



THE HISTORICAL TIMES

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William Uter, author of *Granville, the Story of an Ohio Village*, works at his desk in this 1955 photo to record facts from the records of The Licking Company as kept by Village founders. The Historical Society holds both this record as well as the canisters containing his notes (shown in left side of photo). Uter, a professor of history at Denison University, published his book in 1956.

Professor Emerita Lorle Porter, a distinguished member of the Muskingum College History faculty and a long time friend of the Granville Historical Society, spoke at the Society's annual banquet on the topic of "Doing Local History." Professor Porter began with a tribute to the publication of the new three-volume bicentennial history of Granville, noting that "the project sets a new standard for local history studies." She emphasized the historical principle that "the study of one's roots is important in describing and understanding one's present." Hence, this by itself is an important reason for doing local history. And, she noted: "This is what your bicentennial history project is all about."

Professor Porter began her presentation proper with a brief discussion of her take on the historical

[Editor's Note: The featured article in this issue of the Historical Times is a narrative description of the principal address that Professor Lorle Porter delivered at the annual banquet and meeting of the Granville Historical Society on November 17, 2004, at the Granville Inn.]

Museum begins to extend hours

Thanks to the support of our generous donors through the 2005 Honor Fund, the Granville Museum will expand its hours of operation beginning the week of April 24.

Jodi Chiles, docent coordinator hired as a result of a successful annual campaign, continues to recruit volunteers who can conduct tours and provide information to visitors. As docent numbers increase, so too can hours of operation at the museum. Call us to volunteer.

Hours of operation, beginning in June:

Sundays: June, July, August 12 noon - 4 p.m.

Mondays: Closed for exhibit work

Tuesdays, Wednesdays: Open for group tours and school visits.

Thursdays: Open for research and archivists
9 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 - 3 p.m.

Fridays: Open to the public 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Saturdays: Open to the public 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Special weekends in Granville, open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday and 12 noon - 4 p.m. on Sunday.

Inside

SPECIAL INSERT: HONOR FUND 2005 ANNUAL REPORT

flavor of the Granville community. The early Granville settlers were the original Welsh dissenters mixed three years later with the New England Congregationalists from the neighboring villages of Granby, Connecticut, and Granville, Massachusetts. She suggested that these factors alone make the Granville community unique for Ohio—"far more, for example, than what one finds in the Western Reserve." Ohio's early hamlets were different from one another in their foundations: Chillicothe was very Southern; Napoleon, quite French; St. Henry, German, and, of course, Marietta on the Ohio River, New England. The area of Ohio north of Granville, for the most part, was not settled by emigrating peoples of European descent until after the War of 1812. Following that last set of skirmishes with the British, settlers arrived in Ohio from all parts of the then settled United States; these new mid-westerners had to learn to work together, and in these joint efforts they discovered and developed an intense political vitality.

Doing Local History is Never Easy

Professor Porter remarked how difficult it is to carry out and complete projects in local history. She noted: "Everyone here this evening knows how hard you have worked on these projects!" Yet in a real sense, she said, historians in Granville had it easy. This was especially true because so many of the Granville citizens of the past were literate and, in addition, kept substantial records. The Granville Historical Society itself is nearly a hundred twenty-five years old. What renders undertaking local history arduous is working with people who have left very few or none of the conventional records so necessary for sophisticated historical research. For example, doing historical research on the African American

members of a community during the pre-civil war years or on the Native Americans like the Hopewell Culture of nearly two millennia ago is always a challenge.

Professor Porter next offered several other examples of the difficulties encountered in undertaking local historical research. From the beginning, one needs to transcend the criticism of many professional historians, who refer to local history writing as "nothing more than ancestor worship!" To the contrary, local history is how one begins to understand one's place in a community. And, she remarked: "The most fun—and the most work—in doing local history is recovering truly lost history." She offered insights from her work undertaking research in the Slavic communities of eastern Ohio not far from her home in New Concord. Her book, *The Immigrant Cocoon*, traced the foundations and developments of these communities. She remarked how important church records are for this kind of historical research. Also personal letters, when available, tell the stories of these peoples. Newspaper articles often hold all we know about a certain group of people at a certain time in the history of a community. When long runs of newspapers exist, these printed pages "offer wonderful clues to community life." Professor Porter recalled how one Slavic woman, commenting on *The Immigrant Cocoon*, told her: "You gave us our history back!" This alone is worth the effort.

An example

Professor Porter's current research project is directed towards writing a history of nineteenth-century Mount Vernon in Knox County. From 1843 until the end of the century, there were two opposition newspapers in Mount Vernon, and the discussions of the political issues that divided the editors

Granville's early historians relied on memories to write and illustrate history

Doing local history often depends upon memories. When Charles Bryant, the founder of the Granville Historical Society, embarked on a genealogy of early settlers, a project he never finished before his untimely death, he realized this importance.

In one letter from Cyrus Brooks, dated January 25, 1886, and written from St. Paul, Minn., for example, Brooks recalls a number of people and events from his earlier life in Granville.



Drawing of Granville Furnace

"Our flour, I think, was made at Monson's mill (sic), some two and a half miles below town and that the mill was built by Gen. Monson. Alex Bigelow was

the miller. I am quite sure that loads of wheat were sometimes taken to Zanesville for grinding. Corn was ground at Case's mill on the little stream just be-

low town. I used to go there as soon as I was big enough to balance a bag of corn on a horse's back and the kind old miller, Mr. Bean, would always ask, "Whose young man are you?" I think this mill was built by Maj. Case, the father of Grove and Norton Case. There was a carding machine connected with it, where the wool of which our winter clothing was made was prepared for the spinning wheel. There was a blast furnace at the mouth of this stream, supplied with iron ore from the hills southeast of Newark. At this furnace, at a later day, was put in operation the first steam engine that I ever saw."

Annual Report 2005 Honor Fund

Recognizing the Society's 120 Years of Preserving
Granville History for its Bicentennial



Charles Webster Bryant
1849 - 1886
Founder, Granville Historical Society

A most honorable year

Over the years, I have worked with good people in Granville to bring worthy causes to public attention. This year has been no exception. Through planning for positive growth, the Society's board set forward-looking goals and outlined the path to reach those goals in clear ways that involve and benefit the community and enrich the mission of the organization. This is an exciting time in our history.

Throughout the year, you have heard from President Lance Clarke as he kept you informed about the progress of the first ever campaign to support programs and those people who collect, protect, exhibit, and proclaim Granville's history. As Granville celebrated its 200th birthday, the Society, too, celebrated its role as the Village's memory. We came to you for the first time in our 120 years to ask you to help us grow and improve our service to you. With the President's leadership and the enthusiastic support of each member of the Board and the Honor Fund Committee, we exceeded our goal.

Much good comes of your generosity. It is already happening with the presence of Jodi Chiles as docent coordinator. You will be able to walk into the museum more often and see new exhibits. You will know that inside the workings of the Society, the history you write everyday is being tenderly cared for and protected. You will know that your generosity makes a difference over the long haul of history. Thank you for your support in 2005 and may you continue to place your faith and trust in the programs and people of the Granville Historical Society.

Evelyn Frolking, Chair, Honor Fund Committee; Board Member

2005 Honor Fund Accounting at December 31, 2005 by Program Goals

Program	Used	To be Used	Total
\$10,000 to add Museum Hours; Docent Coordinator; Programs	\$1,125	9,500	10,625
\$4,000 to improve Granville History Publications	318	4,120	4,438
\$3,000 to assure Life of Honor Fund	1,552	0	1,552
\$2,000 to add Computer and Archival Supplies	1,709	0	1,709
\$1,000 to add Care of Old Colony Burying Ground		1,000	1,000
Goal: \$20,000			19,324
\$3,500 Special Gift to Add Historic Marker to Old Colony Burying Ground		3,500	3,500
Total Given:			\$22,824

2005 Honor Fund Report of Donors

Through the generosity of these people, the Granville Historical Society begins to take a new turn in its own history. Increased access to its museum on Broadway and additional programs about Granville's long and well documented history can now be noticed through the success of this year's campaign. This fund accomplishes these and other important goals. Our heartfelt thanks to all of you.

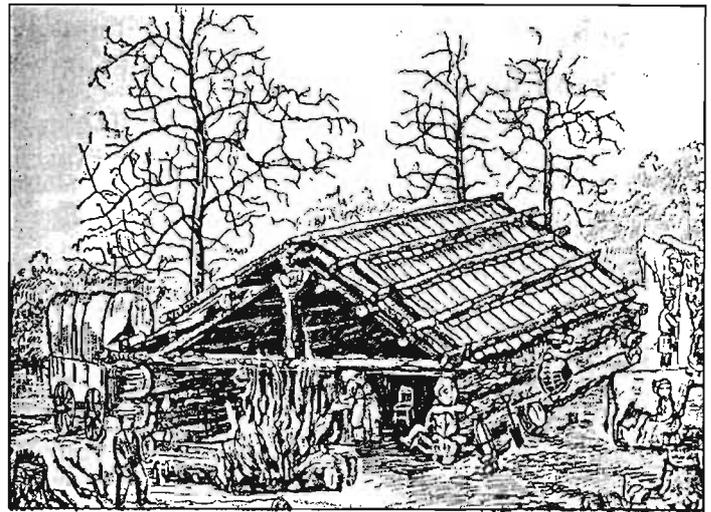
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and their readers are fascinating for the historian. Examples of rhetorical liveliness included one editor referring to the other as a “Lying varlet,” which produced a self-righteous response from the one defamed, calling the original writer “a loathsome reptile!” Nonetheless, before 1843, Mount Vernon boasted hardly a newspaper for forty years. Given the lack of the printed word, how is one to reconstruct the historical narrative of such a town? Here the local historian must delve into what she referred to as “the familiar litany”: census records and court records, church records, and cemetery data, both the tombstone inscriptions and burial records when available. Genealogies too are most valuable research tools, even though some professional historians scoff at this kind of historical work.

Professor Porter presented four examples of what she had discovered about the lost or confused narrative on Mount Vernon history — what, she said, “I’ve been able to ferret out without a printed record.” She spoke about her discoveries into the Norton Family of Mount Vernon. The family of Daniel Norton, a pioneer family in Mount Vernon, has been generally forgotten, except for one street name. Nonetheless, through her diligent research, Professor Porter found references to the Nortons in the early 1882 history of the area and in genealogies. Through these sources, she traced the elder Daniel Norton from a plantation in Louisiana to Brownsville, Pennsylvania; there, he married a woman whose home was in Mount Vernon. Their two sons were important in mid-nineteenth century national politics. Daniel Norton Junior, a Senator from Minnesota, was involved in the impeachment trial of Andrew Johnson. The other son, Banning, served in the 1870s as vice chair of the Republican National Committee. Hence, through the research in the sources listed above, Professor Porter was able, as she says, “to flesh out the story of a famous Mount Vernon person who had long been forgotten.”

The second example is Caleb McNulty. A line in the 1882 history of Mount Vernon intrigued her: “The idol of his party, former clerk of the House of Representatives left his profession for the company of the dissolute and unworthy.” The genealogies from Washington, Pennsylvania, suggested that he was Scots-Irish and the son of “Rob Roy McGregor McNulty.” In the historical record of the House of Representatives, one discovers that Caleb was a Jacksonian political appointee and that later, as a Senator from Ohio, he was being groomed for national leadership fifteen years before the firing of the canons at Fort Sumter. There is a disturbing reference indicating that he was “fired” in 1845. He died in the Mexican War. These sketchy facts were all that the historical record indicated. Of course, an inquiring historian would wonder: “Why the firing?” Then, as Professor Porter noted, “in my beloved reading of newspapers, in 1894 there was a Letter to the Editor describing the situation of Caleb McNulty.” This letter writer wrote that Caleb was a six-foot-eight man who was a charismatic leader. Then to the nub of the situation: “he was fired for poker debts amounting to



The first house in Granville, recreated from memory by an early artist

fifteen thousand dollars.” Professor Porter noted that from the newspaper reading and the study of the genealogies, “a colorful part of the history of Mount Vernon has been reclaimed.”

A third example Professor Porter presented is Jesse Burgess Thomas, the Illinois Senator who introduced the Missouri Compromise into the political scenario of the ante-bellum years. Senator Thomas lived in Mount Vernon for a quarter of a century, 1828-1853. The importance of genealogy when it is done properly is to correct mistakes. In the printed records and in an A&E history program on cable television, Senator Thomas is confused explicitly with a judge who came into conflict with Abraham Lincoln in the 1830s in Illinois. This judge turned out to be Senator Thomas’s nephew. This is another lucid example where studying the sources common to local historians resolves a confusion that had dominated the writing of mid-nineteenth Illinois history.

And the final example is a confusion of the gender of a famous physician in late-nineteenth century Mount Vernon, Dr. Jane Payne. A 1911 published history about the old doctors in the Knox County area noted: “He has a good reputation although he had only one eye.” One notices that in this sentence, the masculine pronoun, “he,” is used twice. Yet, one must remember that all through the Victorian era, it was common to have unisex names — “Jayne, Evelyn and Vivian, to name but a few examples — all could refer to either a man or a woman.” However, this historian of early twentieth century Mount Vernon writing about the earlier medical practitioners confused the gender of Dr. Jane Payne. Once again, the reading of the local newspapers resolved the dilemma. An 1862 advertisement noted explicitly that “a woman doctor trained in Philadelphia had come to Mount Vernon.” Other research into cemetery records and the census reports brought Dr. Payne’s story to light, including a reference to Amelia Bloomer’s influence on her.

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What These Vignettes Show Us

In these four cases that Professor Porter examined, readings and research into local sources produced fascinating results for her writing of the history of Mount Vernon. As she remarked, "Local history fills in the blanks!" Concluding her banquet address, Professor Porter remarked: "So, with these vignettes, I think I have made the case for the importance of recovering lost history; and this depends on doing local history well."

Professor Porter left several final thoughts for local historians to ponder. First, she posed the query: "What if some of one's discoveries are scandalous?" Her procedural principle on these matters is to consider who needs to know this fact or set of facts. Professor Porter noted that she does not routinely publish material on illegitimacy—unless it would make a profound difference in the historical narrative. Secondly, what about actual scandalous behavior? She remarked that in her research into Caleb McNulty, it was obvious that some accounts labeled him as "dissolute" and "a drunkard." She noted that "what I have used in this case is in the context of the politics of the 1840s—i.e., the Mexican War—and the Democratic leadership and its Whig opposition." His actual life with its many experiences gives dimension to this saga. In the end, she remarked that she needs to weigh each case: "Does this story need to be told?"

In concluding, Professor Porter reflected on her fascination with cemeteries. She noted that Ohio burial grounds are a valuable source of rich historical information. Names of family members are often given, and the family surnames of wives, in particular, are useful. In many ways, she noted that information in cemeteries "will tell the truth about us....!"

---Anthony J. Lisska, Denison University

Could you tell me?

Archivists Flo Hoffman and Theresa Overholser receive many questions from residents and visitors to Granville about local history. Here are just two in recent months:

Q Why were jewelers' clocks always set at 8:17?

A This was the hour that Abraham Lincoln died and it became a tradition to set watches and clocks at that time. Large clocks with painted faces were typically placed in front of jewelry stores to advertise their location. Granville once had three such "clocks" in the main business block of Broadway. (Answer found in *Granville Times* index in an 1892 article)

Q I saw a beautiful monument to a little boy named John Page in the Old Colony Burying Ground? What can you tell me about it?

A It is probably the handsome sandstone gravestone was erected in 1833 to commemorate John Page Whipple (the last name was hard to read), who was killed by a falling tree in 1824 when he was seven years old. The stone was carved nine years later by his uncle Manley Whipple at age 19. Manley later became a well-known artist as evidenced by this early work. (Answer found in the *Old Colony Burying Ground* records while conducting research for the *National Register* nomination for the cemetery)



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celebrating its 20th year of publication

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St. Could you tell me....?