

THE HISTORICAL TIMES

Quarterly of the Granville, Ohio, Historical Society

Volume XXX, Issue 1, 2016

\$2.00

Built for the ages



The newly renovated stone bank building in the mid-1950s, with the addition to the building visible at the rear.

The Alexandrian Bank building in Granville history

By LYN B. BOONE

On a spring day in 1816, the directors of Granville's Bank of the Alexandrian Society moved their fledgling financial institution into its brand-new, purpose-built stone building set on a prominent property on Broadway adjacent to the public square. Early histories of Granville agree

on the basic facts: Constructed of locally-quarried sandstone, the 37' by 19' single-room structure had one story and walls 19 inches thick. The

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builder was William Stedman, aided by stonemasons Joseph Evans and Henry George. They were building for the ages.

Possessed no doubt of high hopes on that day exactly 200 years ago, the bank directors could not know that those thick walls would be no guarantee of a long life for their year-old bank. However, they could have legitimately taken pride in knowing they had just constructed what was to become one of Granville's longest-lasting and most historic buildings.

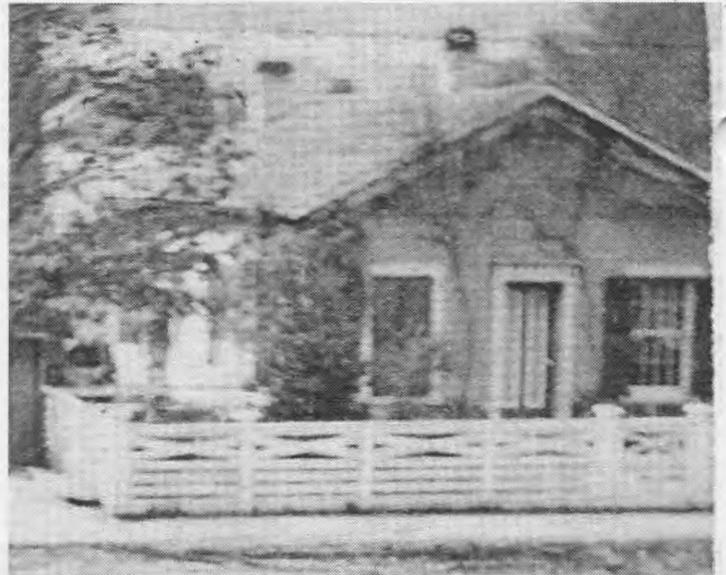
Indeed, the bank would be short-lived. In its wake, a potpourri of small businesses would find their home within those thick stone walls, before the building became a residence for a series of Granville families.

Following its "domestic period," around the turn of the 20th century, we see a sequence of restaurants in the space, giving way to the Interurban depot and finally to the longest commercial run of all—a barbershop that would last well past the time the Granville Historical Society came into possession of the building.

It's been a veritable cavalcade of Granville life, culture, and business. Let's take a closer look at the history of this modest but fascinating bit of real estate, now sixty-one years into perhaps its most defining role as a museum of Granville history.

The Bank

The bank had been founded in 1815, formed under the same charter that had established the library of the Alexandrian Society. The library presumably was named, somewhat grandiosely, in honor of the ancient Royal Library of Alexandria, Egypt. A group of early Granville settlers had established the library in 1807. In a day when even scratching out a living from new farms and struggling businesses might have been a constant preoccupation, the commitment of these settlers to nurturing an intellectual life through a library has to be admired. And it was a fine precursor to the field that would later become Granville's dominant industry —



This image is lifted and enlarged from an already-grainy photograph of a Broadway street scene, likely in the late 1860s. At the time, the stone building was being used as a residence by George and Lucretia Bragg. Note the yard fence, shutters, and curtains, marking it as a home.

education.

The library itself was never known to be lodged in the building that would be constructed eight years later. But the library's charter, written expansively by Jeremiah Munson and given the blessing of the young State of Ohio in 1807, was broad enough (at least in that day) to encompass a bank under its credentials. Deed transfers show that original Granville settler Job Case signed over the land for the building in March of 1815, "in consideration that the Granville Alexandrian Society do erect an office or banking house in the town of Granville...". It was Lot #1 in Block 16, later to be renumbered Lot #179.

The complicated history of the ill-fated bank has been ably researched by John Davenport, whose article, "Banking in Granville Evolves from Rocky 19th Century Start," was published in the Fall 2015 issue of *The Historical Times*. At the start, Davenport concedes that the bank's "legitimacy, nature, and even dates of existence .. have been a point of confusion for well over a century." Fortunately in the current article, which focuses on the uses of the physical building, not on the banking business itself, that confusion

affects our story only in a limited way, for the stone building and the banking enterprise parted ways early on. The bank had two incarnations, separated by nineteen years and much "water over the dam." Suffice it to say here that we know the bank occupied our stone building during its initial brief life, but we do not know with certainty the extent to which it actually "lived" in the same building when it was revived to serve Granville financial interests two decades later.

The historical accounts describe the enterprise as a bank of deposit and discount. It printed its own paper money, examples of which are in the collections of the Granville Historical Society. Its leaders were prominent men of the village and locale, and evidently the initial year or two of the enterprise were quite successful. But what the bank directors had not counted on was the economic recession that plagued the region in the wake of the War of 1812. In only the third year of its young life, the bank found itself unable to meet its obligations, and, according to the memory of Elias Gilman as recorded in the minutes of the Alexandrian Society, in August or September of 1817, the directors "passed an order, agreeing to suspend the Banking operations ... owing to the insolvent condition of its affairs."

The bank did not totally end its operations at this point (it actually continued receipt of payments due, etc.), but it was no longer fully in business. Beyond the banking enterprise, the financial stress of the Alexandrian Society itself must have been very real, for it evidently failed to meet a crucial obligation in 1818. More on that story follows, as well as on the second incarnation of the bank and why the extent of its occupancy of the stone building is uncertain.

A Cabinet Maker in the Stone Bank Building

So we've seen that by about the fall of 1817, the bank building, still new, was in need of a tenant. No prime real estate like this could go empty for long in the village, still new itself and no doubt in need of places to live and work. We know nothing

Cabinet Making.

THE subscriber takes this method to inform his friends and the public in general, that he has commenced the **CABINET MAKING BUSINESS** in the Stone building formerly occupied for a Bank house; and from his experience in the business, flatters himself to be able to give satisfaction to such as may call on him for any articles in his line. He will receive in payment most articles of country produce, and will not refuse cash.

Granville, Jan. 14th, 1823.

SAM. F. BACON.

Wanted immediately, seasoned Cherry, Walnut, and Butternut Boards, and Scantling, for which a liberal price will be given.
S. F. B.

The Jan. 24, 1823 issue of *The Wanderer*, Granville's first newspaper, carried this advertisement for the newly-launched cabinet-making shop of Samuel F. Bacon in the stone building, "formerly occupied for a Bank house." It is the earliest evidence we have for a specific use of the building after the 1817 demise of the bank. To date, no other documentation of Bacon's business in the stone building has been identified.

of the five or six years immediately ensuing, but in 1823, cabinetmaker Samuel Bacon opened his business there. He announced his opening in the Jan. 24, 1823 issue of *The Wanderer*, Granville's first newspaper, saying in his notice that he wanted

... to inform his friends and the public that he has commenced the cabinet making business in the stone building formerly occupied for a bank house ... he will receive in payment most articles of country produce, and will not refuse cash ...

Bacon goes on to call for cherry, walnut, and butternut boards, "for which a liberal price will be

given." It seems that he is just getting established in business at this location. We do not know how long Bacon remained, or whether his start-up thrived. Silence closes over the little enterprise, and there are few sources from the period to reproach for leaving us in ignorance.

It bears mentioning that the Bacon cabinet shop is not the only business in the stone building for which we have barely existent evidence. A single scrap of information is all we have for the next several businesses. The gaps in the evidence tickle the imagination, provoking the question about what purposes the building might have served during those gaps. These are details that are now lost to history indefinitely, and possibly forever.

No Longer the Property of the Alexandrian Society

Granville history buffs will know that the histories written by the Rev. Henry Bushnell (*The History of Granville, Licking County, Ohio*, 1889) and William T. Utter (*Granville, The Story of an Ohio Village*, 1956) are chief references for the early years of the village. It is odd that neither reports the next fascinating chapter in the history of the stone bank building — a chapter that would have been easy to uncover with a trip to the office of real estate records in the Licking County Courthouse. There one can learn from the handwritten deed transfers of the day that in 1827, the property described as the west part of Lot #1 in the 16th Block, belonging to the Alexandrian Society of Granville, was sold at sheriff's sale, the result of an unpaid obligation. After that day, the little stone building was no longer in the Society's hands.

Apparently the financial woes of the Alexandrian Society had played out over almost a decade, beginning with an 1818 ruling by the Court of Common Pleas in Licking County that one Luke Walpole had a legitimate claim of \$797 against the Society. Ordered to pay up, the Alexandrian members evidently did not comply.



Granville businessman George Bragg bought the stone bank building in 1858 and used it, at least briefly, for a marble works in the early 1860s. In 1866 he and his bride Lucretia furnished it as a residence and lived there until 1875. Ownership of the building would stay in George's hands, and later Lucretia's, until 1923.

The wheels of justice may turn slowly, but they eventually turn. And so it happened that by 1827, with still no resolution of the matter up to that point, private citizen Hezekiah Kilbourn answered the announcement of sheriff's sale with a bid of \$427, sufficient to become the new owner of the stone bank building and the ground on which it stood. For the reader patient enough to decipher the 19th-century handwriting, all of this is recorded in a deed transfer dated Dec. 12, 1827 (Volume L, pp. 149½ -150).

The Stone Building Hosts Other Small Businesses

The Store: Mr. Kilbourn, the new owner of the property, opened a store there, possibly a general store. We know of the store's existence solely from a reference in Bushnell's history (p. 291), as



This photo, showing a sign on the stone building designating it a "Lunch Room" and "Ladies Ice Cream Parlor," was most likely taken during the 1890s. "Billy Beans" Davis, the African-American restaurateur who eventually owned the business, is standing in the door of the restaurant. The "Ladies Dining Room" two doors to the east (now the site of Park National Bank) was probably an entirely separate restaurant. The narrow storefront between the two buildings was a tin shop for a time during the 1890s.

he recounts the series of merchant enterprises in Granville:

Mr. Hezekiah Kilbourn had by this time [about 1830] opened a store in the old bank building, where he traded for several years, the firm at one time being H. & A. Kilbourn.

No further records survive to tell us any more about the store, or even what its major wares were. What does "several years" mean for the duration of the business, and could the store have overlapped with the second appearance of the Alexandrian Bank in 1836?

Dormant but not active after its first closure, the bank had been recapitalized by an investor from Buffalo, New York, but, as John Davenport makes clear, there were troubling financial signs almost from the start. As regards location, Bushnell assures us that upon its re-establishment, the bank "occupied the same stone building..., the old iron vault being still in



William "Billy Beans" Davis was the right-hand man to Harry A. Church in Church's Restaurant and Ice Cream Parlor, which operated in the stone bank building. Photograph courtesy of the Denison University Archives, from the 1899 Denison yearbook.



Looking a little worse for the wear, the old stone bank building served from 1916 to 1923 as the Granville depot for the Interurban trolley, a service owned at the time of this photo by the Ohio Electric Railway Company. Note the freight cart parked in front of the building, the railway spur tracks at the east side of the building, and the run-down frame addition on the back of the building. In an early example of branding, the "Ohio Electric" logo on the front sign comprises a capital "E" inside a capital "O." A trolley ticket is pictured below.

position." Other evidence for such an occupancy, however, is weak. The Alexandrian Society clearly no longer owned the stone building, so in light of Bushnell's claim, one wonders whether the Society might have negotiated use, perhaps limited, of the premises. After all, Bushnell, writing in the 1880s, was not that far removed in time from the 1830s, and local memory seems to have informed him about the continued presence of the old iron vault in the building. The vault was later moved down Broadway to a house where yet another offspring of the bank was born. Lacking additional evidence to the contrary, and in the presence of such remembered detail, we must defer to Bushnell's affirmation about the location



of the 1836 bank, although the extent of the occupancy is justifiably in question. In a short

time, probably by 1838, the second incarnation of the Alexandrian Bank would fail as well, brought down by its many difficulties, including the Panic of 1837.

The Gunsmith

Storekeeper Hezekiah Kilbourn died in 1841, and five years later, in 1846, the property deed was transferred to his son, Levi. The next we hear the younger Kilbourn's name, he is referenced in the sale of the property in 1848. During the years intervening, did Levi maintain his father's store or use the property for other purposes? One piece of evidence exists that points to the use of the building as a gunsmith's shop. It is attested to by one of the most helpful sources that we have for the building, a 1930 *Granville Times* article by Charles B. White. In the article, White traces the history of the building, based in good part on the memories of an elderly Granville citizen who had been young in the time of the Kilbourn ownership. White's informant is David Davies, about whom White says, "His memory is so retentive and his boyhood recollections so vivid that his testimony carries the seal of authenticity." Davies recalls that as a lad in about 1845,

My companions and I on our way to and from school used to stop at the stone bank building and peer in at the open door, fascinated by the array of rifles which stood along the walls. We never had the boldness to enter, for the gun smith, whose name was John Smith, was a grim, mysterious man, who talked little and drank much liquor...

As with the evidence for Kilbourn's store, it is difficult to find other references or testimonials, beyond the White article, to the mysterious gunsmith. But although Davies's recounting has not turned out to be 100 percent accurate, nonetheless an indelible childhood memory such as the sights and sounds of the gunsmith's shop would be difficult to question. We must probably grant that for at least a short while, the building served this purpose. And we can hope that

someday, additional documentation for this colorful occupancy will turn up.

The Millinery and First Private Residences

After the gunsmith, darkness once again descends on the building, until we get another glimpse in 1848. That was the year in which Granville citizen Rufus G. Fosdick and his wife Mary purchased the property from Levi Kilbourn. Mary established a millinery shop in the building, and the tin sign for the shop, reading "Mrs. Fosdick, Milliner," is still in the possession of the Granville Historical Society. In 1850, Rufus went West on the Gold Rush, while Mary stayed in Granville, conducting her millinery business. She may also have lived in the building during this time. After Rufus returned from California, some \$1,500 richer, they both lived in the building.

The site was also used as a millinery shop a few years later by Mrs. Samuel H. Worcester, as related by David Davies in the Charles White article. Mr. and Mrs. Worcester bought the property in 1856 for \$600. White and Davies missed mentioning the fact that between the Fosdick and Worcester occupancies, the ownership of the property turned over four times in only four years (1852-1856). But despite the clear evidence of deed transfers, there is no indication that these owners lived in or otherwise used the building themselves. Rather, they probably leased to the occupants who were remembered by Davies. The history of rising sale price of the property contributes to the evidence that this series of ownerships was motivated by real estate speculation. Fosdick bought the property for \$300, and ten years later, it sold for \$1,000 (an increase in value of 233%), with the interim sales reflecting the steadily increasing value.

Samuel H. Worcester was an Englishman who was a student at Granville College (later to be named Denison University). In 1854 college records, he listed his hometown as Portsmouth. He evidently came to Granville to pursue theological studies (as remembered by Davies;

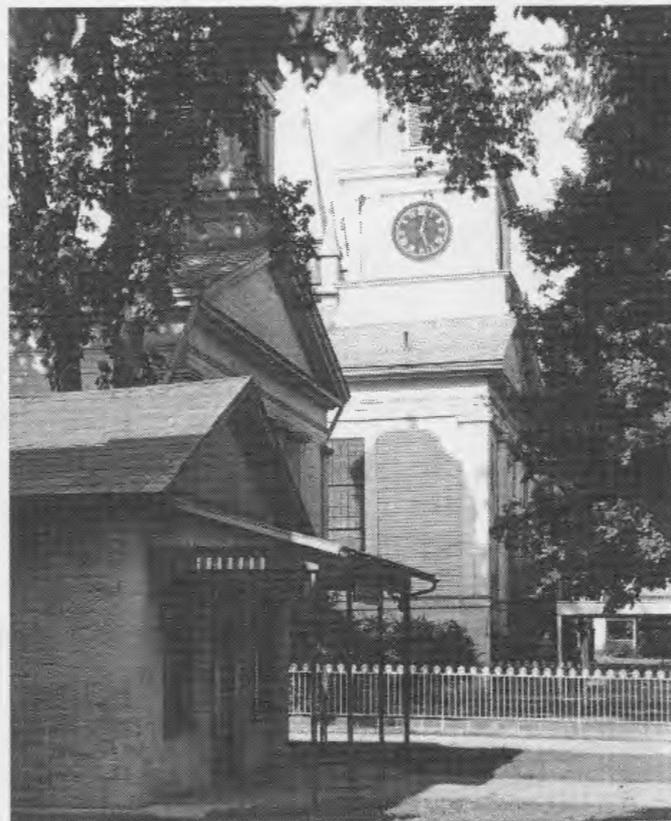
Denison records testify only that he was a student in the "Classical Course" of the Preparatory Department). Worcester and his wife, along with their niece, Lizzie Rowley, resided in the stone building for several years.

Perhaps home ownership was too financially stressful for the Worcester family. Although they remained in the building until at least 1859, in 1858 they sold the property to George Bragg, a Granville businessman, for \$1,000. Although a number of private residences and businesses would be lodged in the building during the ensuing 65 years, the property would remain under Bragg ownership that entire time, until in 1923, Mrs. Lucretia Bragg Smith, widow of George, signed the deed over to the Granville Public Library Association.

More Residences

More private residences in the stone building followed that of the Worcesters, under George Bragg's ownership. Bragg made commercial use of the building at least briefly, and once again, it's a use of the building that we know very little about. We have a single photograph from the early 1860s that was published in Francis W. Shepardson's *Denison University: A Centennial History*, and that photo shows the building in use as a marble works, complete with slabs of marble, about the size of headstones, leaning in front of the building. Bragg, who owned various other businesses and properties around town, was also a trained stone carver, as was his father, Harvey Bragg. The elder Bragg may well have joined his son in running the marble business in the stone building for some time during the years between 1859 and 1866. However, because we have only one testimonial to the marble works, we cannot be certain of the inclusive years.

We do know, however, that in 1866 the building once again became a private residence. In that year, the widowed George Bragg remarried. Mrs. Lucretia Bragg later reported that as a bride, she and George made the stone bank building



After the Ohio Electric Railway Company vacated the building, Alex Roberts and son Edgar "Buss" Roberts moved their barbershop in, about 1923 or 1924. This photo shows the sign, hanging over the front entrance, that says "Alex Roberts Barber and Beauty Shop." The building is dwarfed by its two neighbors to the west, St. Luke's Episcopal Church and the old Opera House.

their first home, and that he had outfitted the place in style, complete with fine furniture and Brussels carpet. A photo from the period shows the building in the background. It looks quite domestic, surrounded by a white wooden fence, with windows and the front door sporting white curtains, shutters further enhancing the windows, and even what appears to be ivy growing up the front exterior. Very homey indeed!

The Braggs vacated the home in 1875, and for the next dozen years, the building was rented as a residence to other families, including Mrs. William Collett and her two

sons and two daughters, followed by the family of Philip Rank, the stagecoach driver who made the run between Newark and Granville. Mr. Rank's daughter Ella lived there with her parents; she was described as "a college belle." After the Ranks departed, there are four or five years of stone building history (1882 or '83 to 1887) that are unaccounted for.

A Series of Restaurants

There is no doubt, however, about the next, much celebrated, occupancy. In 1887 Harry A. Church, who had previously been the publisher of the *Granville Times* and was still associated with the newspaper, opened a restaurant/ice cream parlor in the building. In the announcements in the *Times* (such as that of Aug. 5, 1887), Church describes the new enterprise as "a neat parlor for the use of ladies, or gentlemen accompanied by ladies." The business also offered "a Lunch Room

in the rear of the parlor," where sandwiches and beverages such as lemonade, ginger ale, and milk could be had. It is not clear whether "in the rear" meant simply in the back portion of the stone room, or whether it referred to a frame addition to the rear of the structure. Sanborn Insurance maps covering several decades starting in 1894 show various sizes of frame addition at the back (south) end of the building. At one point (probably between 1893 and 1896), a structure to the east of the building was also built or simply created by closing in the narrow opening between the stone building and its next neighbor to the east, which also housed a restaurant (where Park National Bank now stands).

In the *Granville Times* issue of Oct. 4, 1888, Church's eatery was advertising "Day Board ... at reasonable rates ... Meals furnished at all hours. Oysters served in any style. Fine brands of cigars kept." There seems little doubt that the business



This photo shows the Oak Dining Parlor in the old stone bank building at the far right, next to St. Luke's Church. The photo dates to a period between 1910 and 1915, the known dates of that restaurant. Sharp-eyed readers may be able to see that the stone building sports a sign that says "Oak Dining Parlor." Note that the photo also shows a flat-roofed frame structure that had been built onto the east side of the old stone building.

was seeking to appeal to Denison students, among others.

Despite the claims in its opening announcements, Mr. Church's operation did not wholly restrict its potable offerings to lemonade and milk. Scandal came to Granville in 1889 when Church and his assistant William Davis were charged with and tried for Sunday sales of intoxicating liquor, specifically hard cider. Village ordinances prohibiting sale of alcoholic beverages had been instituted in the 1870s and 1880s. Both Church and Davis were fined \$50 and court costs, an impressive penalty for the day (*Granville Times*, Jan. 31, 1889).

William Davis was known more informally to his clientele as "Billy Beans." Described in Charles White's article as Church's "man-of-all-work," Davis was an African-American man who became the owner of the restaurant sometime in the 1890s. Billy Beans' gourmet legacy was, according to White, the "indelible memories" of men and especially Denison University students, who relished the sandwiches, baked goods, sardines, and other edibles that came out of Billy's kitchen. The presumably fond memories were mixed, White asserted, with "the pains of indigestion which often followed indulgence in Billy's delicacies." A photo from the 1899 *Adytum*, the Denison student yearbook, shows Billy in front of the stone bank building, under a "Lunch Room" sign, sporting his white kitchen apron.

At least three other restaurateurs followed in the ensuing decade (1901-1910). These proprietors included Charles Mertens, William Legge, and William Morgan. The sequence and durations of these occupancies is exceptionally difficult to sort out, and various pieces of evidence contradict each other. Mertens may actually have owned the restaurant business there twice during this period, or possibly he was involved with another nearby restaurant, which persisted for that entire time in the next building to the east. Advertisements of the day tended to say simply "South Side, Broadway," and street numbers were

not used. It's clear, however, that the building had a good long run as a restaurant, a history that was not over in 1910 when the final restaurateur, William Schwab (sometimes spelled "Swabb"), acquired the business. Schwab named it the Oak Dining Parlor, or simply "The Oaks." At no point was the building itself actually owned by any of these restaurateurs, who no doubt were paying rent for the premises to Mrs. Bragg Smith all these years.

Will Schwab announced the launch of the Oak Dining Parlor with a touch of class, with the report in the March 31, 1910 issue of the *Granville Times* that "he will be ready for business as soon as his new furniture arrives...." No beat-up, used furniture for the new enterprise! The *Granville Times* (May 27, 1915) also was the vehicle of the announcement five years later that Mr. Schwab was compelled on account of ill health to vacate the premises and close the business. This short notice concludes with the sentence, "Who will occupy this room has not been announced." Thus ended the stone building's restaurant era.

According to Charles White, the shop of plumber Charles Simpson followed the restaurant in the building, and indeed at the time of White's article (1930), he could say that Simpson still was doing business out of the rear of the building, probably the frame addition to the building that had been in evidence on the insurance drawings for many years. But Simpson's immediate arrival in 1915 and his occupancy of the front of the building have not been further substantiated.

The Interurban Depot

The next occupant for which we have a certain record, however, was a prominent one. In July 1916, Mrs. Bragg Smith rented the building to the Ohio Electric Railway Company, which was operating the Interurban electric trolley that ran between Newark and Granville from 1890 to 1923. Previously, the depot/ticket office for the trolley had been located at various other sites on Broadway. For the last six years of its operation



The Alexandrian Bank Building on a spring morning in 2016, 200 years since its completion. Now in its 62nd year as the Museum of the Granville Historical Society, the building continues to undergo improvements, including new external and internal lighting, a new door, and new signage. The ultimate improvement, yet another expansion of the facility, was completed in 2012 and can be seen in this photo rising to its second story behind the 1955 expansion. Photo by Lyn Boone

(1916–1923), the trolley depot was in the stone bank building. That site must have been appealing because it afforded ample space for the freight and mail that arrived on the Interurban from Newark.

The terms of the lease (which is on file in the Archives of the Granville Historical Society) specified \$350 annual rent. In the contract, Mrs. Bragg Smith agreed to have a structure then housing a barbershop removed from the premises, presumably from the east side of the building, so that tracks could be added there,

making the delivery and loading of freight all the more convenient. Excavations at the time of the 2012 addition to the Museum building brought forth a rusted piece of the track, buried there for 90-some years.

The Barbershop

When the Ohio Electric vacated the building, longtime Granville barbers Alex Roberts and his son Edgar ("Buss") Roberts moved their business into the building. The tenure of the Roberts Barbershop in the stone building and its addition

(built in the early 1950s) would last for 53 years, longer than any other single commercial use of the building.

Alex Roberts was an African-American who had lived and worked in Granville since early in the century. His son Buss, born in 1901, apprenticed as a barber under his father, and began to cut hair in 1915 at the age of 14. A haircut at the time cost "two bits." Generations of Granville men visited the stone building for barbering, and women too had their needs tended to in Jean's Beauty Parlor, also a part of the business for a time. In 1933 the *Granville Times* reported that "A new door has been made in the side of the building occupied by Alex Roberts for the convenience of patrons of the beauty parlor." In those days, a lady could get a permanent wave for \$5.

When the Granville Historical Society (GHS) acquired the stone building in 1949, intending to use it for its museum of Granville history, the Roberts business had been virtually a Granville institution for so long that accommodations were made to keep it in the building, or at least in the extension of the building that was added in the early 1950s. The drawings for the extension on the south end of the stone building show that initially, a location for the Roberts shop was on the west side of the new wing. But before construction, the shop's location in the design was moved to the east side, possibly because village leaders did not approve of having a commercial enterprise opening onto the village square (the immediate westerly neighbor, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, stands on that common).

Many persons still living in Granville, and Denison alumni as well, remember getting their hair cut by one of the Roberts barbers in the east-side room of the extension. This room had a separate entrance, now closed off but still visible externally on that side of the building.

The elder Roberts died in 1957, only two months after retiring. His son Buss Roberts would go on serving his clientele in the building extension for almost twenty more years. He retired in 1976, and



Edgar "Buss" Roberts (shown above) and his father, Alex Roberts, moved their father/son barber shop into the Alexandrian Bank building in 1923 when the Interurban trolley ceased operations. Photo from the *Blue and White: Granville High School Yearbook, 1920.*

lived until 1984. According to Rita Jackson's *African-American Trailblazers in Licking County*, he said of his long career in barbering, "I never made any money, but I always, *I always*, made a living."

Granville Historical Society Museum

When the Ohio Electric Railway shut down the Interurban trolley in 1923, a result of the growing ascendancy of automobiles, Mrs. Bragg Smith chose not to seek another tenant. Instead, according to documents in the GHS Archives, she

turned the property over to the Granville Public Library Association (GLPA) for the cost of \$1 plus "other valuable considerations," which entailed her lifetime entitlement (and that of her siblings) to income from the property. The little stone building had been under Bragg ownership for 65 years, and through its income, it would continue to serve the family for years more. Lucretia herself died in 1928.

In 1949, the property was sold by the GLPA to the Granville Historical Society, which used it to fulfill its longstanding and critical need for a museum. Founded in 1885 by Charles Webster Bryant, the GHS had been collecting artifacts and other items of historical value for decades, but the collection had led a vagrant existence, moved and stored in one makeshift holding-place after another. Village philanthropists and leaders Clara Sinnett White and her husband Charles B. White headed the list of persons seeking a permanent home for the collections.

Over the years, Mrs. White had nursed various plans for realizing such a home for the museum, but none came to fruition in her lifetime. Instead, her real legacy was literally a legacy: When she died in 1947, she left the GHS a major portion of her estate, enabling the organization to purchase the stone bank building from the GLPA for \$12,500, and to fund the substantial additional cost of its remodeling, its extension, and the outfitting of the facility. In total, Mrs. White's bequest exceeded \$83,000, of which about \$68,000 was used to create the permanent home for the museum. It was a defining moment for the GHS — the far-sighted philanthropic act of a village matriarch that allowed a homeless collection of artifacts to become a genuine and permanent museum of local history. In providing for the museum, Clara Sinnett White was truly the mother of the Granville Historical Society that we know today.



Granville philanthropist Clara Sinnett White (1862-1947) and her husband, Charles B. White, cared deeply about the future of the Granville Historical Society, which lacked a permanent home until the 1950s. Mrs. White made it possible through a bequest for the GHS not only to buy and refurbish the old stone bank building, but also to build an extension onto that building, making it suitable for use as a museum.

The Renovation and Extension

When acquired by the GHS, the stone bank building was showing its age and hard use. To revive it for its new purpose, the building was not only gutted to the walls for renovation, but it was also augmented by a new addition that was capacious for its day. Total floor space was increased to well over twice the amount previously offered by the single-room stone building. Plans for the extension (still on file in the GHS Archives) had been drawn up by Horace King, a Denison art professor and GHS member with architectural skills. Stone to match the original stone of the 1816 building was acquired

from the remains of a Welsh Hills schoolhouse built in 1825 from the same local sandstone, cut by Joseph Evans, one of the same stonemasons who built the bank building. Meanwhile, the original structure was treated to a thoroughgoing renovation with new floors, windows, roofing, utilities, and a "new" antique door, made of butternut wood. The door had originally been constructed for a Granville home between 1820 and 1830.

The new facility was celebrated on the occasion of Granville's Sesquicentennial, the 150th anniversary of the founding of the village. On September 30, 1955, none other than Ohio Governor Frank J. Lausch visited Granville for the official dedication of the Museum of the Granville Historical Society. A photograph in front of the newly spruced-up facade shows the Governor flanked by Dr. William T. Utter, historian and GHS Curator; Mr. Henry E. Eaton, President of the Granville Historical Society; and the three gentlemen's wives.

The day was an auspicious one for the new occupant of the old stone building. It was almost as if it had been envisioned by the late Charles White in the *Granville Times* article he had penned 25 years prior. Looking ahead to the future of the unassuming but historic structure, he mused that

Time alone will reveal what function it will serve in the future, but all Granville citizens who revere her historic buildings hope—and that hope is likely to be realized — that it will be the home of some institution or organization intimately associated with Granville's best ideals.

A worthy aspiration, indeed, for the Granville Historical Society.

Acknowledgments and Sources

I am greatly indebted to Theresa Overholser,

Archivist of the Granville Historical Society, for her extensive and always good-willed assistance with my research. Another volunteer in the GHS Archives, Janet Procida, was helpful at many points and always encouraging. Denison University Archivist Sasha Griffin and her staff were also very obliging, including mounting an exhaustive search for an elusive photograph. My colleagues on the Publications Committee of the GHS have been more than patient with my long-delayed article.

A note about sources: Rather than burden this article with extensive footnotes, I have taken a more general approach to documentation, reflected here. I am placing my research notes and extensive chronology of the building on file permanently in the Archives of the GHS, so that the researcher who needs to pursue any given source further may have the benefit of my detailed documentation. As for more general references, I have included some within the body of the text, such as the all-important article by Charles B. White in the Aug. 7, 1930 *Granville Times*, p. 4. Mr. White's timely recording of the memories of David Davies of the uses of the stone bank building in the mid- to late-19th century provides an invaluable backbone for this article. However, even this resource is not accurate in every detail, as shown in property deed transfers.

I spent extensive time mining the deed transfer records at the Recorder's Office of the Licking County Courthouse. There is no arguing with these carefully preserved and detailed records, which are, however, written in a hand that is sometimes exceedingly difficult to read. The researcher who is interested in more information (names, dates of deed transfer, etc.) about the four transfers of the property in the four years from 1852 to 1856 may find all of that real estate minutiae in the materials I have left on file at the GHS. He or she may also, of course, find it the same way I did.

Bedrock resources for Granville history are the Rev. Henry Bushnell's *The History of Granville, Licking County, Ohio*, 1889, and William T. Utter's *Granville, The Story of an Ohio Village*, 1956. Mr. Utter's notes for his book are also on file at the GHS Archives, and provide a helpful supplement to his book. Other treasures of the Archives include the board minutes of the Alexandrian Society, copies of early Granville newspapers such as *The Wanderer*, and records of the GHS (especially concerning the bequest of Clara Sinnett White and the early 1950s renovation/construction of the Museum building and extension). Theresa Overholser, Archivist of the GHS, provided a wealth of knowledge for available U.S. Census data, Licking County tax records, financial and construction records pertinent to the GHS, and especially the invaluable Sanborn Insurance Maps, which illustrate the village's buildings and purposes over a period of about 50 years spanning the turn of the 20th century.

The Granville Times, published from 1880 through the beginning of World War II (except during World War I), is the workhorse resource for Granville history. I made extensive use of it, especially for advertisements and obituaries. *The Times* is available online through the Granville Public Library and on microfilm at the GHS Archives. Another invaluable resource for Granville history is the series of Masonic Yearbooks, which can be perused at the GHS. The Yearbooks record annual village activities and events during the early years of the 20th century, but they also reflect a historical interest and sometimes refer to 19th-century background. The annual Granville village directories covering much of the 20th century are very helpful as well in pinning down the presence and sometimes the addresses of local businesses and organizations.

Some of the residents of the stone building were connected to Denison University; for these I

consulted sources in the Denison Archives, including pertinent issues of *The Denisonian* (the Denison student newspaper), *The Adytum* (the Denison yearbook), and 19th-century annual catalogs of the university and of The Young Ladies' Institute (the women's school that would later merge with Denison). Francis W. Shepardson's book about the college's history, *Denison University: A Centennial History* (1931), yielded the valuable photograph that is the sole evidence of the stone building's use as a marble works (p. 68).

Useful sources for the Roberts barbers include Rita Jackson's *Black History Ohio: African American Trailblazers, Licking County* (2008); the unpublished research by Alan E. Huggins on "Barbers in Granville from the 1880s until the 1930s" and "Walter Samuel Johnson: Enoch, the Professor, The Black Prince: Husband, Father, Barber, Band Leader, Baseball Coach"; and a key article about Buss Roberts in the Columbus, Ohio *Citizen Journal* (June 15, 1972, p. 14).

Finally, the Alexandrian Bank was extensively researched by John Davenport in his article, "Banking in Granville Evolves from Rocky 19th Century Start," which was published in *The Historical Times* (Vol. XXIX, Issue 3, Fall 2015). Also in that same issue, Jessica Bean offers an overview of 19th-century banking, "Granville's first bank reflected industry's early history in U.S." Other articles in *The Historical Times* that were useful for this research were William Hoffman's "Clara Sinnett White: 1862-1947" (Vol. XVI, Issue 1, Winter/Spring 2002); and, in the same issue, a reprint of Leora Norris Shepardson's 1955 article, "The Granville Historical Society."

NOTE: All photos are from the Granville Historical Society archives unless otherwise indicated.

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The Granville Historical Society is an all-volunteer, non-governmental not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization with membership open to all. Joining the Society is a delightful way to meet people who share a love of and interest in Granville's rich, well-documented history. Monthly programs, quarterly publications, and a museum that is open five days a week during the season are some of the ways that enable Society volunteers to share facets of what makes Granville so fascinating with members and guests. Volunteers are welcome in the Archives and Museum Collections areas, as well as museum hosts.

Please visit Granvillehistory.org for further information about all that we do and how you can get involved.

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