

Southwest PIONEER

DECEMBER 2018

Southwest Franklin County Historical Society
grovecityohhistory@gmail.com
grovecityohhistory.org

Annual Membership For 2019 Now Due

The annual membership dues for the upcoming year are now being collected by the membership chairperson, Janet Garza.

Members are encouraged to write a check for membership and mail it to the Society at SWFCHS, 3378-B Park St., Grove City, OH 43123. Members with any changes in address, phone or email should also make note when mailing payment.

Annual membership still remains at \$15 each year and it includes receiving a monthly and quarterly newsletter by email. Individuals without email will only receive the quarterly newsletter.

Quarterly newsletters can be mailed for an additional fee of \$9 per year. This fee applies to both annual and life members.

The life membership is \$150.



1951 Cornerstone Ceremony At Prairie Norton Elementary

Kim Thomas recently shared this 1951 photo of the laying of the cornerstone for Prairie Norton Elementary School. *Continued Page 3*



The Old Salem Church

Salem Church Was Once On Harrisburg Circuit

The following was written by Mrs. D. Tyler, and is reprinted from "Reflections II", a collection of local stories available at the Grove City Welcome Center and Museum. Mark Schmidbauer transcribed the text and it is now also available on the Society website.

The Old Salem Church was situated in Jackson Township, Franklin County, Ohio. The ground for this house of worship was given by Mr. Edward Marsh, A.D. 1798, (this was later corrected to 1843), for burials and religious purposes. The original structure was built of logs.

Improvements were made by boarding over problem areas. It was remodeled and rededicated in 1859, by the Rev. William Doughty, pastor on the Harrisburg Circuit.

The parents of the writer were among the first settlers of Franklin County. They have related how anxious everyone had been to donate something toward its construction.

Nearly all the landowners in the surroundings were willing to cut down trees, hew the logs, make shingles or lend a helping hand in some way.

The only cash outlay required was to pay for nails, window glass, and sash. The seats were simply slabs with strong wooden legs, and with no backs. The children sat erect, swinging their feet back and forth in unison with the old Methodist hymns. I presume today sermons would seem tedious and uninteresting, if we sat on those same benches. *Continued Page 2*

Old Salem Church

Continued from Page 1

Our only illuminations were of tallow candles, made and donated by the good people of the community.

The pulpit resembled that of a large store box, open at one end, if the preacher happened to be tall in stature, we could see his head and shoulders, otherwise the top of his head only.

The following are names of several pastors who have served this charge: Brothers Michner, Hopper, Green and Doughty. The Reverend H.K. Miller is the present Pastor.

To the sorrow of many of our aged members, it is whispered at the opening and closing of each conference year that the little country church should be discarded.

Many of us can say we love the dear old church, for it was the last spot we laid our eyes on our loved ones.

Salem Church had its good years and its lean years as indicated in 1917, when the church was closed.

Salem Church was locked and the windows boarded up. The reason for this closing is now unknown, but this must have been a sad sight for the many people who had loved this church in years past.

The church remained closed for seven years.

Ministers were appointed from 1917 to 1924, but, as Salem Church was closed, the ministers served only the other churches on the circuit.

In 1924, Rev. Eugene Drake, a Baptist Minister, and his daughter, Madeline (now Mrs. James Hutchinson), were quite concerned with the little church on the corner being closed.

So they sat in front of the church one afternoon and prayed for divine guidance in opening the church, and they felt they received their answer.

Following this, they contacted a Rev. Gilfillen, who was a Methodist minister, to intercede with the Methodist Church to allow Rev. Drake to open the church again, but under the Baptist name.

Rev. Drake and his daughter removed boards from the windows, cleaned the church and got it ready for "meetings" once again. Rev. Drake served the church until his death in 1927.

At Rev. Drake's death, Rev. Grover C. Gilfillen became Salem's pastor and the church

reverted back to the Methodists. Rev. Gilfillen was minister from 1928 to 1931. He now lives in Columbus.

On October 13th, 1928, sparks from trash being burned by employees of the Midland Power & Light Company ignited the wood shingles of the church roof.

The fire roared out of control, burning the church to the ground. The only thing that was saved was the piano that was carried out by Mr. W.S. Brown, Mr. Lawrence Wells and possibly some others.

In 1929, Mr. W.S. Brown was responsible for rebuilding the present Salem Church (minus the addition). Due to the efforts of Mr. Brown, the church received \$1,100 in damages from the Power Company.

He was paid \$25.00 per week, by the church, to work full-time at rebuilding. Most of the gravel, lumber and cement was donated free to the church. The seats that were placed in the new building were old streetcar seats, purchased for \$1 apiece.

It is interesting to know that a team of mules was used to dig out the basement and, with the aid of a block and tackle, to place the bell in the bell tower. Incidentally, the church bell weighs 700 pounds.

In December 1929, a mortgage was put on the church for \$1,800 to pay off the debt of the new construction.

Trustees at the time of the building of the new church were H.T. Lambert, W.S. Brown, William Tyler, E.D. Rhyon, T.H. Martindale and A. Basmajian. H.T. Lambert received his local Preacher's License while attending Salem Church, but was never its pastor. Rev. Lambert now pastors a church in Flushing, Ohio, and expects to retire next June.

In the 1930s Salem Church struggled along, very short on both money and attendance. They were fortunate to have 10 or 15 in Sunday school and at one time, we learned, there were only three families attending the church. Being on a circuit Salem Church only had services once a month for a while.

The next decade brought the greatest changes in the history of Salem Church. With Rev. C.A. Moore as our minister, Salem Church, ushering in 1950, was to get the first feeling of "growing pains". Since the Sunday school had doubled in attendance and many more new members were added to the church membership, the small church rapidly outgrew its facilities.

Prairie Norton Cornerstone

Continue from Page 1

She pointed out that her father, Fredrick Kunz, is in the white shirt at the center of the picture and beside him was his brother, Robert.

Fredrick was one of the founding members of South-Western City School District and served as vice president of the school board for several years. Robert, a career firefighter in Prairie Township, became the township fire chief in the 1990s.

HOW MUCH HISTORY DO YOU KNOW? TAKE THIS TRUE-FALSE TEST

1. Grove City once had a manufacturer for pipe organs.
2. Kroger's first grocery store was located in the Town Center.
3. Civic Drive was once known as Sugar Alley in the Town Center.
4. Beulah Park had always been a horse race track in Grove City.
5. The Oakey automobile was manufactured in Grove City in 1899.
6. A cemetery was once located where the parking lot at St. John's Church sits today.
7. Harrisburg was once called Little Pennsylvania.
8. The Franklin County Fair was once held in Grove City.
9. A large chicken farm once sat on the grounds of Grove City High School.
10. Haughn Road was once known as Crushed Stone Pike. *Answers on Page 5.*

Early Grove City Laws

IT'S THE LAW: On May 25, 1868, the Village of Grove City passed an ordinance that prohibits unchaste or lewd entertainment or houses of prostitution. Any person so convicted could be fined not less than \$10 plus costs not exceeding \$50 for each offense. That person was also to be imprisoned not less than five days and not more than 10 days.

IT'S THE LAW: A town marshal in Grove City could be fined not more than \$20 if he failed to keep a strict watch at reasonable hours over turbulent and disorderly persons.



This 1914 photograph captures Earl Miller, left, and Virgil K. Bethard hanging onto a Model T Ford owned by Kenneth Gunderman.

Bethard Remembered As Early Photographer

Unfortunately, very little is known about Virgil K. Bethard but his love of photography has provided Grove City with much insight into the early 1900s.

Bethard, a respected local businessman, should also be remembered today as the person who realized the importance of photography and history.



Bethard

Many of the pictures we view today were taken by him but unfortunately, his photographs cannot be fully identified because many have been copied so frequently over the years.

Bethard operated a garage in the Emmelhainz Building located at Broadway and Grove City Road. The building today is a beauty salon and pub.



In the 1940s, he operated a Sunoco gasoline station and garage just north of Grove City's downtown. Anyone with more information about Virgil Bethard is asked to contact Jim Hale, jhale45@gmail.com.

Bethel Lutheran Celebrates 50th Year

EDITOR'S NOTE—Information for this article is taken from "A Brief History of Bethel Lutheran Church" edited by Brock Morgan.

Bethel Lutheran Church, Grove City's third Lutheran congregation since 1852, celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

The church sits on a parcel of ground that once housed one of Ohio's largest turkey farms. The farm was owned and operated by the Milligan family. In 1967, the Board of Missions for the American Lutheran Church purchased nearly six acres from George and Martha Milligan for \$20,000 for a church.

Nine months later, the Rev. Armin L. Barnick was called to organize a parish in Grove City. Barnick initially felt there wasn't a real opportunity to create a new Lutheran church here but by December, he had changed his mind and accepted the challenge.

Construction of the church had started in



October, 1967, before Barnick's arrival, but work had stalled. His first major task was to get the building program back on track and ready for worship services in 1968.

With approximately 150 people present, the church held its organizational service June 2, 1968 and at that time officially installed Barnick as pastor. His wife, Carol, became the choir director and organist. The two were quite different in personality but complemented each other.

Carol was fun-loving, outgoing and had a laugh that would brighten any day. Armin was quiet, thoughtful, and always spoke the appropriate words for any occasion.

Ten years later after their arrival, Bethel was financially secure and able to repay the American Lutheran Church loan that established it as a mission church.

Bethel was now a congregation that could support itself. In 1983, Bethel's congregation, along with other ALC churches, merged and became identified as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

After 25 years serving as founding pastor, Barnick retired in 1993. The

congregation was served by two interim pastors until the Rev. Peter I. Ray accepted a call to become Bethel's second pastor in 1994.

In 2015, the Rev. Jeffrey N. Wise joined Bethel's ministry team to help serve the growing congregation. Bethel today has multiple ministries and participates in many community activities.

Over the next 10 years, Bethel cemented its place in the community and began to explore the need to grow the ministry.

A building program eventually included a new worship center and educational wing. In October, 2005, a total of 368 people attended a worship service in the new 412 seat sanctuary.

In 2014, Bethel expanded its mission creating a second campus at the St. Matthew Lutheran Church at Lockbourne. Bethel now owns the building and supports a Free Store ministry there. The church is still used for weddings, funerals and other special worship opportunities but no regular weekly services are conducted at that location.



This photo was taken at the loan closing for the Central Ohio Military Museum in Harrisburg. Pictured, from left: Rita and Bob Traphagan, Jeremy Kirk, Bob Scott, C.P. Sprague, Stan Baldwin and Howard McClarley.

Military Museum Now Open In Harrisburg

The Central Ohio Military Museum is open at 1010 High St., in Harrisburg in the former VFW building.

The museum is the latest historic attraction to open in Southwest Franklin County area just south of Grove City. It is a 501c3 non-profit institution and Curator Bob Traphagan is hoping to secure volunteers from the area to help maintain the facility.



Barbara Weygandt Burkhart, who now lives in Orange City, FL, submitted this photograph of three people riding in a buggy heading east on Park Street. The Grant-Sawyer house is visible in the background. This easily could be one of the earliest photos of the house. She said the area between Columbus Street and Park Street was once known as Haughn Town.



Another picture she shared was the truck her uncle, Myron Haughn, transported his Greyhounds in when traveling from Massachusetts to Grove City then on to Florida. The truck is pictured in a field we now identify as Windsor Park. Haughn would park the truck there because it allowed plenty of room to walk his animals.

Answers to the History Quiz

Now you can check your history knowledge with the answers to the quiz.

1. True
2. True
3. True
4. False (Once a village park)
5. False (in Columbus)
6. True
7. False (It was Darbydale)
8. True
9. False (It was turkeys)
10. True

Flying Farmers Had Members From Southwest Townships

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, several residents of Southwest Franklin County were members of an organization known as the Ohio Flying Farmers. These men and their wives owned planes and used the aircraft managing crops and farm animals.

The organization still exists in name and was incorporated in 1985.

James D. Fortney of Orient was a long time member and served as president of the Ohio group in its early years. Other local members

included, Ernest Bowers, Edward Montoney, and Bill Boggs all of Grove City; George Cardosi, Galloway; Richard H. Kellogg, Alton; and Lewis McKinley of Harrisburg.



Publications of that era said they frequently used three airports in the area including the Sullivant Avenue Airport, Don Scott Airport and Northway Air Park on Morse Road.

In 1948, two association meetings were held in Columbus. The first was the Ohio Flying Farmer Convention in July at Don Scott Airport. Just over 200 flying farmers attended the meeting.

The national event had activities in Columbus, Akron and Wooster. The group's headquarters meeting was on the Ohio State University campus. More than 3,000 people from 19 states were expected to attend, flying between 1,000 and 1,500 airplanes into the Columbus area airports.

In one of their organizations' magazines published in 1949, members learned that flying an aircraft at very low altitude over a wheat field would prevent frost damage. The plane would stir the air over the wheat keeping moisture from condensing to form frost.

In 1951, Fortney was nominated to become the first person to serve as the Franklin County Aviation Coordinator of Civil Defense.

His job was to identify all civil aircraft in Franklin County that might be needed in the advent of a civil defense emergency mobilization program.

Guess You're Stuck With Me



By James F. Hale

I've been the Society's newsletter editor nearly 10 years and this was the year I had planned to step aside but, that opportunity didn't come to reality.

So, you're stuck with me for a while longer. I assumed this responsibility from Marilyn Gibboney who had served many years as Society president and newsletter editor.

Marilyn, as is well known, is responsible for many excellent stories we are able to share today on our website. She also coordinated the two *Reflections* publications.

My first newsletter was published in March 2009 and over the years it has gone through many changes and upgrades. Many historical articles have been offered in those pages and it is my hope some of those stories have encouraged a closer look into the history of this area. Grove City and surrounding townships have a great history to explore.

It is my hope Society members will become more involved in the newsletter in 2019. We need to be sharing more stories members know or have been told.

A newsletter can only be as good as its readers and contributors.

As your editor, I need to:

- *Hear from you from time to time.*
- *Know if stories are lacking detail and leaving questions.*
- *Be aware of what you want to read.*

In other words, this is not my newsletter, it's your newsletter and I'm only the information source. Anyone interested in helping in this project should give me a call at 614-875-9560. Your ideas and input are important!



Genealogy Program Started

Have you ever thought about how many surnames have been a part of Grove City's heritage over the years? Probably not.

An effort is underway to change that and it's also the start of a genealogy program for the historical society.

So far, the Society office at the museum has hundreds of names on file folders and some are already packed with information. Is your name included? One way is to verify a file is to contact Jim Hale or email jhale45@gmail.com.

Man Shoots Himself At Greyhound Track

This story was published in the Grove City Record, Nov. 23, 1934.

Despondent over the recent loss of several greyhound racing dogs prompted Clarence J. Martin, aged 50, to end his life Wednesday afternoon at the Franklin Kennel Club grounds. Coroner Edward E. Smith said that the man evidently placed the muzzle of a .22 rifle against his chest and sent a bullet through his heart.

Martin was found in a dying condition by Arthur Hagerman, local resident and greyhound owner, when he made a trip to the track to see his greyhounds, which Martin was training for spring racing. Hagerman called Dr. Dean D. Davis and shortly after the arrival of the physician, Martin succumbed. Martin was still breathing when found by Hagerman about 3 p.m. A large crowd assembled at a sale nearby, did not hear the shot.

The dead man was seen on Broadway carrying a rifle by pedestrians shortly before he was found in the two-room house on the kennel club grounds. Martin had been employed as a watchman by the kennel club.

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Man Shoots Himself

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He was wintering greyhounds for several patrons, including Hagerman and Frank E. Weygandt. The first of the week, several of the dogs became ill and died, which worried Martin.

Martin was known only by a few persons in Grove City, although he had raced dogs here on several occasions. A daughter, Mrs. Carrie Wable, lives at Brecksville, near Cleveland.

The body of the dead man was removed to the Doty-Stroup funeral home, who have charge of funeral arrangements.



According to notations on the back of this photograph taken in 1959, the individual pictured is David Thomas. He was riding on a car on a train track at the home of Kenny Wade in Grove City. The Wade's once had a private park at Richard Avenue and Columbus Street and in 1952, Grove City had its Independence Day celebration there. The day included a fish fry, baseball games, pony rides, pie eating contest, peanut rolling competition and hog calling. An announcement was made that festivities would halt for an hour so residents could go home and feed the pigs and milk cows before the amateur hour competition supervised by Mrs. Orin Breckenridge. After the talent show, the Al Bettinger Orchestra played until 10:30 for dancing. After the show, music and dancing, fireworks lit the sky. Kenny Wade, according to Society records, was once the only hired employee of the Van Isle Pipe Organ Company, once located beside the railroad tracks on Park Street.

Southwest Pioneer

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Southwest Franklin County Historical Society

A 501C3 NON-PROFIT CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION

3378-B Park St., Grove City, OH 43123



www.grovecityohhistory.org

JAMES F. HALE, Newsletter Editor

614-875-9560 – jhale45@gmail.com

OFFICERS

Steve Jackson, President	614-871-0081
John Hines, Vice President	614-364-6692
Trudie Gardner, Secretary	614-879-7416
Larry Zapp, Treasurer	614-475-4018
Janet Garza, Membership	614-991-4712

MONTHLY SOCIETY MEETINGS

Monthly Meetings first Tuesday at 7 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran Church, 3220 Columbus St.

NEW SOCIETY EMAIL ADDRESS

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THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Looking Back

By Steve Jackson
Society President

2018 Soon Part Of Our Past

This has been an exciting year for our organization. We can be very proud of our many accomplishments but our work is far from done. There's always a new challenge waiting around the corner.

This year, we have received several new members into the Society. That is important but we need to reach out to even more to meet the obligations we have assumed.

Relocation of the Grove City Depot to Century Village was a major calendar event but without the cooperation of the City of Grove City and Grove City Parks and Recreation it would not have been possible.

We need to say a big "Thank-You" to the city officials who made this possible.

The station may not be open for public viewing for a while because major restoration work is required. The Society received a \$60,000 grant from the city but we must provide all of the labor and insure everything is up to code.

The chinking project at the Village will continue for several years until the restoration of log cabins and log structures is complete.

The Grant-Sawyer Home has welcomed numerous people and groups throughout the year through both tours and public events. This historic site from the 1830s era is gaining in popularity in Central Ohio and we hope to eventually create it as a tourist destination for groups.

Our Town Center museum has increased the number of visitors after a brief drop in attendance after the library move. Our website has been refreshed this year and in addition to Facebook, we now have an Instagram account.

2018 has been a year of much progress for the Society, but we have much to do in 2019 to achieve what we, as a group, needs to accomplish.

New Audio Story Online

There's a new audio story now online and this one might be a bit on the spooky side.

It runs about 14 minutes and tells a tall tale about the Woolyburger Cemetery on London-Groveport Road near Darbydale.

There are two other stories told by storyteller Edward Young.

A story of legend and lore mixed with historical facts tells about William Foster Breck, the man who founded Grove City.

Another tells tales about Hugh Grant Sr. and how he came to be the first permanent white settler in this section of Franklin County.

Thanks go out to the Women's Civic Club of Grove City for sponsoring these audio stories.

Go to www.grovecityohhistory.org and click on MEDIA Link to hear the Audio stories.

Life Member Wildman Dies

Emily E. Wildman, 80, a life member of the Society, died unexpectedly at her home Oct. 20. She was born Oct. 4, 1938 in Morrow County and had lived in Grove City the past 40 years.

She was instrumental in the re-development of the Community Parade in 1990. It was held in conjunction with Arts in the Alley.

Emily and others at the Grove City Area Chamber of Commerce provided logistic support for the parade committee and she also volunteered on parade days helping to organize the parade.

Emily retired from Saxton Real Estate after many years of service after working at the Chamber of Commerce.

Society's Bylaws Online

Individuals who would like to review the Society's bylaws can read them online by going to the Society website and going to the CONTACT link then to Membership.

The bylaws were approved by the Society membership in 2013.



**Have you paid your 2019
membership dues?
Please do that this month.**