

President's Notes:

The grounds of the Ward – Thomas House are shaping up nicely in spite of all the rain this season. *Dave Martin, Joyce Mahan, Lynn Gombos and Teresa Rishel* have been working diligently to prepare the gardens and flower beds for planting.

George Egner donated four hibiscus plants which were planted in the center circle of the gardens.

A special thank you to the Men's Group of First Christian Church for their help on June 15. *Dale Havaich, Dennis Carpenter and Howie Gerke* cleared debris from the grounds providing much needed muscle.

The Niles Historical Society is entering a very busy season. On Sunday June 30 the Society will participate in Harry Stevens Day. We will have on display many of our publications.

The Society will also have a display of artifacts and publications in the church in the Historical Village at the Trumbull County Fair on July 9 – 14, 2019.

Heritage Day is scheduled for Sunday, August 18, 2019. This year there will be a car show on the grounds that day. Events in the planning stages will include guided tours of the House, barn and greenhouse; historical displays by various collectors, local crafters, artisans and vendors; children's activities, speakers, demonstrations and musical performances and food. Please support this activity.

If you would like to be a presenter, please contact *Anna Marie* at 330-856-5274 or *Sandy* at 330-652-8329.

1918 Influenza Epidemic in Niles

World War I claimed an estimated 16 million lives. The influenza epidemic that swept the world in 1918 killed an estimated 50 million people. One fifth of the world's population was attacked by this deadly virus.

This was the H1N1 strain of influenza which was named the "Spanish Flu" due to the large number of people first affected in Spain.

During the influenza epidemic, many Niles houses and people were co-opted to use as emergency hospitals and staff.

The home of *Anson Bentley* (President of Galvanizing Company) at 923 Robbins Avenue served as a hospital. Across the street was the office of *Dr. Swaney*.

The McKinley High School (the Edison Junior High School building of today) was also used as a hospital with the gymnasium and several first floor rooms filled with patients from Niles.



Hospital staff are posed outside the Bentley Homestead, which was located at 923 Robbins Avenue.



Photo: Dave Petrilla



923 Robbins Avenue (Today)



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

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



Garfield Elementary School History is Preserved

The cornerstone of the Third Street School has found its final resting place in the Niles Historical Society's barn.

The school building was erected in 1905 and first housed 94 students. When all the Niles schools were renamed in 1920, the Third Street School became Garfield Elementary School. It was the oldest continuing school building until its closure in 2003. The building was sold in 2005 and demolished in May 2019.

The Niles Historical Society plans to have the back of the corner stone engraved with the names and dates:

**Third Street School — Garfield Elementary School
1905 — 2003**

Mark Your Calendar:

June 30, 2019, SundayHarry Stevens Day

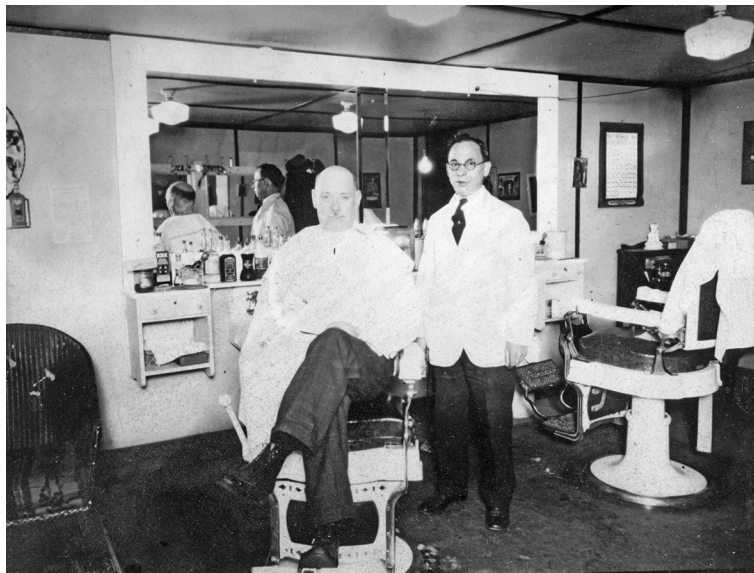
July 6, 2019, Saturday: 10 AM
Membership Meeting Heritage Day Planning

July 7, 2019, Sunday: 2 – 5 PM
Open House

July 9 – 14, 2019
Trumbull County FairHistorical Village

August 3, 2013, Saturday: 10 AM
Membership Meeting Heritage Day Planning

August 18, 2019, Sunday: 11 – 5 PM
Heritage Day and Car Show



Pictured in the barbershop on the lower level of Elder's Drugstore is Phil Melillo and unknown customer.

Three Melillo Generations - As told by Mike Melillo.

The Niles Historical Society newsletter for May-June featured an article about the building at the corner of Cedar and Robbins where the Elder drug store, built in 1929, was located with a doctor's office on the second floor and a barbershop in the lower level. The basement barber shop, called Modern Sanitary Barber Shop (hair thinned for 40 cents) was owned by *Phillip Melillo*.

Phillip Melillo retired after a 57 year career as a local barber after he opened his first barber shop on Pratt Street in April 1910. Then a shave cost 10 cents and a haircut 15 cents, he remembers that he did more shaves than haircuts. That really wasn't a bad price since the rent for his shop was only \$8 a month.

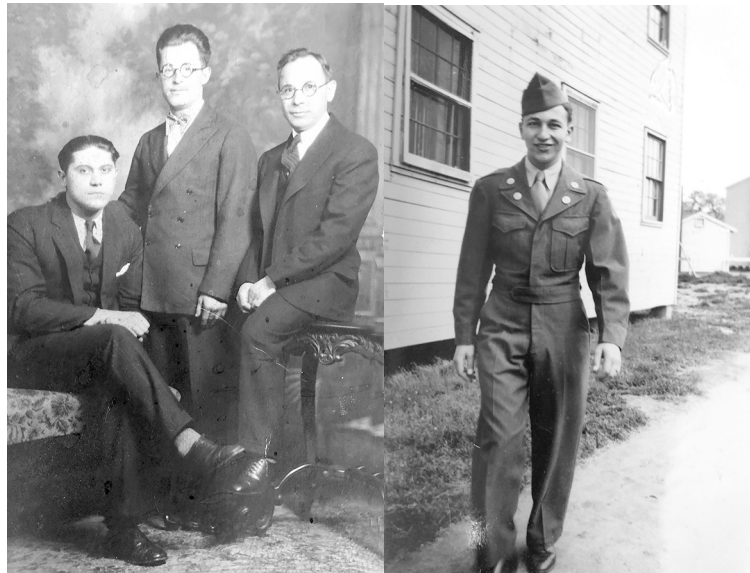
He was born in Corleto Montiforte, Italy near Naples and left as a boy of 16, journeying with others from the same village by ship to New York City, but traveling alone by train to the home of his sister, the late *Mrs. Andre Vigorito*, in Niles.

After a brief stint working at the Niles Fire Brick Company and a boiler factory in Warren, Phil picked up the barbering trade. This is the career he followed, with the exception of a quick excursion into and out of the restaurant business in 1929, for the remainder of his business years.

He gave up the Pratt Street shop in 1920 to work for another barber for four years, and a partnership arrangement with still another barber for five years. After six months of operating a restaurant on State Street, he opened his own barbershop again in the basement of the Elder and Hey drugstore at the corner of Robbins Avenue and Cedar Street. He moved to his last business site at 509 Robbins Avenue (built in 1890) in 1936.

He married *Miss Rose Bianco* of McKinley Heights in Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in 1916 when she was 16 and he was 26 and they lived and raised their family in the roomy house next to and behind his place of business. Walking to work for Phillip meant merely sliding open a convenient door connecting his shop with the entry hall of his home.

Phillip and Rose had five children: *Frank*, *William*, *Angie*, and *Raymond* named for his brother Ray who passed away when he was five years old. Operating the barbershop in the same location today is *Mike Melillo*, grandson of Phillip Melillo and son of Raymond Melillo.



Pictured L-R: *Joe Mordent*, *Joe Vigorito*, and *Philip Melillo* and in his WWII uniform is his son, *Ray Melillo*.



Pictured R-L: *Joe Russo* who ran the Pennzoil gas station across the street from the barbershop, *Ray Melillo* and *Pat Cera*. Pat Cera and Ray Melillo were cousins who jointly owned the barbershop from late 50s to early 80s.



The tower home at 509 Robbins Avenue still stands today. Mike Melillo is the barber today and owner of his grandfather's house and barbershop business.



The Sigler Building, built in 1919, is located at the intersection of Robbins and Mahoning Avenues. The building is being demolished and a Rally's fast food will be built on this site.

Niles Car Dealerships

Information by: *Ralph Tolbert.*

One of the many businesses that occupied the Sigler Building was Johnny Pressell Motor Sales during the 40's and 50's. Johnny sold Chrysler and Plymouth automobiles in the front with a service department in the back.

Also along Robbins Avenue were several car dealerships: Fleck Pontiac was in the next building going up Robbins Avenue, Bonaquist Motors sold Dodge automobiles and an auto parts store was nearby. Looking down Robbins from Pressell's was Herb Stein Lincoln-Mercury Sales.

Dealers kept their new cars hidden until the presentation of the new model year in September. I remember peeking into Stein's garage on Hartzell to see the new Lincoln or Mercury cars. These were the years when each automobile had its own design with fins, chrome, dual headlights and more to make it stand out and be more desirable to the car buyers.

Stiver's Chevrolet on Main Street, Sherwood Oldsmobile on East Federal, and Shively Ford on Church Street were also car dealerships during this same time period.



Pictured are: *Johnny Pressell* in car, his wife *Estelle*, the three Naylor sisters — *Goldie Muccio, Mary Lambert, and Sally Soda.*



The DeJute Building at 236 North Main Street was built in 1928. C.H. Stiver sold Chevrolets at this location, then moved across the street. A Desoto-Plymouth dealership was then located here.

Niles Car Dealerships 1930-1931

Compiled by: *Les Best*

Cook and Baker.....265 N. Main — Oldsmobile
Humphries- Barker..... 1121 N. Main Plymouth — DeSoto
Hake Motor Co.116 W. Federal St. — Buick
Pritchard Motors319 Robbins Ave. — Dodge-Plymouth
Shivley Sales and Service327 Robbins Ave. — Ford
Brooks Motor Sales..... 1121 N. Main — Dodge-Plymouth
C.H. Stiver236 N. Main — Chevrolet
Dean & Best..... 100 W. Federal St. — Oldsmobile
Park 148 N. Main — Pontiac
P&G Auto Sales Willys
Johnny Pressell Motor SalesRobbins Ave. — Chrysler-Plymouth
E.C. Dugan..... N. Main — DeSoto-Plymouth

Many of these dealerships went out of business during the Great Depression. The Peerless brand was advertised and sold by Mullett Motor Sales located at 236 North Main Street. Peerless went out of business during the Great Depression.

Other brands were no longer produced: DeSoto, Packard, Studebaker, Nash, and recently Pontiac and Oldsmobile.

The Nash was sold by J.E. Heathman, Inc. located at 148 State Street across from Central Park (Dairy Queen area). Nash went out of business in the 1950s.



As fine as money can build or buy

It is natural to want the best. Public preference invariably follows the arrival of a superior product. And there is a limit. Always, there is some manufacturer unwilling to be satisfied with an average result. In motor cars, one manufacturer who inspires upon a superior product is Nash. No manufacturer has finer facilities to produce finer cars than Nash. Never have down any more rigid standards for materials and craftsmanship. The Twin-Ignition Eight, the Twin-

Ignition Six, and the Single Six represent three cars in these popular price fields as fine as money can build or buy.

You Should Know:
Controlled chassis lubrication, built-in, automatic oil-pressure indicator, and the world's safest seating in every model. Adjustable front seats. Steel spring covers with lifetime lubrication. In the Twin-Ignition Eight and Twin-Ignition Six line. The protective protection at no extra cost of Duxton, non-shatterable glass in all doors, windows, and windshield frames the Twin-Ignition Eight line. This glass is also available at slight extra cost in all other Nash cars.

SINGLE SIX
\$935 to \$1155

TWIN-IGNITION SIX
\$1325 to \$1745

TWIN-IGNITION EIGHT
\$1675 to \$2385

All prices F.O.B. Factory—Consistent Monthly Payment Plan (if desired)

NASH "400"

J. E. HEATHMAN, INC.
148 State Street PHONE 155 Opposite Central Park

1930 Advertisement for J.E. Heathman Nash 400 automobile.