Prevervine Our Heritage

# THE HISTORICAL TIMES

Quarterly of the Granville, Ohio, Historical Society

Volume XXIV, Issue 2

Spring 2010

# 125 years of telling Granville's story

The Granville Historical Society endures through many peaks and valleys

By DONALD G. SCHILLING Professor of History, Denison University

Charles Webster Bryant, whose portrait hangs on the north wall of the Granville Historical Society Museum, looms large in the history of the Society. As a charter member of the Ohio Archeological and Historical Society, a statewide organization dedicated to preserving and promoting the history of the state, it is very possible that he was among the 60 men gathered in Columbus at the behest of local publisher, Albert Adams Graham, to form that organization in March 1885. At the same time, March 9, 1885, to be precise,

nders of the Granville, Ohio, Historical Society, ryant the driving force, received the charter of oration from the State of Ohio. As Bryant subtly explained in a letter to the *Granville Times*, pted by a keen desire to preserve a knowledge of



Granville Historial Society founder Charles W. Bryant, late in his life. He died at age 37 from typhoid fever, ironically, one year after bringing pure drinking water to Granville.

our local history and having at heart the general good of the community that would accrue from an organized and properly conducted effort, a few young men of the village held a series of preliminary meetings during the early part of the present year which resulted in the formation of the ... Granville, Ohio, Historical Society."

The perspicacity of Bryant and the nine other founding members secured for Granville not only its own organization but also a position placing it among the oldest of the local historical societies in the state.<sup>2</sup>

Its venerable age, however, has not insured that the Society was always able to maintain a robust profile in



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BRYANT'S NOTE-BOOK — Charles Webster Bryant's first draft for the constitution of the Granville Historical Society.

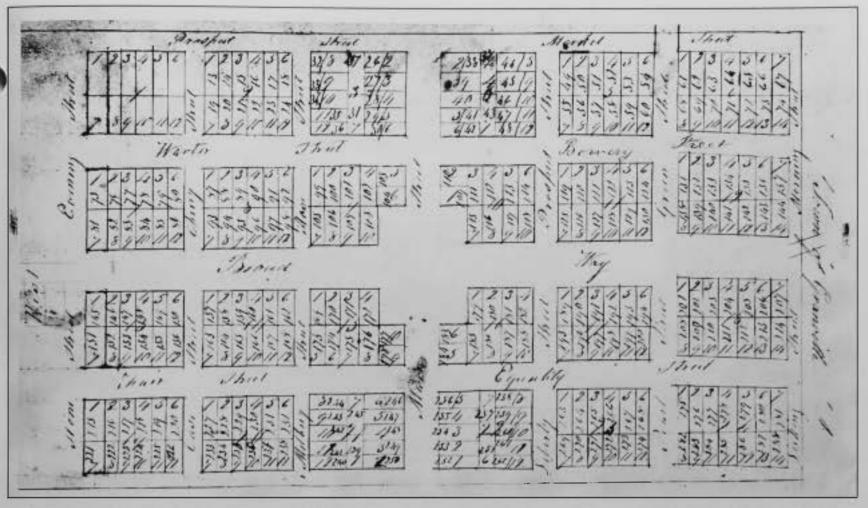
the village. Nonetheless, in its 125 years the Granville Historical Society has existed in a symbiotic relationship with the village of Granville. Granville's 75th anniversary proved the catalyst for the Society's founding and subsequent village anniversaries often reenergized it. Between bursts of activity the Society was frequently quiescent, doing little more than preserving its name and the collection of artifacts and archival materials scattered in local attics and barns. Nonetheless, by enduring, and often more, for 125 years the Society has enabled Granville to preserve key elements of its past and thus maintain essential aspects of its identity.

### The Founding

On October 17, 1855, Granville celebrated its first fifty years with two services in the Congregational (Presbyterian) Church featuring the Rev. Timothy Mather Cooley, eighty-three years old of Granville, Mass., who as a young minister in 1805 had presided over the organization of the Granville, Ohio congregation, and the Rev. Jacob Little, the current pastor of the church. Between them they recounted much of the history of Granville's settlement and first fifty years giving it a religious cast. At the end of the evening service the oldest surviving settler, Elias Gilman, moved

"the adjournment of this meeting fifty years hence to the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and five...." <sup>3</sup>

It was perhaps this focus on 1905 that caused village leaders to almost miss the 75th anniversary. It was not until late October 1880 that they appointed an executive committee consisting of Daniel Shepardson, chair; Charles Webster Bryant, secretary; C.P. Grimsley; Frank Rose; and Thomas J. Thomas to organize the event. In three weeks this group pulled together a successful program for November 13th. Two aspects of this committee's work are especially relevant for understanding the creation of the Society. First, during its meeting of October 27th the executive committee determined to establish a committee on relics which would "keep a record of the articles exhibited with the name of the exhibitor and a short descriptive sketch of the article and the interest that attaches to it." Second, at a meeting three days later, Denison Professor A.W. Thresher moved that the executive committee "be requested to ... effect a permanent organization for the purpose of receiving, caring for, preserving, and putting on exhibition at such times as should seem best ... any articles or objects of interest pertaining to the s tlement and early history of Granville Township."4 AT approximately the same time Bryant highlighted an-



This version of the town plat was saved from a bonfire, then passed through several hands before being rescued by Bryant for the new Granville Historical Society.

other concern in his notebook as he jotted down the following observation, "Papers relative to the history of this town have been sold as waste paper — have been thrown out into the street to be blown away by the winds — have been burned in backyards as a bonfire — have been used to kindle fires with, and applied to other ignominious uses where paper can be applied all to my certain knowledge, for I have recovered valuable and interesting papers from all these sources." These actions reflected an emerging awareness that as the founding generation passed away, Granville needed an organization dedicated to the preservation of its history, especially of the artifacts and paper records that made the past accessible.

The celebration of the 75th Anniversary on that November Saturday featured a day of speeches and papers recounting the settlement and early history of Granville village and township. This was accompanied, according to Horace King, by "an exhibit of relics from the settlement years which were displayed in the church parlors. [It included] portraits, paintings, photographs and engravings of .... early notables, ... furniture, various household items, letters, and records

of early enterprises." Some items in this exhibit, organized by Bryant, remained in his care and became the core of the collection of the Granville Historical Society when it was founded in 1885.

It is unclear why over four years passed between the events just described and the founding of the Society. Perhaps, Bryant, the driving force behind its creation, was too caught up in other tasks. Born in St. Albans Township in 1849, Bryant had moved to Granville to attend Denison in 1866. After three years at the College he left without a degree and worked as surveyor and engineer for several railroad companies before returning to Granville and forming a partnership with Crayton Black in 1873 to purchase A.P. Prichard's drug store. Two years later he married the talented Lorinda Munson, whose father Marvin Munson was also an avid supporter of local history. A strong advocate of civic improvement, Bryant long promoted the development of a village water system which was finally realized in 1885. Appointed with Professor Gilpatrick and Black as water works' trustees, Bryant and his compatriots "bore the burden of supervising the construction of the system." 7 But it



This is the north side of East Broadway, looking eastward from the intersection of Broadway and Main Street, during the 1890s.

is for his substantial contributions to preserving the history of Granville that the Historical Society celebrates him today.

Although not trained as an historian, Bryant had, in the words of Utter, "the interests and abilities of an historian."8 He agreed to work with the Rev. Henry Bushnell on the first significant history of Granville. Bushnell wrote the narrative history, The History of Granville, Licking County, Ohio, published in 1889 while Bryant pursued with alacrity the task of compiling the genealogies of the founding families. He also did yeoman service for subsequent generations by carefully recording the inscriptions on and locations of all the gravestones in the Old Colony Burying Ground. Without his meticulous record the restoration of this historic site over the past several decades would have been impossible. The Society's recent publication of Jacob Little's History of Granville was also aided by Bryant's copying of the manuscript which in the 1880s existed only as newspaper clippings. 9 But arguably his most enduring legacy was the founding of the Granville, Ohio, Historical Society in the spring of 1885.

Bryant's enthusiasm for history infected a number of up and coming young men in the village — Crayton

Black, Francis W. "Frank" Shepardson, Edward Olney, George Case, John Sample, George Kyle, De Estain Jones, Walter Hervey, and Frank Morse — who joined him as the charter members. The youngest of that group, Frank Shepardson, shared Bryant's passion for history. Frank was just four years old when his parents, Daniel and Eliza Smart Shepardson, came to Granville in 1868 to provide leadership for the Young Ladies Institute (later Shepardson College). Graduating from Denison in 1882, Frank enjoyed a year at Brown University before returning home to teach at the Young Ladies Institute. He again departed Granville in 1890 to pursue his Ph.D. at Yale, and then experienced a very successful academic career at the University of Chicago. While he devoted countless hours to the national organizations of Phi Beta Kappa and Beta Theta Pi in addition to his responsibilities at Chicago, he never lost interest in involvement with Granville and its history.

In his 1885 letter to the *Granville Times* Bryant emphasized three primary goals for the new organization:

First, 'the study of the history of America, of the United States, of the State of Ohio, and of this locality in particular.' .... The second object of the

thereon - In witness where of we the Jaid Commit
to have hereun to set our hands and seals
this Justif Second hay of November in the year
of our Lord Eighteen Houndred and Hourt Nodiah Holomo

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This is a quit claim deed from 1804. Bryant wrote many letters to all parts of the United States, trying to trace and obtain old documents of value to Granville's archives.

Society is 'the collection and preservation of whatever serves to illustrate or to perpetuate a knowledge of local Geology, Fauna, Flora, Archaeology, Topography, Geography, Biography, Genealogy, and History.' ... The third object is 'the formation of a library [and museum] designed to illustrate the subjects already named, special reference being had to the department of history.' 10

As Bryant recognized, realizing these objectives would require that the Society have "adequate accommodations, and with that in view, they have memorialized the Village Council to permit them to erect a suitable building upon a vacant portion of the Public Square." Securing a suitable building, however, would prove an elusive and unsolvable problem until the 1950's. Nonetheless, the fledgling organization embarked on an ambitious agenda: collecting important historical papers and relics, supporting Henry Bushnell's work on the history of Granville, and hold-

ing a series of public meetings at which members or invited speakers presented "carefully prepared papers" on relevant historical topics. <sup>12</sup> For example, the session on January 27, 1887, featured "a paper by the Hon. M. M. Munson upon some of the more important epochs in the early history of Granville." <sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, this promising beginning soon foundered.

### Decline, Rebirth, Decline

Although there is no reason to question the broad-based enthusiasm for things historical generated by the youthful Historical Society, developments would soon reinforce the critical roles of Bryant and Shepardson in its initial successes. The Society was cruelly deprived of Bryant's energy, passion, and vision when he tragically succumbed to typhoid fever on August 31, 1886. He was only 37. Frank Shepardson temporarily filled the void, but then he went off to Yale in 1890 and with a leadership vacuum the Society declined and at some

point in the 1890s, according to A.M. Nichol an officer at the time, "was dissolved" and "the contents of the collections by the Society...was (sic) turned over to another 'Body' for keeping...." <sup>14</sup> Nichol did not indicate what this other body was, but other evidence suggests the collections were stored at this time on the Denison campus in the building known as "Old Frame." <sup>15</sup> While fortunately the collections were essentially preserved, the Granville, Ohio, Historical Society sadly had become moribund. It would, in fact, take preparations for Granville's 100th birthday to remind local citizens of the need for an active local historical society.

In contrast to the last minute planning for the 75th Anniversary, preparations for Granville's centennial began several years prior to the September 1905 celebration. As early as 1895 Frank Shepardson in a *Times* article on the jubilees celebrated in Granville, Massachusetts noted the 1855 motion made by Elias Gilman calling for the commemoration of Granville, Ohio's 100th birthday. In September 1902 Shepardson "gave an interesting talk on the proposed Granville

Centennial" to receptive students at the high school. 16 In a letter to the *Times* six months later Henry Bushnell contributed to the conversation about the coming cen tennial, emphasizing that beyond generating interes "there should be some action through a responsible organization soon."17 The women of the community, sparked by the members of the Traveler's Club, responded to his challenge by forming the Women's Centennial Association of Granville with Kate Shepard Hines, president; Helen Munro, secretary; Amelia Bancroft, treasurer; and Dora Howland Case, corresponding secretary. Although women remained the driving force, in 1904 the organization became the Granville Centennial Association indicating the inclusion of men. One of the consequences of the Association's deliberations was the decision to reestablish the Granville Historical Society. Curiously, rather than reviving the dormant Granville, Ohio, Historical Society, the planners determined to charter a new organization, the Granville Historical Society. The charter granted on Aug. 2, 1905, defined purposes for the Society very similar to those of its predecessor, <sup>18</sup>

### MORNING SESSION.

### MUSIC.

.

PALGRIM OVERTURE—Composed by Prof G. H. H. C. Lowery, M. A., of Granville Female College, especially for this Anniversary, and respectfully dedicated to the Pioneers and Citizens of Granville Synapsis: Leaving the Old Home; The Journey; The Thunderstorm; The Arrival in the New Land; Retrospect; Praise

LEXIX. By United Choirs.

Scripture Reading, REV. W C P RHOADES

PRAYER,

REV TIMOTHY HOWE, Pataskala MUSIC.

D.SMARK. - Madan

Address of Welcome.

REV. D. B. HERVEY, Chairman of the Day.

Settlements in Granville Township before the arrival of "The Colony,"

Hox. ISAAC SMUCKER, Newark.

History of "The Granville Colony," REV. HENRY BUSHNELL.

Addre s,
REC ALFRED OWEN, D.D.

### AFFERMOON SESSION.

---- 1:30 P. M.---

PRAYER,
REV C FRAMPION.

MUSIC.

THANKSGIVING CHORAL ... On to God be all "The Praise," Lowery.

History of Pioneer Families,

History of Business Men of Granville, WM, WHITNEY

MUSIC

SILVER STREET, O. fare ye well, my frien ds

History of Churches, Schools, and Professional Interests, E SINNET, M. D.

M. USIC.

St. Tuones-Memorial Hymn, + + + - Protector of our Sires.

History of Military Affairs of the Colonists and their Descendants.

How, M. M. MUNSON

Acto Land Syng. . . . . Chris and Congregation.

Relics of Pioneers and pertraits of old citizens will be on exhibition in the Lecture Room and Parlors of the Church.

There will be a Social Reunion in the evening.

PROGRAM, 1880 — The program for the 75th anniversary celebration of the founding of Granville.



1905 GRANVILLE CENTENNIAL PARADE — The Centennial parade approaches Main Street on Broadway. Centennial fervor gave a boost to Historical Society membership.

The significant role played by women in Granville's centennial was also reflected in the leader hip of the reconstituted Society: Helen Rose served as president. Dora Howland Case was one of four vice-presidents (the others being the Rev. James Eason, the Rev. Augustine Carmon, and Professor Arthur Judson), Eliza Smart Shepards on became both corresponding secretary and treasurer and Helen Munroe was recording secretary. They led an elaborately structured organization that featured numerous standing committees and suggested an ambitious agenda for the new Society. In addition to local members, who paid \$2.00 on joining and yearly dues of \$1.00, the Society sought corresponding and honorary members. Frank Shepards on was among those awarded honorary mem-

bership. His letter of acknowledgment delicately reminded the founders of the new Society of their predecessors:

I take pleasure in accepting the election to honorary membership in the Granville Historical Society, notice of which has just reached me. As a member of the former Granville Historical Society and its president, I have always taken great interest in the matters for which your organization is created. I hope you will be able to collect much historical material and that eventually your labors well may lend to the securing of a satisfactory building in Granville to house those relics of by gone days." 19



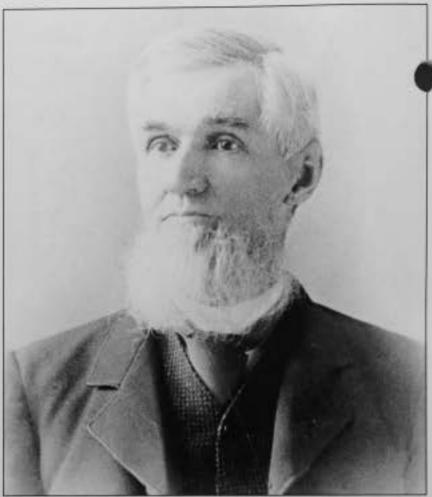
F.W. Shepardson, known as Frank, was a cofounder of the Granville Historical Society.

Mr. George Henry Langham of the London Society of East Anglians responded more effusively to the Society's invitation:

Dear Madame,

On my return to London after a much needed vacation I find your charming letter kindly informing me of the great honour accorded me by the Granville Historical Society by electing me an Honorary Member. I beg you will accept my most grateful acknowledgment for your kind letter, and that you will be so good at your earliest convenience to convey my most grateful thanks to the Granville Historical Society for the very great honour which they have conferred upon me, which I shall ever prize.<sup>20</sup>

The ambitions of the new organization symbolized by the elaborate organizational structure and the international membership reflected the spirit infusing Granville's 100th birthday celebration. The *Times* waxed poetic in its depiction of the village at its birth-



Henry Bushnell, who wrote the first complete history of Granville, published in 1889. (Photo Courtesy Lewis and Clark College Special Collections, Portland, Oregon)

day moment, "Decked like a Princess, radiant with the brilliancy, beauty and grace of a fairyland court, overflowing with the truly loyal cordiality of warm hospitable American hearts, Granville has thrown open her gates to strangers and friends alike, and all week the old town has been crowded with those who are come together to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of her birth."<sup>21</sup>

Running from September 3-10, 1905, the festivities featured a particular theme for each day. Both Sundays were devoted to Granville's religious heritage, church services, and commemorations. Following a rather quiet Labor Day on Monday, Tuesday, "Patriotic Day," marked the visit of Ohio's Lt. Governor Warren G. Harding, who spoke on "The Ideal Patriot" and, according to the *Granville Times*, held the audience "spellbound." Wednesday was Education Day with Frank Shephardson playing a leading role and Denison's beloved former president, Dr. E. Benjamin Andrews, Chancellor of the University of Nebrask delivering the keynote address. Granville Day, Thursday, commemorated Granville's history with a

The Opera House, which stood at the corner of South Main and East Broadway, where Opera House Park is situated today, was Centennial headquarters in 1905.



parade and dedication of the Pioneer Rock on Sugar Loaf. The inscription read, "In grateful remembrance of the members of the Licking Land Company who came from Granville, Massachusetts, and founded this town in the wilderness November 17, 1805. They built better than they knew. To God be the glory forever and ever. Amen." Friday was Welsh and Homecoming Day, while Saturday honored Granville's fraternal organizations: the Masons, Odd Fellows, and the Knights of Pythias. In addition to the daily events the *Times* noted another valued aspect of the birthday:

The Committee on Historical Collection...have

gathered together an array of priceless heirlooms that would dazzle the eyes of the relic hunter. Room has been made in the Linden Flats building for these collections, where they are arranged in appropriate environment and we imagine ourselves in the very abode of the Pilgrim mothers. On every hand various articles that were in common use one hundred years ago...and which have been handed down from one generation to another greet the eye of the visitor....<sup>22</sup>

Some of these artifacts had been collected at the 75th

anniversary; others would now come into the hands of the rejuvenated Historical Society.

In assessing the centennial the Granville Times was unstinting in its praise, "The hundredth birthday of the quiet little college town among the hills has been royally celebrated. As was eminently fitting among this progeny of Puritan ancestry, Sabbath observances were the two golden links binding this happy week to the chain of the past and of the future."23 The paper then thanked those most responsible for the week's success. Frank Shepardson was first, praised for "preliminary work ... valuable suggestions, untiring efforts, and brilliant addresses during the past week...." The women who had done so much to plan and implement the celebration — Mrs. E. S. Shepardson, Mrs. Burton Case, Mrs. Kate Shepard Hines and Mrs. Belle Parsons — were also given "great credit." 24 The new Granville Historical Society could take pleasure in the numerous ways the history of the village had been highlighted in the course of the week and delight in the \$520 which went into its coffers when the accounts of the centennial were settled.

Given such an auspicious debut, it is shocking to find in the *Granville Times* just a few years later the following accusatory letter by Annette Persis Ward:

What has become of the Granville Historical Society which was organized under such favorable auspices at the time of the Centennial celebration?

I am told that it is still in existence, that it holds certain funds in its possession, that its treasures are stored away. What are these funds? Where and what are the possessions? Who are the officers of the Society? How frequently and where are the meetings held? Why do the members not receive notices of these meetings and of their annual dues?

Why does Granville not appreciate its historic treasures and take from the busy Present enough time to case properly for the treasures of the Past, the loss of which would be irreparable?<sup>25</sup>

(To be continued in the next issue of the Historical Times.)

### **FOOTNOTES**

- <sup>1</sup> Granville Times (hereafter GT) 12/15/1885, p.4.
- <sup>2</sup> For example, "the Cincinnati Historical Society officially formed in 1963. Earlier, a Cincinnati



A logo for the 1905 Centennial celebration.

Historical Society, dating from 1844, existed, but it eventually merged with and became known as the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio." (from, www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=2110&nm=Cincinnati-Historical-Society). The community of Worthington, founded in 1803 and a model for the founding of Granville two years later, did not have historical society until 1955. The Western Reserve Historical Society, however, was founded in 1867.

- <sup>3</sup> William Utter, Granville: *The Story of an Ohio Village* (Granville, Ohio: Granville Historical Society & Denison University Press, 1956), pp. 227, 33.
- <sup>4</sup> Granville Historical Society (hereafter GHS) Archives, Box 83-037-Anniversaries 75th-100th, File: Anniversaries 75th.
- <sup>5</sup> GHS Archives, Box 83-037-Anniversaries 75th-100th, File: Anniversaries 75th [1880], Notebook (unlabelled).
- <sup>6</sup> Granville: Massachuseus to Ohio: A Story of Migration and Settlement (Granville, Ohio: Granville Sentinel Publishing Co., 1989), p. 137. See also, Utter, pp. 264-65.
- <sup>7</sup> Utter, p. 268, also 270-71. *GT*, 9/24/1886, p. 8, Bryant's Obituary by F.W. Shepardson.
  - 8 Utter, p. 271.
- <sup>9</sup> Jacob Little, pastor of the Granville Congregational Church, wrote his history as a series of articles appearing between April 1845 and July 1846 in *The Ohio Observer*, printed in Hudson, Ohio. Bryant made hand-written copy in the 1880s. When the Historical

# Lance Clarke held many roles on board

This issue of the *Historical Times* is dedicated to Lance Clarke, who passed away in April. We miss him sorely. He was president of the Granville Historical Society from 2004 to 2006, a job he described as trying to hold onto a team of wild horses. In addition, he also served the board at various times as membership chair, buildings and grounds chair, publisher, educator and docent.

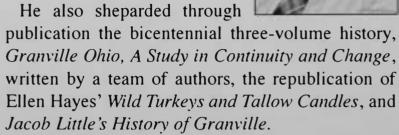
Since he came onto the board in 1998, he was



Lance was the Granville about early Gran-Historical Society's expert ville. Lance got the on guns, instructing docents archives room built on its collection. when we needed

instrumental in moving many of our projects forward including the creation and presentation of the first educational trunk for third-graders about early Granville. Lance got the archives room built when we needed

the space, kept the building systems up to date, including overseeing the major work done on the Old Academy building over the last few years and enjoyed teaching visiting children about the sausage stuffer and the wringer washing machine on exhibit.



We are proud of the things we have done in the last few years and Lance was deeply involved in all of them. Thank you Lance, for your many contributions.

The Granville Historical Society Board of Managers

Society made the decision to publish this history, Laura Evans reconstructed the narrative from the clippings and microfilm of *The Ohio Observer*, producing a digitized copy of Little's history. Bryant's copy provided a useful check in this process. See Theresa Overholser and Anthony J. Lisska, eds., *Jacob Little's History of Granville* (Granville, Ohio: The Granville Historical Society, 2009), p. v.

<sup>10</sup> GT, 12/15/1885, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Utter, 272.

<sup>13</sup> GT, 12/17/1886, p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> GT, 12/8/1910, p. 1, from a letter by Mr. Nichol. Mr. Nichol does not indicate what this other body was. GT, 9/30/1955, p. 1; Special Sesquicentennial Edition, said the first Society "folded up and its possessions were stored." The Granville Times had ceased publication in November 1941 and except for this special edition 14 years later would never again appear in print.

<sup>15</sup> GHS Archives, Box 83-036 (Minutes 1907-2003),

File: Minutes 1907-1989 (incomplete), Nov. 12, 1927. In these minutes Kate Shepard Hines, concerned that information was being lost, provided a summary of where the collection had been stored at various points.

<sup>16</sup> *GT*, 10/3/1895, p. 1; *GT*, 9/25/1902, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> *GT*, 3/5/1903, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> Both charters are famed and hang in the back hall-way of the museum.

<sup>19</sup> GHS Archives, Box 83-037-Anniversaries 75th-100th, File: Anniversaries of Granville-100th [1905], Letter from Francis Shepardson to Eliza Smart Shepardson, Sept 20, 1905.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter of Mr. Langham to Mrs. E. S. Shepardson, Nov. 24, 1905.

<sup>21</sup> *GT*, 9/7/1905, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> GT, 9/7/1905, p. 8.

<sup>23</sup> GT, 9/14/1905, p. 1

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>25</sup> GT, 11/10/1910, p. 1. Ms. Ward was a 1906 member of the Society and the Librarian of the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland.



## Museum hosts Welsh exhibit

The Granville Historical Society Museum hosted an exhibition of Welsh History informational panels (pictured) developed by the Welsh Assembly Government office in New York City.

The panels originally were displayed in 2009 on the mall in Washington, D.C., during the Smithsonian's Folk Life Festival when Wales was the featured country. The panels included a brief history of Wales, Welsh immigrants as coal miners, farmers and workers in other American industries, their role in the Civil War, and common Welsh family names.

The panels were also on display in the Bryn Du Mansion over the weekend of June 12-13 during the Granville Art Affair and Wine Festival.



# THE HISTORICAL TIMES

Celebrating its 24th year of publication by The Granville Historical Society

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Museums operated by the Granville Historical Society:

### **Granville Museum**

115 E. Broadway

Old Academy Building,

corner West Elm Street and East Main Street