



Our Old Bookcase, June 1, 2017. Mercer Co. Indian Relic Collectors - June 25 exhibit

Photo caption: The Mercer County Indian Relic Collectors will be sharing their Prehistoric Artifact Collections at the Mercer County Historical Museum for the 37th year on June 25th.

OUR OLD BOOK CASE

By Joyce L. Alig, President, Mercer County Historical Society

“A Picture is worth a thousand words,” is the phrase which I recalled when I wanted to clarify that the photograph above illustrated previous exhibits by the Mercer County Indian Relic Collectors displaying their artifacts at the Mercer County Historical Museum. When I checked Bartlett’s book, *“Familiar Quotations,”* I learned that statement paraphrased the ancient Chinese quotation, *“One picture is worth more than ten thousand words.”*

The word *“artifacts”* is used to describe *“anything made by man.”* Therefore, stone tools created by man thousands of years ago are identified as *“artifacts.”* Arrow heads, stone axes, and slate pendants are known as *“prehistoric artifacts,”* because they were made by man thousands of years ago, before history books were written. Look at the cemeteries at the marble monuments; a thousand years from now, historians may identify the monuments as artifacts made by man in the 20th and/or the 21st Centuries.

These Mercer County Indian Relic Collectors are Prehistoric Artifact Collectors who have a passion for collecting the artifacts which range in age up to a thousand to ten thousand years old. The Collectors are

dedicated to learning how the artifacts were used and whether the artifacts are slate, flint, or granite. They study the flint colors because that knowledge of geology may tell them where the flint was found which was used for a particular arrow head. Some people come to the Mercer County Historical Museum and ask for identification of artifacts made from a rich multi-colored rose and wine color. Ohioans know these beautiful stones come from the Flint Ridge area of Ohio. Others ask about a green colored stone, with the name of "Mercer" and are surprised that those "Mercer artifacts" do not come from stones found from Mercer County, Ohio, but originated in Indiana. Geologists can often look at a stone piece and identify the place where that stone originated, whether in Ohio or elsewhere. Geologists are able to determine the source of marble used in government buildings or churches, by looking at the color and pattern on the marble.

Other Collectors find stones which had been worked into the shape of an animal. A few beautiful "Bird Stones," are exhibited at the Mercer County Historical Museum Exhibit. Some black slate stones had been created into beautiful pendants.

Remember that trade was important to prehistoric people. During the winter, many groups of early man, traveled south, to a warmer climate, just like many Mercer Countians travel to Florida in the wintertime today. For thousands of years, early man moved through South America, Central America and North America at a time when farming did not tie them to one place. The artifacts I have seen in Museums in South and Central American countries are very similar to the artifacts I have seen in the United States and Canada and as far north as Alaska. Prehistoric man had his own trade routes across land and rivers.

If you appreciate the prehistoric artifacts which were made thousands of years ago by people living right here in Mercer County, you should visit the Mercer County Historical Museum, one block east of the Mercer County Courthouse, and see the Prehistoric Artifact Exhibit by the Mercer County Indian Relic Collectors, on Sunday, June 25th. I hope to see you there.

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