

Approximate boundaries:

N-W. Laramie Rd; **S**-W. Brown Deer Rd;

E-N. Swan Rd; **W**-N. 97th St

NORTHWEST SIDE *North Meadow*

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

North Meadow, like North Granville, is still a largely rural area with few through streets between the major arteries. Some working farms and forested areas still exist in the neighborhood. Most dwellings are large apartment complexes, with a few condo villages. A number of strip malls are also located along major streets.

HISTORY

Nearly 50 neighborhoods on Milwaukee's northwest side once comprised the Town of Granville 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 North Meadow (also known as Woodlands) was once on the northern boundary of the Town of Granville.

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,

Today's neighborhood-Strip mall in North Meadow



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 Station

Over the years, Granville Township partitioned into smaller units—mostly unincorporated hamlets. Some of the area that is today North Meadow was once part of Granville Station. Granville Station, centered on the south side of Brown Deer Road at 107th St. and Granville Road, had a railroad and two train stations until the end of World War II. Residents could ride to Milwaukee for 21 cents. By 1886, the hamlet had a population of 115, two schools, a painter, a cigar factory, undertaker, two general stores, a hotel, and a brick factory.

Movement toward annexation

Economic prosperity reigned in Granville Township, due partially to the work ethic of these early German farmers. The town remained predominantly rural through the early half of the 20th century. Gradually industries began to open in Granville and the area eventually became one of the most concentrated base of industrial employment in Wisconsin.

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.

Post annexation

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.

Current populations (as of 2025)

There are over 3,000 residents in North Meadow, and today only 9 percent claim German ancestry. Approximately two-thirds of the neighborhood's population is African American and one in five is Latino (mostly of Mexican ancestry). Less than 1 percent are Asian (mostly Pakistani and Chinese). The median income of residents in North Meadows is \$27,000. The largest number of employed people work in food service or administration.

North Meadow has an interesting anomaly, and that's home ownership versus renting. Just over 85 percent of the properties in North Meadow are likely to be rented. This is probably due to the fact that the large apartment complexes were those that were developed in the area in the last half of the 20th century, as opposed to single family homes. However, residents in North Meadow have been working with Habitat for Humanity and the City of Milwaukee since the early 2000s to increase house and condominium ownership.

INTERESTING FEATURES

- **Northwest YMCA**, (formerly the John C. Cudahy YMCA), at 9050 N. Swan Rd., home of the Miracle League of Milwaukee.
- **Risen Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church and School**, at 9550 W. Brown Deer Rd., home of after-school programs and summer camp for North Meadow youth.
- **Woodlands Condominium Home Association**, at 8951c N. 95th St.

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.

“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.”

“I know in the woodland area back when it first started it was called The Meadows. I just talked to somebody recently who grew up there. Her experience living there was

that it was a very nice area. There was a lot of things for families to do. People who lived in the woodlands areas had to purchase those condominiums. But at some point there might have been a lot of vacancies so the city allowed it to become rental. I think once that happened, things went downhill. There was a lot of troubles with gangs and it had a bad reputation for a while there.”

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

“I think the Grandioso is going to turn into something that’s going to become more multicultural. Again language is going to be a difficult one. That will evolve with time. The car show tends to be local, locals for everybody. . . The cool thing about the car show is the multiculturalism of Granville is evident at Granville. And we have people from all over the state of Wisconsin who show their cars at it too. Along with all the people who are from the Granville area and the Milwaukee area.”

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-Strip mall in North Meadow



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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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www.urban-anthropology.org