



Our Old Bookcase, Oct. 26, 2017, Historic Marker at the Source of the Wabash River

Photo caption: This Marker was dedicated as a part of the Anthony Wayne Parkway project, by the Fort Recovery Historical Society Members, on June 18, 1959. This Post Card Photograph will be on the 17th Annual Post Card Exhibit, at the Mercer County Historical Museum on Sunday afternoon, November 12, 2017. (Post Card Credit: Chuck's Color Fotos, Hicksville, Ohio, 1959.)

OUR OLD BOOK CASE

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

On a quiet morning in September, I returned to visit this historical site, about four miles south of Fort Recovery on St. Rt. 49, just east of the intersection of the Mercer-Darke County Line Road. The records state that this Marker is located within a half mile of the Source of the Wabash River.

The front of this Marker identifies the Wabash River, meandering north through the Village of Recovery, and into Indiana to Fort Wayne, and then west to the Tippecanoe River. The Wabash heads south, past Vincennes and joins the Ohio River, en route to the Mississippi River, en route to the Gulf of Mexico. This Marker explains that "*Oubache*" was the French name for the Wabash River, from an Indian word meaning white. This plaque also addresses the War of 1812, and the Military sites on this Wabash River.

On the other side of this Marker, local history is addressed, in relation to the November 4, 1791 Battle of the U.S. Army under General St. Clair and the Native Americans under the leadership of Miami Chief Little Turtle. The story continues about General Anthony Wayne's leadership of the U.S. Army, and the establishment of the fort, with the name of Fort Recovery at that same site on the Wabash River, in addition to the establishment of Fort Adams on the St. Marys River, in Dublin Township, north of the Village of Mercer on U.S. Rt. 127. I encourage you to visit this Historic Marker to read this History.

The importance of the Wabash River is reflected throughout the last few hundred years of the history of this area. The Native Americans followed the Wabash River south to the Ohio River and the Mississippi River, to the Gulf of Mexico and continued their travels and trading routes with Central and South America. During the summer months, these Native Americans headed north to the Ohio River and the routes of rivers headed north to the Great Lakes and Canada. Look at your map of Ohio, as a part of the United States, and see the early river routes available for traveling across this Continent.

Following the Treaty of 1795 and a series of treaties at the Foot of the Rapids of Maumee River and at St. Marys, with the Native Americans, northwest Ohio was opened for settlement, as of 1820. The land in northwest Ohio had to be surveyed, into a series of separate counties. Captain James Riley, of the heritage of the Riley Home, the Mercer County Historical Museum, received an appointment from Edward Tiffin, Surveyor General of the U.S.A. on June 23, 1819, to begin surveying this area. On November 20, 1819, Captain Riley wrote that he was "*In the Forest, at the Head of the Wabash River, near Fort Recovery,*" to begin his surveys. Riley went on to plat the Village of Willshire at the St. Marys River Crossing, naming the Village after William Willshire, the Englishman who saw that the ransom was paid for Captain James Riley and his sailors, when they had been shipwrecked off the coast of Africa and captured by the Arabs in the Sahara Desert, in August 1815.

Each of these stories about U.S. History and local history related to the Wabash River can be found in the 1978 "*Mercer County History*" book in the Libraries of Mercer County. In fact, there are hundreds of books which have been written about each of these sites and events. Hundreds of Post Card photographs related to Mercer and Auglaize County historic sites will be on Exhibit at the Mercer County Historical Museum, 130 East Market, Celina, on Sunday, November 12, 2017, 1:00 - 4:00.

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