

111 College Ave. Grove City Pa 16127

The Grove City Area Historical Society Newsletter

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

Volume 16, Issue 1

April 2016

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The theme of my message is “welcome”

We are happily welcoming this rejuvenating season of spring after the long winter months. My husband, Tom, and I were able to get away to our home in Florida for a short time this past winter. While there, we visited with Historical Society Past President, Linda Bennett and her husband, Bruce.

Their Florida home is close to our home. Linda and Bruce are enjoying the Florida sunshine, Disney World, and living close to their daughters and families – especially their grandchildren.

I am pleased to welcome new Board members: Hal McCracken, Cathy Coulter, Marty St. John and Jean Waugaman. Jean is also our newly appointed Second Vice President on the Executive Committee. In addition, thank you to outgoing Board members Heidi Adams and Ed Carlson for their generous service to the Historical Society.

And finally, I wish to extend a welcome to all Grove City Area Historical Society members to join our many volunteers who give of their time and talents. Because of their efforts, I’m proud to write that our Society is now listed in the Top 30 Historical Societies in the United States. You can read more about this honor on page 5. Please call me at 724-264-4439 or email me at kathyjack123@icloud.com to discuss the many volunteer opportunities available at our Historical Society.

And, if you should thank me for this opportunity, I will gratefully say, “You are welcome!”

Kathy Jack

The Uber Hotel Lobby

This is the site that once welcomed the guests of The Uber Hotel.



Now the Historical Society Lobby

This is the same lobby and it continues to welcomes guests today.



A Correction

The November 2015 article “Photo Indexing Project” had the name of John Curry in the article when the name should have been Jack Curry. I wish to extend to Ruth Curry and her family again my sincere apologies for the mistake.

Who’s Who?

Do you know that a former professional baseball player who had played as an outfielder in the Major Leagues 1978 – 1985 was born in Grove City Pennsylvania? He played for the Chicago Cubs, Montreal Expos, and the San Francisco Giants. Can you guess who this baseball player was? Turn to page 7 to find the answer.

How It All Started

The History of Grove City Pa started as most towns did with the first settlement of a family. For Grove City, it was when Valentine Cunningham and his family settled along Wolf Creek about 218 years ago (1798). With the gristmill that Valentine built, the humble beginning of the town now named Grove City was born.

Soon after Valentine’s settlement, others started to arrive in the area along with another mill and the creation of Mercer County. It was decided that a road was needed between the new county’s seat and the growing community. You know this road as being PA 58.

In the 1830’s, Valentine’s sons created a more formal layout of the town, calling it Pine Grove. Later, Pine Grove formally changed its name to Grove City on Jan. 4, 1883. The petition was presented to the Grand Jury in October of 1882. The petition was signed by 91 people from the community. The first officials of the newly incorporated town were B. R. Welch, burgess; R. C. Craig, secretary; C. J. Uber, high constable; J. L. Cochran, justice of the peace, and R. S. Coulter, C. L. Fithian, J. W. McMillan, D. M. Morrow, A. B. Mc Kay, and H. C. Sham, councilmen.

A Special Thank You

Eleanor Gray, GC College student, will be recognized at the Volunteer Orientation and Luncheon this year for her hard work and dedication to the Historical Society. Thank you, Eleanor, for all you have done.

We also would like to acknowledge posthumously Joan Foster for her service as a volunteer and for the many artifacts she donated to the Historical Society and Ralph Packard for developing the Grove City time line for our web page. Thanks, too, to Anita DeMarco for her great work on the memorial book, Kim Kelly for the snow and ice removal of the sidewalk during the months we have been closed, and Aaron Seigfried for fixing the roof.

Memorials

We hope their families know that it is with a sad heart that we have to announce that the following members of the Historical Society have passed away: Sue Burdick, Dr. Ralph Packard, Joan Foster, Betty Hedegore, Hazel Rouse, Ann Shannon, Frank Bryer, and Joe Jaskol.

There were also several memorial donations received for the following people: Judge Michael Wherry, Rose Jones, John B. Reid, Ruth Beck, and Nancy Rankin.

We wish to express our sincere condolences to the families and friends of those who have passed away.

Grove City Middle School’s 8th Graders

It has become a tradition for the Grove City Middle School’s 8th graders to visit the Historical Society. This year several of the students and their younger siblings offered to volunteer. On November 7, 2015 Clare Mapes, and Naomi Comger came to assist the Saturday volunteers and Pep Bernardi. They worked on a list of many tasks and we appreciate their help.

Dedication of the Library

The Historical Society’s Library was dedicated to Lillian Reeher - member, volunteer, and author of *Wolf Creek Legacy*.

The dedication ceremony took place on Dec. 12, 2015 during the Historical Society Open House. Be sure to look for the beautiful Wendell August plaque placed above the Library door the next time you visit us. Thank you Lillian!



Our Library

By Jane Cleary

One of the most recent additions to our Library collection is *I Consider It My Duty: A History of the 16th Division, Pennsylvania Militia During the War of 1812*, published by the Mercer County Historical Society (2014). In addition to books on the history of Grove City, our library contains histories of counties and the early families in western Pennsylvania, local family histories submitted by residents, early atlases and maps, books written by local authors, street directories for the 20th century, photographs of houses through the years, and files of local newspaper articles from the 1960’s to the present – featuring births, marriages, deaths, etc.

Elections Results

The officers for 2016 are:

Kathy Jack – President, Gary Forsythe – First Vice President, Jean Waugaman – Second Vice President, Tom Armour – Treasurer, Laurie McCandless – Secretary

Directors, for three-year terms: Linda Beatty, Liberty Township; Laurie McCandless Wolf Creek Township; and Cathy Coulter, Marty St. John, and Jean Waugaman as Members-at-Large. Harold McCracken was also appointed to serve the remainder of the term for Heidi Adams.

A Thank You to the Out Going Board Members

On behalf of the Board, we would like to thank Heidi Adams and Ed Carlson for all they have done while in their capacity as board members. Heidi was on the board for two years. Ed was on the board for 10 years (Offices held: Twice as 2nd Vice President, once as 1st Vice President, and President.). In addition, the Board would like to thank Ed for giving each board member a copy of his book, Hug a Tree Kiss a Rock.

The Board also would like to thank all of the other members and volunteers as well. You make keeping the Historical Society open possible. Without all of you we could not succeed in preserving Grove City's wonderful history.
Thank You

Please Welcome

Our newest members: Wendy Ewen, Kristi Hannon, Ed and Pam Uber, Tim McCandless, Rev. Robert McCreight, Robert Rider and Dough Mechler.

Rev. Robert McCreight and Jean Waugaman have volunteered to help with the Accessions Processing. Rev. McCreight has also offered to maintain our Church room upstairs as well. Chris Guarnieri will be helping with the newsletter and has offered to maintain the Civic Organizations room and the School Room upstairs.

Paula Kelly Grove City Native and Big Band Singer

By Cathy Coulter



Paula Kelly was born in Grove City Pa. April 6, 1919. She grew up to become a Big Band Singer who had started out performing alone but soon became the female lead of the once all-male Modernaires. Paula was married twice, first on New Year's Eve in 1939 to Hal Dickinson, with whom she had 3 daughters. After his death she married Richard Turner in 1976.

She sang with the orchestra led by Dick Stabile at the beginning of her career in 1937. A year later she was singing with Al Donahue's orchestra when she had a hit recording by the name of *Jeepers Creepers*.

It was in 1941 when she joined the Glenn Miller's Orchestra that Paula Kelly was featured in the popular musical *Sun Valley Serenade* singing the song *Chattanooga Choo Choo*. In that same year Paula Kelly joined Artie Shaw and recorded *Make Love to Me* and *I Don't Want to Walk Without You*. It was

also in 1941 that Paula joined the Modernaires as backup singer.

Glenn Miller enlisted in the Air Force in 1942 during WW2. This caused his band to break up so the Modernaires continued on with Paula Kelly as the lead singer. By the end of 1942 Paula and the Modernaires had appeared as the Glenn Miller singers. Then in 1943, along with the Miller Orchestra and Skip Nelson, they recorded the hit *That Old Black Magic*.

Two years later the Modernaires moved to Columbia Records and created their second album, **Tribute to Glenn Miller**. It was an assortment of Glenn Miller's most popular tunes. They recorded a song with Frank Sinatra named *The Old Master Painter* in 1949.

In the years between 1942 and 1978 Paula and the Modernaires continued to record songs as an independent singing group and even appeared in the Miller ghost bands. She retired in 1978, leaving her position to her daughter and namesake.

Paula Kelly died on April 2, 1992 in Costa Mesa, California.

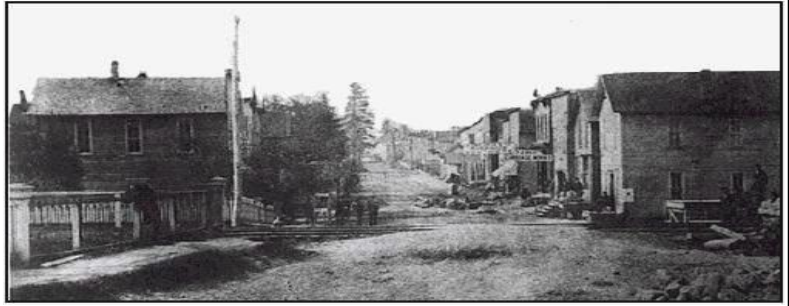
Grove City Fire of 1890

By Cathy Coulter

A fire flickered to life in the W.W. Forrest Barber Shop on May 9th 1890 and was eventually spotted at about 2:00 in the morning. That small flicker would soon grow to such enormous proportions that it would become visible as far as 25 miles away.

Because of the absence of any type of firefighting

equipment, the fire was able to grow and move down the street, causing mass destruction. This monstrous fire consumed 18 buildings along the west side of Broad Street from the railroad tracks to what was considered the "Old Bank".



By the time townspeople had responded to the alarm, the fire was raging and the fight to gain control would last for hours. It was not until 3 a.m. that the Greenville Fire Department was called and responded with three companies to help battle the flames.

At one point many people had stopped trying to put out the fire in favor of rescuing as much property as possible from the clutches of the flames. These townspeople raced to stay ahead of the flames as they desperately tried to save the property within the path of the flames. Anything that could be saved was placed on the opposite side of the street in the lots and alleys. The fire over took the Buffalo Clothing House building and that of the G.B. Hornet Music store, although several pianos and organs were saved.

It also became necessary to protect the buildings on the opposite side of the street from the flames threatening them. Even though they were saved, damage was still done to the following buildings: The harness shop of D. G. Hay, the Grove City House, N. Fithian's drug store, the Arbuckle Building, the old Pine Grove Bank building that was owned by J. L. Cochran, the Central Meat Market, and the Hotel. The other buildings suffered only minor damage by the way of broken glass fronts.

The fire swept northward, soon over taking the millinery store and Mrs. M.I. Hay's home. The other buildings in its terrible path were owned by: S. P. Barr, grocer and confectioner, D. Kerr, grocer, H. W. Koonce, dry goods and groceries, D. G. Courtney, office and residence, 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 residence and tailor room, and the P. S. & L. E. Railroad Station.

The firefighters and the townspeople decided to draw the line at Harshaw's store and attempted to keep the flames from moving any farther along the row of buildings. It was then decided to tear down Courtney's residence, in hopes of stopping the vicious flames. But the flames were too fast and the plan had to be abandoned. The next line to be drawn was at the depot, but this too failed due to the steepness of the roof and the immense amount of heat licking at the heels of the firefighters. It, too, was lost in the fire.

The fire was finally stopped on the north end of the street but not until it took the Stein residence, Stewart's Livery Barn, that had been located on the corner of Railroad and Center Street, and the home of Miss Lizzie Love. Unfortunately, the stables, warehouses, and other buildings located along Filer Alley lost most of the property inside of them when they were devoured by the fire. G. Stein's tenement houses, however, just barely escaped the devastation.

In the early morning of May 10th the battle for control of the fire was won, thanks to the Greenville fire department and the many brave and determined people of Grove City.

Grove City Area High School Yearbook *Pine Knot*

The Grove City *Pine Knot* yearbook, from 1924 to present, has now been digitized and is accessible on a flash/thumb drive here at the Historical Society. This electronic collection is searchable by keywords and names. A special thanks to Wendi Reggi at the Grove City Community Library who helped make this possible.

If you cannot make it in to our building to view the yearbooks, they have also been made available as a part of the Grove City Community Library's digital collection and are available online through the website: <http://www.grovecitypalibrary.org/resources.html#Yearbooks>.

The Historical Society has some of the old Grove City High School and the Grove City College yearbooks for sale. The costs for these are \$10.00. If you are interested in purchasing a specific year, please stop by or contact the Historical Society at 724 - 458 - 1798 or email us at gcahs@zoominternet.net.



A Home at Heart

By Chris Guarnieri

Anomalies catch your eye. Driving along S. Broad St., Grove City, one sees a quaint building on the west side of the street which seems out of place. What is that charming cottage doing in a business district instead of at the end of a lilac-lined country lane?

According to lore told to current owners Dave and Marilyn Stevens, this structure, built in the mid-19th century, was moved from East Main St. to make room for upper campus college buildings. Others believe the cottage was built where it stands at 247 S. Broad St., when this section of town was residential.

Regardless of its origins, this little building transitioned from nurturing families to nurturing entrepreneurs in the late 19th century. It survived the first great town fire of 1890 to house B.B. Montgomery's Book Store. Mr. Montgomery is remembered for the post cards of Grove City he created (many of which can be seen at the Grove City Historical Society on College Street, just around the corner). Wanting to make the most of a venture, the home's owner split the building to house two businesses and the one on the north side became a restaurant. In the 1950s this spot became an Ice Cream Parlor and later still, Lois Foust's (Tubbs) Coffee Shop, a popular spot with college students.

In addition to its incarnation as a book store, the south side of the building housed a glass studio. John Meyerhoff (Meyerhoff Art Glass, Conneaut Lake) opened his studio at this address in the 1970s. The beautiful door now leading into the Marilyn's Cottage Antiques is one of Meyerhoff's creations, as is the lamp above Marilyn's desk.

Marilyn's began in 1991 as a flower, card and candle shop. It was not until the later 1990s that the little structure became united again when Marilyn purchased the Foust Coffee Shop to house her antiques. It is now a shop as comfortable as home.

With its unique history and many incarnations, this little home at 247 S. Broad St. is worth a double look - in fact, it's worth a visit!



HISTORICAL SOCIETY RECEIVES RECOGNITION

By Laurie McCandless

Recollections is a northern Michigan company specializing in producing period clothing for re-enactors, for movies, and for living history role-players. They recently identified their top 30 historical preservation societies in the United States, and our local Grove City Area Historical Society made their list!

The preservation and appreciation of history is one of the main missions of *Recollections*. Their hope in creating the list is to honor historical sites around the country which you can visit to see truly accurate representations of the past.

Their assessment states: "The Grove City Area Historical Society is interesting and unique because it has all the things you'd expect a historical society to have—a museum, historical homes, etc. But, it also has its own publications and genealogy chart. This is particularly important for those who are native to the town, because it provides a reliable way for those people to track their ancestry."

You can read more about the award and other organizations recognized at <http://recollections.biz/blog/the-top-30-historical-preservation-societies-in-the-united-states/>

Although the Grove City Area Historical Society is currently closed for the winter, you can visit them on line at <https://www.facebook.com/GroveCityAreaHistoricalSociety> or www.grovecityhistoricalsociety.org. The Society will reopen on April 12, 2016



A Certified Haunted Building October 2000: A Discussion with an Eighth Grade Class

By Skip Sample

Each year I go to the eighth grade to discuss the history of Grove City. When the Historical Society purchased the Traveler's Hotel in the year 2000 the students began coming to visit our museum. The first day I talk with the students about the history of the town and the second day they come for a visit to the museum. The following conversation happened during the first years we owned the Headquarters.

STUDENT – “Mrs. Sample, is this building haunted?”

MRS. SAMPLE – “I don't think so. I have been here many times and I have never had any feeling of it being haunted, but I will ask Mrs. Trepasso who owned the building.

MRS. SAMPLE speaking to MRS. T. - “Mrs. Trepasso, is the building we just purchased haunted?”

MRS. T. – “Oh my yes! When I would be doing the laundry in the basement, the shadow of a man would come out of the rooms and walk around. He scared me at first. But I got use to him being around and I would just tell him to go on about his business. He never bothered me, he just wandered around. I also had a psychic come from New Castle. She came into the library, stopped, looked around and said “there are many spirits in the building”.

With these stories in mind we were not surprised when strange things happened. The man who was installing the furnace in the basement asked me if there were spirits in the building. I asked him why he wanted to know. He said he lived in a haunted house, so he was not afraid, but he said there was definitely something in the basement in the room where the ghosts always came out. I went to talk with the contractor and jokingly asked if he had seen our ghost. He stopped and asked what I meant. I told him the story of the ghost (shadow) who wandered around the basement. He then told me that one of his workers refused to continue to work in the basement because of a “presence” there. He had to bring in another employee to finish the job.

The son of the family who owned the hotel was visiting with his son. The little boy, who was about 4 years old, was running around having a very good time. When his daddy said it was time to leave the child said he had to say goodbye to the little girl he was playing with. There was no little girl in the building. This story was in the newspaper. A lady called in and said she had lived at the hotel for a period of time and she had seen that little girl many times!

Over the years many strange things have happened- like running into something when there was nothing there, sudden cold spots, chairs moving, and smelling pie and cigarette smoke in bedrooms, just to name a few things. However, nothing bad ever happened. We hope that if the building is haunted, the spirits who persist like what we have done and are content. After hearing all these stories and strange happenings we decided to trace the history of the building to see if we could find anyone who knew people who had lived in the hotel in the past. We had Rhonda McClelland, who was the Recorder of Deeds at the Court House, trace the chain of ownership for the building. We were not able to find anyone alive who could be of any help. So, the mysteries continue.

Skip Sample continues to tell all of the eighth graders who visit us each year about the building's ghostly residents and the paranormal investigation, as part of her tour of the building. Thank you, Skip, for helping to pass on our history to the next generation. Your talks and tours are remembered fondly by many of the students who were able to attend them. I have talked with several who are adults now and they still talk about their memories of the tours that you gave with fond smiles. In the next newsletter Skip Sample will tell us how the building became “A Certified Haunted Building”!



Did you know that there is a Pennsylvania law that says any motorist driving along a country road at night must stop every mile and send up a rocket signal, wait 10 minutes for the road to be cleared of live stock and continue?
I wonder how long ago that this law was created? It would surely make the trip much longer.

Meet our corporate members

Cashdollar & Associates
 Gould Financial Services
 Grove City Agway
 Hodge Realty
 Joden Jewelers
 Grove Manor
 Mercer County State Bank
 Orchard Manor
 Pennsylvania Equipment, Inc.
 The Neely Group
 Hairtique and More
 Premier Power Solutions
 Cunningham Funeral Home
 Armstrong
 Sheer Excellence
 Trinity
 Turner Insurance

Are you looking for something to do?

Join us in preserving Grove City's rich history. We need your help so please consider volunteering.

We are also welcoming high school students who would like to volunteer for the summer. Their volunteer service can be added to their college applications, school transcripts, and résumés.

There's much to be done. The following are only a few of the areas where we could use your help and we will provide training as needed:

- Accessioning/cataloging donations
- Maintaining a museum room
- Designing and setting up exhibits
- Data entry for a photography project
- Building maintenance
- Giving a seminar/presentation
- Writing articles for the newsletter
- Grant writing
- Web page design and maintenance

Spending 3 hours one day a month greeting visitors and giving tours

The time you invest in helping the Historical Society will vary depending on what you would like to do. There is a lot required to maintain and keep the Historical Society open and your help would be greatly appreciated. We would love to have you join us in preserving and sharing Grove City's history.

Contact Kathy Jack, 724-264-4439 kathyjack123@icloud.com if you are interested in helping us or have any questions.

The Who's Who answer is Vernon Scot Thompson. Scot Thompson was born December 7, 1995 in Grove City Pa. His Major League Baseball debut was for the Chicago Cubs on September 3, 1978. His batting average was .262 and he batted 110 runs. He played for the Chicago Cubs (1978-1983), San Francisco Giants (1984-1985) and the Montreal Expos (1985).

Please note that if you are interested in receiving our newsletters by email you can contact me at cathycoulter@grovecityhistoricalsociety.org and I will make sure you are added to the email list for the next newsletter. If by some chance your newsletter does not arrive by email, please let me know and I will send another one.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP ENSURES OUR SUCCESS

NAME _____ TELEPHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

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: \$ _____

Yes, I would like to volunteer. Please contact me about what opportunities are available to me.

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

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Museum and Gift Shoppe Hours
 Tuesday – Saturday 12:00 – 3:00 p.m.
 Our first day of the year is April 12th
 Our last day for this year is Dec.10th
 724-458-1798

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

I am requesting help in finding information and photos of Candyland Soda Fountain that was in business during the 1940's to 1960's on Broad Street. If you have any memories, photos of Candyland or of the buildings on Broad Street that included Candyland, and you would care to share them with us, please me at the Historical Society or by email at, cathy Coulter@grovecityhistoricalsociety.org. Please do not forget to include your name, phone number, or email. Thank you for helping me in trying to preserve the history of Candyland.

Mark Your Calendar - Up Coming Events

April 9th – Volunteer Orientation and Luncheon 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

April 12th - Open for the season.

May 2nd from 10:30 to 2:30 pm - “A Walk Down Grove City’s Memory Lane” - Skip Sample at the Institute for learning in Retirement in Slippery Rock Pa.

May 23rd 6:30 to 8 p.m. - “Genealogy 10: Ancestry.com” – Cathy Coulter at the Grove City Community Library.

June 13th 6:30 to 8 p.m. - “Grove City Area Historical Society: Researching and Resources” – Cathy Coulter at the Grove City Area Historical Society.

July 23rd 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. -Western Pa Authors 2016 Book Festival on the Court House Square, Mercer Pa.

We enjoyed spending time with each and every one who stopped by last year and are looking forward to opening once more on April 12th. Our Volunteers are working hard to prepare for your visit with new displays and other preparations. We hope you can visit us and see what we are working on this year.

Last year we had 1145 visitors to the Historical Society. Next April I would like to be able to report we had 1,155 visitors. So I ask you to help us reach that goal by stopping in for a visit, take a tour, attend a seminar, or just to say hello and see what we have done with the window display.

If you cannot visit us at our building, we hope to see you during our upcoming events we will be involved in this year or you can visit our website (<http://www.grovecityhistoricalsociety.org>) and our facebook page.