

The Historic Vinton House

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Another era begins today in the life of the historic Vinton House Hotel.

Wooden floors once trod by weary stagecoach and canal boat travelers will bear the footfalls of avid antique collectors or the merely browsing.

With today's opening of Vinton House Antiques, two dreams have been realized. Area antique dealers can show their wares in a historic setting. Western Wayne Heritage, Inc., which owns the Vinton House, has filled two floors of the long unoccupied building.

Both sides are pleased with the outcome.

"For me it has been a dream come true. I've wanted to be here for as long as I've wanted as antique shop." Said April Riggle, owner of Pine Lane Farm Antiques and manager of Vinton House Antiques.

Riggle and her husband, Mark, moved their business to the Vinton House from former quarters three blocks west.

They join 17 antique dealers and artisans whose displays fill 12 rooms on the first two floors and bring new life to the old building.

Western Wayne Heritage was ready to have them.

"We were at a place where we wanted to get someone to move in." said Jack O'Malley, president of Western Wayne Heritage.

"There have been people who knock on our doors all the time and want to open something up there. It's such a historic building."

The three-story, red brick hostelry dates back to 1847, when Aaron Reisor built it as an intersection of the National Road and the Whitewater Canal.

A turnaround basin, where canal boats discharged passengers, adjoined the building.

In 1849 it was sold to Elbridge Vinton, who along with his daughters operated it until about 1919. Over the years it remained a hotel, eventually housing a bakery and apartments in the 1980s.

In December 1997, Western Wayne Heritage bought an empty and deteriorating Vinton House.

They hauled away truckloads of trash, restored exterior brickwork, replaced the roof, repaired the windows, repainted the interior and installed new furnaces.

They opened the building for antique sales during Canal Days in September and for an antique fair in early June.

They looked to the day when the renovated structure could be sold or rented to an appreciative party.

Enter two antique dealers from Hagerstown.

Sharon White and Barbara Foulke, owners of Found Treasures, were closing their business in Hagerstown and approached Western Wayne Heritage about using the Vinton House.

"We decided to come down here and several of our dealers are coming with me." White said.

Among the dealers are Donna and Pierre Leitner of Richmond, owners of Vintage Treasures.

Their display space is in what was once the hotel's kitchen, its floor stenciled with fleur-de-lis

At a Glance

- Vinton House Antiques opened today in the historic Vinton House Hotel, 20 Main Street (U.S. 40), Cambridge City.
- Eighteen Dealers and artisans are represented, with antiques, primitives and home décor items filling 12 rooms on the first two floors.
- The hotel was built in 1847 at the intersection of the National Road and Whitewater Canal. It is now owned by Western Wayne Heritage, Inc.

and the pineapple hospitality symbol.

Red and white vintage items fill a white kitchen cupboard atop a wooden kitchen table. An iron sink in the corner will show off homemade soaps.

"We did the antique show here in the spring and told April we would like to be back in here. The building itself is just wonderful." Donna said.

The Historic building which still retains Federal period doorknobs and locks on the interior doors is such a lure that Vinton House Antiques has a waiting list of people wanting to display there.

"It's a very appropriate site for what we have. Everybody here is conscious of the historical value of the building." Riggle Said.

"We have had people in here who say there is no other antique shop like this."

Appreciation for the Vinton House site benefits both the dealers and the building, as items from the past grace rooms or Wayne County History.