



# THE HISTORICAL TIMES

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## Memories of Monomoy



Detailed history of Denison presidents' home told as 160-year-old edifice takes on new role



**ABOVE:** Dark woodwork was painted with lighter colors to help brighten the Monomoy House living room and other spaces following the arrival of Dale and Tina Knobel.

**LEFT:** Monomoy's exterior spaces became more colorful with the addition of peonies and tulips.

**RIGHT:** Dale and Tina Knobel are pictured in Monomoy House on the day they moved out, following Dale's retirement as Denison University president.



# Knobels tell their Monomoy Place story in annual meeting program

By **CHARLES A. PETERSON with DALE T. KNOBEL**

To Dale and Tina Knobel, the now former Denison University presidents' home—Monomoy Place—was many things. It was official residence, Denison's living room, art gallery, and community resource. But to Dale and Tina, it was also just plain "home" and when they thought about its history and Victorian architecture, it was, as Tina called it, "a very grand lady."

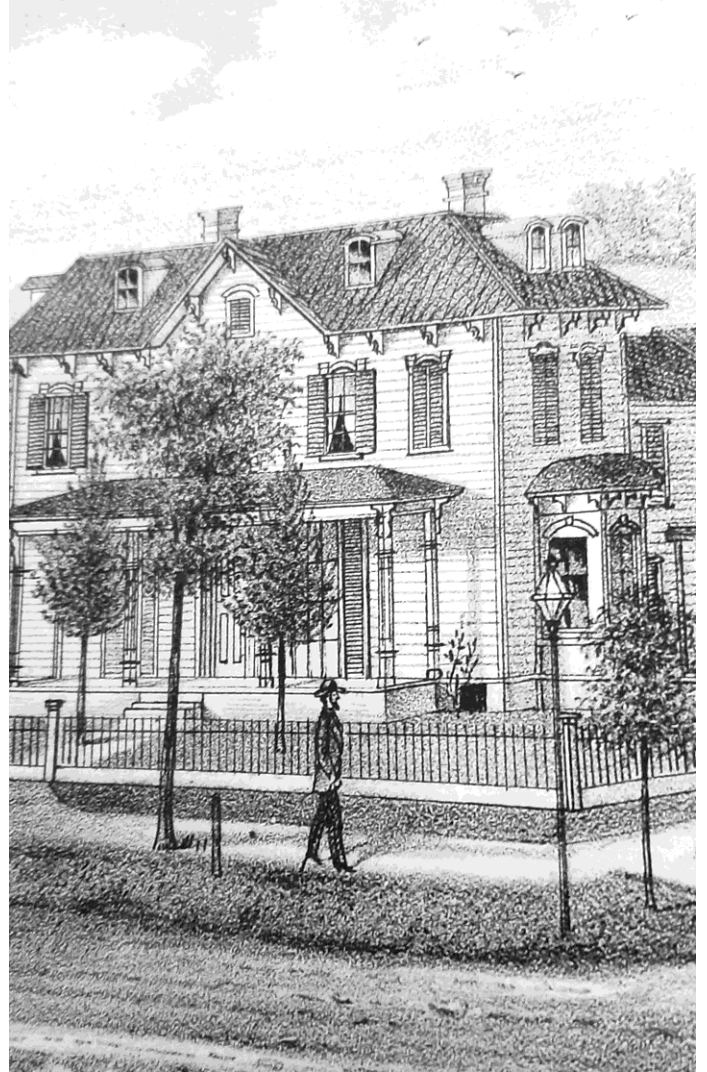
The Knobels visited Granville in November as guest speakers for the Granville Historical Society's Annual Banquet and Meeting, reminiscing after five years' absence about the historic structure at West Broadway and North Mulberry Street. They entitled their program "Loving a Victorian Lady: Fifteen Years of Living and Restoring at Historic Monomoy Place," and dubbed it "a walk down memory lane."

"What's been fun about preparing this talk is discovering how much you forget in a few years—and just how much you remember," Tina Knobel shared. "In the fast-paced life that you lead as a college presidential couple, you don't always have the opportunity to reflect on and enjoy daily moments. Things go by so quickly."

## EARLY HISTORY

Dale Knobel reminded the audience that Monomoy served for forty years as the Denison presidents' home, completing this service late last year when Adam and Anne Weinberg moved diagonally across the street to a new official residence. Monomoy Place will take a new role as a reception venue for the adjacent Michael D. Eisner Center for the Performing Arts and it will remain a gathering place for alumni, students, faculty, family and friends of the college.

"Monomoy Place had a lot of lives by the time we arrived," Dale added, "serving as the home of a physician and a coal baron and their families, as a residence hall for students of both sexes, as a fraternity house, and as the residence of three preceding presidential households."



**An image of Monomoy Place from the 1875 Licking County Atlas shows it had an iron fence that was eventually removed, then replaced.**

Monomoy Place got its name during the 1890s when its owners, Granville tycoon John Sutphin Jones and his wife Sarah Follett, named it for their favorite vacation spot, Monomoy Point on the elbow of Cape Cod, chiseling the name into stonework by the front door. "Sarah Follett was particularly fond of the house," Dale said. "It was built in the 1860s by her father, Dr. Alfred Follett, who replaced a house from earlier in the century to capitalize on the prime location. Once he and Sarah took over the home from her widowed mother, J.S. Jones





**ABOVE: Monomoy is pictured between 1915 and 1925 with a wrap-around front porch, later removed. LOWER LEFT: A Denison student sits on Monomoy's porch depicting the structure's new role: that of a dormitory for female students.**

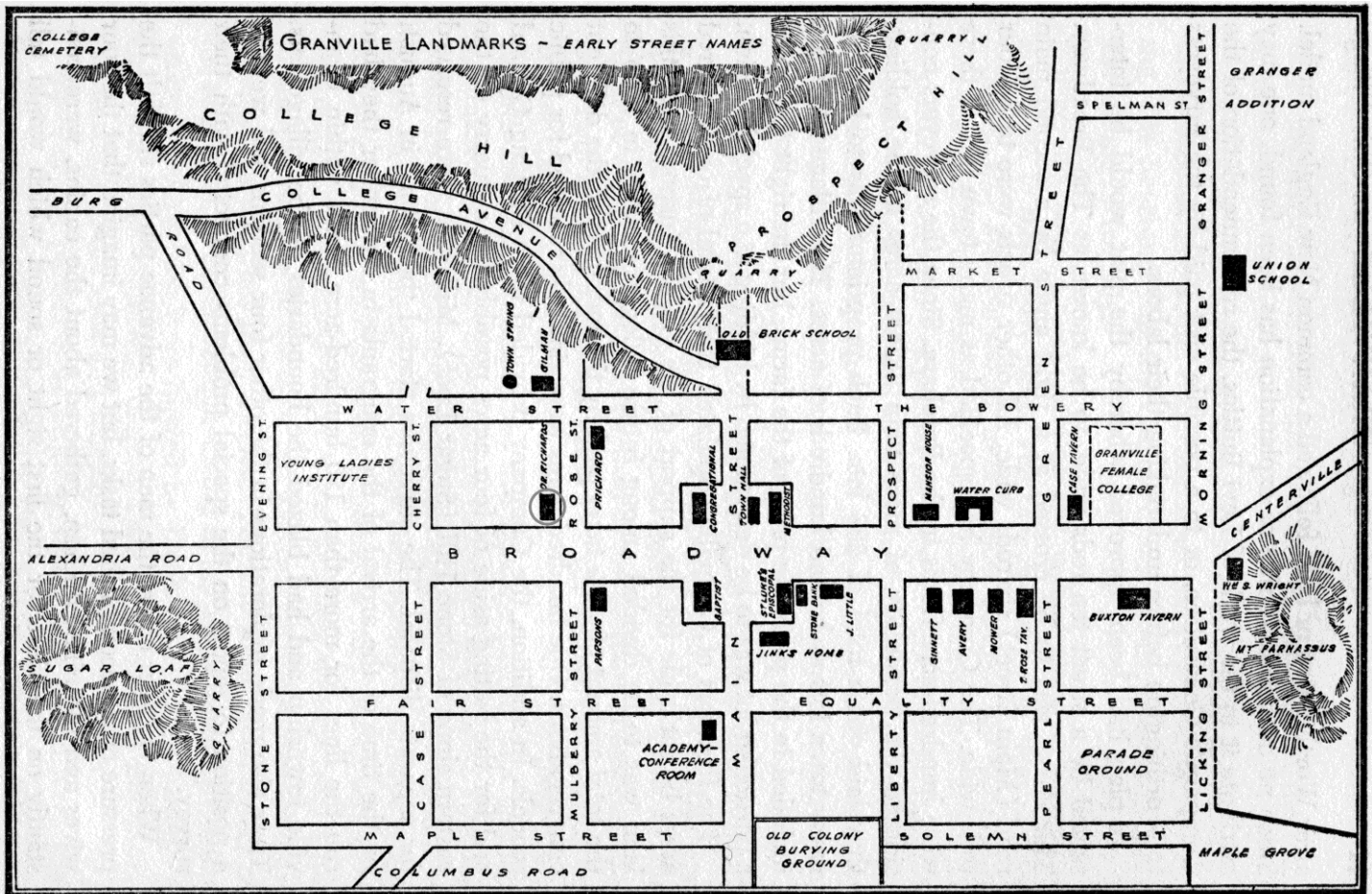
refashioned the house in high Victorian style to suit his growing ambitions, adding a glass solarium, a third story ballroom, and a turreted wrap-around porch.”

While Monomoy Place served as the Jones's “town house,” Dale reported, the increasingly wealthy Granville entrepreneur was converting a home east of town, McCune Villa, into a country estate that Jones renamed Bryn Du. Moving there upon its completion shortly after the turn of the century, J.S. Jones turned over Monomoy Place to his two aging sisters. After their death and Jones' own passing in 1927, the house stood empty until Denison acquired the property in 1935.

### **DENISON TAKES OVER**

In Denison's hands, Monomoy Place initially became a residence hall for 28 women and a watchful house mother who lived on the first floor in Dr. Follett's original examination rooms. The house served this purpose until 1960 except for three years during World War II when it was used to house naval and marine corps cadets in Denison's V-12 program. After new residence halls up the hill made Monomoy Place unnecessary as a women's dorm, it became a fraternity house between 1961





A "Granville Landmarks" map from William T. Utter's "Granville - The Story of an Ohio Village," with the village's early street names, shows that the Monomoy property at the northwest corner of West Broadway and Mulberry Street didn't have to change its address when street names were changed to those we know of today.

and 1964.

During this time, "it took a beating," Dale said, sharing the recollections of fraternity men who described sliding down the bannisters and other rough treatment. Subsequently, it became a home for independent non-fraternity men who styled themselves the "Moy Boys." Finally, it reverted to service as a women's residence, this time as a "co-op" where the young women cooked for themselves. "By the mid-1970s, it was pretty much a wreck," Dale observed, referring to photographs of the deteriorated structure.

### PRESIDENT GOOD INTERVENES

But in the late 1970s, new Denison president Robert C. Good and his wife Nancy, finding the modern presidents' home on Chapin Place unsuitable for public gatherings, decided to restore Monomoy Place as the presidential residence, completing the initial restoration work in the early '80s. Sadly, Dr. Good was diagnosed with cancer in

1984 and resigned before the couple could fully enjoy the renewed Monomoy Place. They were succeeded by Andrew G. De Rocco, a bachelor who left little imprint on the house, and then by Dr. Michele Myers and her husband Gale, who lived in the home from 1989 to 1998. The Knobels arrived in July of 1998 and remained for fifteen years.

### SIGNS OF DISTRESS

When Dale and Tina arrived, the age and wear on the house were apparent. "We were surprised how much work she (Tina always refers to Monomoy Place as a "lady") needed," Tina said. They resolved as much as budget would allow to restore the home true to its high-style Victorian past.

First things first, Tina and Dale addressed the front door on Broadway. "It had suffered over the years," Tina shared. Original etched glass panes had been broken out and replaced here and there with common window glass. The Franklin Glass Company of Columbus made tracings of the

remaining etched glass to reproduce the missing panes in a cost-effective frosted glass. “They were incredible artists to watch, Tina mentioned. “They were perfectionists and did an amazing job.” Their work, she said, “provided a very welcome, elegant entrance to the home.”

Wood floors needed repair—some had holes clear through to the basement. Hinges on the pocket doors and original windows that had turned black were polished clean. “They came out just beautifully. Some were silver and some were brass,” Tina said. In the southwest front parlor, the fireplace back of yellow ceramic tile had turned black. When cleaned, a bas relief of an elegant woman was revealed in the tile. According to Tina, “living at Monomoy Place was like being a detective. We were always finding exciting details, even when we weren’t looking for them.”

Tina set a deadline for initial restoration work of October 23, 1998, the date of Dale’s formal inauguration as Denison’s nineteenth president, when the house would be full of visitors. Tina worked from 9 to 3 almost every day with a decorator and workers. “We had a lot of decisions to make, a lot of choices to make quickly,” she shared.

### LET THERE BE LIGHT

“I remember my first impression of the house. It was so oppressive. It seemed like a very dark home,” Tina remembered. “I thought, this house needs light.” Much of the downstairs was paneled or trimmed in very dark wood. “We wanted the home to feel much lighter, and so we made the decision to paint some of the woodwork off-white and retain some of the dark oak. We tried to strike a balance between preservation and change.” To their pleasure, the painting exposed numerous details in the wood, like egg and dart designs in the crown moldings and wainscoting. The lighter color “brought out detail that you couldn’t see beneath the dark stain,” Dale said. This was particularly the case with the wooden mantle surrounding one of the fireplaces. “It turned out that there were carved faces—faces of a woman with different expressions — all away around the mantle that you couldn’t really see before. As soon as the lighter paint was applied, details like this sprung out.”

Tina paid special attention to the dining room,



**Artisans were able to restore the glass around Monomoy’s front door with one piece that survived a series of breakages of the other sections.**

which would be used constantly for large university events. She found chinoiserie wallpaper characteristic of the Victorian period in which the home was built. “The dining room is truly elegant and a location for large gatherings,” Tina said. “I always tried to choose a room color scheme based upon some university-owned artifact, a Chinese teapot or a Burmese table.”

In the kitchen, new cabinets were installed, along with a large stove, countertops, and commercial appliances that would allow the catering staff — along with the Knobels — to produce meals for two or two hundred. Even the back door had to be reconfigured since it was too narrow to admit trays of food for large events.

Dale said the layout of the second floor had changed repeatedly over the years and took on a new configuration once again after the Knobels arrived. “The upstairs in theory could be eight separate bedrooms,” he said. “On the west side of the house we arranged a series of bedrooms into a master suite with a sitting room, a bedroom, a



**Monomoy's kitchen was updated to allow preparation of food for important events held in and outside the president's home.**

bathroom, and a former servant's room that became a room-sized walk-in closet. This was a gift in an older home that had very few original closets." On the east side, a guest suite was established, including a sitting room, a bedroom, and a bath. "Two other guest bedrooms, each with their own bath, were created," Dale noted. "In the back of the second floor were a private office and a laundry room."

Both Tina and Dale observed that one of the best things about Monomoy Place was the grounds, where so many university functions took place. "And that was Tina's preserve," Dale admitted. Early on, the Knobels installed a replica of the black iron fence that had once surrounded the property. "We believe that it lasted until the First World War when it was donated as scrap for the war effort," Tina noted. Tina continued that the yard had a basic foundation of trees and perennials but, she said, "I felt like I was looking at a half-empty canvas." Peonies and tulips that were so brilliant that they

sometime stopped traffic on Broadway were added and daffodils filled the side garden on Mulberry. Plantings and renovations were made in such a way as to enhance the university's ability to entertain large groups outdoors in both spring and fall, including the configuration of a patio to hold a tent that allowed visitors to spill out of the dining room in all but the worst weather.

### **NEW LOOK FOR THE EXTERIOR**

Ten years after the Knobels arrived, Denison's Physical Plant department determined that Monomoy Place needed exterior repainting. "Dale and I spent a year researching Victorian home colors," Tina said. "We tried out color samples to see what looked best at various times of day and under different weather conditions." The couple was out of town when the painting began and they returned unannounced to check on the progress. "As we drove by the front of the house, we were



thrilled,” Tina recalled. “The color just popped.” Their choice seemed vindicated when the painters scraped to the bottom layer of paint on the home and discovered an original color very much like what Dale and Tina had selected.

Dale speculated that the exterior had probably had more color to it until the time that Denison acquired the house — just when the university was building red brick Georgian-style structures on campus. To conform to the new look, the house was painted white and dark green shutters were added. The white or light gray that stayed on the house for the next seventy years “was an attempt to bring the house into a period that was never really its own,” Dale noted.

### **AN ART GALLERY**

Surprisingly, Monomoy Place during the Knobels’ time also became an art gallery. “Denison has some wonderful pieces of art but has no place to display them on a permanent basis,” Dale observed. “But we figured the walls of Monomoy Place would be great surfaces to hang art where lots of people could see it.” As more materials were brought out of storage, a Denison art student was hired to come into the home to research the artworks and determine where each came from. Her product was a brochure that could guide visitors around the house. “It was an amazing experience for her,” Tina said. “She took the entire summer and immersed herself in the art.”

Among Dale’s favorite paintings was one by the Dutch-born painter to the English court of James II, Sir Peter Lely. The large painting, hung in the dining room, was a portrait of one of the ladies of the court and part of a collection that hangs in some of world’s leading museums. “They are called ‘The Windsor Beauties’ and one of them hung in Monomoy Place,” Dale shared. Tina’s favorite was a six foot tall oil of a peasant girl by mid-nineteenth century French realist painter Jules Breton. Before it could be installed in the main hall at the foot of the stairs it had to return from a museum in France, which had borrowed it for an exhibition.

With the continuing restoration of Monomoy Place came new uses for Denison faculty, staff, and students as well as for the Granville community. “We wanted to open the home for all kinds of events,” Tina said. “It’s why we worked so hard on the renovations.”



**Monomoy took on the secondary role of art gallery with paintings such as this one that were part of Denison’s art collection.**

“Yes, we did a lot of entertaining,” Dale agreed. There were dinners for new faculty and staff, alumni reunion events, university board meetings, and receptions for new students, who began with a tour of the home before gathering for a picnic in the backyard. “We did all kinds of special dinners—for students who had the same roommates for all four years, for twins and triplets, for students from our home town of Hudson, for members of athletic teams, for students who excelled academically, and for student leaders.” Dale noted that there were many special guests who dined with students and faculty at the Monomoy table—Robert Kennedy, Jr. , Sen. Sam Nunn, Mark Shields, Yo-Yo Ma, Emmanuel Ax, Joshua Bell, Renee Fleming, Hal Holbrook, and many others.

### **SPECIAL GUESTS**

Among the memorable guests was former First Lady Rosalynn Carter, whose presence required two weeks’ worth of planning and vetting by the Secret Service. “The Secret Service came to campus to



**Monomoy was a stop on Granville's Christmas Candlelight Walking Tour every other year.**

examine the area around the house," Tina said. "Our whole catering staff had to be checked. They also told us we had to have a room for Mrs. Carter with at least two exits in case of an emergency. We had about six security men in the house during the dinner that evening."

"She was fascinating," Tina shared. "What an amazing woman — as gracious and lovely as she appears on television."

The Granville Christmas Candlelight Walking Tour was a major community event for Monomoy Place, which was decorated and opened every other year to the public. Planning started in July. "It took a lot of work," Tina admitted. Denison students — musicians, sorority women, student leaders—assisted throughout the house. They were needed, since as many as two thousand people came through in about three hours. Most years, seven Christmas trees were set up and decorated throughout the house, including a "Texas tree" in Dale's study with decorations acquired during the Knobels' preceding twenty-one years in the Lone Star State. "That became a tradition; it was always the first tree to go up," Tina said. A "Nature Tree"

was also featured outdoors, hung with pinecone bird feeders often made with the help of local pre-school children. A holiday tea, initially for Denison faculty and staff women, typically took place at Monomoy just before the walking tour.

Dale noted that the third-floor ballroom, which had been used by Dr. and Mrs. Good to host holiday gatherings, was no longer available to the public because the fire marshal was concerned that it was served by only one set of stairs. But, he quipped, it made great hardwood-floored storage and "contained a century's worth of odds and ends," including an ancient Denison bobsled (which the Knobels repaired and used as a holiday decoration), spooky ceramic busts of historical figures, a large carved wooden Burmese room screen, and a candle wick trimmer that had belonged to Denison's first president, John Pratt.

**HOME SWEET HOME**

Amid its many functions, Monomoy was endearing to the Knobels in the most important of ways.

"We loved this home as if she were our own,"





**Among the additions to the front and side yards at Monomoy were a new iron fence resembling one that is believed to have been taken down for scrap metal during World War II. Peonies, tulips and daffodils were among the colorful flowers added.**

Tina said. “We were pleased when family could come to visit Monomoy Place and enjoy events on campus.”

“And Tina and I realized that neither of us had ever lived in a house longer than we lived in Monomoy Place. So in fifteen years, you can make a lot of community friends — and in that same time a lot of things happen in your life,” Dale added. The couple marked their thirtieth and fortieth wedding anniversaries at Monomoy, held wedding and baby showers for their daughter, and were comforted by friends there when the young mother succumbed to breast cancer. On the day they moved out, the Knobels had a Denison photographer take pictures of the couple and the beloved house. “I thought we’ve just got to have one final portrait of this incredible home,” Tina shared.

Both had philosophical thoughts to share about

their time in Monomoy Place. Dale quoted Winston Churchill: “We shape our buildings and thereafter they come to shape us. Our experience at Monomoy Place is exactly that,” said Dale. “Even as we made some modest changes to the house, it influenced us. I think we were especially affected by a sense of continuity, of history, and of our connectedness to the community and to generations of Denisonians.”

And Tina, quoting Frances Mayes, author of “Under the Tuscan Sun,” and thinking of her own experience with the Monomoy grounds, shared, “A garden enfolds us into the seasons, reminding us always that we are in the cycle ourselves. ... As much as you own an old house and garden, it also owns you.”

*Charles A. Peterson is a member of the Granville Historical Society's Publications Committee and retired editor of The Granville Sentinel.*



The space on Monomoy's west side was made into an attractive garden where outdoor events were held during fall and spring seasons.

# Granville's Oldest Photos



This photo begins a series of what the Granville Historical Society Archives has determined are the oldest photos of Granville – taken mainly in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. This photo is documented to have been taken prior to 1857.

**Pictured is the gun shop of Benjamin Loar, prior to 1857. At the time this rare Daguerrotype photo was taken, the shop was located just north of the present Centenary United Methodist Church, off North Main Street. Behind it is the hill on which the Denison University campus is now situated.**

## Investment accounts suffered with markets in 2018

*Editor's Note: The following report on Granville Historical Society's investments, published as part of the 2018 Annual Report in the last issue of The Historical Times, was incomplete, and is published in its entirety here.*

The Granville Historical Society has three separate investment "accounts." In all cases the goal for these accounts is to preserve capital and grow the accounts after withdrawals permitted by the Society's policies.

The accounts are as follows:

- Endowment Fund account: proceeds are used for museum operations.

- Balance as of 1/1/2018 = \$163,233.

- Balance as of 12/31/2018 = \$159,327.

No withdrawals were made during 2018.

- Mahard Trust account: proceeds are used only for the maintenance, operation and utilities for the Old Academy Building (located at the southwest corner of North Main and West Elm streets).

- Balance as of 1/1/2018 = \$126,760.

- Balance as of 12/31/2018 = \$118,628.

A permitted withdrawal of \$2,500 was made during 2018.

- Knobel Fund account: proceeds are used for Society programming.

- Balance as of 1/1/2018 = \$55,353.

- Balance as of 12/31/2018 = \$48,858.

A permitted withdrawal of \$2,020 was made during 2018.

The investment policies for the Endowment Fund and the Mahard Trust were updated in March of 2018. In addition, the Investment Policy for the Knobel Fund was established at the same time.

The investment vehicles have been chosen by members of the Finance Committee (Tom Martin, Rick Moller, Charles Peterson, Jane Wilken, and J. David Rinehart, chair) with our thanks to the able advice of Mr. Moller.

— J. David Rinehart, Finance Committee Chair

GRANVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
115 E. Broadway  
P.O. Box 129  
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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. 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](http://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](mailto:GranvilleHistorical@gmail.com)  
[www.granvillehistory.org](http://www.granvillehistory.org)

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