



Historical Happenings

The Newsletter of the Grove City Area Historical Society

www.grovecityhistoricalsociety.org

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STEEL TOWN PARANORMAL

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Shadows in the basement, a little girl talking in a corner, cherry pipe tobacco being smelled, chairs moving, steps and bangs being heard...all are common stories about the Headquarters of the Historical Society.

We are **AN OFFICIAL HAUNTED BUILDING**. We were given this designation by the Northwest Hauntings Association a couple of years ago. We have all heard these stories and either scoffed at them, questioned them or believed them.



Members of Steel Town Paranormal

This summer we were contacted by the Steel Town Paranormal group asking if they could do an investigation at the headquarters. We agreed, notified the police of activity during the night, and let them roam the building. They did not want to know what other groups had found, nor hear any of the antidotal stories that swirl around. So, we turned them loose.

They called and asked to come back a second time. When I let them into the building we talked about what they had found the first night. Interestingly, they found shadows, heard strange noises, and communicated with a little girl. All of these things tied in with what had been found before and what members had experienced.

Two members of the group, Chris and Melanie Durish, came and spoke at a seminar this fall. They also left us a report of their findings. The report will be in the library if you wish to read it.

They closed their report with the following statement "As for the location itself, it has been one of the more interesting we have ever investigated. Our first investigation provided various investigators with some pretty convincing personal experiences while the second produced a few intriguing pieces of evidence. It is our intention to return to this location in the future to continue our investigation efforts in an attempt to explain the evidence and personal experiences from our first two trips and to possibly validate our growing belief that the Grove City Historical Society is a paranormally active location."

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I begin this newsletter Trick or Treat is tomorrow night. It is no TRICK that this is my last newsletter. And, it is a real TREAT for me to look back over the last four years and see all that has changed at the headquarters. It is hard to believe that I have been your president for four years. To say that the time has gone by quickly is an understatement. When you are busy doing things that you enjoy, time flies. And the time has flown. A lot has been accomplished, but we cannot sit back and rest on our laurels. There is still much work to do, and the work is ongoing. Fortunately we have an excellent group of volunteers who just keep moving forward with projects. The headquarters and the displays are constantly evolving. This evolution continues because new things are constantly being donated. As items are donated they are placed in areas of the building where they will be easily found and seen.



Current President, Skip Sample

We are working to develop a new area of interest to the community; The Grove City Health Care Room. Dr. Betty Jo White has been instrumental in getting this room going. She has solicited donations from many medical areas of the community. Grove City has an interesting history with Medical Doctors and Osteopaths. We hope to showcase both philosophies of the medical profession.

We would not have accomplished what we have in the last four years if it were not for the publications committee (Lillian Reeher, Ed and Jean Carlson, Chester Coulter, Willie Caldwell, Tom Armour, and Jason and Megan Reeher) working long hours to publish GRANDMA LEFT THE LIGHT ON. Gary Forsythe is always quietly working on the care of the building, Mary Ann McClinton works with the clothing, Anita DeMarco organized the volunteers, and Frank Hoffman, Monica Ondruska and Heidi Adams catalog the accessions. Jane Cleary and Don Cook offer their services as genealogists at no cost. Linda Beatty and Jean Brown run the Museum Shoppe, Tom Armour handles our finances and Marty St. John keeps track of our memberships. Each month Phyllis Myers comes in at least an hour early to clean. If you wonder why the first floor always looks so clean and neat it is because of Phyllis. With all this going on and all the people working, there is one person who works quietly outside the headquarters, but who is extremely important to our organization. That person is Rich Snyder. Rich is an attorney with USX and does our taxes each year at no cost. Being president with this group of people was an easy job. This list does not include all the volunteers who work each month to make sure that the headquarters is open. Some days are long and boring because no one comes to visit. Other days are so busy the time flies.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the boys of the BARJ Program(Balanced And Restorative Justice) at George Junior Republic . These boys, under the direction of Matt Louise, move things for us. As rooms change and new items arrive, display cases and/or display items need to be moved. This is when we call the BARJ boys. They are young and strong and cheerfully move things up and down the stairs. They are a delight to work with.

As you can see from this article, my job of president has been made easier because of the cooperation of many.

Our new president is going to be Linda Bennett. We are fortunate that she has agreed to take over next year. Linda is competent and interested in the history of our community. I know that all the people who made my job easy and pleasant will continue to work with Linda. **GOOD LUCK LINDA AND THANK YOU FOR STEPPING FORWARD TO BE OUR NEW LEADER!**

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR ONLINE BOOK SALES

We are requesting a volunteer or two to assist with the online sale of books. We have many old yearbooks from Grove City High School and Grove City College which can bring in cash if we can promote their availability. In addition, the Historical Society's own publications can reach a much wider audience, through year-round sales online.

Grandma Left the Light On and *The Way We Were* would make wonderful holiday gifts!

Volunteers would need to be comfortable with email. Buyers would contact us through our webpage, <http://www.grovecityhistoricalsociety.org> or our Facebook page, <http://www.facebook.com/#!/GroveCityAreaHistoricalSociety> and payment would be made online through PayPal. Once our bank account shows payment received, the volunteer would be notified to ship the book. We have prepaid mailers to make that part easy.

So, if you would be interested in helping with this project in any way, please inform Jane Cleary—724-748-3044 or email at cleary2@zoominternet.net.



CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

DECEMBER 8, 2012

3:00 - 5:00 PM

WINE AND CHEESE RECEPTION

PLEASE BRING FOOD FOR THE FOOD PANTRY

COME MEET YOUR FRIENDS, HAVE SOME REFRESHMENTS

AND WISH EVERYONE A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A

HAPPY, HEALTHY NEW YEAR

INTERESTING ACCESSION

Frequently in the newsletter I tell you about an interesting and unusual item that has been donated. Late last summer the Historical Society received something that may now be unique in Pennsylvania. It is an original mail wagon dating from 1918. Following is the story of the mail wagon, as told by Lillian Reeher, granddaughter of the wagon's original owner.

The Mail Wagon Has Arrived

By Lillian Reynolds Reeher



Lillian standing with the mail wagon

The much-looked-for mail wagon has arrived. It's back in Grove City where it started its journey in 1918. It came home courtesy of an Ohio veterinarian who is the grandson of Grove City rural mail carrier, R. Hood Reynolds, and son of former Grove City Postmaster, John Harold Reynolds, and he is my cousin.

Dr. Robert Reynolds has two practices in the Canfield-Boardman area. He is known for his champion German Short-Haired Pointers. He was reared in Grove City where his father was Postmaster and his mother, Dorothy, was a nurse. Last year, when Robbie's brother, Johnny died, Robbie found our grandfather's mail wagon in Johnny's barn. The brothers had been committed to preserving what is

thought to be one of the last existing mail wagons in our state.

Robbie decided the mail wagon should come home to Grove City. After visiting the Historical Society with me one day last summer, many conversations were exchanged between Tom Armour and Robbie. The wagon was too big to fit through our doors, and how to transport it to Grove City? Certainly it couldn't be horse drawn. It was partially taken apart and brought on a carrier by Tom Thomas, Tom Armour and Gary Forsythe. It is being stored by Grove City College in their maintenance building on Pine Street.

And now back to my story of Hood Reynolds and his mail wagon. When Hood died in 1981 at the age of 98, he had been retired since 1949 from the Grove City Post Office where he was a rural letter carrier for 31 years, in addition to being a farmer.

On Christmas Day, 1917, Postmaster Will Van Eman called Hood. One of the carriers was ill. The mail was piling up and could Hood substitute? Hood agreed and then successfully took the examination for the job

Continued on page 5

the next spring. His route took him from McCoytown through Enterprise , past Galloway School , through a corner of Butler County and into Venango County , 28 miles including some bad roads. His pay was \$100 a month with no equipment allowance. During World War II, an extra \$20 a month allowance was granted.

He had to keep three horses at the ready. That first winter he decided to buy the closed mail wagon. A horse with “a lot of horse sense” probably saved Hood from injury in a narrow escape. While returning to the post office after dark one cold winter night, he was nearing the railroad crossing at Enterprise when a drifting engine sped down the tracks. He yanked the horse to the side of the road finding barely enough room between the engine and the high bank of the railway. Good sense kept the horse from becoming frightened and bolting.

When crews were building Route 8 in Butler and Venango Counties , Hood recalled materials being hauled along the right-of-way by a donkey engine. He also described Route 173 North as “never wearing out” because it has a base of stones from neighboring fields.

“There wasn’t a day that I did not get to the post office and get started on my route,” he told Margaret Patterson in an interview for *Allied News*. Some days, though, drifted snow, high water and mud prevented him completing the route.

Hood’s retirement dinner was one of the first dinners served in the basement of Springfield Church , near the family farm. In 1925, he purchased the property on the corner across from Center Church so he could be nearer his work while retaining what the family always called the Old Farm.

Hood Reynolds’ father, Lt. George Findley Reynolds, who died in 1941 (the year this writer was born) was the area’s last surviving Civil War veteran. He had enlisted at the age of 17 in the 76th Pennsylvania Keystone Zouaves, whose red baggy trousers, fezzes and sword bayonets were copied from Napoleon’s armies. By 1864, he was serving as a guard at Ft. Monroe in General Grant’s army.

On Findley’s return home to Bucks County , he spent two winters getting logs out at the headquarters of the Susquehanna River . He then took up a claim on 160 acres in Kansas where he built a log home. In the summers, he worked on the Atcheson, Topeka and the Santa Fe Railroad which was being built. Then Findley came back to Pennsylvania . He married Mary Hood and took his wife out to Kansas , but a year later came back to Indiana County where Robert Hood was born. Hood’s mother died soon after and his father returned to Kansas , leaving him to be raised by his grandparents. Later his father returned with a new wife and bought a farm near Ligonier where young Hood grew up. In 1916, Hood moved to Mercer County .

Hood and Martha Bobbitt (Bobbitt’s Grocery) Reynolds were the parents of four sons and four daughters. George Forester became head of sales for Alcoa. Bertha married Dr. Harry Rose, a Presbyterian clergyman. John Harold was Grove City Post Master. Kenneth, the writer’s father, worked for Goodyear Aircraft. Mary Edna Stinedurf was a librarian for Grove City College and Lakeview schools. Rev. Charles Reynolds was a Presbyterian minister. Esther Jo died of cancer at age 24. Inez died in infancy.

So, Hood’s mail wagon has come home, quite a reminder of a time when mail came at almost a snail’s pace. For me, it’s a reminder of a mail carrier whose mother died early on, and whose father heeded the call to homestead out



Robert Hood Reynolds



The mail wagon

West. And yet the child survived to become a man who taught school, farmed and drove a tin and wood mail wagon. His focus was to get the mail out to the tune of “Neither rain, nor snow, nor sleet, nor gloom of night shall stay these couriers from the swift completion for their appointed rounds.”

I have often wondered if Hood’s dedication arose from the memory of a small boy in Pennsylvania waiting and hoping for some letter from his father in that far-away place called Kansas . A small boy who realized that communication, no matter how slow, was what kept the wheels of hope turning.

Objects trigger memories. That’s why it’s so important that there are historical societies to preserve objects so that all of us can remember.

For me, this arrival of the mail wagon brought back memories of the Hood Reynolds family. My grandfather, Hood, who survived a solitary childhood and soldiered through adulthood with a formidable work ethic, including continuing to raise beef cattle despite being gored through the mid-section by his favorite bull. His wife who bore eight children, despite heart problems. Uncle George, whom I never really knew, but whose four daughters I came to love. Aunt Bertha, the prettiest, and the soul of Presbyterianism. Uncle Harold who fought in World War II and then came home to battle malaria for the rest of his life. Aunt Mary, born on the Fourth of July, who always kept us cousins informed of the others’ activities. Uncle Charles, a workaholic preacher who as a child always wondered why there was a parade on Aunt Mary’s birthday, not knowing it was the Fourth of July, and whose daughter is like my sister. Esther Jo, who attended Grove City College and died shortly after.

And my father, William Kenneth, of whom I remember only these few things: long walks in the woods and at the Old Farm, and stories of how he took his horse Scout to Boy Scout camp, and whose dog Beans churned butter for the family, walking a treadmill. This I remember.

These were the folks to whom the mail wagon belonged. I know them as one of the many Scots-Irish clans that came to this area that looks so much like the land of their ancestors. I know them as people with strong ties to the land, a love of animals, a strong work ethic, and most of all, with strong ties to their Celtic heritage and their belief in God. And in writing this, I have come to realize that pretty much describes me, this descendant of the Reynolds Clan.

For those of you who have only a few family objects, I urge you to look at them, and let the memories come. Memories are the life flow to the future.

The Historical Society will be closing for the winter on Saturday, December 15th. We will remain closed all winter. We will re-open in mid-April. The exact date will be announced early next year.

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.

MUSEUM SHOPPE

As the Christmas Holidays approach most of us are thinking about gifts. In the Spirit of Christmas, the Museum Shoppe has decided to offer the books GRANDMA LEFT THE LIGHT ON and THE WAY WE WERE at a reduced price. GRANDMA LEFT THE LIGHT ON will be \$25 including tax. THE WAY WE WERE will be \$30 including tax. If you have a friend or family member who is from Grove City, they would enjoy many happy winter hours reading these books and reminiscing about the people and the places.

We also have purchased some decorative bags to use when you purchase something. The bags are so cute that the members of the Museum Shoppe decided you may like to purchase them for your own use. So, the large ones are \$1.00, the medium sized ones are \$0.50, and the small ones are \$0.10.

The Museum Shoppe has an interesting display of gifts. There are several books about Grove City by Grove City authors as well as crockery with the name Grove City on it and t-shirts and sweat shirts. Christmas ornaments with the original Historical Society logo will be selling for \$1.00 each. We have many Grove City High School and Grove City College yearbooks. The books sell for \$10.00 each. These are duplicates of the ones we have in the library. We also have a beautiful assortment of Maude Winder and Margaret Williams prints available.



Decorative bags perfect for gifts!

AUTUMN SCHEDULE



Mercer County Tax Collectors Luncheon

One of the many goals we have at the Historical Society is to get people into the building. It always amazes me how many people from Grove City do not know about us and our museum.

The months of September and October have gone a long way to publicize our organization. We have had 5 seminars, a dinner, a luncheon, and a breakfast. A total of 320 people visited the society in September and October, many of whom did not even know we

existed. We were also on the Library house tour, which brought many people from Butler as well as Grove City. We participated in the Art Walk showing the paintings of Jack Livingston. The Mercer County Tax Collectors had their quarterly dinner meeting at the headquarters. Everyone was surprised at how nice our facility is. This week 4 social studies teachers from Grove City came for a visit. All 4 went out the door with membership forms promising to come back and join.



Institute for Learning in Retirement Luncheon



Lillian Reeher

Our fall seminars were particularly interesting this year. Olivia Lanning from Slippery Rock who owns the Snowflake Mill Quilt Shop told us how quilts led slaves to freedom in the north. She had beautiful examples of the quilt patterns to show. Lillian Reeher then followed with the part Mercer County, particularly this area of the county, played in the road to freedom. Next we had the Steel Town Paranormal Group. The fourth seminar was Will Knecht telling us the future plans for Wendell

August. The company is expanding rapidly. They will soon break ground for the new complex, just west of the Mall on Rt. 208. Our final seminar was an overview of the hammered aluminum industry in Grove City. All the seminars were well attended.



Will Knecht

Continued on page 9



Teacher, Christine Martucio arrives for a tour

Of course we always have the eighth graders come. This year we had 120 students – the students are in addition to the 320 people. Half came in the morning and half in the afternoon. The morning shift was pretty chaotic. However, we had ourselves better organized by the afternoon. Ginger Uber and Carol George were upstairs with a third of the students. I had a third on the first floor and Mary Ann McClinton took a third to the basement. Then we would switch places.

The kids love to look around and hear the ghost stories. This year a couple of the boys

tried to set the bear trap we have in the Agriculture Room. We have to have it hanging from the ceiling, or out of sight, before next year. We joked about having to stay ahead of the students, but it was a reality this year. Working with them however is a pleasure each year. They are so eager to learn. The classes have been coming to the Headquarters every year since we purchased the Traveler's Hotel. The teachers are amazed at the changes in the building. Since the middle school is up on the hill, a visit to the society is a little more difficult. Last year they walked. That was a long walk. This year they had 2 school busses, so we had more time for teaching. Working with the students is something I look forward to each year.



Social Studies Teacher from The George Junior Republic: Mike Sample, Ken Ensco, Vicki Franklin, and Erin Chikosky

YEAR END CONTRIBUTIONS

Each year in the final newsletter I remind you that if you are in the habit of making year end contributions to charitable organizations, please remember the Historical Society. We are a 501 c3 organization.



If you wish you can appropriate your money to a specific project or give to the general fund. We just had a donation for the Grove City Health Care Room which we are in the process of developing.

As you know we have a short fall every year that must be made up. So far we have been fortunate to "make ends meet"!

Please consider helping.

Grove City Area Historical Society

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Tuesday-Saturday 12:00PM - 3:00PM

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/#!/GroveCityHistoricalSociety
Email: gcahs@zoominternet.net

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.

Make Checks Payable To: Grove City Area Historical Society

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!**

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES:	
Founding	\$1,000.00
Life	\$500.00
Corporate	\$50.00
Family	\$40.00
Individual	\$20.00
Student / Senior	\$10.00
	\$

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PLEASE CIRCLE: new member renewal change of address

YOUR MEMBERSHIP ENSURES OUR SUCCESS