



The City of Grove City
4035 Broadway • Grove City, Ohio 43123
(614) 277-3000
www.grovecityohio.gov



**Grove City Area Visitors &
Convention Bureau**
(614) 539-8747
Toll Free (800) 539-0405
www.visitgrovecityoh.com



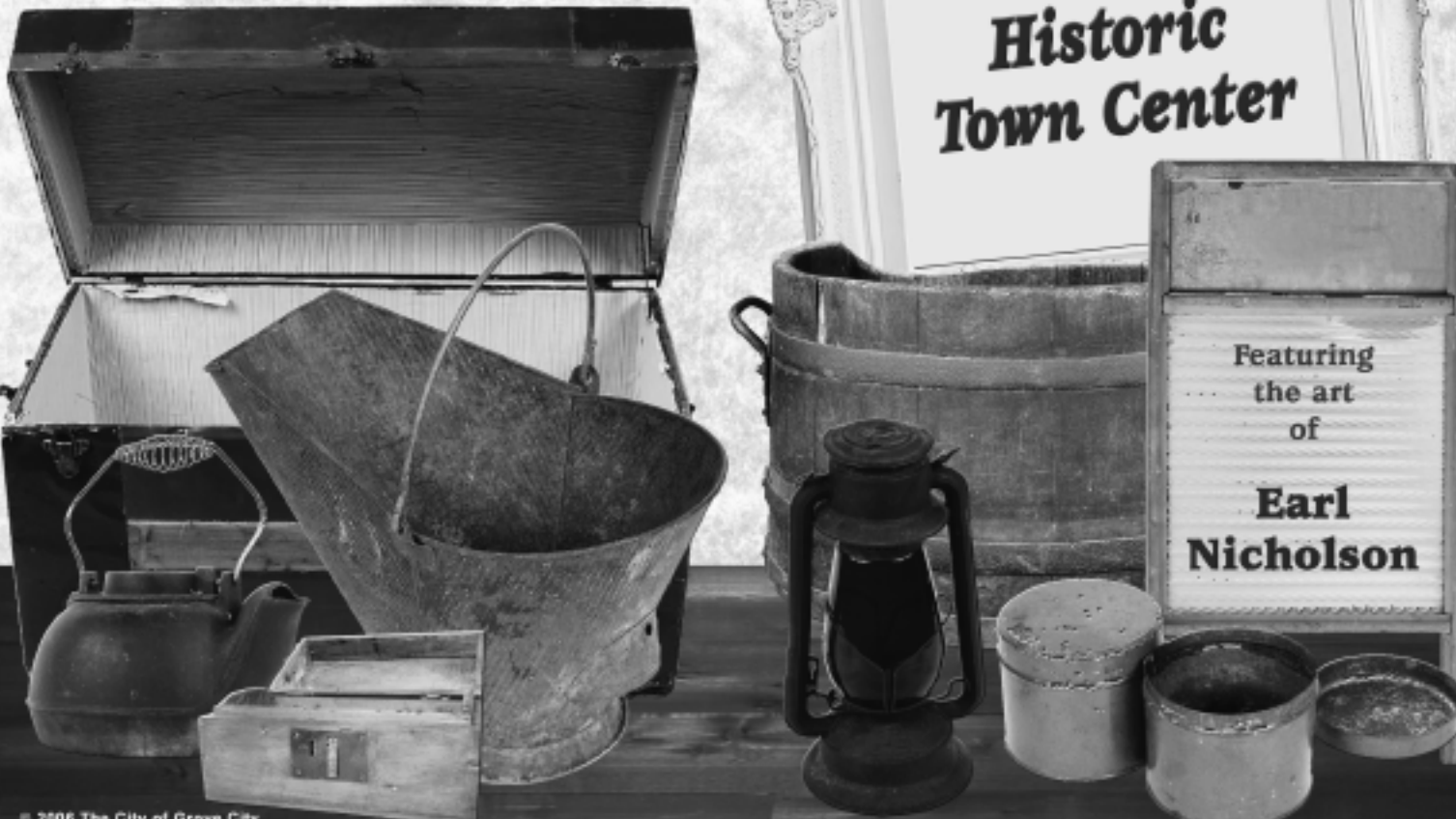
Published by the Grove City Community Relations Office
(614) 277-3040

DISCOVER

Grove City, Ohio's Rich History



**Walking Tour
of
Grove City's
Historic
Town Center**



Featuring
the art
of
**Earl
Nicholson**

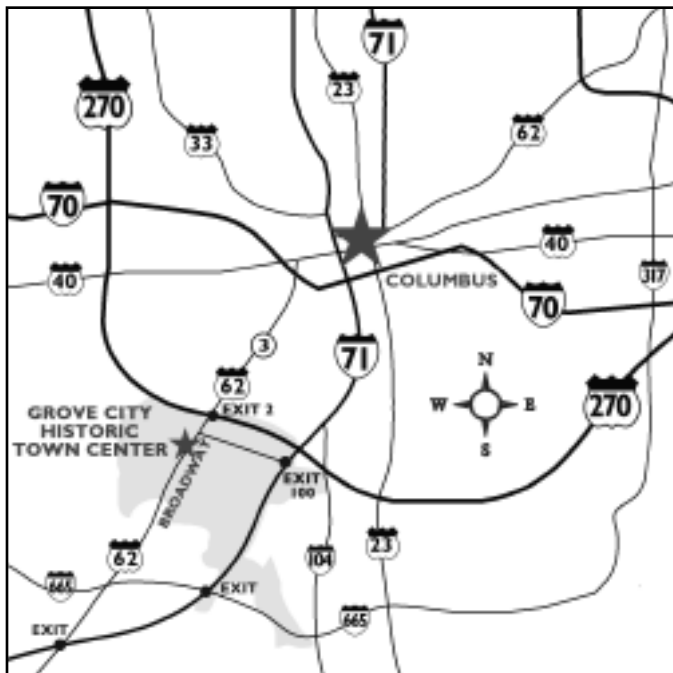
Welcome to Grove City's Historic Town Center Walking Tour

For more information on Grove City
visit these web sites.

The City of Grove City, Ohio
www.grovecityohio.gov

*Grove City Area Visitors &
Convention Bureau*
www.visitgrovecityoh.com

© Earl Nicholson - All art is copyrighted and no reproduction is
allowed without written permission of the artist.



About the Artist

Earl Nicholson is an artist, historian, civic leader and teacher. Of the four, teacher is probably his most cherished.

Some of his more memorable moments were spent with students at Buckeye Woods Elementary School where he brought energetic life to local culture and history using art and

homespun stories. He was a frequent visitor at that school where three original Nicholson paintings are on display.

Nicholson created a sense of adventure in his school art by hiding birds, rabbits and squirrels in his artwork. In one painting, he hid the children as they played hide-and-seek.

"I've never done anything I've enjoyed more than this," Nicholson once told a local newspaper reporter as he led a tour of his artwork at the school.

Nicholson is one of the founding members of the Southwest Franklin County Historical Society. He co-founded the Junior Historical Society and co-founded the Civil War Reenactment held each spring at Century Village in Grove City.

A Korean War veteran, Nicholson served in the U.S. Navy from 1952-56. Community service has played an important part in his life. He served on City Council from 1984-1991 and as President of Council from 1986-1991. He retired in 1994 after 37 years as a graphic illustrator in the Battelle Memorial Institute Art Department. This allowed him even more time to devote to his historical and art interests.

Nicholson also served as Crime Prevention Coordinator for the Grove City Division of Police and organized the city's first Block Watch program. He was a member of the Gantz Farm Restoration Committee, wrote a series of historical articles for *The Grove City Record* called *Odds and Ends* and is the creator of the first mural in the Grove City Town Center.

Nicholson's art in this booklet has been on display as the History of Grove City in Pictures and Text and has been on display at the Grove City Municipal Building, the Jackson Township Offices, the Grove City Library and the Grove City Area Visitors and Convention Bureau. Many of his drawings have been printed as note cards by the Historical Society.

The Nicholson collection moved to the Grove City Library in late fall 2006.

A Brief History of Grove City

A portion of the area now identified as Grove City was laid out on two Virginia Military Land Grants in the names of Colonel William Washington (a nephew of General George Washington) and General Daniel Morgan.

In 1804, Pittsburgh resident Hugh Grant moved his family to Chillicothe where he purchased 450 acres of land in Franklin County from Morgan, land that eventually became Jackson Township.

The next year, he moved his family to Franklin County and settled along the Scioto River because he couldn't identify the land he purchased. During that first winter, Grant was killed in an accident. His family eventually located the land bounded on the west by what we now know as Hall Road, on the north by Grove City Road and Columbus Street, on the east by Hoover and the south by Orders Road.

John Hoover, a veteran from the American Revolution, purchased 200 acres in 1807 in what was to become Jackson Township and lived here until 1840. He is the only American Revolution veteran buried in the township.

By 1815, Jackson Township was carved from Franklin Township and named after Andrew Jackson to commemorate his military victory over the British at New Orleans the same year. By 1820, the township had 310 residents.

William Foster Breck purchased the Grant Estate property in 1846 and moved to the township. About 1851, Breck, George Weygant, William Sibray and Jeremiah Smith platted 15.5 acres that would become the Village of Grove City the following year.

The new village was located on the newly constructed Harrisburg Turnpike that was finished in 1848. Other accounts indicate the road was called the Highland or Hillsboro Road.

The village took its name from a large grove of trees that was left standing when the ground was cleared for homes and farms. The type of trees was never identified, but it was known that oak, beech, maple and walnut were native. Much of the underbrush in the area included grapevine, wild plum, hawberry and dogwood.

Breck also built a 20-room house at the northwest corner of Park Street and Broadway in 1862. Named the Woodland Hotel, Breck intended the property to serve as his residence and a hotel. This was the first brick house in Grove City and it was constructed of

brick from his brick plant once located just east of the present St. John's Lutheran Church. Breck also was a merchant, postmaster and operated a sawmill.

The mid 1800s saw many changes. The first church in the area was an interdenominational chapel built in 1812. Three Methodist churches were built in 1859 and the first German Lutheran Church was built in 1861. Dr. Joseph Bulen (Bullen) was the first physician arriving in 1852. He was also elected the village's first mayor on May 10, 1866. Natural gas street lights lit the downtown in the 1870s; the same time trains and street cars began to service the community. Jackson Township High School graduated its first class of four students in 1898 and the first banks opened in the early 1900s.

In the past 100 years, Grove City has evolved from a small farming community into a thriving Columbus suburb with a strong employment base, increasing retail opportunities, diverse housing options, and dynamic recreational options for all ages. At the heart of it all is the historic Town Center. Enjoy your visit!

Presentday Locations

- 1** William Foster Breck Home
4009 Broadway
- 2** Mulzer's Garage
3989 Broadway
- 3** Nichol's Block
3955 Broadway
- 4** George Gantz Mill
3937 Broadway
- 5** Kegg's Store
4008 Broadway
- 6** Old Hotel
4022 Broadway
- 7** Elias A. White Block
4052 Broadway
- 8** The Old Jail (First Municipal Building)
3360 Park Street (Safety Complex)
- 9** Grove City's First Fire Truck
- 10** Grove City & Green Lawn Street Railway
- 11** Grove City Railroad Station
Corner of Park Street and Front Street

William Foster Breck Home 1

Formerly located at 4009 Broadway

This 20-room house once stood on the northwest corner of Park Street and Broadway. This is part of the land bought by William Foster Breck from his father-in-law, John Smith, in 1847. John Smith bought the land from the heirs of Colonel William Washington in 1837. Colonel Washington was a true hero of the American Revolution, and his name can now be found in our history books.

William Breck laid out Grove City, on the east side of Broadway, in 1852. He farmed the land on the west side of Broadway. The house shown in the drawing was to be his home. After Breck's death in 1864, his widow put up the property for sale. The advertisement described the house as "a large brick house, recently built, said to be the largest in the township and which could not be built for six thousand dollars. The front of the house is unfinished but the situation is a good one for a tavern stand."

The land was sold to John Malott in 1865. He finished the 20-room house, and made it his home until his death in 1881. His dry-goods store was across Park Street, where the City Hall now stands.

By 1888, the property was owned by Charles Bauer. Mr. Bauer sold the property to "Die Deutche Proteatantish Witten Heimeth." The house was used "...for the purpose of a home for aged women who were members of the association." Locally it was called "the old ladies home."

In 1906, Adam Grant bought the property. During that summer he held a "Grove City pioneers reunion." This reunion of the pioneers and their descendants had about 700 attendees, according to the *Columbus Dispatch*.

The Standard Oil Co. leased the property in 1927, and bought it in 1935. The old house was razed in the 1920's.



© Earl Nicholson

Mulzer's Garage 2

Located at 3989 Broadway

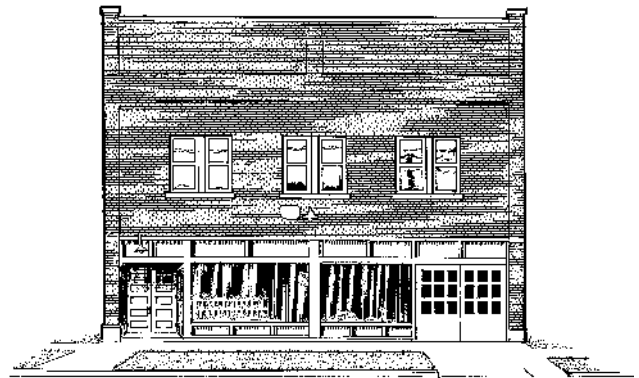
This building, like many in downtown Grove City, has been used by a variety of different businesses. This was the first business building located on the west side of Broadway between Park Street and Grant Avenue.

Henry J. Meyer built this building in 1915. The building was originally a garage and a dancehall. Carl Johnson was its first occupant. Leslie G. Mulzer's Ford and Lincoln automobile agency and garage followed him. Mulzer's was at one-time reported to be the largest Ford dealership in Franklin County. Ray Henry and Carl Goldhart took over the business when Mulzer moved to Columbus, and entered the commercial flying service. Harley Motor Sales occupied the building until they built the original Harley Building, now the Grove City Bowling Alley.

An interesting feature of the building was the elevator that took the cars to the second floor. Behind the two doors on the right side of the front of the building, shown in the drawing, was the elevator. The car would be driven through the double doors directly onto the elevator. The car would be raised to the second floor where it would be driven into the garage area.

In about 1925, Charles Eesley remodeled the building. He made the upper story into an auditorium and created four modern storerooms on the first floor. In the 1930's, the occupants were Galle and Good, a bakery, Hensel's Restaurant and the J.J. Davis Stores. The auditorium held many local functions. The building became locally known as "The Eesley Block."

The Lubben family purchased the building in 1945. The family conducted a hardware business in this building until 1999. "The Grove City Hardware Store" may still be found on Broadway, in downtown Grove City.



© Earl Nicholson

The Nichols Block

Located at 3955 Broadway

3

William Nichols came to Grove City in 1855. He became the third mayor of Grove City, serving from 1870 to 1872. William bought the mill and became the town miller from 1872 to 1877. He then sold the mill to George Gantz. In 1897, William's son, Alvin, became the sixth mayor of Grove City. This was the first of only two times a father and son were mayors of Grove City. (The only other time was when James C. Evans, 1955, and his son Robert "Bob" Evans, 1979, were each mayors of Grove City).

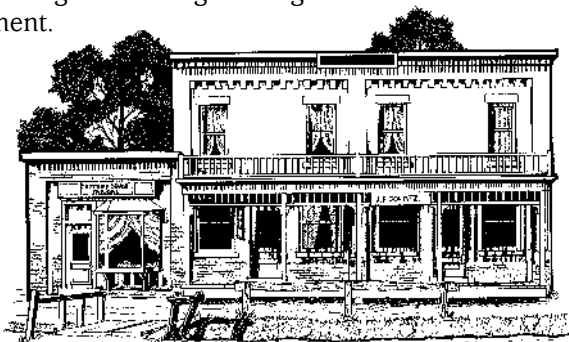
In 1883, the Voelkel Block, depicted in this booklet as Kegg's Store, was built. William and Alvin Nichols conducted a general merchandise business until 1885, when they built their own building on Broadway opposite the West End of Columbus Street. They later sold the business to Joseph Harvey.

Our first weekly newspaper was the *Grove City Blade*, printed from 1894 to 1898. The second paper, the *Grove City News*, began publication in 1905 in the "White Building" on the southeast corner of Broadway and Park Street. The *Grove City News* moved to the second floor of the "Nichols Building" but suspended operation in 1910.

In 1912, the *Grove City Times* began publication from the "Nichols Building." The "Times" suspended operation in 1918, due to lack of support for its editorial viewpoint.

In 1922, Dr. Dean Davis bought the building and remodeled it in 1923. His offices were downstairs and his family living quarters were upstairs. At the top of the building, you can still see the "Davis" name. This building is known today as the "Davis Building."

In this drawing, notice the footbridge in front of the building. Until 1912, a large open ditch ran along the west side of Broadway. Businesses on that side of the road had to maintain bridges for their customers' convenience. Consequently, few businesses located on the west side of Broadway. Adam Grant installed a large sewer tile in 1912. This tile installation was considered locally as a significant engineering achievement.



The George Gantz Mill

Formerly located at 3937 Broadway

4

The first mill in Grove City was a sawmill built in 1851 by George Weygandt, Grove City's first carpenter. It was built for the town founder William Foster Breck. This mill was located west of today's intersection of Grant Avenue and Broadway. In the early 1850's, Breck bought the gristmill operated by Xavias Buckholtz. He moved the millstones to his sawmill and from then on the mill also ground grain.

The Buckholtz mill building was moved directly across the street from the current City Hall. When this building, first known as part of "The E.A. White Block" was built, about 1922, the mill building was then moved to First Street and became a blacksmith shop, and finally a garage.

After Breck's untimely death in 1864, the mill changed hands three times, and in 1878 George Gantz bought the old Breck mill from William Nichols.

In 1880, George Gantz built the three-story brick steam-mill shown in the drawing. The mill changed hands several more times until 1918, when it was bought by Charles Eesley. Mr. Eesley was the owner when in the spring of 1921 the mill caught fire and burned to the ground. The only piece of fire-fighting equipment the town had was the old "barrel-on wheels" (see 9). The town called Columbus for help. They sent their motorized pumper truck from the Hilltop. By the time help arrived, the mill could not be saved. The next year, 1922, Grove City bought its' first motorized fire truck.

The "Farmers Exchange" was organized in 1920, and was in the process of buying the mill from Mr. Eesley at the time of the fire. They bought the land, and in 1921 erected the concrete elevator.

From 1880 to 1921, a lake covered the area that today is the parking lot and storeroom of the Mill Street Market. This was where the young people of the town swam, fished, and ice-skated.



Kegg's Store

Located at 4008 Broadway

5

The building, shown in this drawing, and the brick building adjacent to it were built in 1883. They were built by William Voelkel who then also owned the old hotel. These buildings were then known as the "Voelkel Block." The Voelkel family lived in the upper story of the brick structure.

William Voelkel and George Darnell owned one of the earliest lumberyards in Grove City. This lumberyard was located directly behind the hotel, on the corner of Park Street and First Avenue. Location, and ownership of the lumberyard, may have been a factor in using wood as the building material for the building in this drawing. Most local commercial buildings of this time period were constructed of brick.

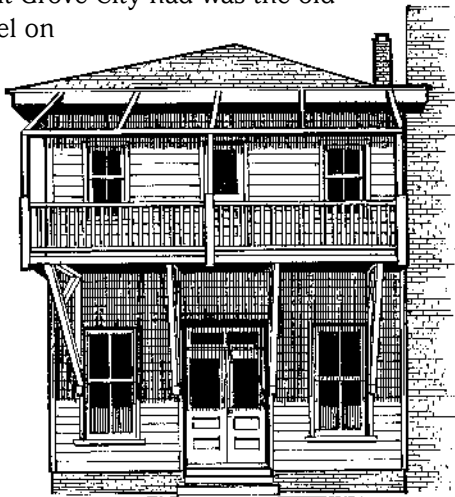
Later, Darnell purchased the entire business from Voelkel, and moved the lumberyard to Park Street and the B & O railroad tracks.

William Nichols (a Civil War veteran) and his son, Alvin, ran a general store in this wooden building. In 1885 they built their own building, the Nichols Block, which is located at the intersection of Columbus Street and Broadway. (See 3)

Marion Kegg went into business in this wooden building in 1902. He then moved to the "Buckholtz Block" at Grove City Road and Broadway. In 1906, Kegg sold out to Louis Riebel. In 1910, Kegg acquired the wooden building in the "Voelkel Block."

In the spring of 1912, both buildings in the Voelkel Block were destroyed by fire. This was the worst fire Grove City had ever seen up to that time. The only fire fighting equipment Grove City had was the old hand drawn "barrel on wheels" (see 9).

When Kegg rebuilt his store, in brick, he put "Kegg 1912" at the top of the building. This building still stands in downtown Grove City.



© Earl Nicholson

The Old Hotel

Located at 4022 Broadway

6

The Old Hotel is one of the oldest buildings in Grove City. William M. Blackburn built it in 1854. The hotel was probably built for William Foster Breck, because the four lots on which it was built were not sold until 1856. When Breck laid out the town in 1852, and still in 1866 when the town was incorporated all lots in Grove City ran north and south. They either faced Church Street (Columbus Street) or School Street (Park Street). So the hotel sits on the south end of lots 38, 39, 40 and 41.

It seems to be during the 1870's or 1880's that the lots on the east side of Broad Street (Broadway) which ran parallel to Broadway were resurveyed to face west.

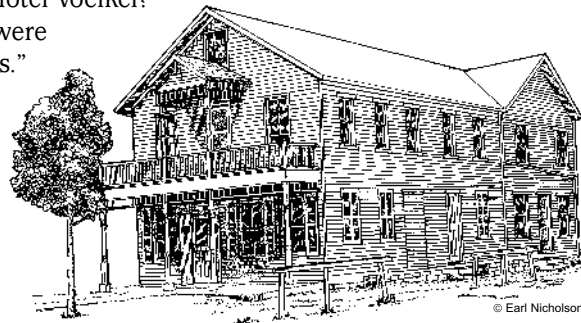
Breck sold the hotel to Alexander Frankenburg in 1856. Others who are known to have operated the hotel are: John Douglas, T. E. Booth, Jack Goldsmith, John Corzilius, "Dude" Strife, a man by the last name of Jones, and William Voelkel Sr. who ran the hotel many years. Voelkel started in the grocery business in 1869, in Breck's first store building at the other end of the block from the hotel. (Jackson and Broadway).

At one time Mrs. Voelkel had a flower garden behind the hotel for the guests to enjoy. Just to the north stood a large livery barn. This barn was used to house the buggies and wagons of the patrons. The barn took up most of the rest of the block and had room for many horses and rigs. For many years this building was used as a feed store as well as a livery stable. It was operated for a long time by William White. The old hotel barn burned in 1926.

The following article was in *The Grove City Blade* on Thursday, September 22, 1896. "Where are you going Saturday night? To the Hotel Voelkel to hear the finest concert of the season. The Grove City Band went over to Lockbourne last Saturday and serenaded the town. The boys and crowd enjoyed forty watermelons furnished by Mr. J. Oatley."

The 1932 comment in *The Grove City Record* about the reprint of this article was "Remember the band concerts at the Hotel Voelkel?"

Those were the days."



© Earl Nicholson

The Elias A. White Block

Located at 4052 Broadway

7

The first building on this site was a large storeroom built in 1860 by the town founder, William Foster Breck. Edward Schirner operated a grocery business from this storeroom for many years. Over a period of time, Schirner acquired the rest of the land and buildings on the block.

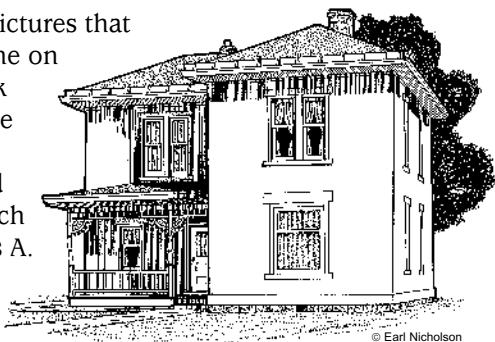
In 1880, Elias A. White, who had previously operated a farm to the east of Grove City, bought the old Schirner block for \$2,300. This block comprised all the land from Park Street to Civic Drive along Broadway, and to First Street on the west.

In about 1890 White built the residence that is today the home of the Grove City Area Visitors and Convention Bureau. An interesting anecdote to me was how they got the bricks to the construction site. The workmen would take wheelbarrows and go to The Grove City Brick and Tile Mill, behind Saint John's church. From here they would push their loaded wheelbarrows back to the construction site at Civic Drive and Broadway. This was before we had paved streets or balloon tires.

In 1905, White rebuilt the red brick building that now stands on the corner of Park Street and Broadway. A few years later White built the brick building that is today located at 4052 Broadway. This building was originally George Ruble's "Grove City Dry Goods Co."

One of the buildings moved to make way for this new construction was a wooden building that was originally the Xavier Buckholtz mill. When Breck came to Jackson Township, in 1851, he hired George Weygant to begin building a mill. (This was the forerunner of the "Farmer's Exchange.") Breck bought the Buckholtz mill. He added the grinding stones to his mill, and moved the building to the Broadway site where it became one of the earliest storerooms in Grove City. Before the new brick building was built the old mill building was moved to the alley behind the red brick building on the corner. This wooden building became the Pascall blacksmith shop.

There are pictures that show a capstone on top of the brick buildings, at the corner of Park Street and Broadway, which read "The Elias A. White Block."



The Old Jail (First Municipal Building)

Formerly located at 3360 Park Street
(Safety Complex)

8

The Old Jail was built in 1893. It was Grove City's first municipal building. However, it was the second jail in the village. The town's first jail had a colorful history some of which follows:

The first jail was a rather crude frame building made of two-inch thick timbers, with iron bars on the windows and a door with large iron hinges and held closed by a large, old time padlock. The first person to be locked up in the jail was a woman, Mrs. Ike Bucher, who was jailed for fighting with her neighbors. This old jail was eventually moved to the site of the present jail.

Before this new combination municipal building and jail was built it was customary for the village council to meet in the mayor's home. Periodically the council meetings were held in the Jackson Township Hall.

As the village grew new additions were added to the old jail. It grew in size until this combination municipal building and jail covered about half of the block between First Street and Arbutus Avenue.

During 1985 and 1986, Grove City was again experiencing a need for more space for its municipal government. Concern was raised about how to preserve this old jail that had served the community for nearly 100 years. The jail was too old to modernize, and where it sat prevented the most efficient use of the land. So, reluctantly, the old jail had to go.

But today when you enter the public entrance to the new safety building you will see the bricks from the old jail. You can also see the following corner stones set into this brick wall.



Grove City's First Fire Truck

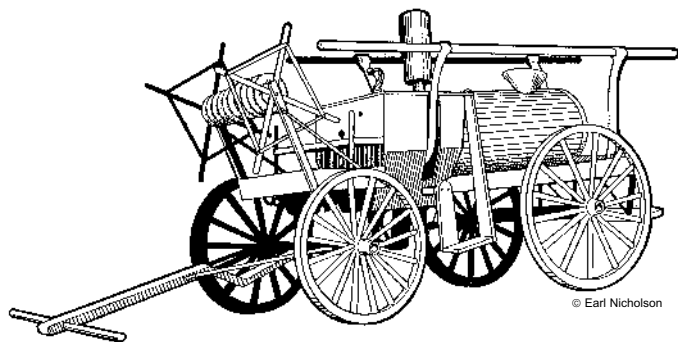


The old fire apparatus pictured was a "New York-style" fire engine, which was produced in the 1880's and 1890's. The Grove City Council purchased the truck in 1893. It served the community until 1921.

The following is an article that appeared in the "Grove City Blade" on Thursday, September 23, 1897. "The house of O.L. Harsh caught fire about 9:30 Tuesday morning. It started in the kitchen roof and was burning at a rapid rate when discovered. No sooner had it been discovered than the sound of the fire bell was heard, and the fire engine came at a pace of 2:01 1/4. Had it not been for the engine the house would have been completely destroyed, with a loss of a few thousand dollars. But as it was, the damages were very slight." In a reprint of this article in the September 23, 1932, issue of the "Grove City Record," the author commented, "And how the natives kicked when the Council purchased the fire engine, or the barrel on wheels." The fire engine was kept in a "firehouse" next to the municipal building. The town firebell was also located at the firehouse, where the police station is now located.

Whoever notified the fire department went to the firehouse and rang the bell. The volunteer firemen came to the firehouse, where they were told the fire's location. The firemen then pulled the fire engine, by hand, to the fire scene. Firemen lined up and worked the pump by the long handles on each side of the fire engine. Others formed a bucket brigade to keep water in the barrel. The remaining firemen could then fight the fire with the man-powered hose on the fire engine.

In the mid 1920's, a motorized fire truck was financed by the citizens of Grove City and Jackson Township. The cost was \$1,200.



The Grove City and Green Lawn Street Railway



Adam Grant of Grove City, grandson of the first white settler in what became Jackson Township, and Joe Briggs of Briggsdale brought the interurban to their respective villages in southwest Franklin County.

They first tried to build the Columbus & Harrisburg Electric Street Railway in 1893. This plan, however, was abandoned in 1896 due to mishandling of funds by other investors, as well as the investor's insistence that Grant and Briggs invest an additional \$5,000 each.

Two years later, Adam Grant decided to try again. By this time Joe Briggs was a Franklin County Commissioner. And, financing was done differently. When Adam Grant needed \$10,000 the people of Grove City were asked to invest in the new line. More than 200 people and businesses, most in the Grove City area invested time, money or materials in the new interurban line. The \$10,000 needed was pledged, and the Franklin County Commissioners granted permission on May 1, 1898. Work began on May 3.

On Saturday, May 2, 1898, Admiral Dewey fought the Battle of Manila Bay, beginning the Spanish American War. Needless to say there was only war news in the newspapers. So information about the construction of the interurban line is very sparse.

The line was completed and the first car ran from Columbus to Grove City on October 31, 1898, prompting a celebration in Grove City that night. The line was called "The Grove City & Green Lawn Street Railway." Its initial running stock was six trailers and three motor cars, like the drawing.

In 1901, the line was sold to the Appleyard Syndicate and later extended to "Morgans Corners" which is now known as the village of Orient. This extension was intended to eventually go to Mount Sterling, to meet a railroad that was to run from Hillsboro through Springfield. The interurban company would not build a bridge over Darby Creek before seeing the railroad under construction. The railroad was never built.

In 1922, the extension to Orient was abandoned. In 1926, the interurban began alternating with buses in Grove City. In 1928, after providing convenient transportation for Grove City residents for almost 30 years, the interurban ceased running altogether.



The Grove City Map

This map shows the evolution of Grove City from 1846 to 1866. The outline of the map is the 15 1/2 acres that William Foster Breck and his brother-in-law Jeremiah Smith bought in 1846. All of the land was on the East Side of the road known as "The Highland Road" because it went to Highland County (Hillsboro). After the road was made into a turnpike it became known as "The Harrisburg and Columbus Turnpike." After Grove City was laid out (1852) this same road became known as "Broadway."

Number one - The shaded area shows the county road that ran through the property. You can see this easily as you come into Grove City from the west on Grove City Road. You can plainly see Saint John's Church steeple straight ahead. The first thing Breck did in 1851, when he moved to Jackson Township, was to petition the Franklin County Commissioner to move a road (the dotted line). When the town was laid-out this road

became Church Street now named Columbus Street. This made the intersections 90 degrees. The next year when the town was laid-out all the other streets were made parallel or perpendicular to Church Street.

Number two - The line with arrows shows the sequence of how the lots were numbered. Lot #1 is at the southwest corner of School Street (now Park Street) and Broadway. Lot #74 is at the northwest corner of Church Street (now Columbus Street). When the four lots were added, where Saint John's Church is today, the numbering system for the lots jumps from lot #74, at the west end of Church Street, to lot #75 at the east end of the street. This is the only difference in the two maps. This shows the only change to the town in 14 years was the addition of four lots, equaling one acre of land.

The original map (1852) at the courthouse was lost due to a fire. But the town changed little in the next 14 years, when the town became an incorporated village (1866).

