



SOUTHWEST PIONEER

SEPTEMBER 2022

Newsletter Only Available Online

SOUTHWEST FRANKLIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

3378-B PARK ST., GROVE CITY, OHIO 43123

Society, Commission, City

Grove City Involved in Statewide Events

Grove City Parks and Recreation, the Southwest Franklin County Historical Society and the Grove City Historical Commission are involved in a nine-day event that encourages Ohio residents to explore fascinating places that reflect Ohio's rich heritage. Dates are Sept. 9-18.

Ohio Open Doors offers several behind-the-scenes events that aren't ordinarily available to the general public. Search *Ohio Open Doors* online for additional information and a calendar. Most Ohio Open Doors events, including those in Grove City, are free and most one-day-only opportunities. For Grove City free events, go to the calendar at www.grovecityohhistory.org.

Society Web Site Offers Variety Of Information

Did you know William F. Breck and his wife, Elizabeth Campbell Smith, purchased 273 acres in Jackson Township from her father in 1847 for \$1,911. Before the interurban operated between Columbus and Grove City, a commuter train provided transportation to Columbus. Many people in town at the time worked at the Columbus Buggy Works, the largest buggy manufacturer in the world at the time. Home west of Broadway were referred to as being in the Town of Beulah

Nancy Duff was the first white child born in the township in 1806. She was the daughter of William C. and Catherine Duff. William Brown built the first brick house here in 1814. Scioto Chapel was the first church built in Jackson Township in 1812. Other early denominations were the New-Lights and the Universalists. Three other denominations were born at the Highland Mission. They included the German-English Lutherans in 1853, the Presbyterians in 1856 and the Methodist in 1859. It's believed Methodist circuits riders arrived much earlier.

Grove City purchased its first motorized fire truck in 1922. In 1996, a propane explosion at a business on Broadway, south of the downtown, caused evacuation of area homes. For a time, there was a fear that propane had

entered the storm sewers along Broadway when another explosion occurred at a station near Southwest Blvd.

Have you ever heard of Zuber, Ohio? What about Ridpath or Tuckeyhuddle? Maybe you've heard that Mastodon tusks were uncovered in the clay pit of an early Grove City brick factory. In 1822, Franklin County's squirrel population was causing so much damage to farm fields, the county commissioners placed a bounty on their skins.



These stories and more at www.grovecityohhistory.org.



Stop By Museum During Arts in the Alley This Month

The 43rd annual Arts in the Alley is slated for Sept. 16-18 in the Town Center. The museum will have extended hours Friday until 7 p.m., and on Saturday. Stop by the

museum that weekend and talk with a representation of the historical society. Consider becoming a member of the organization and help preserve the history of the area.



Garage On Park Street, Not Along Broadway

This photograph is identified as Johnson's Garage and it has been incorrectly identified on several occasions as once being on Broadway.

This location was on Park Street directly across the street from Planks. It is now occupied by Scruffy to Fluffy pet grooming.

The house on the left was the home of Fred Hensel, a local blacksmith. The confusion might come from notations on the back of the photo which describes it as Mulzer's Garage which later became Harley's Ford dealership that was on Broadway.

The notation also states the upstairs was one a bowling alley; street level included a grocery store, drug store, a restaurant, post office and hardware.

All of those businesses were located in several different buildings on the west side of Broadway in the Town Center.

This just goes to prove that history constantly improves as new information comes available and closer comparisons are made when examining old exterior buildings.

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NEWSLETTER ONLY AVAILABLE ONLINE

Southwest Franklin County Historical Society

A 501C3 NON-PROFIT CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION

SOCIETY OFFICERS

Steve Jackson, President 614-871-0081

John Hines, Vice President 614-364-6692

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Annual Member	\$15	Annual Student	\$1
Annual Business	\$50	Life Member	\$150

Arts in the Alley

Annual 'Arts' Parade First Held in 1990

As this year's Grove City Arts in the Alley Parade date approaches, it might be interesting to revisit the first parade held during Arts in the Alley on Sept. 15, 1990. For many years, it was identified as the Grove City Community Parade before the name change. The first parade was an effort that included 60+ volunteers.

There had been no large parade in the community for several years after the demise of the Grove City Community Fair/Festival, an event once held in July.

What lead up to the interest in a rebirth of a parade was the 1989 dedication ceremony for the Grove City Safety Building. The Grove City Area Chamber of Commerce was asked to organize a processional of dignitaries through town. Gary Sigrist, who was president elect of the Chamber at the time, along with fellow Chamber members Greg Skinner and Tom Shrum, asked James F. (Jim) Hale to organize the processional.

Much to their surprise, a huge crowd turned out to watch what were mostly vehicles with dignitaries ride down Broadway to the new Safety Building.

The Grove City High School Band and a band float were the only "parade like" entries. It's believed many local people turned out to support the Grove City High School marching band which had just been selected to march in the 1990 Tournament of Roses Parade.

After the dedication of the safety building, Sigrist, Shrum and Skinner met and decided it was an opportune time to revive a parade for the community. Sigrist asked Hale to take charge of the parade as director, a position he had previously held several times before.

The initial question was what was the best time to host a parade.

After overcoming some concerns with the Arts in the Alley Committee, the Grove City Community Parade made its debut as the kick-off event for the 11th Annual Arts in the Alley in 1990.

The Girl Scout Council was the first organization to sign-up with a float entry and that group continued to be a major participant. (There was no parade in 2001).



Zachary's Restaurant and **Roxainne's Flowers and Gifts** were the second and third local businesses to submit an entry. The **Heartland Bank** was the first to enter a horse drawn unit.

The theme for the parade was *Community Affair* and that it was in more ways than one. The parade was staged at the Southwest entrance to Beulah Park, Our Lady of Perpetual Help and the South-Western Transportation Compound.

The Chamber and the Grove City Area Visitors and Convention Bureau chose to recognize veterans and those serving in the military, especially those in the Persian Gulf. A total of 3,000 U. S. flags were distributed before the start of the parade.

A military plane flyover was requested and approved. Grove City High School graduate **Bruce Johnson** was the pilot of one of four A-7 Fighter Bomber aircraft from the 166th Tactical Fighter Squadron that made a low-level flyover at 10 a.m.

Delbert Johnson, mayor of Harrisburg, coordinated the flyover with the U. S. Air Force.

The Grove City Police Department honor guard led the parade and the officers were asked by the to carry a black POW/MIA flag since Sept. 16 was a national day remembering prisoners of war and those missing in action.

Bands that marched in that first parade included Grove City, Westland, Franklin Heights and two bands from Worthington high schools. In later years, bands from Circleville, Jackson, Waverly and West Jefferson marched.

Eilene Simmons, a 91-year-old businesswoman, was selected as the first parade marshal. When she moved to Grove City from Tennessee in the 1930s, the population on the city limits sign read 1,200 people, she remembered.

Chamber President-elect **Sigrist** arranged with **Schoedinger-Norris Funeral Home** to provide VIP curbside seating along Broadway for residents bused to the parade from **Monterey** and **Adrian Wells** nursing homes.

Skinner selected judges for the parade and arranged for seating in front of **Saxton Real Estate**. Judges included **Mary Anne Harsh** from **Mt. Vernon**, **Mayor Mark Froelich** of **Obetz** and **Michelle Gilmore** from **Johnstown**. Winners selected included: **Ray Ruoff** and his antique tractor, **Grove City Record's** antique truck, **West of the Tracks** (Beulah Subdivision) float, and the **Heartland Bank's** horse drawn unit.



A great deal of appreciation for the success of that first parade must go to **Dolly and Marvin Thomson** of **Thompson Floats** of **Williamsport**, a commercial float building company. They supplied most of the floats for the parade. In the early 1970s, the Grove City Community Parade was one of the largest

parades in the Ohio with as many as 32 commercial and privately built floats. The number of float entries dropped after the Thompson's retired.

Others who played important leadership positions included:

George Nolte, assistant parade director who working closely planning the event with the parade director. Nolte also solicited and coordinated antique and show car entries and several horse units.

Don Miller, of South-Western City Schools, handled publicity for the event; Charles Cotton organized bands and completed arrangements with The Kroger Company to sponsor all bands in the parade.

Tom Shrum made personal contacts encouraging businesses to enter floats. Jennette Myers and Harry J. Monroe worked to encourage non-profit groups and service clubs to enter floats. Earle and Grace Moore offered special design and planning assistance to businesses interested in sponsoring a float in the parade.

Helena McComb and R. L. Edwards coordinated political entries. Edwards continue to work many years on the parade registering all political and commercial entries on parade day.

Bruce Close, who had worked on the Reynoldsburg Tomato Festival, organized a Children's Parade that included uniformed, costume, mini-floats (wagons) and a decorated bike division. Over 250 children participated in that first paraded.

Bev Basler and Emile Wildman represented the Chamber and performed a multitude of functions. Pat Cady represented the Arts in the Alley committee and worked in traffic control on parade day. At that time, the parade committee handled all traffic control and police were stationed at critical areas.



Jody Roach organized a special parade unit composed of twins; John Barnes kept

parade traffic moving at the end to eliminate back-ups and delays; Linda Hale took pictures.

Even Grove City's trash collection service got involved. The last unit in the parade was a refuse truck. Volunteers collected left behind. People along the parade route also joined effort.

City officials included Mayor Ike Stage, City Administrator Charles Boso, Service Director Jim Blackburn, Police Chief James McKean, Jackson Township Fire Chief Donald Reese, Principal Donald Wohrle from Paul C. Hayes Technical School and Michael L. Bobby, director of business affairs for South-Western City Schools.

Harold Stevens Jr., editor of the Southwest Messenger at the time, said it best when he wrote: "A lot of people put a lot of time and hard work into making this parade possible, so come out to see the result of their work and give them a big round of applause as they go by."

Sharon Downs Plaque Dedicated; Installed On Municipal Building

A plaque honoring the work of Sharon Downs was dedicated by the Grove City Rotary Club during the Homecoming Event in the Town Center in July.

The plaque reads:



Sharon Thomas Downs was an early driving force in the creation of today's Town Center. She was a member of the original Grove City Town Center organization, a group that made strides to repurpose and reinvent the downtown business community. She encouraged floral displays along Broadway, live concerts and Boo on Broadway. She worked closely with the local Chamber of Commerce and was instrumental in keeping the fall Harvest Market open. A lifelong member of the Community Club, Sharon helps prepare the chicken noodle carryout meals during Arts in the Alley. Sharon also organized the Christmas Tree Gala, an annual event held at the Pinnacle. A successful entrepreneur, she was introduced to the business world at age 12 at her parent's restaurant. She has since been a proprietor of three successful businesses. Zachary's, a destination downtown restaurant, was the first to feature outdoor dining. Sharon, one of several who envisioned a historical town center district, also was an early promoter of a Grove City Museum and she was a supporter and is still involved with Buddy Ball at Windsor Park.