Old Betsy, Cannon, Which Helped Community Salute War's Beginning In 1861, Is Now Prized Relic Here

Old Cannon Has Memorable Community History

Artillery Piece With Long History To Aid Celebration

By MARGARET DENNIS

Old Betsy is being rejuvenated. Those who know her will tell you she has needed it for many years. For she is venerable. But Merton Mertz, 422 Third St., and the Toledo "surgeons" who are "operating" on her say that, although she is venerable she will once again be made voluable.

Old Betsy has been silent for more than 60 years. But before that her voice was a forceful one. Just 100 years ago Monday she proclaimed to the Hancock County citizens that the Civil War had begun.

In September, 1862, she was rushed, with a group of men who called themselves the Squirrel Hunters, to northern Kentucky to defend Cincinnati from the Rebels.

Dates Far Back

She is believed to have participated in the War of 1812 and the Indian Wars of General Harrison. Some even date her back to Revolutionary days.

Old Betsy, a 600-pound cannon, will be remembered by many Findlay residents as having stood in the front yard of the George W. Walters home, 1039 N. Main St., and later in the museum of the late Dr. C. W. Sheppard. It is now the property of Mr. Mertz and is being reconstructed by the reactivated 111th Ohio Volunteer Infantry of Toledo which is rebuilding many Civil War ammunition pieces to specifications obtained from War Department files.

Mr. Mertz, who rescued Old Betsy from a scrap drive of the Sertoma Club held in 1952, is a gun collector. To some people guns are fearful weapons. To Mr. Mertz, who has lethal weapons ranging in age from antiques to modern day types and in size from pistols small enough to be held in the palm

Here Merton Mertz, of Findlay, is shown with Old Betsy, the historic cannon which he now owns and which will have a role in the Civil War centennial celebration which is now getting under way.

Lawrence Jolliff New Councilman

Lawrence L. Jolliff, 430 North

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