

Meeting held in the library meeting room.



Carol and Bryce Chivington brought in an object that was from the White Mountain Creamery. It was identified as a whetstone put out in 1924 by the White Mountain Creamery when it was celebrating their 40th anniversary. Beth Keuneke passed around a spool with wool thread on it that came from the St. Marys Woolen Mill. Nancy Fortman remembers when red dye was released from the Woolen Mill into the canal.

Beth Keuneke passed around a few pictures of the Bulkhead Inn. The Bulkhead Inn was located north of the feeder lock along State Route 364. Bill Huber remembers when State Route 364 was just a road next to the lake that had an edge close to the lake where people could park their cars and go fishing. This was before the State of Ohio developed the East Bank. Prior to the development of the East Bank, the State of Ohio owned the land. The houses which were along the East Bank Road/State Route 364 were owned by individuals who leased the land the houses were on from the state. The State dredged the east bank down to the original level to make the park along the east bank. Bill Huber said that it took one and a half years to refill the area that was dredged. Businesses that were along East Bank Road/State Route 364 included the Surf Club, the Pizza Shack, Joe & Ruth's Bait & Tackle Shop, Frilling's Grocery, Lakeside Superette, Haseker's Bait & Tackle, and Slim's Place & Boat Ramp. Slim's was a tavern and restaurant, that also sold fishing equipment and rented boats. Several people present

remembered that there was a tree either in the middle of a building or had a deck built around a tree.

Others present remembered the motel that was located on what is now Kingfisher Lane on the Otterbein Campus. This motel was used for the EUB (Evangelical United Brethren) church camp. According to Arline B. Peckham in the book, *Camp St. Marys: Its Life and Legacy*, “plans were made in February 1952 to build the first unit of a motel on Peninsula 2.” “By July, sixteen rooms in the motel were ready for use.” “Because of the demand for use of the building as early as September that same year the Trustees voted to add a second story.” “Until 1959 empty motel rooms were rented to outsiders at which time it was decided that the demand was great enough that it be restricted to EUBs only.” Bill Huber remembers a little building at the entrance where for fifty cents a person was allowed to have access to the area for fishing. Southmoor Shores was at one-time marsh lands, that was drained and developed by someone from Cincinnati.

Oil wells in the area were discussed. Someone stated that during the construction of the Kroger store they found an oil well. Two oil wells were thought to have been found in the subdivision behind Kohl’s. The story of the first oil well in St. Marys was recounted in an article written by Frank Shuffleton in *The Saint Marys Story* reprinted in *The St. Marys Anthology*. “July 24, 1886, had been a hot and humid summer day. Toward evening though, a cool breeze had set in, making a quite comfortable audience assembled at Town Hall. A traveling theatrical troupe was to present “The Mikado.” “The first part of the play moved swiftly, and the Great Mikado had made his first entrance. Before he was able to deliver his first line, a commotion was heard outside. Heavy feet were stomping up the old wooden staircase. Someone whose name has never been recorded, burst into the theater. “They struck oil! They struck oil,” the visitor shouted. “Oil, Oil, Oil,” the crowd echoed, and every man, woman and child went flying out of the hall. The place was empty in seconds.” “All traffic was headed east that night. By foot, by horse or by carriage, citizens of every age and stature were converging on David Armstrong’s cow pasture, a location about where Armstrong Park is now situated.” Someone in the group thought that in 1973 when Frank Shuffleton wrote the story Frank used poetic license, so it might not have happened in the exact way that he described. Someone else asked when the oil boom was over. Although no one seemed to know the answer it was suggested possibly in the 1920’s.

There was a discussion about Luxury Blankets, owned by Ben Rupert, which was first located on Indiana Avenue in what is now the Kogge Electric building. In the summer of 1967 the factory moved to the former St. Marys Canning Factory on the corner of South Ash and Greenville Road which was constructed in 1929 to process tomatoes. He had worked at the Woolen Mill before starting Luxury Blankets. An undated Evening Leader article, written by Pam Dunno, tells the history of the business. Rupert’s original business was a blanket-washing facility for hotels. He also washed blankets for the government. He cleaned blankets for the top 50 hotels from Kansas City to Boston. He eventually bought the looms and other equipment necessary for a

weaving operation from a variety of places. Most of the equipment though came from a closed mill in Hamilton. The only piece of machinery that came from the St. Mary Woolen Mill is a machine that cleans things like burrs and teasel seed from virgin wool which he bought indirectly from McKay Mills. The blankets that he made were from a blend of recycled wool and new wool. At the time of the article the facility had been closed and was in disrepair something that he was hoping to repair and revive.

The next Local History Round Table will be held on Tuesday, June 27th, 2023.