



Beth Keuneke, started the meeting by announcing the passing of Gladys Stroh and passing around her obituary. Gladys had attended several of the Local History Round Tables. Beth asked that the group have a moment of silence for Gladys.

After a moment of silence, Keuneke introduced Detective Tim Rammel who had asked to come and speak to the group regarding the unsolved murder of Roger Parent Jr. that occurred on December 29, 1978, at the P & S Carry Out located at 2111 Celina Rd. The Auglaize County Sheriff's Office is looking for any information on this case. An information sheet was handed out from the office of Dave Yost, Ohio Attorney General about this case. If anyone has any information about the case, please call The Auglaize County Sheriff's Office at 419-739-6565. Representatives from the Sheriff's office will attend the next Local History Round Table in March and will bring photos to discuss the case. Their goal is to find closure for the family.

Barbara Moore asked the detectives how many homicides they see in the county. Detective Brian Little said they run about one a year of varying types. They are now able to charge for overdose deaths which would change that number. Bill Huber, who was assistant prosecuting attorney at one time remembers that he tried the third homicide case in 1973. The second homicide occurred in 1948 and the first in 1850. The fourth was in 1976.

Julie Graves emailed a picture of an item that she found that looked like a bottle opener that had etched on it "Crane and MacMahan Inc. Triangle Brand Furniture St. Marys, Ohio." This metal object looked like a hand pointing to something. Also printed on the pointer finger were the words "You Pay." Most thought it looked like a bottle opener but weren't sure about the "You Pay" inscription. Bill Huber said that it was a wholesale dealer. Beth Keuneke shared information that she had on the Crane & MacMahon Furniture Company with the group. According to George Nearing they made bedroom furniture from 1928 to the late 1930's. In 1947, after the war, they tried to go back into the furniture business but had losses and closed the factory in 1953. From an unknown source: St. Marys Wheel and Spoke, Company was located originally on West South Street where the 1923 Memorial and McBroom Schools were located. Flooding forced the company to seek a new location. Ft. Wayne, Indiana, offered free land to induce the company to move there. St. Marys village officials, hearing of the Ft. Wayne offer took action to raise funds for a tract of land in the northeast section of St. Marys as the new location for the plant. St. Marys Wheel and Spoke, associated with Crane and MacMahon, Inc., moved to the new site at the east end of Columbia Street and continued to operate there until 1959. From a newspaper article with no date: In the northeast part of town was located the St. Marys Wheel and Spoke Co. It

employed about 250 and made wheels, rims, spokes, hubs, etc. Later it became the Crane – McMahan's Spoke Works. They made croquet sets along with other products and during World War II they turned out army cots.

Moving on to other topics. Mike Homan said that he found the location of the bench which was dedicated to "Murph" that was discussed at an earlier Round Table. The bench is in Memorial Park near the Canal Boat. Beth Keuneke related that she had just found in the local history room Resolution No. 95-04. This was, "A resolution designating the park bench located on Spring Street next to the Spring Street Bridge as "The Robert L. Murray Memorial Bench." It was resolved that "Robert L. Murray, affectionately known as "Murph" for many years added to the uniqueness of living in St. Marys; and...had an abiding interest in the affairs and events of his native city, and...was a regular attendee of City Council meetings and other civic events, and was never afraid of making known his views on city issues...." Keuneke passed around a copy of the Resolution. It was related that Murph was hard to understand because of a childhood illness, so was quiet until he had something to say and then he always said it politely. He helped with athletic and other events around St. Marys. Bill Huber related that he had done some genealogy on the family and Murph's grandfather was from Pennsylvania and was involved in oil, so it is likely that he came here in the 1890's when the local oil boom was taking place. Julie Graves said that Murph would come into her parent's store, Huwer Sporting Goods because they always had a coffee pot going and he would come in and "shoot the breeze." He made his rounds to other businesses around town with a stop outside the Evening Leader office just about the time that the newspaper was to be released and he sat there to read it.

The discussion turned to several businesses downtown. One business that was recalled was Shorty's Sport Shop run by "Shorty" Gilmore and his wife "Tuck." Julie Graves wondered what Shorty's real name was because she remembers seeing legal documents in which his name was listed as "Shorty Gilmore." Bill Huber thought that Shorty's real name was Harold. According to the 1950 U.S. Census their names were Richard E and Thelma L Gilmore. According to the 1957 directory, Shorty's Sport Shop was located at 133 W. Spring. In the 1961 directory, it was located at 120 S. Front. In the 1965 directory, it was listed as Huwer's Sporting Goods located at 121 W. Spring. Julie recalls that there was quite a discussion about moving the store from the small store on Front street to the much larger store on Spring street due to cost and other factors. By moving they doubled or tripled their size. The business was later sold to Kay Albert and became Albert's Sporting Goods. Another business in close proximity to Shorty's on Spring street was the Dog House Restaurant. Bill Huber related that it was known for their hot dogs. Both businesses had steps up to the entrance. Another business that was mentioned was Sara's Antique Shop. Annett Kuck remembers Sara coming to Adolph's Restaurant in New Knoxville. Beth found a listing in the 1967 directory for Pleasant Valley Antiques & Used Furniture, 133 E. Spring run by Sara Miller.

Pfenning's Jewelry Store, Hall's TV, and Jack's Shoes Inc. were mentioned. From the directories Beth found that Pfenning's Jewelry Store was located at the following addresses: 101 E. Spring (next to the Leader Printing Co.) in 1939, at 217 E. Spring in 1946, and at 217 (215) E. Spring from 1957 onward. Prior to 1957 the store was run by Vincent S. Pfenning and after 1946 it was run by Philip J Pfenning, Vincent's son. Hall's located at 133 E. Spring in 1939 was called Hall's Radio Shop and run by VC Hal. By 1946 the name was changed to Hall's Radio & Appliances and was located at 141 E. Spring and run by Velda C. Hall. In the 1957 directory, it is listed as Hall's Television and Appliances run by RL and Velda C. Hall located at 311 W. Spring. In 1961 and 1965 the store was located at 215 E. Spring. It was mentioned that at one time there were three jewelry stores in St. Marys, Pfenning's, Durnell's and Hudson's. Jack's Family Shoe Store was located at 213 (211) E. Spring in 1957 and managed by Mrs. Florence M. Meyers. In 1961 and 1965 it was called Jack's Shoes Inc. at 211 E. Spring and JR Swartz was president and Mrs. Florence M. Meyers was manager.

A couple of grocery stores were mentioned, the A&P and Kroger. In 1939 The Great A&P Tea Co. was located at 120 W. Spring and the local manager was Arthur L. Boyce Jr. In 1946 it was located at 222 E. Spring with their storeroom located at 224 E. Spring. According to Wikipedia A&P stood for Atlantic & Pacific. In 1939 there were two Kroger stores listed one at 120 W. Spring with Chas Goldenetz manager and the other at 216 E. Spring with Cecil Thwaits as manager. At that time the stores were listed as Kroger Grocery & Baking Co. By 1946 there was only one Kroger Co. store in town located at 200-02 E. Spring with CE Thwaits manager. In 1957 it was located at 202-04 E. Spring with KE Shinn manager and in 1961-1969 it was located at 1550 Celina Rd.

Someone asked what was in the Custom Transmission building. The Goodyear Service Store was located at 222-224 E. Spring in the 1957, 1961 and 1965 directories. They sold tires, appliances, etc. Barnhart-Bricker ran by CA Barnhart and Kahl E. Bricker sold Firestone tires, etc. and was located at 120 W. Spring in 1961. In 1965 it was located at 1122 E. Spring. Prior to that Midwest Electric occupied the building at 1122 E. Spring before building and moving to State Route 33A. Someone thought that Midwest moved in 1964.

Springs and water levels were mentioned next. Lynn Persinger asked where the springs were located in St. Marys. Jim Winget said that there was a spring fed fountain outside of the Fountain Hotel (Fort Barbee) that was shut down in the 1950's. Other springs mentioned were at Walnut and Spring, at Front and Spring, by the original city building, and behind the Fountain Hotel/Fort Barbee. Someone else remembers that when they were digging the trenches to lay pipe for Villa Nova they had to run pumps 24 hours a day to keep the water out while they were working. Other locations where pumps were needed and that ran constantly were the Bank One/Chase Bank building, the St. Marys Theater, and the 1923 High school. Bill Huber remembers having a tour of the High School and being shown the access to the subbasement via the industrial arts department where the pump was located. Bill Huber remembers reading or hearing that when they built the 1923 high school they had to dig 93 feet to access bed rock for the foundation. Others remember when the library was located in the basement of the current city building and it smelled of mold and would flood frequently. Julie Graves remembers being at Bunker Hill school and it was raining really hard. Normally they walked to and from school but since it was raining so hard the teacher kept them until parents drove up to pick up their children. She had never been picked up from school but that day her father came and picked her up. Her father had Huwer's Sporting Goods store which had a basement so they were taken to the store to help haul things up from the basement. When it was all said and done there was two feet of water in the basement and when the water receded there was silt all over the floor that her mom mopped and mopped to clean up. She remembers when there were large amounts of water some kids would dive off of the cement stadium or goal posts at the high school.

Someone asked whatever happened to the arch over the entrance of the Huber building that said "Auditorium." Bill Huber said that Milt Miller took it and at one time the plan was to use it as an entrance leading to Memorial Park from Spring street. It was mentioned that there were problems with anchoring it and maybe some other issues. So at this point no one knows where the arch is located.

The next Local History Round Table will be on Tuesday, March 28, 2023 from 1:30 to 2:30 pm.