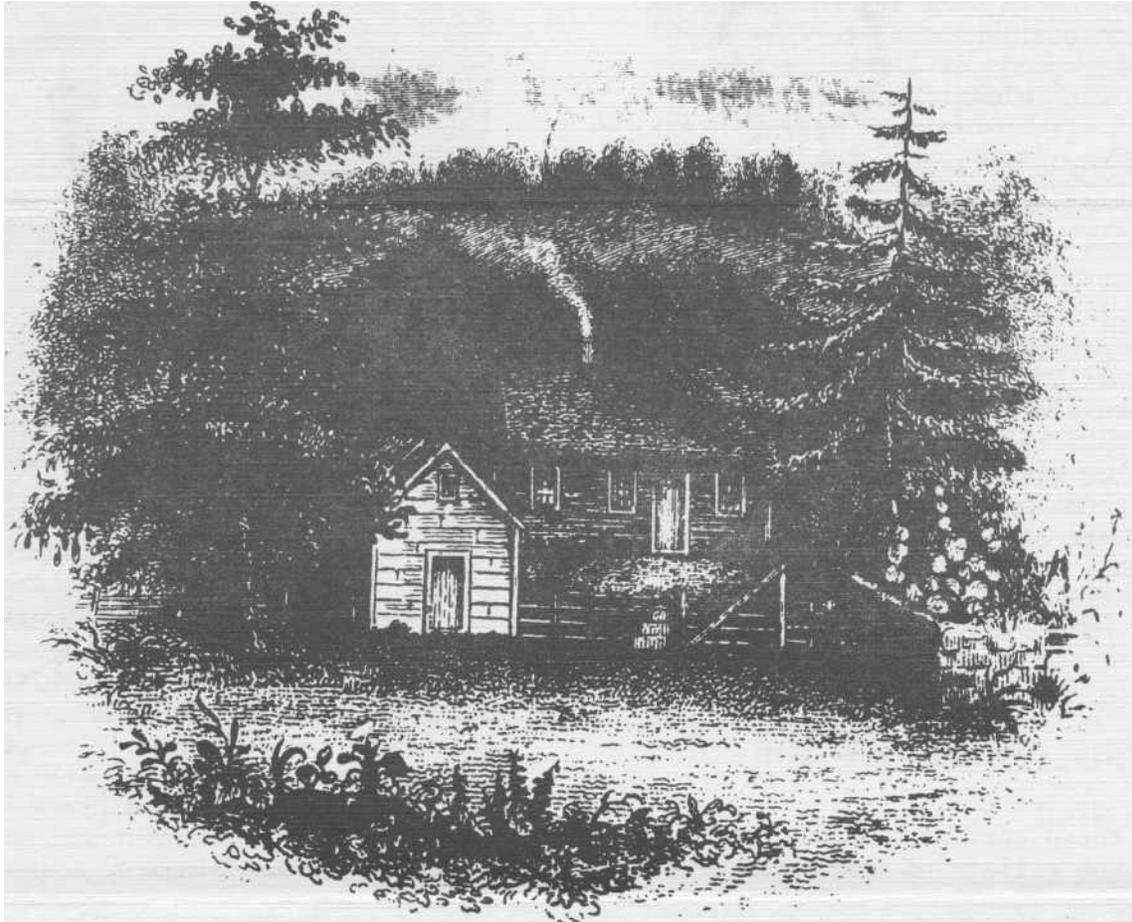


THE HISTORICAL TIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE GRANVILLE, OHIO, HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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SUMMER 1988



Checking Out Utopia

The little village of Granville was once a utopia for a prehistoric tribe about which we know very little. The inhabitants hunted, fished and built monuments to themselves and their ancestors in the form of giant circles, octagons and effigies of alligators. Happiness prevailed in the thick forests, along the clear running streams and all was good.

White skinned men and women arrived and tore down the sturdy trees, drove away the mighty but misunderstood tribes and settled down to **make the land their own.**

Eras went by and men and women outdid each other by building strange houses; their dwellings had echoes of a European past. Log cabins of Scandinavian origin were soon replaced by houses of stately presence, grand and

glorious design, Greek and Roman facades, Gothic battlements and towers, and Italian villas. Gingerbread fretwork and lattices were added to simple boxlike structures. The ghosts of Indians past marveled at the changes in utopia.

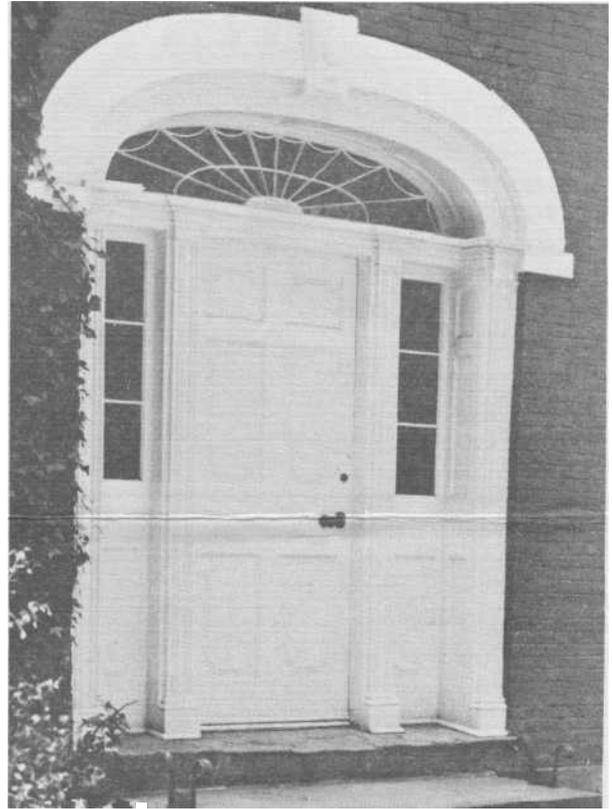
Bartering with goods or paying with imported shells led to general money making in what was to become a tradition still honored to this day. Shops with goods of all kinds were opened, people went about their business with no thought of the ancient days and soon autos, gas stations and parking lots appeared in the deep plateau between the three hills.

Time, inexorable, leads us into strange paths. Past and present mingle still in our dwellings. New ideas are slower in coming. The fields once sufficient for our needs are filled with more and more dwelling places. One wonders whether the great spirits are troubled by what they see or perhaps in awe of our accomplishments.

The Village Amid the Hills

The three ancient hills still embrace the village of Granville with its array of structures representing the history of architecture. Beyond Sugar Loaf, Mount Parnassus and Denison Hill, the rolling terrain stretches into the distance dotted with houses, highways, offices and stores.

The small area protected by the hills is what concerns us when we discuss the most important architectural structures in Granville. A melting pot of style, European and American revivals and replicas stand as a memorial to our heritage; Roman and Greek, Gothic, Italianate, the Queens: Anne and Victoria, and finally, the return to the simplicity of the first structures.



Palladian Entrance Doorway of the
1824 Lucius Mower House

The elegance and harmony of the Lucius Mower House on East Broadway is an example of Federal architecture, built when the new Federal government was coming into its own. Its purity and stateliness contrast with Victorian playfulness so prevalent in Granville.

Standing-to-the-west of the Mower House is the Robbins Hunter Museum, an impressive example of the Greek Revival style. In 1803, Benjamin Latrobe was requested by Thomas Jefferson to come to the new democracy and help design its capital. Latrobe became Surveyor of Public Buildings in Washington. The only nation to have its capitol planned in the Greek style (after all, who invented democracy?), the United States found itself in a rage of Greek fashion. As John Maass wrote in The Victorian Home in America, not only were great ceremonial buildings built in the Greek style, but also "the country was studded with temples from court houses down to bird boxes."

The Greek influence extended far beyond architecture to furniture styles, clothing, names of places (Athens and Alexandria, Ohio and Mount Parnassus to name but a few); names of children (Horace, Hector, Penelope, etc.). Even ladies' hair styles were "Greek" in style. The Robbins Hunter House with examples of the three Greek orders (Doric, Ionic and Corinthian) visible to the street carries us back to ancient times; its frieze of a stylized flower, the Anthemion, harks back to an even earlier time--the lotus of Egypt and Mesopotamia.

Queen Anne

Numerous examples of what we call Queen Anne amuse and amaze us with their turrets, towers and lookout balconies and fanciful trim. Queen Anne, herself, was a tormented monarch whose reign was blighted by plots to overthrow her and worry over the lack of an heir to the throne. A group of 19th century English architects named the frivolous style after Queen Anne, but she reigned from 1702 to 1714 during a period of solemnly formal 17th and 18th century architecture. It might please her to know that her name lives on in the whimsical architecture prominent during the last decades of the 19th century. There are many Queen Anne examples in Granville which in their fantasy borrow from Elizabethan and Jacobean eras as well as American spindlework.

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"Steamboat" Gothic

The builders of the French cathedrals did amazing wonders in the Gothic style during the Middle Ages. Soaring vertically to heaven, the buildings caught the imagination of all who aspired to go there. Granville, too, has its Gothic style. The castle style with towers and battlements is represented in miniature here as well as what we call "Steamboat" or "Carpenter" Gothic, covered with gingerbread scrollwork, trellises and latticework. Verticality is the key to recognizing the Gothic style: Pointed arched windows and vertical boards rather than horizontal siding. These picturesque cottages took a great deal of inspiration from the literature of the day, especially Sir Walter Scott's romances. This in itself is strange since the Goths themselves (from whom the term Gothic derives) were a vicious Teutonic tribe flourishing from the 1st to the 5th Century A.D. when they joined the Roman forces to conquer a common enemy, Atilla the Hun. Their name is now associated with cosy cottages in the American heartland.

Queen Victoria & Italianate

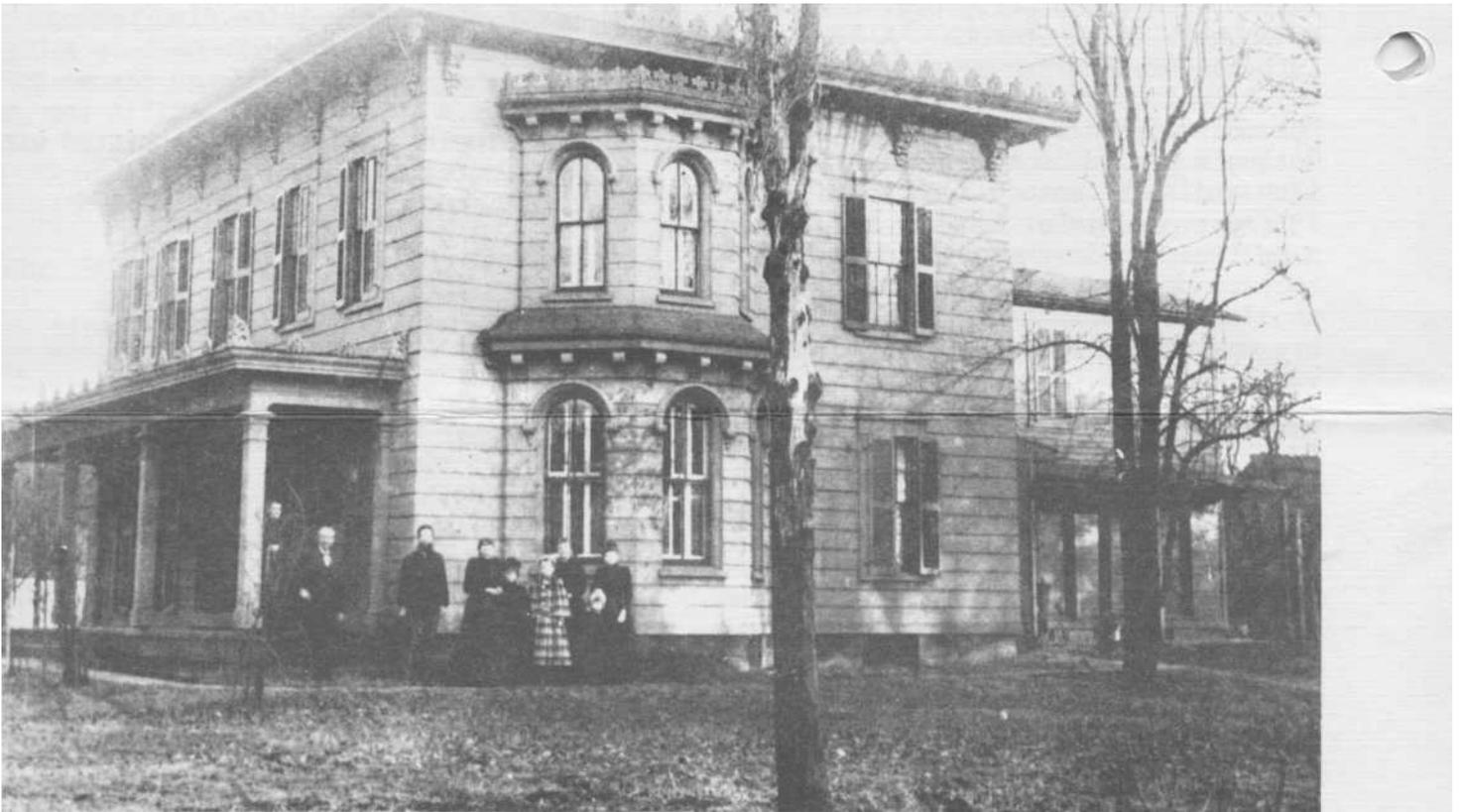
Queen Victoria adored Italy as did the poets and artists of her day. It was she who inspired the growth of the Italianate style widely found in Granville architecture. The most perfect example is the Barsky-Katz * residence on East Elm Street which has been carefully restored. Formally balanced, the Italianate style has a low pitched roof ornamented by brackets, singly or in pairs, and room for verandas, open porticos and possible additions for growing families. The style was considered refined and was utilized not only in homes but in commercial architecture as well. The Italian Villa style

* ed. The George T. Jones House, 1861.

differs in that it has a tower to one side of the structure and is therefore asymmetrical. This tower should not be confused with the "widow's walk" on eastern seaboard colonial houses.

When we refer to "Victorian" in taste and style, we should remember the good Queen who ruled the British Empire from 1837 to 1901. Not only did she inspire trends in architecture but also home decoration, fashions in dress and a certain mode of proper behavior in manners and morals. Over-stuffed furniture, mixed colors and

patterns, rooms awash in knick knacks and sentimental souvenirs would be a housewife's nightmare today. Towards the middle of Victoria's reign, the Industrial Revolution rapidly changed the way things were made. Giant factories did away with simple craftsmen, complex railroad systems rapidly shipped mass produced household adornments both for the interior and exterior of houses, and thus the general public had access to what only the wealthy had in earlier times and the trend sped quickly across the ocean to post-Civil War America.



The 1861 George T. Jones House as it appeared in the mid 1890's. This historic home has been restored recently to its former elegance.

The Spirit of Revival

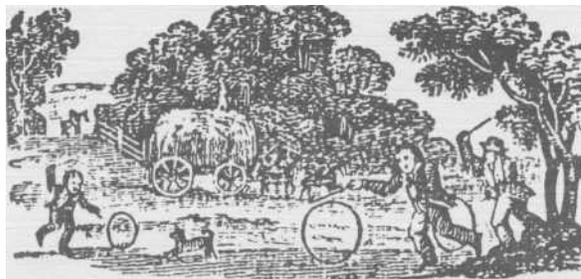
Because Granville was not settled until after the colonial period in American history, the colonial homes here are all revivals of the originals in the east. During the Centennial of 1876, a burst of patriotism caused an increase in Colonial Revival and even today we add colonial architectural details to modern structures (i.e. Bennett's Colonial Marathon or the BancOhio sign with its broken pediment design).

There are many more architectural styles in Granville than can be described in these pages. The Denison University campus could provide us with the subject matter for another article. Of all the buildings on campus, the only one, new or old, which does not use a revival style is Burke Hall unless your imagination permits you to look at the sloping roofs as a modern version of the colonial saltbox.

Wherever you look in the village area, you will be astonished by the harmonious mosaic of English manor houses, Greek temples, fanciful revivals from all phases of history. What the future holds, we can only guess. New ideas spring from the genius of a Frank Lloyd Wright. Until such a person appears again, we can continue to enjoy living in the past.

--Marilyn N. Hirshler

Postscript: The latest architectural craze, not yet in Granville, but nearby in the soon to be completed Wexner Center for the Visual Arts on the Ohio State Campus is known as "deconstructivism." According to Joseph Giovannini in the New York **Tines** (June 12, 1988) this new style of building is "precarious," "disorienting," and "unsettling," among other things, following the path society is taking into the future. Queen Victoria would not approve!



The woodcuts in this issue are from Granville, The Story of An Ohio Village.

Upcoming Features

Victoria Claflin Woodhull
by Patricia Stoneburner.

The Bryn Du Mansion
by Fancion Lewis.

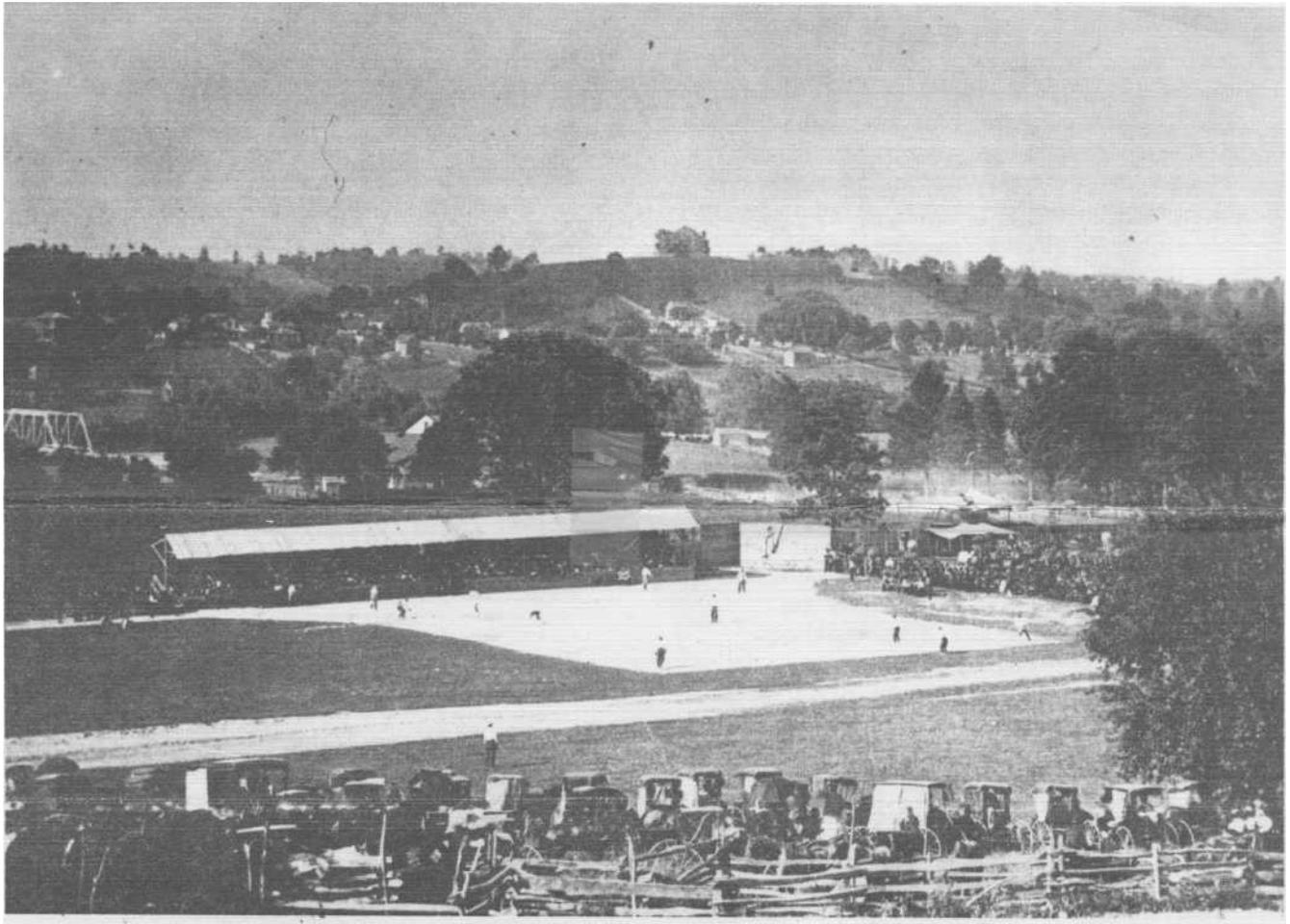
Abolitionism in Granville
by Horace King.

Also: We will continue to publish installments of the Granville Chronology.

The Historical Times is included with membership and is sent to all members of the Society. Questions or comments may be sent to:

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Anthony Lisska, Mary Ann Malcuit



From the Archives--

The Great American Pastime. A game about 1890 on the Granville Athletic Grounds, south of the Village, on Lancaster Road.



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