

111 College Ave. Grove City Pa 16127

# The Grove City Area Historical Society Newsletter

[www.grovecityhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.grovecityhistoricalsociety.org) 724 – 458 – 1798 [gcahs@zoominternet.net](mailto:gcahs@zoominternet.net)

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## Stewardship of Historical Treasures

I recently returned from my annual volunteer weekend in Gettysburg. My sister, our friend, and I were pleased with our assignment to paint the guest house at the Eisenhower farm near the Battlefield. After President and Mrs. Eisenhower purchased the farm in 1950, they converted the garage into the guest house. Occupants included Field Marshall Bernard L. Montgomery, the famous British officer who commanded during both World Wars, and grandson David Eisenhower, who lived there in 1964 while working in Gettysburg. A Gettysburg National Park employee commented to the volunteers that we are all stewards of Gettysburg National Park's historical treasures because of our dedication to preserve Gettysburg's history.

As members of the Grove City Area Historical Society, you are all stewards of our historical treasures. Because of your interest in preserving Grove City's history for future generations and your generous contributions to the Historical Society, we are able to house and care for our historical treasures. Our treasures include a wide variety of historical reference books in our Library, as well as so many interesting artifacts in all of our rooms. I encourage you to visit your Grove City Area Historical Society and enjoy some personal treasure hunting.



Kathy Jack

## Welcome!

We would like to welcome those who have generously offered their time this year to be stewards of Grove City area history.

## 2016 High School Volunteer News

Three of our high school volunteers graduated from high school this year and we would like to wish them all the best for their futures.

Their post graduate plans are:

Erica Cannane – Undecided

Alex Magee - Grove City College

Shannan Coulter – Slippery Rock University



Erica Cannane



Shannan Coulter

## United Way Day of Caring

The Day of Caring was held on Saturday April 16<sup>th</sup> from 9 am until noon. Eight students of the Alpha Beta Tau Sorority from the Grove City College came to the Historical Society and helped Gary Forsythe and Kathy Jack in cleaning, painting, and moving shelving. All of their efforts were greatly appreciated and we would like to thank them for all they did. Thank You Alpha Beta Tau Sorority sisters.





## The Sound of Music

By Chris Guarnieri

Whether wafting over the town from the Madison Avenue practice fields, chiming from the bell towers of downtown churches, or thumping from open car windows, music seems to have always been a vital part of our community.

In the first quarter of the 20th century, Grove City was fortunate enough to have had its own music store. The Baker's Music Store opened in 1909 at 109 S. Broad St. (Grove City Realty occupied this space most recently). Considering it was so close to the railroad depots, Baker's Music Store would have enjoyed a customer-base from a wide area.

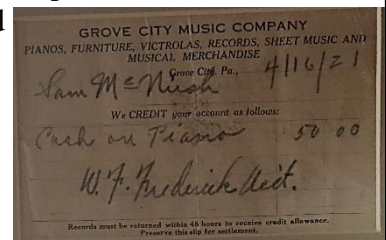
But by 1919 the store was gone and not until 1920 did a new one arrive. Grove City Music opened, first at 124 S. Broad St. and then, in 1921 they moved to 121 S. Broad St. In addition to musical instruments, they sold victrolas, records, sheet music and other musical merchandise. While this store does not seem to have survived the roaring twenties, one piano, purchased at this store in 1921, is still housed on Broad Street.

Samuel McNeish, grandfather of Jane Ford (Plain Jane Curtains, N. Broad St. Grove City) purchased a Clarendon piano from Grove City Music. It remained in the family for some time, until, like most large items, it was sold when the family down-sized their home.

When Jane returned to Grove City in 1981 she wanted her grandfather's piano back in her home and so, made inquiries to locate and return the instrument to her family, where it remained until 2015 when she donated it to Sweet Jeanie's Ice Cream Parlor. Jeanie and David Mills, owners, invite anyone so inclined, to take a turn at the ivories.

Sadly, other music stores have come and gone. Broad St. Music, 154 S. Broad St. and in this century, Music Depot at 157 S. Broad St. each catered to different musical genres, but did their part to keep music alive in our town. At one time, we had a Jam House at 241 S. Broad St., where young people could gather for good music, good coffee and good conversation.

Still, the church carillons ring out hymn tunes, church tower bells chime the passing hours and, if you listen carefully when school is in session, you can even here the music of marching bands wafting down to Broad Street from the Madison Avenue practice fields.



## Did You Know?

by Cathy Coulter

Did you know that the first regularly published newspaper in Grove City started on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July in 1882? The modest beginnings of this particular newspaper had actually begun in a different county. A Dr. John Borland actually started a newspaper in Karns City, Butler County named the *Telephone*. It was not until the economic decline of Karns City that he decided it was time to move his newspaper to a town that was showing some growth. Pine Grove caught his attention, as it did with many others, and it was here that he later decided to move his newspaper.

July 22, 1882 the newspaper found its new home and it was time for it to have a new name. Dr. Borland renamed it *The Pine Grove Telephone*. The newspaper would, four months later, change its name again and became known as the *Grove City Telephone*.

By the year 1887, the *Grove City Telephone* newspaper was doing well in Grove City and was being published every Friday. W. H. McEwaine was the editor by this time. The newspaper was only 4 pages long and was still being printed with a hand press. It was not until 1888 that the hand press was no longer being used.

The newspaper's name, in 1893, was once more changed to one that many long time residents of Grove City may recognize. It became the *Grove City Reporter*.

## 1910 Grove City Facts

There were about 4,000 people living in Grove City  
60% belonged to one of 5 churches in the community  
Coal mining was a major industry in the Grove City area

There were No saloons  
There were No policemen  
900 children attended school

## Mercer County's First Plane Crash

by Cathy Coulter

On June 12, 1913 Mercer County's first plane crash occurred in Grove City during the June Festival. It was later estimated that about 7,000 people came to the college athletic grounds to watch the air plane exhibition.

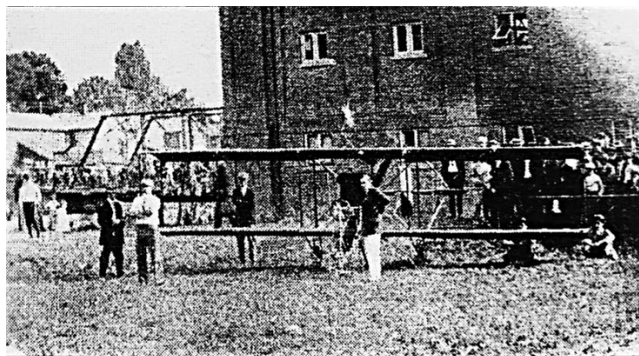
Lewis Earl Sandt, a pioneer pilot, was one of the pilots who was performing that day. He was born in Brookville Pa. and learned how to fly with Glenn Curtiss as his instructor, (Glenn Curtiss was a competitor of the Wright Brothers). In the year before the Festival, Earl achieved the record of being the first to: fly from Erie to Canada over Lake Erie (February), fly over Pittsburgh (June), fly the first air mail flight in Ohio, (August).

The following June in 1913 Earl was performing air plane stunts for the crowd. It was during one of these stunts that he was flying his plane low over the ground. All of a sudden a problem occurred causing Earl to leap from the plane breaking his left arm and leg. The plane swerved then crashed into a back yard located at 146 East Pine Street.

Earl was taken to the Grove City Hospital. Though the leap from the plane had resulted in broken bones there were complications that the doctors had trouble trying to diagnose. It was eventually discovered that he had somehow contracted tetanus.

Since at this time Grove City did not have any of the new anti-tetanus serum, the doctors were forced to send for some from Erie Pennsylvania. The serum was quickly put onto a train and rushed to Grove City. But it did not make it to the hospital in time to save Earl's life. He passed away on June 22, 1913, ten days after his air plane crashed.

Little did Earl Sandt know that his flying record would have an effect on aviation history. Because of his accomplishments in flight, he had unknowingly influenced a man by the name of Charles Lindbergh who would later venture into American aviation history with his first solo transatlantic airplane flight in 1927.



## History of the Historical Society Building

by Cathy Coulter

The building that houses the Grove City Area Historical Society has changed ownership many times over the years as one would expect. With the changing of ownership, the name of the building would change as well.

Before it became known as a hotel it had gone by the name of Uber House and had a restaurant on the first floor. It also had rooms for rent on the second floors which were called "sleeping rooms".

The name eventually changed to that of the Uber Hotel. The Uber Hotel was not always located on College Ave. It was once located at 106 South Broad street near the railroad tracks. Why the hotel moved to the College Avenue location may never be known. Another interesting fact about the Uber Hotel is that it was never actually owned by a family with the last name of Uber.

The Uber Hotel became the Traveler's Hotel when John A. Trepasso and his brother bought it and decided to run it as a 24 hours a day hotel. John and his wife moved into the hotel and lived on the first floor.

Along its journey the building has seen many interesting people walk through its doors for many reasons. Whether it was to rent a room, to eat, or to visit someone staying there, the hotel was an important part of the Grove City community. One of the business men who used the hotel was Doctor Slough. He would rent a room on Tuesday and Thursday every week so he could see his patients. Another business that would rent space to do business was Olan Mills. Olan Mills rented out a spot in the basement so they could take family photos. Travelling salesmen also found their way to the hotel and rented rooms as well.

But the Hotel was used by others who were perhaps visiting a child who was attending college here, or those who were just passing through Grove City on their way elsewhere. Do you remember all of the street fairs Grove City had years ago? Well some of the vendors who came to Grove City for the Street fair rented rooms in the Hotel as well. Mrs. Trepasso remembered that when she and her husband owned the hotel there was a nationally famous traveling hobo and an acclaimed dance troupe that rented rooms. She even noted that one person had decided to make the Hotel their home for 10 years.

In 1963 the cost of staying at the Traveler's hotel for one week was \$25.00 and by 1999 the cost to stay there for one week was \$55.00 or \$30.00 for one night.

The building kept its hotel status until the year 2000 when the Historical Society received the keys and started to prepare it for their museum and headquarters.

### What is Meehanite?

Meehanite is an engineering process that makes high quality cast iron products of many kinds. as well as a trademark that is used under license of the Meehanite Metal Corporation. The importance of this information to Grove City is that 100 years ago on September 26<sup>th</sup> the Johnstone Foundries was incorporated and the first of two Johnstone foundries appeared. They were called Johnstone Foundries Inc. and Johnstone Foundries Company and manufactured Meehanite castings.

Did you know the City Directories hold more information on Grove City than just names addresses and phone numbers?

Two examples are that in 1967 the population of Grove City according to the 1960 census was 8,368 and that only 4,960 of those people actually had phone service.

### Library Shelf

By Jane Cleary

The Historical Society library contains some great books for researching local history. Below are just a few you may find of interest.

History of Mercer County Pennsylvania, 1888, Brown, Runk & Co, Chicago, Ill. – Includes history of Native Americans in the area, early settlement and development; portraits and biographies of pioneers and representative citizens, sketches of boroughs, townships, and villages; neighborhood and family histories. The index of names is in a separate volume.

Plain Grove: A History of its Early Settlement and the Planting and Growth of the Church in that Region, by Rev. R. McCaslin, 1884, Claremont Manufacturing, Claremont N.H. - documents the oldest settlers in Plain Grove and the history of their Presbyterian church.

Mercer County Pennsylvania Will Book 1 Abstracts – Covers 1803-1833. All names, relationships, dates and descriptions of land appear in the abstracts. After documenting that a will exists, you can usually find it at the Mercer County Courthouse.

Combination Atlas of the County of Mercer and the State of Pennsylvania from actual Surveys and Official Records, 1873, G.M. Hopkins, Philadelphia. Contains maps, biographies and sketches of early settlers and homes; military records of local regiments; local history of coal mining and much more.

*We had about 73 visitors in April alone. We are off to a good start in reaching our goal of 1,155 visitors for this year. Help us reach our goal! Bring the family by for a tour of our museum, visit our library, do some research or just stop by to say hello. We look forward to meeting you! Let us know what you think about our wonderful window display, too.*

### Do You Like to Scrapbook?

Would you be interested in helping us with a Scrapbook project? We need someone interested in scrapbooking to keep our Memorial Album going. Our Memorial Album is currently in two volumes, with photos and text that commemorate area residents who have died. We need someone who would create a memorial page as needed. If you are interested in helping with this project, you can stop in, view our albums, and learn more about the project or you can contact the historical society at 724-458-1798.

### Do You Like Fashion?

Are you interested in fashion? Do you like vintage clothing? Well, we have an opportunity for you to indulge in dealing with vintage clothing and setting up displays. We have two clothing rooms that need managers - one of men's clothing and one of women's clothing. You can become the room manager of either room. You would clean and care for the room and the clothing in it. You can manage a display of clothing in the room as well. We have a wonderful collection of clothing and accessories in each room. If you are interested please come and visit the rooms, ask questions, and see what all is involved in managing the rooms. There are no set hours or days of the week for this volunteer position so you can set your own time for managing them.

## Epidemics

by Cathy Coulter

Early in 1914 two epidemics swept through Grove City. The first started with dysentery and what the newspapers had called *winter cholera*. It was from January 29 to February 18 that the doctors in Grove City had seen 1,084 cases of bacillary dysentery. It was determined that just over half of the residents had been affected by this epidemic.

The State Health Department was notified during the first week of February. The State Health Department sent 9 investigators to Grove City and they arrived on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February to investigate the epidemic. The next day they warned the citizens through handbills and posters of the steps they needed to take to prevent the spread of this illness. The citizens were told to boil all water they were going to use. Then the investigators that same day had the town's water treated with copper sulphate.

It was later determined that this epidemic had contaminated the towns water supply and that it had happened on January 29, 30, and 31 of 1914. It had been caused by the fact that Wolf Creek had risen on November 22 of 1913.

**The next epidemic for the Grove City residents** resulted within a week of the first one. This time the Grove City residents were faced with typhoid fever. According to the *Ninth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Health for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (1914), 7,653 typhoid cases in the state had been reported and the number of people who died from the illness had reached 1,075 in that same year. The people of Grove City who had unfortunately become ill with typhoid were counted among them.

The first cases that began the typhoid epidemic in Grove City were reported to the State Health Department on February 17<sup>th</sup>. There were 12 doctors who were practicing in Grove City during this troubled time and they were not all in agreement with the diagnosis of their patients.

The Associated

Typhoid fever left its mark on the people of Grove City, as well as those who had been attending Grove City College that year. There had been 201 identified - of these 187 were borough residents. As of May 1<sup>st</sup> sixteen people had died as a result of both of these Chief Medical Inspector and the Engineering Division Representatives, H. E. Moses and R. E. Irwin, performed an investigation and thought the cause of the typhoid outbreak in Grove City was due to a well's defective casing which resulted in the pollution of the town's water. The town's sanitary conditions were considered to be good. Grove City had even installed a municipal sewer system two years earlier and connected many of Grove City's properties to it. epidemics, six of which were Grove City College students. Several cases of college students contracting typhoid were able to be traced, not to the Grove City well, but back to their own homes in different parts of the state.

There were cases also reported from the following townships: 9 cases in Pine Township, Mercer County; 2 cases in Irwin Township, Mercer County; 2 cases in Wolf Creek Township, Mercer County; 1 case in Mercer Township, Butler County.

### 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 12<sup>th</sup>  
 Our last day for this year is Dec.10<sup>th</sup>  
 724-458-1798  
 Website:  
 www.grovecityhistoricalsociety.org  
 Email: gcahs@zoominternet.net

### HELP WANTED!

by Monica Ondrusko, Accessions Volunteer

The Accessions Committee needs help with the job of creating and keeping the Historical Society's record of donations. These are donated items that form the visible history of the Grove City Community -- our schools, churches, businesses, and community organizations. We use a computer database to record these donations, describe their historical significance, and list their display locations within the Historical Society's building. We are backlogged, and would truly welcome new members to this committee.

### Summer Reading

Whether you are going on vacation, camping or sitting in the sunshine in your own back yard having a good book is a must. Why not stop in at the Historical Society and pick up one? We have a nice selection on Grove City's history and the people that made this town what it is today. You may even find your family within their pages. We also have books by local authors for sale. If you plan on working on your family tree this summer, we have a book for you too. Some of the titles you can find are:

*Wolf Creek Legacy*

*Reflections of Our Past*

*State Roof Bible*

*They Flew Proud*

*Hug a Tree Kiss a Rock*

*Grandma Left the Light On*

*Jen's Gardening Book*

*Tale Wagging*

*Mercer County Memories*

*Pennsylvania Elk Tales*

*My Family Tree Research Workbook*

*Out House Book*

*Grove City: The Way We Were*

*Grove City, Postcard History Series*

### Mark Your Calendar - Up Coming Events

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

**August 8<sup>th</sup>** 6:00 pm - *3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Old Fashioned Pot Luck Picnic*. The picnic will be at the Memorial Park in the Keystone Pavilion. Bring a dish to share and table service. Drinks will be provided.

**September 17<sup>th</sup>** noon - 7p.m. - *Autumn Art Walk*, featuring Chris Guarnieri at the Historical Society

**September 19<sup>th</sup>** 6:30 p.m. - "*Grove City's Daughters of the American Revolution*" presented by Chris Guarnieri

**October 3<sup>rd</sup>** 6:30 p.m. - "*Grove City's History and Homes - a Sampling*" by Skip Sample and Lillian Reeher

**October 17<sup>th</sup>** 6:30 p.m. - "*History of Bashline Hospital*" by Doug Bashline

