

School Tours at the Museum

All third grade students from Washington School arrived by bus to visit the Ward-Thomas Museum. They spent one hour viewing the artifacts in the 14-room museum and learning first hand the grandeur of that period of history. Another hour was spent learning the colorful history of Niles, how it was started and the hardships the pioneers encountered in their daily lives. They also learned about the floods, tornadoes and fires the town has endured throughout its existence. For five days, 15 society members served as volunteer docents guiding nine classes of children through the museum and answering their questions.



Erin Noss' Third Grade Class

Later some of the children had a picnic lunch on the brick covered patio in the back of the greenhouse. Inclement weather prevented all the classes from eating there, however, so they returned to the school to eat. Visiting the museum has been a wonderful learning experience for the children, providing yet another aspect in their training.

Several of the teachers had their students write "thank you" notes to the society members, having the students practice their writing skills also. Some of the memorable items they enjoyed seeing were of course the beautiful first ladies dresses. Several boys thought the commemorative sword that belonged to *D. J. Woodford*, 1894 Mayor of Niles, was really neat too. They were surprised to learn people made their own soap, and that the children rolled clay to make their own marbles. One little boy drew a picture of a coffee grinding mill, very impressive. Society members enjoyed reading all the notes.

Docents for the tours were: *Sandy Bilovesky, Donna Nellis, Nancy Malone, Roselyn Watson, Carol Souders, Helen DeMalio, Lynn Gombos, Julie Miscevich, Joyce Lukz, Dolly Kaercher, Diann Williams, Becky Zofko, Pat Ribarich*, with *Audrey John* and *Betty Whitney* assisting. Thanks for all your help.

Restored Cold frames at the Greenhouse



Cold frames, located on the east side of the greenhouse have been reconstructed and restored by *George John*. The purpose of the cold frames were to start the vegetables and flower plants early and then "harden" them, preparing them to be placed in the spring ground. The cold frames were built around 1925 when the original structure of the greenhouse was built. There were 3" cast iron pipes carrying warm water throughout the boxes to ward off the cold weather. It served as an important part in the over all function of the greenhouse.

The property behind the Westenfield Room (Former carriage building) was used as a vegetable garden and a flower "cutting" garden. The cold frame area served as a needed place to move the young seedlings for garden preparation and relieving the greenhouse for needed space as the other plants grew. Our thanks to George for restoring the cold frames.

Yearly Memberships Due...

By now you have received your notice for yearly membership dues. If you haven't returned your card yet, please do so. Each small donation goes a long way to support our work at the museum and it becomes our general fund "life blood". The number of tours and visitors to the museum does not begin to pay the bills, so we rely on our memberships to carry us over from year to year.

Printing and postage for the newsletter is expensive. By joining the society, you will continue to receive the newsletter... \$15.00 single or \$25.00 family, brings news from home.

Please send your check to:

Niles Historical Society
 P.O. Box 368
 Niles, Ohio 44446

Volunteers at the Museum

The work at the museum goes on and on with our wonderful volunteers and we are please to announce our most recent volunteer docents. They are *Pat Ribarich, Becky Zofko, and Diann Williams*. If you are interested in joining the active volunteers, please call the society office for dates and times of the next training session. **330-544-2143**.



Niles Historical Society
P. O. Box 368
Niles, Ohio 44446

Non-profit
Organization
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Visit our Website: www.nileshistoricalsociety.org
and check out the Photos and Stories links.

Monthly Calendar	
<p>Public Open House The first Sunday of each month 2-5 p.m.</p> <p>Private tours may be scheduled by calling: The office 330.544.2143</p> <p>Membership meetings – 10:00am The first Saturday each month Executive meeting – 9:30am prior to membership meeting.</p>	<p>Trustees: Fremont Camerino, Jesse Scott, Roselyn Watson</p> <p>Officers: Betty Whitney.....President Nancy Malone.....Vice-President Letha Pihonsky.....Recording Secretary Ruth Van Huffel.....Corresponding Secretary Pat Burgess-Fisher.....Treasurer Frank Burke.....Assistant Treasurer</p> <p>Anne Townley.....Program Editor Chairman Audrey John.....Research Editor Nancy Malone.....Education Editor Ralph Tolbert.....Technology Editor</p>

Christmas Open House December 2, 2012



Our wonderful volunteers under, the direction of *Nancy Malone*, will have the Ward-Thomas Museum all decorated up for the Christmas season. In 2001 an 1885 Ahlstrom grand square piano was donated to the museum by *Mr. and Mrs. Curtis Behner*. We knew it needed a little tuning, but we also thought it would be nice to hear it played during an “Open House” event. *Margaret Ellis* has consented to play it on December 2, 2012. Now our visitors will not only see the museum, but hear the sounds of an 1885 piano, as one might have heard years ago. Refreshments will be served in the Westenfield Room after the tour. The continual tours start at 2:00 and end at 5:00 pm.

Hope you can visit us.

Are you current in your membership?
Here is how you can quickly find out.
Check the address label on the front of this newsletter.
There will be an asterisk (*) on the label next to your name if you are current..

Every November we remove all the asterisks and start the drive for renewing the memberships for the New Year. Over 200 have returned their membership cards for 2013 so far and some have added an extra donation for our use. Our thanks to all who have supported the society. Welcome the following new members so far this year.

- Terry Dull*
- Elizabeth Long*
- Frank Mauro*
- Anthony Nardo*
- Edward & Ashley Stredney*
- Mary A. Theis*
- Louise Vett*
- Diann E. Williams*

Consider one of the Niles Historical Society’s books as a special gift for someone special that enjoys reading about Niles History and a perfect ‘stocking stuffer’ is one of the ‘Streak Free’ cleaning cloths. Check out the insert for descriptions and information on how to place an order.

Fifty Years Ago H. H. Hoffman Department Store Fire... 1962



Many of us remember the day of the Hoffman fire, it was a devastating fire that threatened many other stores in the area and for a while it looked like the whole town would burn down. Many of the stores were built of wood frame and were very old, some dating back to the 1800's. It took all of Niles firefighters and several other departments to knock the blaze out. There were several people in the Hoffman Store when it started and everyone got out except a 67 year old lady on the second floor who was overcome with smoke and died there.

The Hoffman store stood about in the center of the block. Many of our readers recall the little over head carriers that took the money to the office and brought back the change. It was a family owned store that earned your business by assisting the customer in every way. Not at all like today's big time stores when you have to look for a clerk.

The photograph, at the intersection of Main Street and Park Avenue, shows the Dollar Savings Bank Company, the Men's and Boy's Shop with H & R Tax Office on the upper floor, Theis Pharmacy, and Public Finance Company.



The photograph shows Seiber's Sports Store, Star Jewelry, an empty building, the Girl Scout Office and across



State Street is J & J Discount Store. The gap between the buildings in these two photographs is where the Ideal Department Store, Hoffman's, Leopold's Shoe Store, a pool hall with the Steelworker's of America meeting on the second floor were located.

Now, fifty years later, the whole block looks entirely different. Looking down the east side of Main Street, The Dollar Bank (now Farmer's Bank) is still standing at the corner but with a large addition. Next we see the bank parking space, then we have parking space for the new restaurant in town. The building that Ron Theis built for his pharmacy, later sold to Gary Kuszmaul for a pharmacy, is now the Stone Yard Grille and Tavern.



The original building at the very corner of Main and State Street was the old Home Federal Savings and Loan office, and later the Girl Scout office. After the 1962 Hoffman fire, urban renewal program (1975) started and a new building was built on the corner that housed the Spot Restaurant, now it has become the operation center for the Farmers Bank

The Stone Yard Grill & Tavern is attracting a lot of attention and we are so glad to have a new restaurant in town. People working in town can walk to the site for lunch. They also serve dinners and are open from 11:00 am. until midnight.

The co-owners *Rich Hale, Brent* and *Denny Ross* hope their new restaurant will bring more business to the downtown area. They have long since felt the town needed a family eatery and they have transformed the former pharmacy into a very attractive building.



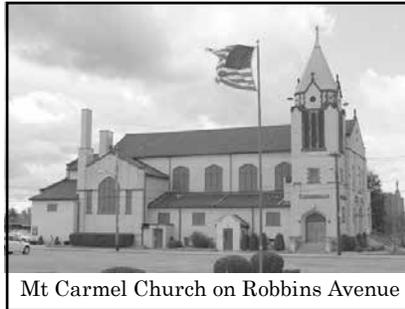
Our town has suffered many losses from fires, floods and tornadoes, but now, once again, new construction emerges welcoming people to Niles.

Tim Tabor's pictures.

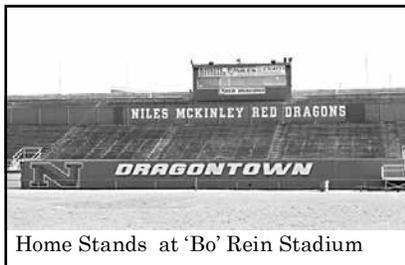
Recently *Tim Tabor*, *Lou Tabor's* son, was in town for a class reunion so he stopped by to donate some of the pictures of Niles he had photographed. He has a "good eye" for photography. We appreciate his donation to our collection.



Garfield School on Third Street



Mt Carmel Church on Robbins Avenue



Home Stands at 'Bo' Rein Stadium

The following four photographs are from the Society's archives. If you enjoy images such as these, please search your own 'shoebox collection' and allow us to scan your photos to preserve Niles' history for future generations.



This photograph features the underpass on North Main Street under construction. Visible on the left is the Desoto/Plymouth Service sign and a car turning onto Maple Street, The other side shows the location of "Joseph's Grille". The Chevrolet station wagon is parked in front of Stiver's Showroom.



The Baltimore and Ohio Freight Station was located in the vicinity of the new parking lot for the bicycle trail. In the background is part of the General Electric Plant and the Rose Building on Robbins Avenue.



The Erie Railroad passenger and freight station was located on Depot Street. The grade crossing is still there but the building was demolished .



A view heading North on Vienna Ave. (St. Rte. 46) at the intersection of Federal St. before paving. Photo is dated May 21, 1940. The sign on the right reads, "Ashtabula 50 Miles, Canfield 11 Miles". The sign on the left indicates that it is 5 miles to Warren.