



# Historical Happenings

## The Newsletter of the Grove City Area Historical Society

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### A VICTORIAN TEA

June 30, 2012 found over 100 ladies of all ages having tea at the Carnegie Alumni Center. The activity was a **Victorian Tea** featuring prom gowns through the years. Proms have evolved over the years from very simple events to the elaborate and expensive activities they are today. The name prom comes from Promenade, which means to walk or march. The first proms in the late 1800s and early 1900s were an attempt to mimic the debutant balls of the rich and famous. Proms started to become more important and more lavish by the 1950s. In the short history of proms they have grown from simple events with people wearing their Sunday best, to the extravaganzas they are today.



*This is "Mickey" Edmindston's 1938 prom dress worn by Kesi McClinton*

Some of the models for the Victorian Tea were the same girls who modeled last year. Dylanne McClinton, a model from last year suggested we have another fashion show using prom gowns and children's fancy dresses from different time periods. The models for this event were granddaughters or relatives of Society members. The criterion for being a model was that you had to be thin. The dresses ranged from a 1922 dress worn by Jane Cleary's mother when she was 6 years old, to Mickey Edmindston's 1938 prom dress which cost \$15, to Kesi McClinton's prom dress worn at Hermitage High School's Junior Prom this spring.

The tables were hosted by members of the Society and had a wide range of interesting decorative treatments. Most of the ladies hosting tables wore vintage hats that belonged to Madeline McBride or her mother Evelyn Coulter.

The lunch was catered by Bon Appetit. The event was an interesting and fun walk down the fashion halls of fame.

A special "Thank You" goes to Mary Ann McClinton and Linda Beatty who organized the fashion show, ironed the dresses and supervised the activities. Since this was our only fund raiser of the year, it was an important event for the Society. When all the expenses were paid we raised about \$1500 which goes a long way to making up our yearly shortfall.



*Our hostesses wearing vintage hats*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Spring is over and summer is here along with hot weather. But, remember the historical society is air conditioned so it is pleasant to be there on a hot summer afternoon. As usual a lot has been going on at the headquarters. We recently received a Highland Band uniform. I had promised members of the Band that if they gave us a uniform, we would get a male mannequin. We received the uniform. So, I went to the Grove City Rotary Club and asked if they would make a donation of \$300 which would pay for a male mannequin and also a mannequin for a little girl. The money came immediately. So, when you walk into the front room, do not be shocked at the new man standing in the corner. He will soon be part of a window display showing things from Grove City's past.



*Current President, Skip Sample*

We also have been given framed documents telling the history of the Osteopathic movement in Grove City. These documents show pictures of the Bashline Hospital buildings and tell the history of the hospital nursing school. These are informative and interesting reading.



*Our new Highland Band Mannequin*

The McBride Family gave us a lovely Maude Winder painting of the steeple on Harbison Chapel. It is now hanging in the College Room with other Maude Winder paintings of the chapel. We have a very nice collection of paintings by local artists. If you have a painting by a local artist and would like to share it with the community we would enjoy having it. The McBrides also gave us the golf trophy that was used for many years when the Kiwanis and Rotary clubs had their annual golf challenge. The trophy is a chamber pot. It is certainly an interesting addition to our collections.

Joe Monteleone gave us signs from Joe's Dry Cleaning and Cloud Nine. As you can see our accessions are far ranging in content.

Pat Brenner, a local artist, is working on a mural going down the basement stairs. Many months ago I asked her if she could do a mural on both sides of the steps depicting the banks of Wolf Creek, and have the wall at the bottom of the steps show the Cunningham Mill. She agreed to the project and has begun painting. It is interesting to see the picture emerge. When this is finished it will be a wonderful addition to that area of the building.

Plans for a classroom in the basement are proceeding. The large room on the left of the stairway has been cleaned and Gary Forsythe and Jane Cleary are now painting the floor. Since the floor is not smooth, they are painting a stone design which will help hide the imperfections. Doing this design is a lot more work for Gary and Jane, but they are doing an excellent job.

*Cont. on page 3*

Jane Cleary and Don Cook continue their work as our genealogists. They are at the headquarters the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of the month to help people look up their family histories. Their service is free to anyone who is interested in this type of research.

Last month I mentioned that at the top of my wish list was to have an elevator from the basement to the second floor. Shortly after the newsletter came out we received a \$1,000 donation as “seed money to help our elevator grow.” That money has been put into a special fund. If we receive any other donations toward an elevator, it will be added to the first money. We have started pricing putting in an elevator or a lift. It is going to be very expensive.

One last thing. We have a very old piano at the headquarters. It has probably been in the building since the hotel was built. It is a wonderful old upright with a beautiful cabinet. A couple years ago I had a man come to tune the piano. He played the piano and could tell from the sound that the sound board was cracked. This can be repaired, but it is very time consuming. Would any member be interested in undertaking this project? We have many members who are wonderful pianists. I would love to be able to have the piano played during some of our events.

One more last thing! The little girl mannequin is dressed in a Plaidette uniform. We do not have little white boots. If anyone has a pair of little white cowgirl boots child's size 8 or larger we would love to have them.

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**JULY 22, 2012**

**HISTORICAL SOCIETY RECEPTION**

**COOPER BESSEMER SECOND REUNION**

July 22<sup>nd</sup> is going to be a busy day in Grove City . We are hosting a wine and cheese reception for historical society members. This reception is in place of the annual banquet which we did not have this year. July 22<sup>nd</sup> is also the day of the second Cooper Bessemer Reunion. The society will be participating in the festivities of the day by being open and hosting attendees at our reception after their event.

College Avenue will be closed for the day from S. Broad Street to S. Center Street for. People who own old Bessemer engines will park them on the street and hopefully get them running. **Our reception will be from 2:00p.m. – 5:00p.m.**, but the society will be open all day for people who come to see the old engines and want to visit the historical society. If you would like to come and act as a host or hostess for the day, please let me know. We will need several people at the society at all times so that tours can be given through the building. However we will still need people downstairs to greet visitors as they arrive.



## GROVE CITY'S CIVIL WAR HERO REMEMBERED

*By Linda P. Bennett*

Grove City will celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War August 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> when the members of the Western Pennsylvania Civil War Re-enactors Society set up camp at Grove City Memorial Park. This event, organized by the Grove City Special Events Committee is being sponsored by Grove City Borough, Pine and Springfield Townships.

"Camp Maxwell" is named after Brigadier General Norman J. Maxwell, who was the last commander of the "Roundheads Regiment". He was born on March 13, 1834 on the old Maxwell farm in Plain Grove Township, Lawrence County, PA. (My mother was a Maxwell and grew up on this farm.) At the age of 17 he went to Mercer to learn the wagon and carriage maker's trade and relocated to North Liberty to go into business for himself. In 1853, he married Elizabeth Campbell. Their first and only child, Flora E. Maxwell later married C. H. Welch and lived in Grove City. In 1860 or early 1861, Norman had joined the Slippery Rock Volunteers, a local militia. The 1872 History/1873 Atlas of Lawrence County describes the "Slippery Rock Volunteers" as following:

"The uniform of the "Slippery Rock Volunteers" was a yellow linen hunting shirt, trimmed with red fringe; red leggings, a citizen's hat with a white plume. Each man furnished his own uniform and his own rifle, with which weapon the men were armed. William Stoughton was probably the first captain of this company, and Samuel Riddle also held the position for a time. After their name was changed to the "Washington Guards", they also changed their uniform to blue pants and coat, red sash, and cloth cap with a white plume. They had four gatherings annually: drill May 4<sup>th</sup>, review, May 12, and drill July 4<sup>th</sup> and September 10<sup>th</sup>. This company contained about



one hundred men, and entered the service in 1861 with nearly that strength under the following officers, Captain, Samuel Bentley; First Lieutenant, Andrew Nelson; Second Lieutenant, Norman Maxwell. They joined the One Hundredth or "Roundhead" regiment, and were mustered into the service as Company E of that body, and before the close of the war saw much severe service."

*(cont. on pg. 5)*

Military records from the U.S. Military Archives indicate that on October 9, 1867, Colonel Maxwell was appointed Brigadier General by Brevet for "gallant and meritorious services during the war". The appointment was to date from April 18, 1865, the day he was promoted to Colonel but he preferred to be known simply as the Colonel of the Roundheads.

The 1909 History of Mercer County's biographical profile on Colonel Norman J. Maxwell records: "In 1866 he went to Grove City, where he located and has since resided and has been engaged in mercantile pursuits, continuing the same



about twenty years. He is active in Masonry, and is now a Master Mason. In his church relations the Colonel is a member of the Presbyterian Church."

In 1896, he was appointed as adjutant and commander of the Soldiers and Sailors Home at Erie. He spent 12 years at Erie, 3 years of which he served as commander. On account of family health he resigned and returned to Grove City where he resided until his death at the age of 94. It should also be noted that Col. Maxwell served as Mayor of Grove City for two terms.

His obituary in the Grove City Newspaper, Tuesday, January 15, 1929 is transcribed below: "Col. N. J. Maxwell, Commander of famous Roundhead Regiment, dies after short illness, at home here. Death claims well known local man in his 94th year. He rose from Private to Brigadier-Gen during Civil War. Death summoned Grove City's oldest resident and most highly regarded citizen at 6 a.m. Sunday, when Col. Norman J. Maxwell succumbed to a week's illness of influenza at the age of 94 years and ten months. Colonel Maxwell was commander of the famous Roundhead Regiment during the War of the Rebellion, and was for years Grove City's most colorful figure and highly esteemed citizen." In 1996 the Western PA Civil War Re-enactor's Society rededicated the grave of General Maxwell at Woodland Cemetery. State, Local and Masonic dignitaries, along with the official historian of the 100<sup>th</sup> PVI, William Gavin, attended the ceremony, at which time an interpretive granite marker was placed on the General's grave.

"Camp Maxwell" is open to the public to visit the camp sites Saturday Aug. 25, 9 a.m.- 5 p.m. and Sunday Aug. 26, 11 a.m.-4p.m. There will be interpretive activities by the re-enactors, horse drawn wagon rides through the park Saturday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., as well as skirmishes with cannon fire. Tim Bennett, one of the organizers reports they are planning to conduct an after dark artillery fire in the back of the park by the former Girl Scout building. We will be able to witness what a night time fire looks like at approximately 9 p.m. Saturday. Tim also plans to give a lecture in regard to Grove City during the Civil War. More educational lectures and educational activities for families to participate in are being planned and times will be announced in the local newspaper in August. Everyone is invited to come out to Memorial Park and enjoy the re-enactment of our nation's history and to honor one of Grove City's Civil War heroes, Norman J. Maxwell.

## SECOND FLOOR ROOMS

The rooms on the second floor of the Historical Society are varied in content and interest. If you are responsible for arranging a room, please check to make sure it is neat and in good condition before July 22<sup>nd</sup>. We expect to have many people through the building that day, and we want every room to be standing tall. We also are going to be part of the Library House Tour this fall, so please check your room again at the end of summer.

As new accessions arrive they are put into their proper room. Once they are in their proper room they should either be stored or displayed. It is also appropriate to change displays or add new items to an existing display. We want items that are donated to have as much exposure as possible. People who take care of a room are doing a major contribution to the society and the community.

### THANK YOU ANITA DEMARCO

For several years Anita De Marco has been in charge of our volunteers. Anita has organized the volunteer schedule, planned the orientation luncheon and been the “go to person” when there was a scheduling problem. Sadly for us, Anita has moved from Grove City and has given up this most important job. However, before she left, she set everything up for this year. So, we are able to continue for the year.

We are asking for a volunteer to step forward and assume the duties of organizing the volunteers. If you are interested in doing this for next year, please talk with me or Linda Bennett. It is a job that is very important, but one that is mostly done over the winter before we open in the spring. Once we are open, the main duty is printing each month’s calendar. Please look at your schedules and see if this is something that you would be able to do for the society.

**ANITA, MANY THANKS FOR ALL YOU HAVE DONE FOR THE SOCIETY.  
WE MISS YOU!**

## MEMBERSHIP DUES

In the last newsletter I mentioned that many of you have not kept your membership up to date. We cannot continue to operate without full financial support of the people who belong to our organization. We are going to be sending out letters asking you to update your membership.

If you are not sure about the status of your membership, ask me, Marty St. John who is in charge of memberships or Tom Armour our treasurer. We will be glad to tell you the status of your membership.



## FALL SEMINARS

Each fall the Historical Society has a series of seminars that are open to the public. Our first seminar will be on **September 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 at the society Headquarters.** **Olivia Lanning** of Slippery Rock will talk about the role that quilts played in leading slaves to freedom in the north. Olivia owns the Snowflake Mill Quilt Shop in Slippery Rock and has examples of the quilts that were so important to the freedom seeking slaves.

The second seminar will be on **September 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00, again at the Headquarters.** It will be hosted by **Lillian Reeher.** Lillian has done extensive research on the Underground Railroad in Mercer County . This will be a nice follow up to Olivia's talk.

The third seminar should get everyone's attention. It will be led by **Chris Durish** of the **SteelTown Paranormal Society on October 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:00.** The Steel Town Paranormal group spent about 6 hours at the headquarters on June 16<sup>th</sup>. They had enough interesting experiences that they are going to come back for another visit in early July. On October 8<sup>th</sup> they will tell us about their group, how they do their investigations and what the results were from their time in our building. This should be a most interesting evening. We have all heard the stories of our "ghosts." And, since we are an official haunted building, I am sure we all want to know more.

**On October 22<sup>nd</sup> Will Knecht** will talk about **Wendell August now and into the future.**

Finally, on **November 5<sup>th</sup> Tom Armour** will give an overview of hammered aluminum in our area. As we all know Tom is the son of Arthur Armour, one of Grove City's aluminum crafters.




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## WOLF CREEK LEGACY I & II REPRINTED

In the 1980s Lillian Reeher worked for the Allied News. One of the projects she undertook while working there was a weekly article on the history of the Grove City Area. These articles were eventually put together into book form – called Wolf Creek Legacy I and Wolf Creek Legacy II. Since Lillian was working for the newspaper when she wrote these articles they owned the copyrights. With the increased community interest in the history of Grove City there has been a renewed interest in the Wolf Creek Legacy's. However few copies of these publications are available.

Recently the Historical Society was given permission by the parent newspaper The Sharon Herald to reprint these books. Lillian has started editing them. New pictures will be added and hopefully better quality printing.

This book should be a good fundraiser for us. As we have done with the last 2 books we are asking for Patron Support. For a \$400 donation you will receive 4 books. For a \$300 donation you will receive 3 books. For a \$200 donation you will receive 2 books and for \$100 you will receive 1 book. One hundred dollar donations can also be a memorial for a loved one. Becoming a patron is supporting our historical society. The first book we printed THE WAY WE WERE was paid for before it went to press. The second book GRANDMA LEFT THE LIGHT ON was almost paid for. We are hoping for continued support from members so that we can proceed to add another publication to our library. Your contribution will be tax deductible. Please send us your donation promptly so that we know how quickly we can proceed with publication.

# Grove City Area Historical Society

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To join or renew your membership, please send your payment along with your name, address, phone number and email address to the Grove City Area Historical Society.  
Founding and Life Memberships are payable over 3 years.

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GCAHS is a tax exempt charitable 501c3 organization. All membership contributions are tax deductible to the extent of the law. **THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**

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