

May Moore Mound marker sign erected

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Delyssa Huffman/photo

The sign that can be seen along W.Va. 2 in Gallipolis Ferry reads, "This is one of the larger burial mounds in the State. It has never been properly excavated, but was probably built by the Adena people between 500 B.C. and A.D. 1. Several smaller mounds can also be seen in this area."

by Delyssa Huffman

GALLIPOLIS FERRY — The West Virginia Highway Historical Marker Program recently placed a new sign in Mason County.

The marker, located along W.Va. 2 in front of the May Moore Mansion and Mound in Gallipolis Ferry, can be seen while traveling to or from Point Pleasant.

With its rich history, the program was able to erect this new sign because of the site's degree of significance and the local pre-history of the mound.

According to Joe Geiger, director of West Virginia Archives and History, this sign is actually a replacement for one that was placed in the same area in the early 1960s.

Geiger manages the historical marker program which first started in 1937 under the New Deal. It was initiated to encourage tourism during the Great Depression. Today, it is a part of the West Virginia Division of Culture and History.

History of the May Moore Mansion states that the home was once that of Charles Page Thomas Moore along with his wife, Urilla K. Kline, and their four daughters, Ida Ogden, Rebecca Frances, Laurette Mai and Elizabeth Van Meter.

Moore was born in February of 1831 in Greenbrier County. After his parents died when he was 14 years old, he was adopted by his uncle, George Moore and moved to Mason County.

While at Jefferson College in Canonsburg, Pa., Moore co-founded the Phi Kappa Psi fraternity in 1852. He went on to become a justice of the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals and died on July 7, 1904. He is buried in nearby Bruce Chapel Cemetery.

The mansion is located near the Adena Indian mound, named the Mai Moore Mound after Moore's daughter, Laurette Mai, and thus the mansion became known as the Mai Moore Mansion; although the program refers to it as the "May" Moore Mansion and Mound. It was gutted by fire in 1968 and not much remains of it today.

There are 28 markers in Mason County alone, with a total of 1,000 markers that have been placed across the mountain state. But, according to the West Virginia Highway Historical Marker Program Web site, the recent survey indicates nearly 30 percent are no longer standing and a majority of the remaining markers are in dire need of repair.

Geiger also provided information that five more markers have been replaced in the county including the "Mark Twain" Family marker located on W.Va. 62, opposite graveyard on Ten Mile Creek; the General McCausland marker on U.S. 35, near the Putnam County line; the Virgil A. Lewis marker on U.S. 33 in Mason; the "Lost Colony" marker on U.S. 35 in Southside; and the Thomas Hannan marker located along W.Va. 2 near the Cabell County line near a small cemetery. Two others are currently under review for being replaced.

Funding for the markers was provided by the state until 1985. Since then, individuals or private groups have paid to have signs replaced or refurbished. Historical societies and civic groups also assume the cost for maintaining the markers.

For more information about historical markers, visit www.wvculture.org.