

## Displays In The Museum

Wedding gowns and hand-painted china will be on special display through *Heritage Day* at the **Ward-Thomas Museum** in Niles. The wedding gowns in our collection reflect the changes in styles that have been made through the years and may be viewed on the second floor of the museum.

The oldest gown was worn by *Evelyn Harris* when she married *Mr. Rosensteel* in 1886. It was donated to the Society in 1993 and previously to that, it was stored in an attic. The heat and dryness contributed to the deterioration of the fabric, however, it is an exquisite dress with fine details and must be carefully displayed. It is a 2 piece dress with a high neck band made of lace, leg-of-mutton sleeves with lace inserts at the cuffs and elbow. The tiny pleats at the lower edge of the skirt and detailed lace inserts are a tribute to the workmanship on the gown. It is now carefully displayed on a bed instead of a dress form as to not allow stress on the fabric.

*Kay Elizabeth Pollard* and *Thomas Edward Weddell* were married on June 3, 1944. Her gown was of candlelight satin with a sweetheart neckline with lace edges and 30 satin covered buttons running down the back. The skirt was slightly gathered at the waist with a small flowing train.

Another gown worn October 21, 1950, was made of slipper satin fashioned with a bibbed bodice of Chantilly lace accented with a small lace collar with rows of satin covered buttons to



the waist. The long fitted sleeves of satin were accented at the wrist with bridal points and covered buttons. The graceful skirt was embellished with Chantilly lace and flowed into a cathedral length train.

A ballerina styled gown worn on June 29, 1957 is a ¾ length gown with three tiered skirt of tulle covering the foundation skirt. Each of the long lace sleeves has 8 covered buttons and the neckline has lace edging with shaped bodice.

The library, on the first floor of the museum is the location of the fine hand decorated china on display. Many of the dishes on display were hand painted by *May Unger John*, daughter of *Dr. Cornelius* and *Mary Unger* from Niles.



*May*, graduated from Niles McKinley High School in 1903. She also graduated from the Cleveland School of Art, receiving many awards for her work there. She enjoyed the china painting and painted many dishes for her family and friends through the years.

The beautiful large Victorian vase on display is another example of her work. She also used oil and charcoal in her paintings and portraits. *May* married *William A. John* in 1920 and lived at 505 Lincoln Avenue in Niles for many years. She was the mother of *George John*; *George* is one of our faithful volunteers at the museum.

We continue to have many of the Ladies Whitehouse gowns on display throughout the museum. Mark your calendar for the *Heritage Day* celebration at the Museum. August 7 from 12 -5. *Heritage Day* is always a good time to see the beautiful flower gardens and enjoy seeing the many displays. It is also a great time to greet old neighbors and enjoy one of our famous lemon shakes in the shade under the trees.

**See you on August 7<sup>th</sup>. 12 - 5.**

## DATES TO REMEMBER

*July 3* ..... *Open House 2-5*  
*August 7* ..... *Heritage Day 12-5*  
*September 4* ..... *Open House 2-5*

Remember, you can call the office: 330-544-2143 to schedule a tour during the hours we are not open to the public. Our volunteers are glad to help you.



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

Non-profit  
Organization  
US Postage Paid  
Niles, OH  
Permit #337

Visit our Website: [www.nileshistoricalsociety.org](http://www.nileshistoricalsociety.org)  
and check out the Photos and Stories links.

<p><b>Monthly Calendar</b></p> <p><b>Public Open House</b> 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><b>Membership meetings</b> – 10:00am The first Saturday each month</p> <p><b>Executive meeting</b> – 9:30am prior to membership meeting.</p>	<p><b>Trustees:</b> Fred Kubli, Jesse Scott, Roselyn Watson</p> <p><b>Officers:</b> Fremont Camerino .....President Nancy Malone .....Recording Secretary Betty Whitney..... 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>
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## Dave Prosser's Trip



You have heard us mention *Dave Prosser* before, but here is a story you have not heard about him. Dave was a well-liked teacher in Niles schools and many of his students do remember him. One said, "You'd never fell asleep in Dave's class 'cause you never knew what he was going to say next." Yes, Dave was a teacher, but as the World War II broke out, he was called into service, just as some of his students. He ended up at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center for boot camp and from there went on to serve our country at war.

As with many of our service people, they have never been given the recognition they deserved for the job they did. *Honor Flights Network* is an organization that works to change that by transporting veterans to Washington D. C. to visit memorials dedicated to honor their service and sacrifices. The Honor

Flights Network helps every veteran in America, willing and able of getting on a plane or bus to visit the memorial in Washington D.C.

*Paul Whipple*, friend of Dave Prosser, made arrangements for Dave to go on the flight. They were to leave at 6:00 in the morning, but Dave was so excited, he was up and ready by 4:30. They flew out of the Akron air port and were treated royally everywhere they went. Meals on the plane, wheelchairs and assistance wherever needed, as they went from memorial to memorial. Just to see the large memorials in real life is breathtaking. And everywhere they went, people stopped and cheered them on.

It was an experience Dave will never forget. When they returned to Akron, they were once again cheered on by a crowd of well wishers. As Will Rogers once said, "*We can't all be heroes. Some of us have to stand on the curb and clap as they go by.*"

Another change in Niles...Roger's Lumber property has been sold to Mt. Carmel Church



61 years of service...closed 2009



Today !

# Chautauqua Comes To Niles 1916



W. Park Ave. looking east toward Main St.

The building on the left was the *T. G. Anderson Grocery* and the small building, *Tony Albisini's shoe repair*. The large corner structure is the IOOF building where Calvin's Drug Store would eventually be located. These buildings are gone now, as is the Allison Hotel (later named 'The Antler Hotel') on the opposite corner. Even the banner at the intersection advertising the coming of the Chautauqua is a thing of the past.



Until the 1920's, the Chautauqua came every summer, erecting their large tent where the post office is now. Their cultural entertainment included everything from lectures to Grand Opera.

The movement started at Chautauqua Lake in New York as an adult education movement in 1847. The traveling program brought entertainment and culture for the whole community, with speakers, teachers, musicians, entertainers, preachers and specialists of the day. *President Theodore Roosevelt* was quoted as saying "*Chautauqua is the most American thing in America*"

The popularity of the Chautauqua movement can be attributed in part to the social and geographic isolation of American farms and towns. People in such areas would naturally be hungry for education, culture and entertainment, and the Chautauqua Movement was a timely response to that need in the late 19th century and early 20th century.

However, by the 1920's, other entertainment and educational opportunities, such as radio and movies, began to arrive in American towns to compete with Chautauqua lectures. With the advent of television and the automobile, people could now watch or travel to cultural events previously available only in urban areas, and the Chautauqua movement lost its popularity.

1916 program from the Chautauqua in Niles, Ohio



The work of preserving Niles History continually goes on daily at the museum. Working together with a group of volunteers has been a joy and a blessing. We look forward to the next 30 years with appreciation of the past and enthusiasm for the future. All are welcome to become actively involved by attending the meetings which are held on the first Saturday of every month at 10:00 in the *Westenfield Room* at the museum. There you will find a group of people dedicated to doing the work necessary to the growth of the museum and preservation of the written word. With dreams of the new building in the foreseeable future, your participation is necessary now, more than ever. Looking forward to seeing you at the meeting, First Saturday at 10:00 AM. and getting actively involved.

## Nick Saula Visits Niles

Recent visitor to the museum was *Nick Saula*, a former Nilesite, now living in Kalamazoo, Michigan. *Dot Leo*, one of our faithful docents, proudly lead a tour of the museum and Nick was impressed with the buildings and the gardens. Nick and Dot were friends in school, way back then, and enjoyed renewing their friendship once again during his visit to Niles.



## Congratulations To Frank Burke

Well deserved honors were recently given to *Frank Burke*, named "*Citizen of the Year*" from the Niles Rotary Club. Frank graduated from Niles in 1940 and Youngstown College in 1947. He belongs to several organizations around town, and he isn't just a member, he is an active volunteer in each organization. Faithfully he delivers the baked goods to *St. Vincent DePaul* dining hall in Warren each day. He is a member of the *Eagles* and the *Knights of Columbus* and *St. Stephens Church*.



He has served as our assistant treasure for the Historical Society for several years. He frequently stops by to see if there is anything to be done at the museum. Frank is always willing to help wherever he can, certainly a true definition of a true volunteer. — Congratulations, Frank.

A close-up of the corner view of the Antler Hotel and intersection where the Chautauqua Banner was flying prior to Urban Renewal in 1974.







Joe Perone, James Nicasastro and Harry Pissini talking about the memories of their youth.

The recently published "Nicknames, Niles, Ohio Book" has caused a lot of interest. We have received numerous requests for the books from people who are giving them as gifts.

Several members got together to look at the new books. They started to reminisce about the names in the book and how people got their special nickname.

Soon the memories started flooding back with laughs as to the games and pranks they used to play with their friends years ago, reminding us once again how times have changed. During the summer, kids would play outside, day in and day out with no fears. All the neighbors were friendly and kept an eye on all the happenings.

They laughed about the "*Tomato Wars*" which took place after all the gardens were cleaned of the tomatoes needed for food and all that was left was certainly not going to be used. What to do with what was left, but to have a friendly war with your friends.

This war took place between *Fenton* and *Mason Street* boys and boy did they have fun. Some times the boys from *Russell* and *Belmont* would join the Fenton and Mason Street gangs, but the battle ground would take place on *Wood Street*. A line was drawn in the center of Wood Street across the street and all the bushel baskets were filled and ready for action. No tomato was to be thrown before 7pm, that was the law... (There was an honor system, of course.) No one was ever hurt and they never did any damaging acts, just kids enjoying life.

So many memories...and this nickname book certainly stirs up many.

The cost of the book is just \$15.00, with shipping and handling being an additional \$2.00.

**To purchase this book, Send check to:**

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



Seated; Joe Perone, Jim Nicasastro & Harry Pissini  
Back row: George John & Gary Coupland

## NEW FLAG POLE AND FLAG

Late last year, our old flag pole that had served us well for years, finally rusted out and fell over. So we needed a new flag pole. *George John* reported it to *Fred Kubli*.

Fred Kubli, trustee, called Mr. *Alan Miller* at RTI and asked if they could supply us with a new flag pole. They were glad to help us. They sent the men out to install the foundation for the pole. Then they installed the new 25 foot flag pole recently.

The flag was donated by *James Williams, Holloway-Williams Funeral Home*, so now we now have a nice new flag flying on a brand new pole. We appreciate these fine businessmen who support the *Niles Historical Society* in our times of need.



l-r: David Dinsmore, Bob Mostoller, Bill Dennis, Fred Kubli, Greg Billock, George John

## BARN SALE

We can never say "thank you" enough to our dedicated volunteers. They are the backbone of the society and have given untold hours of their time, being called upon during the heat of the summer and the cold of winter to help where ever needed.

Recently the volunteers held a sale of donated items. These were slightly used and unneeded items donated from our members and friends for the sale. The ladies worked several days setting up the items and pricing them, then the sale was held with toys, a recliner, chairs, several sets of dinnerware dishes, beautiful glassware, coffee cups and cooking utensils and supplies for sale. Lawnmower, lamps, records, pictures, books, craft items, baskets, paper supplies, greeting cards, Christmas decorations, tools and some antiques, were available at reasonable prices. Because of the number of items, we held the sale in the barn. This location worked out well, for it was cooler in the hot weather.

*Sofia Froom, Nancy Malone, Betty Whitney, Sandy Bilovesky, Roselyn Watson, and Lena Fately* did a fine job serving as salespeople. The ladies made several hundred dollars for the society, but most of all they enjoyed the fellowship of being together and doing something meaningful for our non-profit organization.