

## Happy New Year 2020 to all!

December was a busy month for all of us. The Niles Historical Society held open house on December 1, 2019 and participated in McKinley Christmas on December 14, 2019.

The Ward–Thomas House was beautifully decorated for these events by our docents. Mrs. Claus (*Sandy Bilovesky*) was again on site for December 14, reading stories of Christmas to the children who visited. Admission donations were collected for Niles Community Services.

Membership renewals were mailed in December. The returns have been steady. Thank you to all who have renewed their membership. Hopefully, there are more on the way. Membership dues are the basis of the operating budget for the Society.

Still available are 2020 Calendars depicting the **Old Churches of Niles**. The calendars are \$10.00, plus \$2.00 mailing fee. Please contact Sandy at 330–652–8329 to order a calendar or send an additional \$12.00 with your membership renewal and the calendar will be mailed to you.

This coming year will be filled with anniversaries. The year 2020 is the 150<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution granting voting rights to African–American men; the 100<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment granting women voting rights; the 55<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the Voting Right Act of 1965 banning racial discrimination in voting practices and the 50<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the Kent State shootings. The 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution granting 18 year olds the right to vote followed student activism. “Old enough to fight, old enough to vote.”

Information from OHIO Humanities Pathways newsletter for winter 2020

During the new year we will have the opportunity to reflect on how any significant change results from protest from the ground up (we the people) not the top down. Recent attempts to sanitize history and erase its faults leave our future open to a repeat of the sins of the past.

President: *Anna Marie Beagle*

Ward–Thomas Museum dining room decorated for Christmas.



## The Mango Home



## The Mango Home as it appeared in the 1940s.

The white brick residence known as ‘The Mango Home’, was built in 1903 and took four years to build. *Vincent (Vincenza)* and *Rose (Rosario) Belitto Mango* were the original builders and owners. According to the Census of 1910, Vincent Mango, was one of the the first Italian immigrants in the Mahoning Valley, coming here in 1879.

Vincent had wanted to build on the lot on Robbins Avenue where the Presbyterian Church is now located, but his Italian heritage prevented the sale. He then bought three lots down from the church near the alley on Ambrose Street. Vincent gave one of the lots across the street to Rose’s sister, who was married to *Fredericka Marsico*. They had four children, three girls and one boy. One of the children, *Mary*, had been born in Italy and later lived upstairs with Vincent and Rose in the Mango home.

Vincent Mango was a contractor in charge of the construction of Milton Dam and many brick roads in Niles. He also directed the construction of several buildings in Niles including the Mango Building in 1894 on the southeast corner of Park Avenue and State Street which was bought by Isaac Shaker in 1907.

Follow this link to see the Mango Building and Shaker’s Store:  
[nileshistoricalsociety.org/mango.htm](http://nileshistoricalsociety.org/mango.htm)

In 1906, Vincent offered the top two floors of the building as a meeting place for the Italians who wanted to form their own Catholic Church and later donated the bell to Mount Carmel Church. (Continued on Page 4)

Below: Images of the Mango dining room and wall sconce.





**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*

(Continued from Page 1)

Their only son, *Sam Mango*, was born April 5, 1890 in Niles. Sam graduated from Niles High School, attended Ohio Northern and practiced law. He was appointed city solicitor by former *Mayor E.C. Ferguson* in 1944 and also served two terms under former *Mayor Elmer E. Fisher*. Sam married *Alice Osborne* and they had one adopted daughter, *Betty*.

After Sam died in May 1948, Alice fell upon hard times and had the home converted into three rental apartments in the early 1950s.

Alice died in 1968 and a *Bill and Ethel Yuckel* bought the house in 1972 and it was sold to the present owners, *Harry and Philomena Serena*, in 1994. It has been returned to its original one family design today.

Information provided by:  
*Harry Serena.*



Sam Mango and daughter Betty

## Calendar of events

All Events at the Ward – Thomas Museum in January, February and March are subject to change due to inclement weather conditions.

### Open House is from 2 – 5:00 PM, last tour is at 4:00 PM

January 5, 2020 ..... Sunday, Open House  
February 2, 2020 ..... Sunday, Open House  
March 1, 2020 ..... Sunday, Open House

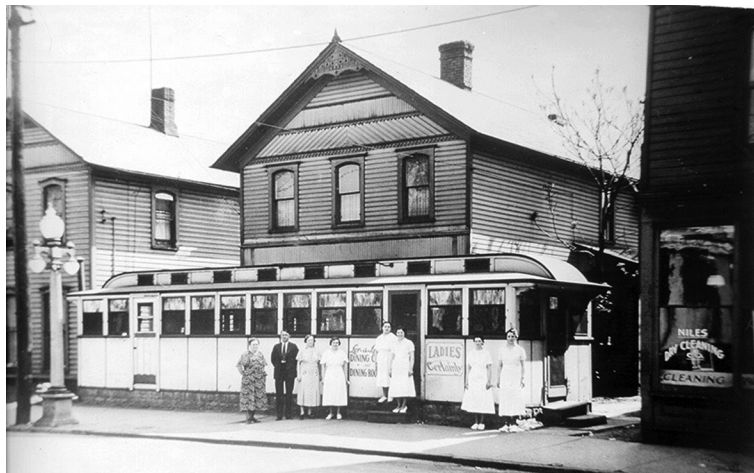
### Monthly Meetings: Saturday at 10:00 AM

January 11, 2020 ..... Westenfield Room  
February 1, 2020 ..... Westenfield Room  
March 7, 2020 ..... Westenfield Room

Please share your photographs, maps, stories and memorabilia with The Niles Historical Society to help preserve Niles' history for future generations. These can be scanned, photographed or recorded and you get your original items back with a free digital file to share and print.

Contact: Ralph Tolbert: 330.651.2482





Lor-A-Lee dining car after it was moved to North Main Street from behind the Niles Bank in 1935. L to R: Mrs. Emma Sandman, Howard and Laura Lee Davis, Georgia Horn, Mary Mangino, Emma Featsent, unknown, Katherine Ramser.

## Progress ends nostalgic era of “The Dining Car”

Article: Dave Addis Niles Daily Times December 7, 1973

One of the intangible costs city residents will be paying for the Urban Renewal program is a town landmark of sorts, Rudy's Restaurant on Main Street.

Rudy's, or “The Diner” as it is more commonly known, will be closing its doors for good on Friday, ending more than 46 years of service for the dining car.

The diner is somewhat of an anachronism. It is a place where bank presidents and mechanics sat shoulder to shoulder, reading the ever-present morning paper and talking over the happenings of the city.

The main attraction of the popular eating place has always been its pleasant help and reputation for good food—not the fancy cuisine offered at restaurants on the Strip, but a good home-cooked meal at a fair price.

The history of the diner also entwines the life history of the three women from the city who, between them, have nearly 120 combined years of service since the original diner opened in 1927.

Katherine Ramser, who is still hard at work behind the counter, started with the business at the age of 18 in 1927. Mary Mangino, also still at work started in 1935, and the recently retired Georgia Horn put in 35 years behind the counter until failing health forced her to quit.

The original dining car was opened in 1927 by Howard and Laura Lee Davis and Jack Sandman, all deceased. The restaurant was located in the area now occupied by the drive-in window of the Niles Bank Building.

“They only kept that first car for about a year and a half, recalls Miss Ramer, and the thing had a sliding door that I'll never forget. People were forever forgetting how to open it and would try to push it in instead.”

The owners purchased a larger car, which was moved to its present Main Street location in 1935. The car was towed around the block, and according to the present owner ‘Rudy’ Roodhouse, the original steel wheels are still attached to the frame.

“They had quite a time towing that thing over here.” laughs Katherine. “When they got it here they knocked the porch off the house, which had been purchased from the Frech family, and just joined the two together.”

Rooms from the house on Main Street still serve as a dining area for the restaurant.

Katherine and Mary recall the lean days of the Depression, but said business remained good throughout. And even offered the opinion that the profit margin on food was much higher than it is now.

The amount of progress they saw through the dining car windows could fill a book. They recalled construction of the Niles Bank Building, the railroad overpass on South Main Street, and the post office building. Mary can tell you about the day Ohio Governor Lausche stopped in for a quick bite to eat.

They remember the war rations and the Black Market that kept everything a little more plentiful than it was supposed to be, also when Niles had three movie houses. Roodhouse speaks fondly of his loyal staff, revealing that Katherine Ramser has not missed a day in the 14 years he has owned the business, and that Mary has missed only a few days, mostly to attend funerals.

Other employees who gathered Wednesday to talk over the past included such ‘newcomers’ as Lela Holt, with 14 years at the diner, Edna Henderson with a total of seven years and Clara Wilson, who has been employed there for the past two years.

Rudy, who with his wife Edith operates another restaurant in McKinley Heights, says the demolition crews will be in for more than they bargained for when they try to tear down the structure.

“This thing says on it that it's ‘good for life’, and I believe it. The dining car would stand for another 100 years, if nobody moved it. These things were really built to last,” he said.

The ladies of the diner said they have met a lot of wonderful people in their years on the job, but there still is one customer who comes in practically every day, and has frequented the restaurant since its opening in 1927.

H.R. ‘Hal’ Rader, who admits to being 95 years and eight months old, is one of the regulars at the counter, and was seated at his favorite stool Wednesday afternoon.

Another diner regular found a new home this week as a local family adopted the scraggly, plump white cat that wandered into the restaurant several months ago and decided to stay.

And, along with Hal Rader, a lot of people who work in the downtown will feel somewhat at a loss when the noon hour rolls around on Monday.



Photo taken of Rudy's Restaurant located at 21 North Main Street (east side) in downtown Niles before urban renewal.

Dated June 27, 1972



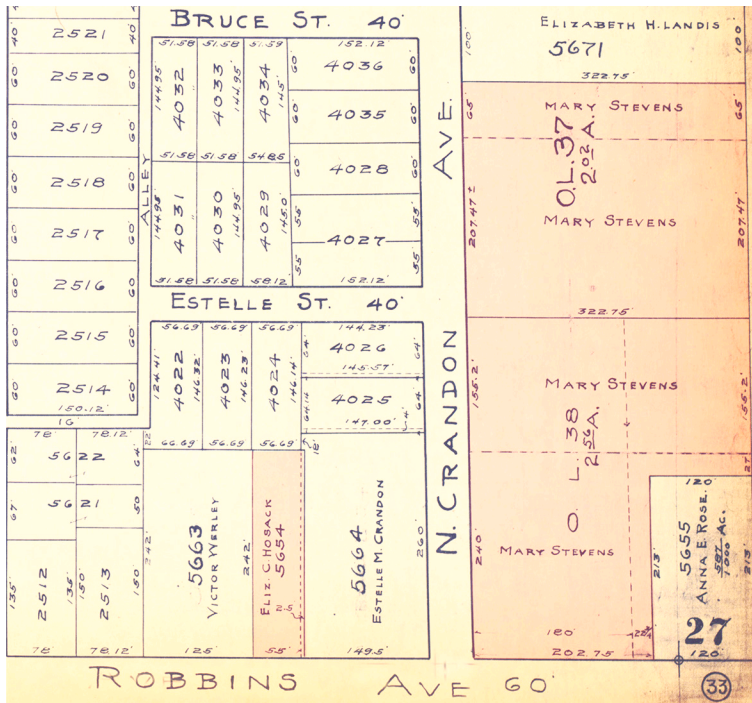


1210 Robbins Avenue, Harry Stevens in far right rocking chair.

## 1210 and 1224 Robbins Avenue.

The Stevens Residence was originally built by *George Robbins* and his wife at the turn of the century in 1905 and the garage was built in 1936. *Harry Stevens* bought the house in 1911 and his only daughter, *Annie Stevens Rose* subsequently acquired the house and lived at 1210 Robbins Avenue for many years. *Jesse Scott* bought the house in 1990.

Annie Stevens lived in the big white house on the corner of Robbins Avenue and Crandon. Her father was Harry Stevens, known as the 'Hot Dog King'. The Stevens family owned land on both sides of Robbins Avenue and extending up Crandon.



Map with Hosack, Stevens and Rose properties on Robbins Avenue.

The family built the house next door to them at 1224 Robbins in 1923. It was ready for the couple when Annie and *C. Homer Rose* were married and they moved there. Some sources list the year as 1925. Unfortunately, Homer died soon after that and Annie moved back to her parent's home next door, taking the wedding gifts with her. The house remained empty for some time.



1224 Robbins Avenue as it appeared in 2018.

*John Hosack* and his wife *Elizabeth*, who was a descendant of the Thomas family, lived with their daughters down the street. They were looking for a larger home and approached Annie about buying her house. It was something she had not considered before but told them that it had been built for a happy family and that she would sell it to them.

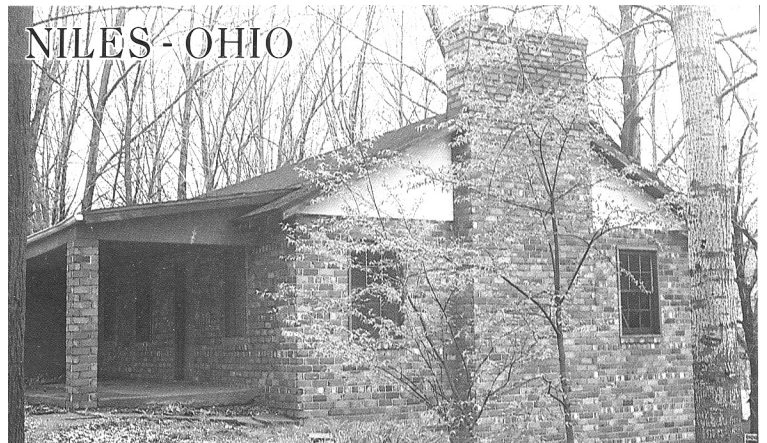
The Hosacks extended the back of the house but the rooms, the woodwork and the lighting fixtures remained as they were when the house was originally built. It is a fine old house.

In 1935 the land was donated for Stevens Park and the Stevens Youth Cabin was dedicated in 1948 in honor of *Harry Mozely Stevens* and the Stevens family contributions to their community.

Annie Rose donated the land for the Presbyterian Church on Robbins Avenue and the Methodist Church on Crandon. She belonged to the Presbyterian Church, so they had first choice. It is said that, "she wanted her church to be on Robbins Avenue across from her house so she could look out her window and see the church she attended".

After Elizabeth Hosack died, *Anne* and *Jim Townley* purchased the house at 1224 Robbins in 1992 and continued to live there until Anne sold the house in 2018.

Information contributed by *Anne Townley*.



The Harry Mozely Stevens Youth Cabin as it appeared in 2018.



The Stevens Residence as it appeared in 2018. The portico has been lengthened to extend over the drive-way. Some large trees are no longer on the property and plantings along the drive are gone.