

## President's Notes—Anna Marie Beagle

The Niles Historical Society will once again have a historical wall calendar for sale for 2019. The theme is Old Niles Schools, many of which no longer exist. Calendars are \$10.00 each and can be purchased on a visit to the Ward—Thomas House open houses or monthly meetings or by calling Sandy at (330) 652 8329. **Remember also that the fine collection of publications of Niles history available from the Society make wonderful gifts.**

Thank you from the Niles Historical Society to all those who supported the annual garage sale fund raiser. Many items were donated and our dedicated members organized goods for sale and manned the garage sale. All proceeds from fundraisers along with membership dues support the activities of the Society. Annual membership drive requests will be mailed in November.

The Society thanks *Kim Bacher* for returning the Night Blooming Cereus to the greenhouse. Please see the article in this issue of the newsletter. A nocturnal viewing of the blooming of this plant will be an event this year.

The Niles Historical Society will participate in the First Annual Halloween Party and Pumpkin Walk at the McKinley Memorial on October 27, 2018 from 6 PM – 8PM. Fun activities and treats will be provided for the children attending. This activity is sponsored by the McKinley Memorial Library and McKinley Memorial Museum Foundation.

On display in November and December will be antique clocks from the collection of member *Pete Sciuillo*. Pete has a massive collection of clocks manufactured in the 1800 – 1900's by the Ansonia Clock Company. Several will be on display through the holiday season.

Please plan to attend the open houses in November and December and also the McKinley Christmas event on December 8. McKinley Christmas is a yearly event sponsored by the McKinley Library, McKinley Birthplace Home and the Niles Historical Society. Get in the spirit of the holiday. Ride in a trolley to each site, enjoy the Christmas music presentations, crafts for the children, treats, special stories and Santa.

## One Hundred Years Ago...Niles Goes to War!



This photo was taken at the old Erie Train Station, The train was taking new draftees from Niles for processing in 1918.



## Niles Cobbler-62 Years on the Job-Plans New Shop.

Seventy-five year-old *Pasquale 'Patty' Pipino* who mended his first pair of shoes in Tursi, Italy, has no plans to retire from his trade, despite the sale of his East State Street property to the city.

Pipino's property was the first urban renewal parcel to be acquired and he was presented a \$6000.00 check by *Mayor William Thorp*, Service Director, *Leonard Holloway*, and *Robert Henderson* of the Urban Redevelopment Agency, in a brief ceremony before his repair shop.

Among five million Italians who immigrated to America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Pipino came to Niles at the age of 17 following his uncle, *Joe Maselli*, and his brother, *Tony*.

Pipino relates that soon after his arrival, his uncle, Joe, introduced him to the late *Benjamin Cook* with whom he was to work for over 30 years.

While working with Cook in the southern section of the city, Pipino purchased the East State Street property from *George Frech* in 1918. Barbers, *John LaPolla* and *Andy Fagnano*, rented the building in succession and the two shoemakers moved here when a road project necessitated the demolition of the original Cook repair shop in the 1920s.

The Cook name, well known in the shoemaking trade was carried to the State Street shop and many years after his death the shop sign still reads, 'Formerly Cook's Rapid Shoe Repair'.

Comparing the shoes of yesteryear and today, Pipino noted that while \$4 once bought pure leather shoes, \$30 now buys a shoe part plastic and paper which he feels doesn't always hold up as well as its predecessor.

Explaining that he was not a "strong enough" guy to work in the steel mills, the diminutive Pipino has spent 62 years in shoe repair and looks forward to at least two more years as he contemplates a move to the Antler Hotel where he will set up shop. Article from Niles Daily Time 1975



*Patty Pipino* receives a check from Mayor *Bill Thorp* and Safety Director *Leonard Holloway*.



## Ward-Thomas Museum

Home of  
The Niles Historical Society  
503 Brown Street  
Niles, OH 44446

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

### Preserving and promoting Niles' History for future generations

Visit our Website: [www.nileshistoricalsociety.org](http://www.nileshistoricalsociety.org)

Check out the Photographs and Stories links.

#### Monthly Calendar

Museum 'Open House'  
The first Sunday of each month' 2-5 pm  
Last tour begins at 4 pm

#### Membership Meetings

10:00 am First Saturday of each month.

Call for private tours to be scheduled  
330.544.2143

#### Officers

Anna Maria Beagle.....President  
Dave Martin.....Vice-President  
Lynda Ralston.....Treasurer  
Coleen Tominey.....Secretary  
Ruth Van Huffel.....Corr. Secretary

Audrey John.....Curator

Ralph Tolbert.....Newsletter and Website

#### Trustees:

Anne Townley, Nancy Malone, and Sandy Bilovesky

## Cereus Plant Returns to the Greenhouse

It was about 1977, when two girls visited the Ward Thomas House and went on a guided tour with the caretaker, *Mr. Hammel*. One of the girls, *Kim Bacher*, was very taken by the Night Blooming Cereus plant that began in a corner and completely encircled the greenhouse. Someone had skillfully woven the vines and the caretaker told them it was fabulous when in bloom. So taken by the plant, the caretaker removed a "leaf" and gave it to Kim. Now 40 plus years old this leaf has outgrown Kim's home.

She contacted our Curator, *Audrey John*, and asked if the original plant had survived the greenhouse restoration and if not, she was wondering if we would like her to return her plant to its original home.

Kim transported the plant and another smaller leaf that she started to the Thomas House on August 31, 2018. George and Audrey John, along with the greenhouse volunteers welcomed Kim and the cereus plants.

There are pictures of the original plant with a flower in bloom in Mrs. Waddell's greenhouse c.1945. The plant hardly turns a head when not in bloom. It is a leggy, trailing plant, with thick, flat stems with wavy edges draping over the sides of its container unless it is staked and tied for support. But the saucer-size white flowers and heady fragrance draws a night crowd to enjoy its infrequent nocturnal floral display. For one midsummer's night each year, (Kim says this one blooms in late October) its exquisitely scented flower opens as night falls, then closes forever with the first rays of the morning sun.

We would like to thank Kim for returning a part of the history of the greenhouse here at the Ward-Thomas House and for her generous monetary contribution for larger pots and soil for the cereus plants. We anxiously await the night –blooming.



Pictured are *Joyce Mahan* and *Kim Bacher* admiring the once-a-year night-blooming cereus plant.

## Niles Mayors: First to Present-Day



Local elections in Niles were special events. Before television, politicians aspiring for office could have glass lantern slides made by a photographer advertising their candidacy. For a slight fee, during intermission at the Stafford Theatre, their slide would be projected on the screen. How effective this political advertisement was is not certain.

By *Gene Antonio*, Niles Daily Times News Staff.

August 7, 1984

**S**ince a man named H.H. Mason was elected the first mayor of Niles in 1866, 30 men have served in the city's highest office. When Niles was no more than a small village, mayors were elected to one-year terms. Later, terms were increased to two years and not long ago they were increased to the present four years.

Each of these mayors made contributions of one type or another to the city and aided in its growth. Some are better known than others, but each has earned a place in the history of the city.

The present Mayor, *John Shaffer*, ran on a platform of seeking industry and commercial businesses for the city, as well as a beautification and litter control program. Mayor Shaffer has promised to clean up the entire city by September.

Shaffer's predecessor, Mayor *Joseph Cicero*, had as the important feature of his tenure a period of fiscal accomplishments in which the city was restored to economic solvency.

Cicero inherited a fiscal emergency when he took office. The city was deeply in debt, with Niles the first city in the state to be declared in fiscal emergency under a new law. As mayor, Cicero put the city back in the black.

*Arthur Doult*, like Cicero, served one four-year term. The major accomplishment of his term was construction of the multi-million dollar electric substation to supply Eastwood Mall with electricity from the city.

Another one-term mayor, *William Thorp*, preceded Doult. His tenure saw an expansion of the Rt. 422 area with construction and new businesses.

Mayor *Thomas Smith* preceded Thorp. The greatest recent period of local construction came during the terms of mayors *Edward Lenney* and *Carmen DeChristofaro*.

These two accomplished more in expansion of the city than any chief executive in the modern period. DeChristofaro worked with the greatest commercial development in city history. This included annexation of the Eastwood Mall land. Much of the Rt. 422 construction visible today occurred in his two terms as mayor.

DeChristofaro's predecessor, Edward Lenney, served five two-year terms as mayor. He was named mayor in 1950 upon the death of mayor *Raymond Hubbard*. He was then elected in 1951 and served for 12 years. He ran two more times in later years, but was defeated.

During his five terms, Lenney saw the size of the city double through annexation. He worked to annex the North Road area, Salt Springs and much of the Rt. 422 area. Prior to annexation, most of North Road had been nothing but open fields. Mayor Lenney came in during the second phase of the post-World War II construction boom. This involved residential construction, especially in the Vienna Avenue and North Road areas.

Another major accomplishment under Lenney was the grade separation project in which railroad bridges across Robbins Avenue and Main Street were built. This was considered a "major feat" because it eliminated dangerous railroad crossings near the heart of the city.

During World War II, mayors *Elmer Fisher* and *Raymond Hubbard* maintained the city in the face of a shortage of construction materials and a building freeze. The two could do little except wait until the war ended.

During the transitional period between the Depression and the war, *William P. Kearney* served two terms as mayor. Under Kearney, electrical wires downtown were installed underground. Niles was one of the few cities at that time to make this improvement.

Also under Kearney, working through the WPA, a major resurfacing project was carried out in the city. During the Kearney administration, through Congressman *Michael Kirwan*, Niles received as much assistance from the WPA per capita as any city in the country.

From 1936 to 1938 *Fred R. Williams* served as mayor. Prior to that, *E.C. Ferguson* served two terms. During his tenure Niles celebrated its centennial. Also during this period, the Niles Bank building was constructed.

*George O. Marshall* served as mayor from 1928 to 1932 and before him was *Harvey C. Kistler*.

Kistler fought against vice in the city and was instrumental in obtaining the land where Meander Reservoir is now located. He also did work leading to Niles' being part of the Mahoning Valley Sanitary District. Kistler also laid the groundwork for construction of the viaduct.

*Charles Crow* served as mayor from 1916 to 1924, the second longest amount of service. Crow was a minor league baseball player and arrived in Niles on a freight train. He owned the Niles Shoe Store for many years and during his years in office saw the dedication of the McKinley Memorial and Library.

His service was characterized as being "like a breath of fresh air" and he was re-elected with the largest majority ever received as a candidate up to that time. Characterized as "genial, impulsive, and big-hearted," Crow fought a war against organized crime which he said produced "a new type of criminal."

Although he himself fought corruption, he was called before the state to answer corruption charges. He was vindicated but the publicity cost him the election in 1926. He lost by 450 votes to Kistler.

Before Crow, *F.E. Bryan* served as mayor. Prior to that, *John Naylor* known as "Honest John" served for six years. He increased the size of the police force and instituted a motorcycle patrol unit. He also adopted civil service hiring of city employees. Naylor was killed in an industrial accident after leaving office.

Others serving in the office were *W.F. Thomas* from 1904 to 1908; *Edwin Hall* from 1902 to 1904; *E. Boynton*, from 1900 to 1902; *Leonard Holloway* from 1896 to 1900. Holloway's terms were characterized as "strict, precise and conscientious."

Other early mayors were *D.J. Woodford*, and *William Davis*. Davis was mayor when Niles was incorporated as a city in 1884. He served for 18 years, longer than any other mayor.

The six earliest mayors were *Ephriam Thomas*, *M.D. Sanderson*, *J.H. Dluhart*, *D. Casper*, *John Ohl*, *J.B. Noble* and the first mayor, *H.H. Mason*.



Cedar Street School was built in 1896 and renamed Lincoln School. The building was razed in 1958 and the block of land is now empty.

## Timeline of Niles City School Buildings.

The first school in Niles was a log cabin located south of the Mahoning River and what is now known as South Main Street, and it was followed shortly by a small log building located in the rear of the present site of the First Presbyterian Church. Another small building known as the little Red Brick School was located on Linden and Leslie Avenues.

After the incorporation of the village, a new school board was elected which immediately decided on the erection of a new school building, taking action in 1869.

The Niles City Schools were built as follows:

**1871 Central High School** on State Street where Central Apartments are located today. Classes were moved to new Niles High School on Church Street in 1914. It closed in early 1920s and demolished in 1926.

**1891 Leslie Avenue School**, on the corner of Leslie and Linden Avenue, now a church parking lot.

**1893 Warren Avenue School**, renamed Jackson Elementary School.

**1896 Cedar Street School**, renamed Lincoln Elementary School

**1905 Bert Street School**, renamed Monroe School.

**1905 Third Street School**, renamed Garfield Elementary School

**1911 Bentley Avenue School**, renamed Jefferson Elementary School.

**1914 McKinley High School**, West Church Street.

**1919 Madison Avenue**, renamed Roosevelt School,.

**1924 Washington Elementary School**. Hartzell Avenue became Washington Junior High School when grades 7-9 were added..



Aerial view of Washington Elementary School showing the playground, Stevens' Park, and empty lots on Hartzell Avenue.

In 1914, except for the McKinley High School, all of the public schools were named for the street on which they were located. In 1919, due to the efforts of a Board of Education member, the schools were renamed for the Presidents of the United States.

St. Stephen's parochial schools were organized more than forty years ago with two teachers and they have grown steadily. In 1928 the student body has 635 children, with 13 teachers.

Updated information (2018) on the schools:

**Bert Street School** was torn down in 1960.

**Jackson Elementary School** on Warren Avenue became the School Administration building when the new Jackson School was built in 1965 on Smith Street. The building was sold and remains empty today. The Jackson School building on Smith Street was razed and the lot remains empty.

**Cedar Street School** was demolished in 1958, became a city playground area and now stands empty.

**Lincoln School**, on Frederick Street, was dedicated in 1956 and was razed in 2013 when the new Primary School was built.

**Garfield School Building** was sold in 2005 and now stands empty.

**Jefferson School**, on South Bentley Avenue, was demolished in 78/79 and retirement homes were built on the site.

**Edison Jr. High School** was razed in 2003 and retirement apartments now occupy that space.

The new **Niles McKinley High School** on Dragon Drive(Trumbull), which opened in 1957, was razed in 2013 and a new high school was built on the adjacent land.

**Roosevelt School** became an annex to the new McKinley High School and was demolished in the 1990s and the lot remains empty.

**Washington Elementary School** was demolished in 2013 and the playground area is now soccer fields and the hill area is a parking lot.

.This information was taken from the Souvenir Program of Niles Homecoming Week. The dates celebrated were from October 1st to the 7th of the year 1928.

## Mark Your Calendar:

**Saturday, October 27, 2018**

First Annual Halloween Party and Pumpkin Walk  
Grounds of the McKinley Memorial  
6 – 8 PM

**Sunday, November 4, 2018**

Open House, Ward-Thomas House  
2 – 5 PM

**Saturday, November 8, 2018**

Remembering WW—The Niles Connection  
McKinley Memorial Library (sponsor)  
1:00 – 2:00 PM  
McKinley Birthplace Home, 40 South Main Street (location)  
*Ralph Tolbert* (presenter, Niles Historical Society)

**Sunday, December 2, 2018**

Open House, Ward-Thomas House  
2 – 5 PM  
Decorated for Christmas

**Saturday, December 8, 2018**

McKinley Christmas  
12 Noon – 4:00 PM  
Trolley ride to McKinley Memorial, McKinley Birthplace Home and Ward – Thomas House