



Mercer County Historical Society Newsletter

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Mercer County Historical Society & Essley-Noble Museum

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Hours

April – Oct: Wed, Sat, Sun 1-5:00pm
Nov - March: Saturdays 12:00-4:00pm



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For Genealogy Queries write to:

MCHS Genealogy Dept.
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Aledo IL 61231-2504
Or: E-mail the museum

Email: mcmuseum@frontier.com



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Where in Mercer County is...? Part 2:

By Stephanie Braucht

Continued below is a brief description and location of lesser-known places in Mercer County – towns that used to be or have lost their post offices, but are still known by the locals. You also may find the complete article, with updates, in the genealogy reference section at the Essley-Noble Museum, in a ring binder entitled "Ghost Towns."

Millersburg Township: High Point was a post office established about 1847 in a farm home northwest of Joy. Its location is in the northeast corner of the farmyard of the Bill and Shirley Crawford home.

Millersburg (41- 14' 29" N; 090-49' 07" W) was named after John Miller, Sr. In 1836 Millersburg became the county seat. The first courthouse and jail in the county were located here. Millersburg hosted the first county fair and all Mercer County Fairs from 1855 to 1869. At one time Millersburg had its own post office, school, hotel, wagon shop, and blacksmith. A doctor and a lawyer had offices there. Other businesses were the Farmers Lumber Company, the Union Flour Mill, and the Millersburg Creamery. The southern part of the town was destroyed by a tornado on May 11, 1908. Millersburg can be found on 140th Street (also known as the Millersburg Road), north of Route 17.



Monroe is about a mile east of the present town of Joy. It was plotted in 1856. The site chosen was supposed to be at the junction of two railroads, but one line never came into being, and plans for the town were abandoned.

New Boston Township: Arpee (41-10' 59" N; 090-56' 50" W), also known as Arpee Junction, is located north of Keithsburg at the junction of Illinois Route 17 and 76th Street (Keithsburg Road).



Named after R.P. Wheeler, at one time Arpee had a train depot, stockyards, an elevator, a post office, and a restaurant. There also was a turntable for the Burlington Route.

Mannon (41-13' 52" N; 090-57' 25" W) had a blacksmith shop, post office, school, store, and church. The church, which was Methodist, was known as Epworth Chapel. Mannon is located at the triangle formed by 107th Avenue, 70th Street, and Mannon Road.

North Henderson Township: **Ethel** was the name of the first post office in this township. Its location is in Section 21, likely on the NE 1/4. John M. Goff was the postmaster and storekeeper in Ethel, and in 1875 he owned the NE 1/4 of Section 21.

Ohio Grove Township: **Devona** is located near the corner of Duck Creek, near where Route 94 crosses the actual Duck Creek.

Duck Creek (41-04' 07" N; 090-44' 43" W) is at the corner of Route 94 and 1st Avenue. At one time it had a post office and a school.

Sunbeam (41-07' 38" N; 090-44' 06" W) is at the intersection of 40th Avenue and 185th Street. While meeting in an attempt to name their new village, the early settlers experienced a rainstorm, after which the sun again appeared. As a result, they decided on the name of Sunbeam. At its height, Sunbeam had a general store, post office, blacksmith, feed mill, school, town hall, a doctor, and two churches.

Perryton Township: **Gingle('s) Corner** (41-15' 47" N; 090-44' 10" W) is at the junction of Route 94 and 135th Avenue (Ridge Road). The first township organizational meeting was held here. In 1847 a post office was established here, located in the home of James Gingles. In 1857 it was relocated to the home of Graham Lee in Hamlet.

Hamlet (41-18' 50" N; 090-44' 07") is at the junction of Route 94 and 170th Avenue. It was laid out in 1868 and named in honor of Hamlet Cooper, who was one of the earliest settlers in this area. In 1873 Hamlet had a general store, wagon and blacksmith shop, drug store, hotel, post office, church, lodge, and community hall. There also was a post office, a doctor, and a justice of the peace.

Perryton is another name that many people use when referring to Gingle('s) Corner.

Preemption Township: **Boden** (41-15' 30" N; 090-35' 13" W) is on Route 67 at 132nd Avenue. According to the 1935 Official Directory of Mercer County, businesses in Boden were the Boden Coal Co., Square Deal Coal, Co., Dogtown Sawmill, Hiway Beer Garden, and Henry Soseman, carpenter. It appears that there were 20 families living there. There is at least one listing that shows the name of the town as Bodenville.

Dogtown sometimes is used to refer to Boden.

Farlow('s) Grove is south of Matherville. It had the first post office (1837) in Preemption Township. John Farlow and Hopkins Boone had settled near a grove of trees there, and Boone's home was the site of that post office. A cemetery there still exists in Section 34

(41-15' 13" N; 090-36' 01" W). The first school in the township also was called Farlow('s) Grove (Section 33).

Southern Junction is located in the northeast quarter of Section 9. In this area there was a junction between the Rock Island Southern railway, running north and south, and the steam railroad that ran east and west between this point and Cable in Richland Grove Township. **...To be continued. More communities will be included in the next newsletter.**



Member Feedback

We are starting a new feature for our readers to comment and/or give us more information on articles in the newsletter or to add interesting bits of information about Mercer County people, places, or events. We encourage our members to share reminiscences or to submit articles for the newsletter. You may write, email, or drop information off at the museum, subject "newsletter," or talk with Mary Jane Sticklen or Stephanie Braucht. We hope to hear from you! Below are additions to the previous "Where in Mercer County is...?" article.

Ferdinand: Delores Kennedy Hauger has contacted us with more information about the settlement of Ferdinand. At one time the post office of Ferdinand was in the home of her great grandfather, John Kennedy. He was postmaster from 1874 until his death in 1886. After his death, his wife Mary became postmaster. Delores reports that Mary gave up being postmaster because the mail cubicles were on her back porch and she got tired of people coming and going all the time!

Ferdinand was established originally in Mercer County on August 22, 1848, near the northern county line. On August 24, 1874, Ferdinand was re-located a short distance to the north, which placed it in Rock Island County. Ferdinand remained in Rock Island County until it was discontinued on January 31, 1907. After that, the mail went to Illinois City. Postmasters (and their appointment dates) for Ferdinand were:

Mercer County

Samuel Leech (August 22, 1848)
John H. Elwell (January 28, 1856)
Mrs. Mary Elwell (February 19, 1859)
George Sperlin (March 29, 1870)

Rock Island County

John Kennedy (August 24, 1874)
Mary Kennedy (March 15, 1886)
Mattie Ryan (November 26, 1889)

Delores reported that her uncle Vaughn Kennedy said he thought most of these post offices were just in

a home or in a building on the home site and that they were all within a distance of about one mile of each other. This information is consistent with Ferdinand being located first in northeastern Eliza Township in Mercer County and then in southeastern Drury Township in Rock Island County. Thanks, Delores!

Bristol: Jim Runyon has reported another town in Mercer County that was surveyed but never developed. The town of Bristol was surveyed by William P. Hull, County Surveyor, on May 18, 1840. Bristol's location is in Mercer Township, in the east half of the southwest quarter AND in the west half of the southeast quarter of Section 16. This area is on both sides of Route 94, as it runs north of Route 17. Bristol's site is just a short distance north of the site of Mercer, which had been surveyed March 30, 1837, just three years earlier than Bristol. Thanks to Jim!



Curator's Corner

Thanks to all the volunteers of the 5th Grade Tour held on May 19th, 2011. It was a great success and the children seemed to enjoy all the displays and hands-on activities.

Also, I want to recognize the monetary donations and the wonderful articles given to our museum this quarter. In honor of the late Arlene Hudson, we want to thank Patricia Connolly, sister of Arlene and Jean Wistedt, Arlene's genealogy research friend, for each of their donations. Arlene will be missed by our Genealogy Group.

Our Genealogy researchers are working very hard to accommodate the requests that are coming in on the website. Thanks to Rich Horner and Wendy Laird for the monetary donation received for the research. Also to Richard H. Schultz for his generous monetary donation in appreciation for the help given him during his recent visit to Aledo.

Our new accessions for this quarter have been given by Elwanda Sheriff, John Huffstutler, Wendell Dillavou, Harold & Shirley Mills, Priscilla Kenney, Marilyn Nelson, Karen Cox Gray, Larry McHenry, Lyle Kugler, Tom Phipps and Sam Hutchinson.

For those of you that had the opportunity to attend the Rhubarb Fest--here's hoping you're cooled off by now. It was a hot but wonderful time had by all. Our booth sold Rhubarb treats, root beer floats, cemetery books and gold coin raffle tickets. Also, many new visitors found their way to our museum. We will be selling raffle tickets and cemetery books into the fall.

Veda Meriwether, Curator



Gray Family History

Karen Cox Gray has written a family history of her husband F. Lee Gray's family in Maine and in Mercer County. *Nigh Pope Creek: Josiah B. Gray of Anson, Maine, and Keithsburg, Illinois, His Ancestors and Descendants*, published by Penobscot Press of Rockland, Maine. The progenitor of this family was George Gray, who was born in Scotland in 1620. As a Scots soldier fighting on the losing side during the Battle of Dunbar in 1650 he was captured by the English army and sent as an indentured servant to work in the saw mills of Kittery, Maine. Descendants of George lived on Squirrel Island and in Somerset County, Maine. In 1854, Josiah Gray and his second wife Lucinda Fish brought their family to Mercer County near Keithsburg. Seven generations of Grays in Maine and Illinois are traced with illustrations. A copy of this book has been placed in the MCHS collection.



Scott's Battery at Antique Days

Civil War re-enactors representing Scott's Battery are going to be at the Essley-Noble Museum Saturday, Aug. 27, during Antique Days. Although Scott's Battery originally was a Confederate artillery group mustered in Tennessee in 1861, both Confederate and Union troops will be represented.



On display will be gear, accoutrements, haversack, musical instruments, weapons...Colt revolvers, Springfield or Enfield rifles...and more. Also, starting at 10:00 a.m. and on the hour or half hour they will fire their cannon. This will be hard to ignore, so come and visit, ask questions, and tour the museum, machine shed, and one-room school house.



What is it?

The previous newsletter's "What is It?" was a carpet stretcher. This item is approximately 38 inches long. As the crank on the top turns, the jaws on the end open and shut. We invite readers to send their own What's It. Bring, send, or email a description and photo of the item to the museum and we will try to include it in an upcoming newsletter.



Come to the Fair

We are looking forward to seeing you afternoons and evenings during the Mercer County Fair, July 12-16. Our booth is in the SW corner of the Merchants Building and will feature displays and the popular "Name That Tool" contest. We will also be selling the newly-printed Mercer Co. Cemetery book as well as Golden Double Eagle raffle tickets.



Mark the **Fall open meeting Oct. 17** on your calendars. The meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. in the newly renovated Pope's River Church (Also called Pope Creek Church), in Section 7 of Ohio Grove Township. You will learn about the history and the renovation of the church and there will be the drawing for the Golden Double Eagle coin. Be sure to purchase your coin raffle ticket(s) before hand at the museum, from a board member, or at various events

in Mercer Co. There will be heaters provided at the church. More information will be coming in the next newsletter.



Items for Sale at the Museum

If not picked up at the museum, postage (book rate) is extra. Inquire for insurance or special shipping.

1882 History of Mercer County.....\$25.00

Hardback reprint, 1005 pages, add \$4 postage

Mercer County Cemeteries\$25.00

Locations/color photos, 87 pages, add \$3 postage

Abe Lincoln in Mercer County.....\$10.00

Soft cover, 51 pages, add \$3 postage

Celebrating Yesterday-Viola 125 years.....\$5.00

Soft cover, 110 pages, add \$3 postage

Betty L. Beer note cards, pkg. of 6.....\$3.00.

Indicate "False Spring" or "Nathan Listening"

\$1 postage for one or both

RI Southern R.R. routes of Mercer Co.....\$5.00

Circa 1914, 18.5"X18.5" map copy

Add \$4.75 for postage and shipping tube

Bicentennial plate.....\$6.50

designed by Suzy Bogguss - Inquire about shipping

Coming Events for 2011:

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| July 12-16 | Mercer Co. Fair booth, Merchants' Building Displays, "Name the Tools" |
| Aug. 27 | Antique Days special exhibits
Civil War reenactment group
Extended museum hours |
| Oct. 17 | Fall open meeting 7:00 p.m. at Pope's River Church - Raffle drawing; History and renovation of church |
| Oct. 30 | Last day of summer hours |
| Nov. 5 | First day of Winter hours, Saturdays only 12:00-4:00 |

This newsletter sponsored by:

Tomorrow is that day of the week when anything could happen

No one knows what tomorrow holds. Call today to schedule an Insurance and Financial Review to get prepared for your future.



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