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C. W. Bryant: Multi-tasker

Historical Society founder had a diverse range of interests

By **THERESA OVERHOLSER**

Charles Webster Bryant is honored as the founder of the Granville Historical Society, but his concerns, contributions, and delights in life were numerous and wide-ranging.

Charles was born in 1849, the only child of Oren and Mary Fitch Bryant, who lived near Alexandria on Raccoon Valley Road. Oren Bryant had arrived in Licking County in 1835 and was employed for a time in plastering the ceiling of St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Granville. Mary Fitch's family settled on a farm close to Bryant's in 1836. She had been born in New York State and retained vivid memories of her youth there, and of the family's migration to Licking County. She would later write them down for her son's enjoyment.

Charles attended Denison University for three years, dropping out in 1867 because of "infirmity of the eyes." He worked as a carpenter for a while before joining a surveying crew for the newly-established Atlantic and Lake Erie Railway, which was to run from Toledo to the coal mines of southern Ohio. A portion of this rail line eventually became the Johnstown-Granville-Newark bicycle path.

While they were surveying for another railroad in 1873, Bryan's colleague and close friend, Crayton Black, had an opportunity to buy the Prichard Brothers Drug Store in Granville. Black urged Bryant



Charles W. Bryant

to join him in the venture. Although neither of them had any experience in running a pharmacy, they quickly sealed the deal and took over the business at 138 East Broadway. Charles enrolled in the Cincinnati College of Pharmacy for the 1874-75 academic year and began the dispensing of prescriptions. In addition to prescribed medications, the store sold a variety of merchandise, including "over the counter" drugs, dyes and flavoring

extracts, cigars and pipes, sea salt for bathing, and flavored soda water.

In the meantime, Charles had been courting a young lady. Lorinda Munson was the granddaughter of an original Granville pioneer, Augustin Munson. She was born in the Munson home on Newark-Granville Road which, after a move across the road, is presently at the heart of the Welsh Hills School building. Her father, Marvin Munson, was involved in preserving the early history of the village and township. He wrote and presented several papers based on reminiscences and reports of early settlers. Charles and Lorinda had two children: Fitch, born in 1876, and Miriam, born in 1880.

The decade from 1876 to 1886 saw changes in the village, as modern improvements made their way slowly into everyday life. The Village Council took up the question of a water system for the whole town in 1877. Charles took an active part in gathering information on pumping systems, but the project fizzled. Regular rail passenger service arrived in 1880. Bryant sold tickets for excursions to Columbus and to Lake Erie at his counter. Mail was first sent from Granville by rail in 1881, on February 1 at 10:23 a.m., as Bryant carefully noted. The first telephone came in 1882 and the only phone in town was set up in Bryant's store. The *Granville Times* reported that Bryant "will kindly instruct you in regard to the *modus operandi*."

All during that decade, Charles spent much time and some money working at his other passion: the histories of his family and of Granville. He wrote volumes of letters to genealogists throughout New England asking about his own ancestors. He paid for handwritten copies of town and church records that might include his ancestors' names. He wrote to former Granville residents asking for any records or memories of the early days of village settlement. He attempted to collect enough material for both a book on the Bryant family and a book of Granville's history and genealogy. He carefully kept everything in two fireproof safes. After several years, he realized that he had taken on too many projects and partnered with Rev. Henry Bushnell to produce the village's history. Bushnell's *The History of Granville Ohio* was published in 1889, but Bryant's genealogies of the original settlers remained in note form.



CHARLIE -- Charles Bryant was a self-described lonely only child. He lamented never having had close family nearby for telling tales

1885 seems to have been a banner year for Charles. He and several other like-minded men chartered the Granville Ohio Historical Society. He dedicated a room above his drug store to housing all the artifacts and written materials they had been collecting for several years, since the 75th anniversary celebration of the Village founding. The group's prize possession was perhaps the original Licking Land Company meeting minutes, which Bryant had carefully tracked down through a long chain of ownership. He attempted to fund a new building to house the Society by soliciting money from prominent families, promising them naming rights. That effort was not successful.

That same year the Village finally established a



C. W. Bryant's family, from left: son, Fitch; wife, Lorinda; and daughter, Miriam.

water system to bring clean water to all the inhabitants. Charles was made one of three trustees of the water works. Once the deep wells were dug and the lines laid and the pumps began pumping, he was given the honor of holding a fire hose as the first water flowed through and shot high enough to reach over a three-story building.

During the summer of 1886 Bryant began a new project: recording all the tombstone inscriptions in Granville's old burying ground. There were over 900 of them at the time, filling several notebooks. The ongoing restoration of the cemetery has been based on his careful notes. As he finished the last of the notes, he wrote: "Such being the case the work that I set out to do is finished i.e. to copy verbatim the inscriptions in said old ground. Very possibly some have been omitted by reason of being hid by brush weeds or grass; but all that have been seen have been faithfully copied. Will the coming man thank me (or otherwise) for the labor I have here bestowed?"

Granville, O.

Chas. W. Bryant

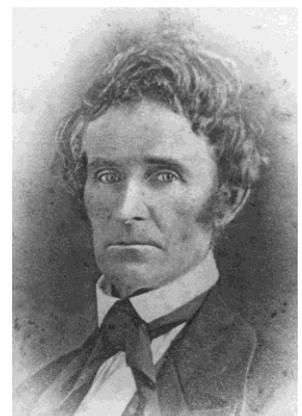
10 June '86

Charles Webster Bryant died of typhoid fever on August 31, 1886.

Lorinda Munson Bryant became a widow at the

age of 31 with two young children. She was left with sole ownership of a drug store which was on a somewhat shaky financial footing. She immediately took up the challenge of carrying on as a woman in business. For a year she ran the drug store, having passed the state examination for registered pharmacists, apparently the first woman in the state and second in the country to do so. She took a science course at Denison University and also one at Cornell University, and in 1890 she moved to near Philadelphia where she was in charge of the science department at the Ogontz School for women. Her next move was to Orange County, New Jersey where

(Continued on page 6)

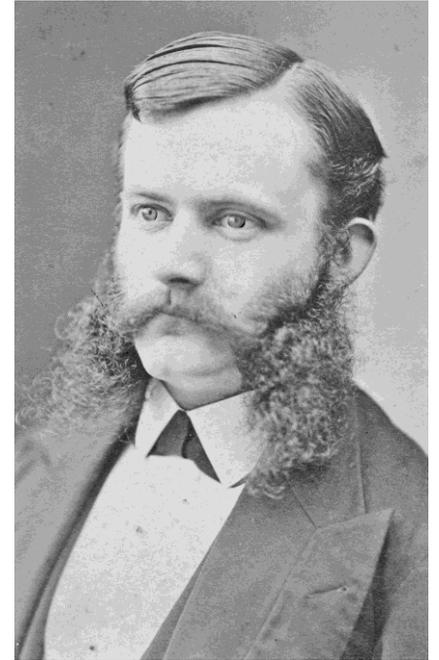


C. W. 's parents: Mary Fitch and Oren Bryant

The Charles Webster Bryant

Who was Charles Webster Bryant?

When friends Crayton Black, Francis Shepardson, and Charles Webster Bryant realized firsthand memories of the early days of Granville were vanishing, they came together to create the Granville Historical Society on March 9, 1885. One of the Society's first major acts was to begin to preserve and document the history of the community. We continue that work today.



Charles Webster Bryant

What is the Charles Webster Bryant Legacy Society?

In Bryant's name, the Granville Historical Society launches the Charles Webster Bryant Legacy Society. This society brings to you, our members and friends, the opportunity to honor and protect the future of preserving our history now and for the generations to come. Let's find out how this works.

Estate Planning is for Everyone

Everyone has an estate. Simply, it's all of the property you own. And because you have an estate, you will want to have an estate plan, a strategy for using your assets well and ultimately passing them on to those you care about.

There are many reasons to make an estate plan:

- *You want to provide for others, your loved ones or others who have been meaningful in your life.*
- *You want a particular individual to inherit parts of your estate: your home, a collectible, a family heirloom.*
- *You want to leave a legacy to an organization, such as the Granville Historical Society, an organization that you care about and have supported for many years.*
- *You want to reduce or avoid estate taxes from your taxable estate.*
- *You want your gift to be unrestricted, enabling the Granville Historical Society to apply your gift to the greatest need when it is received.*
- *Overall, you want to make wise use of your assets. You want to shape your legacy.*

What is a Bequest?

A bequest is a gift created now as part of your will or living trust and given at the end of your life. Bequests can include gifts by beneficiary designation, such as the proceeds from a retirement plan or life insurance policy, or direct payments from a financial account or donor-advised fund.

Legacy Society is unveiled

Is this the right gift for you?

The Granville Historical Society welcomes bequests of all sizes from individuals at all stages of life. Whether you are crafting your first will or updating an existing estate plan, we can help you and your advisors explore giving by bequest as one way to express your lifelong commitment to preserving and protecting the history of Granville for future generations.

How is a bequest structured?

Your gift may take the form of a percentage of your estate, a specific amount, or a particular asset. If taking care of loved ones is your first priority, you may wish to leave part of the remainder of your estate to GHS after other gifts have been fulfilled, or name GHS as a contingent beneficiary should certain heirs not survive you. If you have an estate plan that you do not wish to revise in its entirety at this time, your attorney may draft a simple codicil to your will or amendment to your living trust to add a bequest and leave you other plans unchanged.

Can I make a bequest to GHS and provide for my heirs?

By establishing a testamentary life income gift, one can leave a legacy to GHS while also providing a stream of income to your designated heirs.

What are the benefits for you and your family?

A bequest to GHS is deductible from your taxable estate and thus can help you reduce or avoid estate taxes. You may find that the estate planning process is also a meaningful personal opportunity to reflect on the people, values, and organizations that matter most to you.

Talk to us

Evelyn Frolking and Tom Martin, board members, invite you to talk with us about the possibilities that will benefit both you and the Granville Historical Society. For more information, please contact Evelyn or Tom. There are two ways to do this.

Send us an email at CharlesWebsterBryant@gmail.com or leave a message at the Museum at (740) 587.3951 and we be in touch with you.



Evelyn Frolking and Tom Martin



The Bryant family is pictured on their porch at the northwest corner of North Pearl and East College streets.

she was principal of the Montrose School for Girls. Her final move was to New York City, where her son Fitch had already established himself as a travel agent.

In this last period of her life, Lorinda became an author of books on travel and art, focusing on volumes aimed toward elementary age children.

She died in New York in 1933, having lived a very full life of 47 years after her husband's death.

Theresa Overholser is the Granville Historical Society's head archivist and author of two of the Society's Pocket Histories: "Granville's Industrial Past" and "Beneath This Sod: A Walk Through Granville's Old Colony Burying Ground."

LORINDA IN THE ALPS:
Lorinda Bryant traveled extensively. Here she is shown third from the right on an Alpine tour.

-- All photos from Granville Historical Society Archives



Fifty mounds once dotted township

The Granville Historical Society recently acquired a complete set of editions of the "Rotator", the weekly newsletter of the Rotary Club of Granville from its inception in 1949 through the 1990s. At the club's Aug. 28, 1978 meeting, Don Valdes, professor of Sociology/ Anthropology at Denison University, presented a program about Indian Mounds in the Granville area. The following account appeared in the Sept. 11, 1978 "Rotator," which preceded the Bryn Du Woods housing development that preserved the historically important Alligator Mound on the property.

One hundred mounds graced the Licking County landscape years ago; fifty were in Granville Township. The

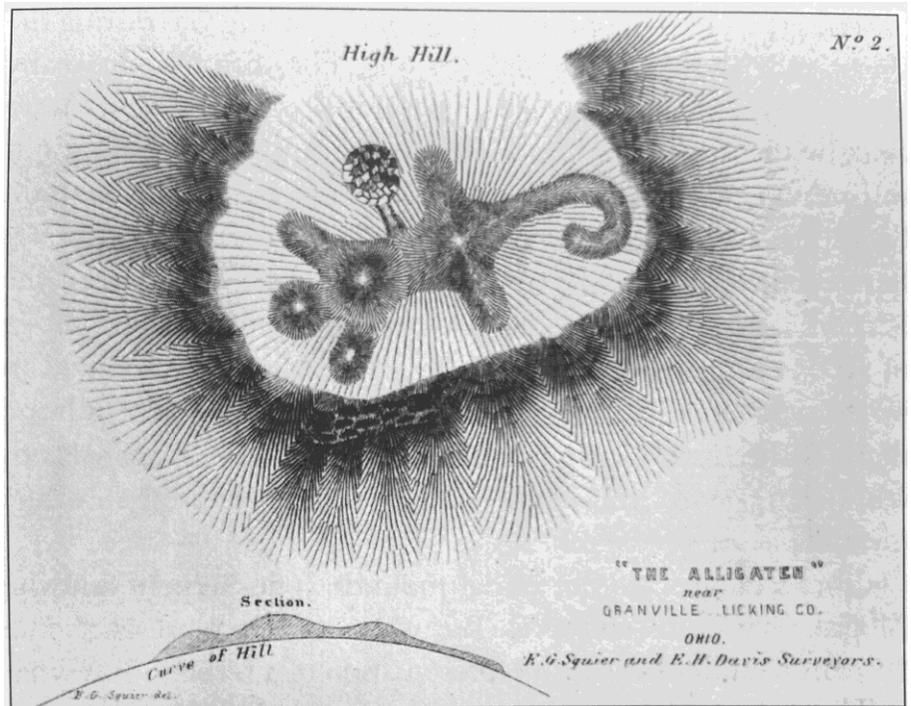
Adenas who moved in about 800 B.C. and remained until 800 A.D. and the Hopewell who came about the beginning of the Christian era built the mounds. Burial, fort, signal, ceremonial, and effigy mounds were all a part of the incredibly ambitious feat we still can see around us.

The Serpent Mound in Adams County is one of America's most famous ceremonial earthworks. Built by the Hopewell, it is 1,250 feet long, 4 to 5 feet high, and 20 feet wide. We have no idea why this and similar mounds were built. Of the 50 Granville mounds, 38 were burial mounds which contained artifacts, most of which now are in the Ohio Historical Center in Columbus.

The Octagon and Great Circle Mounds in Newark were also built by the Hopewell. The two ceremonial complexes were once joined.

Only a few of the mounds are still left. Farming has leveled most of them. Some were hauled away to hold in the Erie Canal and Buckeye Lake. Others were salvaged by companies before industrial complexes or coal mines took this place. Collectors destroyed others.

State laws restricting the destruction of mounds vary. Those in the Southwest are fairly severe. In Ohio it is a misdemeanor to deface a mound,



The 1848 Squier and Davis map of Alligator Mound.

without the permission of the owner. National legislation protects any mound if U.S. money is involved in a project affecting the land.

Don was particularly concerned about the Alligator Mound located just east of the Granville Golf Course. It is one of four good effigy mounds in Ohio. It was investigated in 1847, is 4 to 6 feet high and occupies what many agree is one of the most desirable building sites in the county. So far it has been preserved by the good grace of the owner. Don hopes this good will continues. He urged us all to support the preservation of our own Alligator Mound.

--Clyde E. Moss, Editor

Granville trivia

Another factoid from our Granville Trivia list:

Q. How many murders have been committed in Granville?

A. Thirteen – Frances "Granny" Wertz (1905); George Stevens (1916); Ernest Jones (1938); Ernest Rolly, Jack Hodson and Jane Williams (1948); Herman and Carol Jean Leasure (1964); Deborah K. Shull (1973); Jenkin Jones (1978); Roberta Peters (1979); Nancy Wallick (1984); and Darrell Sponseller (1990).

GRANVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

115 E. Broadway

P.O. Box 129

Granville, OHIO 43023



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GET CONNECTED, JOIN THE SOCIETY

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. A variety of programs, quarterly publications, and a museum chock full of intriguing artifacts 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 volunteering as museum hosts.

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

The Granville Historical Society
P.O. Box 129, Granville, OH 43023
740-587-3951

GranvilleHistorical@gmail.com
www.granvillehistory.org

Granville History Museum and Robinson Research Center, 115 West Broadway.