

# SOUTHWEST PIONEER

DECEMBER 2019

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SOUTHWEST FRANKLIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

GROVE CITY, OH 43123

grovecityohhistory.org



*Gardens at Gantz Farm*

## Volunteers Adopt 'Village' Garden

If you missed seeing the kitchen garden at Century Village during the growing season, you missed out on a beautiful site.

Volunteers from the Gardens at Gantz Farm volunteered their talents by creating a vegetable garden at the village.

A variety of heirloom vegetables were planted from the 1860s era in Central Ohio and the crops produced an abundance of fresh foods.



## Museum Visitors Give Facility High Marks

The Grove City Welcome Center and Museum has earned a 4.5 positive rating out of 5 rating points on the popular Trip Advisor web site.

There were 17 reviews including 15 ratings of excellent, with one each for average and poor.

Don Ivers received many accolades from visitors and one August review said, "If you want to know more about the history of Grove City, then this is the place to visit."

*See Museum Page 2*

## Annual Members Urged To Renew Now

Janet Garza, Society membership chair, reminds everyone it's that time of the year to renew memberships.

There has been no change in dues. Annual memberships continue to be only \$15 for 2020, far less than other organizations or historical groups.

Annual members who want the newsletter mailed should write their check for \$24. The quarterly newsletter is delivered by email without additional cost.

Life and annual members, who want the 2020 quarterly newsletter by mail, must pay an additional \$9 fee to cover postage and printing.

The printing and postage fee must be paid before the March 2020 newsletter is mailed.



## HISTORY RECALLED

**Gypsies were frequent** visitors to Grove City arriving in large Conestoga wagons. According to stories, they camped near the present-day Grant-Sawyer Home. Downtown merchants closed their stores and would not allow them to enter.

**When businessman** Rolla W. White retired in 1938, he announced he was leasing his building on Broadway to the Ben Franklin Store.

**William F. Breck**, the founder of Grove City, advertised Aug. 25, 1852, that he was selling 200 acres of land two miles south of Grove City. It was his intent to sell the acreage in three different tracts or cut the land into two acre lots. The property was on the Harrisburg Pike. The advertisement was carried in the Columbus Statesman newspaper.

*See History Recalled, Page 3*

## Need A Holiday Gift Idea? Consider Society Books

Looking for a meaningful Christmas gift for a special person interested in history? Consider one of the Society's publications available at the museum. All proceeds from book sales benefit the Society 100%. Books available at the Museum.

### **History of Jackson Township, Grove City and the Early Pioneers**

This history was first published in a series of articles in the Grove City Record in 1932. Windsor was a local historian, Grove City council member and journalist. The book is 91 pages. **Price \$15**

### **William Foster Breck Grove City's Founding Father**

This is a new publication on the life of Grove City's founding father who came from Fairfield County where he owned several businesses as a teenager. Learn those involved in the founding and development of Grove City. **Price \$10**

**PURCHASE BOTH BOOKS FOR \$20**

### **Reflections**

#### ***Written by Members of the Southwest Franklin County Historical Society***

This 1986 publication is a collection of short stories about Grove City. Some stories include the 1913 flood, Indian mounds (there were 25 in Jackson Township), the food early settlers ate, use of herbs in the frontier, and the Gantz story. **Price \$10**

### **Reflections II**

#### ***Written by Members of the Southwest Franklin County Historical Society***

This publication is mostly about places and township histories. Readers will learn about many of the early families, Bean Corners, Little Pennsylvania, Old Salem Church, the Schock Farmhouse and stage coach stop and Borrer's Corners. **Price \$10**

**PURCHASE BOTH BOOKS FOR \$15**

**Purchase all 4 books including the second  
printing of the booklet Greyhound Racing  
For \$30.00**

**(A \$60 Value When Purchased Separately)**  
**Must Present Coupon at time of Purchase**  
**Good Only at the Museum**  
**Offer good through Dec. 31, 2019**



## Plenty of Chicken At Society's 2019 Christmas Party

**DON'T MISS THIS FRIED CHICKEN EVENT!**

**The party will be Tuesday, Dec. 3 starting at 6:30 pm at the Evans Center. It's a great time to visit with friends, socialize and share stories. Be sure to bring a side dish or dessert to share. Bring your own beverage and table service.**

**INVITE A GUEST**

## Museum Visitors

*Continued from Page 1*

Positive comments included knowledgeable people at the museum willing to answer questions and be attentive to visitors.

Museum visitors used words such as a "fun and fantastic place" and "very cool museum" and "history at its finest" in describing their visits.

The community and the Society can take great pride in this cooperative effort with the City of Grove City and the Grove City Historical Commission.



## Website Supporters Thanked

The Society's website continues to support itself with private donations from businesses and members.

Hirth Norris & Garrison, LLP, certified public accountants, provided new financial support this year along with EMICON Corporation (Timothy Eyerma) and Windora Design.

The Women's Civic Club was also a major sponsor.

Individuals who donated specifically to the website fund included B.J. and Jody Roach, Steve Jackson, Joan Eyerma and James F. Hale.

Look on page 4 of this newsletter for ways you can help keep our website growing.

## History Recalled

*Continued from Page 1*

**Six years ago**, in November 2013, the Grove City Historical Commission held its first meeting. Mayor Richard "Ike" Stage appointed five Grove City residents to serve. Three of the five original members were also members of the Southwest Franklin County Historical Society. Jim Hale was named chairperson; members included Karen Lane, Lisa Napier, Mike Lilly and Linda Hale. The Commission replaced the Department of History. Marilyn Gibboney was the only person to have served as Director of History for the City of Grove City. She was appointed to that position in 1998.

**The Women's Civic Club** announced plans to incorporate in 1927 as a non-profit organization in an effort to purchase a lot in Grant's Woodland Division and construct a clubhouse. Until that time, the organization met in a room at the Jackson Township Library. The action taken also changed the organization's name to the Women's Civic Club of Grove City. The purpose of the group was the advancement of literary pursuits.

**In July, 1927**, Grove City was host for the first Gas Circus 'ever held in the world.' West Park Street was closed for a giant tent that showcased all kinds of new gas appliances including one that actually made ice. To help attendance, an orchestra performed for an hour each evening. The event was sponsored by Columbus Gas and Fuel Company.

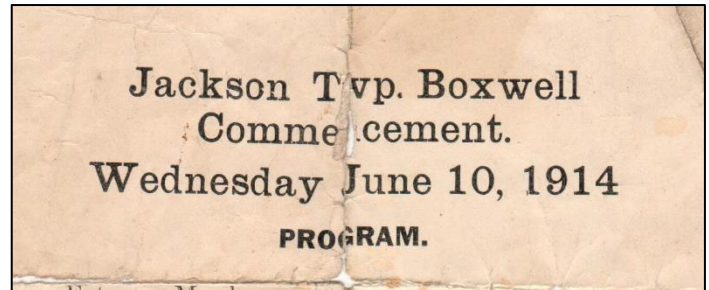
## Web Site Provides Glimpse Into History

Society members interested in searching for area historic sites to visit or just to experience from home have an outlet as close as the computer.

History in Your Own Backyard is an interesting and informative source that is available free on the Internet.

They have over 400 video documentaries available. Society members can view the website and experience the information free. Go to [www.historyinyourownbackyard.com](http://www.historyinyourownbackyard.com).

**2020 Memberships Now Due**



*Mrs. Marian Breckenridge donated a number of old documents to the Society and one off the items is pictured above. In the days before there were many high schools, students at one room schools could complete their education and opt to take the Boxwell Exam, according to Steve Jackson. It was an extensive essay type test that covered a wide range of topics. If a student scored high enough, it gave the standing to go to college, etc. My great aunt took hers about 1905 and did quite well, of which she was quite proud. Stanley and Mary Jane Norris once showed me a copy of the exam. The questions were very challenging, so I understood why Auntie was so pleased. Once the counties in Ohio closed the one room schools and created the rural consolidated high schools, I presume they ended the Boxwell system.*

## Search For Chickens Locates Urbancrest Still

It was nearly 90 years ago when the Franklin County Sheriff's Office uncovered a second operating still in the Village of Urbancrest.

Deputy William Everetts was originally dispatched to the village on a complaint that 11 chickens had been stolen.

The anonymous telephone call claimed the chickens were being prepared for a feast at a village hotel.

Everetts searched the hotel property without any success but upon venturing outside, he uncovered a copper coil in a corn field.

The search for chickens ceased and a search for a working still and home brew began.

A closer search of the building's basement uncovered the other parts of the still along with six gallons of whiskey.

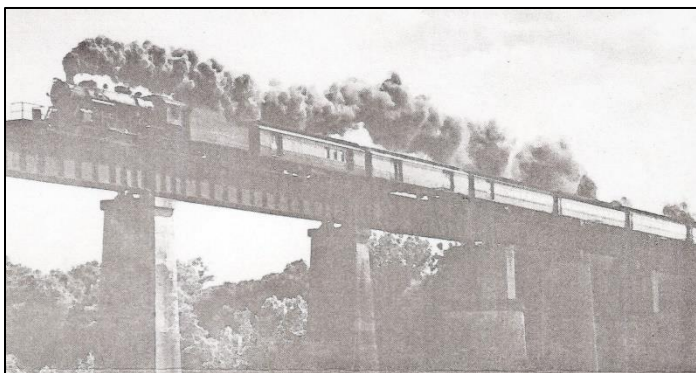
No chicken feathers or evidence of a feast being prepared were found.

This was the second still found in Urbancrest in 1932 during prohibition years in the United States.





*New photo of train crossing the trestle at Orient taken in the 1800s. Notice the train engine.*



*Photo above from historical society archive of a later train crossing the trestle at Orient.*

## New Train Trestle Photo

Jim Henry, a Southern Ohio historian from Waverly, mailed a much earlier copy of a photograph of a coal fired engine crossing the trestle at Orient.

The picture (top) originally appeared in the *Pickaway Quarterly* in the fall of 1979.

Early locomotives that passed through Grove City also burned combustible materials, usually coal.

## Help Fund Society's Website

To date, the website has been sustained by special dedications without being a drain on the Society's treasury. Can you help continue that practice with a minimum donation of \$25. A donation of \$100 will allow you to be an individual sponsor listed on the home page. Mail your check to Web Page Support, 3378-B Park St., Grove City, OH 43123 before Dec. 31, 2019 or leave your donation at the museum.

# Relieffe Grant Barn Dedication Held

**By Steve Jackson**

The dedication of the Relieffe Grant barn at the homestead on Haughn Road was well attended.

Just over 100 people attended the Sept. 21 event held from noon until 5 p.m.

The main floor of the Grant-Sawyer Home was open that afternoon to visitors.

I presided at the dedication and the mayor spoke. I had the honor to ring the farm bell and then we slid open front doors of the barn.

**Many very nice** and supportive comments were made throughout the day.

The barn is about 85 percent done inside; 100 percent outside. The stairs in the northwest corner are still under construction.

The displays are basically installed although old time tool display is still under construction.

Likewise, the stone top stove in the summer kitchen display is still a work in progress. It's similar to one at Monticello.

**We had inherited** a huge slab of soap stone from Mrs. Jividen. John Mannering of the City designed it and the blacksmiths at Village are making iron pieces.

The laundry etc. are done, as is the visitor orientation space. We can currently seat about 15 people and have a small stage centered on the restored Concord Church pulpit.

Upstairs is currently a storage area and prep area. It may eventually be used as an expanded display area. Much depends on how user friendly the stairs can be made.

Currently the stairs are not suitable for all except the brave. Currently, signage for all displays haven't been completed.

We will be working with city staff on that this winter. I'm pretty proud of what we have accomplished. We started move in last Tuesday and it has been busy.



**STEVE JACKSON**

*Continued on Page 5*

# Relieffe Grant Barn

*Continued from Page 4*

The Grove City Welcome Center and Museum also had a good day with more than 300 visitors.



Beverly Babbert, left, conducted tours during the dedication service. Photos right and bottom show the Relieffe Grant barn interior.



## DON'T FORGET.

**It's time to renew your annual membership. Please mail your \$15 to the Society at 3378-B Park St., Grove City, 43123 or pay Janet Garza at the next meeting.**

## HISTORY Dateline

By Jim Hale



I recently received an interesting email from Mike Boso. Mike's job as the chief building inspector for the City of Grove City affords him many opportunities to view our past in ways unknown to most of us.

One of those situations provided a look into the past of a downtown building better remembered as the former Grove City Savings Bank on the west side of Broadway in the Town Center.

Workers inside had removed a section of the floor to complete a plumbing repair. That repair exposed an interesting piece of Grove City's past.



Much to Boso's surprise, the building's floor joists weren't wood.

Instead, the main floor was supported by metal track once used as standard railroad rails or, could it be possible, they once lined Broadway during the operation of Grove City's Interurban

The Grove City Museum had a section of Interurban rails in a display case. They were removed from the showcase and the rail sections were taken to the municipal building for Boso to compare.

Before a comparison could be made, the workers at the old bank building had completed their work and closed the hole the floor.

The mystery remains.

*Continued on Page 7*





White's Barber Shop when it was located beside what is now the Little Theatre off Broadway in the Grove City Town Center.

## Town Center Businesses Are Over 100 Years Old

Two Grove City Town Center businesses have now been operating for well over 100 years, according to an article by Barb Albert in the Jan. 5, 2000 edition of the Grove City Record.

One business, the "old hotel and saloon" is well known but did you know an honor is also due White's Barber Shop?

The barber shop has always been in the downtown area but it has operated at numerous locations. One of the oldest pictures the Society owns shows the barber shop beside the downtown movie theatre, now LTOB.

**Albert interviewed** Jim McDonald, the current owner of the shop who was also a former member of Grove City Council.

McDonald told Albert that Charles White was the original owner. It was later owned by Earl White and later Richard White.

An article in the Columbus Dispatch in 1952 pointed out Charles and his son, Elvin, better known as Budd, had been barbering in the downtown for 98 combined years. Charles has plied his profession 57 years and his son has completed 41 years.

**McDonald purchased** the business in 1977 but kept the shop's historic name. He had worked at White's Barber Shop since 1961. He was told the first haircuts by Charles White were 15 cents. "I think this business had kept going by word of mouth, tradition and habit," McDonald told Albert.

## Hotel and Saloon

The "Old Hotel" in the Grove City Town Center is known today as Plank's on Broadway. Before that it was operated by the Enders' family.

"I was told that in the early days of Grove City that building was at one time a Livery Stable and Hotel," according to Barbara Weygandt Burkhart. "There were rooms upstairs that were used for bedrooms and lodging."

"There is a picture of my mother, Sidney Haughn Weygandt, showing her own mother, Barbara Keller Haughn, standing in the front upstairs window as she worked there," she recalled.

**"During my young** days, the hotel was owned by Charlie Endres and later by his son Joe Endres. We locals always called it "The Hotel", or "Charlies". My Dad would sometimes go to Charlie's and buy a ham sandwich to bring home to share."

The hotel was built in 1854, two years after Grove City became a village, by William M. Blackburn for William Voelkel Sr. Others, over the early years, who operated the hotel included John Douglass, T. E. Booth, Jack Goldsmith, John Corzilius, Dude Stife and a man only known as Jones, according to a series of historical articles by Harold Windsor.

The Endres & Son establishment opened in 1909.



## Society Wins Award

*Steve Jackson accepted the Trailblazer Award for Community Enhancement at the annual meeting of Visit Grove City, the Grove City Area Visitors and Convention Bureau. With Jackson were, left, Beverly Babbert and Barbara Howison.*

# SWFCHS 'Home Tour' Held 20 Years Ago

The Historical Society sponsored a fund-raising Home and Building Tour nearly 20 years ago showcasing some of the better known historic sites in Southwest Franklin County.

The tour program included stops at nine buildings, four cemeteries and Camp Chase which was a Union Prison site during the Civil War.

The tour included stops at the following:

**BIGGART CABIN.** The John Biggart family log cabin in Pleasant Township was an early stop. It is believed to have been built in 1800 and located on the west bank of Darby Creek. The Biggart cabin could only be viewed from the outside.

**DEVOSS HOME.** The next stop was in Harrisburg and the home of the village's first mayor, Dr. Joseph Helmick. The house was beautifully furnished with period furnishings.

**GANTZ FARM.** Andrew Gantz, a Pennsylvania native, settled in Jackson Township around 1830. At the time, the old brick farmhouse was being restored.

**LINDIG HOME.** The house, built in 1873, has been restored. The farm was once in both Pleasant and Jackson Townships.

**RIES CABIN.** Built in 1803, this cabin is about two miles north of Georgesville on Gardner Road. As such, it was one of the oldest structures in Franklin County.

**WHITE HOUSE.** William F. Breck once owned this house on White Place. Breck held a meeting in the front room to layout the village that became Grove City.

**CONCORD CHURCH.** This Methodist church was formed in 1847 as a Bible study class. The current structure was built in 1906.

**ST. JOHN'S CHURCH.** Located on Columbus Street, this building was completed in 1889 after relocating from its original site at Columbus and Arbutus.

**HARRISBURG TOWNHALL.** This was the site for many stage and medicine shows over the years. The lowest level of the building was the town's jail.

**UNION CEMETERY.** Many early settlers and veterans from four wars are buried there.

Other cemeteries included in the tour included Grove City, Concord and Oak Hill cemeteries.

## History Dateline . . .

*Continued from Page 5*

Boso said the railroad rails were probably available when the building was under construction and provided a very secure foundation. He said he knows of no other building in Grove City, at this time, with rails used as a foundation.

The Grove City Savings Bank was capitalized in 1903 by A. G. Grant, Emil Kiesewetter and E. C. Wagner.

Shortly after, Joseph M. Briggs and Daniel Weygandt formed The Farmers and Merchants Bank also in 1903 and shortly after opening, the name was changed to the First National Bank in Grove City. Both banks were capitalized with \$25,000. *Photo by Mike Boso*

## Museum Marks 10<sup>th</sup> Year Of Operation

It was just 10 short years ago that Grove City Council, acting on a recommendation from the City Administration, approved renovations of the old Huntington Bank building to create a museum in the Grove City Town Center.



**MUSEUM'S FIRST  
CHRISTMAS TREE  
IN 2009**

In the past five years, nearly 7,000 individuals have visited the museum. Visitors have passed through the doors from nearly every state in the Union and from many European countries, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the South American countries.

**"The museum** will be an asset to our town center and will help draw more people to the area," Steve Jackson, Society president was quoted as saying. The museum has lived up to its expectations.

When the building first opened, it housed offices for the Grove City Area Visitors and Convention Bureau, The Southwest Franklin County Historical Society, the Grove City Town Center and the Franklin County Historical and Genealogical Society which relocated from the Harrison House in Franklinton. The museum today has thousands of exhibit items.



# Christmas Celebration Is Saturday, Dec. 7

A full day of holiday celebration is planned for the Grove City Town Center on Saturday, Dec. 7 from 10 a.m. until 8 p.m.

One of the highlights will be the Grove City Community Parade that steps off at 7 p.m. After that, Santa will help light the Town Center Plaza Christmas Tree.

The Mistletoe Market will open at 10 a.m.



and operate until 6 p.m. Children will be able to visit Santa at the George Edge Music Park on Broadway. TWIG 184 will be taking photos of children with Santa for a \$5 donation to Nationwide Children's Hospital.

Donations of money, food and personal hygiene products will be accepted for the Grove

City Food Pantry, and new toys can be donated for the Jackson Township Firefighters for Kids holiday program.

A Secret Santa shop will be open in the Grove City Welcome Center and Museum.

Experience the sights of community history and holiday traditions. Celebrate an afternoon of old-style holiday fun on the Historic Christmas Tour from 1 to 5 p.m. on Saturday.

Stop by Century Village, 4185 Orders Road; the Grant-Sawyer Home, 4126 Haughn Road; or the Grove City Museum, 3378 Park St., to enjoy a ride to each destination. Tours end at 4:30 p.m.

From 6-8 p.m., enjoy live entertainment in the Town Center and be sure to visit Santa's reindeer at the southeast corner of Civic Place and Broadway.

## Story Ideas For Newsletter; Submit By Mail or E-Mail

Do you have a story of historical interest you would like to share? If you do please submit it to the **Southwest Pioneer** at 3378 Park St., Grove City, OH 43123 or at [jhale45@gmail.com](mailto:jhale45@gmail.com). If you need help writing the story we can help. Next newsletter in March 2020.

## Did You Know?

When 'old hotel' operated in the downtown years ago under the ownership of the Voelkel family, what was the popular meal served in the dining room?

Ida Voelkel was considered a very popular cook in the community and people would come from miles around for her popular dish, turtle soup.

Long gone from the business is the soup and the garden out back where she raised fresh vegetables.

There were also walkways through flower beds and tables set up outside where families could gather with their own baskets of food to enjoy with friends and relatives.

## Grove City Became Real 'Bedroom Community'

In 1988, Grove City lived up to its name as a bedroom community of Columbus when the Simmons Mattress Company opened a manufacturing facility on Marlane Drive in a building now occupied by the Mid-Ohio Food Bank. Simmons selected Grove City because of its close proximity to both I-71 and I-270. The manufacturing plant and office building occupied nearly 15 acres just off Stringtown Road and shipped mattresses throughout Ohio, Pennsylvania and Indiana.

## SOUTHWEST PIONEER

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Southwest Franklin County Historical Society

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

A 501c3 NON-PROFIT CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION



[www.grovecityohhistory.org](http://www.grovecityohhistory.org)

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### MONTHLY SOCIETY MEETINGS

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