

Approximate boundaries:

N-W. Good Hope Rd; S-W. Green Tree Rd;  
E-N. Park Manor Dr; W-N. 99<sup>th</sup> St

# NORTHWEST SIDE *Golden Gate*

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Golden Gate is a low density residential neighborhood. Most of Golden Gate is made up of ranch or colonial style houses that are set far back from the street. There is no business corridor in the neighborhood.

Golden Gate's topography is flat to gently rolling hills. While some neighborhood streets follow a rectangular grid, most in the eastern section curve to the south and intersect North Park Manor Drive at the eastern border of the neighborhood. Golden Gate has no public green space but there is an area of open field in the northwestern corner west of North 99th Street and north of West Vera Avenue. 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 Golden Gate was once part of Granville Township.

### 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. 99th St.  
& W. Green Tree 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.

### *Movement toward annexation*

Economic prosperity reigned in Granville, due partially to the work ethic of the early residents. The township remained predominantly rural through the early half of the 20th century. From the late 1800s to World War II Granville was an important center for dairy and truck farming. Resident William Schlapmann owned a creamery that produced 100 pounds a week. 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.

### *Late 20th century*

In the second half of the 20th century a wave of African Americans began to migrate to Golden Gate and other former Granville communities. 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.

### *Golden Gate specifics*

While a few farms operated in and near the Golden Gate area, the neighborhood did not begin to attract serious settlement until the early 1960s when a developer named Francis Jay Schroedel invested in the area. He developed the Golden Gate subdivision and most of the neighborhood's streets. He named two streets after his grandchildren— Debbie Lane after granddaughter Debbie and Marcelle Avenue after grandson Marc. See Francis Schroedel's profile below.

## **Golden Gate profile (late 20th century)** *(Information from U.S. Census and other public documents)*

### **Francis Jay Schroedel**

The Golden Gate 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 the 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.



### *Post-1980s in Granville*

Unfortunately, the deindustrialization movement that began in the 1980s arrested the course of economic prosperity in the former Granville area. Manufacturing employment in Milwaukee fell 77 percent, from a peak in 1963 to the present. What had been a working and middle class area on the Northwest Side was in economic decline.

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

Today there are fewer than 700 residents in Golden Gate. Of these, slightly over half are African Americans and about 4 in 10 are European Americans (the largest ancestry groups being German and people of mixed European backgrounds). There is also a scattering of Latinos (all of Mexican

ancestry), Asians (mostly of Hmong extraction), American Indians, indigenous Africans, and people of multiple or “other” racial ancestry in the area.

The median household income for residents of Golden Gate is just over \$76,000, placing the neighborhood in the upper middle income stratum and making it the fourth wealthiest neighborhood in Milwaukee. The main occupations claimed by adults are in the fields of production, management, and sales. Golden Gate is also a highly educated neighborhood with just under 4 in 10 residents holding a degree beyond high school.

## 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.

TOUR OF MUSEUM OF WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD (WELS)			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
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, fireworks.	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.	unk

## 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.**

“And then as I grew up there, the subdivisions were developed around our home, and you know, some industries and some shopping centers. And I remember a lot of the annexation activities that took place. And there were some battles between Brown Deer and what-was-then the town of Granville and then eventually of course the city of Milwaukee annexed the area.”

“Granville started growing after World War II. You know the GI’s came home. If you start going down towards Silver Spring, that whole area you are seeing is the World War II homes. When the GI’s came back, they had smaller family home row houses. So I think back in the day Granville was a blue collar single family kind of thing. And Granville really started growing after World War II. Before that it was certainly rural.”

“Well I think the rules were a little bit more defined then than they are now--for the most part in terms of adult women. Like I mentioned my mother went back to work when I was in high school, [but it] was not a necessity.”

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

“Speaking of my neighborhood the similarities I see are stable families with higher paying jobs. The average income of my neighborhood is well over \$100,000 per year. My home sticks out because the church pays for my house. Regardless of race there is that income level and that stability.”

“Sometimes you have the women going out to work out of necessity. Sometimes here it just is to add to the family income—to add on to the house, to travel, to save for the kids’ college, to get a better car.”

“Today we are more of a working household than we were.”

“I think a lot of it is a single mom with multiple kids probably. Both today and in the past. In the past it was prominent to have a typical big family but based on what I’ve seen in the community I think it’s extremely typical to have a single mom trying to scrape by to do whatever they can for their kids.”

“There are quite a few churches between Good Hope’s 106th and 107th. Evangel Assembly of God [members] are pretty active. Now there have been some smaller store front churches that have popped up in vacant retail areas. The ones that have started there have continued to be there.”

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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-  
Looking west from N. Park Manor Dr.  
& W. Teresa Ln.



Today's neighborhood-  
Houses on N. 97th St. & of W. Vera Ave.





Today's neighborhood-  
Houses on N. 99th St. & W. Green Tree Rd.



Today's neighborhood-  
Looking northwest from N. 99th St & W. Vera Ave.

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* and Jill Florence Lackey's and Rick Petrie's *Germans in Milwaukee: A neighborhood history*.

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:  
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