

News Letter, Jan 2011

Thanks to all the many friends who have sent their dues/ subscription to us. The dollars we receive from each of you is deeply appreciated. It is placed in the *general fund* and supports our work of preserving history. We welcome the following new members that have joined the society recently.

Dorothy Bianco, Carol Binko, Jack Blenton, Josephine Ciavarella, Mark Crawford, Mr. & Mrs. James Cuchna, Richard Doran, Paul Gartner, Lewis F. George, Mr. & Mrs. Palmer Gentile, Paula Griffiths, Lawrence Guerra, Richard Harris, Adria A. Hood, Nancy Kiracofe, Mr. & Mrs. James Law, Ralph Leard Sr., Mr. Carl Lipp, Phillip V. Mazzilli, Lory Patrick, Mr. Richard Pitts, Marvin Richards, Jim Rounds, Mr. & Mrs. Al Salerno, Bob Smith, Edward Tock, Mr. & Mrs. Larry Toriello, Elizabeth Wildman, Dr. & Mrs. S.Y. Yumang

Thanks to all of you who have joined for 2011.

In the last newsletter we asked about the name of Bert Street School.

Nick Saula wrote the following information to us about Bert Street. He said that name “Bert” was named after the son of the Robbins family. They practically owned all of the land from the Mahoning River and acres around it. It seems that when they started to make roads in that land, they named the streets after their children, other streets were named “Ann”, “Carle”, “Clay”. Later when the street was extended, the city changed the name from “Bert Street” to Belmont Ave.

Nick tells us he was born in 1918 on the south east side of Niles, called “Russia Field”. He graduated from Niles High in 1936 and he is now 92 years old. He lives at 2211 Miles Ave. in Kalamazoo, Mi 49110, if you’d like to write to him. I am sure he’d enjoy hearing from you. Nick thanks so very much for submitting the interesting information to us. A copy of the street history has been placed in our files for future historians.



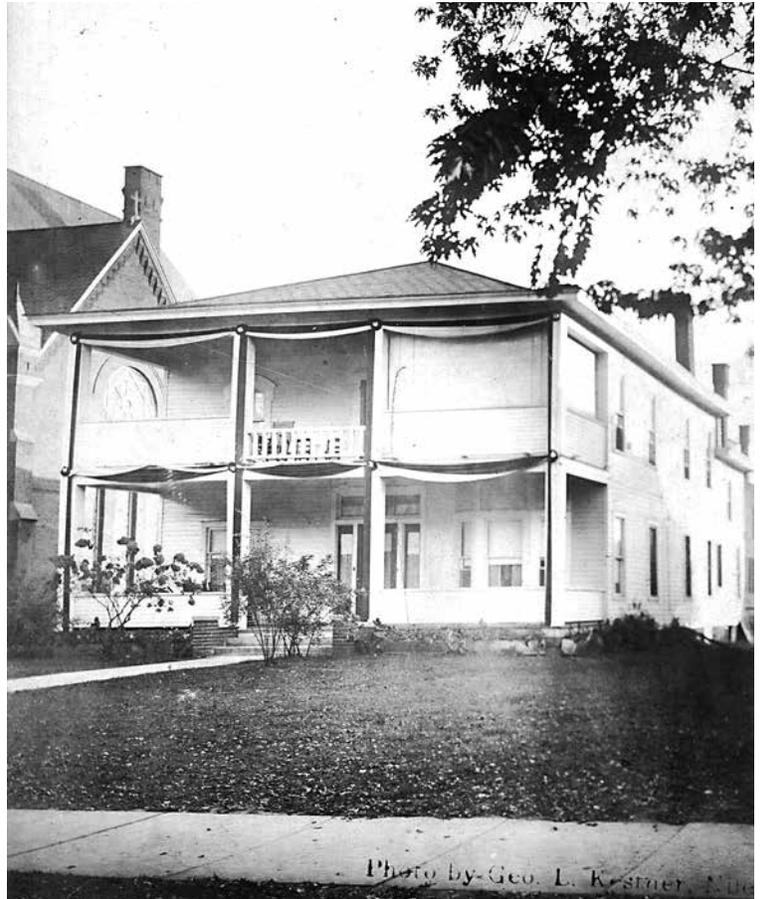
Picture of Monroe School, formally “Bert Street”

Taken in 1948-49 school year with Marie Hofius as teacher. Some of the students in the picture are; Carl Jones, Dora Cogan, Janet Jerina, Carol Yuhaza, Alex Szekely. Irene Szekely, Edward Ryznen, and Alta Holbrook

St. Stephen School and Parish House

One of our readers asked us to show pictures of the St. Stephen School and the old Parish House.

I found these pictures in our file and glad we help bring back some memories. This picture was taken of the original Parish House of St. Stephen’s Church by George Kestner of Niles. You can see the corner of the church on the left hand side of the picture.



The picture below, looking North from West State Street, shows St. Stephen’s Roman Catholic Church, Academy and School as it appeared in 1905. The building at the forefront was the Music Academy, which later became the Sisters Convent, and then was torn down in 1990.

The school was torn down in the summer of 1971.





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

Non-profit
Organization
US Postage Paid
Niles, OH
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Visit our Website: www.nileshistoricalsociety.org
and check out the Photos and Stories links.

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

Hey Squint, Buggy, Grindl, or Sarge—

We have had several requests to republish the “Niles Nick Name” Booklet. If you will remember, we first published it in 2002 and we had over 700 names submitted. The next issue, 2003, there were over 550 new names published. Both booklets have long since been sold out.

We decided to combine the entire 1250 names and have a **new book** published along with any other new names **you** might like to have in the new book.

Here is what you do....

If you have nicknames you'd like to submit to the Niles Historical Society...

Print the nickname you wish to submit

Print the first and last name of the person belonging to the nickname

Send **your** name, address and **PHONE** number and your list of nicknames to:

Niles Historical Society, P. O. Box 368, Niles, Ohio 44446
or curator@nileshistoricalsociety.org

Deadline for sending names March 1, 2011.

I realize you will not know all of the names we currently have in our data base, but that is alright. Feel free to just submit **your** list anyway. With the data base in the computer, we will be able to sort out all the duplicate names for the book. Please keep in mind we don't want to miss any names and **do** want to put as many names in the new book as we can.

The March 1st deadline is firm. After it goes to the printer it is too late.

Volunteer docents at the Christmas Open House at the Ward-Thomas Museum.



l-r. Roselyn Watson, Georgia Mae Jones, Lena Fateley, Betty Whitney.

Reminder: If you haven't returned your dues card, please consider sending it in soon. We really don't want to remove you from our mailing list, but postage is expensive.

Membership
\$15.00 Single, \$25.00 Family

Send to:
Niles Historical Society
P.O. Box 368
Niles, OH 44446

THE BAGNOLI CLUB

As a kid growing up in Niles, my friends and I would frequent places on Robbins Avenue such as *James Dairy*, *Morabito's Market* and *Woodcock's Drug Store*. To our delight, cherry phosphates, plump fruit and a large supply of comic books were enjoyed at these places.

Another place of interest was *The Bagnoli Club* on Mason Street. (The Bagnoli Club originally was located on Langley Street in Niles, in 1932 the club relocated to its present-day location on Mason Street.editor) The club was perfect for entertainment such as weddings and banquets. It had a full basement containing a kitchen and wooden saloon-type bar. The upstairs floor had a platform stage where hired musicians could play a myriad of numbers for dancing to ballads, polkas, tarantellas and jitterbugs.



On many Sunday afternoons, my grandfather would don his Italian straw boater hat, navy blue suit and take me to the club to watch bocce ball games. He would buy me a Grape Nehi soda and I sat on the edge of the bocce court where I could watch the game. Every time a team scored a point, a loud shout of joy was heard throughout the neighborhood.

My grandfather, *Dominic Clemente*, was born in Bagnoli Irpino, Italy. He worked there as a laborer and in 1905 traveled to Niles with his brother, *Aniello Clemente*, sister, *Lucia Clemente* and her husband, *Joseph Pallante*. News of available work at the Niles Fire Brick Company had reached their village and was a strong incentive for many men to move. Grandpa Clemente obtained a job as a night watchman at the Fire Brick Company where he worked until retiring. Many men who traveled from Bagnoli Irpino held jobs there.

Wedding receptions were always festive at the Bagnoli Club, days before the event, men and women of the club volunteered to make this event possible. Upstairs, the men set up long tables and folding chairs for the afternoon meal. They polished the bar and stocked it with selected alcoholic and soft drinks the bridal couple had chosen. Downstairs, the ladies began food preparation for the big event. They rolled meatballs and simmered wedding soup and tomato sauce. Everyone labored very hard before and during the celebration to ensure a smooth social event.

They also made sure the bridal table was beautifully decorated for the wedding cake and bridal favors. The small favors were usually made up of Jordan almonds secured in netting with a ribbon tie. Another popular souvenir was a

match book engraved with the couple's names and marriage date on it.

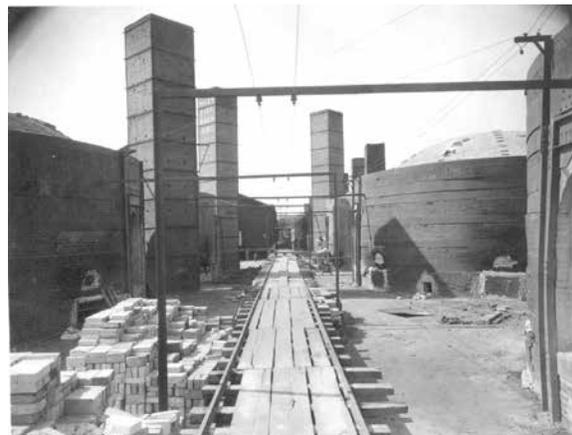
Only when at the very end of the evening after the merriment had ended, the bridal couple and guests had left the club did those unselfish, hard-working Bagnoli Club men and women sit down and have a piece of cake. The following day, they were back again at the club to clean up and put things in order.

Oscar Wilde said, "Memory is the diary that we all carry about with us."

Contributed by—Eileen Roberts from California



Bagnoli Club on Langley Street in Niles



A photo of some of the kilns for firing the bricks at the Niles Firebrick plant where many Italian immigrants found work. Photo credit goes to the Luck Illustrating Co. of Cleveland, Ohio. Donated in the year 2000

Joe Perone sends along just a few thoughts about Police Chief Charles A. Nicholas...

"I got to know him well, as a boy growing up in Niles. I spent a lot of time in downtown most of my childhood life. One of my jobs was selling newspapers at night.

The Pittsburgh Post Gazette came in at 10:45 PM on the Pennsylvania train. Most of the time it was late, as late as 11:45, but the streets were busy all night back in the late 30's. I'd sell most of the papers to the bars and people hanging around town. My best sell was *Krieger's* pool hall where Mr. Jones gave me 25 cents for a paper at that time, the cost was 3 cents. When I was done selling, what ever paper I had left over, I'd give them to Kriegers and one to the Police Department. Most people couldn't afford to buy a paper at that time, so they would go to the pool hall and read one.

So I got to know the "Chief" well. He told me, after we came home from World War II, that he was proud of the Niles boys and that he never put a boys name in the paper if he got in trouble, under the age of 19....But he *did* call the parents to let them know what was going on...Chief Nicholas, one good person...

After my Dad died of mustard gas poisoning during World War I, I went to work for *Joe Rossi's Funeral Home*—my first job, I was nine years old. Things were bad, so he also delivered milk on the east end of Niles, the milk came from *Madden and Hubbard* and was processed at 532 Vienna, which is *Charlie's Auto Repair* today.

I also worked for *John Katicos' Shoe Shine*



Joe Perone and Joe Pissini—1940

In the late 30's shoe shine was a big business, most people were lucky to have one pair of shoes. Back then as bad as things were, people did dress good and on Friday and Saturday the lines to get a shine were as long as a 1/2 block. A shine was 5 cents, but every one did tip big and gave 10 cents or even 25 cents.

And then I got a job at *Kroger's Grocery Store* as a butcher before enlisting in the Navy at the age of 17 in the 10th grade, 1942.

So after 60 years in the painting business, it is time to lay back and reminisce."

— Joe Perone.

Editor's note;

Chief Nicholas served as the Niles Chief of Police from July 1927 to 1947. He died at his home on Maple Ave. of a heart attack. At the funeral *Mayor Fisher* characterized him as a "true gentleman in every respect, and a very fine friend of everyone."

Safety Director, *Tom Hall* noted that Chief Nicholas was "tactful and had an unruffled way of dealing with excited persons." Mayor Fisher appointed *Charles Berline* as the new chief of police, who served till 1954.



No more shoe shines, but you could still have your shoes repaired in the 1970's on State Street. The brick building, partly visible on the left, was built in the 1950's and was occupied by Harry's Hobby House. On the right is the Municipal Parking Lot.



The Police Station was located on Franklin Alley until Urban Renewal in the 1970's provided for the construction of a new complex on State Street.