

# THE HISTORICAL TIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE GRANVILLE, OHIO, HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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## The Religious Heritage of the Granville Settlers

*--text of remarks delivered to the  
Granville Historical Society,  
November 16, 1983.*

The religious heritage of the Granville settlers was English Protestantism. Puritanism, an important expression of English Protestantism which dominated all of New England in the seventeenth century, had declined nearly a century before these settlers left New England for Ohio in 1805. Much had intervened between the death of Cotton Mather, whom we might call the last Puritan minister, and the life of Timothy Mather Cooley, minister of the church they left in Granville, Massachusetts. The American Revolution had occurred, of course, but so had the Enlightenment and the Great Awakening--both of which had direct influence upon religion. The Enlightenment was a fundamental shift in the way western men thought about themselves and their world brought on by the work of Englishmen Isaac Newton and John Locke. The Great Awakening was a massive wave of religious revivals which began just up the Connecticut River from Granville, Massachusetts, and swept all thirteen of the colonies and much of England as well. The religious heritage of the Granville settlers was Puritanism transformed by the Enlightenment, the Great Awakening, and the American Revolution.

Some of the important customs, institutions, and beliefs which they brought with them to Ohio can be traced back to Puritanism. Such customs included the Puritan Sabbath, which was a day set apart for worship and religious instruction and nothing else. (The "continental Sabbath" practiced by others often included games such as bowling.) The church and the school are examples of institutions cherished by these descendants of the Puritans. Puritan



Timothy Mather Cooley  
1772 - 1859

beliefs which were **transported** to Ohio included the **major** doctrines of Calvinism. Perhaps the most important Puritan idea which they retained was the doctrine of the "covenant," the notion that Christians were **pledged** to each other and in a covenant with **God**. The first settlers covenanted together, forming a church, several months before leaving Granville, Massachusetts. They pledged to watch each other and to support each other in the faith. They conceived of their newly formed town as a holy community. Puritans who first came to Plymouth or to Massachusetts Bay had once entered into a similar covenant and subscribed to the same idea.

A modified Puritanism was thus the heritage of the place from which they came: Granville, Massachusetts. Of course their religion was shaped as well by the times in which they lived. The religious history of the early years of the nineteenth century can be characterized in four ways.

### **Sectarian Splintering**

It was an age of sectarian splintering. The Puritan ideal was one church for every town. In such a circumstance, **everyone** might worship together and subscribe to similar doctrine. The church might be the center of the community. That ideal **had passed very early in major coastal cities like Boston**, but it **remained** powerful much longer in small towns in the Connecticut River Valley. **As late as 1790 Granville, Massachusetts, had just two churches and they were united in practice and belief.** There were two meeting houses only because the residents of the town were scattered **geographically**. When **denominations** were formed early in the nineteenth century, both of these churches were called "Congregational." A Baptist church was formed in 1791. Sometime in the 1790s Methodist preachers invaded the region, but no Methodist church was formed in Granville in

that century. An **Episcopal** church existed in Granby, Connecticut, a **neighboring** town. The exodus to Ohio occurred in a period in which English Protestant **groups** were **proliferating** in western Massachusetts.

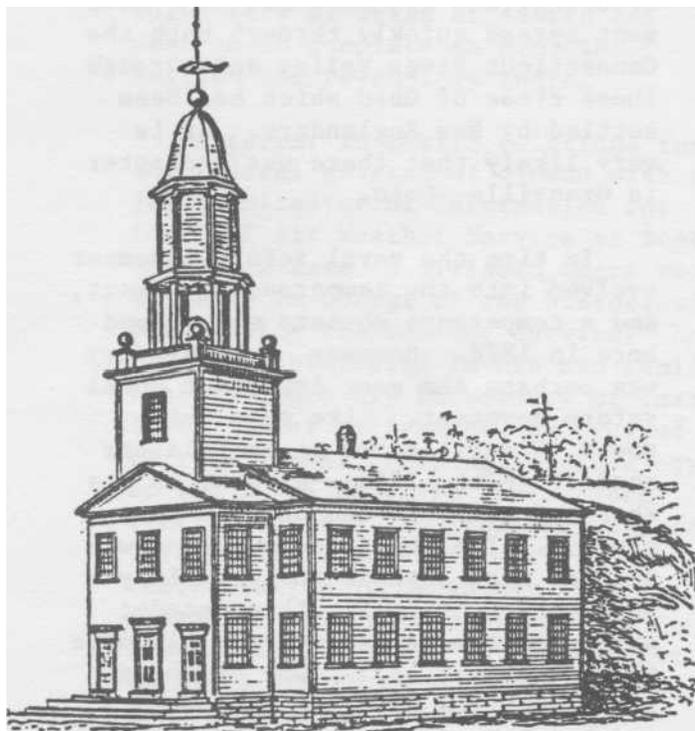
The same phenomenon occurred in Granville, Ohio. The first settlers had formed a Congregational church even before leaving New England. The first Methodist sermon was preached here in 1810; in the next ten years Granville became a regular stop on a Methodist circuit. A Granville **Baptist** Church was formed in 1819. The same year Bishop Chase, an Episcopalian, visited Granville and St. Luke's Church was formed in 1827. The Congregational church began moving toward **Presbyterianism** in the 1820's. It was a time of sectarian splintering.

### **Migration and Missions**

It was an age of migration and missions. Thousands of New Englanders and others were moving west to Ohio. A sizable number from Goshen, Connecticut had settled Hudson, Ohio in 1801. James Kilbourne had led a **group of Episcopalians** from Granby, Connecticut, to **Worthington, Ohio**, in 1803. Many others came as **individuals** or families. Those who **stayed behind** sent **missionaries** to their **friends** and **kinfolk** on the frontier.

The **missionary movement was something new.** **English evangelicals formed the London Missionary Society and began sending missionaries to the "heathen" in Asia and Africa in the 1790s.** In 1795 a Connecticut Missionary Society was formed by Christians who wished to follow the English example. Seven years later the churches of Granville, Massachusetts, in Hampshire County, joined the newly formed Hampshire Missionary Society. The first settlers of Granville, Ohio were a part of the young missionary movement before they ever left home.

Groups like the Connecticut or Hampshire Missionary Society were active in Ohio. Rather than send missionaries to the heathen, these groups supported ministers to organize churches and schools for departed friends and kinfolk on the frontier. The first church in Granville, Ohio did not require missionary assistance, but Granville's Baptist church was formed with the assistance of George Evans, sent by the Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Society. In time, other missionary societies were formed to support foreign missions. Again, Christians from Granville, Massachusetts were involved. Gurdon Hall, a Granville boy, was among the college students who helped form the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and was one of the first American missionaries to India. Zeal for missions was part of the culture of the Connecticut River Valley in this period.



**The Congregational Church  
Granville, Ohio  
1816**

### **Religious Revivals**

It was an age of religious revivals. The Great Awakening, the first massive wave of revivals, had begun a short distance from Granville, Massachusetts in 1734. Revivals were rare in the second half of the eighteenth century, however, until the Second Great Awakening began in the Connecticut River Valley in 1798 and swept the nation for the next three decades.

Timothy Mather Cooley, pastor of Granville, Massachusetts, led a revival there in 1799. He wrote later that it began after a Thanksgiving ball in 1798. Some of the young people felt guilt for attending the ball, and when one of them was struck with a serious illness Cooley was able to use their anxiety to incite a revival. The Thanksgiving ball does not fully explain the cause of the revival, however, since similar revivals were erupting in most of the surrounding towns at the same time.

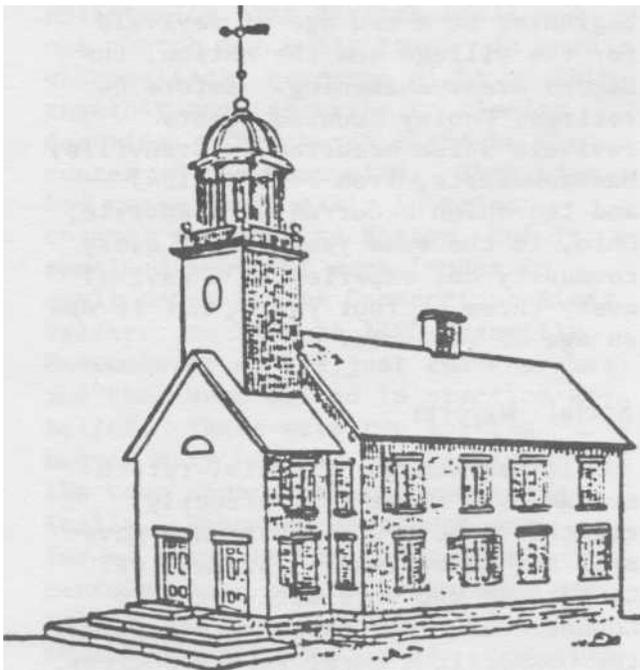
What Cooley described was the beginning of a new age of revivals for the village and the nation, the Second Great Awakening. Before he retired, Cooley counted twenty revivals which occurred in Granville, Massachusetts, from 1799 to 1843 -- and ten which occurred in Granville, Ohio, in the same years. Not every community had experienced a revival every three or four years, but it was an age of revivals.

### **Social Reform**

It was an age of social reform movements. These were directly related to both the missionary movement and to revivals. Evangelical Christians who were active in the Connecticut Missionary Society formed the Connecticut Moral Reform Society at the end of the War of 1812. The former would save souls, the latter would change behavior. The moral

reform society worked to reduce the instances of swearing, Sabbath breaking, and drunkenness. The movement spread quickly through both the Connecticut River Valley and through those areas of Ohio which had been settled by New Englanders. It is very likely that there was a chapter in Granville, Ohio.

In time the moral reform movement evolved into the temperance movement, and a temperance society was formed here in 1828. However, anti-slavery was perhaps the most important moral reform movement. Like most Ohio towns, Granville had an antislavery society in the 1830s--as well as its share of citizens who opposed anti-slavery. The abolition movement was perhaps most intense and certainly most controversial in this decade; anti-abolition riots erupted all over the country in 1835. One of these riots occurred in Granville, Ohio, and has been described by Horace King in the Newark Advocate and by William Utter in his book, Granville, the Story of an Ohio Village.



**The Baptist Church  
Granville, Ohio  
1831**

Sectarian splintering and religious revivals represented a change in the Puritan heritage. Both were indications of an emerging individualism and a declining emphasis on the community. Missions and moral reform, on the other hand, were applications of the Puritan concept of the covenant. Granville's Christians believed the entire nation was in covenant with God and therefore Christians had a responsibility for the salvation and the behavior of fellow Americans.

The religious heritage of the Granville settlers was an important force in their lives. Christianity colored the way they understood themselves and their world. Church affiliation probably shaped the circle of their friends and limited their selection of partners for business or marriage. If we can generalize from studies of other communities, church affiliation probably determined how they voted.

Their religious heritage continues to shape the community of Granville today. Certainly it shapes the village physically. Four English Protestant churches stand at the center of town; the Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches stand off to either side, removed from the heart of the village. Similarly, Granville's religious heritage helps explain its traditional commitment to education; the town is known for its schools and for its college. Finally, the idea of the covenant, a stimulus for moral reform, remains alive. In an earlier age, that idea drove men not to drink--and today there are no liquor stores downtown. In our day a version of that Puritan idea led a group in Granville's Baptist Church to study nuclear war. **It is** no accident that of all Ohio's communities, it was in Granville that a nuclear freeze resolution appeared on the ballot in 1983. The religious heritage of the Granville settlers remains very much alive.

- Richard D. Shiels, Department of History, Ohio State University-Newark

## **John D. Rugg Named Historian of the Year**

The premier award of the Society, Historian of the Year, was presented to John D. Rugg at the annual dinner on November 10. He is the first genealogist to receive the award. Well known for his expertise and interest in genealogy, and for his help to local historians, John is a member of the Ohio, Licking County, Perry County and Muskingum County Genealogical Societies. He has served as trustee of the state organization and is presently chairman of the Courthouse Liaison Committee of the Licking County group. His own company, Ohio Roots, performs contract research. He is listed in Who's Who in the Midwest and Who's Who in Genealogy and Heraldry and similar reference works. The impressive document which reports his research on the Avery family was particularly noted by the Society in making this award. He has worked on tracing Alfred Avery's descendants for a number of years, traveling as far as Wisconsin to collect information for this study.

Mr. Rugg's roots are in central Ohio. He is descended through his father from the Prior family of Muskingum County. He was born in Newark during the time his father was minister of the Methodist Church in Hebron. While his father served as minister of the Granville Methodist Church, John attended Granville High School for two years then Western Reserve Academy in Hudson, Ohio on a scholarship. He graduated from McGuffey High School in Oxford, Ohio where his father then had a church. He enrolled in Ohio Wesleyan University and was drafted into the army during the second world war. After his release from service he worked at an M.I.T. laboratory which helped develop radar. It was there, in Boston, that he met his wife,

Mildred. Seeking a warmer climate, he finished his college work at the University of Texas at Austin and went on to complete an M.A. in English and Psychology there.

A career in public relations for the federal government closed with a job as Director of Information for the USAF Air Weather Service at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois where he was also in charge of the historical program for the weather service. He had been interested in his own family history since his University of Texas days. After retirement, he decided to take formal training in genealogy, so the Ruggs moved to Utah. John received an M.S. in Librarianship and Informational Sciences with a concentration in Genealogy from Brigham Young University and was elected to Phi Kappa Phi scholastic honorary and to Beta Phi Mu, the Library Science Honorary.

Mr. Rugg returned to Granville in 1974 to set up Ohio Roots to do research for clients in all parts of the world. "Genealogy has been called the handmaiden of history," observes John Rugg. His career demonstrates this connection.

### **Come Join Us!**

Write to:

The Granville Ohio Historical Society  
P. O. Box 129  
Granville, Ohio 43023

or call 587-0430 to request an application or for general information.

### **William T. Utter History Award**

Russell Luke, a senior at Granville High School, was awarded the William T. Utter History Award at Commencement last June. This prize of \$100 is given annually to a Granville High School student.

## Museum News

*--This is the first in a series of articles about exhibits in the museum.*

### Indians Loved It Here Too!

We are certain that most everyone will agree that Granville, Ohio is a unique and special community. The beauty of the old homes and historical structures and the area in which the first settlers decided to build their future, has not only left us with a legacy of superb craftsmanship, but a strong will not only to preserve what they worked so hard and long to achieve, but to continue to improve on it in any way we can.

There were others, however, who also saw this area for what it was. The prehistoric and historic indians, who at one time or another called this area their home, were well endowed with excellent craftsmen, builders, hunters and farmers. This can be readily attested to by the excavations of the many mounds and villages in Licking County.

The Granville Historical Society Museum displays many artifacts that tell the story of how these people carried out their daily lives. We have a nice collection of projectile points, drills, knives, hammerstones, mortars, pestles and other implements.

The museum also displays fossils, minerals and gemstones that were cut from Licking County flint. This flint from the Flint Ridge area in eastern Licking County is said to be some of the best in the world and was sought after by Indians from most of the nearby states. Samples have been found in Kansas, Florida and upper Michigan.

To keep building this collection is our never ending goal. We will soon have a new display of artifacts donated by Mr. and Mrs. Harry Fitch, formerly of Granville.

At this time we are short on beads and pottery but would gratefully accept donations from anyone to add to our collection. For information, call Dick Boyer at 587-2508.

- Dick Boyer

### The Annual Banquet

The Society's annual banquet was held in the Old Academy Building, decorated in an autumn theme, on November 10th. Fifty-six persons attended. After welcoming members and guests, Fanchion Lewis announced that John Rugg of Granville had been selected "Historian of the Year." Following dinner, Rick Sowash of Bellville, well known in central Ohio for his musical, cultural, and civic activities, entertained the members and guests with his unique rendition of "The Life and times of Cy Gatton, Ohio Storyteller", a review of the best tall tales of the Clear Fork Valley's master yarn-spinner. The dinner was catered by Blackstones.

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

Editors  
The Historical Times  
P. O. Box 129  
Granville, Ohio 43023

Editorial Board: Florence Hoffman,  
Anthony Lisska, Mary Ann Malcuit

### Recent New Members

Mrs. Florence Lisska  
Mrs. Harriet Lattimer

## **From the Archives--**

what has happened in Granville in the past year? How much do you remember? Most of us recall the mild winter followed by the big snow in April. Annexation of areas east of the village and south in the developing business district are fresh in our minds but many other events have slipped away. How certain are your memories of events five or ten years ago? When was the last big flood, and more important for the flood plain, how high was the water? Which year did the Opera House burn?

Many of us are familiar with the Annals of the years 1806-1876 in Bushnell's History of Granville. The Society archives contains two additional volumes of annals. The first was kept from September 1877 to September 1878 by Charles Webster Bryant. A handwritten entry for nearly every day notes births, deaths, fires, accidents, and a partial eclipse of the sun. During that year some 21 burglaries, 37 deaths, 10 sales of property in Granville and 13 serious accidents were recorded. Many of the accidents were caused by runaway horses.

The title page of the second volume reads:

1885  
Annals kept by the  
Granville Ohio Historical Society  
Society organized Feb. 16th 1885.  
Annals written from Jany. 1, 1885  
as nearly as practicable.

C. W. Black  
Annalist

Crayton Black was an impartial Annalist. On March 2 he reports "Regular meeting of the Granville Ohio Historical Society. The Annalist was the only officer that

reported not prepared." Obviously, he corrected this deficiency. He records the death of Grove Case on February 19 and the opening, March 4, of the new skating rink which measured 60 by 115 feet. At a church social in the Methodist Church on March 31, "a fine gold watch and chain was presented to Mr. John Montgomery in testimonial of his energy and zeal in managing and pushing to completion the elegant new church edifice." The first white frost of the season occurred on September 24. All through this year, the progress of the new waterworks is noted, from the drilling of the test well on April 20 to the installation of the first hydrant on December 31.

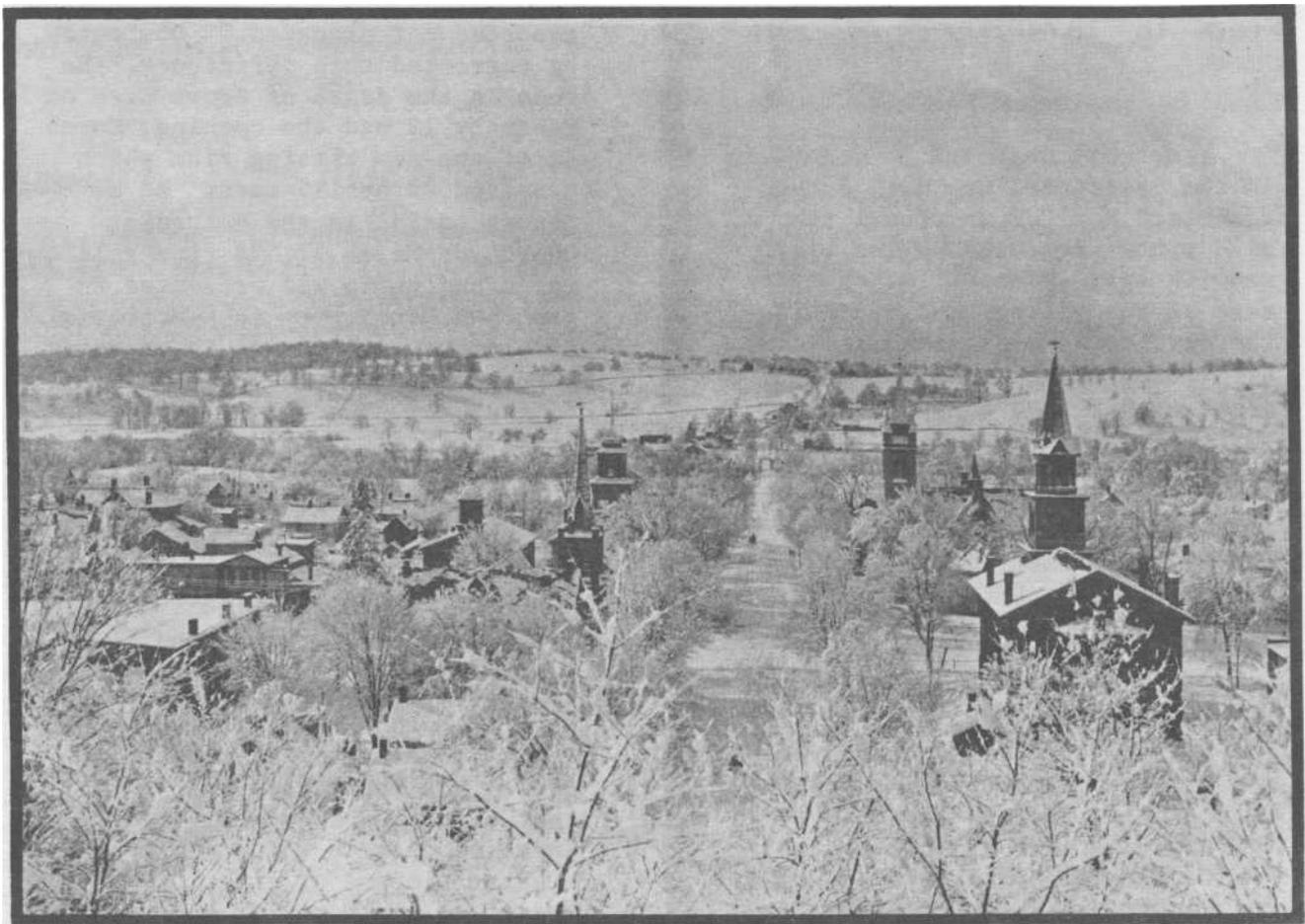
This volume also contains the Annals of 1886 and entries for the months of January and September 1887. Was the record kept after that time? We do not have it. These two little volumes give us a clearer picture of life in Granville a hundred or more years ago than we have of years in the mid-twentieth century.

Florence W. Hoffman  
Archivist

## **Granville Historical Society Board of Management**

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Richard Shiels



**From the Archives--**

**Main Street (Lancaster Road), looking south from College Hill,  
March 1906**



The Granville Ohio Historical Society  
Post office Box 129  
Granville, Ohio 43023