



Our Old Bookcase, April 20, 2017, Shanes Crossing, 1755 – 1888 maps

Photo caption: Shanes Crossing (1888) was known as “Half Way Cross,” in 1755.

OUR OLD BOOK CASE

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

Shanes Crossing Historical Society invited me to their meeting in 2014, when they were discussing ideas for their 200th Anniversary Celebration in 2020 (Twenty-Twenty). We shared many ideas about how various communities in Mercer County had celebrated anniversaries of their historical events.

Now that they have had three years to consider various plans, they invited me to return this April. I went back to my computer, to see if I had kept my outline of plans related to their history, the last time I was there. At that time, I was impressed with the depth of thought which they had applied to their ideas at those early planning meetings.

When I was writing about inventions, I wrote, “*Creative individuals are thinkers and dreamers; they are the ones who come up with the light bulb moment.*” Today, I am asking the thinkers and dreamers to create ideas for a local community to plan and implement for their historic celebrations.

Prehistoric Artifact collectors of arrow heads, stone axes, flint pieces, and shards of pottery, have found extensive examples of artifacts along the Saint Marys River in Dublin Township. Map collectors may have early maps of Mercer County. The earliest map I have found which identifies a site in Mercer

County, is the 1755 English map which includes “Half Way Cross,” which refers to the site of Shanes Crossing of the St. Marys River. (This Crossing was half way between two Indian Villages; do you know their names?)

Military Historians study military action which relate to people in Mercer County. In Dublin Township, during the 1790’s Indian Wars, the U.S. Military constructed Fort Adams and crossed the St. Marys River. During the War of 1812, the U.S. Military crossed the St. Marys River. Treaties were made between the Native American Tribes and the U.S. Government, in the early 1800’s. Anthony Shane played an important role during that time period. Shanes Crossing Historical Society has Members who study this heritage. Local organizations honor our Military Veterans in several ways. German Prisoners of War worked for local businesses in Rockford, in the 1940’s.

Transportation History is studied about rivers, trails, railroads, airports, and high ways. Rockford can claim history for each of these methods of travel. Communication History is another topic, with studies of the social events, written history, Morse Code, newspapers, telephones, cell phones and computers.

Communities study their Township and Village Government histories, Business histories, School histories, Library history, Church histories, and Service Organization histories. Community events’ history includes arts and music programs, parades, festivals, fairs, and holiday celebrations. Sports historians not only study school sports, but also study adult and children’s sports of baseball, basketball, and other options, including local swimming pools, and race tracks. Architectural styles in family histories of homes would be of interest. The untold stories of Prohibition in the 1930’s might find a place for story-telling? Those oral histories of the community may need a night of “Twice Told Tales.”

The easiest reference books for you to read about Rockford’s history are Mercer County History books and Rockford’s History books at the local Libraries in Mercer County. You may email Mike Schumm at MDSchumm@roadrunner.com and share your knowledge and your ideas of projects for Rockford’s 200th Anniversary in 2020, with Shanes Crossing Historical Society.

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