



E-NEWS AND E-NOTES FOR FRIDAY, MAY 9th, 2025

CELINA IN THE SPOTLIGHT

As we shake these cold dreary bonds of Old Man Winter and turn to the warmth of Spring it is a ritual from years past to welcome the youngsters' racing Season with the first Matinee at the Mercer County Fairgrounds in Celina, Ohio this Saturday, May 10th starting at noon.



With the turmoil of taxes, tariffs, and tweets this scene sorta says "everything is gonna be all right."

ABOUT CELINA

Before the coming of the Europeans a massive forest once stretched from the Allegany Mountains to the Illinois prairie. This area was the Great Black Swamp, the watershed of the Maumee River and one branch of the Maumee is the St Mary River, a 99-mile tributary which led southward into Ohio. It was where a trading post was established by James and Simon Girty in the 1770s. The brothers were of Irish descent and were born in the 1740s near Harrisburg, PA. They had been captured as young teenagers and raised by the Mingos (also called the Ohio Seneca) who brought them back to Ohio. The Girty brothers would adapt well to the Native way of life and become guides and interpreters - Simon Girty could speak 11 languages - but defected to the British in the War of Independence. Thus, the Americans regarded them as "turncoats" and put a price on their heads. When the US Army arrived after the signing of the Treaty of Greenville in 1795 (which ended the wars & pushed most of the Native Americans west) the Girty brothers abandoned their trading post & went to Canada.

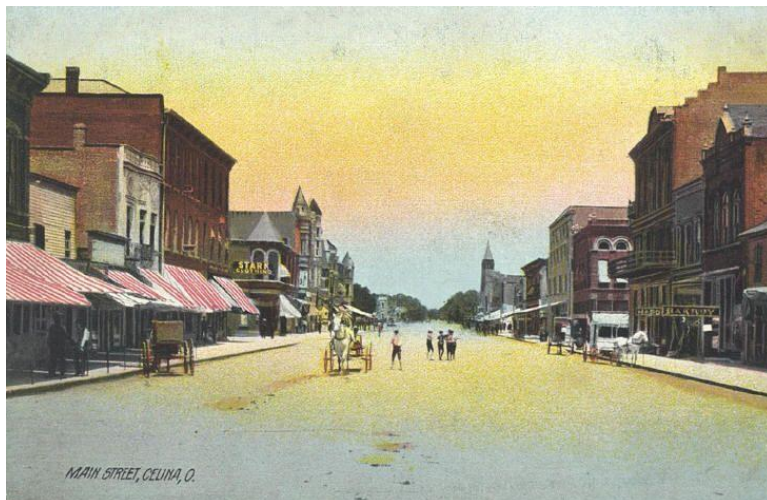
As the area was now open for settlement, James Riley of Middleton, Connecticut a well-traveled sea captain and his eldest son James Watson Riley, surveyed the land at the junction of the Auglaize and Maumee rivers in 1821. While James the elder returned to New York and the sea it was James the younger (born in 1804) who established Celina along with and his western New York-born wife Susan in 1834.

It was named after his wife's hometown of Salina, New York now part of Syracuse NY and noted for the salt deposits. The settlers who came to Celina would clear and drain the lands to farm and raise livestock and tamed the wild frontier. It was they who turned a flat prairie marsh into the 13,500 reservoir now named Grand Lake (the largest man-made body of water in Ohio) that is shared by Auglaize and Mercer counties. It was part of the north-south Miami-Erie canal system. Constructed between 1825-1845, the canal ran 274 miles from Cincinnati to Toledo until it was replaced by the railroad.

James & Susan Riley would have five children & their descendants are still an important part of Celina.

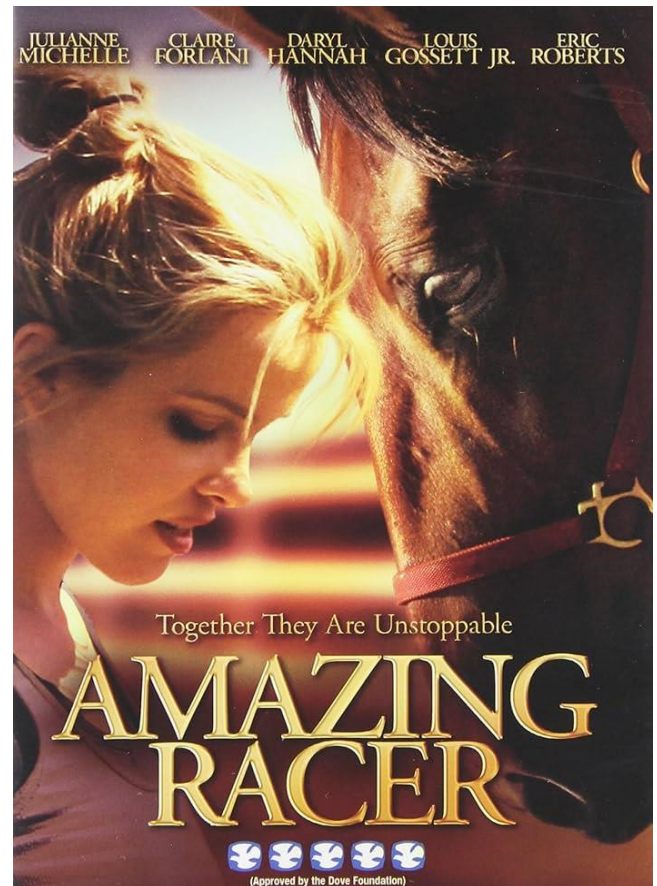
The very first Mercer County Fair was held for one day in October of 1852 on 18 acres overlooking the Reservoir. As Celina grew so did the Mercer County Fair. The present site was purchased in 1878 as the grandstand and the racetrack were added in 1894. In 1909 the Immortal Champion pacer Dan Patch visited Celina. As the Fairs through the 1920's were 4 days long but no Fairs were held in '32, '33, and '34 yet the American Legion still hosted the harness races. The only Mercer County Fair ever to be canceled was in 1949 at the height of the polio epidemic.

Celina puts out the red carpet for the Matinee and welcomes everyone back for their two days of Ohio Colt Racing Association stakes on August 10th & 11th.



Máthair Mháthairí

Weekend at the movies



Finally released in 2013 this production was a long time in the making with rewrites and rescors etcetera. An enjoyable story about a girl (Shannon) and her horse (Rainbow) who overcome the problems to finally make it to the Winners Circle. With an accomplished cast of Daryl Hannah, Eric Roberts, Lou Gossett Jr, including the Voice of Roger Huston, the race scenes were filmed at The Meadows and features several of the local drivers sporting brand-new sets of colors. A good attempt at realism but it lacked the authenticity to the discerning eye. You can watch it for free on tubittv:

<https://tubitv.com/movies/456225/amazing-racer>

UPCOMING MATINEES

SATURDAY 5/17 - GREENVILLE (DARKE)

SATURDAY 5/17 - BUCYRUS (CRAWFORD)

SUNDAY 5/18 - WASHINGTON CH (FAYETTE)