

Approximate boundaries:
N-W. Bradley Rd; S-W. Calumet Rd;
E-N. 76th St; W-N. 81st St

NORTHWEST SIDE *Pollber Heights*

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Pollber Heights is a sparsely populated neighborhood with few residential streets and mainly ranch and Colonial-style housing. The greenhouses and plant nursery of Minor's Garden Center occupy most of the neighborhood's acreage. There is a modest commercial corridor along North 76th Street on the eastern border of the neighborhood. Only industrial buildings line North 87th Street on the western border.

The topography of Pollber Heights is flat to gently rolling hills. There is no public green space in the neighborhood, but there are empty fields and wooded areas west of North 80th Street. See neighborhood 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 Pollber Heights was once in the Town of Granville and was part of the hamlet of old Granville Station.

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-
Houses on N. 78th St.
& W. Lolita Ave.



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.

Old Granville Station

Much of today's Pollber Heights was part of a Granville hamlet known as Granville Station. The current Milwaukee neighborhoods of Granville Station, Riverton Heights, Pollber Heights, Buchel Park, and sections of Land Bank once comprised old Granville Station. The hamlet was centered on the south side of Brown Deer at 107th Street and Granville Road. An 1858 map shows a hotel, two stores, two general stores, a wagon maker, and a blacksmith in the hamlet. By 1886, the hamlet had added a painter, an undertaker, a brick factory, cigar factory, two schools, and two general stores. The population was 115. The area also had a railroad line with two stations that closed after World War II.

The hamlet grew slowly throughout the late 19th and early 20th century. It remained rural into the time of annexation.

Movement toward annexation

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.

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.

Industrial development in old Granville Station

Except for the downturn of the Great Depression, economic prosperity reigned in the area that had been the Town of Granville. While the area 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, including parts of the Pollber Heights area. The area eventually became the most concentrated base of industrial employment in Wisconsin.

One of the families of Pullber Heights that lived in the neighborhood during the time of annexation, industrialization, and arrival of new populations is profiled below.

Pollber Heights family profile

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

The Apollos

Sometime in the early 1950s, the Apollo family moved to 7837 North 78th Street in the Pollber Heights neighborhood.

Born in 1920 to Italian immigrants--Joseph and Josephine (Crupi) Apollo--son John George Apollo grew up in the Riverwest neighborhood. His parents had

emigrated from Palermo, Sicily in 1910. In Milwaukee, father Joseph worked as a bricklayer in the building trade. The family did not follow the traditional Italian path of settling in Milwaukee's Third Ward. They lived in Riverwest, first on Booth and then on Fratney near Center Street. John had seven siblings, and perhaps more.

After completing two years of high school, John went to work as a laborer for the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad. A few years later, he met and married Dolores Savage.

Dolores, born in 1921 in Minnesota, was the child of Midwestern parents, Clifford and Bessie (Greeley) Savage. Dolores first married Robert Moon around 1940 and had two children, Diane and Ronald. In 1944 she married John Apollo.

They first lived on Milwaukee's North Side where they had children Doris, Ann, and John. Later, while living in Pollber Heights, John Sr. took a job as a meat cutter for Pernat Haase Meats in Juneau, Wisconsin, and for over 20 years commuted 45 miles to and from work.

Dolores and John retired to Phoenix, Arizona sometime before 1980. They may have missed Wisconsin and later moved back, this time to Beaver Dam. Dolores died in 1994 and John in 2007.



During the years that the Milwaukee Industrial Park and Land Bank project was being developed, these were the only businesses that operated on North 76th Street within the Pollber Heights neighborhood.

<i>Addresses on N. 76th in 1972</i>	<i>Names of businesses and organizations from the Milwaukee City Directory</i>
7965	Bradley Road Sunoco Service Gas Station
8015	Clark Oil and Refining Company
8075	Syndstrand Tool Corporation

Into the 21st century, the boundaries of the Milwaukee Industrial Park and Land Bank expanded, extending from 68th Street on the east to 114th Street on the west. The development today comprises over 1,200 acres with over 150 enterprises. Vacant parcels of land are a rarity.

Current populations (as of 2021)

Today there are fewer than 500 residents living in the sparsely populated Pollber Heights neighborhood. Of these, slightly over one-half are African Americans and slightly under one-quarter are European Americans (mostly of mixed European ancestry). Nearly 1 in 10 are Asians (almost all Hmong) and there is also a scattering of Latinos (most of Mexican and Dominican extraction) and people of mixed or “other” racial backgrounds in the area.

The median household income in Pollber Heights is just over \$64,000, placing the neighborhood in the middle-income category. The main occupations claimed by adult residents are in the fields of administration, production, and management.

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

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

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.

“I’m going to say . . . white people probably worked in the industrial park in the beginning. You know they moved the companies and then they were probably the ones that moved again and they still worked there. But back in the heyday, they were professionals. They worked probably downtown at CPA firms, and they were engineers and stuff. I mean they were all lived in Granville. So, the baby boomers, they all had good jobs. Lived in Granville around 1980. Trust me they don’t live there today.”

“I think more people commuted in. There were so many jobs that all of a sudden sprung up. People came from everywhere. And then when the jobs went away, people would flee Granville.”

“That was a huge city decision--building the Land Bank, building the manufacturers out there. Because, despite whether or not the folks could get jobs there, the manufacturing business kept this area strong.”

“I think a lot of people worked inside the neighborhood. I think retail because I think there was so much retail here back then. We have a lot of manufacturing in our neighborhood but manufacturing is more of a skill trade and I think even back 15 years ago I think there was just not a huge skilled trade sense in our neighborhood. It is more of a general labor--something more like retail.”

“We used to have a park-and-ride that was very vibrant where people would take the freeway shuttle. So, I think the majority of people worked outside. They had jobs ranging from professional to labor to truck driving. I think there was a diversity of different types of jobs. Some people worked in retail. It was a middle-class working neighborhood. My wife worked in factory. There was a diversity.”

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

“I think there is a lot of opportunity for people to work in this neighborhood, but I think the lack of skilled trade makes them have to go outside of their neighborhood to get those jobs.”

“But really for the tax base in the City of Milwaukee, those manufacturing--those jobs-- and those businesses are probably more vital than any mall can ever be.”

“It has effected the youth component severely because there has been a reduction in those types of jobs. I get a ton of them coming to me asking if I could help them find a job.”

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-
View of N. 80th St.



Today's neighborhood-Minor's Garden Center



Today's neighborhood-Industrial buildings on N. 81st 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*.

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