

1890

Context:

On July 3, 1890, Idaho became the 43rd state.

On July 10, 1890, Wyoming became the 44th states;

The Sherman Antitrust Act was signed into law, prohibiting commercial monopolies (July 2).

The population of Grove City reached 1,160. The population of Pine Township was 1,909. This represented a combined population increase of 1,417 over the 1880 census.

At about 2 a.m. on May 9, the west side of North Broad Street was destroyed by fire.

Note:

The fire originated in W. W. Forrest Barber Shop and swept through the business district destroying eighteen buildings.

The flames of the fire were said to have been visible 25 miles away.

Because of the lack of a community water works, the lack of fire fighting apparatus, and a strong wind firefighters were unable to control the fire. Bucket brigades were formed, but they were unable control the fire. Firefighters redirected their efforts to saving as much property possible as possible.

The Greenville Fire Department was called at 3 a.m. and all three Greenville Companies (D. B. Packard No. 1; Citizen Hose No. 2 and T. C. Gibson Hose No. 3) responded. They left Greenville on a special train for Grove City. With the help of the Greenville Fire Department, the fire was under control by early morning. A livery, bank, and the college buildings were saved.

Among the buildings that were destroyed were:

The Buffalo Clothing House	Clothing
The Millinery Store and	Dry goods
Mrs. M. I. Hay residence	Residence
The Homer Store	
S. P. Barr	Grocer and Confectioner

D. Kerr	Grocer
H. W. Koonce	Dry goods and Groceries
D. G. Courtney	Office and Residence
G. B. Horner	Music Store
W. J. Harshaw	Dry goods and Groceries
A. C. Bligh & Co.	Drugs
W. H. Craig	Restaurant
C. A. Rice	Barbershop
A. K. McCandless	Groceries and Feed
Robert Veach	Restaurant
A. G. Stein	Tailor and Residence
P. S. & I. E. Railroad Station	Rail Station
Stewart's Livery barn	Livery
Lizzie Love residence	Residence
The stables, warehouses and other outbuildings along Filer Alley	

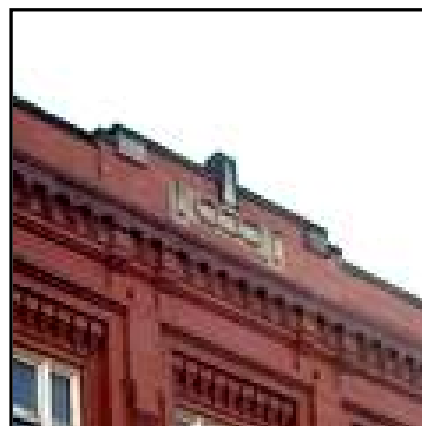
In c1890 a four-storey brick building was constructed on Broad Street.

Note:

The building was built next to the Methodist Church at 214 Broad Street. The builder of this structure is unknown. It is a distinctively styled building with prominent decorative brickwork on the front of the structure. The building featured a vertical emphasis with pilasters topped by decorative features. The decoration at the top of the building features three interlocking chain links.



This photograph shows the building as it appeared in 2011.



Milton Clark Baker began operating a forge and blacksmithing business.

Leroy D. Shafer, D. D. S., began practicing dentistry in Grove City.

Note:

Shafer was a graduate of Grove City College, and the Pennsylvania Dental College of Philadelphia

Ambrose M. Allen, a graduate of the Pennsylvania Dental College of Philadelphia, moved his dental practice from Philadelphia to Grove City.

Note:

Allen was also involved in local banking. He was one of the organizers and the first vice-president of the Peoples National Bank. He later served as its president.

He also served as a director of the First National Bank of Grove City.

1891

Milford H. McCoy began a furniture business under the name McCoy and Peasale.

Note:

In 1898, McCoy became owner of the business. He worked as a funeral director as well as a furniture storeowner.

On February 1, 1919, McCoy sold both businesses to Simon Hoffman and his son Wilbur. On May 1, 1920 (another source 1923) Leonard Shelly, a recent embalming school graduate, purchased half interest of Simon Hoffman and three years later purchased the interests of Wilbur. Shelly changed the name to the Shelly Furniture Store.



In 1925 Shelly's Furniture burned and was reopened. In 1927, Leonard's brother joined the business.

In 1936, when the undertaking facilities began inadequate, the Shellys bought the Glenn Carruthers property at 203 East Pine Street and opened a funeral business.

In 1938, David became the owner of the funeral home and Leonard Shelly again became the sole owner of the furniture business.

David operated the funeral business until he sold it to John C. Dorr in 1960. The business was purchased by the Ficca Funeral Home, a private funeral home company.

Leonard continued to operate the furniture business. In 1945, Shelly enlarged and remodeled his building. In 1955, Leonard's son Robert Curtis Shelly entered the business as partial owner. In 1986, the Shelly family sold the business to Lee and Bonnie Risch who changed the name to Saxony House.

In March, Grove City College established a Military Department.

Note:

Charles Walter Rowell was professor of Military Services and Tactics at Gove City College. He began teaching in the spring term in April.

Rowell was an 1881 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and a First Lieutenant of Infantry, 2nd Infantry. He had served at Fort Omaha, Nebraska and in the field during the Sioux campaign from Nov., 1890 to Jan., 1891. On Feb. 25, 1891, he served as Professor of Military Science and Tactics at Grove City College. He served there until Feb. 25, 1895. He was assigned to garrison duty at Fort Omaha. In May of 1896, he was promoted to Captain of Infantry.

On June 4th and 5th, 1891, A. Fessenden, Captain, Fifth Artillery, Assistant to Division Inspector-General Pennsylvania State College conducted an onsite inspection of the military department of Grove City College. On June 10, 1891, he submitted a report of his inspection. The following comments were included in his report:

The faculty comprises six professors, including the professor of military science and tactics, and eight instructors. The military department of the college was established in March last. First Lieut. C. W. Rowell, Second Infantry, is in charge of it, having reported on the 28th of February. He began his work April 1, at the commencement of the spring term. Lieut. Rowell is a very capable and efficient officer, who will, I am sure, perform his part of the college work faithfully and well. He is in accord with every member of the faculty on all points affecting the management of his department.

The number of students receiving military instruction is 195. Excused 73. These are members of the senior class and business department, and a few others who are unfit to perform military duty, or who are excused at the request of their parents.

The work of the past two months has been drilling of the students in the school of the soldier three hours each week, and giving special drills and theoretical instruction to the young men he had in view for officers.

The uniform is of dark-blue cloth—blouse, trousers, and forage cap—gilt buttons, cap cord, and wreath. Twenty-one only had thus far got uniforms. But the president of the college informed me that all the students in the military department would have them at the beginning of the fall term.

The Company F, Fifteenth Regiment Infantry, N. G. P was mustered into service in the Railroad Riots of 1877 at Pittsburgh, at Homestead during the strike.

Note:

Andrew Carnegie owned the Pittsburgh Bessemer Steel Works in Homestead. In 1881, he placed industrialist Henry Clay Frick in charge of his company's operations.

The Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers (the AA) organized the workers at the Pittsburgh Bessemer Steel Works in Homestead in 1881. Frick resolved to break the union at Homestead. Frick and the leaders of the local AA union entered into negotiations in February. As a negotiations tactic Frick locked workers out of the plate mill and one of the open-hearth furnaces on the evening of June 28. On June 30, when the contract expired, local AA leaders decided to strike.

Frick called upon the Pinkerton National Detective Agency to provide security at the plant in an attempt to open the works with nonunion men on July 6. The strikers were prepared for them. Pinkerton fired into the crowd, killing two and wounding 11. The crowd responded in kind, killing two and wounding 12.

Pennsylvania Governor Pattison ordered the Pennsylvania militia to muster on July 6, and on July 12, more than Pennsylvania state militia arrived near the Homestead mill. Within 20 minutes they had displaced the picketers; by 10:00 a.m., company officials were back in their offices.

David D. Morris he was made superintendent of the Grove Coal Company, which operated the Enterprise Mines, at Grove City. (See 1910)

Note:

David D. Morris experience at operating coalmines was learned from his father, Evan Morris. Evan Morris was a member of the firm of Todd, Stambaugh & Co. He had developed and operated the Churchill mines, the largest block coalmines within the entire state of Ohio. He was also connected with the Crawford coalmines and was interested in the coalmines near Grove City.

David D. Morris moved his family to Grove City in 1899 and became involved in the growth of the community.

David J. Washabaugh began practicing medicine in Grove City.

Note:

Washabaugh was a Civil War veteran. In June 1863, he enlisted in Company F, Fifty-Fifth Pennsylvania Regiment of the Union Army.

From 1871 through 1873, Washabaugh had operated a drug store in town. After selling the drug store, he entered and graduated from Miami Medical College.

Upon graduation, he practiced medicine in Anandall before coming to Grove City.

In 1892, the Grove City College football team played its first official game.

Note:

In the early years the team did not wear helmets. It is said they let their hair grow long for protection.

This photograph shows the 1894 football team.

By 1897, Grove City was playing a regular season. They played teams from Allegheny, Geneva, the University of Pittsburgh, Thiel, and Westminster.



1893

Context:

The Economic Panic of 1893 led the United States into a national economic depression.

Carl Franklin Lawrence bought the *Grove City Telephone*, the local newspaper, and renamed it the *Grove City Reporter*.

Note:

In 1893 C. F., Lawrence and his son, Harry W., bought the publication and changed the name to *The Grove City Reporter*. They also operated the Lawrence Printing House. One source states they acquired half interest in the *Grove City Telephone* in 1892 and became sole owners in 1893.

This newspaper was a forerunner of the *Grove City Reporter-Herald*. (See 1926)

Joseph A. Craig moved to Grove City and became the manager of the Peerless Laundry.

Note:

Craig was born and raised in North Liberty. He was a Civil War veteran who had enlisted on December 20, 1861 in Company C, One Hundredth Pennsylvania Regiment Volunteer Infantry.

After the war, Craig had farmed for about twenty years and then was employed as a slate roofer for six or seven years before moving to Grove City.

Uber House was built c1893.

Note:

Although the building has been known locally as the Uber House, it apparently was never owned by a Uber family.



The Uber Hotel is listed in the 1913 Union Telephone Book. The address is listed as College Avenue.

This photograph shows the lobby of the "Uber House", but it is not dated.

According to the deeds, it was built shortly after 1893. Records indicated that the land was sold by J. C. Black to Harriet F. Hughes on July 7, 1893. On June 8, 1898, Elsa L. Gilmore purchased the property with a building included. These deeds would indicate a building was erected between 1893 and 1899.

Ownership of the property changed many times from 1906 until 2000 when the Grove City Historical Society acquired the property. Among the owners were the businessmen William A. Redmond and Homer A. Rhodes (In December 1908, after they sold their hardware business). There is no mention of the name Uber in the chain of ownership. The building has also been known as the Traveler's Hotel.

The Historical Society acquired the property (on January 11, 2000) from the Trepasso family who had purchased the property in 1957.

The Christ Reformed Church was established in 1893.

Note:

The Reverend George E. Limber, the pastor of the Amsterdam Reformed Church (in Liberty Township), preached his first sermon in Grove City on June 4, 1893, in the Ruffing Building.

A congregation was organized July 9, 1893 and was named Christ Reformed Church. Originally, services were held in the Ruffing Building.

George E. Limbert was the first pastor and served from June 4, 1893 to February 18, 1900. The pastor of the Grove City church also served as the pastor at both the Amsterdam and Blacktown congregations until about 1905 when they disorganized.

In 1895, The Christ Reformed Church was erected southeast of the intersection of Main and Elm Streets. The corner stone was laid October 25, 1895; it was dedicated on July 5, 1896. A parsonage was built on the rear of the church lot in 1903.

A charter was granted to the congregation October 3, 1910

Context:

In 1894, Congress enacted a flat rate Federal income tax under the 16th Amendment to the Constitution.

On June 27, 1894, the Free and Accepted Masons Lodge #603 was organized.

Note:

Chauncey A Jewell was the first master of the lodge.

Seventy years later, on May 2, 1964, Lodge# 603 sponsored the establishment of a second Lodge #800 in Grove City.

John H. Kohlmeyer purchased half interest in A. P. Buckhold's hardware business establishing Buckhold and Kohlmeyer.

Note:

The next year he bought out Buckhold. In 1901, he sold the business to his competitor Rhodes and Redmond.

Kohlmeyer then worked in the in the coal industry at Butler.

When Rhodes and Redmond sold their business in 1906, Kohlmeyer partnered with W. C. Naylor and formed the Naylor-Kohlmeyer Hardware Company. Naylor-Kohlmeyer established a reputation as one of the best-equipped hardware stores in Mercer County.



The Mission of the Holy Cross was established.

Note:

On March 1, 1894, the first service was held.

In 1910, the mission was renamed Church of the Epiphany. During the early days of the church, the parishioners had difficulty finding a place to meet.

In 1912, Dr. Isaac Ketler offered the use of the Ivy Chapel on the college property for their use rent-free. The church used this facility until 1914 when they returned to meeting in parishioners' homes.

In 1930 the Grace Reformed building on Main Street was purchased for use.

In 1967, a new facility was built on Route 173 south of Grove City. The cornerstone was laid in 1967 and the building was dedicated on May 25, 1968.

Context:

In 1895, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled the flat rate Federal income tax enacted in 1894 was unconstitutional because it was not apportioned according to the population of each state.

This 1895 Atlas of Mercer county shows the development of many small communities around Grove City.



The Mercer County Bar Association was chartered on December 9, 1895.

Note:

Two early members from Grove City were: T. A., Crichton, February 4, 1903. and Chas. E. McConkey, (No date).

Grove City built the Music Hall in 1895.

Note:

The Music Hall was a brick building specifically designed to function as a music facility.

This photograph shows the Music Hall with the Academy Building adjacent to it.



Samuel E. Van Eman and others purchased an interest in the Van Eman Livery Stable.

Note:

Samuel's brother, W. W. Van Eman, was one of the chief owners at the time. Samuel purchased an interest in the business.

In 1902, Samuel became the sole proprietor of the business.

In 1907, a brick addition was added to his barns.

William W. Van Eman was appointed Post Master of Grove City in 1895. He served four years and retired in 1899. He acquired several oil leases.

1896

Context:

On January 4, 1896, Utah became the 45th state.

On May 18, 1896, the US Supreme Court, in Plessy v. Ferguson, ruled that "separate but equal" schools were legal.

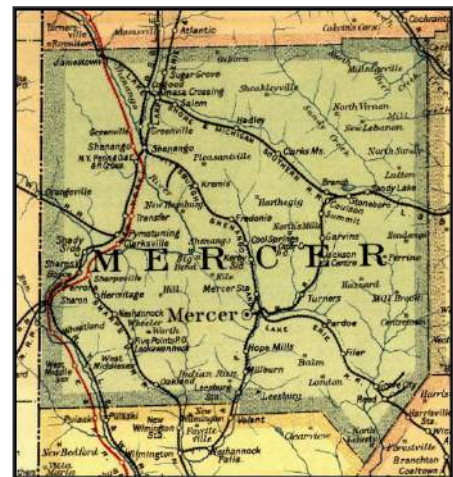
On December 26, 1896, the Pittsburgh, Shenango, & Lake Erie Railroad (operating in Grove City) became the Pittsburg, Bessemer, and Lake Erie Railroad.

Note:

This 1897 railroad map of Mercer County shows the extensive development of the railroads throughout the county.

Although the Pittsburgh, Shenango, and Lake Erie Railroad no longer existed as an entity, it is still shown running northwest/southeast through Grove City. There are also railroad spurs heading northeast from Grove City and Reed. These railroads were actually being operated by the Pittsburgh, Bessemer, and Lake Erie Railroad.

Also shown are the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad, the Sharps Railroad, and the New York Erie Railroad.,



The Grove City Water Co. was chartered.

Note:

The borough approved the construction of a water works in 1898.

The Pinchalong Mine closed.

Note:

The Pinchalong mine was opened in 1869 by the Pine Grove Coal Company before the coming of the railroad. This photograph shows the Pinchalong Mine after the coming of the railroad. The side rail switch and indicator can be seen.



The enlargement focuses on the mining area.



It is said that the name "Pinchalong" came from the miners. The word pinch means, "to be miserly". The phrase "pinchalong" is said to have been an expression used by the mining boss, James Spears. When miners would ask for payroll advances, he would tell them they would have to "pinch along" until the next payday. The miners adopted the expression as the name of the mine.

The Grove City Banking Company closed.

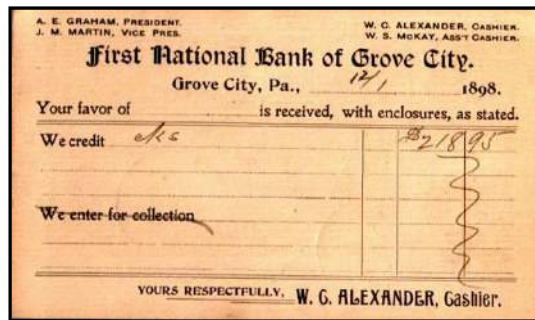
In July, the First National Bank of Grove City was organized and incorporated.

Note:

The First National Bank of Grove City succeeded the Grove City Banking Company, a private bank that had been established in 1884 by A. E. Graham.

Graham established a partnership with W. C. Alexander. The bank opened with a capital of \$50,000 of capital stock and deposits of \$95,000. Graham became President of the bank; William McKay became the cashier of the First National Bank.

Below are two early views of the bank building. The photograph on the right is labeled 1908.



This deposit slip, dated December 1, 1898, identifies A. E. Graham as W.G. President; J. M. Martin, as Vice President; as well as Alexander and W. S. McKay., as Cashiers

In 1903, Graham resigned due to poor health. At that time, W. C. Alexander assumed the Presidency of the bank. The early bank presidents were:

A. E. Graham	1896-1903
W. V. C. Alexander	1903-1910
J. M. Martin	1910-1923
M. H. McCoy	1923-1926
A. M. Allen	1926-1941

William H. Bashline came to Grove City in 1896 and established the Imperial Brass Foundry Limited.

Note:

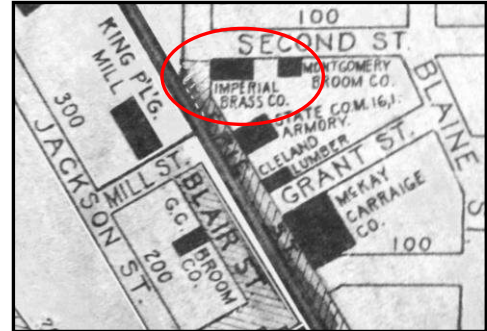
William H. Bashline issued stock to establish the Imperial Company. He was the President and General Manager of the company. J. J. Spearman and his son, Benjamin Spearman of Sharpsville were the major stockholders of the company. The company was registered with the Commonwealth on August 8, 1897.

William H. Bashline was born in Clarion County. After attending Allegheny College and teaching school, he became a traveling salesman, traveling the United States. As he traveled, he became aware of the need for improvement in the construction of valves. As a result, he began inventing and patenting improved valves and plumbing fittings

including bibs, basin and bath cocks, stops, and wastes. These products were manufactured by the Imperial Company.

The Imperial Company manufactured a complete line of high quality brass plumbers' fittings. The plant was nicknamed "The Brass Foundry."

The company erected a building at the intersection of Erie and Second Streets. This area of town was a manufacturing center in the community. This 1915 map shows this area and the Imperial Brass Company.



The Imperial Company building was a forty by one hundred and forty feet concrete block

This picture of the building was taken c1910.



In 1906, Benjamin Spearman moved to Grove City Pa and became involved in local businesses. He became president of the Imperial Company and the Bessemer Foundry Company as well as a director of the Grove City Hospital and the Grove City Building and Loan Association.

In October 1912, Benjamin Spearman died of a stroke. Due to his death the company experienced financial complications.

In May 1913, the Imperial Company was reorganized. A receiver was appointed for the company pending reorganization. The company was reorganized with Mrs. Ruth B. Spearman as President and W. H. Christy as Vice President. A. B. Anderson was the Secretary-Treasurer and John A. Nordstrom the Superintendent.

In 1913, the Industrial Directory of Pennsylvania listed the company as having 17 employees.

In 1916, the Imperial Company employed 11 people. It is listed in the 1916 Industrial Directory of Pennsylvania as being in the brass and bronze products, plumbers' supply and steam fittings business.

1897

James M. Cleland purchased the D. G. Courtney lumber business.

Note:

After being employed at the D. G. Courtney lumber company James M. Cleland acquired the company at the corner of Erie and Grant Streets.

James M. Cleland was born at Portersville. On June 28, 1861, he had enlisted in Company D, Eleventh Pennsylvania Regiment of Volunteers (Reserves), which was mustered into the Union army as the Fortieth Regiment.

In 1884, James M. Cleland moved to Grove City, and began working for D. G. Courtney buying and selling lumber and timber.



In 1902, his son, H. W. Cleland, became a partner in the firm.

Grove City College became a non-profit educational institution.

Note:

By 1894, the national depression was wide spread; banks were closing, railroads were going into receivership and farms were closing. It was estimated that 25% of the nation's plants were closed and that hundreds of thousands of workers were jobless.

The depression threatened the existence of Grove City College.

Isaac Ketler met with his grade school teacher Joseph Newton Pew in Parker, an oil center at the time. Pew had become a wealthy businessman in the oil industry. During this meeting the personal relationship was formed that would shape Grove City College for nearly 100 years.

Pew agreed to help Ketler if other Pittsburgh businessmen would help. He also gave Ketler a list of names of Pittsburgh business, civic and religious leaders to contact. One of the first men contacted, Samuel P. Harbison, gave Ketler a check upon their first meeting. This check was immediately followed by a check from Pew.

New trustees joined the board of the college. Among them were Pew, Harbison, Major A. P. Burchfield, Dr. Joseph Gibson, Edward O'Neill, W. A. Shaw, and Dr. William H. McMillen. The new board members decided the college should be a non-profit institution and led the college through the change process.

In 1902, Isaac Ketler described the process in an article written for the United States Bureau of Education Circulars of Information. Ketler wrote

But could 250 stockholders of different types dispositions and denominational affiliations and maintaining different attitudes to the college be induced to surrender their property right in an institution to which they had made

contributions, often involving actual personal sacrifice? It added to the gravity of the undertaking that it was a serious question whether the change could be legally made if even one stockholder should oppose.

It must forever be to the honor of the community that the desired change was made without one dissenting vote. At a stockholders meeting held in the college on the 3d day of November AD 1894, according to legal announcement, the stockholders met and unanimously consented to the change and did there and then make an assignment of their entire stock to the college.

[This] changed the entire legal aspect of the college. From a stock corporation in which 250 persons had a property right it became a corporation in the class of public charities. and the former 15 trustees and 15 others whom they were by the provisions of the charter to elect, became the legal guardians or trustees of the changed corporation. The final decree making these changes was ordered on the 10th day of December AD 1894 a little more than ten years after the first college charter had been obtained.

On April 8, 1897, Grove City College was legally created as a non-profit entity in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The new trustees began funding a major building and improvement program. By 1902, a science building and a women's dormitory were being constructed.

A high school curriculum was added to the Grove City school's educational program.

1898

Context:

On April 25, the United States declared war against Spain in the Spanish-American War.

The Company F, Fifteenth Regiment Infantry, N. G. P was mustered into service in the Spanish-American War.

Note:

This same Company had participated in the railroad strike in 1892 at Homestead.

The borough council voted to construct a community water works

Note:

The 1890 fire that destroyed the buildings on Broad Street caused an estimated loss of forty thousand dollars. This event became the center of public pressure for the borough

to provide better fire protection including a community water plant. In August 1875, the Grove City Water Company was formed with I. C. Ketler as president.

Public pressure continually increased until the borough acted. In February 1898, the borough council voted (by a majority of two) to increase debt to build the first Grove City water plant and a contract was awarded for the construction of the plant on Wolf Creek.

Construction of the water works was begun in the fall of 1898. Plant 1 was built on the west side of Wolf Creek near the intersection of North Broad Street and Lincoln Avenue. It was supplied by a 210 foot well. A ten-foot diameter, seventy-five feet high standpipe was erected on the highest spot in the borough, at the intersection of Craig and Tidball Avenues.

By 1900, the water supply was inadequate and a second well was drilled to a depth of 260 feet.

In 1905, the borough purchased Lock's Mill (owned by Cunningham, then Campbell before Lock), an operating gristmill.



This photographic postcard, is dated 7/14/06, shows the mill, the iron bridge, and the dam. It is labeled "The Old Mill, Grove City, Pa". Interestingly, there appear to be tall poles visible on either side of the bridge, which may be utility poles. The borough did not establish electrical service until 1908. In 1908, a power plant was built on the site.

The power plant was also used to pump water. In 1908, a second well was drilled at this site.

By 1908, ninety fire hydrants were in operation.

In 1898, a major fire destroyed much of South Broad Street.

Note:

At 3 a.m. on Wednesday, June 15, 1898, fire was discovered in the basement of the State Armory Building (site of present IOOF Hall). The front of the basement was used by R. D. Young for a printing shop, and the rear for storing wool. Five thousand pounds of wool were being stored at the time of the fire. The oily wool and the greasy floor of the printing office quickly caught fire. By the time help arrived it had spread through the basement and into the upper floor.

Within ten minutes, the fire began moving down and across the street and burned until it was contained by morning. Buildings that burned included:

Ford Boarding House	Reynolds Residence
Ford Grocery Store	J. M. Reynolds Photo Studio
Col. Maxwell House occupied by James Clelland	Nickles Variety and Pottery Store

Lizzie Smith house occupied by Dr. Wilson	J. H. Black and Sons Furniture Store
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Dr. Edwin J. Fithian began to devote his efforts to developing an internal combustion engine with John Carruthers.

Note:

Dr. Edwin J. Fithian was a physician who was practicing medicine in both Portersville and Harmony. In addition to being a physician, Fithian was an entrepreneur with a mechanical mind.

Several small oil producers were among his patients. They complained they would be forced out of business because of their aging steam boilers used to run their pumping systems and their high maintenance costs. Through them, Fithian became aware the cost of operating steam pumping systems

Fithian's interest in the issues with steam engines caused him to investigate the internal combustion engine. He collaborated with George H. Willets (who had a patent on an internal combustion engine) and his brother, Reuben, to develop an internal combustion engine. In 1897, he purchased the Willets' interest in the engine. He then hired them as employees to continue developing the engine. Subsequently, he sold the interests he had acquired from them to a lumberman, H. W. Bentle.

The first engine they developed was a two horsepower, single cylinder engine.

After several months of experimentation, a 10 HP engine a 10 HP internal combustion pumping engine that could utilize existing steam engine components was completed and tested. At that time Fithian was operating in a branch shop of the Oil Well Supply Company, in Harmony, PA. (See 1900)

Fithian offered to sell the engine to the Oil Well Supply Company but his offer was rejected. Oil Well Supply had recently hired a engineer and believed they could develop an engine independently.

At this point Bentle decided not to invest further in the venture, and offered his shares for sale. Fithian purchased Bentle's shares. Again, Fithian was the sole owner of the company.

Fithian contacted John Carruthers, a machine shop operator, who was developing a similar engine in nearby Callery Junction, Pa, concerning investing in Fithian's company. In 1898, Carruthers bought the shares in that had been owned by Bentle.

Dr. Fithian began the process of closing his medical practice to devote his efforts to developing an internal combustion engine with John Carruthers.

The team was ideal; Fithian was the idea man; Carruthers was the man who could turn ideas into productive units.

Fithian and Carruthers decided most of the oil producers could not afford to the purchase new gas engines. Although the engines were more efficient, the producers were already invested in steam engines.

At some point Fithian began to wonder if the escaping natural gas at oil wells could be used to power the pumps. This led to the idea of replacing steam engine cylinders with gas cylinders that could be powered by the natural gas available at the wells.

Both men recognized that a friction clutch and pulley would be needed to attach to the steam engine shaft to provide a disconnection of the load from the engine so that it could be started by hand. There was no friction clutch available. This led Carruthers and Fithian to design and built an automatically adjusting friction clutch that automatically adjusted to drilling and pumping loads. They registered three patents relating to the clutch in 1901:

Carruthers John and EJ Fithian September 3	Clutch	Patent Number 682,126
Carruthers John and EJ Fithian September 3	Clutch	Patent Number 682,127
Carruthers John and EJ Fithian September 3	Clutch	Patent Number 682,128

After the new clutch was ready, the company designed and manufactured two sizes of cylinders, one at 10 hp, and another at 15 hp. These items became the basis of their conversion kit ("gas operated cylinder outfit") to replace the steam cylinders on steam engines, thus converting the steam engines to gas engines. The word "gas" referred to the natural gas available at every oil well. An oil producer could convert his steam engine with a 10 HP gas cylinder and clutch combination and the engine could get its fuel (gas) directly from the site.

The Carruthers-Fithian Clutch Company was organized by John Carruthers and Dr. E. J. Fithian.

Note:

The Carruthers-Fithian Clutch Company was formed to market the conversion kit to convert steam engines to gas engines. According to the records of Pennsylvania Department of State, the entity creation date for this company was June 14, 1912. (Other sources state 1899.)

Fithian's brother-in-law, Dr. L. B. Monroe, a Grove City dentist, organized a citizen's fund drive in Grove City to acquire the abandoned property of the J.C. Brandon's Tile Works and convince Carruthers and Fithian to move Carruthers-Fithian Clutch Company to the property in Grove City. This campaign was successful and the Carruthers-Fithian Clutch Company moved from Portersville to Grove City to start production.

After the decision was made to move the plant to Grove City, John Carruthers moved from Callery Junction, (Colloy?) Pa. to Grove City and supervised the conversion of the building and the installation of the machinery in preparation for the full-fledged manufacturing operation.

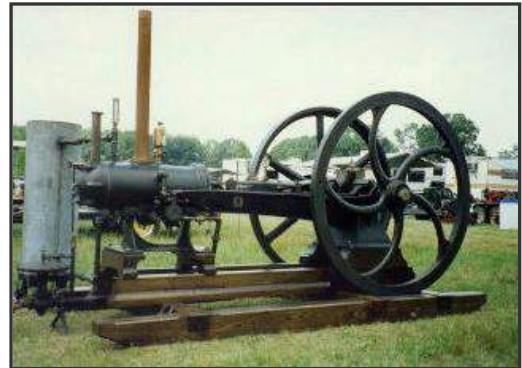
The idea was an instant success. An oil producer could convert his steam engine with a 10 HP gas cylinder and clutch combination for \$120.00. A 15 HP unit could be bought for \$175.00 and two experienced men could complete the conversion in one day. The converted engines became known as "half-breeds".

Acceptance of the half-breed was so immediate the company was unable to meet the demands. South Penn Oil Co., its first major customer, purchased every cylinder the Carruthers-Fithian Clutch Company could manufacture for three years.

In addition, they paid royalties for the production of half-breeds in their facility at Allegheny. Thousands of these half-breeds were produced.

This photograph shows a Bessemer conversion of an 1880s Innis steam engine.

The success of the conversion kit led the company to the next natural step, designing and building their own gas engine. (See 1899)



On August 1, 1997, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) recognized the Bessemer conversion engine for its historical significance. The press release stated:

An engine developed by The Bessemer Gas Engine Company at the turn of the century, which allowed steam engines on oil drilling sites to be converted to more efficient gasoline-powered systems, has been cited for historical significance by ASME International (American Society of Mechanical Engineers).

The Bessemer 12-horse power conversion engine will be named an ASME Historical Mechanical Engineering Landmark at an awards ceremony this Aug. 1, in Scottsville, Mich. The honor places the Bessemer engine among 195 other mechanical engineering achievements distinguished for their contribution to technological progress and public service.

The Bessemer engine was designed as a retrofit for the steam engines used on the site of oil producing wells in Pennsylvania, West Virginia and other regions. It essentially converted the steam engines to more efficient, harder working internal combustion engines. The Bessemer kit included a cylinder, auxiliary flywheel, and friction clutch and pulley connecting to the steam shaft.

The Bessemer Gas Engine Company was established by John Carruthers and Dr. E. J. Fithian in 1898-99.

Note:

The Bessemer Gas Engine Company was organized to produce the gas engine John Carruthers and Dr. E. J. Fithian had developed.

According to the Pennsylvania Department of State, this company was incorporated on February 15, 1900 with further corporate activity on March 8, 1915. Stock was sold to Carruthers-Fithian Clutch Company employees as well as a few citizens of Grove City.

The company officers were:

John Carruthers, President	Arthur J. Hull, Vice President
Mark Graham, Secretary	Edwin J. Fithian, Treasurer

The name Bessemer was chosen for the company because "Bessemer" denoted prestige in the Western Pennsylvania area, due to the advent of the Bessemer Steel process.

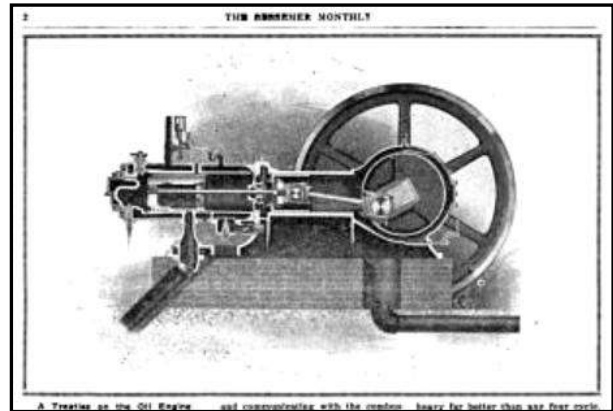
In actuality, the Bessemer Gas Engine Co. was incorporated as a separate entity in name only. It continued to coexist with the Carruthers-Fithian Clutch Company for several years, both companies working together as one.

E. J. Fithian was granted a patent (US Patent 626,155) on May 30, 1899 for a "Gas-Engine and Means for Governing Same". He had filed for the patent on October 4, 1898.

This illustration shows a cut-away view of the early engine. It appeared in an 1913 issue of the company publication *The Bessemer Journal*.

The Friday, November 3, 1899 edition of *The Sharon Herald* stated:

The business of the Bessemer Gas Engine Company at Grove City is increasing so rapidly that they have broken ground for a large addition to their works.



The company developed and began producing a two-cycle 5 HP engine that operated on natural gas. The company continued its research and development and in 1900, produced its first enclosed-case engine. The direct-gas, engine-driven compressor, pioneer of casing-head gasoline production, was a success from its inception.

THE BESSEMER MONTHLY

THE MONEY MAKING INDUSTRY
GASOLINE FROM GAS

In entering the comparatively new gasoline from gas industry take advantage of our months of experience installing successful money making plants.

Bessemer Machinery in Use
of all plants installed TO-DAY.

THE BESSEMER DIRECT GAS ENGINE DRIVEN COMPRESSOR

All Bessemer plants are built up under the same famous Ohio Patent, the basic patent that covers the industry and makes every unlicensed plant an infringing one. You are thus protected against infringement while in buying Bessemer plants.

In buying a Bessemer Plant you take advantage of experience, you are not made the victim of cheap claims.

We are the only concern selling your business handling the industry from gas analysis to complete plant in order one part.

BESSEMER TWO STAGE BELTED COMPRESSOR

Our range of size and type of Compressors is very complete. We manufacture Bessemer Direct Gas Engine Driven Compressors as well as Bessemer Belt Driven Compressors, both gas and oil driven. Complete equipment for full size Compressors.

Ask for "The Handbook of Gasoline From Natural Gas" by E. J. Fithian, E. J. Carruthers & E. J. Fithian, Bessemer Direct Gas Engine Driven Compressors, The Gasoline From Natural Gas, The Gasoline From Oil, and the Gasoline From Coal. This book will be sent to you on request.

The Bessemer Gas Engine Co.
Grove City, Pa.

BESSEMER SINGLE STAGE BELTED COMPRESSOR

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As the company grew, it continued its strong effort in research and development. A vertical gas engine that was developed was abandoned. Other products included vertical pumps, roller pumping power equipment, an oil well pumping jack, and a small gas/kerosene engine. (See 1912)

This advertisement appeared in an 1913 issue of the company publication *The Bessemer Journal*. The journal was mailed at no cost to persons interested in Bessemer's products.

This detail from an advertisement, in the same publication, pictures the company's laboratory facilities. The text reads:

In the Bessemer Gas Engine Company's plant is perhaps the only metallurgical and chemical laboratory maintained in the United States by a gas engine concern.

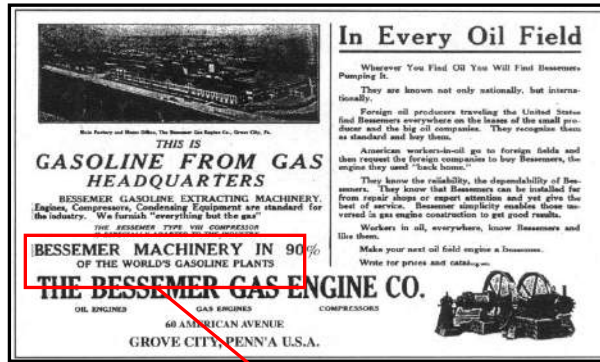


This is a photograph of the assembly floor of the Bessemer Gas Engine Company in 1918.

The original factory expanded into a complex. (See 1900)

Shown are photographs of the Bessemer Gas Engine Company.





Pictured is an advertisement from the company emphasizing the use of their machinery worldwide. The company's address is listed as "60 American Avenue, Grove City, Penna, U.S.A."



In 1913 the Bessemer Gas Company was continuing to emphasize their worldwide reach with this ad.



Carruthers and Fithian

It has been said that Carruthers and Fithian were an unlikely team. Although their personalities differed greatly, they were an extremely effective team. They seldom argued and it was common knowledge that neither would permit an unkind word about the other. Carruthers ran the factory and Fithian handled the administrative operations. They functioned to such an extent as a team that reportedly it was difficult to tell who the Chief Executive Officer was, and neither seemed to care.

Vita: John Carruthers

John Carruthers was the President of the Bessemer Gas Engine Company.

Carruthers was born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1855. He developed a lifelong interest in machinery. He first operated a machine shop in Knapps Creek, New York. Later he became an owner of Carruthers & Peters in Harmony, Pa. He sold his interest in this business and began a machine shop in Callery Junction, Butler County, (now known as Callery).

Carruthers married Laura Jenette Warthey in 1880.

He moved to Grove City in 1898.

Carruthers was a "stocky man of medium height". He had gray hair and a mustache. He dressed in a light-colored suit. Employees privately called the suit his "ice cream uniform".

Carruthers was respected as a mastermind of machinery and machinery design. He held several patents and was a joint-patentee with Dr. Fithian of their automatic friction clutch. His designs were integral to Bessemer products. Many of those designs were produced on the job in the workplace and were never recorded on paper.

Work was a compulsion for Carruthers, and even though he was President of the company, he spent most of his time in the factory shops. He expected dedicated work from everyone. It is said that employees often described Carruthers with the single word "tough".

However, he was always willing to help the employees. When he was walking through the shops, he would pause to help employees with their work. He carried a piece of chalk and would sketch ideas for product designs on the floor. He would actively supervise the machinists on site as they produced the items. He was a hands-on leader.

Carruthers was also a supporter of the public school system and served as member of the school board.

Vita: Edwin J. Fithian



Edwin J. Fithian was the Treasure of the Bessemer Gas Engine Company.

Fithian was born on July 1, 1863, in Portersville, PA.

He was ambitious and worked while attending school. He worked painting furniture, driving a delivery wagon, and made sleds. He was also a janitor at a church, the school, and a bank.

After leaving school at sixteen he worked as a clerk at William Riddles store in Prospect, PA. At eighteen, he enrolled at Grove City College. He continued to work in the building trades during the summers.

He received his B.A. from the Grove City College and entered the West Penn Medical College, graduating in 1892. He practiced medicine in both Portersville and Harmony for six years.

That same year he married Georgiana Slocum Shellito, of Espyville. He was married three times: to Georgiana Shellito who died in 1928; to Esther K. Sibley who died c1930; and to Ethel Limberg.

Fithian was tall and lean. He was dignified, mannerly, respected the rights of others, and was loyal to his friends. He carried himself well and was very well respected. He was addressed as Dr. Fithian. Privately employees called him "the doctor". He was a conservative religious man and a Prohibitionist who opposed drinking, smoking, swearing, dancing, and playing cards. Although he opposed these activities, he was known to personally come to the aide of individuals in need.

He was elected Mayor and unsuccessfully ran for both Governor and the Senate on the Prohibitionist Party ticket.

Fithian designed and had built a special vehicle for his election campaign. This vehicle may have been the first motor home in the country. The bus like vehicle was built on a elongated truck frame and had built-in cabinets, a Pullman seat, a table, and icebox, and a lavatory. It was furnished with cut velvet upholstery. Construction was done by Ed Black.

The back of the vehicle had a speaking platform similar to a railroad coach enabling Fithian to address voters.

The vehicle is in the collection of the Imperial Palace in Las Vegas. The Imperial Palace name and logo are visible in this photograph.



Dr. Fithian was director and vice president of the Grove City Savings and Trust and was also involved with the Hercules Specialty Company.

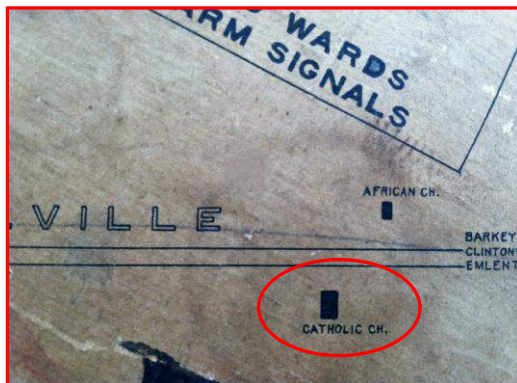
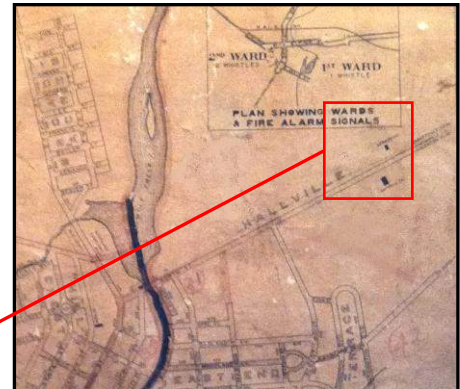
The first Roman Catholic Mass was celebrated in 1898.

Note:

The first Roman Catholic Mass in Grove City was celebrated by the Rev. Daniel Lehane of All Saints Church, Mercer. The Mass was conducted in the home of Major Thompson. Major Thompson, associated with Grove City College (See 1891), was the early organizer of the Roman Catholics in the area.

Reverend Daniel Lehane and Father Francis Borman (both from All Saints Church, Mercer) celebrated Masses in homes in Grove City from 1898 onward.

When Thompson left Grove City in 1900, he donated a small two-room building behind his home to be used as the Catholic Church. The building was moved via Broad Street on skids by a team of horses to Hallville (Route 208). These details from the 1915 map show the location of the church.



This building became the Our Lady of the Sacred Heart parish. The Rev. Joseph L. McCabe and Rev. O'Mahoney celebrated Mass there until Rev. Francis Buonauro was assigned there as resident pastor in 1904 (See 1925).

The coal miners in Mercer County went on strike.

Note:

It is estimated that 4000 miners were involved in the strike. A camp was established at the Chestnut Ridge mine where the miners gathered to hear speeches and march. (See Coyer Mine below)

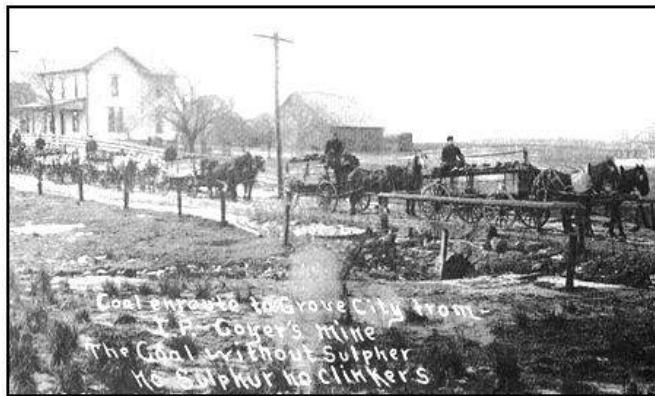
Robert Coyer began mining on his family farm west of Grove City.

Note:

The Coyer Mines were to become one of the major mining operations in the Grove City area. They were located near the intersection of the Blacktown Road and Interstate 79.

Coal was hauled in wagonloads by teams of horses; the drivers were known as "Teamsters".

This photograph is labeled "From I. P. Coyers Mine, Weight 7400lbs, Frank Coulter Teamster."



This photograph shows wagons of coal from the I. P. Coyer Mine on the way to Grove City on state route 173. Kocher's greenhouse is visible in the background.

The photograph advertises "Coal Without Sulphur No Clinkers".

The Coyer Coal Company began mining the Coyer Number 2 mine in Springfield Township. They also operated the Number 3 mine.

Shown is the Coyer Mine.



In 1898 the Coyer Mines became the scene of a major confrontation in the struggle to unionize the miners. Miners, the sheriff, and the state police met at the mine and a face-to-face physical battle ensued fists with ball bats, hammers, and tools. Many were injured. Most were treated at home; a few were treated at the Bashline Hospital.

The Coyer mines closed in 1963 with the construction of Interstate Highway 79.

William H. Filer, son of Joseph Filer, opened a roofing, slating and heating apparatus business. (See 1882)

1899

The Grove City Reporter (the newspaper) built a new building on Broad Street designed for the printing process.

Following the Spanish-American War (on March 29th) Company F, Sixteenth Regiment Infantry, N. G. P. was reorganized as Company F, Fifteenth Regiment Infantry, National Guard of Pennsylvania.

Note:

The commander of the company Capt. John W. Campbell.

William J. Harshaw established J. Harshaw and Son, a real estate and insurance business.

Note:

William Harshaw served two terms in the Pennsylvania state legislature, was a Justice of the Peace, and served on the school board.

He was one of the first directors of the First National Bank of Grove City until 1903. He was a promoter of the Grove City Savings & Trust Co. taking over the business of The Peoples National Bank. He served on the Grove City Savings and Trust Co. board as one of the directors until his death.

When William Harshaw died in 1908, William's son, Clifford Gordon Harshaw, continued to operate the real estate and insurance business.

His son, Edwin B. Harshaw became cashier at the Grove City National Bank. Edwin became Secretary of the Grove Saving and Loan Company in 1903.

Grove City College established its first basketball team in 1899.

Note:

This photograph shows the first basketball team.

