

*Approximate boundaries:*  
N-W. Good Hope Rd (partially); S-W. Mill Rd;  
E-N. 107<sup>th</sup> St; W-Hwy 45

# NORTHWEST SIDE *Heritage Heights*

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Heritage Heights has low population density with housing stock that is mostly recently- built, single-family homes in the colonial style. Neighborhood businesses—mainly car dealerships or auto parts stores—are concentrated in the northwestern corner of the Heights, south of Good Hope Road.

Heritage Heights' topography is hilly, with gently rolling inclines throughout. Most of the streets follow a rectangular grid. Few, if any, streets have curbs or sidewalks, and houses tend to be set back a distance from the street. While the neighborhood has no public green space, there are abundant and undeveloped open fields in the south and central sections. 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 Heritage Heights was once in the Town of Granville. The neighborhood got its name from its heritage sites (see below).

### 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, 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



Today's neighborhood-  
West Granville  
Presbyterian Church

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).

### *West Granville*

The area that is today's Heritage Heights, Park Knoll, and Mill Valley neighborhoods was once the hamlet of West Granville. It was centered at the crossroads of Mill Road and 115th Street. Very early on, the German settlers established the West Granville Cemetery Association that would develop and govern the West Granville Cemetery. Much of this historic site owes its genesis to the Barndt family. See the family profile below.

## **Heritage Heights family profile**

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

### **The Barndts**

Jonas F. Barndt was born in 1810 in Telford, Pennsylvania. He married Hanna Scholl. Sometime prior to 1840, the couple moved to Granville Township with a large group of Pennsylvania Germans who built farms and founded Salem Lutheran Church. The Barndts were quite industrious. By 1850 they had three children and by 1860 their net worth was \$12,000—a small fortune at the time. They rented out parcels of their land holdings to others in the community.

Shortly after arriving in Granville, the Pennsylvania Germans knew they needed a cemetery for their growing community. In mid-century they established the West Granville Cemetery Association, with trustees of P.W. Dodge, Hiram Lake, and Jonas Barndt. The same year they purchased an acre of land from Jonas and Hanna Barndt's large estate. This may have been providential, as Hanna died in October of that year and was buried in the new West Granville Cemetery.

Within a few years, Jonas married Sophia Scholl, the apparent sister of Hanna. The couple had three children. In 1866, Sophia and Jonas sold another acre to the cemetery association.

Jonas died in 1875 and was buried next to his first wife Hanna. He left most of his estate to his oldest son Abner. One year later, Abner S. Barndt sold a third acre of the Barndt estate to the cemetery association.

Sophia Scholl Barndt died in 1896 and was also buried at West Granville Cemetery. Abner died three years later. In 1902, David Barndt, descendent of Abner, and his wife Josephine sold four more acres to the cemetery for \$1,000.

The cemetery was not the only heritage site that still operates in the former hamlet of West Granville. In 1860, a dissenter from Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church and 26 German Calvinists founded West Granville Presbyterian Church as "Die erste Presbyterian Kirche" (The First Presbyterian Church). They built the Cream City brick building which houses the congregation to this day. As the church was developing during the Civil War and aftermath, the congregation made an early commitment to provide assistance to newly freed slaves through the Freedman's Board.

By 1876, the hamlet of West Granville had a post office, two wagon makers, a shoemaker, two blacksmiths, a cigar store, and a flour mill. In the 1920s, Joy Farm opened in the hamlet at 115th Street, two blocks south of Good Hope Road. The farm was a favorite horseback riding club for decades. Later it became a transportation company and rented out school buses and other vehicles.

During these years, West Granville Presbyterian Church continued its humanitarian works. In 1960, the congregation developed a program to welcome new citizens and sponsored many immigrants to the area. At the same time, they participated in the civil rights movement through the Covenant of Open Housing and Project Friendship.

The year 1977 became auspicious for the former West Granville hamlet and Granville Township. Three of their historic sites--the West Granville Cemetery, Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church, and West Granville Presbyterian Church all received historic designation.

### *Granville industrializes*

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*

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 2018)

Today, there are just over 600 residents living in Heritage Heights, making it one of the least populated neighborhoods in Milwaukee. Of these, over three-quarters are African Americans, about 1 in 7 are European Americans (mostly of mixed European ancestry), and just under 1 in 25 are Latinos (mostly of Mexican extraction). There is also a scattering of Asians (all of Pakistani and Indian ancestry) and people of mixed or “other” racial backgrounds.

The median household income in Heritage Heights is just over \$39,000, placing the neighborhood in the lower middle income stratum. The main occupations among adult residents are in the fields of administration, sales, and management. There are approximately twice the number of adults in the field of healthcare support than their proportions in other Milwaukee areas.

## 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

### 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

### 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

### 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.	\$4, \$3 kids <12

### 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>1</sup>—About THEN.**

“I used to ride horses by the hour at Joy Farm. I will never forget my first time. I went there with two friends. We were in about 7th or 8th grade at the time. I had ridden before, but always Western style. Then if the horse would start to trot, I’d give a little kick and get the horse into a lope so my insides would not burst. But I’d never heard of English riding. We went there and got up on English saddles. The riding leader expected us to post, which is a rhythmic way of raising yourself up and down from your stirrups to avoid the bumps of the trot. Well, I just could not get in rhythm. It was horrible. For at least half of the rented hour we were at a trot. The leader kept screaming at me to post, and I just couldn’t. My sides were bursting. When I got up for school the next day, my whole body ached so bad I could barely move. I did eventually learn how to post, thank God.”

“You didn’t come there [Granville] to live [permanently]; you came there to live before you moved and bought a house somewhere. So there was a lot of apartments and there was a lot of duplexes and a lot of places where people lived there until you got your house. And so it kind of developed that kind of image.”

“And Milwaukee, being the segregated city it was, the area was all white and then suddenly there’s an influx of black people and it surrounded Northridge mall. And for the most part they were low income and poverty. A lot of them did not have jobs. And suddenly you put this huge mix of people with people who had kind of been living in Granville because it felt like a suburb even though it was part of Milwaukee at the time. . . So basically we dropped a bunch of people who didn’t have jobs into an area that was doing very well. And guess what? It didn’t help anything. . . The area maintained itself from an economic perspective because back when the city workers still had to live in the city, you still have very good middle class housing.”

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

“Historical preservation is important here. A lot of energy goes into preserving the two churches and the cemetery as well.”

“I am trying to bridge that gap between government, business and community. Where they used to be silo-ed out and only worked together when they needed to. I am really trying to bridge that gap and let all three entities see that without one we are going to fail. So it needs to be a circle where we are constantly working together.”

“Both [groups] I mentioned are very interested in historical preservation. They are conservative in the fact that they’d don’t like change. As the demographic of the neighborhood changes, they worry about preservation.”

“I would say they get along whenever interacting. It’s an area that doesn’t have a lot of crime. The crime rate is pretty low compared to other parts of the city. That would be an indication that people get along pretty good.”

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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-  
West Granville Cemetery



Today's neighborhood-West Granville Presbyterian Church



Today's neighborhood-Houses on W. Green Tree Rd. & N. 112th Ct.



Today's neighborhood-N. 108th St. & W. Green Tree Rd.



Today's neighborhood-The south end of N. 108th St. looking west



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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