

*Approximate boundaries:*  
**N**-W. Green Tree Rd; **S**-Pacific RR Co;  
**E**-W. 40<sup>th</sup> St; **W**-N. 60<sup>th</sup> St

# NORTHWEST SIDE *Graceland*

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Graceland is a moderate-density neighborhood with a variety of housing styles. Included among the styles are many early 20th century bungalows, Tudors, and middle to late 20th century colonial and ranch houses throughout the neighborhood. There is a modest commercial corridor on Mill Road, consisting mainly of manufacturing firms.

The topography of Graceland is flat to gently rolling hills. While there are no public parks, the Graceland Cemetery occupies a large section of the neighborhood. Most of the streets follow a rectangular grid. See neighborhood photos below.

## HISTORY

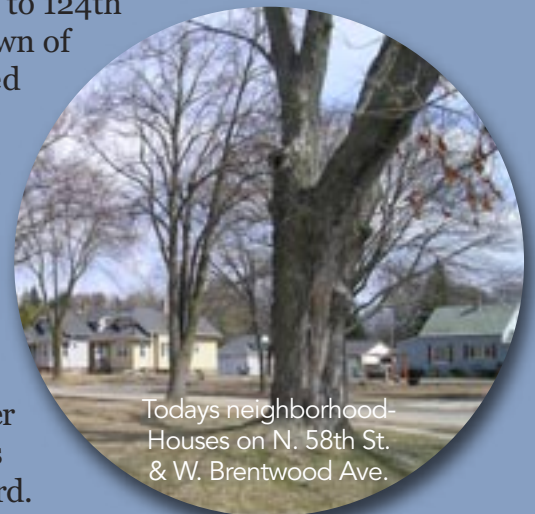
Over 50 neighborhoods on Milwaukee's northwest side once comprised the unincorporated Town of Granville in Milwaukee County, which extended from Hampton Avenue on the south to County Line Road on the north, and 27th Street on the east to 124th Street on the west. Today's Graceland was once within the Town of Granville. It was named after its cemetery which was organized in 1914.

### 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.



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. See one example below.

### **Graceland family profile**

*Information was found in U.S. Census and other public records*

#### **The Keihnau**

Keihnau Avenue in the Graceland neighborhood was named after the Keihnau family. The road once ran through their family farm.

The Keihnau first appeared in Granville in the middle of the 19th century. Henry Keihnau was an immigrant who was born in 1831 in Darmstadt in the state of Hesse in today's Germany. In 1854, he married Margaretha Roesel, also a German immigrant and also born in 1831. *(See their photo to the right from public records at Ancestry.com.)* By 1880, the couple had three children and owned a farm in Granville valued at \$3,000, a good sum for the times.

One of the children of the Keihnau couple was Henry W., born in 1867. As a young person, he worked on the family farm. In 1897, Henry W. married Anna Bahmann. Anna, born 1874, had also grown up in Granville. She was the daughter of Ludwig and Wilhelmena Bahmann, two Prussian immigrants. The newly married Keihnau couple purchased land near their parents and began their own farm. They had at least three children and by 1920 owned their farm outright.

Sometime in the 1930s the Town of Granville named the road that was on their property after the Keihnau. Anna died in 1913 and Henry W. in 1944. Both were buried at Graceland Cemetery.



#### *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. 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.

The following is a sample of a few businesses that were incorporated into Milwaukee in the Graceland area on West Mill Road within the neighborhood's boundaries just after annexation. See summary points below.

<i>Addresses on W. Mill Rd. in 1973</i>	<i>Businesses and organizations from <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u></i>
4620	(Fred) Goethel Sheet Metal
4707	Twin-Mill Bowling Lanes
4811	Gerald E. Marks Excavating Contractors
4829	Lavo Chemical Corporation
4901	Gene's Tile Service (Rossey)
5001	Spiegel Printing Company
5132	Kipp's Supper Club
5200	Jim's Hometown Service Gas Station
5216	Master Tag Stringers
5225	Richard B. Raml Woodworking Company
5308	Apartments
5412	Apartments
5415	Thermal Company Commercial Refrigeration and Heating Units Inc.
5420	Apartments
5501	Acme Printing Inc.
5615	Great Lakes Solvents
5737	Great Lakes Solvents Chemical Distributing Company

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

- Given that it was the 1970s, the businesses along W. Mill were not designed for neighborhood foot traffic. They were the kinds of establishments that required cars for resident patronage or for industrial products.
- The site of the Goethel Sheet Metal Company is today Tempco Heating and Air Conditioning.
- Twin-Mill Bowling later became Court Lanes Bowling.
- Lavo Chemical Corp apparently still exists in the Graceland neighborhood and today specializes in carpet cleaning.
- The site of Spiegel Printing today is a childcare center.
- The site of the Great Lakes Solvents Chemical Distributing Center is today Supreme Cores Inc. that supplies cores and molds to foundries in the U.S. and Canada.

### *Arrival of African Americans*

More change was coming to Graceland and the former Granville area. African Americans began to migrate in for two reasons: (1) available industrial jobs, and (2) the need for housing following the leveling of their former central city home known as Bronzeville (see [Halyard Park neighborhood](#) for details). As in most Milwaukee neighborhoods where the dominant population was German, integration proceeded without incident. Many African American families were now finding their way into the middle class.

Unfortunately, the deindustrialization movement that began in the 1980s reversed this course. 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 decline.

### Current populations (as of 2025)

Today, most of the Germans have left Graceland. Two thirds of the nearly 3,000 residents of the neighborhood are African Americans. The rest are mainly European Americans, with over 300 still claiming German ancestry. In addition, about 1 in 11 residents are Asians (nearly all of Hmong descent). There is also a scattering of Latinos (mostly Mexican), American Indians, indigenous Africans, Middle Easterners, and residents of mixed racial or “other” backgrounds.

The median household income for Graceland is just under \$46,000, placing the neighborhood in the lower-income stratum. The largest number of occupations claimed by Graceland’ adult residents are in the fields of administration, production, and social services.

### INTERESTING FEATURE

- **Graceland Cemetery**, at 6401 N. 43rd St., founded in 1914 and includes original burials and reinternments from St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Cemetery and Fairview Mausoleum.

## 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.

SLEDDING--MCGOVERN			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Winter, daytime	McGovern Park, 5400 N. 51st St.	Sledding hills for family and friends.	Free

RHYTHM & BLOOM CONCERT SERIES			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Jul.to mid Aug., Thu.'s, 6- 8:30pm	Green Tree Commu- nity Garden, 60th & Green Tree Rd.	Concerts with a variety of bands, food, food trucks.	Free

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

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.**

“It was all open land. We'd drive through, but it was hard as there were not many roads at all. Some had favorite bars out in the country, which of course was Granville then. No one thought of that as being a city or even a suburb.”

“There were two Lutheran churches in the area back then and St. Catherine’s, the Catholic church.”

“I think the activities were bigger back then from skating to go-carting to all sorts of stuff. Now we are lacking that.”

“Basketball’s always been big, I see kids sometimes ride their bikes in the neighborhood. But not as much. My kids would get all the neighborhood kids together and they would be playing baseball in the street. Our kids would go play in the woods and catch frogs and go ride their bikes in the open field. Our kids had a great childhood here.”

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

“I don’t think the churches really communicate. When they do outreach programs we try to communicate and the right foot doesn’t know what the left foot’s doing. Everybody will have their own separate food pantry and again we do have some cultural differences in our churches, but we also have a lot of African American churches up there. And I don’t believe that they collaborate together real well. The churches aren’t playing together in the sandbox. I don’t think it’s intentional. I think they’re just doing their own little church thing.”

“A few pastors have gotten together and we help out with the woodlands a little. Mostly on Mill Road. There is a small subset that belong to the faith-based initiative that works together to try and deal with some of the poverty and have events like that for the poor.”

“We had a couple of guys in our neighborhood that would send out the weekly email to our neighborhood. That was meaningful to me because it made me feel a part of the neighborhood. And [we] would coordinate talks with our Alderman. . . Also there’s the Doors Open Milwaukee thing [that] opens historical places to people in the community. We have a couple of places like that here at the churches.”

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<sup>i</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**







Todays neighborhood-  
Graceland Cemetery (1)



Todays neighborhood-Graceland Cemetery (2)



Today's neighborhood-  
Houses on N. 49th St. & W. Brentwood Ave.



Today's neighborhood-  
Houses on N. 58th St.  
& W. Brentwood 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*.

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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