

The President's Page

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REFLECTIONS ABOUT THE MUSEUM

The Old Courthouse Still Stands!

Visitors to the Museum often bring up topics which take me back in time to the beginning of the preservation and restoration project. A senior citizen recently came to the Museum to talk with Jane Ries about one of Jane's projects. After they had concluded their conversation, I asked the lady if she had seen the most recent additions to the train table. She said it had been a few months since she had visited, so I walked with her to see the HO scale models of buildings of yesteryear. She was so very impressed by what she saw; then she said, "You know, I was opposed to saving this building. I thought it was in such bad shape that it was a waste

of money to change it into a museum. I was wrong! I am so glad that the old courthouse still stands!”

My mind went back to March 15, 2009. At a public meeting held in the County Office building on that day to decide the fate of the historic building. Every single person who voiced an opinion to the audience of approximately 300 spoke clearly in favor of preservation. Within less than a week, what would become the Effingham County Cultural Center and Museum Association, Inc. was born. The effort to preserve, to restore, and to operate the old courthouse got results.

Today, many of the people who wanted to see the courthouse square turned into a parking lot come instead to marvel at the rich heritage which the Museum Association has collected and artfully displayed in the 1872 Effingham County Courthouse. The old courthouse still stands!