



Our Old Bookcase, May 18, 2017, Mercer Co. Historical Museum Plaques

Photo caption: Have you seen the new plaques at the Mercer County Historical Museum?

OUR OLD BOOK CASE

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

The Mercer County Historical Society met with the Mercer County Commissioners over a year ago, about creating new plaques and replacing the old brick columns, holding the previous Courthouse bell, in front of the Mercer County Historical Museum, the Riley Home.

The Mercer County Commissioners had bricks left over from the new Mercer County Jail building, which were used to have new brick columns constructed, to replace the previous ones. The Mercer County Historical Society offered to pay for new plaques, with the permission of the Mercer County Commissioners.

The bell is the old bell which was located in the previous Mercer County Courthouse, 1868-1923, (when the current Mercer County Courthouse was dedicated.) The previous Courthouse stood on the southeast corner of the Courthouse Lawn, at the northwest corner of Main and Market Streets. After the 1868-1923 Courthouse bell was removed from its tower, it found a new home in a church east of Celina. (I did not check the Commissioners' Records if they gave that bell to the church, or if the Commissioners charged them for the bell.) However, the Commissioners gave up ownership of that old bell, at that time. When the church closed, the bell was given to the Mercer County Historical Society. Eugene Hirschfeld constructed the brick columns to hold that bell on the lawn of the Mercer County Historical Museum.

Nearly four decades later, the bricks needed attention and the plaques were aging due to exposure to the weather. Thus, the new brick columns and the new plaques were made

The plaque on the East side reads: ***“Mercer County Historical Museum, The Riley Home – Built by Calvin Riley, 1896; administered by Mercer County Historical Society, Inc. Mercer County Courthouse Bell, 1868-1923, Property of Mercer Co. Historical Soc. 1975. Sign by Jony D. Images.”***

The plaque on the West side reads: ***“Mercer County Commissioners Resolution # 438. Whereas, It has been brought to the attention of the Board of Mercer County Commissioners by Mercer County Historical Soc. President Joyce Alig, that a place is needed for the Mercer County Historical Society; Whereas, that the Board of Mercer County Commissioners do hereby agree to purchase a home for the Mercer County Historical Society, at 130 East Market, Celina, Ohio from David K. and Barbara D. Riley, May 27, 1975. Mercer County Commissioners – Property Owners.”***

The County Museum had been located on the second floor of the business building, at the Northeast Corner of Main and Fayette Streets. It was a great move to the Riley Home, to host the Mercer County Historical Museum.

The Mercer County Historical Society, Inc. was created at the request of the Mercer County Commissioners, when they first had the idea to create a County Museum and in 1957 included a \$4000.00 appropriation in their 1958 budget for the Mercer County Historical Society. Over the years, the Mercer County Historical Society has grown and has followed its Mission Statement: To Preserve Mercer County’s History and to Educate the public about that History.

The next Open House at the Mercer County Historical Museum will be held Sunday, June 25, 1:00 – 4:00, when the Mercer County Indian Relic Collectors will host their Exhibit of Prehistoric Artifacts on the Lawn of the Museum. You are invited to enjoy the Exhibit and to see the new Plaques.

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