

Donations to the Museum from the Mathews Family.



Shortly after the house at 503 Brown Street was to become a museum, a large portrait of *Mrs. W.H.B. Ward* arrived. Few of us had any idea who Mrs. W.H.B. Ward was, at the time, except she looked like a pleasant looking lady in a light blue dress. She hung in the museum for several years and was the only item we had from the Ward family except for a small picture of James Ward. It was the only connection we knew about the Ward name other than the fact that we knew James Ward was the one that built the house at 503 Brown Street, and his name was mentioned in the Niles history books.

Then one day in 1996 I received a telephone call from a man from Arizona. He wanted to know if we would like some items from the Ward family. I was stunned, for I just couldn't imagine how there was anything of the families left after all these years. After all they had moved out of the house in 1884 some 100 years ago.

It seemed that *Dean Mathews* had been working on his family history and no longer needed the documents he had been using for his research. Dean's wife, *Betty* was a direct descendant of James Ward family. We were so thrilled when Mr. Mathews sent the box of items to us. It took some time to

go through the letters, documents and leases from the Ward family, just trying to get a time line established in order to digest the information was a job.

One of the oldest documents he sent was a letter, written on July 27, 1830 that James Ward's mother, *Sarah*, wrote to her husband, *William*, telling about her arrival in New York to visit their son and his wife. The letter was all folded several times and there was a wax seal on it, with the simple address "Mr. William Ward, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania" on the outside. The letter explained that she had arrived in New York under situations with weather and 6 days of travel, but she was informing her husband that she had arrived at her destination safely.

That letter is one of the oldest items in the museum today. A copy of it is in the glass case along with many other items Mr. and Mrs. Mathews have sent to us through the years. There are linens, several engraved pieces of silver, along with the hankie of hand made bobbin lace that belonged to *Lizzie Brown* dated 1863, the year she married James Ward II. There is so much history in those items in the Ward case. For whatever reason, Dean Mathews decided to seek us out and send the item to us; we are forever indebted to him.

We also can appreciate the portrait of Mrs. W.H. B. Ward more, now that we know the family history behind it. She was the former *Earlie Hice* who married William H. B. Ward, son of James II and Lizzie Brown Ward in 1898. W.H.B. Ward was in business with *Jonathan Warner* in the manufacturing of steel until 1925. Pictures of their family home, located at 329 Brown Street are in the Ward display also. So for 14 years she probably visited the home at 503 Brown many times before the family moved.

Mr. Mathews also sent a copy of his genealogical "History of the Mathews and Clark Families in America" for our library. It contains detailed information about the James Ward family and the families that followed. I am sure he would not mind if I shared the postscript he wrote to his family for it is so meaningful today.

"Comparing the lives of these ancestors with those of the living generation presents a startling picture of change... Stand up to those who would destroy your heritage with the same fortitude, commitment and indomitable spirit which your ancestors have faced similar conflict... In reading this book, remember the counsel of Winston Churchill..."

**"THE FARTHER BACKWARD YOU CAN LOOK,
 THE FARTHER FORWARD YOU ARE LIKELY TO SEE"**

For all the years to follow, the donated items from *Dean and Betty Mathew* will be enjoyed by many of the visitors to the Ward-Thomas Museum.

Dean and Betty Mathews visiting the Thomas House Museum.



Our deepest thanks to you both—Niles Historical Society

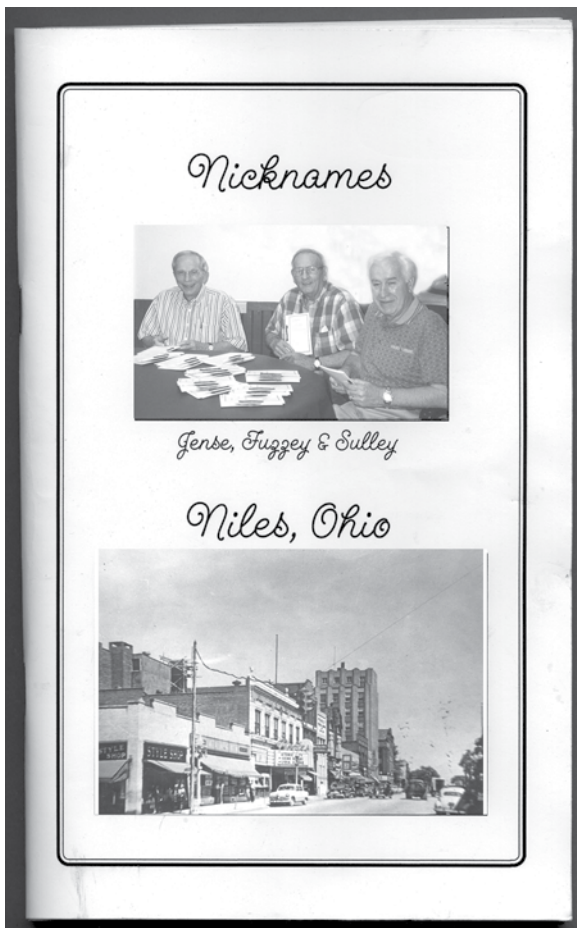


Niles Historical Society
P. O. Box 368
Niles, Ohio 44446

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

<p>Monthly Calendar</p> <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</p> <p>Executive meeting – 9:30am prior to membership meeting.</p> <p>Historical Society Membership Dues \$15.00 Single \$25.00 Family P.O.Box 368, Niles, Ohio 44446</p>	<p>Trustees: Fred Kubli, Jesse Scott, Roselyn Watson</p> <p>Officers: Fremont CamerinoPresident Patricia Nelson Vice-President Nancy MaloneRecording Secretary Betty Whitney.....Corresponding Secretary Ruth Van Huffel.....Treasurer Frank Burke Assistant Treasurer</p> <p>Anne Townley Program Editor Chairman Audrey John..... Research Editor Nancy MaloneEducation Editor Ralph Tolbert.....Technology Editor</p> <p>To contact Curator: 330-544-2143</p>
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Nicknames

The long awaited “Nicknames, Niles Ohio” has arrived from the printers. This booklet was first printed in 2002. The pages were copied on the copy machine and put together with wire. It was a quick attempt of trying to make a list of the nicknames for preservation and it sold for a few dollars. A few months later we made another booklet with more names. Never in our wildest dreams did we think it would ever get so much attention.

After combining all the names in the booklets, and asking for more, we now have 1330 names in a new 74-page book, 5 ½” x 8 ½”. The names are listed alphabetically in the nickname section and alphabetically in the formal name section making it easy to find a particular name or person.

The book also contains pictures of the scenes around Niles, stories about the nicknames, and information about the work of the Niles Historical Society in preserving the history of Niles.

Most people in Niles know *Mike Lastic* as “Bear”, but did you know that there are three more ‘Bears’ in town and they aren’t Papa, Momma, and Baby. Find out who they are when you purchase the newly printed **Nicknames** book.

Cost of the book is \$15.00 each. If you would like a copy mailed to you, you must also send \$2.00 for postage. To save postage costs, you may want to stop by the Ward-Thomas Museum at any of the “Open House” events, held on the first Sunday of every month from 2-5pm and pick up a copy. You may also want to check out the many other books we have for sale at that time.

Open House May 1, 2011

Next "Open House" will be held on May 1, 2011. At that event we will be giving a live tomato plant to the first 50 adult visitors to the museum. We have planted these tomato seeds in our greenhouse and will also be selling the plants at our plant sale to be held May 19-20. These are a special heritage tomato; ready for planting outside as soon as the weather warms.

Change of Address

We have several data based lists of names for our mailing of the newsletters. If you are receiving more than one, please notify us. The double mailing happens occasionally in transferring names from the "Non-Member" list to the "Membership" list when a membership standing is changed.

We also would appreciate you sending us any change of addresses you might have. When mailing by bulk mailings, we are not informed by the post office of any change in your address, for they do not forward anything sent by bulk mail.

We appreciate your help in this matter. We don't want to lose touch with our readers. Again, if you do not have a * asterisk on your mailing label, you are not current in your dues and may be removed from our listings the next time we update our files.

"Everything" Sale June 10-11

Our Sale of good and slightly used items will be held on June 10 and 11th. These are **NOT** items from the museum collection, rather they are items people have donated to us to sell for a few pennies to help with all the expenses we have at the Museum. The sale was held in the Westenfield Room, but we outgrew that area and now we set up table after table and sell out of the barn on the property. Our volunteers do a masterful job sorting and pricing all the items.



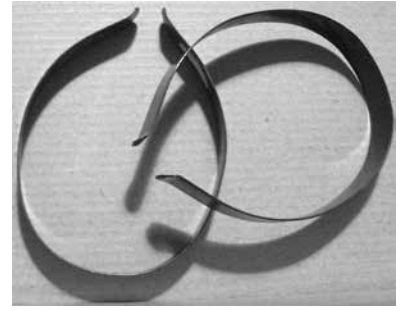
There are many small household items, dishes, glassware, craft items, cookbooks, and lamps already collected for this sale. If you care to donate items, please call the society 330-544-2143 and you will be informed as to when it can be dropped off.



Correction: *Dave Prosser's* address: 800 S. 15th Street, Crandall Medical Center, Sebring 44672

Clip Your Cuffs

Lloyd Rupp wrote that years ago, bicycles were built "bare bones". There were no guards over the chains to keep your long legged pants from being caught in the chain. You would wrap your pants around your lower calves and put these clamps over the wrap, just above your ankles, to keep your pants from being caught in the chain.



Rose DeJute 1914-2011

We are sad to report another member of the Niles Historical Society has passed away. Rose was a charter member of the Niles Historical Society, serving as secretary for many years. Rose will always be remembered as "Ida McKinley" with the Whitehouse Ladies organization. Rose sewed by hand thousands of pearls and rhinestones on the dress she made as Ida McKinley. She looked beautiful and played the part with all the style and grace of Mrs. McKinley for the style shows.



Rose later donated the dress to the **National McKinley Birthplace Memorial Association** with the express desire that it be kept in the memorial building. Rose and her sister, *Betty Moritz* donated the gazebo on the grounds at the Ward-Thomas Museum in memory of their mother, *Angeline LaPolla DeJute*. Our sincere sympathy goes out to her family.

The building of the house at 503 Brown Street.

William and Sarah Ward had seven children. They came to America in 1817 and went directly to Pittsburgh, Pa. William Ward was a practical iron worker and his sons obtained knowledge of the business from their association with him.

Their son, *James Ward* married *Eliza Dithridge* in 1835. Her family was also involved with the iron manufacturing in Pittsburgh. In 1841 James Ward and his brother, *William* built the first rolling mill in Niles. The firm was destined to play a prominent role in the history of Niles, as well as the entire Mahoning valley.

Just as the *Heaton* family founded the village of Niles, and the industries that nourished it, so too the Ward family provided the industrial leadership that transformed Niles from a diminutive village of 300 inhabitants and a single furnace in 1840, to a thriving industrial town with a population of around 3,000 by 1870. The first Ward plant stood on the north bank of the Mahoning River, east of the viaduct. In 1859 James Ward built the Elizabeth Furnace to supply the pig iron for his rolling mill. It was located on the east side of the Mosquito Creek, about where East Park Ave crosses the creek.

In 1862 James and Elizabeth Ward built the house at 503 Brown Street. A lot of thought obviously went into the building of the house. The front entrance holds double doors with glass windows which open to allow the air to flow into the house and up the stairs which are in the main hallway. This



allows for the cooling of the house in the summer. Of course this was before window screens as we know, so grates for the windows were installed to prevent birds from flying inside. These were probably made at the Ward factory and have the same motif as the frosted glass window above the double doors. We were told that the windows also held a frosted glass insert with the same motif, but they were removed some time ago. The frosted glass panels were made by Eliza's brother, *Edward Dithridge*, who was a glass cutter and engraver in Pittsburgh. .

When we removed the carpet from the parlor and the dining room in 1999 to replace it, we discovered the wooden floorboards were 5 ½" wide and square nails were used. These nails were probably made at the James Ward factory. Fireplaces were used to heat the house when it was built in 1862, but years later, as we discovered, there were 14" x 19" spaces cut in the floor for gravity air returns to aid in the circulation of the heat. Later cast iron radiators were installed as better methods of heating became available. The basic part

of the house has remained the same since being built in 1862 and evidence of the original construction can still be seen.

After 1887 when *John R. Thomas* and his wife, *Margaret* purchased the house, some changes were made. The care and love of both families, through the years has helped to preserve the house to the showplace status it deserves. A way of life existed here that will only be remembered in the history books. The fine linens, use of china, crystals and silver that was used daily, has been replaced with paper plates and fast food. Today, sadly, family dinners together, proper conversation, and social graces have been lost in the rush of daily life for many people.

Our world is changing fast all around us and preserving the past for future generations to see and learn from, has become a never-ending job. We are forever grateful to the Thomas heirs who deeded the acreage to the City of Niles for the museum to be established in our town. The Ward-Thomas Museum is 149 years old and still remains a fine example of Italianate architecture, a beautiful Victorian home loved and enjoyed by all who care for it and those who visit it.

We welcome the following new members.

Theresa Adler

Thomas E. Calderone

Rosemarie Cancelli

Angela Cortell

Joseph E. D'Amico

Joyce Fonce

John Herlinger

Joielle Martin

Mark & Luanne Matheney

Cynthia Nutter

Dominic "Snaps" Patrone

Ralph Persing

Pete & Judy Spetsios

Mr. & Mrs. Edward J. Young

A total of 72 new members have joined our roster this year.

Endowment Fund donations:

In Memory of Sue Larsen

Skip & Nancy Riedel

In Memory of Ruth Corea

Joyce and Joe Lukz

Pictures

Many pictures for the new pictorial book have been donated and we do appreciate you taking the time to go through your old pictures. We are glad to scan them and return them to you. Please attach names of people in the picture and dates if possible.

Every picture we receive will not be in the new pictorial book, but it will remain in our files for later use. All the pictures in the file have now been scanned for quick and easy access. Remember, this is an on-going project. We are always glad to make copies of your pictures. ...so keep looking. The pictures currently in our files are here **only** because someone, like you, took the time to save them for us to enjoy today.



Please send us your photos to preserve Niles' History.