

Murry Associates Build New Building To House Auction Center

LITITZ (Lancaster Co.) — A new 6,400 square foot building has taken shape along the Lititz Springs Creek off North Lane that promises to be another boost for the auction industry in Lancaster County and the surrounding region. This new auction center that is to open next Saturday, Sept. 24, is the dream of Elmer and Richard Murry, the father and son team of E.M. Murry Associates, headquartered at 10 S. Broad St.

"We have been looking for a place to accommodate our auctions better than on a one-day set-up at a fire hall," Richard said. "Over three years we have investigated different places, running into many bureaucratic obstacles. Finally, at the end of July of this year, we received final building permits for the warehouse slab that was used by Wilbur Chocolate before a fire destroyed the building four or five years ago.

"We feel we are beautifying Lititz, and not only the town, but we are also providing a service to Lancaster County and the surrounding area with another auction facility. The auction business is a growing industry, and in many areas this business is only in its infancy.

"An auction is an answer to economics regardless if the economy is good or bad," Richard said. "People sell in good times to make a profit and in bad times they sell to get out of debt or escape their problems."

The Murrys already have 13 auctions lined up for the new

building. At the opening sale they have a full line of antiques, including Jaguar automobiles, Lionel trains, machinist tools and firearms. They plan to hold auctions every Monday and as they have merchandise to sell.

The new building on leased land is 40'x 160' with an auction room, offices and a large storage area. Truck docks are in place to accommodate easy unloading and loading access to the building.

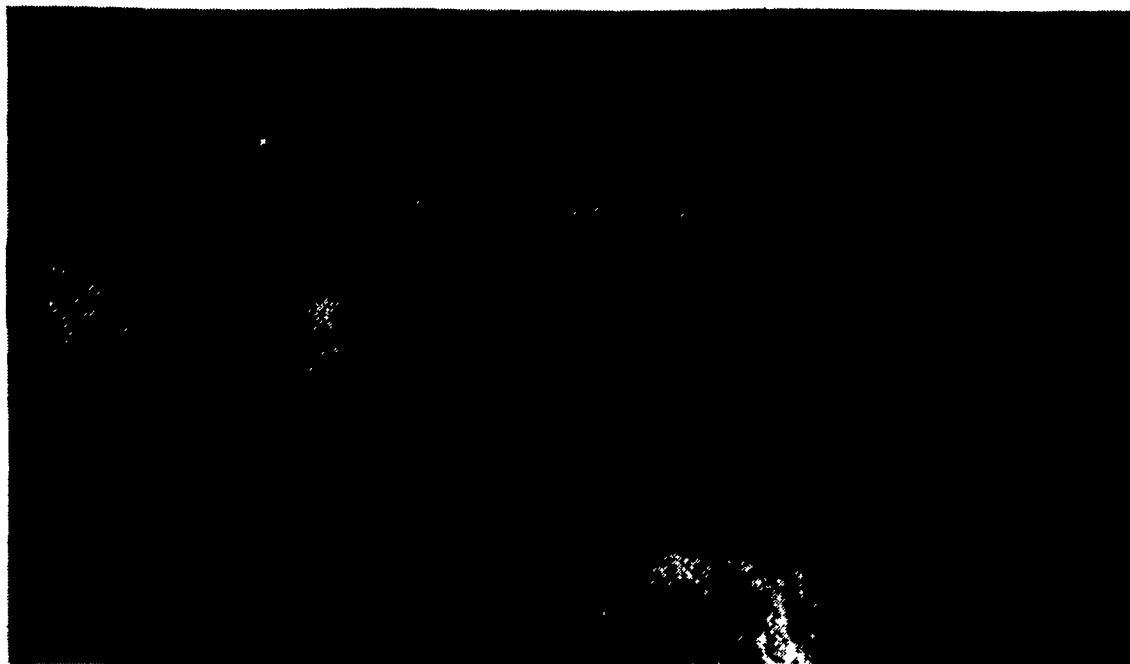
Elmer Murry has been an auctioneer for 41 years, longer than almost everyone else in Lancaster County that is still active. He likes the business and hopes to "stick at it a while longer."

Of course, he has seen a lot of change over the years. When he started in 1953, he sold dry sinks for \$1.50. Now they bring up to \$1,500. A Dutch cupboard went for \$300 or a Windsor chair for \$60, but now you can get \$1,200 or \$1,500 for either.

Carnival glass sold by the basketful for 25 cents. Gaudy Dutch went for \$20 or \$30. Now they bring in the \$100's.

Elmer said business runs in cycles but not as much as when he started. In the '50's you only had sales in the spring and fall. There was no such thing as a summer auction. Then auctioneers began to promote sales, develop logos and advertise. This developed a following.

"I hope I have done right by the people," Elmer said. "I have tried. Everybody 'flubs' sometimes, but



The new auction center building is set to open for the first auction on Sept. 24, 1994.

if you can square things away right away, it doesn't become serious."

If you are into collecting, Elmer suggests good solid plastics not glued together. "Many of the items today will never last long enough to be called antiques," Elmer said. We live in a throw-away era. I looked at a cherry table with Queen Anne's feet and six chairs bought in the early 1930's. I don't care what these items bring; they will be worth more than anything you can buy now. No reflection on the furniture industry; they are just meeting the market. But in 1930 you could still get something that will last to become antique. Since then, if you are going to use it, it will not last."

If Elmer were to summarize his view of business, he would say it in three words: "Observe," "Compare," and "Remember." Observe what you are selling, compare it with something you sold before like it, and remember that when you go on to the next one like it.

"And always try to do your best. Always!" Elmer said. "You can never reach the top, but you can better your best as you progress."



Elmer Murry, left, and son Richard Murry with the catalogue of the first auction to be held in their new 6,400 square foot building to serve as an auction center in Lititz. Elmer started auctioneering in 1953, 41 years ago.

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