

Odd Fellows sign restored

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MOORESVILLE

The new Mooresville park will contain a piece of important Mooresville history.

According to Bill Buckley, of Mooresville Public Library's Adult Information Services, in 1859, the Morgan Lodge 211 of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows was formed.

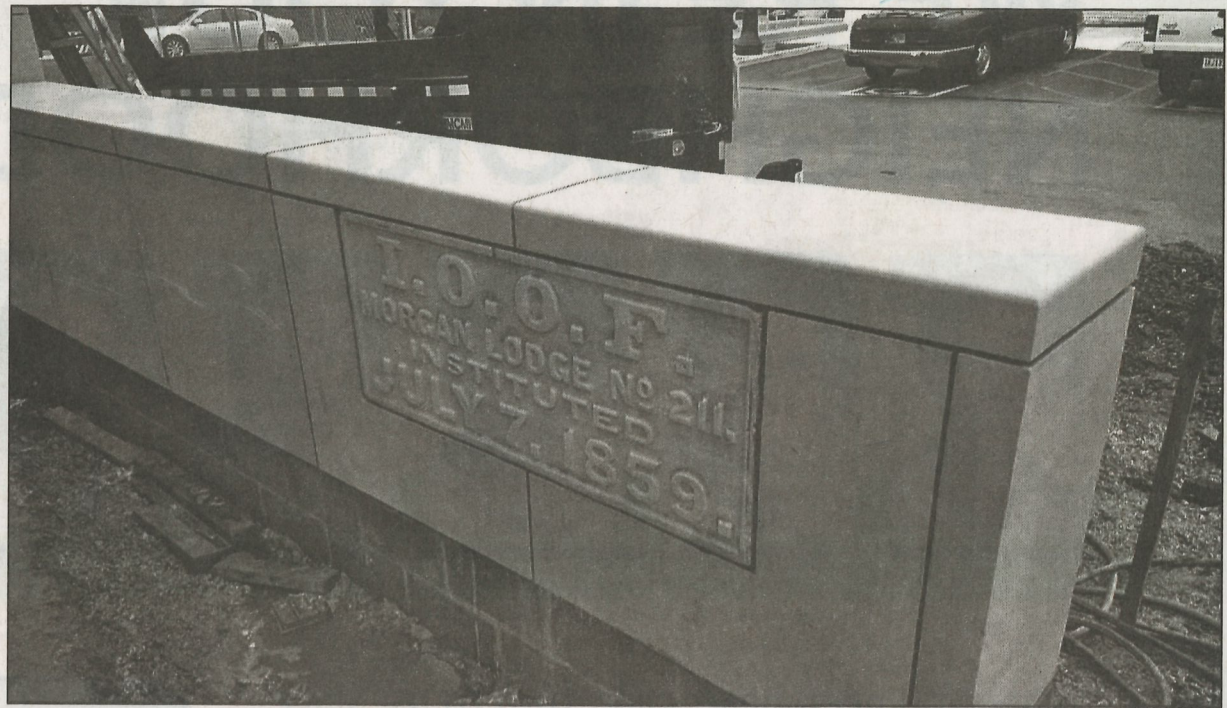
According to the IOOF website, the organization's mission is to "provide a framework that promotes personal and social development."

In 1869, Lodge 211 built a three-story building at the corner of Indiana and Main streets, which was used for all different kinds of businesses throughout the years.

The site was originally used for town founder Samuel Moore's general store from 1824 to 1859.

In 1881, the building burned down, but Lodge 211 had a second one built in place of the original. Many organizations and businesses were housed in this building for almost a century, including IOOF from

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The Mooresville Redevelopment Commission restored the Odd Fellows plaque and placed it on the side wall in Bicentennial Park, where the original Odd Fellows building used to reside. Bicentennial Park is scheduled to be completed by Nov. 20. Photo courtesy of Chelsey Manns.

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1859 to the 1920s, Pleas Mills Dry Goods from the 1890s to the 1930s, Kroger in the 1940s and Tompkins Jewelry in the 1950s.

Citizens Bank, which was started in 1931 at the Bass Building on east Main Street, began construction for a new building in 1965 behind the Odd Fellows' building on Indiana Street, where it is today. The bank then opened on Sept. 24, 1966.

Around that time, the Odd Fellows Grand Lodge gave Lodge 211 permission to sell the area to Citizens Bank, and they demolished most of the structure for parking. Buckley did not have the exact date for when Lodge 211 sold its part to Citizens Bank.

Buckley said he wasn't exactly sure when Lodge

211 ended, but according to former librarian Wanda Potts' list of organizations in Mooresville in 1968, the organization was not mentioned.

While most of the structure was demolished in the mid-1960s, part of the first floor was salvaged and housed some businesses, including Warren Insurance. In 1989, when it was just a one-room building, it was entirely demolished.

As part of the Gateway Corridor Project, the Mooresville Redevelopment Commission (RDC) has been in the process of creating Bicentennial Park, located at the same corner as the IOOF buildings on Indiana and Main streets.

The park, which is scheduled to be completed by Nov. 20, is phase three of the entire project.

While there were possible future phases presented to the RDC, no future phases are under design.

According to RDC consultant Chelsey Manns, the IOOF sign has been restored and is now placed on a seat wall at the north end of the park. She said Mooresville Schools had the sign and made sure the RDC was aware of it, and the commission made sure to incorporate it into the park.

The RDC also plans to place the Samuel Moore plaque at the corner of the park as well. The plaque, along with a stone, was put at the corner by his granddaughter, Ida Fogleman. As of right now, there are no plans on where to place the stone.

Buckley said for a town like Mooresville, it is important to keep pieces of history in the town, as it

was part of what the town is today.

"It's vital we are able to point to specific places in town," Buckley said, mentioning how the IOOF building's site was where Samuel Moore built the first wooden-frame building for his general goods store and how Mooresville had the first high school in the state. "These are important things to commemorate."

The RDC meets at 6 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month at the government center, 4 E. Harrison St. At this time, the members and Manns discuss items concerning the commission, along with updates to the Gateway Corridor Project, including Bicentennial Park.

For more information on Mooresville's history, visit the mplindianaroom.blogspot.com.

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