

Approximate boundaries:
N-W. Bradley Rd; S-W. Good Hope Rd;
E-N. 107th St; W-N. 124th St

NORTHWEST SIDE *Park Place*

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Park Place is a sparsely populated neighborhood. There is a small residential area in the southwestern corner of the neighborhood. The houses are all recently built and a number are under construction. Most of the neighborhood is occupied by the Park Place business complex with large office buildings set back far from the street and surrounded by green space. Another commercial corridor runs along Good Hope Road in the southeastern section of the neighborhood.

The topography of Park Place is hilly, with gently rolling inclines and fairly steep ravines. Few streets follow a rectangular grid. Most are widely curving lanes. Interstate- 41 cuts through the neighborhood at an angle from the northwest to the southeast. Most of the land west of the freeway is open field except for the small residential area. Just south and west of the freeway, the Menomonee River winds through Park Place from the northwest to Good Hope Road at the southern border of the neighborhood. There is no public green space in Park Place but open fields surround the many office park areas and lie on either side of the Menomonee River. 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 Park Place was once in the Town of Granville. The neighborhood got its designation from the business park built by the Trammell Crow Company in the early 1980s. See Trammel Crow's profile 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, 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).

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.

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

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.

Unfortunately, the deindustrialization movement that began in the 1980s arrested this course. Manufacturing employment in Milwaukee fell 77 percent, from a peak in 1963 to the present.

Park Place specifics

Except for a few widely dispersed homesteads—mostly farms--there were almost no settlers in the Park Place area until the late 20th century. In the mid-1960s, Good Hope Road had only two businesses—a grading service and a trucking firm. Two nationwide movements were apparent by the close of the 1970s. First was the onset of deindustrialization, where private and public investment was moving from industry to a service and technology focus. Second was the movement of resources from city centers to city edges and suburbs, a movement mainly ushered in by Milwaukee's Socialist leaders of the 20th century. Both of these movements played a role in the development of Park Place. Much of this was due to the efforts of one Dallas native. See his profile below.

Park Place profile

(Information from U.S. Census records.)

Trammell Crow

The most influential individual in the Park Place neighborhood was Trammell Crow. He developed the Park Place business park in the early 1980s.

While Crow maintained an office in the business park (11270 W. Park Place, Suite 500) until sometime in the 1990s, Crowⁱ was not a



Milwaukeean. Born in Texas in 1914, he grew up in Dallas--the son of a salesman. His major works were in his hometown. Beginning with his first commercial complex in 1948, he went on to major historic developments, including the Dallas Furniture Mart, the four-building Stemmons Towers, the Dallas Design District, Dallas Market Hall, Dallas Apparel Mart, the San Jacinto Tower downtown, Bryan Tower, the Dallas Trade Mart, the World Trade Center in Dallas, the Hilton Anatole hotel, the Diamond Shamrock Tower (now KPMG Centre), the Dallas Infomart, LTV Tower (currently called the Trammell Crow Center), JP Morgan Chase Tower, and Pioneer Plaza. Crow also founded the Wyndham Hotel

Company and developed a series of first-class business hotels cross the country.

In the late 1970s, Crow brought a vision to Milwaukee, which included a complex of upscale offices, man-made lakes, elaborate landscaping, and a country-club aura. Together with local partner, Francis Brzezinski, chief executive officer today at Interstate Partners LLC, Crow's vision materialized as the Park Place complex. His firm, the Trammell Crow Company, also built the Milwaukee Center office building in downtown Milwaukee (where Crow also maintained an office). All of the buildings were sold, but many of the firm's partners, including Jon Hammes, later president of Hammes Co., and Patrick O'Brien, executive director of the Milwaukee 7 economic development group, remained in the Milwaukee area and stayed involved in real estate.

Crow died in 2009, leaving behind a wife and six children. He was buried in Travis County, Texas.

The Park Place business complex remained the center of the Park Place neighborhood for decades. The 1.5 million square feet of office space was anchored by A.O. Smith Corporation's headquarters. The office park was the largest business concentration of its kind in Milwaukee outside of downtown.

However, just as quickly as the trend to move businesses to the suburbs took over, so the trend retreated by the end of the 20th century. Fueled in part by the New Urbanism movement with its emphasis on livable cities and businesses relying on neighborhood foot traffic, investors (including government) began to focus on revitalizing cities' centers. The Park Place complex fell to a low of 60 percent occupancy in the new millennium.

Current populations (as of 2021)

Today, there are just over 100 residents living in Park Place, making it the fifth least populated neighborhood in Milwaukee. Of these, nearly 6 in 10 are African Americans, about one-quarter are European Americans (mostly of mixed European ancestry), and nearly 1 in 10 are Asians (mostly of Indian extraction, but some Hmong). There is also a scattering of Latinos (all of Mexican or South American ancestry), American Indians, indigenous Africans, and people of mixed or “other” racial backgrounds in the area.

The median household income in Park Place is just over \$61,000, placing the neighborhood in the middle-income stratum. The main occupations among adult residents are in the fields of administration, management, and computers/math. There are over four times more adults in the field of computer/math than their proportions in other Milwaukee areas. Park Place is a well-educated neighborhood with nearly half its residents’ holding degrees beyond high school.

In the early 2000s, the Park Place business complex became the focus of revitalization efforts. The City of Milwaukee and developers initiated an effort to provide support for a research and technology facility focused on water, repaved roads, some sidewalks, improved landscaping, and funds to attract new tenants.

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

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.¹—About THEN.

“I don’t think they gave a lot of thought to how this area was developed. I don’t think we have enough single-family housing. I think we could use more. They did not think about recreational activities either. When I think about our area and when I think about other places in Milwaukee, there are parks and other activities. We don’t have any of that. When I mentioned [a] whole park--there are these big woods, but there’s not a parking lot or anything. That has had a big impact on everything.”

“I do remember when I was in my teens and twenties that we all dreamed of renting or buying a home out in the suburbs or the far ends of the city—where there was nothing but farms and no sidewalks. I don’t even know why. It was that everyone else thought that. It wasn’t white flight or anything. It was just that we were led to believe that the rural or suburban areas were more prestigious. And I think now that people growing up in their teens and twenties are thinking the opposite. They think like, ‘Oh to have a condo downtown.’ And I think in the times of Zeidler when Granville was annexed, that the area gained by the prevailing values of the time. But now the area loses because the people are not usually choosing this as their first choice.”

“We were one for the first houses that were built on North 86th Street. We are directly west of the old Northridge Shopping Center. At the time we moved here it was a relatively new shopping center but as far as our street, it was pretty much the first houses here. It was a gravel road and behind our house, the land was owned by Michael Cudahy and he had a house there and it was his land. Behind us there was this big line of trees, some fields, and some woods back there.”

“I think that all the businesses that were there fed off of Northridge . . . Just the diversity of businesses from the clothing stores to a place to buy appliances. You had Toys R Us, Best Buy. You had a good amount of restaurants there. You didn’t have to leave. There were large department stores. A lot of outcrop from the strip malls came from that, so if you didn’t want to go to Northridge you could go to the strip malls and get some of the things that you needed from some of the stores. Like Joanne Fabric and Stein Mart, you know some of your middle-sized stores.”

“When we moved there, there was a Pick n Save, a Menards, a Half Price Bookstore. There were some nice fun stores there. There was a Joanne Fabrics store there. Some of the bigger chains had stores there but unfortunately some of those have since left the area.”

“They had every kind of businesses you want. And then there used to be a Kohl’s food store across the street. Whatever fast food restaurant you would want was over here. Anything you needed in a general neighborhood was here 15 years ago. And in those 15 years a large portion of that has gone away minus the fast food restaurants for whatever reason.”

“[Neighbors] were the cops’ wives. They worked at Northridge as clerks. And they were waitresses. Of course you didn’t see the industrial parks because they were kind of hidden. So even though I had a job in an industrial company, I really did not know there were all those companies up there. Which is kind of interesting because they are off the beaten path.”

“I remember when the Brewers were in the World Series in 1982 and everyone was out in their yard watching TV. I think people have gone to the YMCA. Now I don’t think people have money like they used to. I think a lot of people used to go over to Northridge mall and that has changed. There wasn’t a lot of stuff on the northwest side. There’s not a lot of skating rinks or anything. The kids would play on the playground in the summer but they cut all that out so I don’t know what they do nowadays.”

“I would have to say the single turning point that really drove things south in this neighborhood was the Jesse Anderson case. It was that and the decision not to build the Park West freeway.”

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

“Today, all the Mayor and the Common Council seem to care about is downtown. So much goes into the streetcar and arena and all the downtown and east side neighborhoods. But now we are forgotten. I hope the little bit they are proposing for Granville comes to fruition.”

“Who doesn’t like skating or go-carting or miniature golfing? Just walking and enjoying the nature and the lake. Fishing. It is lacking today and I am working on bringing it all back.”

“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.”

“I think of businesses, like big corporate businesses like AO Smith, which is a water heater company, and there’s a little bit of manufacturing. So those impacts reach far and wide.”

¹ 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-Office building on W. Parkland Ave.



Today's neighborhood-Looking west at the twin 12-story office buildings, One Park Plaza and Two Park Plaza, on W. Lake Park Dr.



Today's neighborhood-Looking north from W. Lake Park Dr.



Today's neighborhood-
N. 107th St. & Good Hope Rd.



Today's neighborhood-
New housing on N. Beau Ave.

¹ Photo attribution: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/5a/Crowstrammellmarg.jpg>

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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