

**Approximate boundaries:**

**N**-W. Dean Rd; **S**-W. Bradley Rd (partial) railroad tracks;

**E**-N. 68<sup>th</sup> St; **W**-N. 76<sup>th</sup> St

# NORTHWEST SIDE *Granville Woods*

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Granville Woods is not a residential neighborhood. The area is entirely occupied by industrial buildings and businesses. The only street in the center of the neighborhood begins as West Steven Road at the northern border, turns at a right angle into Marcia Road, and then curves southeast and becomes North Granville Woods Road, continuing south to the southern border of the neighborhood. The commercial corridors are along North 76th Street south of West Dean Road.

The topography of Granville Woods is gently rolling hills. While the neighborhood has no public green space, there are a number of undeveloped areas of open fields and wooded land within its boundaries. 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 Granville Woods 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-  
Looking north on N. Granville Woods 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 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 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 Granville Woods and other nearby 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.

### *Granville Woods specifics*

Today's neighborhood of Granville Woods was almost completely unpopulated prior to and during the industrial development. Until the closing decades of the 20th century, there were almost no streets in the neighborhood. Neither North 76th nor North 68th Streets extended into the area. The only early signs of residential settlement were on Bradley Road during the middle to late century. In 1971, there were no businesses and four residences on Bradley and one on Dean within the current Granville Woods boundaries.

## **Granville Woods profile**

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

### **The Fienes**

In the late 1960s, the household of Harvey Alvin Fiene was one of only five families to live within the boundaries of Granville Woods. They lived at 6942 W. Bradley Road.

The Fienes were an old Granville family. Harvey's parents were Charles Feine (b. 1886 of Pomeranian immigrants) and Elsie (Eichner) Fiene. Charles began his work life as a farm laborer and by 1910 had met and married Elsie Eichner. The couple rented a home in North Milwaukee, a town that had originally been part of Granville Township. For a time, Charles worked as a laborer in an oil mill. However, by 1920, Charles had landed a job with the City of Milwaukee that paid above scale for the time. The couple purchased a home outright just a few blocks from their North Milwaukee home, over the Milwaukee border.

The Fiene family remained in their Milwaukee home until sometime in the 1930s when they returned to Granville Township. Over the years they had children Elsie, Milton, Elmer, Florence, Meta, Herbert, Gladys, Glenn, and finally Harvey. The children grew up on Good Hope Road. When they went out on their own, most decided to remain in or near the old Granville area. Youngest son Harvey Alvin moved to the Granville Woods neighborhood on Bradley Road.

Harvey died in 1996, still living in Granville Woods. No records were found on any wife or children for Harvey.

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

While the area that would become the Granville Woods 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.

The Granville Woods neighborhood did add roads at the end of the 20th century. In 1990, Granville Woods Road, Steven Road (named after Alderman Thomas Nardelli's son, Steven) and Marcia Road (named after the alderman's wife, Marcia Endrizzi) were platted as part of the Granville Woods Subdivision. But it would continue to be industries that would dominate the area.

### **Current populations (as of 2025)**

In terms of population, Granville Woods is currently tied with the Zoo neighborhood as Milwaukee's smallest neighborhood. Granville Woods had only three residents and one home.

### **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.

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

Most of these outings are provided courtesy of MECAH Publishing. To access the book that provides nearly 600 outings—all priced under \$10—for the entire Greater Milwaukee area, go to <http://mecahmilwaukee.com/NonFiction.html>

## 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 just farms. It was just vast farms. So farmland; so not many people.”

“You had a lot of middle class people living in the area. It had high status to be out here near the woods. With the factories, I think you now have more of a working class type.”

“I think what also followed [was] the rapid change from agricultural to residential and all of the industry and road building. I think the rapid change that took place over the pretty tight time span of 15 to 20 years or so . . . I think a lot of people were moving in and a lot of people were moving out.”



“Back in the day it was outside of the neighborhood people worked. One of the cool things about being a pastor is doing what I call shut in visits where I go to a retired lady’s house and I’ll go and give her a devotional and serve her the Lord’s Supper. They talk a lot and share a lot about their history. You get a feel for the big employers in the neighborhood. The Milwaukee Can [sic] and Master Lock--those are the two big ones from a long time back. Now a lot of people work in the medical industry [or are] police officers. And people go down to the city and commute of course.”

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

“I think the Granville area was starting out agricultural and then it became a lot of working professionals--white-collar retail people, people that worked with the mall and all the stores and the businesses; and now I think it’s evolving into more of a middle class, blue collar area. With all the industry here. I think that’s the future of the area.”

“People talk about the poverty here, but I think if you compare all the Granville neighborhoods to other city neighborhoods, that we fare pretty well. There are pockets of poverty, but most of the area has a lot of jobs to offer, with all the industry. Sometimes it requires some form of skilled work, but where else do you have all the opportunities that we do have here?”

“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-Looking east on W. Marcia Rd.





Today's neighborhood-View on N. 76th St.

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:  
[JFLanthropologist@currently.com](mailto:JFLanthropologist@currently.com)