

Approximate boundaries:
N-W. Calumet Rd; S-W. Good Hope Rd;
E-N. Teutonia Ave; W-N. 43rd St.

NORTHWEST SIDE *Tripoli Park*

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Tripoli Park is a neighborhood of moderate population density with mainly Colonial and ranch style houses. There is at least one older Colonial-style house that dates from the early 20th century. A modest commercial corridor runs along North Teutonia Avenue.

Tripoli Park is relatively hilly, with gently rolling to fairly steep inclines. There are a number of curving streets and some end in *culs-de-sac*. While there is no *public* green space in the neighborhood, there is a small open field south of West Clinton Avenue west of the Loving Shepherd Lutheran Church and school. 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 Tripoli Park was once part of Granville Township. The area was named after the Tripoli Golf Course on its border.

Early populations

In the middle of the nineteenth century, a Menomonee Indian village was identified near the area that would become Tripoli Park. This was also the time that the first Europeans appeared in the wider Granville region—many of whom would have relationships with the indigenous settlers (see quotes below from *The Golden Years of Yesteryear* by Emily Treichel Boehlke).

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.

Movement toward annexation

Economic prosperity reigned in Granville, due partially to the work ethic of the early German farmers. The town remained predominantly rural through the early half of the 20th century. From the late 1800s to World War II Granville was an important center for dairy and truck farming. 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 scores of companies.

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 parts of 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.

Tripoli Park specifics

The Tripoli Park area was late to develop. It was named after the Tripoli Park Golf Club just west of 43rd Street in today’s Brown Deer. The 18-hole course was designed by noted Scottish-born architect, Tom Bendelow, and was opened in 1928. It wasn’t until 1947 that Clinton Street was platted, and most of the other Tripoli Park roads were constructed after annexation in the 1960s, and more settlers began arriving. The following is a sample of a few businesses that were incorporated into Milwaukee in the Tripoli Park area on North Teutonia just following annexation. See summary points below.

<i>Addresses on N. Teutonia in 1966/67</i>	<i>Businesses and organizations from Milwaukee City Directory</i>
7286	Progressive Industries Inc. Tool Manufacturers
7289	A.J. Clemins Welding
7290	Douglas Corp Research Department
7312	Phil Tolkan Body Repair
7330	Sealcraft Products Corp. Packaging Materials Manufacturers
7360	Becker Post and Lumber Company
7368	Built-In Kitchens, Inc. George Max Cabinet and Millwork

<i>Addresses on N. Teutonia in 1966/67</i>	<i>Businesses and organizations from <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u></i>
7378	Gerald M. Rosen Veterinarian
7409	Apartments
7421	Apartments
7448	Suburban Millwork Service Garage Doors
7460	Federal Distribution Company Wines, Beer, Liquor
7463	Apartments
7477	Apartments WEP (Power plant)
7501	Apartments
7513	Apartments
7537	Tom's Deep Rock Gas Station
7552	Castle Ceramic Studio
7557	Parkview Restaurant
7586	Kips Pine Manor Tavern

Summary and notes from U.S. Census and other public records:

- Technically, only those businesses and housing complexes on the west side of N. Teutonia (odd numbers) were within the Tripoli Park neighborhood, but residents could easily access shops on either side of the street.
- The businesses on this stretch of Teutonia in the 1960s reflect the growth of Milwaukee and the movement of populations to the newly annexed Northwest Side of the city. Note the businesses with an emphasis on the building trade (e.g., carpentry/millwork, cabinets, lumber, welding, garage doors).
- Progressive Industries Inc. still exists today and is headquartered in Chicago.
- The location of the Douglas Corp. today is a flooring company.
- The Phil Tolkan business included a car dealership, body repair, and car leasing services at multiple locations. Tolkan's "singing Pontiac" with a hood bouncing up and down as if singing, became the theme of the business's inane TV ads. Tolkan died in 1994 and the organization he left behind was gradually bought up by other companies.
- The site of Suburban Millwork Service is today DAK Property Management.
- The site of Castle Ceramic Studio later became Majestic Engraving Corp.

One of the early arriving families to settle in today's Tripoli Park neighborhood was the Sader clan. See the profile below.

Tripoli Park profile

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

The Saders

The Saders were a German Russian family. They did not come to the Granville area with the wave of German Russians that had arrived in Old North Milwaukee during the early decades of the 20th century, although the Saders apparently made connections to this community and their church. German Russians were people who migrated from Germany into the Black Sea or Volga River areas in Russia in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. They generally maintained their own German traditions, and later many immigrated to the United States.

The Saders first settled in Kansas. Peter Sader was a German speaker who had been born in Russia in 1877. He immigrated to the United States and Marion County, Kansas in 1899. Along the way he met and married Katie. The couple started a farm and had eight children by 1920. Within a decade, the family owned their land and home outright.



Some of the Sader children migrated to Wisconsin. By 1940, son Isaac and his wife Alice were living on 35th and Villard in Milwaukee, just one block from Grace Lutheran Church, the parish of the Granville German Russian community. They may have had relatives among the group. Having completed two years of college, Isaac was listed in the 1940 census as a proprietor of an establishment. The establishment was probably a restaurant, as his younger brother Ernest lived with the couple and listed his occupation as a waiter.

It would be Ernest that would end up in the Tripoli Park neighborhood at 7464 N. 39th Street. But this would not happen until many years later. Just a few months after the 1940 census was taken, Ernest enlisted in the U.S. Army. He served in the Philippines during World War II. Upon his return to the Granville area, he married Fern Ruth Pentony, daughter of Midwesterners Francis A and Clara Pentony. Fern Ruth had grown up on her family's farm, just blocks from where Ernest and his brother lived.

At some time during or prior to the 1960s, Ernest and Fern Ruth moved to the area that is today's Tripoli Park neighborhood on North 39th Street. Records suggest they may have lived there for decades. The couple later moved to Sussex and Port Washington in the 1990s, and then on to Cedarburg. Ernest died in Cedarburg in 2006 and Fern Ruth in 2012. No records were found on any children the couple might have had.

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)

Tripoli Park neighborhood has over 1,200 residents. Of these, over three-quarters are African Americans and approximately 1 in 6 are European Americans (most of mixed European ancestry). There is also a scattering of Latinos (all of Puerto Rican or Mexican descent) and West Indians.

The median household income in Tripoli Park is just over \$48,000 a year, placing the neighborhood on the cusp between the lower middle- and middle-income strata. The chief occupations of adult residents are in the fields of production, sales, and healthcare support. There are approximately two and one-half times more people in the repair field (including installation and maintenance) in Tripoli Park than the proportions in other Milwaukee neighborhoods. In addition, significantly more Tripoli Park workers are self-employed or operate sole proprietorships than in other Milwaukee areas.

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.

GOLF			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Daily, in season	Brown Deer Golf Club, 7625 N. Range Line Rd., (414) 352-8080	9- and 18-hole golf, with clubhouse and other amenities.	unk

GOLF			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Daily, in season	Tripoli Golf Club, 7401 N. 43rd St.	18-hole golf, with clubhouse and other amenities.	Call (414) 351-7200 for current rates

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

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.

“At one time we used to have a neighborhood association. One of the goals was to get people to bond and get people to know each other and at one time we were fairly vibrant. That was around the 80s to the early 2000s.”

“My only opportunity [was] until really high school and college to really meet many African Americans. At Brown Deer High School at the time there was one African American family in the area--just one. And they had kids who were in high school that I did not know. There were one or two in Granville High School. I think the population was well over 1,000 and there was one.”

“When all the industries began moving up into Granville, I think everyone thought that would be the answer to all the problems. Especially later when you had de-industrialization. But it sort of seemed to me that everyone was being pushed into college—you had to go to college. So maybe a few of these graduates worked in management or personnel or something at these industries, but there really has not been the push to teach the skills that are needed in the day-to-day work—skilled trades. It’s like, you either have college, or you have no skills and rely on fast food, cleaning, hotels, and delivery or trucking, and there’s not much in between.”

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

“There are two ways to look at the Granville area. It is either someplace where all the poor were transported to or it’s somewhere where the well-heeled go to play golf or soccer. Somewhere in between is the real community.”

“You know you need the sense of knowing your neighbor, you need that comradeship. I think right now it doesn’t have that because as the new people come in, we try to reach out to them, [but] they have no interest. Everyone kind of just goes into their shell and are not really out about being collegial.”

“There’s a yearning for something different. They all want to see a change. They are not coordinated and not empowered. The power structures are not focused on it—from the mayor’s office to the state legislature. Nobody really cares about the neighborhood. I love downtown Milwaukee but I don’t know if they’ve done anything on the north side.”

“What’s strange for Granville is there isn’t a lot of community . . . We do have a landmark group here who are really concerned with the preservation of historical things in the community such as the church. And the people who maintain the cemetery. For whatever reason that cemetery seems to be a small draw. There are historical preservation [efforts] there.”

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-
W. Clinton Ave. & N. Sussex St.
with Loving Shepherd Lutheran Church
in background



Today's neighborhood-
Older colonial style house on N. 38th St.
& W. Clinton Ave.



Today's neighborhood-
Houses on N. 42nd St. & W. Portage St.
with water tower for Brown Deer
in background



Today's neighborhood-
Businesses on N. Teutonia Ave.



Today's neighborhood-Houses on N. 38th St. & W. Portage 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:

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