In the last column I mentioned the three individuals that I would write about, it comes down to me what will be the most interesting part of that person that makes you the reader what to continue to read about what I put down in writing. You see I could write the entire column on just one person, so therefore only what is most interesting for you the reader is what is needed.

I can tell you this much the more I read and learn about them the more I want to find out more about them and I am not a big fan of genealogy or research for that matter. So like a journalist I have to seek out ways to find information on those that I write about which is why the library is a good place to start.

Alfred Willard French Sr. came to Piqua in 1898, prior to his arrival in Piqua he had been working in the linseed oil industry. But I must digress just a little that he was not from Piqua but came to Piqua later in life. Mr. French was born in Connecticut in 1862 attended public schools before enrolling in M.I.T. and graduating in 1889. He would stay at M.I.T to teach Mathematics over several years.

While with the linseed business he patented a cake trimming machine in which I must confess I have no idea what that is, and on May 25, 1900 started the French Oil Machine Company.

During his short life Mr. French was awarded 55 patents. His lost his life at the age of 53 in an auto accident.

As of today the French Oil Machine Company is still a family owned and operated business and of all the US companies founded in 1900, less than 2% have survived and are still owned by descendants of the founding family.

John Franklin McKinney, born two miles north of Piqua on April 12, 1827, during his early years attended both public and private schools. After graduation he attended college at Ohio Wesleyan in Delaware studying law and was admitted to the bar in 1850. He returned to Piqua in 1850 to practice law.

A Democrat he was a delegate from Ohio to all the Democratic National Conventions from 1850 to 1888. In 1863 he was elected to the Thirty-eight Congress of the United States when in 1894 he failed to win reelection to the Thirty-ninth Congress.

In 1871 he won the election to the Forty-second Congress. In 1872 he chose not to run for reelection and returned to practicing law.

Mr. McKinney also served as chairman of the Democratic State executive committee for the years 1879 and 1880. He died in Piqua on June 13, 1903.

In his private life outside of congress he had been president of the Piqua School Board, President of the Piqua Hydraulic Company – in which the city became the owner and is now the canal/walk path – and finally as the president of the Western Ohio park and Driving Association.

John Franklin McKinney is buried in Section 9 along with his wife.

John Harvey Hart, a civil war veteran he entered the Union Army and was mustered in at Camp Dave Tod in Troy, Ohio on October 7, 1861 as a commissioned officer in Company C of the 71st Ohio Regiment and began nearly four years of service. He was 46 years of age at the time.

Prior to his service in the Union Army he was an attorney in Piqua and was described as “Eloquent and fluent of speech” and living in Washington Township and married Mary Powers in 1843.

On April 6th 1862 he was promoted to Major from 1st Lieutenant and Adjutant. He was promoted again on April 2nd 1864 to Lieutenant Colonel and received his final promotion on November 29th 1865 to Colonel. During his time as Lieutenant Colonel he commanded the 71st Ohio Volunteer Infantry. He was brevetted Brigadier General, US Volunteers on March 13, 1865 for "gallant and meritorious services during the war".

He was wounded in the Battle of Nashville Tenn. on December 15, 1864; the civil war beginning in April of 1861 lasted until the surrender in June of 1865 by the Confederate Army. During the war it is believed to have taken the lives of 620,000 Union and Confederate soldiers.

James Hart officially mustered out ending his service on November 30th of 1865 when the 71st Regiment ended in accordance with orders from the war department.

He was laid to rest in the lower veterans section just inside the entrance off of Washington Ave. in 1867 at the age of 53.

What seems to me as I write this is the fact that there was a connection between John Franklin and John Harvey Hart. In a letter written by that late congressman he mentioned John Harvey Hart in that he was a man of eloquent and fluent of speech. I mentioned that and it didn’t ring a bell until it was pointed out while reading the speech, which the two men I was writing about actually knew each other and one wrote about the other. It sure is a small world after all.