

The Ward-Thomas Museum Grounds.



This has been a beautiful spring time at the museum. The spirea is in full bloom and the yellow azalea is still looking quite colorful. Two new members of the society graciously volunteered to help in the flower gardens this year. *Elyn Summer* of Girard and *Michelle Gall* from

Lordstown spent the day cleaning two of the flower beds and then planting the flowers in them. *Nonnie Woodford*, *Roselyn Watson* and *Audrey John* have also helped with the plantings in the many flower beds.

George John has been cleaning out the beautiful peony bed along the back fence line. While cleaning around a tree, just south of the house, Roselyn found a nest of baby bunnies. She was quite surprised to find them there. There is always something new happening at the museum. Our thanks goes to all the willing workers.

With the soil so rich and loose, it is so relaxing working in the gardens and we have lots of free weeds for you to pull. One thing about weeds, they never die and for some reason, the deer and the bunnies don't like them either. If you'd like to join us, just call the office and leave your name. We'll get back to you.

**Luncheon on the Lawn
 July 26, 2008...12:00 noon**

Elizabeth Clark will be the speaker at our annual "Luncheon on the Lawn" Liz was a history teacher in Howland, many years ago and she has traveled the world. Among other things, she is a docent at Butler Art Institute in Youngstown and gives tours in the Warren area. You may remember Liz as our guest speaker in 2006. Liz is a busy lady, hardly ever slows down, loves history and truly enjoys sharing her knowledge with us.



This time Liz will tell the interesting life story of *Lou Hoover*, wife of President Herbert Hoover. She is one of the least known President's wives. As a youth, her love for nature, animals, plants and physical involvement continued through her life time. She was a self-sufficient and versatile lady in the true sense of the word. If with us today, Lou Hoover would be the most prepared woman to be president of the United States.

The donation for the luncheon and program is \$20.00 again this year. Tickets will be on sale on June 27th. If you wish to order tickets, call the office, leave your name and telephone number and we will return your call. Or you may also

purchase them on July 6, at the "Open House" (2-5 pm) at the museum. Remember, there is limited seating available. This is a very popular event and the tickets go fast.

The price of gas for summer vacation

With the price of gas going up and people trying to find things to do close to home, may we suggest, visiting your local historical home. It is interesting how many people in Niles have never been inside the McKinley Memorial Library building, let alone our Ward-Thomas museum.

People travel all over the world looking for interesting places to visit, and here in their own home town, sits one of the most beautiful museums in the country.

The Ward-Thomas Museum exists because caring people have volunteered to create it. It holds over 5,000 items in the 14 rooms and it takes over an hour just to walk through. If you take your time, you could spend hours and still not see everything.

I once asked a Niles man, who has traveled the world, why he never visited our museum. He said, "I guess because it will always be there." "No, it will not", I answered him. If no one visits and donates money to support it, the Ward-Thomas Museum will fade away like everything else in town".

Remember we are open for public tours on the first Sunday of every month from 2-5 pm. However, we are more than glad to open the doors just for you, if you call ahead and schedule a tour time. Just call the office, 330-544-2143 and leave your name and phone number. We will return your call and schedule a tour.

Garage Sale Items August 15 & 16

Sofia Froom and *Dot Leo* are pictured with items for sale. We can start accepting your good and used items that you'd like to donate for the sale by August 7th.



The committee will sort and mark the items and have them available for the sale which will be held in the barn on Friday, August 15th and Saturday, August 16th. Watch the paper for the hours of the sale.

"Heritage Day", August 3, 2008

An annual event at the Ward-Thomas Museum is the "Heritage Day" festivities. It is the time for families to stroll around the property enjoying the beautiful gardens and old shady trees. It is the time to show the children how other generations lived and worked. There will be plenty of exhibits to see, demonstrations and entertainment. Food is available and there will be a bake sale of home made treats.

Volunteers will be needed to sign up to help. Please call the office if you would like to help. We will be needing people at the gate selling tickets, servings as docents, assisting at the various displays, and selling books and items.

Mary Ream has lined up some new displays and activities for our visitors. She will be putting more information in the news papers closer to the August 3rd date. Just circle the date and plan to come back home to Niles to see your old friends and visit for a while.



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

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

Calendar for July & August 2008		
July 2, 2008	Executive meeting	11:00am
July 5, 2008	Membership Meeting	10:00am
July 6, 2008	Open House	2-5 pm
July 22, 2008	Reservation deadline for Luncheon	
July 26, 2008	“Luncheon on the Lawn”	Noon
July 30, 2008	Executive Meeting	11:00am
Aug. 2, 2008	Membership Meeting	10:00 am
Aug. 3, 2008	“Heritage Day”	11:00 am
Aug. 7, 2008	Drop off good and used items for Sale	
Aug. 15 and 16	Garage Sale-Hours in local newspaper	

Endowment Donations

Recent donations were received from

- Barbara UngerIn memory of the Unger Family
- Pat & John Heston In honor of George & Audrey John
- Leaders in Investment Education NE Ohio Chapter
- In memory of Michael Cavacos
- A Friend..... In honor of preservation of history

The Endowment Fund was started in April 1988 with a little over \$5,000. During the following 20 years the fund has grown with careful investments. The principal sum that has been donated is never used. A gift to the endowment is a perpetual gift and only the income from investments may be used. The interest income generated by a donation to the endowment, will help pay for the Society’s operation forever. We are still building the Endowment Fund and any donation of \$5,000 or more will receive special recognition in the form of a plaque displayed in the museum.

Donations are placed in the fund that the donor specifies. An acknowledgement is sent to the donor and all memory/honor names are recorded. It is a nice way to honor a person and also provide funding for historical preservation. Each and every donation is deeply appreciated.

The Building-Capital Improvement Fund

Recent donations were received from

- Ruth Erke In memory of Hazel Bieber
- Quest Club of Niles In memory of Robert Whitney
- Frank & Virginia Stein In memory of Robert Whitney
- David & Sallie Bohn & sons ... In memory of Robert Whitney
- Tony MagliaroIn memory of Nick Ruberto & Joe Ruberto
- C. Gilbert James Jr. In memory of Adeline Wick James
- Richard & Joyce Mahan In memory of Bill & Marilyn Thorp
- Bob & Gerrie MillerIn honor of George & Audrey John
- Lynn & Tom Gombos In honor of Mike Woodford

The Building-Capital Improvement Fund was started to provide us with the needed funds to build a new meeting/ educational building to accommodate our ever expanding collection and provide us with room for lectures & meetings. Grants have been applied for and the donations received are being invested. It is hoped that some day soon we can see our dream of a new building come true.

New Web Site

We have a new web site, thanks to *Ralph Tolbert*, who has worked long and hard getting us hooked up to the outside world. He has created a beautiful web site and for all who have a computer, it will not be hard to find.

<http://nileshistoricalsociety.org>

If you have some pictures, you’d like to share with our viewers on the web site, please send them on to us and we will get them scanned and back to you as soon as possible. Page 1

Our contribution to the “Breaker Boys” book by David Fleming

On April 30, 2008 David Fleming was the featured speaker for the Niles Historical Society spring dinner. David is the author of “Breaker Boys” and he talked about coming to Niles a few years ago in search of information about the Stein brothers for his book..

Dave called the society office and explained he wanted to talk to someone who knew Russ and Herb Stein. My husband, George John knew both



of them and their father, Fred. I arranged to have *Bill Sullivan*, who was always a good source of history in Niles, to join George and Dave in the discussion. I gathered pictures from our file and resource articles that had been

saved throughout the many years by *Grace Allison* and others.

David Fleming was interested in the little details of daily life and what made Russ and Herb so competitive on the football field. He wanted to know where they lived, how their daily life was structured, type of personalities and so on.

During his talk on April 30, Dave said his visit to Niles, changed the way he would write the book. He graciously thanked the Niles Historical Society again and again for preserving information he needed for his book. Considering the Steins played Niles high school football in 1914, that was over 94 years ago. We are grateful to the persons who saw fit to save these articles for our files.

The book “Breaker Boys” brings out the personalities of each of the characters in the book. You couldn’t make these people up. They really lived and became a team of caring players that were concerned with one thing and that was to WIN. Dave Fleming lifted up the corners of old newspaper and rattled the historic tid bits that were written here and there, gathered them together and made them become alive again for his readers.

His description of the miners who became the team players is so detailed. Only after he went down into the dark, damp coal mine, himself, was he able to help his readers gain the full significance of that dreadful work place. Dave discovered that the Stein boys develop their strong healthy bodies working on the farm, pitching hay and plowing the fields. Their work ethics developed from the family’s need to survive in the early 1900’s. There was no government aid at that time families were on their own to survive. .

Putting all the information together was like putting a puzzle together, Dave said. He did a masterful job of keeping the readers interest. Every little detail allows your imagination to picture these poorly equipped, rough and tough players, brought together by a rather ruthless owner, to win the NFL title, only to have it taken away from them on some questionable rule of the day.

We are proud to have had a small part in the creation of this fine book, for our whole purpose for being a museum is “Saving Memories for future Generations” and once again, providing the information that was needed in the researching of a subject. .

The book, “Breaker Boys”, is still available at the museum at a cost of \$20.00 plus \$5.00 for postage. We have sold over 5 cases of the book so far. Presently, the movie version of the book is being worked on with Gavin O’Connor as the director, who also directed “Miracle”.

We’ll keep you posted on that. . .



Robert Stein and Son



Carolyn McCallum and family



Russ Stein’s Family



**Russ, Carolyn, Patricia
and Robert Stein**



Trish Knox and Family Page 3

Riverside Park 1883 - 1901

The development of the electric railway afforded people



Promoters were quick to plan and construct amusement parks along their interurban lines, usually midway between two towns and frequently along side a charming stream for the pleasures of bathers, boat riders and fishermen. Picnic grounds, base ball diamonds, bleachers and dance pavilions, steam boats and rustic walkways were common features of these parks.

The trolley was an excellent means of getting away from the summer heat of the city and admission was free to those who arrived at the park via the trolley. And, after the sun set, the park, with electric lights strung along its rustic paths, and dance pavilions with large verandas, was very romantic and created much excitement for the young people.

The *Riverside Park* was opened in Evansville during the



the *Riverside Park* was located on the south side of the street, just beyond the railroad tracks and before Meander Creek. . On opening day, the Mineral Ridge – Niles Electric Railway Company carried 4,000 people to and from the park. The fare was one nickel with free admission to the amusement park.

The manager of the amusement park advertised that the



a means to travel to places they had never been before and gave people more opportunities for parties and amusement away from home.

summer of 1893. It was located on the southwest corner of Niles off Route 46, going south toward Mineral Ridge. T u r n i n g right on Salt Springs Road at Evansville,

the entrance of the facilities included a large dance pavilion, which had a rambling veranda and a walking bridge across M e a n d e r Creek. This structure , with a dance

floor 80 feet by 50 feet, had been built at a cost of \$2,000. Other attractions included baseball diamonds, lawn tennis, swings, slides, and rowboats. There was also a small steamer, “the *Mayflower*”, which would carry 75 passengers as it slowly went up and down Meander Creek. An announcement was made that the popular *Leffingwell Orchestra* would be playing at the dances.

At that time, five railroads connected with the streetcar line that ran directly to Riverside Park and the Niles- New Lisbon Railroad stopped at the gate of the park. A man by the name of *E. L. Boynton* of Niles was secretary of the park. The newspaper described the park in this way. “All around are mighty beech and oak trees with huge gnarled arms. At the bottom of a picturesque glen glides the Meander, which looks like a silver ribbon as it flows over the stones below. On this stream are placed many boats, and pleasure seekers find it possible to row as far as Ohltown, a distance of four miles. Rustic benches, natural springs- in fact all that one could imagine as belonging to a place of this kind, are among the many virtues of this romantic spot.”

In 1890 the land upon which M^cKinley’s house stood on Main Street, was needed as a site for the City National Bank (later M^cKinley bank) It was not known who undertook and financed the project, but M^cKinley’s house was cut in two and the part in which M^cKinley had been born was moved to Riverside Park, some time after the park began operating, possibly as a museum attraction. The second half of the house was moved to Franklin alley and used as a shop where the Harris rotary offset presses were made.

In 1894 the Riverside Park Co. constructed a dam across the Meander Creek so as to enlarge the boating area. They stocked the water with fish in the hopes of attracting the serious anglers.

Because the automobile was developed and more affordable, people traveled to other locations for their entertainment. By 1901 the Riverside Park proved to be unprofitable and the owners, *William Allison, Clement Souder, Frances Thomas, E. A. Hartzell, Maggie Hartzell, S. S. Holeton, and Selina Holeton*, sold the property to Buckeye Leather Company for \$1,700.

With the demise of the amusement park, the M^cKinley house was occupied by tenants until 1908. In 1909, *Lulu Mackey*, first female member of the Trumbull County bar, decided to buy the house and restore it as nearly as possible. Miss Mackey had it moved by *Frank Kramer* to her property at M^cKinley Heights. She purchased the other section and had it moved as well, then proceeded to create a privately-owned museum which she operated until her death in 1934.

