

*Approximate boundaries:*  
N-W. Villard Ave; S-W. Hampton Ave;  
E-N. 85<sup>th</sup> St; W-91<sup>st</sup> St

# NORTHWEST SIDE *Vogel Park*

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Vogel Park is a mainly residential neighborhood of approximately 2500 residents that is named after its park. Most of the homes are 1950s to 1970s ranch houses interspersed with a relatively large number of multi-unit apartment buildings and a few Tudor style homes from the 1920s. There is a commercial corridor along West Appleton Avenue.

The neighborhood's park, also named Vogel Park, is an 11-acre square with a tot lot/playfield and picnic areas. See neighborhood photos below.

## 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 27<sup>th</sup> Street on the east to 124<sup>th</sup> Street on the west. The Vogel Park neighborhood was once part of this expanse.

### 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 107<sup>th</sup> Street.

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.

Today's neighborhood-  
Houses on 87<sup>th</sup> & Stark



## *Englesburg*

Granville Township was divided into smaller units—mostly unincorporated hamlets. The area that is today the Vogel Park neighborhood had been called Englesburg, named after German settler F. W. Engles. Englesburg centered around today's 91st Street, Highway 175, and Villard—although its full boundaries extended to Hampton on the south, Good Hope on the north, 60th on the east, and 91st on the west. The unincorporated town was populated by German Catholics who established St. Martin's Catholic Church as their anchor. Englesburg became known for its early auto races on a four-mile stretch of road—races that became famous for cars that reached speeds of 20 miles per hour!

## *Germans and more Germans*

Economic prosperity reigned in Granville, due partially to the work ethic of these early German farmers. The township remained predominantly rural through the early half of the 20th century. Gradually industries began to open in Granville and the area eventually became the most concentrated base of industrial employment in Wisconsin. Following the factory jobs, Germans who had originally settled on Milwaukee's North Side began to migrate to the Granville area and joined the farmers—most of whom were also Germans. Some, such as the randomly selected resident below, were ethnic Germans from Austria.

### **Vogel Park random resident**

*Name selected randomly from the 1941 City Directory in the Vogel Park area  
(other information found in census records)*

#### **Leopold Schuster**

Born 1864 in Austria, Leopold Schuster immigrated to the United States in 1885. Unlike most of Granville's ethnic Germans, Leopold did not move into the township immediately. He lived on Milwaukee's Near North Side first. There he was able to find a wife whose parents were also ethnic Germans from Austria. The wife, Anna (nee Kuessner or Kueffner) was 17 years his junior. The couple had at least five children before moving to Granville and purchasing a farm. Unfortunately, Leopold was widowed by 1920. His mother-in-law, Elizabeth Kuessner or Kueffner—who was actually the same age as Leopold—moved in with the family and no doubt shared in the care of the young children.

Despite the loss of his wife and despite having only completed the fourth grade, Leopold was a resourceful man. By 1920 he had opened his own saloon in Granville and by 1930 he also had a grocery store. The grocery store, located at 8835 W. Appleton, was handed down to his son, Leopold Jr. by 1940. Leopold Sr. then lived out his life in the homes of his children.

More immigrants were arriving from Germany and settling in Granville well into the 1900s. A large proportion of these were from Pomerania, a region along the Baltic Sea that stretched from eastern Germany into western Poland—the latter being controlled by Prussia/Germany until the end of World War I.

In the early years of the 20th century a very different German community arrived. These were the German Russians who had left Germany for Russia in the late 1700s and settled along the Volga River and Black Sea area. For about 150 years they had been allowed to keep their own language and traditions. But later Russification policies, and ultimately the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, resulted in collective departure from the area. Many ended up in Granville (many more settled in the Plains States).

Between 1910 and 1920 the German Russians set up their own colony where most built farms south of Villard, east of today’s Vogel Park. The group remained relatively isolated from their neighbors—both through choice and external prejudice. After the 1917 revolution and growing Communist paranoia in America, Milwaukeeans began calling the German Russian colony “Red Town” even though most of the Germans loathed Communism. Gradually they migrated into other Granville neighborhoods.

### *Movement toward annexation*

But great change was coming to Granville. In 1956 the residents and property owners of the 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.

### *Appleton Avenue*

Appleton Avenue became the main business corridor for the Vogel Park neighborhood. Leopold Schuster chose to have his business ventures on the street that would later become Appleton. The highway received its name in 1926 during the street renaming program. Previously, there had been two parallel streets on the city’s Northwest Side that led out of town and both were called Fond du Lac—one was North Fond du Lac and the other was South Fond du Lac. To avoid confusion, given that both were on the North Side, South Fond du Lac was renamed Appleton, after the city of Appleton.

The following chart lists the businesses that were on Appleton Avenue within and slightly beyond the Vogel Park’s boundaries in 1962, shortly following annexation. See summary and notes below.

<i>Addresses on W. Appleton Ave. in 1962</i>	<i>Names of businesses, offices, apartments, and organizations from the <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u></i>
8310	Arnold’s Pharmacy
8332	Herb Gulknecht Mobil Service Station
8339	Don’s Old Mill Tavern
8349	Art & Bill’s Pate Service Station
8401	George’s Texaco Service Station
8427	Variety Motors Used Cars Paul’s Zenith Service Station

<i>Addresses on W. Appleton Ave. in 1962</i>	<i>Names of businesses, offices, apartments, and organizations from the <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u></i>
8438	Gruenwald's Beacon Service Station
8401	George's Texaco Service Station
8427	Variety Motors Used Cars Paul's Zenith Service Station
8438	Gruenwald's Beacon Service Station
8520	Joe T. Patrick Contractor
8822	Seymour Standard Service Station
8825	Lutz Grocery (Herbert A. Lutz)
9003	Engleburg School Side Entrance
9027	Claffey Oil Company Gas Station Midwest Trailer Rental
9050	Earl Wiggins Landscaping
9122	Town & Country Manor Inc. Nursing Home
9146	Economy Tractor Center (garden and landscaping equipment) Dri-Gas (gas distributors)

**Summary notes from the U.S. Census and other records:**

- While the business corridor did have a grocery store and a pharmacy, of the 17 listings, over half were businesses that served the automobile, suggesting that in 1962, Vogel Park was a "bedroom community" where people tended to work and recreate outside the neighborhood.
- Don's Old Mill Tavern was known to draw a lot of its patrons from nearby Waukesha County (especially Butler) during late hours. Bars in Waukesha County had to close earlier than those in Milwaukee County.
- The Gulknecht family members with one of the gas stations, were among the German Pomeranians in Granville.
- Joe Patrick was the son of Edwin Patrick who had owned a home on the same block as Joe's gas station. Edwin was the son of Robert Patrick (son of an Irish immigrant) and Hulda Patrick (nee Grabow—a German immigrant).

- Herbert A. Lutz, with the grocery store, was the grandson of Pomeranian immigrants.
- Engleburg School, which still exists by that name today, apparently got its name from the hamlet of Englesburg, which was the earlier designation for the Vogel Park area.

Milwaukee's growing Northwest Side attracted its own newspapers. One of these was *The Northwest News*, published by Ed Bristol Advertising, with offices on 76th and Hampton Avenue. The editor of the newspaper was Manny Meyers, the one-time campaign consultant of Mayor Frank Zeidler. The biweekly newspaper operated between 1961 and 1966, with a couple of brief reincarnations.

During these years, people of color began to migrate to the area. African Americans arrived for two reasons: (1) available industrial jobs on the Northwest Side and the area that had been Granville, and (2) the need for housing following the leveling of their former central city home known as Bronzeville (see [Halyard Park neighborhood](#) for details). As in most Milwaukee neighborhoods where Germans dominated, the integration was relatively peaceful. Many African Americans were able to obtain family-supporting jobs and purchase homes.

However, just as soon as the black population had settled in large numbers, they were faced with the long deindustrialization movement, beginning in the 1980s. 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 decline.

### Current populations (as of 2021)

Today, just over 7 in 10 neighborhood residents are African Americans. Nearly 2 in 10 are European Americans, with people of German ancestry continuing to dominate this demographic. In addition, there is a relatively strong Asian presence in Vogel Park (approximately 1 in 20), and nearly all of these speak an Asian language in their homes. The Asians are evenly divided among Hmong/Lao and Filipinos. Just under 1 in 20 residents are also Latino—mostly of Mexican ancestry. The neighborhood skews young, with nearly one-third of all residents under the age of 20. Vogel Park also has substantially more women than men.

Just over half the residents live in households with annual incomes under \$50,000, placing most households in the low and lower middle-income strata. The largest number of jobs held by residents are in the fields of administration, production, and sales.

Despite the modest incomes of Vogel Park households, home ownership in the neighborhood is typical for Milwaukeeans. Approximately 4 in 10 of the property units are owned, as opposed to being rented. Select costs for home ownership (e.g., mortgages, deeds of trust, contracts to purchase, insurance, taxes) are a good buy with approximately 7 in 10 home costs ranging from \$501 to \$1,500 a month. Rents are also modest, with about three-quarters of the units priced at \$501 to \$1,000 monthly.



## 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.

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

MILWAUKEE ASIAN MARKET			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Daily, 7am-7pm	6300 N. 76th Street	Hundreds of stalls of Asian food, clothing, toiletries, cosmetics, and other goods. (414) 760-3771	Free

RHYTHM & BLOOM CONCERT SERIES			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Jul.to mid Aug., Thu.'s, 6-8:30pm	Green Tree Community Garden, 60th & Green Tree Rd.	Concerts with a variety of bands, food, food trucks.	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.**

“I remember riding through the old Granville neighborhoods on our bikes when I was maybe 12 or 11. It was just all farms with horses and cows and mean-looking dogs. It was a pretty area, like it still is today.”

“This was our first house and it ended up being our all-time house. We came here because we were able to afford the property at the time [prior to annexation]. The builder was offering the whole area in this subdivision a deal, where you got your house and the land in one price. At the time that was what we could afford.”

“Because of the time, it was an accessible neighborhood from the city [just after annexation]. There was lots of shopping and it was a vibrant neighborhood. You didn’t have to even leave the neighborhood to get all that you needed taken care of.”

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

“I think the Granville BID has been involved in doing those kinds of things--trying to bring the neighborhood together. A couple years ago, at Christmas, they had events in the mall area for people to attend. And they have also sponsored in the old parking area that used to be Menards on 76th and Bradley They had food trucks there at lunch time on Mondays and in the evening too. So that has brought a lot of people to the area for kind of a nice event. I think there are different groups who have done things in the area to try to bring people together.”

“Lots of kids play basketball. There are always kids playing basketball. Video games. Kids all watch YouTube videos and bully each other with Snapchat. It’s not like these are out playing baseball. Even I see dads and sons playing basketball in their neighborhood. There’s a fair amount of kids riding their bikes around the neighborhood.”

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<sup>i</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-Houses on 87th & Stark





Today's neighborhood-Vogel Park



Today's neighborhood-Houses on  
87th & Potomac Ave

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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