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Drawing of the first shelter built on the Granville village square.

Granville Historical Society Archives

A planned community

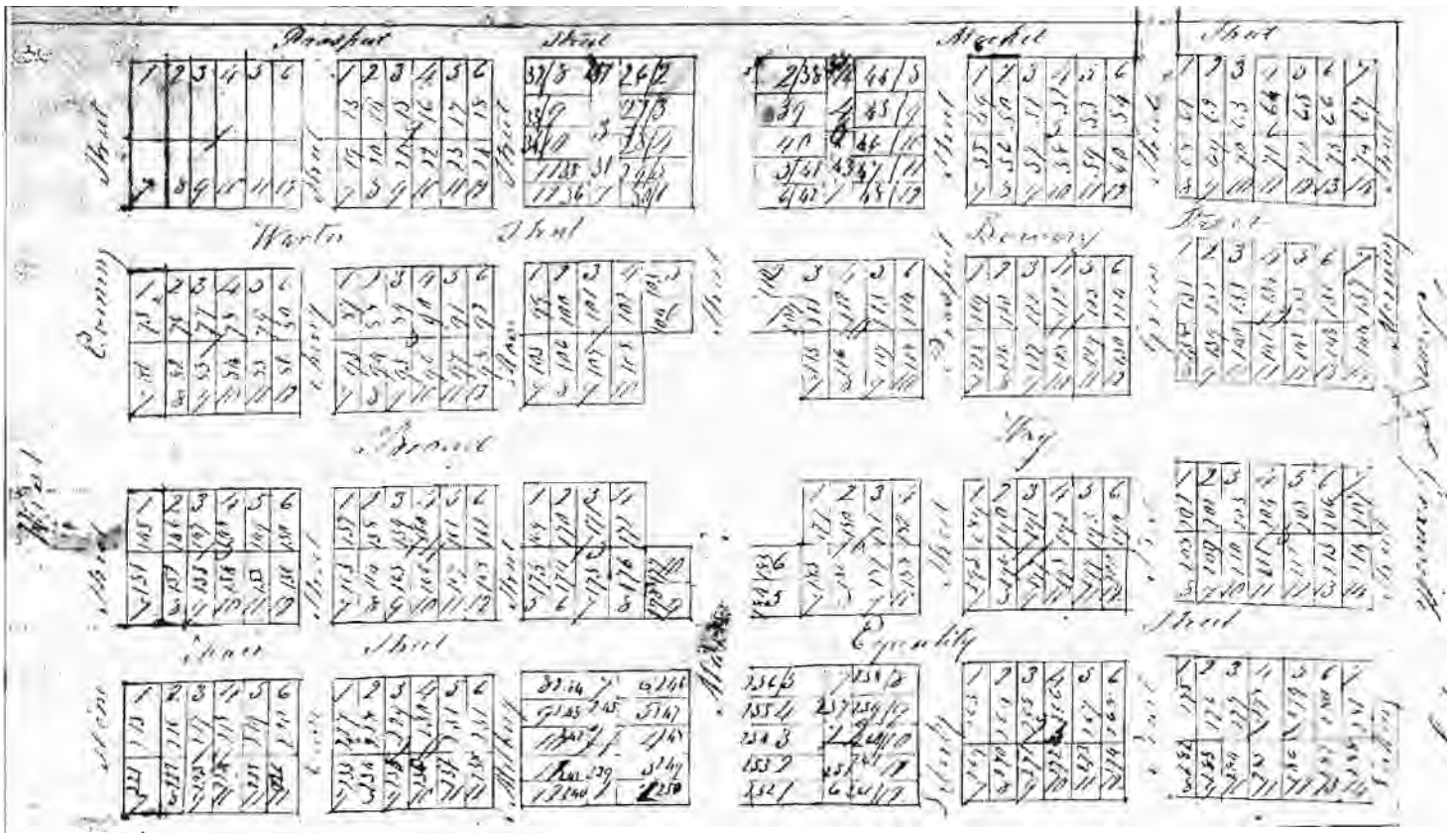
The Licking Company's role is well documented

By THERESA OVERHOLSER

The generation that matured during and after the Revolutionary War in New England found itself growing in population to a point at which the hilly land of the interior was no longer sufficient for a man to support his family by farming. Also, in those post-war years, a spirit of restlessness was engendered by reports of fine land to be had over the Appalachians to the West. Some entrepre-

neurs had established settlements in western New York State, and news of their experiences came back to the seaboard states, perhaps furthering a desire to join in, to have similar new experiences, and to work at creating something new, better and permanent.

The opening of the Northwest Territory at the end of the 1780s, the creation of a Federal system of bounty land warrants for veterans, and the Greenville Treaty of 1795 led hundreds of thousands



The village plat, 1806.

Granville Historical Society Archives

of migrants to what would become the state of Ohio during the next decades.¹ Many of the migrants traveled as members of companies formed for the express purpose of establishing towns, the members purchasing land in common for their own habitation and to sell for profit. Of these, The Licking Company stands out as a well-documented, representative case-study of a group that bought and settled its own new lands for the members' mutual satisfaction and benefit.

Organized in 1804

At the time the Licking Company was organized in 1804, settlement by a group of investors (a company) was a well-established process. As early as the 1750s companies from Connecticut had occupied lands in Pennsylvania. Once the Northwest Territory opened, groups such as The Ohio Company in Marietta and The Connecticut Land Company, which surveyed and settled territory in the Western Reserve in northeast Ohio, entered the region. These first groups purchased very large tracts, totaling hundreds of thousands of acres, for speculation as well as settlement. Successive companies modified the process to fit their particular circumstances and the changing conditions in the West, each group building on the hard-won knowledge of the others. Over the first fifteen years of colonization, the movement of groups became more efficient, with some activities, such as sending out surveyors, mill builders, and crop planters well before the main parties, being considered essential for a successful expedition. By 1802, when 41 men of Granby, Connecticut and the surrounding area formed The Scioto Company and founded Worthington, Ohio, the arduous and sometimes heartbreaking migration process was at least eased by the knowledge won by preceding companies. The Licking Company surely followed

their lead and example.

The 1804 Licking Company was made up of friends and neighbors of The Scioto Company, and in fact four — Russell Job Case, Levi Buttles, and Levi Hayes — were members of both groups.² It is not known why the Scioto group was limited to 41 members, when so many others were obviously anxious to travel west, but religious affiliation could have been a factor in group membership. Scioto's leader, James Kilbourne, established an Episcopal Church congregation in Worthington; in contrast, thirteen members of The Licking Company, nine from Granville, Massachusetts and four from Granby, Connecticut, established a Congregational congregation before they set out from New England. Both Levi Hayes and Job Case were members of the Congregational group, and eventually settled in Granville, Ohio.'

Levi Buttles elected president

Levi Buttles was perhaps the most important dual member of the two companies. Buttles was elected president of The Licking Company even though his family was already in Worthington. In October 1804 Licking Company members selected him to be their agent for any transactions taking place in Ohio. "He had already been on a committee of three to go to that state and "view and purchase such lands as will justify a settlement of the contemplated company."³ He was also designated "to survey what is necessary for the town plot this spring."⁴ Unfortunately Buttles died in the spring of 1805.

It seems likely that the ultimate choice of the specific townships of The Licking Company's settlement was shaped in part by the desire of Scioto Company members to capture the traffic of westward-bound settlers after they passed through Zanesville. There was not yet a National

Road or an Ohio and Erie Canal to bring travelers easily to the center of the state. A direct route connecting Zanesville and Worthington, with Granville on its path, could lure migrants away from Franklinton (Columbus's west side) and increase commercial possibilities in both the Licking and Scioto Companies' lands.⁷⁸

Stanbery and Rathbone: The Land Brokers

The Licking Company used Jonas Stanbery and John Rathbone, land brokers and speculators, to assist in purchasing suitable tracts of land. Stanbery had been involved in brokering the very favorable lands for The Scioto Company and was contacted again for the new settlement. The two men put together a package containing 29,040 acres, covering seven quarter-townships in Fairfield County, some held by other speculators, some still owned by the U.S. government. The Licking Company must have been pleased, for when a discussion was held concerning naming the new town, "Rathbery" was one of the suggestions.⁹

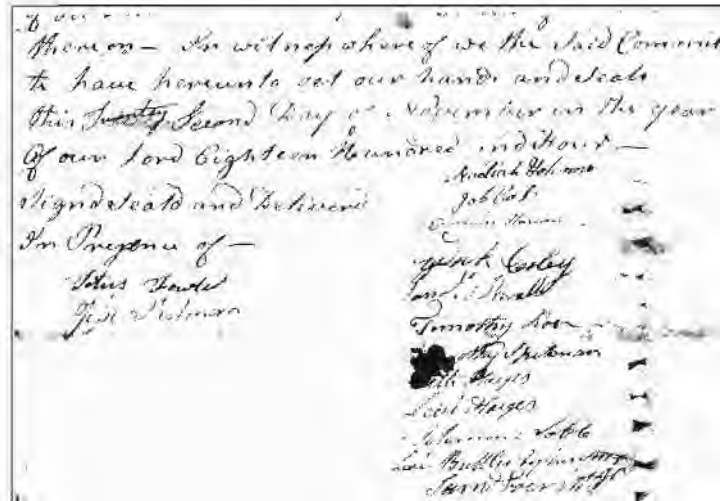
A committee of eleven members acted for the entire Company, signing the legal documents and receiving payments from individual members. These eleven also received the deeds to the Ohio lands in their names jointly. They issued quitclaim deeds for the full 29,040 acres to each Company member as he made payment for the amount of the land he had signed up for.¹⁰ The land would be distributed separately when the group was in Ohio.

Once the Company knew the location of its purchase, advance parties could be sent to make preparations. On December 10, 1804, the Company met and voted "to employ a surveyor and hands to lay out the town plat and a farm lot to every proctor next summer," to "erect a saw and grist mill next summer," and "to employ 18 men to survey said lots erect said mills improve the cleared land and build huts next summer."¹¹ Reverend Jacob Little, writing in 1846, stated that the twelve men and their families who eventually went as advance parties planted corn in whatever clearings they could make. The corn was harvested, and then sold in ten to twenty bushel lots in January 1806.

A Self-Reliant Town

From the beginning, the new Granville settlement was designed to be a self-reliant town, but one having the extras necessary to promote an educated lifestyle. The Company's minutes, constitution, and copy of the partition deed give detailed instructions for the setting off of spaces for a public square, a burying ground, a quarry, and lots to be rented or sold for funds for the support of schools and churches. In February 1805 the Company chose Job Case, Timothy Rose and Sylvanus Mitchell to receive subscriptions and draw up a constitution for a library. The first books were purchased in the East and brought to Ohio by Samuel Everett, Jr., in 1806. A school was set up during the winter of 1805-1806 in the first public building in the settlement, which also served as a church.

Finally, when all the arrangements were made, the migrants set out. Not even the choice of a time to leave New England was left to chance. September was still warm enough to avoid snow and ice, yet late enough that the crops at home as well as in Ohio would have been harvested. There would still be time after arrival to cut wood and build shelters for the winter. Families used to the cold and snow of their old homeland knew how to keep warm and busy until spring in the new Granville. And perhaps just as impor-



Signatures of the eleven men who served as legal representatives of The Licking Company.

Granville Historical Society Archives

tant as all the other reasons, fall marked the end of the season for the many raging fevers and infections that thrived in hot, humid weather in the new state. There would be several months in which the settlers could prepare for the fever season by building up their physical condition and by growing or gathering the best medicinal plants.

Settling on the Public Square

There are several surviving partial accounts of the actual migration to Ohio. The mode of transportation was riding in ox-drawn wagons, riding horseback, walking, or a combination of the three. Groups of families set out at intervals and spent varying amounts of days on the road. In all, at least 26 families and 14 men either unmarried or unaccompanied by families were in the new Granville by December 1805. Their temporary camp was set up on land that had already designated to be the public square, because individual settling lots had not yet been chosen.

On December 9th, again following precedents set in Worthington and in Hamilton County, a vendue, or auction, was held to determine the order of choice of town lots. This was followed by a similar sale of choice of 100-acre farm lots, and then by a distribution of farms in the more distant parts of the purchase. As Utter states, "No record of friction exists and this must be taken as proof of the wisdom of those who directed the Company."¹² In an often-quoted letter, Timothy Rose, Company president, said, "We have come to the division of our land and that peaceably and I believe honestly."

Theresa Overholser is an archivist and member of the Board of Managers of The Granville Historical Society.

ENDNOTES

1 *Along the Ohio Trail: a Short History of Ohio Lands*. Ohio Auditor of State, 2004, p. 33-42.

2 McCormick, Virginia E. and Robert W., *New Englanders on the Ohio Frontier*, Kent, The Kent State University Press, 1998, pp.73-75.

3 Records of the church of Christ formed at Granville, Massachusetts, May 1st 1805 (First Presbyterian Church of Granville, Ohio) p. 3.

15		14		13	
Hardyford	Sturtevant 4000 ac. @ \$1.25 \$5000.	Bennington		Sturtevant 4000 ac. @ \$2.00 \$8000.	Burlington
	2.	M P A A		3.	
Munroe	1000 ac. @ \$2.00 \$2000.	Liberty		McKean	3
Jersey	3.	B C H A		5.	2
	4000 ac. @ \$2.00 \$8000.	Bray 4000 ac. @ \$2.00 \$8000.	Denman 4000 ac. @ \$1.50 \$6000.	Sturtevant & Rathbone 3040 ac. @ \$1.50 \$4560.	
		St. Albans	Hardy 4920 ac. @ \$1.75 \$8610.	Steele 3080 ac. @ \$1.75 \$5390.	

The Licking Company's purchase involved land in four townships.
Granville Historical Society Archives

- 4 Minutes of the Licking Company, p. 5.
- 5 Partition Deed on 1806, The Licking Company copy, p. 3.
- 6 Minutes of The Licking Company, p. 15.
- 7 McCormick, op cit, p.52 and p. 79.
- 8 Bushnell. Henry. *The History of Granville, Licking County Ohio*, Columbus. Hann & Adair, 1889. p. 89.
- 9 Minutes of The Licking Company, p. 13.
- 10 Partition Deed of 1806, p.4 (Article 2 of the Company Constitution), and documents in the Granville Historical Society Archives.

'Planned community' marker will be dedicated June 14

At 1 p.m. on Saturday, June 14 (Flag Day), in Opera House Park, the newest Ohio Historical Society Marker in Licking County will be dedicated.

The marker commemorates the 1805 founding of Granville as a "planned community" by the New England residents of Massachusetts and Connecticut who joined The Licking Company for the purpose of migrating to the new lands being sold in Ohio.

The Granville Historical Society prepared the extensive application to the Ohio Historical Society for the marker and was assisted with the costs involved in the production of the marker by the generous donation of an anonymous benefactor.

GHS President Don Schilling will preside at the unveiling ceremonies. A reception will immediately follow the unveiling in Opera House Park.

Not yet confirmed is the participation of a brass group to provide music, Dick Shiels in costume as Timothy Rose and Tom Martin as Theophilus Rees.

- 11 Minutes of The Licking Company, pp. 8-9.
- 12 Utter, William T., *Granville, the Story of an Ohio Village*, Granville, Granville Historical Society, p. 23

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN: Lectures accompany exhibit

by DON SCHILLING

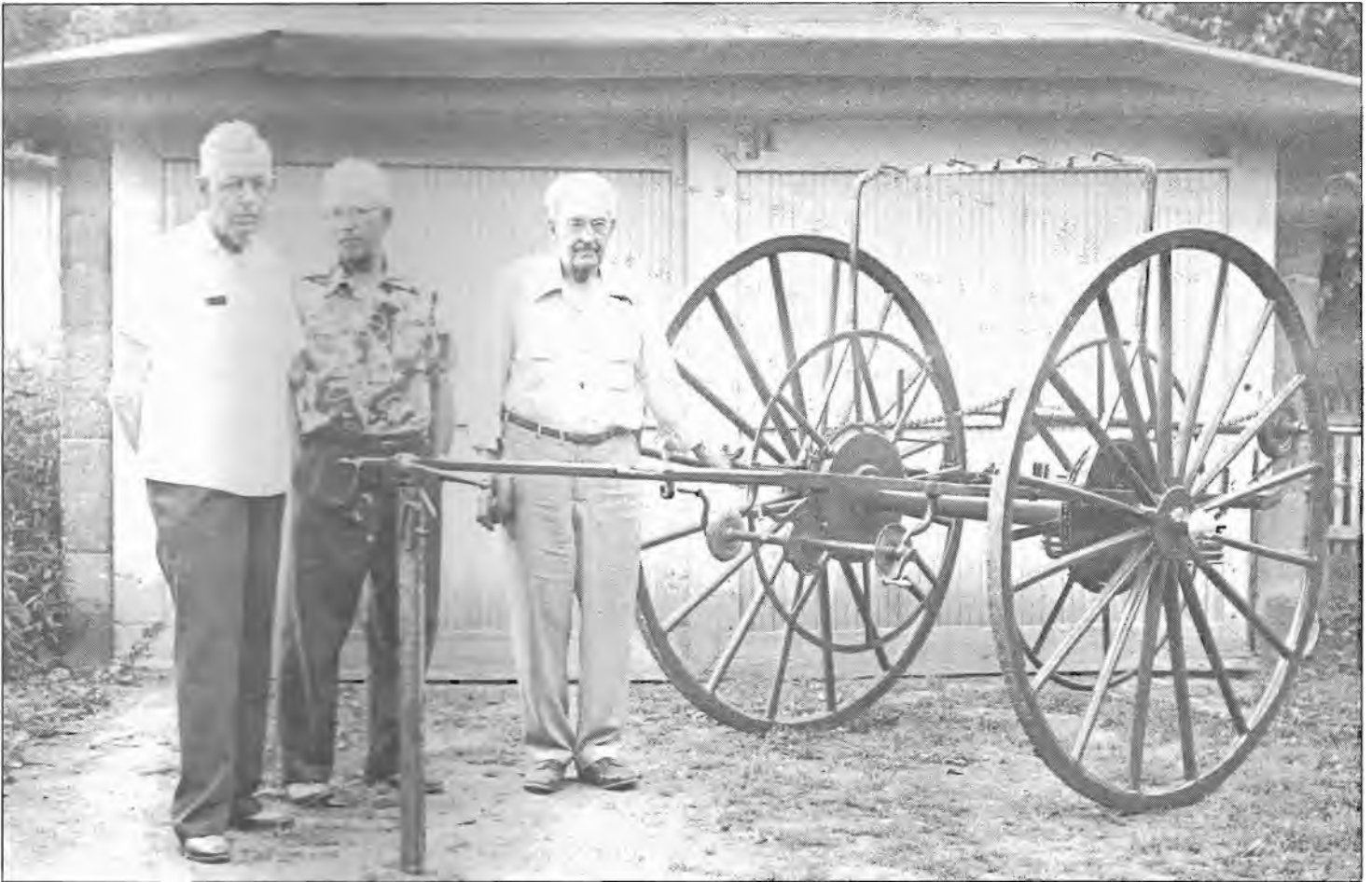
Since my column in the last issue of *The Historical Times*, the exhibit "Art for War's Sake" has opened simultaneously at our museum, the Robbins Hunter Museum, and the Denison Museum. While the thematic structure for the posters is similar at each venue, the posters differ and each features additional artifacts from the world wars, so please make an effort to see the complete exhibit over the next several months. [Note: the Denison Museum's portion of the exhibit closes August 17.]

I also urge you to take advantage of the accompanying lecture series. On Wednesday, May 28th, Major General Richard Chegar (ret.) used the life and career of George Patton, Jr., to illumine his topic, "The Raising and Fighting of American Soldiers: World War I & II." Analyzing Patton's particular gifts and significant contributions to the American effort in the two World wars, Chegar's stimulating and provocative presentation thoroughly engaged an audience of ninety persons. I will present the second

lecture in the series on the topic "Mobilizing for Total War: What Story Do the Posters Tell?" at Robbins Hunter on June 11 at 7:30. Other lectures follow on the second Wednesday of each month through October.

As other material in this issue of *The Historical Times* indicates, we will dedicate a new historical marker in Granville on Saturday, June 14, at 1:30 in Opera House Park. This marker commemorates Granville's founding as a planned community and is made possible by the excellent work of Flo Hoffman and Theresa Overholser and the generosity of an anonymous donor. Please join us for this important event.

Within the next ten days, you should be hearing about important developments regarding our docent program, most particularly the hiring of a new docent coordinator for the Society and the initiation of the Granville Museum Consortium's joint docent education program. The summer is upon us, but the Gram ille Historical Society is not on vacation!



H.E. Lamson, Roc Morrow and I.W. Rohrer are pictured with the hose reel used in the village from the 1880s until 1927.

Granville Historical Society Archives

'A hose carriage and a suitable line of hose'

A History of the Granville Volunteer Fire Department (1885-2005)

by MATT WATERBURY
and PHIL WEISSHAAR

Denison University

During the 2005 bicentennial celebration of Granville, it was especially important to recognize and acknowledge the impact of the town's dedication to its community welfare and to the commonweal. Like several other local organizations, the Granville Volunteer Fire Department was founded by and continues to function through the efforts of caring and civic-minded citizens. Now in its 123rd year, the Granville Volunteer Fire Department remains as tangible evidence of the people of Granville's sense of civic duty and pride in their community.

The Department's Origins and Several Early Fires

Founded in 1885 as a product of a time period that local historian William T. Utter identified as Granville's post-Civil War "decade of progress" (1885-95), the Granville Volunteer Fire Department was officially organized on December 10. Formally named Granville Hose Co. No. 1, the organization was the culmination of approximately fifty years of attempts at fire safety in the town and village. Fires, called the "scourge of nineteenth century Ohio villages,"¹ were a common worry for any mid-century Ohio town, Granville included. This fear of fire led to other civic improvements in the town. Utter suggests that the completion of a new water works project in 1885 was



Volunteer Jacob Bolen in uniform, 1880s.
Granville Historical Society Archives

by the danger of fire and not necessarily a need for water.² As early as 1834, Granville was protected from such a "scourge" by a uniform-wearing fire company that employed the use of an early form of fire engine (complete with a hand-operated pump), along with several leather buckets. However, fifty years later, the engine had fallen into disrepair, the fire company had disbanded, and in real terms, Granville was more susceptible to fire than in 1834. Utter calls this vulnerability an "alarming fact,"³ but the Nineteenth Century Granville historian, Henry Bushnell, gives a justification for this situation, stating such disrepair came from the relative scarcity of fires and the dying away of "the enthusiasm of the drill."⁴

At its inception, the fire department constitution described the object of the organization as "the extinguishment of fires in the city of Granville," a task to be performed with a well-maintained "Hose carriage, with a suitable line of Hose."⁵ The original membership of sixteen men included Francis W. Shepardson, prior to his position as a historian at the University of Chicago, who served as the department's first president. These men were expected to furnish their own firefighting outfit, described by G. Wallace Chessman and Anthony J. Lisska as a "snazzy" combination of "blue shirts, leather belts, and oilcloth helmets" that surely gave the volunteers a prominent presence while on duty.⁶

Funds for the original reel-cart, which was accompanied by five hundred feet of hose, came from volunteer subscriptions. As far as procedure, the department divided Granville into five

fire districts, each accompanied by its own fire bell signal. Accompanied by an updated water works system and staffed by a group of men described by Lisska as "community-minded," the Granville fire department certainly began as an organization prepared to keep its hometown safe from any destructive fire.

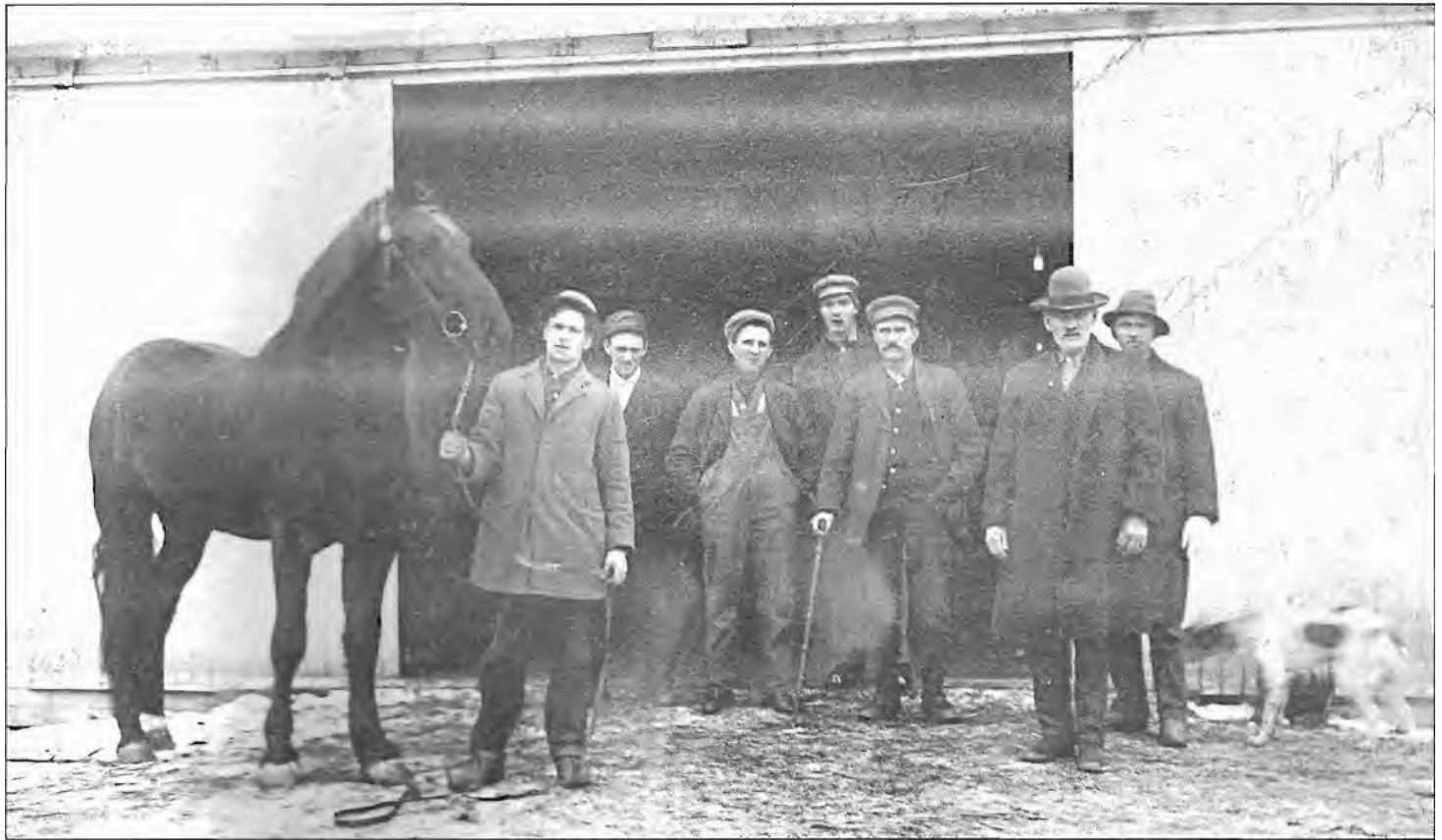
Despite the presence of fire protection in Granville, the town did not escape the first few years after the momentous year of 1885 unscathed by fire. In December of 1886, a small but potentially devastating fire ignited under what became a book store in later years. *The Granville Times* reported an efficient response by the Hose Company, despite the accumulated smoke and steam in the cellar that "made it a doubly hard task for the firemen." The *Times* indicates that the town experienced minimal losses and two minor injuries. Preliminary reports blamed the fire on either spontaneous combustion or "matches ignited by rats." However, the article appears to attribute the incident to a stove that was left on overnight. A second instance of fire in the department's early years occurred in 1892 when a fire broke out in the Hotel Granville. The department's response was effective enough to save the building from what would later be a suspected case of arson. In the August 18, 1892 edition of *The Granville Times*, citizen George Hooley reported finding several boxes of matches, some of which were "burned and blackened," in the building's vicinity. Apparently, Hooley's finding displaced the original and "unsatisfactory" theory that the hotel spontaneously combusted.

These are just two of several incidents that show the potential destructive capabilities of a fire in Granville. Even the Denison campus was not immune to fire damage. In March of 1905, during the college's spring recess, a fire of unknown origin "completely gutted"⁷ Barney Science Hall. Although exterior structural damage was minimal, the building needed to be entirely restored, this time with a steel framed interior and fire resistant floors and walls.

Despite the protection of well-organized fire-fighting squad, turn-of-the-century and early-century Granville was aware of the potential for a disastrous fire. And the town would see such a fire within the next quarter-century.

The Disastrous 1927 Fire on the Southside of Broadway

By the year 1927, the Granville Fire Department seems to have fallen into a state of disorder similar to the situation that led to the official founding of the department in 1885. In January of 1927, the *Times* reported on the sorry state of Granville's fire protection in an article titled "A Discussion of Granville's Need for Better Fire Protection." As noted, fire-fighting equipment was at a minimum and the department was "loosely organized." Along with the physical danger this situation created, the *Times* indicated that due to poor fire protection, insurance rates were increasingly higher and a "steady annual drain on the community pocketbook." Perhaps the most appalling fact alluded to in this article is that sufficient fire equipment could be purchased for no more than 52,500, an amount "little more than twice as much as [we] raise without effort for the Fourth of July." Clearly, Granville could have afforded this kind of fire-fighting equipment. Within five weeks of the publication of this magazine, Granville suffered the most fire in



Firemen and their "horse-powen early 1900s.

Courtesy Granville Lifestyle Museum

downtown Broadway totally engulfed in flames.

Observers place the origin of this raging conflagration in the rear of the Student Restaurant at 6 a.m. on February 1, 1927. Members of the fire department quickly responded and began pumping water, but their efforts were completely nullified when the restaurant's water heating tanks caused two separate explosions. At this point in the fire, the *Times* reported that "the entire block was doomed. The Newark Fire Department was called as backup, but even with this support the last flames were not extinguished until noon.

The final damage of Granville's worst fire amounted to \$50,000, but the town's immediate reaction was one of resilience and resolve. Though seven businesses closed, most of their owners immediately announced their intentions to rebuild and stay in the community. These included Rufus Johnson, who temporarily moved his pressing establishment to Enoch Johnson's barbershop. In the very same issue of the *Times* that reported on the fire, Mayor John S. Graham announced plans for a meeting that upcoming Monday for all citizens interested in improving the town's fire protection. Plans were already in the works to purchase a fire truck equipped with a pump capable of delivering 170 pounds of water pressure along with 1,500 feet of hose; these requirements were suggested by the presiding fire chief, Dr. J. W. Rohrer. Citizen contributions were expected to fund the new truck and hose, along with chemical apparatus, axes, lanterns, boots, and other equipment. Denison University officials also announced their intentions to contribute for the update, as the campus had some of the tallest buildings in town.

The primary objective of the campaign to update Granville's

fire protection was to raise enough money for a motorized fire-fighting apparatus. This apparatus would not only physically protect Granville from other fires but also would lower the town's high insurance rates, which stemmed from the fire hazard. These two incentives seemed to be enough to inspire residents to participate in a subscriptions campaign rather than waiting for increased taxation. On March 15, just six weeks after the Main Street conflagration, Denison's Trustees voted to donate \$1,800 to the cause and purchased an additional 500 feet of hose to keep on the hill. By early May, the drive hit the \$6,000 mark, and the purchasing committee placed an order for a pumper built by the Peter Pirsch Manufacturing Company and mounted on a Reo speed wagon chassis. The apparatus was also equipped with a chemical tank and 700 feet of hose. After arriving in town in late June, the fire engine was housed in the rear of the municipal building. Thus, within five months of the town's worst fire, the people of Granville rallied to provide the town with state-of-the-art fire-fighting equipment.

The Granville Fire Department in the Mid 20th Century

A decade after the 1927 fire, *The Granville Times* reported that the fire department was actively reminding Granville citizens of fire danger through participation in National Fire Prevention Week at the beginning of October. Each year during this week, members of the fire department inspected homes and businesses for fire hazards. The inspections also allowed fire fighters to become aware of exits and windows whose locations would be important to know in case fire broke out.



A group of volunteers from Denison University, with "Doc" Rohrer.

Granville Historical Society Archives

Several men donated their time to fire-fighting. Since the department was founded, at least forty-three men have provided more than twenty years of service, as noted by a plaque inside the door of the fire department. Many of them were local businessmen like Virgil "Tug" Fryman who served as chief from 1954 to 1962. He also ran an auto repair shop in a building behind the firehouse.⁸

Another one of these men who served as president and chief from the 1920s through the 1950s was the dentist .I. W. Rohrer. Rohrer "tightened the organization, and clarified expectations for the volunteer firefighters."⁹ In 1945, he formed the Licking County Volunteer Firemen's Association, a "mutual aid agreement among the county's fire departments and two-hundred firemen."¹⁰ Dr. Rohrer also converted the bell for calling the fire fighters to an electric siren in 1927. It was said that he left patients in the dentist's chair when he heard the fire call!¹¹

Granville further improved its fire equipment in early mid-century. Granville citizens felt that the town needed more than one fire truck. Another truck could be used for runs outside the Granville area while the truck purchased in 1927 could be used solely for fires within Granville. The fire department bought its second truck in April of 1937 from the Hanley Company for \$3,125. It could pump 700 gallons per minute, was built on a Ford chassis with a closed cab, and had approximately 110 horse power. The price also included 1,000 feet of new hose.

Before the new truck arrived, the fire department initiated plans to build a firehouse for the two trucks. The *Times* reported that the town council set aside \$6,000 for the erection of the firehouse in March of 1937. The council paid an architect to design the structure and planned to locate it east of the municipal building, south of St. Luke's church. However, before construction began, in tra

ditional Granville community fashion, a garage building was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Charles B. White. The fire department modified this building on North Prospect Street (where the fire department is still located) to its needs and shared the space with The Boy Scouts and The American Legion.

The First Non-Volunteer Firefighters

Until the late 1960s, the fire department relied solely on donations from the townships it serves, Denison University, and private donors to support its operations. It became clear in the late 1970s that "the department could not meet its obligation to the community as a solely volunteer organization"¹² due to an increased number of runs. Lee Larson, who became chief in 1978, led the campaign for paid employees in the fire department. Tax levies began to help fund the department, which has operated under a 1.3 mill levy annually since 1979. The first levy, passed in 1979, allowed the department to pay three employees, a business manager, a fire inspector, and a maintenance person.¹³ In 2005, the fire department continued to depend on donations for support, but also used tax levies to fund its operations.

The current Granville firehouse was built in 1971-1972. The village owns the building, but leases it to the fire department at ten-year intervals for one dollar a year. The department recently acquired the house north of its building on Prospect Street for more offices. The additional space also provides sleeping quarters for on-call members.

Professor Lee Larson and the Denison Connection

In the early 1970s the Granville Volunteer Fire Department became one of the first volunteer fire departments in the county



Volunteer firefighters with their ladder truck, behind the village hall on South Main Street, about 1930.

Courtesy Granville Lifestyle Museum

to have female members); This came about in 1972 when Denison was offering a January Term in which students took one course for a month. Approximately half of the sixteen students in the fire-fighting course offered by Lee Larson were women. Some of the students, including a couple of "omen, became volunteer members after their participation in the class. The class was offered again in January 1974 with similar results. Jan Packard was a student in the 1974 January Term class and later became a paid member.¹⁵

Several chiefs made significant changes in the department during this period. Ken Dixon, who served as chief from 1968 to 1978 and from 1980 to 1984, took major steps toward modernizing equipment. When he first became chief, the department's equipment consisted of a 1952 Ford Pumper, a 1951 Ford tanker, and a new 1968 Ford Pumper. A 1955 box truck with plywood shelves and a 1961 Oldsmobile station wagon served as emergency squad vehicles. Dixon played a key role in convincing the village and townships to build a new fire station in 1971-1972. Also in 1972, the fire department purchased its first new custom fire pumper, which could pump 1250 gallons per minute from a hydrant and also had a 1,000 gallon tank.

Denison University donated a "generous"¹⁶ amount of money toward this truck. Another custom pumper followed in 1976. Other purchases in the 1970s included a used American LaFrance ladder truck and the department's first emergency squad vehicle designed for the purpose. "None of these accomplishments would have taken place without the vision and driving force of Ken Dixon."¹⁷

Lee Larson served as chief from 1978 to 1980 following service as assistant chief from 1972 to 1978. Larson was also a

Professor of Physics at Denison University for thirty-two years. According to Larson, the late 1970s and early 1980s was a time in which "the fire department was thriving," with about fifty volunteers. There were three major incidents during Larson's years as chief, one of which occurred during a blizzard in January 1978 with record snows, wind, and cold. Larson, who was away on Denison business at the time, offered this account:

The firehouse ran around the clock for four days, with snowmobiles and a huge farm tractor equipped with a plow used to rescue people. Many were without power, some without telephone. Assistant Chief Lehr Dircks did a great job running the disaster. There was still chaos when I returned during the fourth day. That night we had a house fire in Fredonia, and because the snow drifts in the road had been opened with a bulldozer, the road was so narrow, and the snow so deep, that the friction between the banks and the sides of the truck was so high that we couldn't get through. The first truck was ultimately towed through with a bulldozer, and we arrived at the house fire about an hour after receiving the call. The residents had kept the fire under control by shoveling snow onto the burning wood, and the house was saved.¹⁸

The Catastrophic 1982 Opera House Fire

On April 7, 1982, the historic Opera House situated on the southeast corner of Main and Broadway burned to the ground. The fire was started by an electric heater that was being used to warm some baby chicks. Fire fighters could do little to save the opera house building, but they were able to protect the surrounding buildings,



The 1982 Opera House Fire. Only heroic measures by firefighters saved St. Luke's Episcopal Church next door.

Photo by Tom Philipps

especially the venerable St. Luke's Church.

This achievement may be credited to Larson, who as assistant chief had convinced the town to put priority on the deteriorated water line that ran down the center of Broadway rather than on plans for constructing a loop around the college. Flow tests Larson encouraged the department to perform on the old Broadway 6-inch line showed it was inadequate. The department then made the case to the village government for upgrading the Broadway line, and it was completed several years before the Opera House fire.

The Festive 1985 Centennial Celebration

Granville marked the hundredth anniversary of the fire department during the town's July 4th celebration in the summer of 1985. Many citizens showed their support by participating in the fire department themed parade that year. The parade included the original 1885 hose cart, which the fire chief at the time, Jim Dumbauld, restored for the occasion. The celebration also included firemen competitions which were held in front of the post office and in the Livingston gym parking lot. Firefighters from all over Ohio came to compete. The farthest traveling team in the competition came all the way from Granville,

brought its fire truck along.¹⁹

Into the Late 20th Century and the Early 21st Century

By the time of the Bicentennial celebrations in 2005, the Granville Fire Department had come a long way from using just a cart to put out fires. The organization no longer deals only with fire, but also provides emergency medical services, disaster preparedness, and public safety education.²⁰ In 2005, there were four full-time paid employees, about thirty volunteers, and a number of Denison student volunteers. The Granville fire department contracts with McKean Township, Union Township, and Granville Township, covering approximately 72 square miles. In the mid-part of the new decade, there was an average of just under three runs a day: this totaled 1,130 runs in 2004,²¹ compared to sixty-four in 1965 and twelve in 1935.²² However, only fifteen percent of the runs made today are fire related. The other eighty-five percent are responses to emergency medical calls.²³

Members of the Granville Fire Department now have advanced technology on their side when fighting fires. They no longer use a siren or a bell to call volunteers to the fire department, but instead use beepers. The vehicle inventory includes an engine



In January 2006, the Granville Volunteer Fire Department became the Granville Township Fire Department, under the auspices of the Board of Granville Township Trustees. The first paid fire chief in the history of Granville firefighting, Jeff Hussey, is pictured with a rescue vehicle.

Photo courtesy Granville Township Fire Department

(pumper), a combination engine/rescue truck, one Land Rover grass fire unit, one 1,800-gallon tanker, and two emergency squad vehicles (ambulances). The fleet also includes a \$675,000 ladder truck with a 93-foot aerial platform. Denison University contributed \$100,000 toward the ladder truck, which made a great deal of sense because the ladder was needed mainly for the tall buildings recently built on the Denison campus. Denison contributes money to the department annually, which averaged about \$31,000 each year from 1998 to 2005 as well as occasional extra funds for equipment.²⁴ The department will soon acquire a truck that uses foam instead of water to extinguish fires. This method eliminates heavy water hoses and does not cause water damage.²⁵

Now more than a century and a quarter after its founding, the Granville Fire Department is, without a doubt, a much more efficient and effective fire-fighting force. The organization certainly has grown from the original hose cart and sufficient line of hose to a well-respected team that serves multiple communities. Though the technology used by the department has changed, the sense of civil duty and service has remained a constant over the past 123 years.

Editor's Note

This essay was originally written for a Denison University Honors Program Seminar on the history of Granville conducted by (Ton) Lisska during the 2005 Bicentennial Celebrations of the Village. Working with the archivists of the Granville Historical

Society and Denison University, in addition to extended discussions with members of the Granville Fire Department, Matt Waterbury and Phil Weisshaar undertook the research necessary to produce this fine piece of historical writing. The essay has been mildly edited for publication in *The Historical Times*. The following Postscript by longtime Granville resident and firefighter, Norm Kennedy, brings the fire department story up to date in 2008.

Postscript to the Granville Volunteer Fire Department: 2005 to Present

The fire department, which had been organized as a not-for-profit corporation, ceased to operate as a corporation on December 31, 2006. The membership of the corporation found it increasingly difficult to find members with the time to handle the operational aspects of a \$1 million operation. In early 2006, the corporation approached the Granville Township Trustees about the township establishing a "public" township operated fire department that would replace the corporation in providing fire and

emergency medical services for the community.

The Trustees engaged the services of a consulting firm and began a series of transitional meetings in order to determine how best to convert from a private contracted service to a public operation. The township officials involved in the conversion were Trustees James Havens, Lyle King and Wes Sargent, along with Fiscal Officer Norman Kennedy. The township hired Jeff Hussey, a 21 years-plus career member of the fire service, as its first paid fire chief. Chief Hussey, who is also a paramedic, began work on December 4, 2006 and assisted with the smooth transition from private to public operation on January 1, 2007.

The corporation had begun staffing the station with three personnel on duty 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. This staffing consisted of one full-time employee and two part-time employees. During 2007 on duty staffing was converted to two full-time and one part-time employee, supplemented by volunteer members. The new publicly operated department continues the long-standing traditions of the fire service and the Granville Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.

**—Norman S. Kennedy, firefighter/EMT-I,
Granville Township Fiscal Officer and volunteer member
Granville Fire Department July 1973 - present**

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THE HISTORICAL TIMES

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Endnotes

1 Lisska, Anthony J. and Louis I. Middleman, eds. *Granville, Ohio: A Study in Continuity and Change: Volume 1, A Purpose, A Plan, A Place*. Granville Historical Society, Denison University Press: Granville, OH. 2004. Pg. 221.

2 Utter, William T. *Granville: The Story of an Ohio Village*. Granville Historical Society: Granville, OH. 1956. Pg. 266.

3 Ibid. Pg. 267.

4 Bushnell, Henry. *The History of Granville, Licking County, Ohio*. Press of Hann & Adair: Columbus, OH. 1889. Pg. 332.

5 Utter, pg. 274.

6 *Granville, Ohio: A Study in Continuity and Change: Volume I. A Purpose, A Plan, A Place*. Pg. 220.

7 King, Horace. *Granville, Massachusetts to Ohio*. The Granville Sentinel Publishing Company: Granville, OH. 1989. Pg. 127.

8 Larson, Lee. Personal Interview. 30 Nov. 2005.

9 *Granville, Ohio: A Study in Continuity and Change: Volume 1, A Purpose, A Plan, A Place*. Pg. 324.

10 Branstool, Eugene. Senate Resolution No. 420, adopted by the Ohio Senate, June 27, 1985. This resolution congratulated the Granville Fire Department on its 100th anniversary and now hangs on the wall of the meeting room in the Granville firehouse on North Prospect Street.

11 Dumbauld, Jim. Personal Interview. 28 Oct. 2005.

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21 Kennedy, Norm. Personal Interview. 19 Oct. 2005.

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