FIFTY YEARS OF FIDELITY TO A FINE IDEAL

CHARLES BROWNE WHITE
ON THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE GRANVILLE TIMES

Don Young, William Kussmaul and Judson Evans, Times Print Shop about 1912

This issue of The Historical Times offers a reprint of a fascinating account first published sixty-five years ago about Granville's longest-lived newspaper, The Granville Times. Founded in 1880, this Granville paper of an earlier generation celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1930. On the occasion of that historical milestone, long-time Granville citizen, and himself a valued newspaper person, Charles Browne White, wrote a moving narrative about the history and the importance of a village newspaper for Granville. Much of the history of The Granville Times is centered around its long-time editor, William H. Kussmaul. This essay, which first appeared in the fiftieth anniversary issue of The Granville Times on July 31, 1930, was reprinted in a collection of Charles Browne White's writings, The Philosopher of Mount Parnassus [Denison University Press, 1948].
Fifty Years of Fidelity to a Fine Ideal

Tribute to the "Granville Times"
Anniversary issue of the "Granville Times," July 31, 1930

Few forces in the social, political, and intellectual development of the United States possess a more interesting history than the village newspaper. The first newspapers in the United States were really village papers, for they were published in Boston as early as 1689, when Boston was but a village in respect of size and character.

PURITAN CONSERVATISM

It might be expected that Granville, founded by pioneers from New England, and consequently stabilized by Puritan conservatism, would be somewhat slow in giving birth to a newspaper. Such, however, was not the case. It must be remembered that the Granville colony represented the highest development of New England character, which was, in its turn, the result of the transplanting, in American, of the best manhood of Europe. Those emigrants from Europe faced one great hardship, that of wresting a livelihood from an unfriendly environment; but they enjoyed one precious privilege, that of religious freedom. Their very survival depended on their own industry and thrift and fortitude--virtues which were inculcated and sustained by their Puritanism. It is stupid to declare, as many shallow critics of Puritanism are so fond of declaring, that the New England character was as drab as it was inflexible. Life in primitive New England was, indeed, synonymous with toil and struggle; but it was not, on that account, robbed of relaxation and pleasure. Paradoxically, its very sterility bred a rich imagination as a defensive armor--a retreat from the tyranny of toil.

RICH IN IMAGINATION

That our Granville colonists were rich in imagination is obvious from the zest with which they welcomed the adventure into a distant and mysterious wilderness in search of better soil and climate, better returns for their labor, and more comfort in their daily life. In their new home, remote from navigable rivers and thus practically cut off from commercial contact with the East, they were forced to depend on their own inventive ingenuity for the bare necessaries of life. They had to forge and fabricate their own tools. They had to spin their own yarn and weave their own cloth. They had to make their own millstones; grind their own meal; manufacture their own bricks; mold their own pots and stoves and kettles. Their ambition and industry, thus fructified by necessity, soon gave to Granville a stove foundry, a woolen mill, a wagon shop, a clock factory, a tannery, and a shop for the manufacture of wooden bowls and measures, besides a number of lesser industries.

THE VALUE OF EDUCATION

Also, born of their recognition of the value of education, came public schools and colleges, among them Granville Female College, founded in 1827 and Granville Literary and Theological Institution, now Denison University, established in 1831. Granville, a struggling colony during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, became, under the leadership of her indomitable Munsons, Fassetts, Mowers, Wrights, Reeds, Sinnetts, Cases, Winchells, Bancrofts, Langdons, Bakers, Taylors, and others like minded, a busy little manufacturing center.

It was the unanimous belief of the people of Granville that their village would continue to grow industrially until it should become a city. Alas for their optimism! The Ohio Canal, the National Road, and, later, the railroads, in their passage through Ohio, left Granville isolated,
and fatally handicapped by lack of transportation facilities. Of all her factories, but one survives—that for the development of mind and character, Denison University.

THE EARLY NEWSPAPERS

Among her early industries, Granville had her newspapers. They, too, are factories. And they are more important than most factories, inasmuch as their output consists of thoughts—and thoughts are always more important than things. It is the high office of the country paper to record the life and to interpret and preserve the individuality of its home community. Even its advertisements are social as well as commercial history. It is this which explains its survival in America; for thousands of towns and villages which long ago lost their illusions of future grandeur still cherish the newspapers which once proclaimed those illusions.

Granville's first newspaper, the *Wanderer*, a weekly, appeared in 1821, only sixteen years after the founding of our village. It survived only two years, but was succeeded, at irregular intervals, by others which likewise perished until, in 1880, the *Granville Times* was launched. With this succession of weekly papers this article is not concerned—their story is told elsewhere in this issue. The *Granville Times*, however, deserves special treatment, for it has just passed the fiftieth milestone in its career.

WILLIAM HENRY KUSSMAUL

That career comprises also the productive years of its first "devil" and, for many years, its publisher and proprietor, William Henry Kussmaul. Familiarly known, through these fifty years, to the citizens of Granville and hundreds of students of Denison University as "Koos," he has been so deeply immersed in the affairs of the *Granville Times* that to think of the one is to think of the other. Greeley was no more closely identified with the *New York Herald* nor Dana with the *Sun* than Koos with the *Granville Times*.

Day after day, year in and year out, he was to be found in or near the *Times* print shop, attending personally to the innumerable details of management or doing his share of the mechanical tasks of publication—the type-setting, the press work, the folding, wrapping, and addressing of the papers; for during the greater part of his connection with the *Times*, most of the operations preceding its weekly publication were done by hand. This is in sharp contrast with the present equipment of the *Times* plant, which includes so many ingenious machines that the human hand performs only a slight fraction of its earlier functions.

AN "OLD-TIME" PLANT

In that old-time plant, all of whose operations were conducted in one room, Koos was the stabilizer. His imperturbable temperament triumphed over all disorder. He was never disconcerted, never even impatient.

To an outsider, the shop of the country paper, up to twenty years ago, was often in a condition approaching pandemonium. The jar and rumble of crude hand press or antique gas-driven press, mingled with the rattle of type under the manipulation of compositors, and punctuated by the sharp calls of the copy boy and by the pungent repartee of operatives and reporters, united to compose a cacophony well calculated to stampede the temper of a philosopher. But Koos never lost his equilibrium. Quietly, with the easy assurance which characterizes efficiency, he kept an even keel. Under his calm control the crew ceased its clamor, tackled its tasks with new zest, and presently the day's work was done and the cares which had infested it "folded their tents like the Arabs and silently stole away."

I have seen Koos in many distracting situations—I have never seen him vexed or impatient or censorious. He never upbraided an
employee. He governed the expert printer and taught the unsophisticated novice with the same quiet courtesy and patience. He never posed as the dictator. He never blustered or fumed or fretted. He worked with his men--a kind overseer, an earnest teacher, a sincere fellow-worker. In my opinion, such magnanimity, kindness, and courtesy are among the finest--and perhaps the rarest--virtues.

I have mentioned Koos as a teacher. His services in that capacity deserve more than a mere mention. Many an impecunious college student was able to earn enough money by working on the *Times* force to pay a good part of his college expenses. Other college lads worked for the *Times* just because they were fascinated with the job. In every instance, their experience was a valuable adjunct to their formal education. As a matter of fact, the early country paper was an educational plant of no mean importance. Its atmosphere was congenial to thought. Its work was conducive to study. Some of its workers were men of real genius; many of them were men of wide travel and experience.

A "HOME PAPER"

The *Granville Times* has always been, to a remarkable degree, a home paper. It has never been its aim to offer to its readers even so much as a digest of state, national, or international news; but it has spared no pains to keep its clientele informed about the past and present of Granville. Its columns, therefore, have been rich in contributions from individuals whose familiarity with Granville history made them authentic reporters and interpreters.

Many of these contributions bore, in signature, only the initials of the writers' names. Thus, the letters M. M. M. have appeared at the bottom of many historical articles, obituaries, etc. These letters identified the writer as M. M. Munson, a blue-blooded Granville patriot. His long residence in our village made him an inexhaustible repository of Granville history, while his style as a writer was characterized by refinement and sincerity. It is a pity that his knowledge of Granville was not preserved for posterity in a book of reminiscences. What a joy it would be to read such a book!

Granville Times Composing Room in 1932. Chessie Young, Donald W. Young, Wilbert E. Young, Robert Johnson and Herbert Phenegar
Another frequent contributor was Peter Richards, of Lodi, Wisconsin. Under the title "Early Days in Granville" he gave readers of the Times many columns of delightful sketches. Another member of the Richards family, Henry L., of Winchester, Massachusetts, contributed many articles concerning his early recollections of Granville, all written in a sprightly, refreshing style. Theophilus Little, then of Kansas City, added to our knowledge of Granville history many columns of reminiscences, happily narrated.

William H. Johnson, for many years a member of the faculty of Denison University, and now chief editorial writer of the Columbus Dispatch, wrote many timely articles on Granville affairs which appeared over the initials "W. H. J." Another frequent contributor was Dora H. Case, whose work bore the signature D. H. C. Her fluent pen is now in the service of the Newark Advocate. Francis W. Shepardson's articles have been read by two generations of Times readers and are still frequently found in the Times. His articles in the Times, if pasted in a strip, would make a nice border around the village of Granville. William F. Chamberlin is an old friend of the Times, who knows how to write and what to write about and who never overlooks an opportunity to give publicity to matters of interest to Granville, the village of his love.

TRUTH AND CHARITY

The Granville Times, during the years when Koos was in active control, reflected his magnanimity. While it welcomed contributions from all sources and on all subjects of interest or concern to the community, its columns were closed to distempered controversy, offensive sensation, scandal, and scurrility. Granville has always been, in the main, a quiet, conservative, neighborly village. Occasionally, as in the heat of a political campaign, or in the discussion of some proposed innovation, we get excited and indulge in ungracious charges and recriminations— which we presently deplore; but we never throw vitriol. And we have been fortunate to possess a paper like the Times, which has represented the real character of our citizenry so faithfully.

The Times still clings to its traditional magnanimity. It is not now under the active control of Koos, although he is its manager-emeritus; but it still flies his flag and adheres to his policy—truth tempered with charity. Not "all the truth that is fit to print"—that is a poor screen against the bacteria of putrefaction; but all the truth that a self-respecting community cares to read—for Granville has not forgotten how to blush. Blessed be the pure in purpose, for they shall deserve—and get—a good newspaper.

JENNIE RANSOWER KUSSMAUL

The object of this article is expositive rather than biographical—to explain to the lay reader the province and power of the country press in general and, in particular, to demonstrate to Granville its own newspaper's conception of that province and its use of that power. It was essential, in carrying out our purpose, to paint this sketchy portrait of W. H. Kussmaul, whose aims have been built into the fabric of the Granville Times. It now becomes imperative, in order to make this discussion of the Times complete, to refer to another personality which has influenced its career, namely, that of the manager's wife. It was Mr. Kussmaul's good fortune to have chosen, for his helpmate, a Granville girl who knew her home village and loved it.

In 1890 he led to the altar Miss Jennie N. Ransower, who was born on Loudon street and educated in the public school and in Granville Female College. Her business sagacity did much to make the Times company a commercial success. Most of her time, from morning until evening, was spent in its bookshop or at its accounting desk. Her discerning
judgment and cheerful mien contributed as much to the prosperity of the plant as did her husband's technical skill and managerial ability. She died in 1926.

We offer this tribute to W. H. Kussmaul because we believe that a man "diligent in his business" for fifty years, deserves encomium. "Koos" may still be seen, at almost any hour of every working day, in the office of the Times. He could not be happy away from the odor of printers' ink. There we shall leave him, the same kindly, charitable mentor for whom--and with whom--we first worked "forty years ago."

Charles Browne White
July 31, 1930

Dates of Publication for The Granville Times

According to our Society archivist, Flo Hoffman, The Granville Times was published from January 11, 1880 until October 10, 1918; publication resumed on January 4, 1924 and continued through September 18, 1941. A special sesquicentennial issue was published on September 30, 1955.

Richard Shiels is Historian of the Year

Professor Richard Shiels was honored with the Howe Family Award, Historian of the Year, at the Annual Banquet on October 16, 1995. Dick has been a member of the Board of Management and served as President of the Society from 1992 to 1994. Quarterly public programs sponsored by the Society were instituted during his administration and for the past two years he has chaired the Program Committee bringing distinguished and interesting historical programs to Society members and the citizens of Granville. His deep knowledge and strong interest in the history of this area is also evidenced by his addresses to the Society on "The Religious Sources of Settlement of Granville" and "Granville Churches in 1885." He rewrote the docents manual for the Granville Historical Society Museum but perhaps is most widely known locally for his spirited impersonation of Elias Gilman during annual walking tours of the Old Colony Burying Ground.

Dr. Shiels is Associate Professor of History and Honors Coordinator at the Ohio State University/Newark. He is a graduate of Hope College and received the M.A.R. at Yale Divinity School and his Ph.D. from Boston University. His doctoral research on "The Connecticut Clergy in the Second Great Awakening: included Granville, Massachusetts and Granby, Connecticut. His research projects have studied the linkage of religious developments and out-migration from New England to Ohio, he has been awarded the Thomas J. Evans Teaching Excellence Award three times and this fall received the Robert A. Barnes Award for Exemplary Teaching.
From the President's Desk:

Under the leadership of Board Member Gay Weinberg, the Constitution and Bylaws of the Society are being updated. Gay's committee will have its recommendations ready by the April 22, 1996 Annual Meeting.

Membership continues to be a challenge for the Society now that we are computerized. Under chair Dan Campbell, the Membership Committee is working on identifying and correcting the problems and asks that former members and current members alike be patient while we work out inconsistent labeling and list-making.

A Building Usage policy for the Old Academy building has been approved by the Board of Managers. Jim Siegel is our contact person for groups wishing to use the building.

Kay Koeninger has taken over as Chair of the Museum Committee, succeeding Gay Weinberg. The Board extends its thanks to Gay for a fine job of outreach during the two years she served as chair and museum activities coordinator.

There is news from the Post Office about the mural on the back wall that depicts the first encounter of Theopolis Reese and the Massachusetts settlers. The mural is due to be cleaned as part of a national Postal Service project later this year. In addition, new ceiling lighting should further help the viewer see the details in the painting.

Please mark your calendars for the April 22, 1996, Annual Meeting.

--Tom Martin

January Program features William Howard Doane

On January 31 at 7:30 PM in the Burke Recital Hall, Denison's Distinguished Professor of Fine Arts, William N. Osborne, presented a biography of William Howard Doane. Following the lecture, guests had an opportunity to sing some of the hymns written by this industrialist, world traveler, philanthropist (Guests came prepared to give the number of Doane buildings at Denison!), devout Baptist, and prolific musician.
NOW IS THE TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TO THE GRANVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Nominations Committee

Tom Martin has formed the Nominations Committee. The task of the committee is to put forward a slate of nominees for the Spring Elections, which will be held at the annual meeting on April 22, 1996.

If you would like to run for an office in your society, or if you would like the Nominations Committee to consider a member, please call Tom Martin by February 10 in care of his Denison Office: 587-6631, or email [Martin@Denison.edu].

Members of the Nomination Committee are: Dan Campbell, Kay Koeninger, Maggie Brooks, Jim Siegel, Dick Shiels, and Tom Martin, chair.

The positions open this year are the following:

President: [Two year term]
Vice-President: [Two year term]
Secretary: [Two year term]
Three Board Members: [for three year terms--1996-1999]
One Board Member: [for a two year term--1996-1998]

Victoria Woodhull and Tennessee Claflin

The December, 1995 issue of American Heritage contains an article on Homer's own Victoria Woodhull and Tennessee Claflin. The emphasis of the article is on the Wall Street brokerage house set up by the two sisters in 1870.

The Summer, 1994 issue of The Historical Times contained Suzanne Condray's biographical essay on Victoria Woodhull. Professor Condray also produced a thirty-minute video on the life of Woodhull which has been shown on WOSU-TV.

The editors gratefully acknowledge the work of Marilyn Sundin in typing the original copy of Mr. White's article and the editorial assistance of Cookie Shields in arranging this essay for publication.

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Kevin Bennett announces the spring schedule for the monthly meetings of the Civil War Roundtable sponsored by the Granville Historical Society. Meetings will take place on the third Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. in the Society's recently refurbished Old Academy Building, South Main and Elm Streets. All members are invited to attend the monthly meetings of the Roundtable. A vast knowledge of civil war history is not a prerequisite for the meetings.

Kevin Bennett

A presentation of the trial and execution of the commander of Andersonville Prison. Was Wirz the "war criminal" often portrayed by historians, or was he a scapegoat tried to incriminate the Confederacy and to deflect criticism from the Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton?

February 20, 1996: "The Copperheads in Central Ohio":
David Woodmannsee

David Woodmannsee explores the role played by groups such as the "Copperheads" in the central Ohio area during the Civil War. This presentation, based on Mr. Woodmannsee's Honors Thesis at Denison University, discusses whether these groups were active southern sympathizers or were motivated by anti-war concerns.

Dr. Chet Bennett

Dr. Bennett, an active member of the Ohio Sons of Confederate Veterans, will discuss the career of Worthington, Ohio native, Roswell Ripley. This Ohio Confederate saw service at the battle of Fort Sumter and was a key figure in the siege of Charleston.

April --, 1996: [To Be Announced]

May 21, 1996: "General George McClellan Reconsidered: A Debate":
Clarke Wilhelm and Jamie Ryan

Always controversial, the subject of General George McClellan and his merits as a commander will be debated by Clarke Wilhelm, Professor Emeritus of History at Denison University, and Jamie Ryan, a leading authority on the Army of the Potomac. Kevin notes that "with these two sharp minds and sparkling wits, this promises to be an exciting event."
Granville, Ohio, Historical Society
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WCLT Radio
From the Archives: Broadway and Main, about 1915

THE HISTORICAL TIMES

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It is included with membership in the Society and is sent to all members.

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Send comments, suggestions and questions about membership to
The Granville Historical Society
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With this issue, the editors of The Historical Times have completed Volume Nine of our quarterly Newsletter.

We trust that you, our valued members and readers, have both enjoyed and profited from the many articles we have published now for nearly a decade.

With our tenth anniversary volume in 1996, we hope to publish several special articles of importance to the history of our village.

This issue brings our publication schedule back to its normal quarterly rotation.

We apologize for any inconvenience due to our falling behind in our regular publication schedule.