

Local History Roundtable - June 2022 Notes

Local One June 28, 2022, a group of eleven met in the meeting room of the St. Marys Community Library for the Local History Roundtable discussion. Lynne Ray passed around several postcards. One was of Cook's Department Store in New Knoxville this building became Adolph's Restaurant. The next was of the boulevard on Market street in St. Marys. She passed around a postcard of a building that had been ruined with just parts of it still standing, with the hopes that someone in the group could identify it. The final postcard was of a group of people having a picnic. One of the people in the picture was Fred Yacmett a local photographer and his wife with several other people. Ray is a postcard collector and has an extensive collection of local postcards. In 2015 she acquired a large portion of the photos, postcards, etc. taken by Yacmett which document St. Marys and the area from 1903 through the early 1930's. As a little history lesson Ray stated that she does not have any postcards prior to 1905. More information about the Yacmett collection can be found in *The St. Marys Anthology: More Tales and Sketches from an American Small Town* compiled by Robert 'Buz' Howard.

Bob Hurm passed around a photocopy of a photograph containing a large group of people mostly from the St. Marys area. The people are numbered and on an accompanying page there is a list of those that have been identified. Some of the names were Lynch, Axe, and Lawler.

Bob Hurm asked if anyone know of someone who could help him put a family tree on the computer. Lynne Ray suggested the Mercer County Genealogical Society and Beth Keuneke suggested the Auglaize County Genealogical Society. Ray said that she was going to see about having someone come to the next meeting to answer the groups questions.

Bob Hurm related that his grandmother came from Italy and he remembers her making 50 pizzas a day which were sold by C&B and the Surf Club. She sold them for .60 cents each. As a young boy he tried to help but since he was eating the pepperoni and putting holes in the dough she sent him out to play.

Lynne Ray talked about her aunt Shirley (*nee* Fortman) Harrison who owned Shirley's Apartments and the first catholic church building in St. Marys. Per the *History of Holy Rosary Church, St. Marys* by George L. Neargarder: The first "frame church 30 x 40 feet was not completed until 1854 and was erected at 301 North Walnut Street. After the new brick church was erected in 1867, this church was sold and moved to 201 Madison Street where it still stands today and is converted to a home." Ray said she was told that when they moved the building they put it on and hewn logs and attached horses to it and rolled it down Mackenbach hill and placed it on the site. The logs are still visible under the house. At that time the site was not within corporation limits and they could have livestock on the premises. When it was incorporated into the city limits, no livestock was allowed, so Shirley went to the city and said that horses were not livestock and she was grandfathered in so as long as she kept at least one horse she was allowed to keep it. One of the last horses she bought was called "Freedom." Lynne remembers Shirley calling the horse's name loudly to get it to come in from the pasture.

Shirley had told Lynne that she bought her property which was the size of a whole city block for \$8700.

Shirley's brother Mike Fortman was working as a car convertible top upholsterer. He also was a ham radio operator. He went to a ham radio convention and there was someone there handing out applications to join the CIA. He applied and was accepted. He worked for the CIA for many years going all over the world.

Ray said that yes they are painting a building near Northmore Golf Course an "eggplant" purple which is the color for 100 as the Golf course will be celebrating its' 100th anniversary in 2023. They are looking for things to do to celebrate. When it was built there was a man who came from either Hungary or Poland to put the stucco on the outside of the lighthouse. There is a photo of the lighthouse with the bridge either taken by Fred Yacmett or his apprentice Doug Endicott.

Ray stated that she has a postcard of a blimp at Gordon State Park, East Bank Road, that was taken about 1920, which was before there was a Goodyear plant in St. Marys. She did some research and found out that one of the first five blimps did come here.

Ray plans on attending the next Local History Roundtable on July 26, 2022, and bringing along some of the Yacmett photos that she has. Please join us in the meeting room of the St. Marys Community Public Library on July 26th from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.



This home now located at 201 Madison Street was the first Catholic Church.

From History of Holy Rosary Church St. Marys, Ohio by George L. Neargarder