

SOUTHWEST PIONEER

MARCH 2019

SOUTHWEST FRANKLIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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grovecityohhistory.org

Breck's First Home: Brick Or Wood Frame?

By James F. Hale

History isn't always as easy to understand as the words in a book. Sometimes new research suggests a different view to what has long been considered factual.

Consider the two photographs that claim to be the first home of William Foster Breck. Breck is the undisputed founder of Grove City.

A wood plank house believed to have been located near Arbutus and Columbus Street is one, while another constructed of brick and still standing at 3359 White Place off Broadway is the other.



First, let's examine what is known about the wood plank house.

The earliest published photograph of that house, known to date, appeared in the *Epoch of the Park Street School* written in the spring of 1964 by Faye White and her husband, Harold L. Morland. The Morland's were founders of the Grove City Community Historical Society, predecessor to the Southwest Franklin County Historical Society.

Their manuscript contained a photograph of a wood plank house, identified only as #19 in their book. Unfortunately, the Moreland's never identified that house in their book as Breck's home. That photograph, over the years, has become identified as Breck's first home for his family in Jackson Township.

The only reference to what might have been a wood plank house Breck lived in is mentioned without reference in a 1932 article by Harold Windsor in the *Grove City Record*.

It reads: "John Buckholtz purchased a large tract of land from William Breck, on which land Breck had built a peculiar "L" shaped house. Some of the older residents will recall the old landmark that stood where the present R. E. Shover home on Columbus Street." See Page 2



Society Float—This Society float was entered in the Millersport Corn Festival in 1987. A few identified include Ruth and Dale Jividen, Bill Buckley and Marilyn Gibboney.



Northwest Ordinance Theme: Another Society float in 1987 appeared in a Grove City parade. Individuals identified include Tara and Jason Childres, Wilma Marcum, Matthew Welch, Marilyn Gibboney, Bill Buckley, Huldah and Bryon Rader, Ruth and Dale Jividen, Wilbur Gantz and Steve Marcum.

Should Society Plan Float For Fall Parade?

Some conversations are circulating that the Society should consider entering a float in the Arts in the Alley Parade.

See History Dateline, Page. 5

Breck's First Home: Brick, Wood Frame?

From Page 1

"On the rear of the lot, "Uncle Johnnie" as he was known, built a grist mill to grind feed and meal."

According to Society member Dick Shover, R. E. (Robert Ellsworth) Shover never lived in Grove City. While a Shover did live on Columbus Street, it likely was another relative.

"My grandfather's brother, Sidner "Russell" Shover, farmed the original Borror farm at Borror's Corners," Shover said in a January email.

"I know that before he died (1941), his farm went to a daughter, Ava Borror Corzilius. Russ and his wife moved to 3327 Columbus Street. Eventually, the house belonged to Lulu Shover Canter, another daughter to Russ. Lulu lived there until she died in 1997 at the age of 99. I wonder if the story you site confused Ellsworth Shover with Russell Shover," he said.

A close examination of the photograph shows the house in question has a "U" shape, not an "L" shape. There is the possibility an addition was added to the house at a later date altering the original structure into a "U" shape.

There is no reference to the photograph of a wood plank house in the series of historical accounts written by Windsor in the 1932 newspaper articles.

Windsor's articles have been transcribed into a book, *History of Jackson Township and Grove City and Early Pioneers*, available at the Grove City Welcome Center and Museum.

Research by Windsor indicates Breck and family were listed as residents of Fairfield County as late as 1846, the same year Breck is said to have moved to Jackson Township.

Breck was a respected businessman in Carroll, Ohio, a small town in Fairfield County located on the Ohio-Erie Canal. Many prominent Fairfield residents followed Breck to Jackson Township. They included William Sibray, John Mallott, Jerimah Smith (Breck's brother-in-law), George Vanceiver, George Weygandt and the Rev. R. K. Davis, a Presbyterian minister.

Grove City historian Earl R. Nicholson, in a 1985 article, wrote his research indicated a brick house at 3359 White Place was Breck's home. Nicholson said that house, built in 1848, was also the location Breck, Weygandt, Smith

and Sibray laid out the plat for the new village of Grove City. If so, the question remains: Where did Breck live for the previous two years?

Sibray may have built Breck's house at White Place. Sibray, a brick mason and plasterer, and Weygandt, a carpenter, may have worked together on the project.

There is a belief Breck built the first brick and tile factory in the township but that may not be

completely accurate. Windsor, in his articles, pointed out several brick and tile plants operated in the township, including an early plant at Pleasant Corners as early as 1815. Breck's brick factory opened around 1850.

Early bricks were formed by hand using clay found on properties where brick houses were being built. Windsor's articles stated in December, 1817, carpenters were charging a dollar per day for their work; bricklayers were being paid \$4 per one thousand bricks.

It's also interesting to note that in 1848 when Breck was living in the brick house that it wasn't located in what would become the Village of Grove City. The village plat itself was entirely on the east side of Broadway and it wasn't until many years later that the west side of Broadway became part of the village.

Breck's porch, at the time, had a clear view of the horse drawn buggies, wagons and coaches that passed daily on the new Harrisburg Turnpike. Breck was known to sit on the porch and watch the early horse drawn traffic. That land where the house sat was part of his 600 acre farm, according to a Woodbridge family history.

The question remains. Did Breck move to Jackson Township in 1846 leaving his family behind in Fairfield County? Where did he or they first live? Was a house available for him to rent or purchase while he built the brick home?

Many questions remain but unfortunately there may never be answers to the questions that focus on Breck's first two years in Jackson Township. There are business references about Breck but no details on his early family life.



Remember When?

Telephone books have pretty much a thing of the past as has the dial telephones of just a few years ago.

Old phone books can be historical records and the museum has a collection at the office. The books tell a story of a past life that is easily forgotten.

A 65 year old phone book, once published by the Grove City Greyhound Boosters Association, has interesting stories as a reader flips through its pages.

Back then, driving south on Hoover Road you would see a large flock of turkeys instead of Grove City High School. The Milligan Turkey Farm was one of the largest in Ohio housing as many as 3,000 birds.

There were four grocery stores. Sig's Red & White Food Mart and the Kropp's IGA Market were both located on Broadway. Breck's Market was at 99 Midland St., and Curtis Grocery was located in Urbancrest.

If you wanted fresh baked goods, residents would go to Groive City Bakery for breads and pasteries.

One man known around town was Granville "Granny" Shoaf. His motto was "Be Wise-Be Safe, Deal Only with a Broker Who is a Realtor." That was a few years before he coined his long lasting slogan, "Don't Loaf, Call Shoaf."

Another local realtor, Melvin P. Girbert, opened a The Community Theatre and urged residents to relax and enjoy a movie.

A good meal or snack was never a problem in Grove City 65 years ago. All people had to do was visit any number of restaurants and taverns.

They included, B. & T. Grill, Broadway Restaurant, DeVault's Restaurant, Enders & Sons Tavern, Gene's Sandwich Bar, and Goebbel's Restaurant.

At one time there were many auto dealers but in the 1950s there were two: Harley Motor Sales, offering Dodge and Plymouth cars and trucks and Grove City Motors, selling used cars.

Eileen Simmons operated the only clothing store for women. It was first located on Park Street later moving to Broadway. Eileen was the first woman to serve on Grove City Council. She served during the Haughn administration.

Nelson Grant Respected Resident In Township

This story is reprinted from the "A Centennial Biographical History of the City of Columbus and Franklin County" that was first published in 1901. It is reprinted verbatim except for creation of new paragraphs. Nelson was the son of Nancy Grant, daughter of Hugh Grant Sr. and Catherine Barr Grant, never married.

After a long and useful career as a farmer Nelson Grant has laid aside all his business cares, and is now living a retired life in Grove City.

He is a native of Franklin county, April 1, 1826, and was reared in that township, pursuing his studies in an old born in Jackson township log school house.

At the age of nineteen years he assisted in taking a drove of stock to Baltimore and Washington, driving them across country, and on his return went from Wheeling West Virginia, to Cincinnati, and from there to New Orleans on a flatboat.

He was then on the river during the season of navigation for about six years, and at the end of that period went to St. Louis. Later he spent about a year in the county, traveling across the country buy way of Chicago and Detroit.

On the 5th of May, 1850, Mr. Grant was united in marriage with Miss Caroline A. Odell, a native of Virginia, who came to Franklin county, Ohio, at the age of nineteen years.

By this union were born four children: Melissa and William N., both deceased; Charles W., a farmer of Jackson township; and Edward E., a motorman and conductor on the Grove City & Columbus Street Railroad.

After his marriage Mr. Grant located on the farm in Jackson township which he received from his mother, and was successfully engaged in agricultural pursuits until 1883, when he laid aside active labor and moved to Grove City.

He owns some property in that city and also twenty acres of land east of town. Politically he was a supporter of the Democratic party for many years, but is now a Republican, and he has been honored with several local offices, including that of constable of his township, and councilman for two years.

Mr. Grant is an earnest and consistent member of the Methodist Episcopal church, and is highly respected and esteemed See Page 4

Nelson Grant Story

From Page 3

by all who know him. During almost his entire life he has been identified the interests of this county, and for three-quarters of a century has witnessed the wonderful changes that have occurred here in that time.

During the war of the Rebellion Mr. Grant serve in the One Hundred and Ninety-first Ohio Volunteer Infantry until discharged.

He joined the Odd Fellows order in 1848 and has been active ever since.



Franklin County Once Bordered Lake Erie

It's hard to realize today but when Ohio became a state in 1803, the boundary for Franklin County stretched north including a portion of the Lake Erie shores. The county was actually established April 30, 1803, just 216 years ago.

Franklin County was created from Ross County and named for Benjamin Franklin.

Looking at current maps, Port Clinton and maybe even modern day Toledo would have been the northern most cities. Others cities that would eventually have been part of the county would have been Tiffin, Bucyrus, Upper Sandusky, Marion, Marysville, Delaware and others.

Rev. Thomas Woodrow

Historic Figure Once Preached In Grove City

By Janet Shailer

Southwest Franklin County Historical Society

The village of Grove City was just a dot on a sparsely populated map between the years 1853-1912. Barely elevated beyond a stop on the stagecoach route from Mt. Sterling to Columbus, Grove City was growing out of the timber of a frontier village into a comfortable home for industrious entrepreneurs and stoic, determined farmers.

Among those who brought their talents into the village for a short period of time was an educated man from Scotland who would become the grandfather of a future President of the United States.

Rev. Thomas Woodrow was born and raised in Paisley, Scotland and studied at Glasgow University to become a Presbyterian minister. From 1821-1835, Rev. Woodrow served an Independent Congregational Church in Carlisle, England where he married and began to raise his family. One of his children, Janet "Jessie" Woodrow, would become the mother of President (Thomas) Woodrow Wilson.

When Janet Woodrow was a young child, her father and mother packed up the family and sailed to Canada where Rev. Woodrow served a Presbyterian congregation in Brockville, Ontario. Rev. Woodrow accepted a call a year later as pastor at the Presbyterian Church in Chillicothe, Ohio, where he served from 1837-1848.

After 11 years in Chillicothe, Rev. Woodrow became a supply pastor at Dr. James Hoge's Presbyterian Church in Worthington and served from 1849-1857. Meanwhile, Janet Woodrow married Rev. Dr. Joseph Ruggles Wilson, also a Presbyterian minister, and moved to Virginia. Although raised in Ohio, Rev. Dr. Wilson was a Southern sympathizer and would later serve as a chaplain in the Confederate Army. Before the Civil War, however, Rev. Dr. Wilson took a teaching position at Hampden-Sydney College in the heart of Virginia and also ministered to the congregation at Staunton Presbyterian Church.

On Dec. 28, 1856, Janet Woodrow Wilson gave birth to Thomas Woodrow Wilson, the third of her four children, in Staunton.

Continued on Page 5

Rev. Thomas Woodrow:

Continued from Page 4

Until his teen years, Woodrow Wilson was known as "Tommy."

During the very same decade in Grove City, a small group of Lutherans broke away from St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church and joined other English-speakers to form the First Presbyterian Church. In those days, the St. John's congregation alternated English and German services every other Sunday and some of the English-speaking members desired their own regular English services.

Members of First Presbyterian Church met in a log building (now a brick home) at 4086 Broadway, then moved to 3496 W. Park Street, and onto 3506-3510 W. Park Street. It is believed that Rev. Thomas Woodrow, Woodrow Wilson's grandfather, gave several sermons at the latter address. The exact time period is unknown but is believed to be 1860 or shortly thereafter.

Rev. Thomas Woodrow also served Presbyterian congregations in Nicholasville, Kentucky and Scotia, Ohio until his retirement to Columbus in 1865. He died on April 25, 1877 in Columbus and is buried in Green Lawn Cemetery.

In 1902, the future 28th President of the United States would become the first layman to head Princeton University, which was founded by Scotch-Irish Presbyterian clerics from Ulster, Ireland.

Woodrow Wilson became governor of New Jersey in 1911 and was elected President of the United States in 1912. He was reelected in 1916.

Following World War I, President Wilson led the American delegation at the Paris Peace Convention and spearheaded efforts to construct the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. Out of this treaty grew the League of Nations, a precursor to the United Nations.

Woodrow Wilson was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1919. He suffered a stroke while in the White House and died on Feb. 3, 1924 at the age of 67 – three years after his term as president had ended.

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**Have you paid you 2019
Society Membership Dues?**

HISTORY Dateline

By Jim Hale



History is not a favorite subject for most people probably because of the many dates we were taught and had to memorise in school.

Dates are important but the stories told from memories, lore and fact can be even more interesting.

Every one of us has a story to tell but most are too guarded to do so because you may feel it is not relevant. You're wrong. Every story is good and we need to share them more freely.

We have hundreds of stories on file at the Society office on Park Street and we're looking for more. These are in addition to the many stories about people who are now part of the City's official Oral History Project that is housed at the Grove City Public Library.

If you have a story, memory or remembrance, please write the information down and mail it to 3378-B Park St., or better yet, email the information to jhale45@gmail.com. There is also a form at the Museum you can complete. Be sure to include contact information and a phone number.

New Generation of Historians

I'm concerned that too many of our members are my age, 72, and older. We need to do a better job of reaching a younger generation.

In my opinion, the age group we should consider trying to reach would those who are "empty nesters" because younger adults with children already have many challenges and responsibilities. Consider these three areas:

The **Young Historians** effort was a good try but it is now inactive. Is anyone interested in trying to reach young people still in school?

A second item to consider would be **building an actual float** entry for the 2019 Arts in the Alley Parade. Take a look at the photographs on the front page of our newsletter and see what the Society did years ago.

A third item is very easy to accomplish. We have a simple **Society membership form** that fits easily into a #10 long envelope. Why not consider getting several and mailing them to friends and relatives with a note inviting them to get involved in preserving local history.



Heading Home--Adam and Edith Dill Gantz are pictured with their horse and buggy on their way to their first home that was located on Hoover Road. The couple has just recently married.

Urbancrest Woman First Black Mayor

Mayor Ellen Walker Craig-Jones of Urbancrest was not only the mayor of Urbancrest, she was a community organizer and leader in her community.

Working closely with her behind the scene was her husband, James. That was the way he liked his involvement. Together, they helped make things work in the small village on the northwest boundary of Grove City off I-270.

Craig gained national notoriety in 1972 when she was elected the first African-American woman mayor by popular vote in a municipal election.



She never made a big deal about that historic honor because she had her mind set on greater challenges.

While serving on the village council, she became a friend of U. S. Representative Chalmers P. Wylie.

This alliance became pivotal when it came to getting federal funding for village projects. One such project included \$3 million for new low income apartments.

During her term as mayor, she also worked closely with City of Grove City officials.

Mayor Craig was also recognized as the first parade marshal for the Grove City Community Fair who didn't live within the city limits of Grove City.

Museum Visits Can Be Winter Destination

Many people are looking for something to do during the gray winter months. Why not include a visit to the Grove City Welcome Center and Museum, 3378 Park St.

There is something new all the time on display so one visit will not give a complete orientation of all there is to see.

Last month, WOSU-TV visited the museum and recorded a brief program about Grove City's historical thoroughbred track, Beulah Park.

The video of this program is available for viewing on the Society's Facebook page. If you haven't LIKED the Facebook page, you should consider taking a look. It's been very interesting and new items are posted at least twice weekly.

The 1912 Ford Model T is still the most popular item at the museum. Adults and children frequently take pictures in front of this amazing vehicle that was donated to the City by Louie and Joan Eyerman.

Ask Don who this represents.



How Much History Do You Know?

TAKE THIS TEST – ANSWERS PAGE 7

1. The first railroad through Grove City was the Circleville, Grove City and Columbus Railroad, the Cincinnati, Midland City and Columbus Railroad or the Baltimore and Ohio.
2. The first major road through Grove City was a log and plank road. What was it called?
3. First high school graduates were all male, or female.
4. How were the original lots sold in the newly created village? Land speculators, public auction, or through a local attorney.
5. The Interurban in the late 1800s and early 1900s that operated on rails through Grove City was powered by horses or electricity.
6. A log union meeting house gave birth to what religious organizations?

HOW MUCH HISTORY ANSWERS

1. Cincinnati, Midland City and Columbus Railroad
2. Corduroy Road; a very bouncy and rough ride
3. All female
4. Public Auction with agreement to build a house.
5. Electricity using overhead wiring
6. Lutherans, Methodist and Presbyterians.



Green Lawn Cemetery—Many early residents of Grove City, including the founder of the city, William Foster Breck, is buried there. Grove City's first cemetery is believed to have been located on the grounds of St. John's Lutheran Church. The graves were moved to the German Lutheran Cemetery on Grove City Road around 1860. If you have never visited, it is worth a trip on a warm day.



Do you want to receive a printed copy of the Quarterly Newsletter by mail?

The cost is \$9 for 2019.

Please mail payment to:

Janet Garza, Treasurer

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

Rotary Club Seeks Service Nominations

The Rotary Club of Grove City is seeking nominations to be recognized for their Service Above Self Award. The individual selected will have a plaque mounted on the Park Street wall at the Grove City Municipal Building.

Nomination forms are available at the Grove City Public Library and at the Grove City Welcome Center and Museum.

There are four firm qualifying factors. The nominee must:

- ✓ Have live in Grove City, Ohio during his/her lifetime.
- ✓ Be retired from his/her primary career.
- ✓ Not hold or be a candidate for any elective, appointed or political office.
- ✓ Be at least 65 years of age at the time of the nomination.

Forms must be returned not later than March 31 at Rotary Club of Grove City, 3873 Broadway, Grove City, OH 43123.



The Old Station—Thanks to Shelly Parker Messer, the Society now has another grand photograph of what the Grove City Railroad Depot might have looked like around the turn of the century. The artist for this is her father, James Daviner. As the weather warms, work will resume on restoration of the old depot that was relocated to Century Village from the Town Center last year. Considerable work will be required over the upcoming months to get the station ready for public viewing. This may not be possible until sometime in 2020. John Hines is in charge of the restoration effort and anyone willing to assist should contact him.

2018 Annual Report Ready For City Council

The Society's annual report has been completed and will be submitted to the Grove City Council and Administration March 4, according to Steve Jackson, president.

A copy of the report will also be sent by email to each member of the Society. A print copy is available by mail for a charge of \$5. The

Payment and request can be mailed to: Annual Report, SWFCHS, 3378-B Park St., Grove City, OH 43123.

Last year, over 5,370 people visited Century Village for Heritage Day in June, Old Time Harvest Festival in October, Christmas at the Village and the Saturday summer open houses.

Other interesting statistics showed that people from 84 countries and 49 states visited the Society's web site. Videos on the web site were viewed a total of 2,974 minutes.

Guided at the Grant-Sawyer House totaled 505 last year, up from 42 in 2017. These figures do not include special events when the house was open to the public.

Attendance fell off slightly at the Grove City Welcome Center and Museum last year most likely because of the move of the library. Visitors who signed the guest register in 2017 totaled 1,586 while 1,512 signed in 2018.

While everyone entering the Museum is encouraged to sign the guest register, it's estimated that only one out of four people do. Numbers of visitors are based on visitor sign-ins.

This past year, 475 students and guests participated in field trips as part of the Society's educational program. School children from Park Street, J.C. Sommer, Darby Woods, Monterey, OLPH, Bolton Crossing and Buckeye Woods participated.

Field trips were also provided for groups outside of SWCS. One group was the Delaware City Schools Daycare and Preschool. Another was Quest, an organization that works with developmentally challenged adults.

The Society's events page was greatly enhanced last year. In 2017, it was viewed for 531 minutes while in 2018 that number jumped to 2,889 minutes of viewing time.

The Facebook page continues to spark interest with an increase of 15% last year. That represented 1,107 followers.



Simon Kenton, Life Size Statue Now At Museum

A life size statute of frontiersman Simon Kenton is currently on display at the Grove City Welcome Center and Museum.

Kenton, a friend of Daniel Boone, served in the American Revolution, Indian Wars and the War of 1812.

In 1771, at the age of 16, thinking he had killed a man in a jealous rage, Kenton fled into the wilderness of West Virginia, Kentucky and Ohio. A few years later, while living in Boonesborough, KY, he saved the life of his friend, Daniel Boone during a Shawnee Indian raid.

Kenton became a brigadier general in the Ohio Militia and was present when the famous Indian chief Tecumseh was killed in 1813 at the Battle of the Thames.

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A 501C3 NON-PROFIT CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION

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



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MONTHLY SOCIETY MEETINGS

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

NEW SOCIETY EMAIL ADDRESS

grovecityohhistory@gmail.com