

# Grove City Sesquicentennial History

The land upon which Grove City now sits was once heavily wooded and teamed with wildlife. It was the fur trade driven by the abundant wildlife that drew various Native American nations and European fortune seekers to the area. The Scioto River was a key feature of the region. The Scioto Trail, the main on-land transportation route used for warfare, trade and migration, followed the river from its mouth in present day Portsmouth north to the Sandusky River, then along that river to Lake Erie. The Scioto River with the Little Miami and Ohio rivers anchored surveys for the land bequeathed to Revolutionary War generals from Virginia in payment for service.

**1803** In 1803, Ohio became a state and was carved into counties. Franklin County was divided into four townships, the southwest quadrant named Franklin Township. As the population grew, the township was further divided, creating Jackson Township in 1815.

In 1805, Hugh Grant Sr. purchased 450 acres in present Jackson Township to establish a homestead. Unfortunately, after settling on the wrong land (not uncommon as deeds often identified parcels with vague descriptions of landscape elements), he fell to his death in 1806. In 1810, his widow and children were conveyed land "beginning at the northeast corner of Survey 1383 at two white oaks and a black oak..." the area around Haughn Road and Park Street.

The catalyst to the formation of Grove City was construction of the Columbus and Harrisburg Turnpike in 1848-1849 using the stagecoach trail running from Columbus to Mount Sterling. The turnpike finally established reliable, direct connectivity with the state capital, a path to market for residents, and increased traffic from long-distance travelers. By 1850, the township's population had doubled to 1,550.

The turnpike was seen as a prime opportunity by William Foster Breck, a merchant from Fairfield County who purchased 273 acres in Jackson Township west of the road from his father-in-law, land he maintained as a farm. He bought 15 additional acres on the east side of the road from the Grant family and formed a partnership with other Fairfield County businessmen: John Malott, brother-in-law Jeremiah Smith, carpenter George Weygant and mason William Sibray. In 1852, those 15 acres were divided into plats, forming the new town named "Grove City" after the trees left standing once the plats were cleared. They built a general store, a post office, a brick plant and a sawmill, then set to enticing people to move to the budding town of 50 with Columbus and Lancaster newspaper advertisements.



W.F. Breck Home • Illustrator: Earl Nicholson

In 1866, a group of 37 merchants and farmers in the town of Grove City gathered to petition Franklin County and State of Ohio officials to incorporate the village on March 5, 1866. The incorporation was granted March 13, 1866. Unfortunately, Breck did not live to see this achievement, dying in a farming accident two years earlier.

**1866** A.G. Grant, grandson of Hugh Grant, Sr., purchased most of Breck's farmland from his widow. The first election held May 10, 1866, resulted in Dr. Joseph Bullen being named mayor; Randolph Higgy, clerk; Gabriel Postle Sr., marshal; and William Sibray, Anton Pilger Sr., A.M. Anderson, John L. Smith and Leonard Buckholtz, councilmen.

The population of the town grew steadily, surpassing 140 by 1870.

Grove City continued to grow steadily as the forests gave way to farms, homes, churches and schools, as well as mills, stores, factories and other businesses. The village was strengthened when the Cincinnati, Midland City and Columbus Railroad **1884** began service through Grove City in 1884.

In 1889, the area of the village more than doubled when Grant platted "Beulah's Addition," located on the land west of the turnpike. It filled with new villagers, surging in popularity once Grant brokered the establishment of an electric interurban route from Columbus to Grove City in 1898, making it easy for Grove Citians to work in or transport wares to Columbus and for visitors to make their way to Grove City attractions.

After a period of limited growth during the Great Depression and World War II, Grove City had a strong period of geographic and population expansion during the 1950s, surpassing the 5,000 residents needed to apply for a city charter by more than 50 percent by 1958. Voters approved the Grove City Charter November 4, 1958, and Grove City officially became a city.

**1958** In 2017, Grove City has nearly 40,000 residents and more than 1,200 businesses. After more than 150 years **2017** the community retains its small-town charm and the original Grant-Sawyer home.



"The undersigned citizens and legal voters of the village of Grove City, in the township of Jackson, county of Franklin, hereby petition your honorable body for the incorporation of the above named village. Said proposed incorporated town is situated in Jackson Township, Franklin County, on the Columbus and Harrisburg turnpike, six miles southwest of the city of Columbus, and being part of the Virginia Military Survey No. 1388 entered originally by Washington and Morgan, and accurate plat of said village being attached to this petition. The incorporated name of said town to be 'Incorporation of Grove City.'"

Submitted: March 5, 1866 ~ Granted: March 13, 1866

**Information collected from:**  
 "Images of America: Grove City" (Janet Shailer and Laura Lanese, 2008); "History of Grove City and Jackson Township," The Grove City Record (Harold N. Windsor, June 24, 1932); "History of Franklin and Pickaway Counties, Ohio" (Williams Brothers, 1880); "History of Franklin County" (William T. Martin, 1858); "Sale of Grove City Lots," Lancaster Weekly Gazette (W.F. Breck, Sept. 22, 1852)



# Grant-Sawyer Home Dedication, Community Picnic & Village Sesquicentennial



Grant Family Reunion, 1910



Adam Gabriel Grant

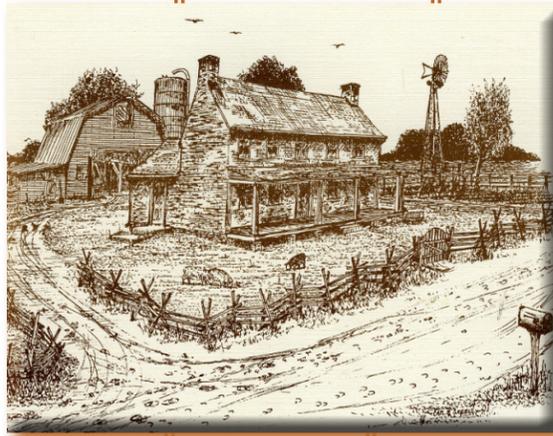


Ruth V. Sawyer Jividen

**Special Thanks to:** Southwest Franklin County Historical Society • Grove City Historical Commission  
 Grove City Parks & Recreation and Service Departments

Mayor Richard L. "Ike" Stage  
 Grove City Council President Roby Schottke, Members Steve Bennett, Ted Berry, Jeffrey Davis, Steve Robinette

# Grant-Sawyer Home - Pictures & History



**1788** Hugh Grant Sr. was 23 years old when Marietta became the first permanent settlement in the Northwest Territory in 1788. A native of Pittsburgh, he lived most of his adult life in Pennsylvania. From his youth, he learned the trade of a miller and, as an adult, he owned and operated a gristmill in that city. According to historical accounts, he also acquired 187 acres' of prime property that is now the heart of downtown Pittsburgh. Grant made forays into the Northwest Territory when he took his surplus goods down the Ohio River and further south. It is difficult to know for sure what prompted Grant to move into a wilderness after enjoying the benefits of city life. Whatever the reason, he and his family deserve credit for their part in opening southwest Franklin County to settlement. At 38 years of age, Grant decided to leave Pennsylvania. It was a decision that impacted not only Grant, but his wife, Catherine Barr Grant, and their three children. By the time he left Pennsylvania, the new state of Ohio had been created in 1803.

A description of Grant's more than 400 acres was described as: "Beginning at the northeast corner of Survey 1383 at two white oaks and a black oak corner to said survey; thence west 253 poles; thence south 253 poles; thence east 253 poles to the line of said survey; thence north along the line of said survey 253 poles to the beginning, containing 400 acres."<sup>2</sup> Unable to locate the specific parcel, Grant and his family squatted on land somewhere to the west of the Scioto River. Native Americans also lived in the area and passed the Grant home frequently. When Hugh Grant was away, the Indians would stop and take whatever they wanted, but never approached his property when he was home. In the early 1800s, most settlers in Franklin County feared their Indian neighbors.

**1803**



In December 1806, Grant was killed while attempting to remove a limb from a bee tree. The limb broke under his weight, causing him to fall with the broken limb landing on his chest, most likely dying instantly.

**1836** After his death, Catherine was able to identify the acres her husband purchased. She moved the family to that land and constructed a cabin on the land that would become the family homestead. The house was located on Crushed Stone Pike, a road today identified as Haughn Road. She lived there until her death in 1836.

Hugh Grant Jr., born six months after his father's accident, was willed the property after his mother's death. In the 1840s, he constructed the brick house currently located at Haughn Road and Park Street, which fell outside of Grove City in Jackson Township.<sup>3</sup> Hugh Jr. was a successful farmer and community leader. The father of 14 was also an active member of the Methodist Episcopal Church and did what he could to promote the church within the community.

Hugh's son Adam Gabriel Grant was only 12 years old when William Foster Breck and others platted the settlement of Grove City in 1852 on property they purchased from the Grant family. Little is known about Adam's youth, but no doubt he watched Grove City develop from a small settlement into a prosperous community.

**1852**



**1862** In April 1862 at age 22, Adam ventured west to seek his fortune mining gold in Sierra, California, at the start of the Civil War and near the end of the California Gold Rush. He returned to Grove City in 1864, and was a successful Grove City merchant for 27 years.

Adam was also involved in farming. He worked 20 years as a stockbroker in Franklin, Pickaway and Madison counties, and operated a brick factory for 28 years. He was a major player in the creation of Grove City Savings Bank and also had real estate holdings in Columbus as well as Grove City. Grant was also instrumental in the construction of Grove City's first storm sewers, several roads and bridges. He is well known for platting the Beulah's Addition section of Grove City, which he developed from property he bought from W.F. Breck's widow.

**1987** The home remained in the Grant family's hands as Grove City blossomed around it. After Adam's death in 1919, the property passed to John Grant, Adam's stepbrother. After he died, his daughter Relieffe assumed the property. She lived there with her husband Clarence Wilbur Sawyer and daughter Ruth, born June 8, 1915.

Ruth's father operated the Sawyer Dairy on the property and he provided the first pasteurized milk to residents on his dairy route. Ruth wrote in a newspaper article that she worked at her father's dairy milking cows. She also drove tractors and operated a hay bailer on the family farm. She went on to marry Lem Seymour whom she outlived, then Dale O. Jividen for 22 years.

**2014**

Once Relieffe passed away, Ruth Sawyer Jividen became the last member of the Grant family to occupy the old homestead. Ruth was the sixth generation of Hugh Grant's descendants to live on that property. History was important to Ruth who passed away on April 14, 2014 at the age of 98. She was a charter member of the Southwest Franklin County Historical Society and many other organizations in Grove City. The City of Grove City purchased the property from Mrs. Jividen with a promise to preserve the home and nearly two-acre, historic site. Restoration began in early 2016 and continues today.

**2017** Each generation of the Grant family played a role in the growth, development and success of Grove City as it grew from a small village to the major suburb it is today. The Grant homestead survived the Civil War, World War I, the Great Depression, World War II and the events of the postwar era.

The Grant-Sawyer Home, formerly known as the A.G. Grant Homestead, is the oldest home in Grove City. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and was occupied by descendants of the same family since the 1840s. There are only a handful of homes in Ohio that can make the same claim.



The upstairs of the home, not currently open to visitors, has a central hallway with a small sitting area and three bedrooms. The nursery will be styled as a 19th century room with toys spanning 60 years. The guest bedroom will be styled in the 1880s, the furniture belonged to Ruth Jividen. The master bedroom will be styled in the 1850s to 1860s, the furniture belonged to the Grant/Jividen family. Mr. Jividen's desk will be displayed in the master bedroom.

This history was compiled in 2017 by James F. Hale from records and documents maintained in the archives of the Southwest Franklin County Historical Society. Other sources cited below.  
 1 A Centennial Biographical History of the City of Columbus and Franklin County; 2 Franklin County Deed Book F, page 154 in the Recorder's Office; 3 Marilyn Gibboney, Grove City historian.