

May 2022

### Local History Round Table at Library Meet

A group of 8 met at the St. Marys Community Public Library on Tuesday, May 24, 2022, to discuss local history. Prior to the start of the discussion, Linda Koons related that Edward "Eddie" Meckstroth graduated in 1954 and after graduation traveled to Switzerland where he visited relatives. He traveled to Switzerland a number of times during his lifetime. He was known for walking around town in "Edwardian" attire. He loved history more than any other subject in school. He would often relate stories of the past to those he talked to whether they were young or old.

At the start of the meeting Beth Keuneke, Adult Services Coordinator, shared several pictures related to the discussion in April. One photo was of the D. Armstrong store with a lion edifice above each of the three arched windows of the store. The building at 150 W. Spring Street now has one of the lions attached to the lower right corner of the building, having been recently returned to the building's owner.

Another was a copy of a page from the book Auglaize County Postcard Images by George Nearing about the St. Marys Woolen Mill. The question about why and when the Woolen mill changed to the Cotton Mill was explained on page 104. "The Herzings operated the blanket factory until 1957, when the market for wool blankets sharply declined. The mill was then sold to Fieldcrest Mills, which moved production out of St. Marys in 1960. Leshner Corporation then purchased the buildings establishing the St. Marys Cotton Mill, which operated until 1998, when the facility was donated to the City of St. Marys. It was demolished in 2007." The blankets were well renowned. Bob Hurm related that the wood for the flooring was made from redwood that come from California on the train. When the building was being torn down someone got the four-inch-thick floorboards. These boards were planed to remove the grease and dirt and when finished looked like new, and were used in the building of a home in the area.

Mike Homan was told that when the wooden silo on the Helmstetter farm was torn down someone from the East coast came and bought the lumber which was taken back to the East Coast to be used for building materials.

The next article was another page from the Nearing postcard book, page. 105. Keuneke related that the original Spoke Works factory was located near the Southeast corner of Front and South streets, where McBroom was located. The company built a new building east of Cleveland, Hendricks, and Columbia streets and moved to the new location in 1900-1901.

Doris Cook related that there was a lot of quicksand around town, especially in the area of Wayne street. Mike Homan remembers when there was a spot on South Front street that always settled and created a low spot. Come to find out that at one time the Spoke Works put

sawdust in the low spots which in time created low spots in the street. The city eventually dug out all of that, refilled it, and repaved the street.

Keuneke also showed a picture of a dump truck dumping dirt into Lock 12. She is looking to find the source and date of the photo. She has pictures from the Evening Leader newspaper, May thru July 1969, where they were filling in the basin which became the Chestnut street parking lot. Keuneke also has a picture of a bulldozer pushing dirt into Lock 12 from the newspaper dated 1959. Bob Hurm remembers kids jumping into the canal lock and swimming through the flume/culvert that ran under Chestnut street. Mike Homan remembers the parking lot being gravel in 1970.

Mike Homan asked where the Chain Works were located. Using the map of St. Marys from the Atlas of Auglaize County, with Historical and Biographical Sketches., 1898, the Chain Works was located on the Northeast corner of Scott and Oil street. This factory was mentioned by Jim Tully in his books. The site is now the home of BRW Tool & Manufacturing.

One of the questions from the April meeting was how to clean tombstones. Bob Hurm had talked to a relative who told what she had used or done in the past. Keuneke brought up on the computer the Cemetery Conservators for United Standards website and their cleaning instructions. They have a wealth of information on their website about not only cleaning but tablet setting, slotting, repairing, and reading stones.

Mike Homan also asked where Sherman's Junkyard was located. Bob Hurm said that it was located south of South Street and east of the Canal. There was also a scrap yard on South Ash street near the railroad, known as Auglaize Scrap Yard. There might also have been on the east of V.F.W.

The next Local History Round Table will be held at the library on Tuesday, June 28, 2022, from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.