

Heritage Day at the Ward – Thomas House August 4 was well attended. The day began with the dedication of a weeping cherry tree planted in memory of past president and trustee of the Niles Historical Society *Fremont Camerino*, who passed away in September, 2017. Trustee *Nancy Malone* read the dedication. *Mrs. Betty Lou Camerino* was in attendance and placed a dedication plaque at the base of the tree. Several Niles City officials including new mayor *Steve Mientkiewicz* and Niles City Council President *Bob Marino Jr.* were present.



Front row: Nancy Malone and Anna Marie Beagle.
Back row: Bob Marino, Jr., Betty Lou Camerino, and Steve Mientkiewicz

The programs began with New York based vocalist *Amanda Beagle* accompanied by *D. Jack Ciarnello* of Take Note Productions. Amanda is a performer, vocal teacher and pageant coach. Also featured were *Ava Wilson*, a sophomore with Mahoning Unlimited Classroom and *Kaylynn Thomas*, a thirteen year old student of Girard High School, Ms. Beagle's vocal students. 2018 Miss Ohio's Outstanding Teen *Juliana Heichel* of Lexington, Ohio also sang and signed autographs.



Juliana Heichel and Amanda Beagle.

Birds in Flight, wild life preservationists, introduced their aviary friends to the crowd. *Heather Merritt* and her staff talked of their efforts to care for their injured friends and of their return to the wild.

Historian *Sean Posey* presented a historical account of his book "Lost Youngstown".

Arts and crafts by local vendors were displayed on the grounds. For the children there was a scavenger hunt and crafts. The Ward – Thomas House and the barn were open for tours. *Dave Martin* has several new displays in the barn. *Ralph Tolbert* presented a slide show of nostalgic Niles.



Heather Merritt

Our docents provided commentary on the house tour and sold books on Niles history. *Joyce Mahan* and *Lynn Gombus* sold lemon shakes and *Coleen Tominey* and her grandsons, *Dominic* and *Drew* sold sandwiches and snacks. Thank you to all who have been mentioned and also to *Nancy Malone*, *Anna May Cuchna*, *Loren Gargano*, *Annette Batovsky*, *Mary Ann McMahon*, *Donna Nellis*, *Carmel Rinaldi*, *Cindy Cuchna*, *Pat Fisher*, *Joan Ries*, *Judy Guarnieri*, *Lynda Ralston*, *Thelma Snyder* for publicity, *Katie bowen* and the *Niles McKinley key Club* and *Sandy Bilovesky* for a successful day.

Getting the Grounds in Shape

Many thanks to the Grounds Committee! *Dave Martin*, *Joyce Mahan* and *Lynn Gombus* have spent countless hours preparing the gardens of the Ward—Thomas House. They conducted two clean-up days, May 19 and June 9. The Mens' Group of First Christian Church, members of the Niles McKinley Football team and their friends, Dave's brother *Jack* and *Pat Fisher* cut down dead limbs and cleared brush. *Joyce* and *Lynn* along with *Teresa Rishel* weeded the flower beds and Dave mulched them. The result is absolutely beautiful. If you haven't visited the House lately, please do and appreciate the work that has been done. There are lilac bushes for sale, the cuttings taken from the lilac bush near the barn. Also for sale are spider plants and asparagus ferns. If you are interested, please contact *Joyce Mahan*: 330.652.0870.

Anna Marie Beagle, President

We would also like to thank *Lynn Gombus'* grandson *Braunson Craft*, this four year old loves to work in the gardens with his grandmother!

The Niles Historical Society is the best way to preserve Niles' history.

Call Sandy to have your photographs, maps and memorabilia scanned. You may keep the original items and receive a free digital file which can be printed and shared among family and friends.

330.652.8329





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
Check out the Photographs and Stories links.

Monthly Calendar	Officers:
Museum 'Open House' The first Sunday of each month' 2-5 pm Last tour begins at 4 pm	Anna Marie Beagle President Dave Martin Vice-President Lynda Ralston Treasurer Coleen Tominey Secretary Ruth Van Huffel Corr. Secretary
Membership Meetings 10:00 am First Saturday of each month.	Trustees: Anne Townley, Nancy Malone, and Sandy Bilovesky,
Call for private tours to be scheduled 330.544.2143	

Mark your calendar:

Saturday, September 8, 2018

A Walk Down Memory Lane

From the early years through the 1930s

McKinley Memorial Library (sponsor)

1:00 - 2:00 pm

McKinley Birthplace Home, 40 South Main Street (location)

Ralph Tolbert (presenter)

Sunday, September 9, 2018

Open House, Ward – Thomas House

2 – 5 PM

Friday, September 28, 2018

Saturday, September 29, 2018

NHS Garage Sale

Friday 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Saturday AM 9-Noon

37 Hartzell Ave

Call Sandy at 330 .652 .8329 to deliver donations for garage sale

Sunday, October 7, 2018

Open House, Ward – Thomas House

2 – 5 PM

Saturday, October 27, 2018

First Annual Halloween Party

Grounds of McKinley Memorial

6 – 9 PM

Sunday, November 4, 2018

Open House, Ward – Thomas House

2 – 5 PM

Saturday, November 8, 2018

Remembering WWI

The Niles Connection

McKinley Memorial Library (sponsor)

1:00 - 2:00 pm

McKinley Birthplace Home, 40 South Main Street (location)

Ralph Tolbert (presenter)

Saturday, December 8, 2018

McKinley Christmas

12 – 4:00 PM

McKinley Memorial, McKinley

Birthplace Home and Ward – Thomas House

Garage Sale, Items, Volunteers!

The annual garage sale is scheduled for September 28 – 29, 2018. This is a significant fundraiser for the Society. Please consider donating items. *Sandy Bilovesky* will again host this event at her home, 37 Hartzell Ave., Niles. Please contact Sandy at 330 .652 .8329.

Volunteers are needed to help Sandy prepare items for set up and for sale beginning now!

Demise of the Falcon Steam Fire Company

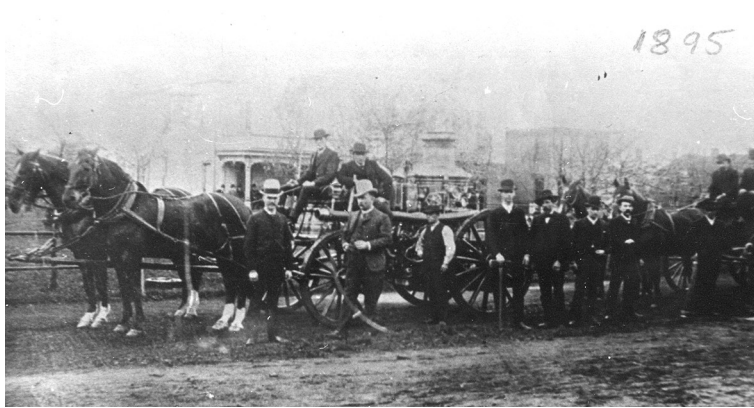
It is bad enough when the city loses a residence or place of business due to fire, but it's a calamity when the city's fire station catches on fire.



Postcard showing the City of Niles Town Hall, Fire Department, and apparatus.

However, Niles had such a calamity occur during January 1875, when an extensive fire originated in the building occupied by the Falcon Steam Fire Co. The building stood on the north side of the Mahoning River on South Main at Water Street. near a drugstore managed by *J H. Leslie*.

When the Niles Fire Department was organized in 1870, *James Ward* and *Truth Carter* purchased a second hand horse-drawn fire engine in Pittsburgh. The chief engineer, *T.D. Thomas*, who was hired when the fire department was organized, was paid by the village and he devoted full time to the care of the department for the next 10 years



1895 photograph of the horse drawn fire engine. This fire equipment was purchased in 1875 and replaced in 1898.

Two teamsters and a fine span of horses were kept on hand at all times, but any other firefighters were strictly volunteers.

The morning of the fire, Thomas had been sleeping in an upper room of the engine house and when he awoke around 6:30 AM he discovered the room was afire. *George Bear*, a teamster sleeping in the room below, quickly sounded the alarm. However, he was not very successful, for after about three or four rings of the bell, the rope burned off, cutting off the fire department's line of communication with the community.

The horses, which were already hitched to the engine and hose cart, exited the building upon the first ring of the fire bell. But, while backing the rig down an icy incline to the river in order to pump water on the fire, the engine slid and fell against the trestle of the A.Y.&P. Railroads, throwing Thomas and Bear off the engine onto the ground.

Fortunately, they promptly up-righted the engine. Within 12 minutes after the fire was discovered, they were still able to have two heavy streams of water squirting on the fire by using a 44 foot suction hose at a 12 foot perpendicular elevation.

The hay stored on the second floor of the engine house made a ready tinder box of the building, as well as the row of tenant houses adjacent to and extending west of the engine house. The fire swept along between the roof and ceiling of the six- apartment tenant house, making it very difficult to control and extinguish the fire. The firemen worked until noon to bring the fire under control.

The rooms occupied by the fire company were entirely burned but only the roofs of the tenant houses burned. At that time, only two tenants were living in the apartment complex- the *Adams and Whitticar* families. The furniture and other goods belonging to those two families were saved. The fire company lost uniforms, furniture, a bell worth \$250, harnesses, 100 bushels of oats, and about 2,500 pounds of hay, the value of which was estimated at \$800. *William Ward*, owner of the apartments, lost about \$2,200 and was not covered with insurance.

Evidently, after the 1875 fire, the fire department found a new home. The 1882 map of Niles located the Niles Fire Department on the west side of Franklin Alley, directly east of the Town Hall, between Park Avenue (James Street then) and Church Street, with an access onto Franklin Alley.

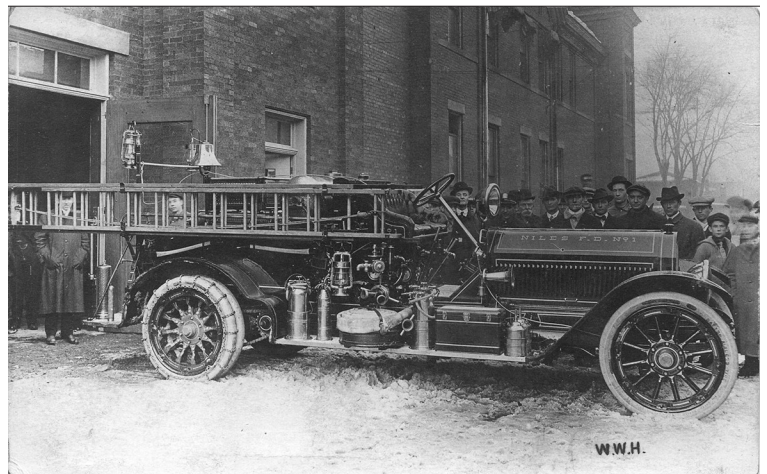
George Bear became the fire chief in 1880. By 1896 *Samuel Mosley* was the chief and the 1899 City Directory listed *J.W. McBride* as the fire chief and *George Neis* as assistant fire chief. *A.J. (Lex) Orr* had become fire chief before the great fire of January 1904, when the city suffered a large fire loss due to ice, as a result of the big flood a week earlier,

In 1875, the city purchased a new horse-drawn steam engine. At one time, when the city administration was considering the purchase of a motorized fire truck, it was decided that horses would be much more dependable since there was no danger of them running out of gas or getting blowouts. However, the officials' second point of reasoning doesn't make a lot of sense since the first tires on the motorized fire engines were "airless" tires.

Lex Orr was still fire chief when the city bought its first motorized fire engine, a new American LaFrance Pumper, c.a. 1916. The latest thing in fire equipment, it pumped 750 gallons per minute, had Dayton airless tires, and was chain driven.

"Pick," a bay horse, served in the firefighter's harness for five years from 1907 to 1912. The 25-year-old bay was still alive and working for the city of Niles for his room and board in 1928, but at a much slower pace than he had worked in his younger days!

Article from 'Dustin the Cobwebs' by *Grace Allison*



Niles Fire engine #1 purchased in 1916.

Landmark Corner of Downtown Niles

Of the 54 lots platted in 1834, James and Warren Heaton owned 23 parcels including the lot at the intersection of South Main Street and West James Street(now Park Avenue).

From 1842-1865 the building, located on this site, served as a hotel. It became the Harris family residence from 1865-1905. From then until 1920 it was used for various businesses and storage. At that time it was sold by the Harris heirs to the Niles Trust Company and was demolished in 1929. It was to become the site of the first Niles mini-skyscraper-The Niles Trust Company Bank Building.



Photograph of the old Harris house which stood at the southwest corner of West Park Avenue and South Main Street.

Photograph (below) shows the Harris building being used as a news-stand for the local and Cleveland papers. The Lor-A-Lee diner was located behind the Harris Building on West park Avenue. The diner was later moved to North Main Street across from the McKinley Memorial.



Photograph (below) shows the newspaper boys in front of the Harris Building taken November 19, 1922.



Niles Tallest Building

The construction of the mini-skyscraper by the Niles Trust Company on the site of the former Harris residence began on November 25, 1929 and was completed in 1930. A pictorial record of the construction was made by *P.T. Alfonsi*, a Niles photographer who eventually had his portrait studio located in the bank building.

In the photograph below, you can see that the building known as the Allison Hotel was also called the Heaton Hotel and finally the Antler Hotel until it was demolished during urban renewal in 1975.



View from the construction site of the Niles Trust Company Bank building with the hotel across Main Street.

Photograph (below) shows the progress in January and the art deco style of the stairway that led to the mezzanine from the first floor. Between the Holeyton building, occupied by Kreiger's Pool Hall, and the bank a new building was erected and occupied by Reisman's.

The 1961 occupants of the bank building by room number. Basement-Mary Loise Megert Dance Studio

302 Dr. Abraham Hoodin,
303 Niles Community Corp.,
304 Dr. I. E. Benis,
305 Dr. Sam Jaffe,
306 American Red Cross,
307, Dr. R. G. Davis, 308-10
Martha Jaynes' Beauty School,
401 Mansell Insurance Agency,
402 Paul Moritz,
403 Wilson Insurance Agency,
404 General Adj Bureau,
405 vacant, 406 C. Westenfield,
409 Credit Bureau of Niles,
409 Trumbull Credit Bureau,
501 Kinderman Stl M Equip,
502-3 Mitch Shaker, 504 vacant,
505 Brown Adj Co,
506 Baringer & Co,
507 MacQueen & MacQueen,
508 Johnson Agency, 509 vacant,
601-2 Dr. Nick and Tony Altiero,
603 Longberry Employment Svc
605-08 SV Wilder, Wilder MFG
Co, Wilder products Co,
609-10 vacant,
Penthouse: Niles Area Chamber
of Commerce.

