

*Approximate boundaries:*

**N-N.** Bradley Rd; **S-W.** Good Hope Rd;  
**E-N.** Range Line Rd; **W-N.** Teutonia Ave.

# NORTHWEST SIDE *Brown Deer Park*

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

There are no residential properties in the neighborhood of Brown Deer Park. The 362- acre park with a golf course, soccer field, softball diamond, boathouse, and lagoon dominates the area. There is a business district on North Teutonia Avenue along the western edge of the park.

The topography of Brown Deer Park neighborhood consists of gently rolling hills throughout. See 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 Brown Deer Park was once part of Granville Township.

### Early populations

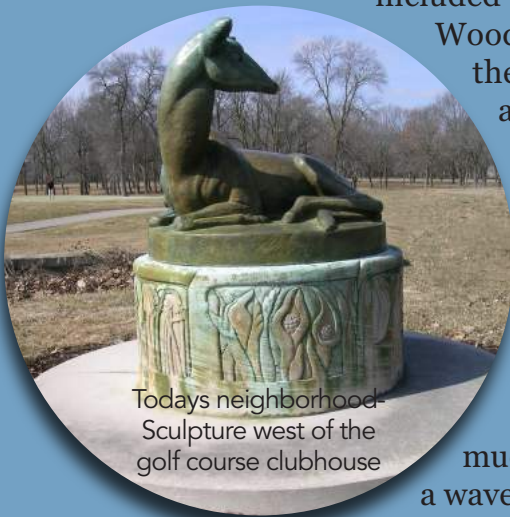
In the middle of the nineteenth century, a Menomonee Indian village was identified near the area that would become Tripoli Park. This was also the time that the first Europeans appeared in the wider Granville region—many of whom would have relationships with the indigenous settlers (see quotes below from *The Golden Years of Yesteryear* by Emily Treichel Boehlke).

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



Today's neighborhood-  
Sculpture west of the  
golf course clubhouse

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.

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.

### *Brown Deer Park specifics*

Save for a scattering of nearby farmers, the area that is today's Brown Deer Park neighborhood never attracted settlers. In the 1920s, developer George Hansen held a contract with the then Milwaukee County Park Commission to develop golf courses outside of the City of Milwaukee. At the time the only public facilities in the area were a 6-hole course in Lake Park and a 9-hole course in Lincoln Park within the city's boundaries and none in Milwaukee County outside the City of Milwaukee. Below is Hansen's profile.

## **Brown Deer Park profile**

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

### **George T. Hansen**

Today's neighborhood of Brown Deer Park owes its landscape largely to a developer named George T. Hansen. Hansen had a checkered history in Milwaukee County.

Born in 1889 in Racine, Wisconsin, Hansen lived much of his life in South Milwaukee. He completed college, married Karen, and had five children (perhaps more). Over his lifetime, he built a career designing and managing golf courses in Wisconsin and developing real estate.

By 1919, Hansen was successfully managing a golf course in Racine. At the time, the Milwaukee County Park Commission was searching for someone that could develop a golf course on the South Milwaukee lakeshore—an area that would be named Grant Park a year later. The commissioners gave him a contract.

Seeing Hansen as an effective manager over the succeeding years, the Park Commission appointed him to the position as Superintendent of Parks in 1926. During his era, he developed the Brown Deer Park Golf Club in Granville and also created courses at Greenfield, Curry, and Whitnall Parks.

The same year that Hansen oversaw the consolidation of parks in 1937, he also completed development of the George Hansen Subdivision in his adopted hometown of South Milwaukee. He set up the subdivision to exclude people of non-white races and non-citizenship. The charter read as follows: "At no time shall Lot of any building thereon be purchased, owned, leased, occupied or used by any person other than citizen of the United States of America, of the White Race. This provision shall not apply to domestic servants which may be employed by the owner or occupant of any such Lot or building thereon." (11 Vol. 1497 Page 455 , Owner: George Hansen; Date Recorded: Dec. 13, 1937; Length of Term: Jan. 1, 2024).

Hansen died in 1950 and was buried at First Congregational Cemetery in South Milwaukee.

### *Movement toward annexation*

Economic prosperity reigned in Granville, due partially to the work ethic of the early German farmers. The town remained predominantly rural through the early half of the 20th century. From the late 1800s to World War Two Granville was an important center for dairy and truck farming. Gradually industries began to open in Granville and the area eventually became the most concentrated base of industrial employment in Wisconsin—today including industrial parks and scores of companies.

In 1956 the residents and property owners of Granville 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 parts of 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.

The following is a sample of a few businesses that were incorporated into Milwaukee in the Brown Deer Park area on North Teutonia just following annexation. See summary points below.

<i>Addresses on N. Teutonia in 1966/67</i>	<i>Businesses and organizations from Milwaukee City Directory</i>
7286	Progressive Industries Inc. Tool Manufacturers
7289	A.J. Clemins Welding
7290	Douglas Corp Research Department
7312	Phil Tolkan Body Repair
7330	Sealcraft Products Corp. Packaging Materials Manufacturers
7360	Becker Post and Lumber Company
7368	Built-In Kitchens, Inc. George Max Cabinet and Millwork
7378	Gerald M. Rosen Veterinarian
7409	Apartments
7421	Apartments
7448	Suburban Millwork Service Garage Doors
7460	Federal Distribution Company Wines, Beer, Liquor
7463	Apartments
7477	Apartments WEP (Power plant)

<i>Addresses on N. Teutonia in 1966/67</i>	<i>Businesses and organizations from <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u></i>
7501	Apartments
7513	Apartments
7537	Tom's Deep Rock Gas Station
7552	Castle Ceramic Studio
7557	Parkview Restaurant
7586	Kips Pine Manor Tavern

### Summary and notes from U.S. Census and other public records:

- Technically, only those businesses and housing complexes on the west side of N. Teutonia (odd numbers) were within the Tripoli Park neighborhood, but residents could easily access shops on either side of the street.
- The businesses on this stretch of Teutonia in the 1960s reflect the growth of Milwaukee and the movement of populations to the newly annexed Northwest Side of the city. Note the businesses with an emphasis on the building trade (e.g., carpentry/millwork, cabinets, lumber, welding, garage doors).
- Progressive Industries Inc. still exists today and is headquartered in Chicago.
- The location of the Douglas Corp. today is a flooring company.
- The Phil Tolkan business included a car dealership, body repair, and car leasing services at multiple locations. Tolkan's "singing Pontiac" with a hood bouncing up and down as if singing, became the theme of the business's inane TV ads. Tolkan died in 1994 and the organization he left behind was gradually bought up by other companies.
- The site of Suburban Millwork Service is today DAK Property Management.
- The site of Castle Ceramic Studio later became Majestic Engraving Corp.

### *A new population arrives*

The man most responsible for the landscape that is today's Brown Deer Park neighborhood—George Hansen--was a developer who championed racial exclusion. It is perhaps rightly ironic that the area he helped develop would eventually attract large numbers of people of color. In the second half of the 20th century, African Americans began to migrate to the 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. As in most German-dominated areas in Milwaukee, the integration of the new population proceeded relatively smoothly. Many African American families were able to purchase homes and move into the middle class.

## Current populations (as of 2017)

Brown Deer Park neighborhood has no residences. In terms of population, it is tied with the Zoo for Milwaukee's smallest neighborhood.

## RECURRING NEARBY OUTINGS

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.

GOLF			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Daily, in season	Brown Deer Golf Club, 7625 N. Range Line Rd., (414) 352-8080	9-and 18-hole golf, with clubhouse and other amenities.	18-hole standard, \$75, 9-hole standard, \$42, less with players' discount card

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

GRANDIOSO ART FESTIVAL			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Jun., Sat. 11am- 6pm	N. 76th St. and Dean Rd.	Celebration of diversity with Reggae, blues, jazz, choral music, food trucks, dance, visual arts, and the spoken word.	Free, but donations welcome

BROWN DEER EAT & GREET ON THE STREET			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Jun., Sat. 3-11pm	Deerwood Dr. and Brown Deer Rd., Brown Deer	Festival with artist and community marketplace, children's games, live entertainment, food, obstacle course.	Free

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>i</sup>—About THEN.**

“Even into the 60s when I got there, you could drive for miles and not find many through streets. You’d find a few farms if you looked carefully, but most of the Granville area—even after annexation—was solidly rural. It was a good site for golf courses.”

“Living in Granville back then, I think that my education was very narrow in terms of the Catholic education, in terms of the indoctrination, and in terms of the exposure to other religions presented. What I did learn, as [a] very traditional Catholic, was that we were highly influenced to think in terms of that religion being the only correct religion even in terms of other Christian religions. I may be a little biased now but in retrospect growing up, one thing I would have to reflect on was that there was not any overt negative racism that I observed among people. But that’s just my impression of being brought up that way. And it was very narrow.”

“At one time there was a rumor that UWM would open a branch in that area but it never got to that stage.”

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

“While a lot of people complain that there is nothing to do up in the Granville area, there are some of the finest golf courses around. There’s also the soccer club. If you can afford to golf, this is where you want to be.”

“[Today] there’s a pretty strong Catholic sensibility in the Hispanic community and a pretty strong Christianity in the African American communities. I have guys at work from the suburbs where there’s hardcore atheism.”

“There’s a Catholic church that’s been there for over 150 years. There is a couple Lutheran churches right on Brown Deer Road that hasn’t changed too much. I noticed we have a couple storefront churches that have popped up. I think those are like non-denominational churches, I guess what you would call bible churches.”

“So the city hired maybe ten architectural firms to come up with plans for five locations within that Granville area. The city is really committed to try to maybe reinvent the area there. Not so much residential shopping but more light industrial area. That’s kind of what a lot of firms are in that area. I’ve seen the plans that they have for it. If it all works out I think it will be good. It will all take years. I am kind of excited about that.”

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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

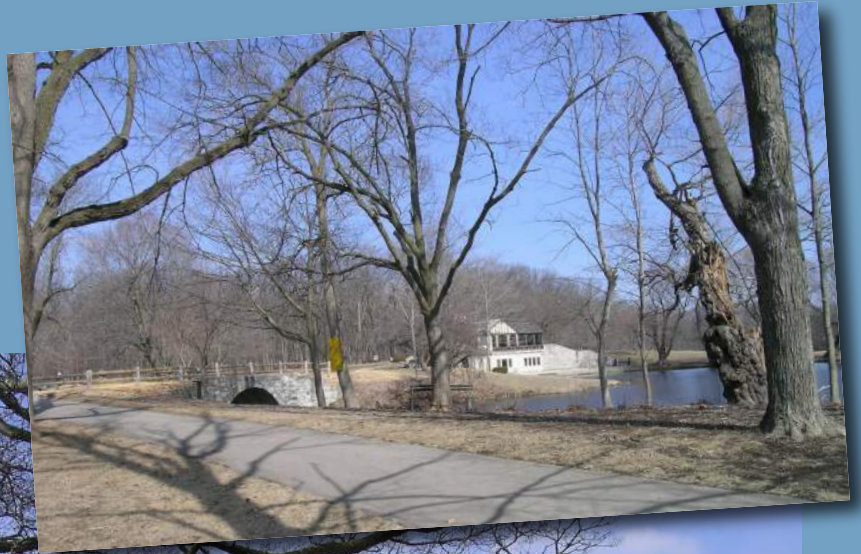
Today's neighborhood-  
Brown Deer Park Golf course



Today's neighborhood-Park boathouse pavilion



Today's neighborhood-  
Long view of boathouse pavilion and bridge



Today's neighborhood-  
Golf Course clubhouse exterior



Today's neighborhood-  
Golf Course clubhouse interior



Today's neighborhood-Sculpture west of the golf course clubhouse

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)