

*Approximate boundaries:*  
N-W. Bradley Rd; S-W. Good Hope Rd;  
E-N. 91<sup>st</sup> St; W-N. 107<sup>th</sup> St

# NORTHWEST SIDE *Calumet Farms*

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Calumet Farms is a sparsely to moderately populated neighborhood. Most of the housing stock appears to have been built recently and consists mainly of colonial and modern bungalow style homes. Most are set back from the street behind wooded areas. There is no business corridor in this neighborhood.

The topography of Calumet Farms is hilly, from gently rolling to fairly steep inclines. A large area along Good Hope Road appears to be in active use as farmland. Streets are mostly winding with very few following a rectangular grid. They tend to be grouped in clusters throughout the neighborhood and surrounded by large areas of woodland. Almost no streets have sidewalks. 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 27<sup>th</sup> Street on the east to 124<sup>th</sup> Street on the west. The Milwaukee neighborhood of Calumet Farms was once in the Town of Granville. The neighborhood got its designation from the farms that still operate in this area and the street that runs through it—Calumet Road. In the 1970s, the road was named after the French word for a North American Indian peace pipe.

## 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 107<sup>th</sup> Street (see outings).

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.

Except for a few widely dispersed homesteads—mostly farms—there were almost no settlers in the Calumet Farms area until the late 20th century. One exception was a Swede named J. Arthur Ehn. See his profile below.

## **Calumet Farms resident profile**

*(Information from U.S. Census records.)*

### **J. Arthur Ehn**

Ehn was not a farmer. He was a broker—probably in real estate. By 1935, Ehn had moved his family to land he'd purchased just east of Highway 100 in Granville. There he built his house and may have also constructed the small road that ran east/west from the highway. He called the road Greenwood Terrace, a name that stood the test of time—even after annexation.

J. Arthur Ehn was born in 1891 in Ashland, Wisconsin. His parents, John and Lena Ehn were immigrants from Sweden. Father John worked as a boiler maker in a round house. J. Arthur never completed elementary school.

As a young man, Ehn married Edna Schaper, the daughter of a German immigrant, and the family moved to North 28th Street in Milwaukee. There Ehn worked as a traveling salesman for a carbide company. Sons Claude, Raymond, Richard, Robert, John, and Byron were born. At some time, Ehn changed occupations and became an independent broker. He apparently did well, as the Granville home he owned was valued at \$8,000, about four times the average for 1940. Of course, pure diligence may have played a role in Ehn's prosperity. That year, he told the census taker that he worked 70 hours a week—and this was Great Depression times.

Sometime after the Ehn children were grown, Ehn and his wife retired in Delray Beach, Florida. Edna passed in 1974. It is not clear when J. Arthur died.



### *Post-Depression*

Economic prosperity eventually reigned in Granville, due partially to the work ethic of these early residents. The township remained predominantly rural through the early half of the 20th century. 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 over 75 companies.

### *Movement toward annexation*

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 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.

### *A new population arrives*

In the second half of the 20th century, African Americans began to migrate to the neighborhood. 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.

Unfortunately, the deindustrialization movement that began in the 1980s arrested this course. Manufacturing employment in Milwaukee fell 77 percent, from a peak in 1963 to the present. All this had negative effects on the residents of Granville Township generally, but seemingly less so on the diminutive Calumet Farms neighborhood

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

Today, there are fewer than 2,300 residents in Calumet Farms. Nearly 6 in 10 are African Americans, about one-quarter are European Americans (mostly of mixed European ancestry), and nearly 1 in 10 are Asians (mostly of Indian extraction, but some Hmong). There is also a scattering of Latinos (all of Mexican or South American ancestry), American Indians, indigenous Africans, and people of mixed or “other” racial backgrounds.

The median household income in Calumet Farms is just over \$61,000, placing the neighborhood in the middle income stratum. The main occupations among adult residents are in the fields of administration, management, and computers/math. There are over four times more adults in the field of computer/math than their proportions in other Milwaukee areas.

### **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

### 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

### 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

### BUTLER FARMERS MARKET

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Jun.-mid Oct., Mon. 12- 6pm	Hampton Ave. at 127th St.	Fresh produce from Wisconsin farmers, baked goods, arts, crafts, activities.	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.**

“I think the big thing is that there's no one that really knows about the old Granville. I don't know. I don't know who does know.”

“I just remember another one that I did go out to. There was a 4-H club that I did belong to and that was in the Granville area. Again other than the churches—let’s see--there was the little league. I didn’t do it but I know there were some bowling organizations. Baseball and softball was popular. There was a softball league; I did not play in it at the time.”

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

“I know so many more people now so there are lots of different ethnic groups. We have some Ethiopians in our school. There’s a small section of people who are Indians that [came] to this area to do business and send their kids to school. There’s a fair amount of Hmong people. [There’s also] other second and third generation of Japanese and Chinese immigrants. And a group from northern Africa.”

“I know in the charrette process they talked about a real lack of things for young people to do in the area. The charrette process addressed that in the five areas they focused on. One of them was to try to have an entertainment area for young people to do. There’s a lot of traffic that goes through the area. People coming and going to work. I think if you have the right places there, it could pull people in.”

“What I see is that when you go a few blocks this way or that way in the Granville area you might get some really poor areas and then a few more blocks away there might be whole blocks of people earning six digit incomes. So it varies a lot in this area.”

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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-Produce stand on Good Hope Rd. & N. Granville Rd.

Today's neighborhood-  
Looking north from Good Hope Rd. & N. Granville Rd.



Today's neighborhood-  
Houses on W. Greenwood Terrace



Today's neighborhood-  
Houses on W. Mt. Zion Dr. & W. Bishop Circle





Today's neighborhood-The Little Menomonee River

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)



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