

Southwest PIONEER

December 2017

Southwest Franklin County Historical Society

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Internet Comments Positive For Museum

The Grove City Welcome Center and Museum receives praise from visitors on a daily basis but it is more special when those visitors take time to record their comments on *TripAdvisor*, a popular Internet site.

A recent search on the web to see what people were saying uncovered these comments.

"Love the artifacts and the creative special displays."

"All the things your grandparents saved in their attic have been lovingly displayed here Grove City has done a wonderful job with this museum."

"One nice part of the visit is that there are some items and displays which are available to touch and try." (Note, this is something that was just started this year.)

"It is an experience you don't want to miss."

". . . lot of things that would amaze you."

"Stop and take some time to see all the great things they have there."

"Full of history of the Grove City, Ohio area, but it isn't opened on the weekends and that is when people travel the most."

"My 5 year old daughter is intrigued by the old time stuff on display."

This place is very casual, friendly and helpful."

"They pay a lot of attention to detail."

The museum has become a destination for not only local residents but it is gaining popularity from out of town visitors, according to Don Ivers, museum representative. Foreign visitors have also found their way here.

Annual Members Urged To Pay Dues

Annual members of the Society are urged to pay 2018 dues by the end of December, according to Janet Garza, membership chair.

This allows the Historical Society to have an up-to-date membership list as it enters the New Year.

The annual membership of \$15 has not changed for many years and has been kept low to encourage people who are interested in history to become a part of the organization.

A life membership is available for a onetime fee \$150.

There is an additional annual fee of \$9 if either an annual or life member wants copies of the quarterly newsletters mailed instead of reading the newsletter on-line.

There is no additional fee for the quarterly newsletter when it is sent by email.

The monthly newsletter, with minutes and the treasurer's report, is only sent by email.



Christmas Party Dec. 5 At Church

The Society's annual Christmas party will be held Tuesday, Dec. 5 starting at 6:30 p.m.

Fried chicken will again be provided by the Society and those attending are asked to bring a covered dish to share or a desert.

Those attending are reminded to bring their own table service and a beverage. Coffee will be provided.

Can You Make Donation?

The Society, like most organizations, operates on a very limited budget. Dues, in no way, cover expenses over the year. If you can make a tax deductible donation of any amount it would be appreciated as an investment in the Society and also in the history of Southwest Franklin County.

Briggsdale, Ohio

Walk On Property Inspires Town Name

Would you believe that it was a stream in Franklin Township that inspired the community name of Briggsdale?

According to a 1977 article in the Grove City Record by Julia Keck, Nicholas Briggs owned much of the land in the area now known as Briggsdale.

Most of it was a wilderness swamp infested with mosquitoes that presented the danger of malaria. Briggs, born in 1807, cleared and drained the land and set about to name the area but what would that name be?

Since there was already an Ohio post office with the name Briggs at the time, he had to think of an alternative. Walking his property, Briggs stopped at what he called a "beautiful brook" and immediately thought the area fit the definition of a "dale".

Thus the name Briggsdale was chosen to identify this community half way between Grove City and Columbus.

Joseph M. Briggs, born in 1833, inherited over 1,000 acres when his father, Nickolas, died. Joseph married Louisa Ransburgh, a native of Missouri, who was living in Columbus when the couple met.

A strong southern girl, she is remembered as the veiled lady who decorated the graves of Confederate soldiers buried at the Camp Chase Confederate Cemetery on Sullivant Avenue.

Briggs lived in a house near the railroad. He opposed selling any of his land to the railroad until there was an agreement to build a station and post office in the village.

The steam commuter train was the most common means of transportation for residents in the Briggsdale area until the Interurban line opened.

Mail was delivered to the local post office twice a day by train. A large iron arm held a mail bag for the postal car worker to grab as the train passed the station. A bag of local mail was thrown to the ground at the same time.

Mail service ended when the Columbus post office assumed service to the Briggsdale area.

The electric powered interurban rail cars were a joint venture between Adam G. Grant of

Grove City and Joseph M. Briggs. That line operated until the late 1920s. The interurban took over mail delivery after the steam train commuter ceased to operate.

Years later, Briggs built a large brick home on Harrisburg Pike. He was killed in an accident in 1913 but Mrs. Briggs continued to reside in the family home until she was nearly 100 years old.



This log house was once located at Grove City Road and Demorest Road. Does anyone have a date when this picture was taken? If so, please call 614-875-9560 or email grovecityhistory@gmail.com.

Cabin Believed To Have Been Stagecoach Stop

There is no evidence to confirm it but it is noted in some histories that this log cabin was once a stagecoach stop.

It is recorded that it was a stop on a line that extended from Washington Court House to Worthington.

Termite damage forced the building to be demolished.

The cabin had been in the Weber family since 1929. The family had attempted to restore the building without success.

Ben Franklin Store Opens In Grove City

Longtime businessman Rolla W. White retired in 1938 and with that announcement he advised residents he was leasing his building on Broadway to the Ben Franklin Store.

That site today is a pizza shop and once the location for Broadway Family Fashions, operated by Businesswoman Gay Weber.

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Ben Franklin Store

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The Ben Franklin store, commonly referred to at the time as a “dime store” was just one of 2,600 stores in the United States, most of which operated in small towns.

Before White made his announcement, it was widely believed in the community that he had made arrangements for an A&P Grocery to operate out of his building.

There was an A&P store in Grove City at one time at the Broadway Shopping Center at Broadway and Southwest Boulevard.

White tried to assure other merchants in 1938 that Ben Franklin would in no way conflict with any other business in Grove City.

One thing that didn't change was the second floor site of the Jackson Township Public Library.

Rolla White had been involved in the dry goods and furniture business in Grove City since 1914. In his early days, he was managing partner in a dry goods business known as as T. J. Boyd Company. White eventually bought out Boyd's interest.

White, born July 8, 1878, retired to his farm.



This Grove City Savings Bank check was issued July 26, 1919 by Witteman & Miller Feed Store.

Early Bank Changed Hands Several Times Over Years

Grove City Savings Bank is believed to have been the first bank organized in Grove City in 1903.

That same year, the Farmers and Merchants Bank was organized by Joseph M. Briggs and Daniel Weygandt. It changed names the same year becoming First National Bank of Grove City. It eventually became part of the Huntington Bank.

The savings bank was organized by Eugene C. Wagner, Adam G. Grant and Emil

Keisewetter. Wagner served the bank in several capacities and retired as president after 26 years.

The Grove City Savings Bank was sold to a partnership that included Tiney M. McComb in 1968 and the bank's name was changed to the Franklin Bank.

McComb sold the Franklin Bank in 1987 to Society Bank and that bank was absorbed into the Key Bank family of banks.

Years later, McComb organized another bank that now operates in Grove City and Central Ohio as the Heartland Bank.

December Activities Numerous For Society

December is a busy month for the Society with special activities at Century Village, the Grove City Welcome Center and Museum and the Grant-Sawyer House.

Activities are planned Dec. 2 and Dec. 9 in the Grove City Town Center.

Saturday, Dec. 2

A Christmas 7 p.m. parade, with Santa riding atop a Jackson Township Fire Department aerial platform, will be an evening highlight.

Throughout the day, unique one of a kind holiday gifts will be offered at the annual the Mistletoe Market. Hours for this German Kristkindl Market is 10 a.m. until 8 p.m. in the Town Center.

Many Town Center merchants will be participate with additional retailers and crafters exhibiting and selling gift items and winter wares at the Grove City Municipal Building.

The Secret Santa shop will operate inside the Grove City Welcome Center and Museum, 3378 Park St. This is a great opportunity for children to be able to shop for family and friends.

Christmas Concert

Also on Dec. 2, the Grove City Community Winds and the Chamber Singers will host their annual Christmas concert at the Grove City High School auditorium, 4665 Hoover Road from 11 a.m. until noon.

Admission is a charitable donation of canned goods or other non-perishable foods for the Grove City Food Pantry.

Saturday's activities are sponsored by the City of Grove City, the Grove City Town Center Inc., Grove City Welcome Center and Museum and others.

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December Activities

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Saturday, Dec. 9

Two trollies will ferry visitors from the Grove City Welcome Center and Museum to the Grant-Sawyer House and Century Village at Fryer Park on Saturday, Dec. 9. All activities are free.

Visitors can visit the various sites either riding the trolley or in a personal vehicle.

Grant-Sawyer House

Individuals interested in riding the trolley to the three sites can board at the museum between the hours of 4-8 p.m. or at any location. There is ample free parking in the area around the museum.

The trolley's first stop will be the Grant-Sawyer House where visitors will exit the trolley at the Gladman Avenue parking area.

Entry will be through the back door, exiting at the front. The tour will include only the downstairs areas. A guide will present a history in each area. The upstairs at the house has been completed but will not be open due to safety concerns.

Decorations from the 1840-1860 time period will be showcased inside the house. A quartet from the Grove City Chamber Singers will perform along with violin music.

Century Village

From the Grant house, visitors can ride a trolley to Century Village at Fryer Park exiting the bus at the blacksmith shop. When ready to board for the return trip to the museum, riders must board at the school house.

Civil War reenactors will have an encampment there between the Blacksmith Shop and the Jones Barn. Reenactors will be clustered around tents and a camp fire. Some will be singing Christmas songs often sung around campfires during the Civil War.

The Chamber Singers will also perform at Century Village inside the school house. Other musical groups are expected to take part in the evening's activities. Children can visit Santa at the Black Log Cabin at the Village.

The Museum

The museum will be decked out with nearly 20 Christmas trees, a Peanuts stuffed animal display, animated buildings, trains, antique toys and displays that will delight both children and adults. Santa will also be at the museum between the hours of 5:30-8 p.m.



LOOKING FOR A CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR THE PERSON WHO HAS EVERYTHING?

What about a book that is exciting, fun to read, educational and one they will pick-up often!

Books available at the
Grove City Welcome Center and
Museum, 3378 Park St.

Images of America, Grove City.....	\$25.00
Images of America, Grove City II.....	\$25.00
History of Jackson Township, Grove City and the Early Pioneers.....	\$15.00*
William Foster Breck, Grove City's Founding Father.....	\$10.00*
Reflections.....	\$10.00**
Reflections II.....	\$10.00**
The Last April, an Ohio Civil War novel Storyline in Grove City.....	\$10.00
Grove City High School Baseball.....	\$20.00
Adam Gantz Story.....	\$ 5.00
Post Cards, 10 cards for.....	\$ 1.50
Note Cards with envelopes.....	\$ 8.00

SPECIAL HOLIDAY OFFER

*Buy both books for.....	\$18.50
** Buy both Reflections books for.....	\$15.00
Buy all 4 of * books.....	\$30.00

CASH OR CHECK ONLY

Genealogy Effort Started At Museum

For the past six months, a genealogy effort has been underway to collect information on founding families and also families who live in the Grove City area today.

At this point, files have been created for nearly 200 surnames with more being included on a regular basis.

It is the intention that maybe within a year, the information will be searchable for individuals wanting to learn more about families who live or have lived in the area.



Members of the Society are encouraged to begin their own family tree or history and when completed submit them at the museum office so an official file can be started.

The files to date include photographs, genealogical charts, newspaper clippings, letters, certificates and more.

Please call Jim Hale, 614-875-9560 with any questions. Current files are open to the public by appointment.

Do you remember?

- Simmons Beautyrest mattresses were once manufactured in Grove City. The plant was on Marlane Drive in the building today occupied by the Central Ohio Food Pantry is today.
- The East of Chicago Pizza Company opened a store in Grove City in 1995 in a building on Broadway which was built by Tren Carpet.
- Eiliene Simmons, 91, was selected the first parade marshal when Arts in the Alley and the Grove City Area Chamber of Commerce conducted its first parade in conjunction with the festival.
- There was a time in Grove City's past where many of the most prominent men of the community weren't offended when called a liar. The Liars Club met frequently in Marshall Kegg's clothing store located on Broadway.
- Grove City recorded a growth spurt in 1913 when the Columbus Railway, Power & Light Company extended power lines throughout the village and surrounding communities. Ohio Fuel & Gas extended lines here in 1923.

President's Message

Steve Jackson

This has been a very busy and a very rewarding year for our organization. As I look back, it's sometimes hard to realize we have accomplished as much as we have.

We are very fortunate to have so many dedicated volunteers and supporters. Many of our volunteers are not even members of the organization . . . they just want to have a part in preserving history.

Of course, we must recognize that our success is not ours alone. The close cooperation with Grove City Parks and Recreation, the City of Grove City and the Grove City Historical Commission must not be overlooked.

One of our accomplishments is a very successful web site, blog and Facebook page. This has allowed us to reach people far beyond the reaches of Southwest Franklin County.

The Grant-Sawyer House that has been restored by the city and furnished by the Society will soon become a crown jewel for all to enjoy.

Expanded programs at the two annual events at Century Village attracted some of the largest crowds ever and the positive comments from those attending make us proud.

We have searched for some time but we also now have an office manager at the Society office within the museum complex. Office hours for now are by appointment.

As you may have read in this issue of the newsletter, we are also working steadily on creating a surname history for Southwest Franklin County, a first effort at genealogy research.

We can't forget the train depot. That has been a struggle for many years dating back into the late 1980s when there was discussion of moving it onto property behind the Schoedinger Norris Funeral Home.

We call ourselves the Southwest Franklin County Historical Society but most of our members are Grove City and Jackson Township residents. We need to do more to encourage participation from Franklin, Prairie and Pleasant Townships.

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Is this a picture of the Grove City Railroad Depot? If so, it appears that the group may be posing for the picture on the east side of the building. The track is at the far left. It's interesting to note there are two entrance signs on the building that read 'Ladies Waiting Room' and 'Gents Waiting Room'.

Depo Relocation Delays From Structure, Railroad

Efforts to relocate the railroad depot in Grove City have been ongoing for nearly 30 years.

One of the earliest efforts back in the 1980s was to move it to a site on Cleveland Street behind Schoedinger-Norris Funeral Home. That was only discussion and nothing came of it.

The one that has been most frequently mentioned has been Century Village but several Town Center locations have been considered including one that would have placed it somewhere near a new road extending from Broadway into the redeveloped Beulah Park.

Efforts to move the building in one piece have been abandoned and now the most feasible way under consideration would be to disassemble and reconstruct at Century Village.

The most recent delays were set in motion when the railroad company which leases the tracks felt contractors planning to move the structure were working too close an active track.

Short Stories, Photographs Sought For Web Site

A collection of short stories and photographs are being sought to be part of the Society's new internet blog on the web site.

Individual members of the Society are encouraged to write their own brief story and include a photograph for consideration.

Members can email the photograph and text to grovecityhistory@gmail.com or drop the information off at the museum marked for web site. To read the stories posted, go to www.grovecityohhistory.org and click on EVENTS then IN THE NEWS.

President's Message

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I am looking for people willing to work with our Membership chairperson to find ways to encourage more participation in our organization.

If you are willing to serve, please give me a phone call at 614-871-0081 or talk to me after one of our monthly meetings.

I want to get this project started as soon as practical. This is an important committee and its success will rely heavily on all of us.

Janet Garza, who is the chair of that committee, has done an outstanding job of tracking and keeping our membership up to date but we also need to be looking for new members and willing volunteers.

Southwest Pioneer

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Southwest Franklin County Historical Society

A 501C3 NON-PROFIT CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION

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MONTHLY SOCIETY MEETINGS

Monthly Meetings first Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.
St. John's Lutheran Church, 3220 Columbus St.

MONTHLY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

2 nd Thursday	Commission, City Hall, 8:30 am
1 st -3 rd Mondays	Events Committee, Museum, 7 pm
Last Tuesday	Museum Committee, Museum, 7 pm

Annual -- \$15 Business -- \$50 Life -- \$150

Quarterly Newsletter Sent by Email
Quarterly Newsletter Mailed is \$9 extra