



UNITED STATES BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES

In reply please use this address:
U. S. Geological Survey
325 National Center
Reston, Virginia 20192-0525

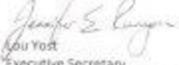
February 17, 2011

Mr. Charles H. Ayers
421 Magnolia Street
Celina, Ohio 45822

Dear Mr. Ayers:

This is to reconfirm that the U.S. Board on Geographic Names, at its April 9, 1998 meeting, did not approve the proposal to change the name of Grand Lake in Auglaize County and Mercer County to Grand Lake—Saint Marys. It was determined by the Board that there was a lack of evidence that the lake's official name needed to be changed. In addition, there was no specific recommendation from the State of Ohio.

Sincerely yours,


Jennifer S. Langston
Executive Secretary
U.S. Board on Geographic Names

Our Old Bookcase, July 13, 2017, Grand Lake's Name & Sites of Mercer County Courthouse.

Photo caption: This February 17, 2011 letter from U.S. Board on Geographic Names to Charles H. Ayers, at Celina, confirms the local lake's name as "Grand Lake."

OUR OLD BOOK CASE

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

Questions keep coming across my desk about the "official" name of the local lake between Mercer & Auglaize Counties. I have written about the many names of this lake, over the years. This February 17, 2011 letter printed above should remove any doubt about the name of "Grand Lake."

Questions keep coming across my desk about how Saint Marys gained and lost the status of being the Mercer County Seat. On February 16, 2017, I wrote about St. Marys being the Mercer County Seat from 1824 until September 12, 1839, when the County Seat was moved to Celina. I asked if anyone knew why the County Seat was moved from St. Marys to Celina.

John Valentine, New Bremen, sent me a copy of a page from Frank Shuffelton's book, "The Saint Marys Story, 1823-1973," written for the Village's Sesquicentennial. On page 28, Shuffelton wrote:

"When this area was laid out by the State Legislature in 1820, the County of Mercer contained the western half of Auglaize County. [Auglaize County was not founded until 1848, which resulted in St.

Marys, New Bremen and Minster being a part of Mercer County, 1824-1847. As of 1848 the three villages became a part of the newly formed County, Auglaize County.] In 1824, the proprietors of Saint Marys, (Murray, Houston and McCorkle), gave the County Commissioners 31 of the 68 plotted lots. These lots were sold by the Commissioners to raise funds for the establishment of the county to build a courthouse, a jail, and provide operating monies. By virtue of this gift, the new County was successfully established. Sixteen years later, in 1840, the controlling votes of the Commissioners passed to elect members of the western most parts of Mercer County. They wanted the County seat to be closer to themselves. Consequently, they moved the Courthouse and all to Celina, much to the unhappiness of Saint Marys. In 1848, a new County of Auglaize was formed. An Election was held soon to choose a site for the new County seat. Wapakoneta wanted it as being close to the geographical center while Saint Marys pushed its claim of being nearer the center of population.” Auglaize Countians can check those records at the Auglaize County Courthouse. Shuffelton recommended in the introduction to his 1973 book, that Saint Marys plan for its Bicentennial celebration in 2023. I do hope that Auglaize County includes the facts about the elections in the 1830’s and 1840’s for their Bicentennial Celebration.

The first week of April, 2017, I contacted the Mercer County Board of Elections twice, and asked them to provide the public records about the public elections in the 1830’s and 1840’s. I have not heard from them as of this July. The public is interested in the information which may confirm the story about why the Courthouse was moved to Celina.

When I was writing the *“History of the Mercer County Courthouse,”* for the Mercer County Commissioners, for the 75th Celebration of the current Courthouse in 1998, I did not find a record of a meeting of the Mercer County Commissioners which recorded why they made the decision and/or passed a Resolution to change the site of the Mercer County Seat. I did find the Mercer County Commissioners’ Journal that the Commissioners held their first meeting at Celina, dated September 12, 1839.

Decisions to move an Ohio County Courthouse, from one Village to another Village should have been a public record in 1839. Was this decision about a County Public Building Site, a private decision made behind closed doors? In the *“Ohio Sunshine Laws, An open Government Resource Manual,”* from the Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine, the statement is made, *“Over 200 years of Sunshine: Reflections on Open Government.”*

[Mercer County Historical Society President Joyce Alig, may be contacted at 3054 Burk-St. Henry Road, Saint Henry, OH 45883, or hystalig@bright.net or 419-678-2614]