

Approximate boundaries:
N-W. Ruby Ave; S-W. Capitol Dr;
E-N. 92nd St; W-Menomonee River Pkwy

NORTHWEST SIDE *Grantosa*

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Grantosa's borders are jagged, with the City of Wauwatosa cutting in block-by-block on the eastern boundary of Grantosa to the straight western boundary of the Lindsay Park neighborhood¹. At one point, Capitol Drive at Grantosa's southern boundary is cut off on the north side of the street by Wauwatosa between 95th and 96th Streets.

The oddly shaped Grantosa has a moderate to low population density with a variety of housing styles. There are a number of late 19th to early 20th century homes along West Capitol Drive. In the rest of the neighborhood the predominant style is either ranch or Cape Cod. Some areas have multi-unit apartment buildings likely built in the 1960s and 1970s. There is a modest business corridor along Capitol Drive.

No public green space or public park exist in Grantosa. Some of the streets follow a rectangular grid pattern and about an equal number are curved or run at a diagonal following West Grantosa Drive. See photos below.

HISTORY

The total area that is today's Grantosa neighborhood was once situated in the unincorporated Town of Wauwatosa, which was bounded by 27th Street to 124th Street, and Greenfield Avenue to Hampton. The neighborhood name was taken from

one of its streets, Grantosa Drive, which was constructed prior to 1930. At the time it was built, Grantosa Drive ran through sections of the Town of Wauwatosa and the Town of Granville, and took its name from both—GRANville and WauwaTOSA—hence Grantosa.

Early populations

The arterial that proceeds at an angle and ends at Grantosa's southern border, Lisbon Avenue, was once an Indian trail. It became a plank road in

the 1850s. Named for its destination, the road connected Milwaukee to the town of Lisbon. Small hamlets of mainly German farmers grew up along Lisbon, and on the banks of the Menomonee River, about one-half mile south of today's Grantosa area.

One of these Germans was Theodore Hartung, an immigrant from Prussia. In 1860, the 34-year-old Hartung lived with his wife Cora and children Ralph, Arthur, and Frederick in a hamlet called Smithville. The hamlet was named after Hartung's Massachusetts-born neighbor, Erasmus Smith, who had settled in the area a decade earlier. Among the resident families were the Heinmans, Larkins, Weismanns, Benzes, and Weises from Prussia and a handful of other Yankee settlers.

One of Theodore Hartung's sons, Frederick, made a name for himself. In 1910, Frederick began building a quarry along the east bank of the Menomonee River, digging out the dolomite that

Today's neighborhood-
Houses on N. 96th St. & W. Capitol Dr.



was used in building homes and commercial buildings in the area (which included the tower at nearby Mount Mary College). The pit was nearly 100 feet deep. Hartung also served as a Republican member of the Wisconsin State Assembly.

Another longtime family in the Grantosa area is profiled below.

Grantosa pioneer family

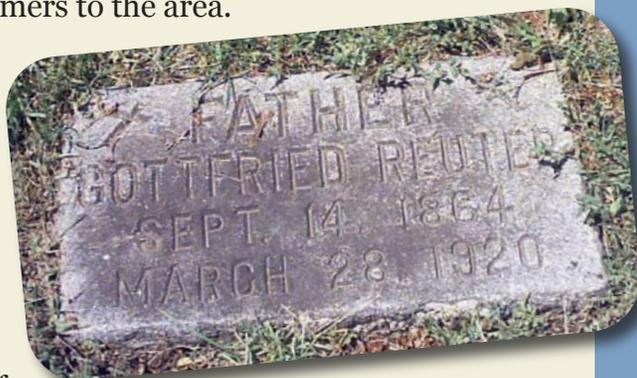
*Name selected from the Milwaukee City Directory in the Grantosa area
(information from U.S. Census and other public records)*

The Reuters

In the 1940s, two Reuter families had farmhouses next door to each other at 9906 and 9924 West Grantosa Drive in the Grantosa neighborhood. One family was headed by George E. Reuter (b. 1899) and the other by Gilbert Reuter (b. 1908).

The Reuter family members were not newcomers to the area.

George and Gilbert Reuter were first cousins. They shared grandparents, Henry and Anna Reuter, who had immigrated to the United States from Germany, both in 1840. The couple married in 1855 when Anna was only 15 and Henry 19. They settled on West Galena on Milwaukee's north side where Henry worked as a laborer. Together, they had four children, Anna, Gottfried, Charles, and Herbert.



Henry and Anna's boys took jobs right out of elementary school. The oldest son Gottfried worked as a milk peddler until he could afford to pay down on a farm. Sometime between 1900 and 1910 he and his new family joined the handful of settlers along Lisbon Road in the Town of Wauwatosa. At some point, his land extended into today's Grantosa neighborhood. (*See Gottfried's gravestone above from public records at Ancestry.com.*)

The second oldest son Charles remained on Milwaukee's north side for a time where he advanced in employment from an unskilled laborer to a stone cutter. He and his family joined his brother Gottfried on the Wauwatosa farm in 1910.

After the death of the brothers, two of their sons (and possibly more) took over the farm—George a son of Charles and Gilbert a son of Gottfried. When Grantosa Drive was built, their family farmhouses were listed on this street. By this time, George had married Helen Lilly, the granddaughter of German and English immigrants, and had one child, George Jr. Gilbert had married Evelyne Zooge (spelling varies), the daughter of German immigrants, and had at least one child, Joyce.

Save for these few relatively isolated homesteads, the Grantosa area did not begin to attract large numbers of settlers until the 1950s. In the 1930s, there were few roads and only a handful of residences. By the late 1940s several new roads opened, but there were still just over 25 residences. The overwhelming majority of these residents were German, but there was also a scattering of people of Austrian, Dutch, Swiss, Irish, and English ancestry. Over half of the sparse number of businesses were on Capitol Drive.

Capitol Drive

Below is a snapshot of the commercial properties on this street in the Golden Valley area in 1947.

<i>Addresses on W. Capitol Dr. in 1947</i>	<i>Businesses and organizations from <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u></i>
9308	Erwin Behn Tavern
9532	Mrs. Katie Schmidt Apiarist
9730	Horseman's Club
9901	Archery Club

Summary and notes from census and other records:

- The businesses on Capitol in the late 1940s, with the Horseman's and Archery Clubs and apiarist, give the area a rustic aura.
- Erwin Behn had been a butcher before opening his tavern.
- See the resident profile on Katie Schmidt on the next page. An apiarist is involved in animal husbandry, mostly bee-keeping.
- No information was found on the Horseman's Club.
- The Archery Club was a tavern by the mid-1950s.

One of the business people and a long-time resident of the Grantosa area was Mrs. Katie Schmidt. See her profile below.

Golden Valley Resident

*Name selected from the Milwaukee City Directory in the Grantosa area
(information from U.S. Census and other public records)*

Mrs. Katie Schmidt

In the 1940s, Katie Van Bortels Schmidt owned her own apiary (bee farm) near 96th and Capitol (see stock photoⁱⁱ of beekeeper to the right). By 1940 she had been widowed from husband George, a house carpenter, and lived with her only child, a grown son named Stanley. The family had also farmed in the area before George's death that occurred

sometime in the 1930s. In the 1940 census, Katie reported working 60 hours a week as an apiarist and Stanley 36 hours.

Katie had a deep history in the old Town of Wauwatosa—a part of which would become the Milwaukee Grantosa neighborhood. Her parents, Peter Van Bortel and Johanna Houberstein, were immigrants from Holland, and had operated a farm in the area since the late 1800s.

When Katie was in her teens, she went to work as a servant for the Seth Swan family. Seth's father, Emery, was one of the early settlers in the Town of Wauwatosa. The wealthy family later left their name on several local places, including Swan Circle in Milwaukee, and Swan Park and Swan Boulevard in the City of Wauwatosa.

Katie remained active in her apiary until at least her late 1960s. She eventually retired in the Wisconsin Dells and died in 1978 at the age of 95. She was buried alongside her husband at Lincoln Memorial Cemetery. See gravestone below.



Current populations (as of 2021)

Today there are just over 1,500 residents in Grantosa. Nearly 6 in 10 residents are still European Americans, most of German or multiple European ancestries. A little over 3 in 10 residents are African Americans and 1 in 10 Asians (all of Indian, Korean, or Hmong/Lao descent). The rest are Latinos (about two-thirds Mexican and one-third Puerto Rican extraction), American Indians, indigenous Africans, and people of mixed racial backgrounds.

The neighborhood is on the cusp between the lower middle and middle income strata with a median household income of just over \$48,000 annually. The highest number of adult occupations in the neighborhood are in the fields of administration, sales, production, and business. Nearly three times as many Grantosa residents work in the legal field than in other Milwaukee areas. A disproportionate number also are employed by the federal government.

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.

HARTUNG FARMERS MARKET			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Jun. thru Sep., Wed. 3:30-7pm	Hartung Park, 3266 Menomonee River Pkwy.	Fresh produce from Wisconsin farmers, baked goods, arts, crafts.	Free

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT—NORTHWEST SIDE			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
First week Aug., weekday 5:30- 8:30pm	Kops Park: 3321 N. 86th St.	Fun evening of free food, games, rides, chance to dialogue with local police and community organizations.	Free

SLEDDING--WAUWATOSA			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Winter, daytime, evening	Currie Park, 3535 N. Mayfair Rd	Sledding hills for family and friends, plus lighted sledding 4:30-8:30pm.	Free

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

ST. AGNES PARISH FESTIVAL--BUTLER			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Aug., Fri. 4- 11pm, Sat. 11am- 11pm	12801 W. Fairmount Ave, Butler	Festival of craft beers, food, live music, auction, games, talent show, and more.	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

If you are a resident of Grantosa and have an interesting observation to make about this neighborhood, send your quote to JFLanthropologist@currently.com

PHOTOS

Today's neighborhood-
Houses on N. 99th St.
& W. Sarasota Pl.



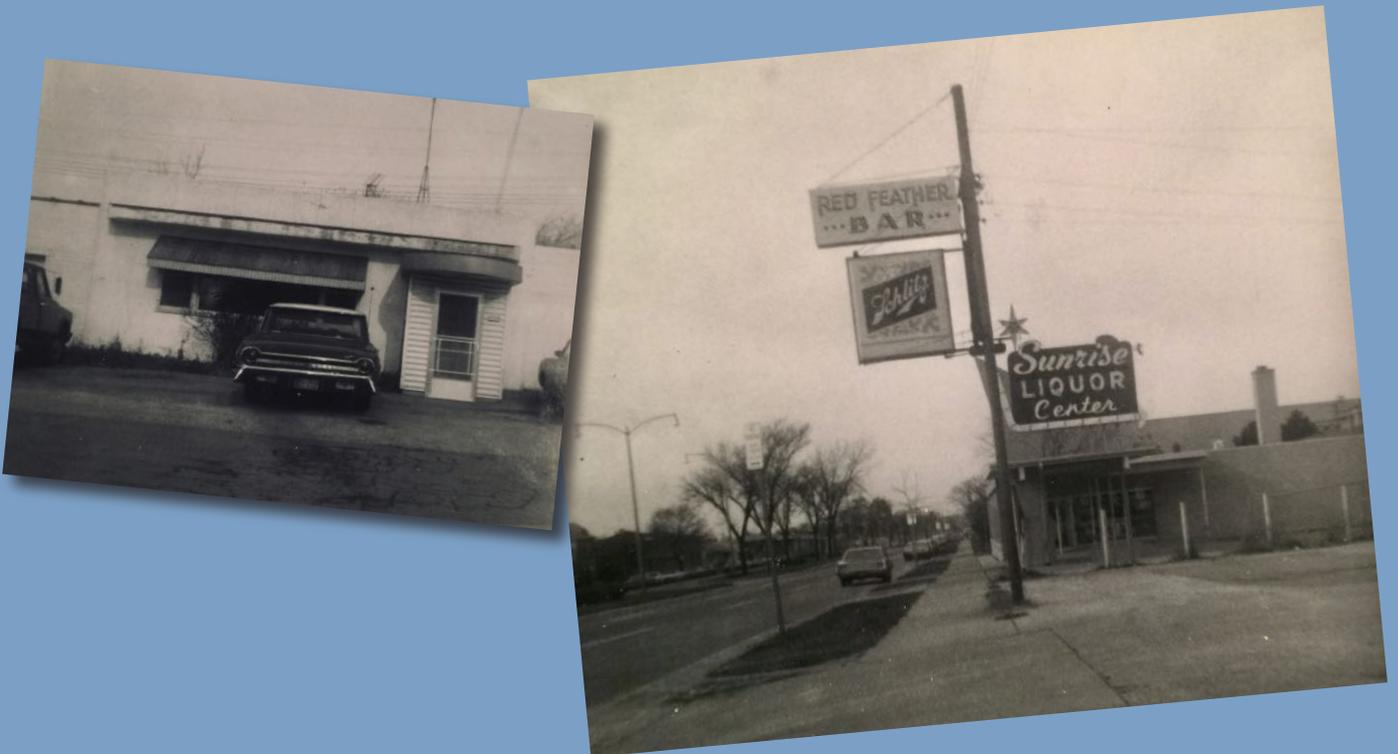
Today's neighborhood-Houses on N. 100th St. & W. Grantosa Dr.



Today's neighborhood-Apartments on W. Sharon Ln.

OLDER PHOTOS FROM RESIDENTS

Photos of the area around 93rd and Capitol Dr. (Photos courtesy of Craig Augustine)





95th St. looking south
toward Hope Ave Before curbs put in (1969).
(Photos courtesy of Craig Augustine)

SE corner of 92nd St.
looking toward Capitol Drive in 1969



Capital Drive at 92nd St. Looking northeast in 1969



NE corner of 92nd St. at Capital Drive Looking southwest toward Capital Drive in 1969.

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*.

ⁱ Much of the neighborhood of Grantosa mapped out on the UWM website: [Milwaukee Neighborhoods: Home](#), is actually in the City of Wauwatosa.

ⁱⁱ Photo attribution: <https://static.pexels.com/photos/173361/pexels-photo-173361.jpeg>

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