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Founder Stone returned to downtown

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MOORESVILLE

The Bicentennial Park in downtown Mooresville saw a new addition recently with the return of the Founder Stone, a boulder bearing a plaque honoring Mooresville founder Samuel Moore and marking the site of his first wood-frame business building. The stone was removed during the construction and has recently been returned, though not on the corner of Indiana and Main streets where it once was.

Currently, the stone is located toward the back of the park, closer to the Citizen's Bank parking lot than its previous corner location.

Mooresville Public Library Director of Adult Information Services and local historian William R. Buckley spoke about the history of the park



The plaque on the Samuel Moore Founder Stone notes the importance of Moore and his contributions to the town. Photo by Anthony Woodside.

and the stone.

"The stone was placed there at the town's centennial celebration," Buckley said. "It was spearheaded by Samuel Moore's granddaughter, Mary

Ida Fogelman. She wanted to place the stone there for the 100th anniversary to celebrate the founding of the town and also her grandparents,

See **STONE** on page A2 ►

STONE

FROM PAGE 1

who played a part in that. The plaque indicated the date of the town's founding and also provided the dates that he founded his trading post."

"It was his first wood-frame store. It was actually the first wood-frame building in Mooresville," Buckley said. "At that time, it was pretty much just log cabins dotting the town."

Buckley explained that Moore wasn't the first person to build a log cabin in town, even though he founded the town.

Due to the historical significance of the Founder Stone, there has been split opinion among Mooresville regarding its new location. Some citizens are glad that it has been returned to the park, while others are upset that it is not back on the corner where it once was.

Many detractors on social media mentioned the importance of history in their criticism, noting that it was originally placed at the corner to commemorate that location. Others noted that many in town had sentimental ties to the stone at the corner and it was mentioned that perhaps the Bicentennial Park could benefit from greater historical context.

Others, however, were happy to see its return, regardless of location.

"I'm for updates, change and 'putting up new wallpaper.' I feel like when someone has wallpaper, they learn to live with it, even when it's out of style because removing it to replace with new is a daunting task, and another big commitment," Kelli Burns McGuire, a 17-year member of the Mooresville Parks Board, said.

"That's how I see this park. People were just used to how it was, not in love with it. As long as it's there and is aesthetically pleasing, why not give it a new home? Everyone has their 'glory days' memories from youth, but why should today's generation not be afforded new, refurbished places in which to create their own?"

"I think the location is fine," Mooresville resident Paul Ford said. "Yes, people driving by the park can't see it, but even if they could, you wouldn't be able to read the plaque. It looks like a big rock with no significance. At least where it is now, as people enter the park from the bank parking lot, they will be able to see it and read it."

On his history blog, Mooresville (Indiana) Treasure Trove, Buckley said the stone itself is not important, but describes the plaque as "historically critical." In the same post, Buckley advocates for the return of the plaque to the northeast corner of Indiana and Main streets downtown, given the historical significance of that location. According to Buckley, the wood-frame business built by Moore was at the heart of the community he established and hoped to see endure, and returning the plaque to that location would allow it to continue to be a part of the town's narrative.

For more information about the history of the Bicentennial Park, the Samuel Moore Founder Stone and Mooresville at large, visit mplindianaroom.blogspot.com.

The Mooresville-Decatur Times reached out to the redevelopment commission for comment about the return of the boulder, but did not receive a response by press time.