

President's Notes:

Dear Members of the Niles Historical Society,

This has been an unusual winter here in the Mahoning Valley. The weather goes from balmy Spring to frigid Winter—on a daily basis.

The Membership drive is ongoing. Thank you to all who have responded with your membership dues. There is still time to mail your returns. We have a few 2020 calendars left for sale. The subject is: Old Churches of Niles.

Society activities are ramping up! The Annual Spring Banquet is scheduled for 6 PM April 23, 2020 at Ciminero's Banquet Center in Niles. The cost is \$30.00

Traci Manning, Curator of Education of the Mahoning Valley Historical Society will present "Immigration History of the Mahoning Valley". Why did people immigrate to the Mahoning Valley? When did immigration start? Where did they come from? Where did they work? How did our population grow? These are some of the questions Traci will answer for us. Traci is always informative and entertaining.



Please support this activity. We have so many of you on our membership list. It would be wonderful if you would share this evening with us.

For reservations please contact: *Sandy* at (330) 652-8329 or *Anna Marie* at (330) 856-5274.

In May the third grade children of the Niles City Schools will be treated to an outing which includes visits to the McKinley Library and Museum, McKinley Birthplace House and the Ward-Thomas Museum. They will be treated to lunch at the Niles Wellness Center.

Heritage Day will be celebrated August 30, 2020. The Society will once again partner with *Dave Petrilla* who is organizing a car show in conjunction with the Heritage Day celebration. Last year the car show brought many visitors to the Ward-Thomas Museum who did not know of its existence.

Vendors, craftsmen, musical groups, history buffs, etc. who would like to participate should contact Sandy or Anna Marie at the numbers listed above.

If you would like to contribute an article telling your memories of family stories for a future newsletter, please contact:

Ralph Tolbert: (330) 651-2482 or ralph.tolbert@me.com

President: *Anna Marie Beagle*

The Way We Began—Mt. Carmel Church

The first Niles immigrants were English and Welsh Protestants of many denominations; none large enough to organize a congregation or have a permanent House of Worship. Small groups met in private homes, but there was not a single organized church in Weathersfield Township until 1839.



Roman Catholics, mostly Irish immigrants, also first worshipped in private homes. During the period from Mango Building, 1894 from 1838 to 1879, eight different congregations were established in Niles: Methodist, Catholic (St. Stephen), Baptist, Episcopal, Welsh Presbyterian and Primitive Methodist. For both the pioneers and immigrants, their churches became a means of keeping their traditions.

Arriving in 1881, *Joseph Pallante* was one of the earliest Italian immigrants to arrive in Niles. Many Italians immigrated from Bagnoli-Irpino to work in the Niles Firebrick plant where skilled laborers were needed. In 1906, Italian immigrants who had settled in Niles felt a need for their own church and a priest who spoke their language. An appeal was made to the Bishop who answered by sending a priest, *Reverend Vito Franco*, who had recently arrived from Italy.

The first meetings were on the second floor of *Vincenzo Mango's* Building on State Street. The Scarnecchia House at 449 Mason Street was the temporary chapel from 1906-1908, where worship was held in two rooms rented from *Pasquale Scarnecchia*.



Pasquale Scarnecchia's family and Father Vito Franco with bakery delivery truck in back of 449 Mason Street.



The Scarnecchia family on the front porch of their home at 449 Mason Street.

Top: Pasquale Scarnecchia, Maria(wife), Carmen, Pete, Amelio, Tom. Middle: John(brother), Sophie, unknown, Bottom:Edith, unknown, John.



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	<i>Anna Maria Beagle</i>President <i>Dave Martin</i>Vice-President <i>Lynda Ralston</i>Treasurer <i>Coleen Tominey</i>Secretary <i>Ruth Van Huffel</i>Corr. Secretary
Membership Meetings 10:00 am First Saturday of each month Call for private tours to be scheduled 330.544.2143	<i>Audrey John</i>Curator <i>Ralph Tolbert</i>Newsletter and Website Trustees: <i>Anne Townley, Nancy Malone, and Sandy Bilovesky</i>

Continued from page1-The Robbins home near the corner of Erie Street and Robbins Avenue was purchased in 1908. It had been the residence of *Josiah Robbins* and his wife, *Mary Heaton*, since 1839. This home had been the center of political thought in the Niles area during the days of the Whig and Tory parties.

The house was in deplorable condition with broken windows, fallen plaster, an inadequate ancient coal furnace, failing plumbing, and no electricity. The building was renovated and the building was divided. The lower floor on the west side was transformed into a chapel, while the east side was made the living quarters for Father Franco.

On Easter Sunday, 1908, the first mass was celebrated, representing a real achievement for *Father Franco*, the committee and the community of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

The Robbins
Home on Robbins
Avenue and Erie
Street became the
chapel from 1908-
1924.



Calendar of events.

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

April 5, 2020 Sunday, Open House
May 3, 2020 Sunday, Open House
June 7, 2020 Sunday, Open House

Monthly Meetings: Saturday at 10:00 AM

April 4, 2020 Westenfield Room
May 2, 2020 Westenfield Room
June 6, 2020 Westenfield Room

Visit our website to explore the history and images of Niles.

Our home page:

<https://nileshistoricalsociety.org/index.htm>

Our Photographs links:

<https://nileshistoricalsociety.org/stein.htm>

Our Stories links:

<https://nileshistoricalsociety.org/direc.htm>

Mt. Carmel church link:

<https://nileshistoricalsociety.org/mtcarmel.htm>

Our McKinley High School link:

<https://nileshistoricalsociety.org/NilesOhioHighSchool.htm>

Holeton-Yuhasz Funeral Home

The Holeton Block, built in 1887, is the last remnant of the original Niles downtown buildings. It is located at 16 South Main Street on the west side of South Main Street near the Niles Bank Building.



Holeton Building, built 1887.

Selling furniture since 1875 and practicing as a licensed undertaker and embalmer from 1890, C.R. Holeton built the Holeton Block.

In 1889 the C.R. Holeton & Son Furniture and Undertaking was the first occupant of this building with the furniture located on the first floor and the caskets were upstairs. At this time, funerals were held in the home and the deceased was carried to the cemetery by a horse-drawn hearse. Later, the west Park Avenue property was purchased to build a back building for the horses, wagons and hearse.



Interior view of the C.R. Holeton and Sons Furniture Store showing the many different styles of furniture that was available.

In 1928 the business moved to its present location at 126 West Park Avenue. The business was known as Holeton Funeral Home. The name later was changed to Holeton and Holeton Funeral Home when the two brothers, *Charles* and *Dan*, took over their father's business. Dan died at a young age and Charles maintained the funeral home until he died in the early 1950s.



Holeton and Sons 1916 Hearse



1951 ambulance in front of Holeton Funeral Home which now had a covered entrance.

Alex Yuhasz became a licensed funeral director and embalmer after attending the Cleveland Academy of Mortuary Science and began working for the Holeton family. An addition to the funeral home occurred in 1958 and the funeral home provided ambulance services.

In 1969 *James Alex Yuhasz* became a licensed funeral director and embalmer after graduation from Youngstown University and the Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science. The name changed in 1972 to the Holeton-Yuhasz Funeral Home. In 1974 Alex Yuhasz died at the age of 57.

Major building renovations, addition and redecorating occurred in 1979. Improvements continued in 1990 with a handicap accessible entrance, sound system and redecoration.

In 1991 *James Alan Yuhasz* becomes a licensed funeral director and embalmer after graduation from The Ohio State University and the Pittsburg Institute of Mortuary Science.

1999 brought another major building renovation, addition and redecorating. In 2006 and 2008 additional adjacent property was acquired for parking and future growth.

Contributed by: *James Yuhasz, Sr.*

Photograph of early 1900s funeral in front of the First Methodist Church located at West Park Avenue and Arlington Avenue. Note the hearse on the right of the image.

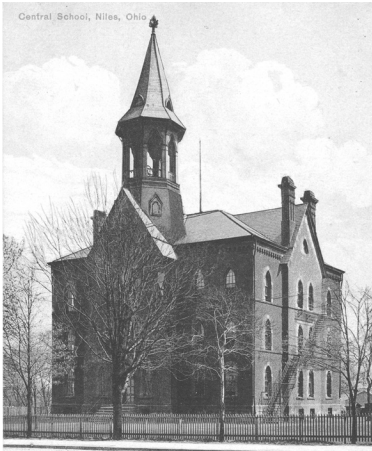


The Central School Bell

The first brick school built in Niles was the Union High School, later named Central High School. Construction began in 1870 and it opened in May 1871, with six teachers, including the principal. The tower had a large bell.

It was located on Mill Street (now East State Street) and Church Street. It was a red brick building with three stories and a basement, and cost a total of \$37,980.00.

A new McKinley High School was under construction in 1914 on Church Street between Arlington and Chestnut Streets. It housed grades 1-12 and had an outdoor playhouse which provided play and exercise areas during inclement weather. The Central High building was in continuous use until the mid 1920s providing extra classrooms. After a fire broke out in two of the classrooms, it was declared unsafe and demolished. The bell was relocated to the front of the new high school where it was placed on a stone pedestal in the southeast corner of the lot.



The 1959 Senior Class Project, under the sponsorship of *Miss Anna Compana*, had the bell moved from the old McKinley High School to a pedestal in front of the new Niles McKinley High School. Their project also included the construction of concrete benches and sidewalks leading to the pedestal. The dedication took place on Senior Recognition Day May 29, 1959.



The committee in charge: *Richard Malone, William Bohne, James Williamson, Dominic Chieffo, Jack Martin, Class sponsor Anna Compana, Principal Robert Sharp.*



McKinley High School, ca 1935.

The McKinley High School was renamed Edison Junior High School in 1958 and converted for grades 7-8-9, while the new Niles McKinley High School, built in 1957 on Trumbull Drive, housed grades 10-12.

The inscription on the bell reads:

Cast by A. Fulton & Sons,
Pittsburgh. PA

Niles Union School
1871

Board of Education
Josiah Robbins, Prest.
T. Calvin Stewart, Clerk
Wm. Campbell, Treas.
Geo. S. Baldwin
Wm. Davis, Sr.
A.J. Dyer



The bell is now located at the new Niles McKinley High School on Dragon Drive. The bell hangs from a new support built of the same red bricks as the high school building.

For more information, type the link below into your browser.

<https://nileshistoricalsociety.org/bell.htm>