



Our Old Bookcase, March 15, 2018, U.S. Post Office at Coldwater, Ohio

**Caption:** This photograph was taken at Coldwater, before the Cornerstone was laid on June 10, 1940. The photographer was looking north, from the southeast corner of Second and Main Streets. Can you identify the buildings in the background? Can you identify the cars or the owners?

### OUR OLD BOOK CASE

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

First, I have to apologize to the citizens who were interested in Mercer County's history and left messages on my home telephone in February. Alvin and I went to Florida to visit our daughter and her family, and to attend the Florida Flywheelers' Antique Tractor Show, and I forgot to turn off my answering machine on the telephone, before we left home. If anyone called about the Mercer County Historical Society or the Mercer County Historical Museum, or about the New Idea History Book series, or with other questions, please call me or send an email. I do not want to miss your important quest for local history.

The Coldwater Post Office History is the topic of emails and telephone calls which I have been receiving. Apparently, old photographs of the Post Office were placed on the internet by local citizens who were commenting on their memories. I went back through the files about the History of Coldwater, Ohio. I went through the book, Coldwater at 150 which Eugene Weber and I wrote for Coldwater's Sesquicentennial Celebration 1838-1988. I checked the book, Passport Mercer County Ohio History, Butler Township: Coldwater, Philothea, Philothea Station, and Montpelier, which I wrote in 2007, for bibliographical references for research in local history of Coldwater.

The Coldwater Post Office was first established as Cold Water Ohio U.S. Post Office on February 26, 1847, and that name was used until April 4, 1893 when it was discontinued. The Post Office was re-established as Coldwater Ohio U.S. Post Office, the next day, on April 5, 1893, and that continues to the present. [Note the change in the spelling of the village Post Office name, from Cold Water to Coldwater.]

In 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt began his office of the United States President when millions of people were out of work. FDR created a program, known as the New Deal. One of the facets of that program was Post Office Art. The Coldwater Post Office was a recipient of this program, and the Mural on the west wall of the lobby was painted by Joep Nicolas, on canvas and glued to the wall on Coldwater's new Post Office building, in 1942. Coldwater's Postmaster Clarence Braun, corresponded with Paul Kalinchak, Professor of Art History at Kent State University in January 1974 about this Mural.

Before the Post Office was constructed at this site in 1940, the John A. Giere family home was built about 1910-1912, and torn down in 1938 prior to the Post Office being established at this site. Prior to the Giere home, the Lawrence Rosenbeck home stood at this site and was torn down in 1909.

By the way, the building on the east side of the Post Office site was the Heiser Chevrolet Garage, which also sold Phillips 66 Gasoline, in 1940. You can recognize across the street, the present buildings, as well as the Cincinnati Northern Railroad Depot, and the Fox and Hess Elevator to the east. There appears to be a barn or other building, just north of the Depot and Elevator. A Hoop Factory stood at this site in 1900, identified on the 1900 Plat Map of Coldwater in the 1900 Atlas of Mercer County, Ohio, edited by J.E. Hamburger. How was the 1940 building used?

Thanks to **the local citizens who brought up the topic of the Coldwater Post Office, on the Internet, “You know you're from Mercer County when.....”** Thanks to each person who has an interest in preserving Mercer County's History.

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