

Approximate boundaries:
N-W. Mill Rd; **S**-W. Silver Spring Dr;
E-Hwy 41; **W**-Menomonee River

NORTHWEST SIDE *Park Knoll*

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Park Knoll is a neighborhood of moderate population density 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. While most of the older homes are in the northern part of the neighborhood just south of Mill Road, the newer ranch style homes are mainly in the southern section of the neighborhood south of West Florist Avenue. The business and industrial corridor is located in the southern part of the neighborhood close to Silver Spring Road.

The topography of Park Knoll is hilly, with gently rolling to fairly steep inclines. Most of the thoroughfares follow a rectangular grid. There are a few curving streets-- mainly in the western section of the neighborhood. There is no public green space in Park Knoll, but a large portion of the neighborhood is undeveloped wooded land, particularly in the southwestern corner. The Menomonee River flows through the western part of the neighborhood from Mill Road on the northern border to West Silver Spring Road at the southern border.



Today's neighborhood-
House on N. 118th St.
south of Mill Rd.

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 Park Knoll was once in the Town of Granville and the hamlet of West 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).

West Granville

The area that is today's Mill Valley, Heritage Heights, and Park Knoll neighborhoods was once the hamlet of West Granville. It was centered at the crossroads of Mill Road and 115th Street. Very early on, the early 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 [Heritage Heights](#) neighborhood for more details.

One of the men that played a role in founding the cemetery was Hiram Lake, one of the original Granville settlers from New York (see above). He served as a trustee with Jonas Barndt and P.W. Dodge in establishing the West Granville Cemetery Association. See his family's profile below.

Park Knoll family profile

(Information from U.S. Census and other public records)

The Lakes

The Lakes were a pioneering family in Granville. Hiram and his wife Mary C. had settled in the hamlet of West Granville before 1850. They were among those early residents responsible for giving Granville Township its name, as they had hailed from Granville in Washington County, New York.

According to the 1850 census, Hiram and Mary had four children, ages 15, 13, 11, and 9. In their household was another of the earliest settlers from New York, Truman Everts age 60.

Hiram Lake, together with Jonas Barndt and P.W. Dodge, were the three trustees of the West Granville Cemetery Association. In 1853, this trio purchased the first acre of land for the cemetery from Jonas and Hannah Barndt. It was fortunate that they made this purchase when they did, as Hannah Barndt died the same year, and Lake's boarder, Truman Everts, died two years later.

The Lake family did not remain in Granville. By 1880 they had moved to Horicon in Dodge County, Wisconsin. Hiram became the Justice of the Peace for the town.

The Everts remained, however. Truman, his son Charles C. and grandchildren Hiram and Sarah were all buried in the same plat in the West Granville Cemetery.



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 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.

Below are some of the businesses that were in the Park Knoll neighborhood along Silver Spring Drive shortly following annexation.

<i>Addresses on W. Silver Spring in 1973</i>	<i>Businesses and organizations from <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u></i>
11700	Holt Lumber Inc. Bucky's Holt Lumber Corporation Construction L.W. Babb Company Real Estate
11715	Bark River Culvert and Equipment Company
11800	Wallboard Inc. Plaster
11811	Engine Power Inc.
11900	Dick's Gulf Service Station
12120	Lakeside Plywood and Building Materials

<i>Addresses on W. Silver Spring in 1973</i>	<i>Businesses and organizations from <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u></i>
12311	Ingersoll Rand Company Machine Rental High Reach Equipment Rental
12314	Frantz Company Sawdust Dealers Inc.

Summary notes:

- Technically only those businesses on the south side of the street were within the Park Knoll neighborhood, but residents could easily access places on either side of the street.
- Businesses on this stretch of Silver Spring in the 1970s were really servicing the building trade, reflecting the expansion of Milwaukee.
- The site of Holt Lumber later became The Fireplace (appliances, heating, air-conditioning).
- The site of Bark River Equipment is today one location of Yes Equipment & Services Inc. (YES).

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.

Current populations (as of 2021)

Today, there are just under 1,250 residents living in Park Knoll. Of these, just over two-thirds are European Americans (hundreds still of German ancestry), about 1 in 5 are African Americans, and close to 1 in 20 are Asians (nearly all Hmong). There is also a scattering of American Indians, Latinos (mostly of Mexican extraction), and people of mixed or “other” racial backgrounds in the area.

The median household income in Park Knoll is just over \$57,000, placing the neighborhood in the middle-income stratum. It is also a well-educated neighborhood with over 35 percent of adult residents holding degrees above high school. The main occupations among adult residents are in the fields of administration, education, and production.

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

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.ⁱ—About THEN.

“There remains in the Granville area a group of committed people who are very concerned about preservation of history, particularly concerning the West Granville Cemetery and the two oldest churches, Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church, and West Granville Presbyterian Church.”

“It was all farms and then it started to grow out there and retail just exploded.”

“Those that stayed and settled in, in the old Town of Granville, were the Germans. Others had come earlier, but it was the Germans who made the area a community, while the others moved on. Today that effort falls upon our solid African American community.”

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

“There is a lot of student-age children in the woodlands area. There is a lot of people involved in cars and like to have car shows. [It is] the 2nd or 3rd year the Granville BID has been involved in getting the car show in September. That seems to draw a lot of people.”

“What I did was try and bring in all different people to the car show and enhance the name of Granville--as opposed to calling it the Northridge area. So, we're trying to rebrand it, as that--as the Granville neighborhood. Not the Northridge neighborhood. Again, we had probably a couple thousand people walking through here. There's a complete video. But that's what I've been working on. And it is the lowest crime district in the city of Milwaukee right now, which most people can't even fathom. Because what you believe is your reality. And I think they didn't manage the mall in proper fashion to make it seem like a secure environment. You know, what they have going on at Bayshore and Mayfair--where they really, really, if there is a group of kids that seem to be up to no good, they go: “Hey you're not shopping? Then, *adios*. Not a clubhouse”. I think that makes it feel safer for the people that are actually doing commerce there and that's with any racial makeup.”

“I'm going to guess there were a lot of city workers in Granville. When I went to UWM I had a lot of friends that lived in Granville and their dads were all cops.”

“People have concerns that now, with the state law changing about residency requirements that a lot of these city workers will be moving to locations outside of Milwaukee. This could be problematic for the Granville area. While I might say, ‘Good riddance’ to those not committed to urban life, the effects are not yet known. Will this destabilize a lot of our areas? We surely hope not.”

ⁱ Urban Anthropology Inc. complies with human subjects requirements of formal research and asks informants to sign informed consent forms that stipulate

PHOTOS



Today's neighborhood-Houses on N. 118th St. & W. Kaul Ave.



Today's neighborhood-Houses on 119th St. & W. Bender Rd.

Today's neighborhood-
The New Apostolic Church on W. Florist Ave.
& N. 118th St.



Today's neighborhood-Houses on N. 122nd St. & W. Lynx 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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