

*Approximate boundaries:*

**N**-W. Calumet Rd; **S**-W. Good Hope Rd;

**E**-N. 86<sup>th</sup> St (partial) N. 87<sup>th</sup> St; **W**-N. 91<sup>st</sup> St

# NORTHWEST SIDE *Melody View*

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Melody View is a low to moderate density residential neighborhood. Most of the housing stock is ranch or colonial style homes that are set back from the street. While there is no true commercial corridor, there are a few businesses on North 91st Street in the southwestern corner of the neighborhood and on the north side of West Calumet Road.

The topography of Melody View is flat to gently rolling hills. Most of the streets follow a rectangular grid except for the southern portion of North 89th Street that curves slightly to the east as it intersects with West Dogwood. The neighborhood has no public green space but the area south of West Dogwood Street and west of North 87th is open field. 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 Melody View was once part of Granville Township.

### 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. 89th St  
& W. Portage St.

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 residents. The township 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. Resident William Schlapmann owned a creamery that produced 100 pounds a day. 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.

### *Late 20th century*

In the second half of the 20th century a wave of African Americans began to migrate to Melody View and other former Granville communities. 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.

Today's Melody View neighborhood did not attract many settlers until the early 1960s when the Melody View Subdivision was developed, along with most of the roads currently in the area.

Below is a profile of one of the early settlers in this subdivision.

## **Melody View profile (late 20th century)**

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

### **Robert P. Linda**

Robert P. Linda lived at 9006 West Good Hope in the 1960s. He was born in December 1927, the child of Benjamin Bernard Linda (b. 1898) and Lillian Linda (b. 1900). The family was probably Polish. Robert was the oldest child. The parents must have liked names that began with the letter “R” because after Robert, they had a son named Roland, followed by a son named Ronald, and finally a son named Roger.

Robert grew up in a rented unit on State Street where his father worked as a window washer. At one time, the family took in a shoe repairman from Russia to help out with the expenses.

As early as 1952, Robert embraced the trade of a landscape gardener. Another older Robert Linda was also working as a landscape gardener during these years, who may have been related to the younger Robert.

Robert married Esther sometime before moving to the Melody View neighborhood. The couple operated the family business—now described as “landscaping and land care gardening”—out of their home. No records were found on children the couple might have had.

By the middle of the 1970s, the Lindas moved to 8601 West Kaul, about a mile south of Melody View. There Robert purchased a truck and opened a trucking business.



### *Post-1980s in Granville*

Unfortunately, the deindustrialization movement that began in the 1980s arrested the course of economic prosperity in the former Granville area. Manufacturing employment in Milwaukee fell 77 percent, from a peak in 1963 to the present. What had been a working and middle class area on the Northwest Side was in economic decline.

### **Current populations (as of 2021)**

Today there are just over 600 residents in Melody View. Of these, slightly over half are African Americans, about 2 in 10 are European Americans (the largest ancestry groups being German and people of mixed European backgrounds), and approximately 1 in 12 are Asians (nearly all of Hmong extraction). There is also a scattering of Latinos (mostly of Mexican and Dominican ancestry) and people of multiple or “other” racial backgrounds.

The median household income for residents of Melody View is just over \$64,000, placing the neighborhood in the middle income stratum. The main occupations claimed by adults are in the fields of administration, production, and management. There are nearly four times the number of adult residents in the domain of law enforcement than the proportions in other Milwaukee neighborhoods. Melody View is also a highly educated neighborhood relative to Milwaukeeans generally, with just over one-quarter of residents holding a degree beyond high school.

## 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.	\$4, \$3 kids <12

### 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.<sup>i</sup>—About THEN.**

“It was changing a lot even when I grew up there. As I said, it was rural, so there were some people who worked in the Granville area. But I have to say many people did not. Many commuted to the city [Milwaukee] even to work in factories or to other areas. So there were some who worked in the community and who did run businesses. But very few are farming anymore. But I have to say it was mixed, maybe fifty/fifty.”

“What I remember is it was just farms. It was just vast farms. So farmland--so not many people.”

“Granville started growing after World War II. You know the GI’s came home. If you start going down towards Silver Spring, that whole area you are seeing is the World War II homes. When the GI’s came back, they had smaller family home row houses. So I think back in the day Granville was a blue collar single family kind of thing. And Granville really started growing after World War II. Before that it was certainly rural.”

“The mayor, he moved a bunch of the poor people out to 91st on Brown Deer Road. a little bit north of there and something was called The Meadows and they built these condos. The city did. And the concept in the day--this might have been the late 80s or early ‘90s, I can’t remember--the concept was that if you build, if you move people who don’t have jobs, and you move them to where the jobs were, eventually they are going to assimilate. It would take them a matter of days and they were all of the sudden going to be middle class and everything’s going to be better so we can erase all of our issues by moving our poor folks over to the jobs.”

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

“And unfortunately . . . what I call the Brown Deer corridor between 76th Street and 91st Street has really declined business wise and it’s a little unsightly at times just to see closed down businesses. Unfortunately for the neighborhood. Hopefully things will turn around.”

“I think for the most part it was more light industrial work in the area. Companies like factory type of work rather than high tech firms. I know there’s a lot of people who go either farther into the city or out to the suburbs for work. I just don’t know of the people who live in the area how many worked there. And today it’s still light industrial. Especially south of Brown Deer and west of 76th Street there’s a lot of light industry in that area. Between 76th and 91st there’s a lot of light industry. I am always amazed by all the firms there.”

“I think this area for the most part has always been more defined as poverty to low income. Obviously the woodlands that’s built up west of 91 st Street. Its original intention are not what it turned into today.”

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<sup>1</sup> 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-  
Looking east from N. 89th  
St. & W. Dogwood Ave.



Today's neighborhood-Houses on N. 89th St.





Today's neighborhood-Houses on N. 90th St. north of W. Dogwood 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:  
[JFLanthropologist@currently.com](mailto:JFLanthropologist@currently.com)



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