

111 College Ave. Grove City Pa 16127

The Grove City Area Historical Society Newsletter

www.grovecityhistoricalsociety.org 724 – 458 – 1798 gcchs@zoominternet.net

Volume 15, Issue 3

November 2015

Board of Directors

Kathy Jack, President
Grove City Borough

Gary Forsythe, 1st VP
Grove City Borough

Linda Beatty, 2nd VP
Liberty Township

Dr. Tom Armour, Treas.
Member-at-large

Laurie McCandless, Sec.
Wolf Creek Township

Heidi Adams
Member-at-large

Ed Carlson
Member-at-large

Jane Cleary
Member-at-large

Wendy Ewen
Springfield Township

Lillian Recher
Pine Township

Joseph Monteleone
Grove City Borough

A Message from the President

I am pleased to write to you as the newly-elected interim president of the Grove City Area Historical Society. I do know that I have “big shoes to fill,” as Past President Linda Bennett certainly served the Historical Society well. I look forward to serving along with the knowledgeable and supportive members of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors, and I hope to have the opportunity to meet as many of our members as possible.

Just to give you some information on my history-related background - as far back as I can recall, I have had an interest in history, especially American History. I grew up on the former David Gilson farm, a Mercer County historical landmark, built in 1794 and located at the corner of Blacktown Road and Route 258. I have a Bachelors of Arts degree in History from Slippery Rock University, and have been a member of the Mercer County Historical Society for 15 years. I am also a member of the Friends of Gettysburg. As members, my sister, Sally Gargas, and I travel to Gettysburg each June to participate in the annual volunteer work day. As a part of the “Bucket and Brush Brigade,” we join other volunteers from all over the United States to paint barns and fences on the battleground, and have even painted the names on the grave markers in the Gettysburg National Cemetery. It is so meaningful to me to take part in the preservation of one of our country’s cherished historical landmarks and also meaningful to me to continue to join other Grove City Area Historical Society members in preserving the history of Grove City.

I look forward to participating in the future events and activities here at the Historical Society, and I hope you will join me. Whether you choose to attend an event, volunteer hours of service, or make a monetary contribution, your support is very important to us. Thank you!

Kathy Jack



Helpers are needed at the Historical Society

We need your help. If you have the time and are looking for something to do please consider helping us. We need help with the following: web page design and maintenance, exhibits, accessioning/cataloging donations, data entry for photography project, grant writing or writing articles for the newsletter. Volunteering can be helping out with one of the above items or it can be 3 hours one day each month that we are open to give tours of our museum, work on projects, or help with genealogy. There is a lot to do to maintain and keep the historical society open. Your help would be greatly appreciated.

If you would like to help, contact Kathy Jack, 724-264-4439
kathyjack123@icloud.com.

"It is the duty of every good citizen to use all the opportunities which occur to him for preserving documents relating to the history of our country "

Thomas Jefferson to Hugh P. Taylor, 1823.

Scouting in Grove City



This Scouting window display was created by Laurie McCandless at the end of July. It featured scouting uniforms and equipment. It also depicted a scout's camp site.

We would like to thank those who made this display possible - the Sonntag family for loaning us their Boy Scout items, Skip Sample for the allowing us to use the Brownie and the Girl Scout uniforms, Laurie McCandless, and all who helped her with this display.

Girl Scouts

The Girl Scouts began in 1912 with only 18 girls. Twenty years later, in February of 1932, they got their start in Grove City thanks to Esther Post and several others. Esther was the physical education director of women at the Grove City College and felt that the girls from Grove City area could benefit from belonging to the Girl Scouts. Within that year there were enough girls interested in scouting that they had expanded their one troop to a total of five. They also needed more people to help run the new organization.

Four years later in March of 1936 the Girl Scouts in Grove City held their first Girl Scout cookie sale. This first cookie sale made \$160. In this same year the newspaper started a Girl Scout column to report their activities. This column ran until sometime in the 1970's.

The girls in the photo to the right are Scouts who were a part of the 200 girls from 10 Girl Scout local troops that took part in the 68th anniversary of Girl Scouting in 1980.

A songfest in observance of the 68th anniversary of was held in Grove City at Highland Elementary school. 10 local Girl Scout troops were among the 200 girls and visitors that attended during Girl Scouts week March 9th to the 15th.

Photo on right from the left Standing:

Heather Conroy, Shelly Crawford, Darlene Loughner, and Julie Hoogland

Seated: Lori Martin.

Photo was taken by Linda Miske

Boy Scouts

The Boy Scouts in Grove City were established in 1919 by Dr. E. J. Fithian. Dr. Fithian had arranged for the troop to meet at the Presbyterian Church where Tower Church now stands. In 1930, Grove City had its very first Eagle Scout, Milton Stewart. His scoutmaster had been R.C. Cox. By the 1920's there were 7 Boy Scout troops in Grove City.

James H. Montgomery shared his memories in the book *Reflections of Our Past: Celebrating 200 Years of Grove City, Pennsylvania* by the Bicentennial History Committee. One of the memories he shared was that of a service project the Boy Scouts from Grove City had performed. They had planted pine trees in Memorial Park to earn merit badges.



We would like to recognize Joan Foster for all of the years she dedicated to being a Girl Scout Leader and the items that were donated in her honor.

We hope that these images and reflections bring back many fond memories for Grove City's former scouts.



Cultivating Young Minds Since 1830

By Annabelle Wagner

The Grove City Area Historical Society has a wealth of information about this small town's school system, going all the way back to the very start. Among the antiques collected in its School Room are wood and cast iron school desks, a school bell, slate for practicing letters and numbers, school books, flags, framed pictures that hung in local schools, class pictures, and class reunion pictures. One item on display is the flag from the class of 1924. The class celebrated their forty year reunion in 1964. Among the attendees were four former teachers and seventy students.

In the 1800's most children would have had to travel to one-room schoolhouses to get any sort of education. Thirty-seven schoolhouses existed in the Grove City area for a time, but the last one closed its doors in 1960. Over the years, some have burned down while others, like the Courtney Mill School in Liberty Township, are now homes. One of the earliest schoolhouses to open, the Blacktown School in Springfield Township, was turned into a community center in 1957.

In 1830, Grove City established its first subscription school, and thus a good education became available to the youth of the still-developing town. Students paid a fee to attend, girls six months out of the year, and boys only three. Nellie Bolton was the school's first teacher

The Historical Society also has information on the George Junior Republic. The Republic of Grove City, PA opened in 1909. It was designed to save homeless, abandoned, neglected, or delinquent children from the streets or abusive homes and help them to become well-rounded, functioning citizens by providing them with an education, psychiatric evaluations, recreation, etc. It is still in operation today and is considered to be one of the nation's largest non-profit residential treatment facilities.

In the School Room, you will find many photographs of Grove City's old educational facilities. The Central School Building, located on the corner of Center Street and Main, was built in 1900 and considered to be state of the art. It was razed in 1976. The Lincoln Grade School was built in 1906. The Grove City High School was built at 130 East Main Street in 1913. It would later operate as the middle school for ninety-seven years before being shut down in 2011. I myself was one of the last students to attend this school as a seventh-grader. The current high school opened its doors in 1954.

Fall Window Display Featured the Grove City Schools

Our school system is rich in history. Come and see how many of your school memories can be found in our school room. You just may be surprised at what you find.



James H. Montgomery shared his memories in the book *Reflections of Our Past: Celebrating 200 Years of Grove City, Pennsylvania* by the Bicentennial History Committee.

Mr. Montgomery talked about the pond in Grove City's Memorial Park and the Monument Hill. He told of how the unemployed men who dug the pond in Memorial Park were paid 25 cents an hour by R.E. English. They then were paid to use the dirt they had dug up in creation of the pond to create the Monument Hill beside it.

Can you imagine the amount of digging they had to have done to give our community such a beautiful and lasting legacy that we still enjoy today?

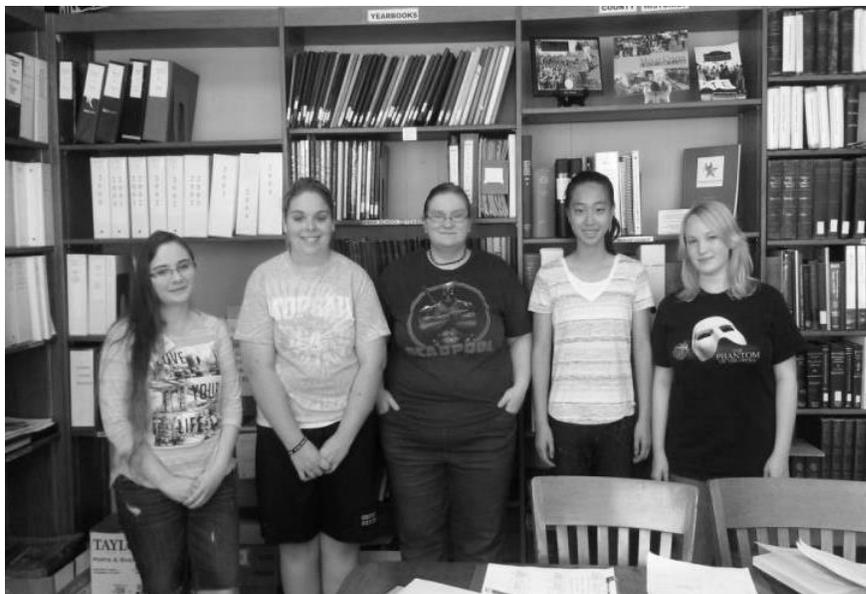
Grove City Area High School Volunteer News

Last summer we were fortunate to have seven new high school volunteers helping visitors and working on projects in the Grove City Area Historical Society.

The idea to extend an invitation to the Grove City Area High School students to volunteer for the summer was that of Shannan Coulter. This was Shannan's third summer as a volunteer at the Historical Society. She started volunteering with her mother and thought it would benefit others from the high school with their college and job applications. This year seven students joined Shannan. They were Erica Cannane, Maddy Jack, Ruiting Feng, Annie Wagner, Ashley Trouterman, Alex Magee, and Maddie Magee.

The girls were instrumental in the Photo Indexing Project that is mentioned in this newsletter. Several also helped with The Cooper Bessemer Photo Project also mentioned in this newsletter. They gave tours, cleaned, and accepted donations and more. Erica Cannane learned how to do accessions. All of them learned how to do genealogy research and learned about searching our cemetery records. Ruiting Feng managed our Photo Indexing project.

Maddie Magee, Erica Cannane, Ruiting Feng, Shannan Coulter, and Annie Wagner all wrote articles for the 2015 July, and November newsletters. Several of the girls also helped with the West PA Author's Book Festival on July 25, 2015 by setting up the table, helping with visitors and packing up everything at the end of the day. Three of the high school volunteers joined us at the Historical Society picnic to wish Linda and Bruce Bennett goodbye.



Left to Right:

Erica Cannane
Maddy Jack
Shannan Coulter
Ruiting Feng
Annie Wagner

Not pictured:

Ashley Trouterman
Alex Magee
Maddie Magee

The Grove City Area Historical Society Facebook Challenge!

On September 24, 2015 Tim Cookson issued a challenge. It was: *"On this beautiful second day of Autumn, here's a little quiz from your Grove City Area Historical Society...What GC building is adorned with the plaque pictured below? Hint #1: The photo is very poor quality... the plaque reads "The Lincoln". Hint #2: The building is NOT the old Lincoln School."*

Well, I now issue the challenge to those of you who did not see his post on Facebook. Do any of you know where it can be found? Try to make a guess, then look on page 8 in this newsletter for the answer. The answers that were given on Facebook and the winners of Tim's challenge are also listed here.

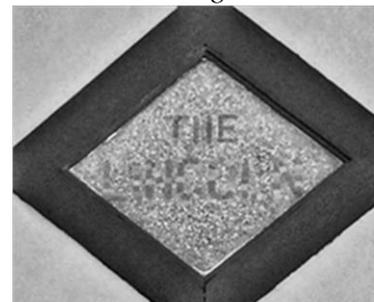




Photo Indexing Project

by Ruiting Feng

During the summer months of 2015, the Grove City Area Historical Society started to put together a new photo project. This project involves cataloging over 40 boxes of pictures the Society received from Giesmann and Curry Studios. The over 6,400 photos that we gratefully accepted, will be accessible through an excel database once the project is completed.

Mrs. Ruth A. Curry donated the images from Curry Studios. Carl Giesmann's studio was located in present day Marilyn's Victorian Antiques in Grove City. John Curry bought Carl's studio around 1979–1980. He eventually moved the studio to where B' Gifted is today. One of the Historical Society's volunteers, Marty St. John, was employed by both Carl and John. She said she helped acquire these pictures one day after getting a call from Ruth, who asked whether we wanted these historical prints and negatives that were stored in her house on Superior Street. Curry Studios had closed down sometime in the 1980's. One or two years later after the call, 40 boxes were moved from Superior Street into the Society's basement.

Pictures are of weddings, people, buildings, along with negatives all ranging from the years 1950-1981. Boxes are located in the Historical Society's basement. These pictures contain Grove City history, and when the project is completed, copies will be available to the public for purchase.

The Christmas Tree

The first record of a Christmas tree being on display was in 1830 in Pennsylvania. The German settlers brought the tradition with them from their homeland. The trees had been used in the German settlements as far back as the mid 1700's. It was not until 1846 that the Christmas tree became popular, thanks to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert (who was of German decent). The *London News* had an illustration of them and their children standing around a Christmas tree. It is said that she was so popular with her subjects that they adopted the Christmas tree quickly. Thus, the Christmas tree made its way into the hearts of the subjects along the eastern coast of America.

Christmas ornaments started to flow into America from Germany by the 1890's and the Christmas tree was gaining in popularity. The American families at that time preferred their Christmas trees to rise all the way to the ceiling of their homes, while those in Europe preferred to keep their trees at about 4 feet tall.

By the 1900's many Americans were decorating their trees with homemade ornaments, though there were German- Americans who still used apples, nuts and cookies. Popcorn was used as well even then, though they preferred to color it with dyes and string it with the nuts and berries.

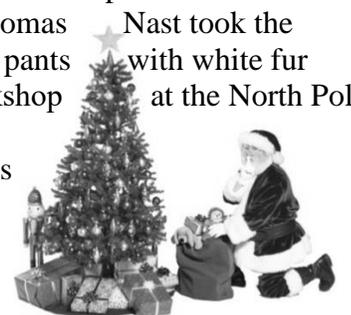
How do you decorate your tree? Are there hidden traditions handed down from generation to generation in your family?

Santa Claus

What we know today as a lovely Christmas story, '*Twas the Night Before Christmas*, was written by an Episcopal minister by the name of Clement Clarke Moore in 1822. He wrote it as a poem entitled "An Account of a Visit from St. Nicholas" for his three daughters. Many believe the modern image of Santa Claus can be traced back to this poem. Moore thought the subject of his poem to be of a frivolous nature and was hesitant to publish it. But fortunately, for many children today, he did.

59 years later in 1881 a man by the name of Thomas Nast took it upon himself to draw a picture of the Santa Claus from Clement Moore's poem. This picture appeared in *Harper's Weekly*. Thomas Nast took the description from the poem to create the colorful image of Santa in his red coat and pants trim that we know and love today. Nast also added to Santa's image a wife, a workshop at the North Pole and the elves.

So it is to these two men we owe our thanks for many of our childhood Christmas memories and traditions that we will share with our children and grandchildren again this year.



Grove City's Olde Town Autumn Arts Festival Art Walk

The Historical Society took part in the Autumn Arts Festival Art Walk on September 19th and featured various works of art done by local artists: Maude Winder, Margaret Williams, Charles Elliott, William Bovard, Jeanne Behringer, Lillian Reeher, Leon Rayl, Lillian Griffin, and Lois Hamilton. The Historical Society was able to be open for this event from 12 pm to 7 pm thanks to our volunteers.

Laurie McCandless wrote a brief biography of one of the artists that had been featured at the Historical Society and I would like to share it with you.

Margaret Williams – Margaret was born in Clintonville, PA, in 1877, and died on March 9, 1957. She moved with her family to Grove City in 1887. After graduation from Grove City High School, she attended Grove City College. While attending college, she taught a drawing course. Margaret transferred to Philadelphia College of Design for Women and studied there for four years.

She was practically a lifelong art student – she studied at Fontainebleau in France and in Venice. Margaret then returned to Grove City College in 1920 to begin her teaching career, but made numerous trips back to Paris to study. She also traveled the New England states, painting beautiful landscapes there. She belonged to an extensive art colony that peaked in the 1920s and '30s.

Margaret was the sole art instructor at Grove City College from 1920 to 1954 – she *was* the art department. She attempted to retire in 1952 after 32 years, but returned for two more years while the college decided whether or not to keep the art department. Failing health forced her to retire in 1954, and the college didn't hire a new instructor until 1958.

Margaret painted mostly still lifes, scenes, the Clarion River, the Kennerdell area, the Grove City area, western Pennsylvania landscapes, and Grove City College views. She would also paint things on request by others. She even copied several well-known classic paintings, demonstrating her incredible technical skills. Three of these were commissioned by Dr. Weir C. Ketler, then president of Grove City College. The majority of her known works are composed in oil, watercolor, or pastels. Many were completed on location.

Many of Margaret William's paintings, like the ones below, are on display at the Grove City Area Historical Society. "Lady in Black", two portraits, and four paintings can be seen in the front room. Large autumn scenes, "Cow Belly Bend", on Greenwood Drive, as well as other works of Margaret's are on display in the middle room. Additional paintings can be viewed elsewhere throughout the building.



West PA Authors Book Festival

Several volunteers of the Historical Society set up a table at the first West PA Authors Book Festival, held at the Mercer County Court House on June 22, 2015. Members handed out newsletters, made \$62.00 in the book sales and are looking forward to attending again next year. They all had a great time meeting some of the authors who were featuring their books.

Oh How We Have Changed and Yet Stayed the Same!

The Grove City area has come a long way since 1882 with dirt streets and horse drawn wagons traveling the roads. For all of the changes we have made over the years, we have also stayed the same as can be seen in the types of businesses that have been established here. Boarding houses such as the Filer House and the Uber Hotel / Travelers Hotel existed then - and now we have a bed and breakfast named Terra Nova House Bed and Breakfast and the Best Western / Comfort Inn.

The families, too, have grown. Some have moved away but others can trace their ancestry back to when Grove City was called Pine Grove. These families were an important part of our town - Cunningham, Montgomery, Uber, Filer, and McCoy to name a few. They created businesses, built industries, and supported our way of life from its foundation to what we know it as today.

History of the Fire Department

Records show that from between 1890 and 1904 there were three major fires that devastated the small thriving town of Grove City. They caused extensive property loss. Some of the other fires that occurred in the years between 1890 and 1904 were either not recorded or their records were destroyed. The records of three major fires have survived.

In 1904, after at least three major fires, nine men decided a volunteer fire company was needed. These men were: Plum Crawford, William Horsman, S. E. Van Eman, J. W. Russell, Jr., S. A. Mayers, Roy Maxwell, Ben McNeish, John Maxwell, and Will Allen.

The first fire department of Grove City was organized on September 21, 1904 with Chris P. Ruffing becoming the first Fire Chief. 12 years later the Grove City Fire Department acquired their first fire truck. This new fire truck cost \$ 2,000.00 and had been built by the Bessemer Truck Company on East Pine Street.

In the next three newsletters you will be able to read about three of the fires that led to the creation of Grove City's first fire company.

The First Officers Were as Follows:

- PRESIDENT..... J.W. Russell, Jr.
- VICE-PRESIDENT..... J.H. Mc Clelland
- SECRETARY..... M.L. Styers
- TREASURER..... C.A. Black
- Fire Chief Chris P. Ruffing
- ASST. CHIEF J. M. Patterson
- FOREMAN No. 1..... S. E. Van Eman
- ASST. FOREMAN No. 1.... S. A. Mayers
- FOREMAN No. 2.....L. M. Bolander
- ASST. FOREMAN No. 2.....Fred McCoy

1905 Fire Company No. 1's Members were:

- Plum Crawford
- Ben McNeish
- Roy Maxwell
- S. E. Van Eman
- William Horsman
- John Maxwell
- S. A. Mayers
- J. W. Russell, Jr.
- Will Allen
- Thell Bartholemew
- Joseph Madden
- Will Camer Houston
- Bartholomew W. Forrest
- George Meyers
- C. L. Russell
- M. C. Baker
- Jay Billingsley
- Ed Atchison
- Jean DeArmit
- T. Friend McCoy
- Claude Meyers
- C. Z. Ritchey
- Wes Christy
- E. D. Bolander
- William McCalmont
- John Love
- Reed Forest
- Oran Turk
- Albion Washabaugh
- Norman Kuhn
- Charles Schaffer
- Fred Bolander
- Charles Robinson
- Will Snedden
- N. F. (Knute) Neeley

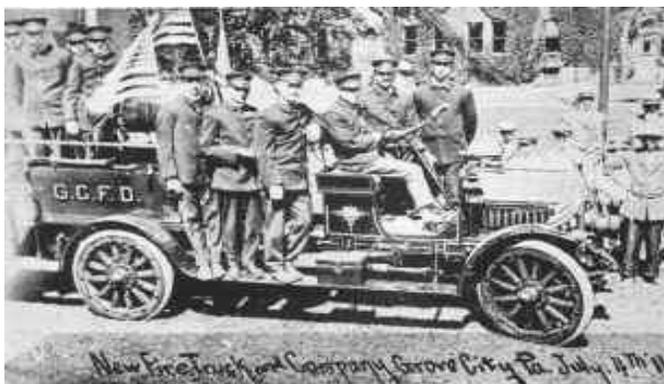


Photo on the left:
Grove City Volunteer Fire Department with their first motorized firetruck in 1916

Grove City Area Historical Society Facebook Page

As we said goodbye to our former president Linda Bennett and her husband, we have welcomed Tim Cookson as the new Facebook administrator. When online please stop by our Facebook page and see what Tim is posting about the Grove City area. He has many wonderful plans for the future of our Facebook page. His first post was about the Street Fair that used to be an annual event. While visiting the page do not forget to add a comment or a memory that you have about Grove City. We would love to hear from you.

**The Facebook Challenge: “What GC building is adorned with “The Lincoln” plaque pictured below?”
The following are the answers that were given on Facebook for Tim Cookson’s challenge**

Elizabeth: The Guthrie Movie Theater

Jim: Lincoln Hall, Grove City College, a guess

David: I'll throw my hat in the ring and guess at it. Is it at the Penn Grove Hotel?

Scott: Corner of Lincoln and Broad. I heard it used to be a hotel or a train station.

Stacy: The old building on the corner of Lincoln & Broad?

Bruce: the Historical Society building?

Bruce: could it be the corner building on Lincoln ave that has been boarded up for years? Used to be dentist and dr office.

Sally: Lincoln Coach Lines?

Michele: A bank downtown?

Scott: Could you tell us what the building was used for in the past, and what it's going to be used for?

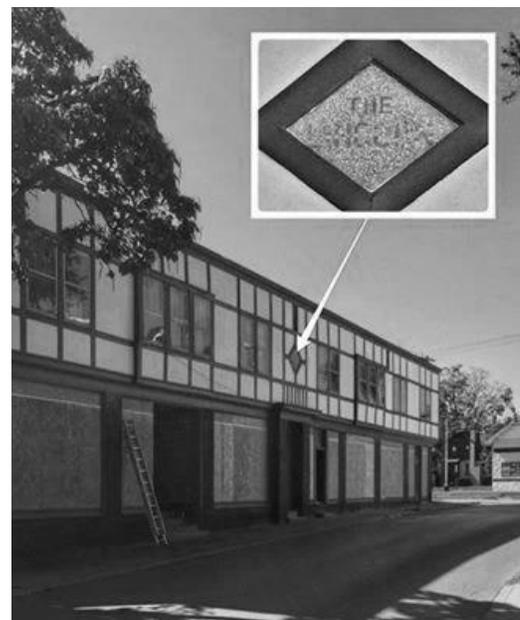
Grove City Area Historical Society BTW, the esteemed ex-president of your GCAHS, Linda Bennett, also submitted the correct answer. For some reason she soon afterward removed her post. We at the Society are guessing modesty.

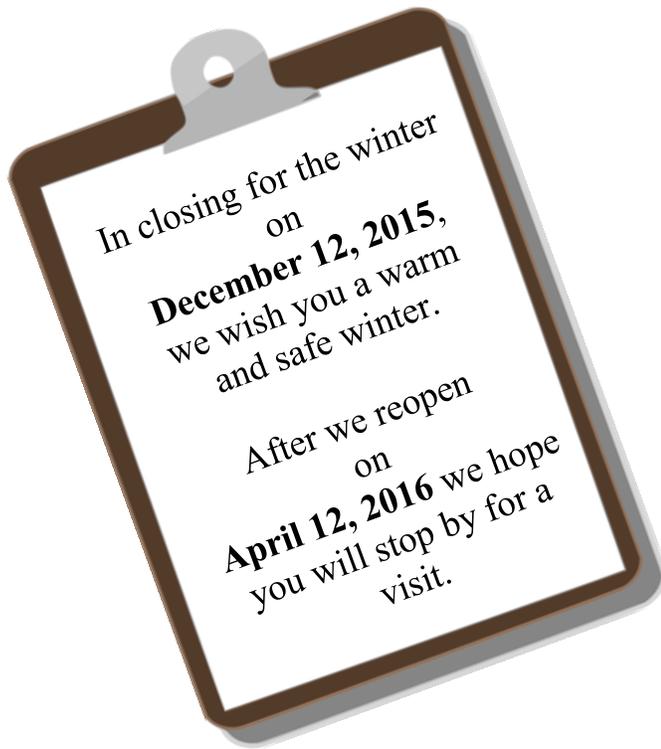
The winners in this challenge were:

Bruce Beck, Scott Miller and Stacy Montgomery Schell

They were able to identify the building on the corner of Lincoln & Broad. The building has been boarded up for a while and is now being renovated. What it will be used for in the future? I don't know. But if you think that you have the answer and can access our Facebook page let us know what you think it will be.

Thanks Tim, for the challenge I enjoyed following this on Facebook. I can't wait to see what you will post next!





Remember to renew your memberships as well in the coming year.

Some of the articles that you may find in the 2016 newsletters:

- Genealogy
- Volunteer news
- Events
- Projects
- Museum Rooms
- Fires of Grove City

People who were important in Grove City's History

Newsletter Suggestions

If you have a suggestion for a newsletter article that you would like to submit I would be happy to hear from you. Please contact me at cathycoulter1@yahoo.com or you can leave me a message at the Historical Society.

While you are thinking of the end of year tax planning, please remember that contributions and memberships to the Historical Society are tax deductible. If you are also looking for a way to honor someone special, a donation in their name or a membership for them may be just the thing you are looking for.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP ENSURES OUR SUCCESS

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____

PLEASE CIRCLE: new member renewal change of address

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

Founding and Life Memberships are payable over 3 years.

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, Box 764, Grove City, PA 16127

Make Checks Payable To: Grove City Area Historical Society

Grove City Area Historical Society
Cathy Coulter, Newsletter Editor
cathycoulter1@yahoo.com
111 College Ave
P.O. Box 764
Grove City, Pa. 16127

NON-PROFIT
Bulk Rate
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
GROVE CITY, PA.
PERMIT NO. 764



Museum and Gift Shoppe Hours
Tuesday – Saturday 12:00 – 3:00 p.m. until Dec. 12
724-458-1798

Website:
www.grovecityhistoricalsociety.org
Email: gcahs@zoominternet.net



*We Wish You and Your
Family a Very Happy
Holiday Season!*

Home for the Holidays Open House

Will be held on Saturday Nov. 14th noon to 3 pm. We are having a drawing for *Wolf Creek Legacy* during the open house. We are looking forward to seeing you.

Member Christmas Open House

It is getting to that time of year again when we participate in the Grove City Downtown Christmas event by having an open house for our members. The date this year for our open house is set for December 12 from Noon to 3 pm. Plan on stopping in for refreshments and visiting with other Historical Society members to enjoy the end of another successful year.

Museum Shop Holiday Gifts

When out shopping for the holidays please keep in mind that our Museum Shop has many items that would make wonderful gifts for your family and friends.

We have a nice variety of books for sale such as *Wolf Creek Legacy*, other history books, and even a book on genealogy. Fleece sweatshirts are also available to keep your family and friends warm throughout the upcoming winter.

We also have magnets, art prints of Grove City scenes, crocks, and note cards designed by local artists. All would make wonderful gifts for the holidays.

Stop in and see what wonders and memories we have in store for your family and your friends. Don't forget to add a few to your own wish list too.