

Historical Chronology Of Grove City, Pennsylvania

c. 1758

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Cunningham and Mr. and Mrs. James Glenn from Antrim County, Ireland, emigrated to the United States; the Cunninghams and the Glens established their homes in Shaver Township, Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania. The Cunninghams had two children a son, Valentine and a daughter, Polly. The Glens also had a son, Robert, and a daughter, Margaret. Valentine and Robert served in the Infantry during the Revolutionary War, and after the war they returned to Huntingdon County, PA., where they married one another's sister.

1795

Free parcels of land in Mercer County and elsewhere were offered to white settlers by government officials in Harrisburg, PA. As a result of this historic offer, two villages on Wolf Creek were founded simultaneously-Pine Grove and Slabtown approximately one mile north which formed the nucleus of Grove City, Pennsylvania.

1796

The first permanent settlers in the Grove City region were Samuel Waldron and his family, originally from New Jersey, and Thomas McCoy from Harpers' Ferry, West Virginia. Mr. McCoy had six sons – John, Joseph, James, Thomas, Hugh and William. The McCoy family settled in the area known today as McCoytown, PA.

1798

Valentine Cunningham and Robert Glenn of Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania are presumed to have conducted a reconnaissance party to this area during which time they chose the site known today as Cunningham Park, Grove City, for their permanent settlement. The village they founded was called Pine Grove, a name suggested by Margaret Cunningham.

Valentine Cunningham received an original land grant of 400 acres.

A gristmill was built by Cunningham and Robert Glenn along the western bank of Wolf Creek.

The Cunninghams built their log cabin home downstream on the eastern bank of Wolf Creek, not far from a village of friendly Indians.

Approximately a mile north in Wolf Creek, another gristmill was built, possibly by Robert Glenn or James Graham. This village was named Slabtown because of the large slabs of slate which were stored on the side of the mill until they were needed to cover the holes in the roads nearby.

1799

February 19, Mr. and Mrs. Valentine Cunningham and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Glenn signed an Agreement to share equally any profits realized from the gristmill in Pine Grove.

1800

Death of Margaret Cunningham at age 25.

Mercer County established.

Valentine Cunningham erected a saw mill not far from the gristmill in Pine Grove.

1802

Valentine Cunningham also built a log cabin to be used as a school house for local children.

A cable and plank bridge was built across Upper Dam at Slabtown.

1806

Death of Valentine Cunningham at age 30. The three Cunningham children were provided a home in Plain Grove by their Glenn grandparents.

First wooden bridge built across Upper Dam in Slabtown.

1807

Robert and Samuel Glenn built a new gristmill of escutched logs, replacing the one built by Valentine Cunningham.

c. 1808

Gristmill in Slabtown became known as Shaw's Mill.

1812

Saw mill built in Slabtown by Robert Moore. Other businesses, such as a tannery, a general store and salt works, followed. With these growing establishments, which served an increasing number of settlers, Slabtown became the business center for the area.

Birthdate of Brigadier General Maxwell, d. 1929

c. 1837

J.G. Cunningham and brother Charles returned to Pine Grove to continue building the village which their parents co-founded. J.G. Cunningham built a frame home on the site of the present J.G. Cunningham house.

1843

Construction of the first church in the area – a Methodist Church in Slabtown at the intersection of Cranberry and Sandy Lake Roads. The log cabin structure had a dirt floor, no permanent seats and was lighted for services with lamps provided by the members.

c. 1850

Regional post office (Wolf Creek) was located in the W.A. Young residence on Liberty Street. Mr. Fleming was the postmaster.

Discovery of bituminous coal in the Grove City area.

1851

First permanent business, a coffin and fine cabinetry shoppe, was established on South Broad Street by E. R. Black.

c. 1858

Founding of Pine Grove Academy, Pine Grove, PA., which was a post-high school center with male and female tutors. The academy was founded by Prof. Richard M. Thompson and is the parent institution of Grove City College. In the early years of the academy a student's outfit for returning to school included a bedstead, cooking stove, two or three chairs, a crock of homemade apple butter, an oil lamp and a generous supply of Mother's homemade bread.

1864

Academy received accreditation for preparing students for enrollment in Allegheny or Westminster Colleges.

1872

Pittsburgh, Shenango and Lake Erie Railroad reached Pine Grove.

The Black brothers opened the first planing mill and lumber yard which was located on South Broad Street near the location of the present music store. Because of complaints, concerning noise, it was forced in a few years to the present location of the Bi Lo Market.

1875

Construction of two-story brick school house, Center and Main Streets, which replaced the one-room school house on the same site. The new school was a combination elementary / high school. According to oral history, the early group of United Presbyterian Church parishioners met in one of the upstairs rooms of the new building. Isaac Ketler, a new educator in town, also used one of the upstairs rooms for his Select School.

Stave Mill, which cut lumber into barrel staves was built along Wolf Creek near Lincoln Avenue.

The population of Pine Grove was approximately 200.

1876

Founding of the McKay Carriage Works

1877

Founding of the Music Department, Pine Grove Academy.

1878

Porter and Emery Pottery Works was established.

Founding of the Porter and Emery Pottery Works on North Broad Street.

1879

Construction of Old Academy (Recitation Hall), the first building to be constructed by Pine Grove Academy. Community funds for the building – the community goal since the first mill started turning in 1799 – were solicited; when citizens could not afford monetary donations, their labor was offered. Frank Stewart, a local architect, designed the building, which was razed by the college c. 1965.

Founding of the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

1880

First coal mine opened in the area.

Census records indicate the Grove City population was 650.

1881

Grove City College awarded its first academic degree.

Ina McDowell was the first Pine Grove student to receive a Grove City College degree.

1882

Petition of Pine Grove citizens submitted to Mercer County court to change the name of the village of Pine Grove to Grove City, along with incorporated status.

1883

January 1, name change of the community and incorporated status became effective.

February 2, first official meeting of Grove City Borough Council at which time the sketch for the official Seal was adopted.

July 3, request for the construction of a jail was approved. Grove City Police Department was founded in order to handle the anticipated rowdiness of the upcoming Fourth of July celebration.

October 3, Margaret Simpson Guinnip (1826-1897), who went west and returned by covered wagon to Pine Grove, offered a series of financial loans which made it possible for the new borough council to begin official operations.

1884

November 1, Charter was received which officially changed the name of Pine Grove Normal Academy to Grove City College.

1885

Title "Grove City College" first appeared on their academic catalogues.

1886

Brick making was started on the Cornelius farm, Liberty Street.

Shaw's Salt Works founded in Slabtown.

1887

J.G. and Charles Cunningham laid out the basic street plan of Grove City.

1889

Gas lamps were installed along South Broad Street.

1890

May 9, South Broad Street fire destroyed all the business district on the west side of South Broad Street from Pine Street to the railroad.

Grove City College's administrators signed a contract with the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A. to provide Biblical instruction.

1893

Founding of the Fine Arts Department, Pine Grove Academy, and the beginning of fine arts exhibitions for the community.

1896

First serving of the Roman Catholic Mass in the Grove City area. The service was held in the J.G. Cunningham House, Lower Campus, Grove City College.

1897

August 20 fire destroyed McKay Carriage Works, Grove City's largest employer.

1898

June 15, South Broad Street fire.

Founding of the Bessemer Gas Engine Co.

Founding of the Grove City Fire Department.

Construction of Ivy Chapel. Razed c. 1965.

1901

Construction of Central School, Center and West Main Streets. Razed 1976.

1904

Fire destroyed McKay Carriage Co.

1905

Construction of Lincoln School, Gilmore Avenue.

Planting of oak trees along West Main Street, sponsored by the Grove City Women's Club.

1906

Founding of the Chamber of Commerce.

1907

Founding of the Grove City Hospital, 335 West Main Street.

Opening of Grove City's first theatre, the Nickolodean. Opening night drew an audience of 2000 who paid 5¢ each for admission. The theatre was located in the Reynolds Building where Joden's Jewelry is currently located on South Broad Street.

1908

First municipal electric plant installed.

1909

Founding of the George Junior Republic, Grove City-Mercer Road.

1910

Construction of the Sturgeon Memorial Chapel, George Junior Republic campus.

1911

Grove City College officials purchased the first parcel of land for the Upper Campus development.

1913

Construction of the Grove City High School (now Grove City Area Middle School), East Main Street. Architect, W.G. Eckles, New Castle, PA.

June 12. Airplane crashed into backyard of the home at 146 East Pine St., killing the pilot Earl Saundt (1888-1913). Mr. Saundt, a pioneer aviator, was providing an air show demonstration for the June Festival when the accident occurred.

Bessemer Lake Erie Railroad accident in Grove City.

1914

Typhoid Fever epidemic.

Beginning of World War I.

1915

U.S. Creamery built, Lincoln Avenue (no longer extant).

Osteopathic patients of Dr. O.O. Bashline and Dr. W.R. Rossman were hospitalized at the Rossman home at 315 Woodland Avenue. The Rossman home served as a residence/hospital until 1919.

1918

Conclusion of World War I.

1919

Dr. O.O. Bashline and Dr. W.R. Rossman purchased private home at 312 Jackson St.; after remodeling and wiring the home for electricity, a seven bed hospital with offices and examination rooms, opened as the Bashline-Rossman Osteopathic Hospital.

The facility was closed in 1923.

Founding of the General Hugh Mercer Chapter of the Daughter's of the American Revolution.

Founding of the Grove City Country Club.

1920

Founding of the radio station WSAJ by Dr. Herbert Harmon (1871-1956), Grove City College.

1922

Construction of the Grove City Hospital, Hillcrest Circle. The building was designed by W.G. Eckles, architect and remained in service, with numerous additions, until 1978.

Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Harshaw donated land for Memorial Park.

1923

Col. Oakley G. Kelly (1891-1966), a Grove City native, using a single engine mono-plane, the "T-2", completed the first transcontinental airmail delivery from New York City to San Diego, California.

Bashline-Rossman Osteopathic Hospital opened its new quarters at Center and Pine Streets. The building, with a sequence of additions remained open until 1978.

Founding of the Grove City Rotary Club.

1924

Grove City community raised funds to commission the design and construction of the war memorial in Memorial Park. William Ahearn, a Grove City native and fine arts graduate with a degree in sculpture from Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie-Mellon University), was awarded the contract.

1925

Opening of the Penn-Grove Hotel, East Pine Street.

1926

Tower Presbyterian Church constructed on South Broad Street.

1927

Charles Lindbergh flew the Atlantic Ocean from New York to Paris.

Construction of Washington Elementary School, Madison Avenue.

1929

Bessemer Gas Engine Co. and C. and G. Cooper Co. merged to form the Cooper-Bessemer Company.

1930

Upper Campus, Grove City College, was laid out.

Construction of Chestnut Street Bridge.

1931

Founding of Grove City's Boy Scouts of America organization.

1932

Memorial Day week – moving of the Craig-McConkey house to its present location.

Founding of Grove City's Girl Scouts of America organization.

1933

Construction of the U.S. Post Office, East Pine Street

Ordinance passed by Grove City Borough Council prohibiting the sale of alcoholic beverages.

1935

Paula Kelly, daughter of a local doctor, pronounced the name "Grove City" for the first time on a national radio program – The Major Bowes Hour. Paula Kelly later became one of the lead singers with the Glenn Miller Orchestra and later the Artie Shaw Orchestra.

1936

Construction of the Memorial Park swimming pool by the borough council.

Fatal airplane accident which claimed the life of Donald August, son of Mr. & Mrs. Wendell August.

1939

Beginning of World War II.

1940

Dr. Peter Marshall, chaplain of the U.S. Senate, presented a week-long series of memorable sermons at Harbison Chapel and Tower Presbyterian Church. Many old-timers will agree that this was one of the most exciting weeks in Grove City history.

1945

Conclusion of World War II.

1955

Creation of the Office of Borough Manager.

1958

Founding of the Grove City Community Library.

c. 1965

Beginning of the demolition of the Lower Campus, Grove City College.

Opening of the Bashline Memorial Hospital in the former estate of E.J. Fithian, "Oakhill," on Woodland Avenue. The facility was closed in 1978.

1967

Grove City Women's Club sponsored a major retrospective exhibition of Margaret Williams paintings. The project raised \$1,000.00 which was donated to the local libraries.

1978

Merger of Grove City Hospital and Bashline-Rossman Hospitals.

1981

Construction of the Unity Community Hospital, North Broad Street Extension.

1983

100th Anniversary of the founding of the Grove City Borough Council.

1986

Construction of the present borough building.

1993

August 10. Operation of the Grove City water plant, West Main Street, began. It includes a state-of-the-art water treatment facility and the drilling of an additional well. (The number of wells no totals 4).

1994

Radio Station WSAJ-FM, Grove City College, converted to a classical music profile.

1995

Began implementation of a master plan for “active” sports (swimming, basketball, etc.) in Memorial Park, and “passive” recreation (walking, hiking, biking, etc.) at Hunter Farm. Anticipated date of completion is 2005.