

*Approximate boundaries:*  
N-W. Bradley Rd; S-W. Good Hope Rd;  
E-N. 51<sup>st</sup> St.; W-Pacific RR Co.

# NORTHWEST SIDE *Bradley Estates*

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Bradley Estates has a moderate to low-density population. Multi-unit apartments or condos and single-family ranch style houses occupy most of the residential area. The modest commercial district is limited to a few businesses near North 60th Street and West Bradley Road.

The topography of Bradley Estates is hilly with gently rolling inclines throughout the neighborhood. No streets follow a grid; all curve except for North 60th. The only *public* green space is a playfield north of Thoreau Elementary School. In addition, there is a large area of undeveloped land south of West Calumet Road and west on North 60th Street, adjacent to the railroad tracks that define the southern border of the neighborhood. See neighborhood photos below.

## HISTORY

Over 50 neighborhoods on Milwaukee's northwest side once comprised the Granville Township in Milwaukee County, which extended from Hampton Avenue on the south to County Line Road on the north, and 27th Street on the east to 124th Street on the west. The Milwaukee neighborhood of Bradley Estates was once in the Town of Granville.

### Early populations

According to the *Milwaukee Sentinel* (March 22, 1877) there were originally three small settlements in Granville. The first, in 1835, was the family of Jacob Brazelton which included 11 sons. The second was duo Daniel R. Small and W.P. Woodward from Indiana who pitched their tents in the center of the Granville area shortly after the Brazelton family arrived and later built homes. The third group of settlers, the Joseph R. Thomas family and S.C. Enos, arrived shortly after Small and Woodward.

Within a few years a new group arrived from the town of Granville in Washington County, New York. The assemblage included the Evert, Brown, Crippen, Lake, Dutcher, and Norton families. They gave their new home the name of their former home in New York.

But it was not these earliest settlers that established much of the culture of Granville, Township. That role belonged to a wave of Pennsylvania "Dutch" (i.e., Germans) who arrived just a few years later from Telford, Pennsylvania, including the Wambold, Leister, Scholl, Barndt, Price, Bergstresser, Borse, Klein, Martin, Huber, Groll, Horning, and Lewis families. The Pennsylvania Dutch, under the leadership of Samuel Wambold, quickly established the German Evangelical Lutheran and Reformed Church (now known as Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church) in 1847. The following year, the church's pastor, Wilhelm Wrede, called a meeting of local Lutheran ministers at the church. This group would later become the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. A museum of these early synod activities now stands on 107th Street (see outings).



Today's neighborhood-  
Houses on N. 53rd St.  
& W. Hemlock Rd.

In the 1840s there were over 200 people living in Granville Township, and the numbers continued to grow. A small Irish community settled on Granville's eastern border to the center of the township. Initially they set up tents, built brush shanties, and log cabins. But during these early years, Granville Township remained strongly German, and more Germans arrived every year.

Below is a profile of one of the first families to settle in the area that is today's Brynwood neighborhood.

#### *Movement toward annexation of Granville*

In 1956 the residents and property owners of Granville Township were given a choice to consolidate with the City of Milwaukee. Needing services that Milwaukee could offer—especially water--the majority of voters said yes to the referendum. By the 1960s, the western portion of Granville (16.5 square miles) was annexed by Milwaukee and the eastern section consolidated as the Village of Brown Deer. Milwaukee became one of the few large cities in the United States that still had working farms within its boundaries.

#### *Land bank development*

Except for the downturn of the Great Depression, economic prosperity reigned in the area that had been the Town of Granville. While the region remained predominantly rural through the early half of the 20th century, industries gradually began to open in these neighborhoods. Beginning in the 1960s, a Milwaukee Industrial Park and Land Bank was constructed just west of today's Bradley Estates neighborhood between West 76th and West 91st Streets. The area eventually became the most concentrated base of industrial employment in Wisconsin. The Milwaukee Industrial Park and Land Bank grew beyond the boundaries of the current Land Bank neighborhood, moving into contiguous areas. The industrial complex currently extends from 68th Street on the east to 114th Street on the west. The development today comprises over 1,200 acres with over 150 businesses. Vacant parcels of land are a rarity.

#### *Bradley Estates specifics*

Today's neighborhood of Bradley Estates was almost completely unpopulated prior to the 1950s. In the early 50s, developer Francis Jay Schroedel and his construction firm began laying the groundwork for what would become the Bradley Estates Subdivision. The neighborhood roads of Delta Place, Edgewood Drive, Fairway Place, Highview Drive, Link Place, Parklawn Avenue and Court, and Port Avenue were platted in 1955. Fairway and Link Places were named by Schroedel in reference to the nearby Brynwood and Tripoli Golf Courses.

Below is a profile of the individual who was most responsible for the development of today's neighborhood of Bradley Estates.

## **Bradley Estates profile**

*(Information from U.S. Census and other public documents)*

### **Francis Jay Schroedel**

The Bradley Estates neighborhood was developed by the construction firm of Francis Jay Schroedel in the mid-1950s, a developer of mixed reputation in Wisconsin.

Francis was born in 1909 to John and Elizabeth (nee Klauck) Schroedel. Father John was the son of a German immigrant and worked in a shoe factory. The family lived on North 2nd Street and Francis attended St. Elizabeth Catholic Grade School. In his teens he left high school and went to work for his uncle's billiards parlor. Committed to becoming a builder, John started his own company. By 1940, he and his family--wife Anita and two sons--were living at 68th and Locust Streets. Despite Great Depression times, John had his own company.

The close of World War II and returning GIs in need of housing gave Schroedel the opportunities to succeed in the building trade. His

construction company developed so many subdivisions for young families that they became known as "Schroedel's Cradles." He tended to give them grandiose names, such as Golden Gate and Bradley Estates in Granville, Camelot Forest and Imperial Estates in Brookfield, Embassy Estates in Menomonee Falls, and Regal Manors in New Berlin.

But Schroedel's penchant for the grandiose became his ultimate downfall. He purchased a tract of land just outside of Mukwonago where he envisioned Wisconsin's most luxurious resort complex with the name of Rainbow Springs Resort. Schroedel began development about the time his company was building the Golden Gate Subdivision.

As he completed each component of the resort, he held elaborate and expensive galas for Wisconsin's elite. And with each component, his plans for the area continued to expand--often without secured funds. After opening a lodge and an 18-hole golf course on the site, he laid down plans for expansion, including a 756-room hotel, a carnival street with high-end merchandise, and a 9,000 square foot conference center.

But Schroedel's funds dried up. Insistent that he would be the resort's sole developer, he refused offers to take in partners. By 1971, Waukesha judge William Gramling awarded title of Rainbow Springs Resort to Marshall & Isley Bank following a sheriff's auction. To add further humiliation, Schroedel and his wife Anita were formally evicted from the property shortly afterwards.

But Schroedel persisted in trying to raise the money. He continued his unsuccessful quest until the year of his death in 1976.



### *A new population arrives in the former Granville Township*

While the area that would become the Bradley Estates neighborhood did not attract new settlers, the surrounding area did. In the second half of the 20th century African Americans began to migrate to the former Granville area. This happened for two reasons: (1) the need for housing following the razing of over 8,000 homes in the African American Bronzeville community in the late 1950s through the mid-1960s (see [Halyard Park neighborhood](#)), and (2) the availability of family-supporting jobs in industry in the former Granville community. For a time, and to some extent now, many African Americans were able to realize middle class dreams.

### **Current populations (as of 2021)**

Today, Bradley Estates has just over 3,500 residents. Of these, just over half are African American and just over one-third are European Americans (most of mixed European backgrounds). Approximately 1 in 14 are Asians (mostly of Hmong, Sri Lankan, and Vietnamese ancestry). There is also a scattering of Latinos (mostly of Mexican descent), American Indians, indigenous Africans, West Indians, and people of mixed or “other” racial backgrounds.

The median household income in Bradley Estates is just over \$52,000, placing the neighborhood in the middle income stratum. The occupations cited most often by adult residents are in the fields of administration, production, sales, and education. There are over three times the number of residents in the engineering field than their proportions in other Milwaukee neighborhoods.

### **RECURRING NEARBY OUTINGS (Health conditions permitting)**

In the following section the website addresses have been eliminated due to technical problems with the various ways different web browsers display PDF files. Website information on these events is available through the book *Milwaukee Area Outings on the Cheap*. See below.

<b>TOUR OF MUSEUM OF WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD (WELS)</b>			
<b>When?</b>	<b>Where?</b>	<b>Description and contact info</b>	<b>Admission</b>
By appointment	Salem Lutheran Landmark Church, lower level, 6814 N. 107th St.	Tour of more than 1,000 artifacts and pictures of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod	Free, but donations welcome

  

<b>GRANVILLE BID CAR, TRUCK, AND BIKE SPECTACULAR</b>			
<b>When?</b>	<b>Where?</b>	<b>Description and contact info</b>	<b>Admission</b>
Late Sep., Sun. 10am-3pm	Russ Darrow, 7676 N. 76th St.	Exhibition of iconic custom vehicles.	Free

## JULY 4TH CELEBRATION

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
July 4th, 9am-10pm	Noyes Park, 8235 W. Good Hope Rd.	Parade, Doll Buggy, Bike & Trike, and Coaster judging, games, fire-works.	Free

## OPEN SWIM

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Daily, 1-5pm, holiday times vary	Noyes Park, 8235 W. Good Hope Rd.	Open swim year-round at indoor pool with diving boards, locker rooms, vending machines.	\$4, \$3 kids <12

These outings are provided courtesy of MECAH Publishing.

## QUOTES FROM RESIDENTS

**In *The Golden Years of Yesteryear* by Emily Treichel Boehlke (reprinted in *A History of Granville* by Miriam Y. Bird, 1996), Treichel Boehlke writes about her family’s history in Granville from the mid-1800s through the late 20th century. The following are passages from this work.**

“When my Grandparents Treichel were first married and lived in their one room cabin, the Indians would stop in and admire their baby. . . At Grandfather Hackbarth’s the Indians set up camps in the woods every spring and fall when they came to do their trading in Milwaukee.”

“Weddings in the 1860s and later were quite different from today. The invitations were hand written by the bride and groom and they were the hosts, not the parents of the bride. . . the silk material for the brides’ dresses was only 18 inches wide, so for a fancy dress, it took 18 to 20 yards of material. It was not unusual for a man to wear his wedding suit 20 to 25 years, or as long as it fitted.”

“. . . the settlers were having church services at the home of Ernest Zautcke, who had brought a reed organ from Germany to help him with his singing. One of the men could read a text from the Bible and the other religious books which they had brought from across. Mr. Zautcke then donated land for a church and school on the corner of [today’s] Hopkins and Silver Spring Roads. They were served by visiting pastors from Milwaukee and vicinity.”

“School [of her parents] was then held at the house of one of the member’s house one month and at another one the next month, whoever had a room big enough to seat the children.”

“The housewife had to plan well ahead for her household. There was the Arab that would come about once a month with two heavy suitcases full of notions and yard goods for house dresses. When he begged for a night’s lodging the housewife would get a spool of thread for payment. Also a man with a big basket of oranges and bananas would come. Bananas were 25 cents a dozen for nice large ones. Later a baker would come once a week with bread and sweets.”

“Every mother had to be well-schooled in home remedies. . . Plants and herbs were gathered in the summer to be dried and stored for the winter, to be used for any and all ailments.”

“Grandfather would sit and knit many mittens and stockings for all the grandchildren while Grandma read to him and tended her many plants of which she had quite a variety.”

“Even the first street cars were propelled by horse power. There were only 2 lines, one on 3rd Street to Williamsburg, a section of the city at North Avenue and Center and [one] further north (an all-German settlement).”

“In the beginning of the 1900s, there was no Silver Spring Drive, not even a wagon trail west of Hopkins Street. But the plans were made to have a road there, so one of the farmers would ride through the woods with horse and wagon or on horseback as best he could, so it would be legally kept as a driveway to the next mile west.”

“During the first World War, all gathering of people was forbidden, due to the spreading of the flu. So at Freistadt Church only every other pew could be sat in, so all the people east of the church came for early services and all those west of the church came for later service. Also all talking and preaching was to be done in English, but Pastor Wehrs insisted on preaching in German as many of his older members could not understand English.”

“There were about 12 to 14 neighbors that exchanged labor. This was a hard job for the ladies also, with breakfast at 6, lunch at 9, dinner at 12, another lunch at 3, and supper at sundown. No 8 hour days.”

“When the first threshing machine came out the farmers started to raise barley for the Breweries in Milwaukee. My father raised quite a lot of it and we girls had to man the farming mill in the evening when milking was done and our lessons were finished. This was a cold and tiresome job until enough was cleared for a load to be hauled to town the next day.

**Quotes from an oral history of the Granville neighborhoods currently being conducted by Urban Anthropology Inc.<sup>1</sup>—About THEN.**

“Okay schools. Well, there was the public school system which I mentioned I attended only through kindergarten. There was those private schools--primarily the religious ones--the Catholic ones and Lutheran ones. There was no high school. I believe it wasn't built until at least the mid-50s and the late 1950s and that at the time was Granville High School and then became Brown Deer High School, which I attended during the name change. . . And I think there are still some religious schools but those are on the decline only because I know in the case of the one that I attended, St. Catherine's, they do not offer school but they still operate as a church. The school was closed a number of years ago. My sense is that, and I don't know this to be sure, but I suspect it's true that many of the religious schools are now operating as either charter schools and I don't know what the other one is [called] [Choice?].”

“I suppose the priests were at times leaders. Of course I didn't think of them as being political leaders. I really wasn't aware of the politics very much. . . I do remember the first [alderman]--I think his name was Clarence Miller. I think he was the first alderman [when] Granville got annexed by the city and appropriated as a different district. But I remember going to the local firehouse listening to Mayor Maier shortly after it became a firehouse.”

## Quotes from the oral history of the Granville neighborhoods—About NOW

“We had our county supervisor who really worked with us on trying to develop whole parks, which was then empty land. It’s not developed like the other parks. He worked with us, but he didn’t get reelected because for the pension scandal.”

“It has drastically changed from the mall. But I do get calls from new businesses trying to come in three or four times a week. We have seen a fill of those vacancies. We were trying to have a business owners’ summit the other week and it was almost a struggle to try and find a space for them because they have been filling up.”

“What we have is underrated. We have more jobs available here than anywhere, and believe me, the City of Milwaukee gets their fair share of taxes.”

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<sup>1</sup> Urban Anthropology Inc. complies with human subjects requirements of formal research and asks informants to sign informed consent forms that stipulate anonymity, hence names are not provided with the quotes.

## PHOTOS



Today's neighborhood-  
Houses on N. 59th St.  
& W. Calumet Rd.



Today's neighborhood-  
Looking east on W. Calumet Rd.  
near N. 60th St.



Today's neighborhood-  
Christ the King Baptist Church  
on N. 60th St.



Today's neighborhood-  
N. 60th St. looking south.  
Railroad tracks mark the southern border  
of Bradley Estates and northern border  
of the Brynwood neighborhood

For more information on the history of Granville, refer to Miriam Y. Bird's *A History of Granville Township*.

For more information on Milwaukee neighborhoods, refer to John Gurda's *Milwaukee, City of Neighborhoods*.

Do you have great photos of this neighborhood? Are you a resident with an interesting quote about this neighborhood? Do you have recurring outings, additions, corrections, or general comments about this neighborhood? Please email your input to Dr. Jill Florence Lackey at: [jflanthropologist@currently.com](mailto:jflanthropologist@currently.com)