

President's Message:

Dear Members of the Niles Historical Society,
The words of Winnie the Pooh -- "Let's spread Hope here, Love there, Peace and Kindness -- Everywhere!" -- are a good place to start today.

Our hope is that you are all staying safe and healthy. As conditions improve the Ward -- Thomas Museum will be open Saturday, October 3rd with tours of the house and a yard sale on the grounds. If you would like to donate items for the yard sale, please call **Sandy** at (330) 652-8329 or **Anna Marie** at (330) 856-5274.

Ralph Tolbert is compiling pictures to present in a 2021 calendar which will focus on sports and athletes of Niles through the ages. If you would like to pre-order a calendar, once again, please call Sandy. I would like to thank our readers for the positive remarks we have received concerning our newsletter. Ralph does a wonderful job as editor.

Our thanks go out to *Mia Owens*, an Americorp intern, who helped the Society develop a five year plan, a media policy and a volunteer policy. We wish her much success as she pursues a masters degree.

The Society is currently formulating a plan to make the Niles History Program for the third grade students available on line. This includes lessons and a virtual tour. In the future the Society would make available to everyone digital presentations of various topics of Niles History.

Don't forget to vote in November....by whatever means you choose....

The Ohio School Law of 1849

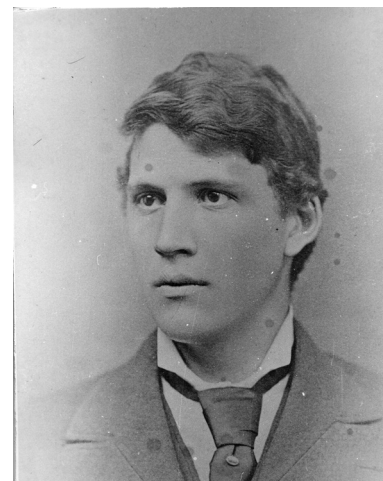
In the History of Niles Schools article, there is mention of the Union School Law. Not knowing of this I looked it up. The information is posted on the Ohio History Connection website.

"The Ohio School Law of 1849 reflected the interest of Ohioans in the idea of public education. Until this time there was no uniformity in schools from one community to another. The state legislature chose to model the state system after one created by the citizens of Akron in 1847. There was to be one school district encompassing the entire city. Within the district would be a number of elementary schools, with students divided into separate 'grades' based on achievement. When the demand existed, a high school would be established. A school board of elected community members would make decisions on management and hire professionals to run the schools. Property taxes would pay for the new school system. Illustrating the racism that existed in Ohio during this era, the Ohio School Law excluded African -- American children from the public school system. continued page 4

History of Niles Schools — Part 1

Written by *Frank O. Robbins*, Class of 1875, in 1915. Ed. there have been no grammar corrections.

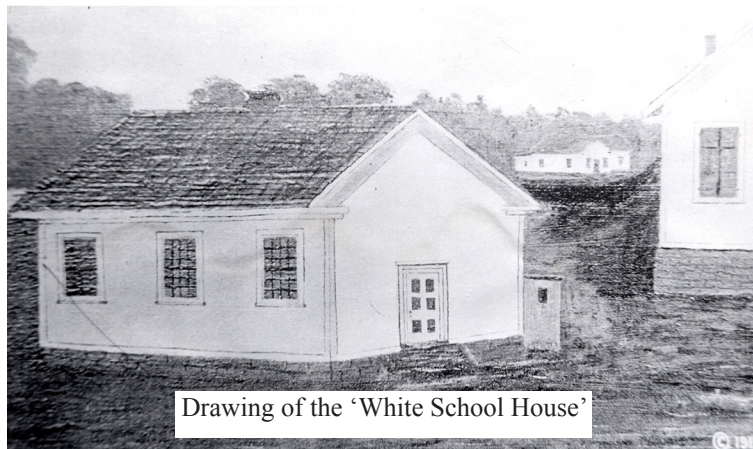
"In the limited time I have taken to look up the history of the Niles schools, I have been unable to learn anything of the actual organization of School District No. 8, nor have I found anyone who could tell anything of its history previous to 1842. The earliest record now in existence is a minute book of the directors' meetings and the first entry therein is as follows: Pursuant to previous notice, the householders in District No. 8 in Weathersfield Township, Trumbull County,



Frank O. Robbins graduation picture, 1875

Ohio, met for the purpose of electing three school directors. The meeting being called to order by appointing *William McKinley*, *Jacob Robison* and *James Dempsy* to the chair, they then proceeded to the election of officers. After counting the votes given, it was found that William McKinley was elected school director for the term of three years and *Doc. Miller Blachly* for the term of one year. The said directors then proceeded to select one of their members for district clerk and the treasurer, which eventuated in the appointing of William McKinley to that office. This done, the oath of office was administered by *James Dempsy*, Esq. Meeting adjourned Friday, September 16th, 1842. WM. McKinley, Clerk.

William McKinley, who signed this record, was the father of our martyred President McKinley, who was born in the following



Drawing of the 'White School House'

year. I have not been able to learn whether the building known as the 'White School House,' standing west of the Presbyterian church, had already been built, but presume that it had. as it is referred to frequently in the records as a meeting place for the directors.

At this time teachers were hired for short terms, three months, or a little longer. Wages varied from \$5.50 to \$15.00 per month, part to be paid out of the school fund and balance to be paid in bar iron at a specified price per pupil and to be furnished by the patrons. There was but one school, 'the White Schoolhouse', in the district at this time, and the branches taught were those



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 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>

(White School House continued) of a common English education:
writing, reading, arithmetic, geography and grammar.

It is interesting to note the names of some of the people who either taught the school or who served on the school board: In 1844, we first meet the name of *H. H. Mason* as director and clerk; in 1845, we find on the Board, the name of *J. G. Butler*, the father of *J. G. Butler, Jr.*, known to all of our citizens. Under the new school law, in 1849, three directors were elected. In the fall of that year,

Amos Allison, *H.H. Mason* and *J. G. Butler*. The first instance in the records telling of the hiring of two teachers was in March, 1847; these teachers were *Alba Sanford*, known to the old citizens as 'Santa Anna' and his daughter. Their compensation was \$20.00 per month. I can not learn whether they both taught in one building but the presumption is that they did.

In the fall of 1851, an enumeration of the white youth over four and under twenty-one in District No. 8, showed that there were within the district 110 males and 92 females between these ages. You will notice that in those days there were no boys and girls, only males and females. In a meeting of the house holders April 12, 1852, held at the White School House, a committee consisting of *William Ward*, *William Hunter* and *J. G. Butler* was appointed to inquire into the propriety of having the school divided and conducted thereafter upon the Union system; we can say nothing relative to this report but it is probable that at this time, the school house later known as the Niles High School, was built at the western end of what was then known as James Street (Church Street). Part 2 will appear in November-December 2020 newsletter.

Calendar of Events

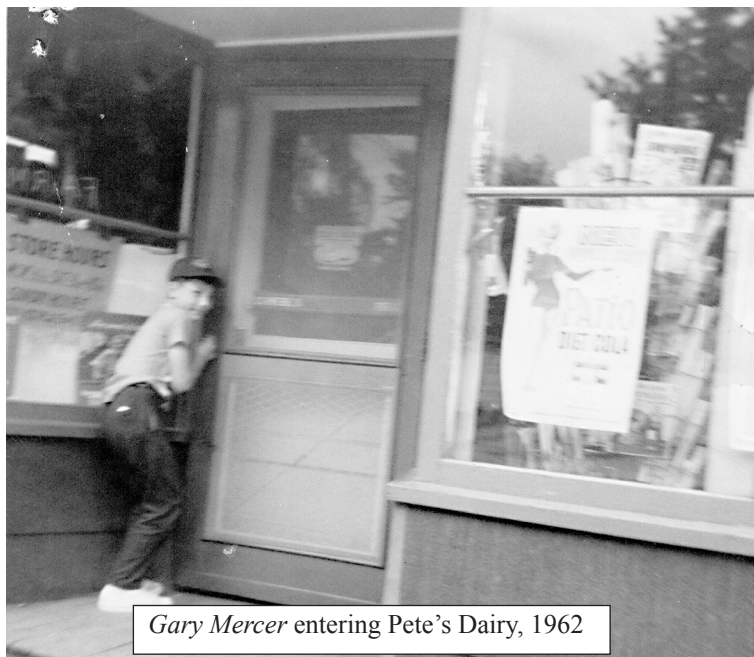


Saturday, October 3, 2020
10 AM- 3 PM
Tours of Ward – Thomas Museum
Yard Sale.

Continued from page 1

The Ohio legislature passed a modified Ohio School Law in 1853. As a result of the new law, the state collected a uniform property tax across the state, which it then redistributed to each school district based upon the number of students enrolled. The Ohio School Law of 1853 also provided money for school libraries for the first time in Ohio's history."

Anna Marie Beagle



Gary Mercer entering Pete's Dairy, 1962

Pete's Dairy Information: Jay McMurray

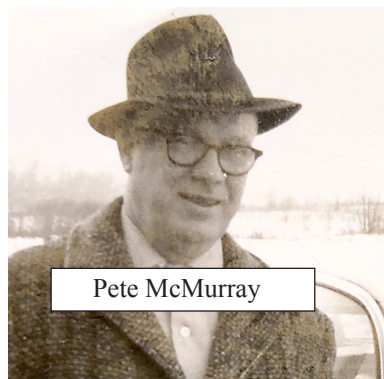
There are so many great memories growing up in Niles as a 'Baby Boomer' but the neighborhood store stands out the most. Each neighborhood had a little store where your mother would send you to pick up a loaf of bread, sandwich meat, or some treat for your school lunch like Twinkies or Hostess cupcakes filled with crème and topped with chocolate fudge frosting.

Joan Miles, "We lived on the corner of Lafayette and Hughes. There were several of those 'Mom and Pop' stores in our neighborhood. I remember McAllister's on Vienna Avenue, Cartwright's by the old Lincoln School, and Smith's was another small store by Lincoln School."

Elizabeth Bridgen, "I lived on Southside and there was a store just like Pete's Dairy called Partridges and I worked there every evening from 5-9 p.m. and 8-4 on Saturday. I was the only one working evenings, lock up and walk home around the corner. No fear. Those were the days. Fun!"

Pete's Dairy was located on Pearl Street between Lincoln and Washington Avenues with an alley on the left side of the store. The outside was brown fiber shingles with a front entrance of a single door. Joe Dugan remembers, "Back in the day we walked to Pete's on our lunch break from Washington Jr. High. Our nutritious lunch consisted of a cupcake, bag of chips and a soda for a whopping 35 cents total-sweet memories".

"(Pete) George Harold McMurray Born July 1, 1916 Niles Ohio on Bentley Avenue. Pete grew up on Bentley Avenue, moved to Washington Avenue, then to Lincoln Avenue, then to Bentley and in 1955 back to 723 Lincoln Avenue He married Catherine Bott from Youngstown, Ohio on April 25th 1947. They had two daughters, Janice C and Judy C, and one son Jay C. Dad had one brother, Carson, and one sister, Margaret. Carson had polio and never married. He passed away in 1946. Margaret married William Roemer and lived on Robbins Avenue near the



Pete McMurray

Presbyterian church. Pete was in the Army during WWII serving as an MP in France and England.

Mom worked as a nurse at Northside Hospital until 1962 when Niles City Schools hired her as school nurse where she worked until 1986. After she retired, Mom and Dad moved to Florida where they enjoyed riding their bikes and walking along the trail bordering the nature preserve behind their townhouse. Dad passed away in August 2006 and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. Mom is still very much alive and in great mental shape today at 100 years old.

I believe the store was built in 1946 by Dad from his father's garage. Carrie McMurray, my dad's aunt, worked at the store some, as did John Roemer. Dad's two employees were Hilda Nixon and Edna Sexton. Through the years all of us worked some at the store and to a lesser degree I did also but I was only 12 or 13 when the store was sold in 1968.

The store was a dairy delicatessen and had everything a neighborhood store would have back then from magazines to cigarettes, beer, fresh milk products, and fresh eggs that he would get from a lady on a farm past 422 on 46. In the early days the store had a lunch counter where he served ice cream and more, in later years that was done away with. The store was known for its penny candy by all the local kids. The business ran as a cash business with a tab kept for local return customers."

The reward for helping your Mom was when she gave you a quarter for bread and you got to spend the change on penny candy. Michele Bloom recalls, "Loved Pete's Dairy, back in the day I grew up on Lincoln and Pete moved in across the street from us. The McMurrays were such nice people. I loved walking down the alley behind our house, it led directly to Pete's. The penny candy counter was so intriguing, Tootsie Rolls, Mary Jane's, Double Bubble Gum, so many choices. We loved the 'pop' bottles in the cooler chest and the miniature wax ones at the candy counter. We would often buy 'rolls of caps' and set them off with stones. Ah, the good old days!"

To bolster your bankroll, you searched for discarded glass pop bottles in your neighborhood; the small bottles were worth two cents and the large glass quart bottles earned you a nickel. By far the best memory from the hot summer days was the pop chest with its ice cold water circulating around the glass bottles hiding a multitude of flavors awaiting your hot hands and arms. There was more than Coca-Cola in this treasure chest: Golden Age, Nehi, Seven-Up, Hires Root beer were the bottlers that produced, Orange, Strawberry, Cherry, Black Cherry, and Grape sodas as well as some exotic flavors like Grapefruit and Chocolate pop.

A variety of fudgesicles, ice cream drumsticks encrusted with nuts on the top, creamsicles, and popsicles were available if you dared the freezing cold of the top lidded freezer as you searched quickly before your arm turned cold. A favorite popsicle was the red apple flavor which was guaranteed to turn your tongue and lips the brightest red possible.

Dennis Quilty said, "When I think of Pete's Dairy I think of all the great candy and bags and bags of beans for my bean shooter."

It was a safer era in the 50s and 60s when you could walk from your house to the store without your mom worrying that something would happen to you.

— Memories: Ralph Tolbert

Rose & Rice Electric Company

Information from the Daily Times April 27, 1949.

Niles oldest and largest electrical contracting firm and appliance dealer, Rice Electric at 11 North Main Street, began life as a partnership between *Wade Rose* and *Ralph Rice* forming the Rose and Rice Electric Company in 1921.

Operational headquarters were, at that time, at Wade Rose's home on Franklin Avenue. A year after the inauspicious beginning, the two-man operation moved to a Church Street location from which it operated for close to two years before switching to 46 State Street.



This is a 1923 interior view of the Rice Electric store.

Always on the lookout for a more spacious shop and increasing service with every step, the partners made their next-to-last move in 1930 when they opened a store at 8 North Main Street near the Antler Hotel.

They had been adding new lines of merchandise whenever space and time would permit. In 1923 Rose and Rice took on the local dealership of the first RCA radios, which incidentally, was their first appliance.



Second truck load of Electro Luxe's delivered in the spring of 1936 at the store on the west side of Main Street, next to Calvin's Drug Store. In picture: *Guy Rice*, *Richard Redmond*, *Bill Bevan*(window of IOOF), *Ralph Rice* and *Donald Rice*.

In 1924 they introduced the Kelvinator refrigerator to a skeptical Niles public. Ralph Rice, quiet president of Rice Electric says, "It was sure some job to sell refrigerators then. They cost too much money and people were used to ice. They didn't need them then."

It was in 1929 that Ralph bought out Rose but the name wasn't changed until he moved the store to its present location at 11 North Main Street and renovated and remodeled it.

"While the new store was being built, the business carried on from the alley as carpenters and decorators took over the front of the store," laughed Ralph.

Ralph is a veteran of the electrical business, having been in it since 1916 and before coming to Niles was in the contracting business in Youngstown. *Guy Rice*, vice-president, Ralph's brother, has been in the firm since 1924 and is now in charge of the contracting jobs.

Lester, a nephew of Ralph, is assistant manager of the store and has been with the firm for two years. Mrs. Rice is secretary-treasurer of the retail division.

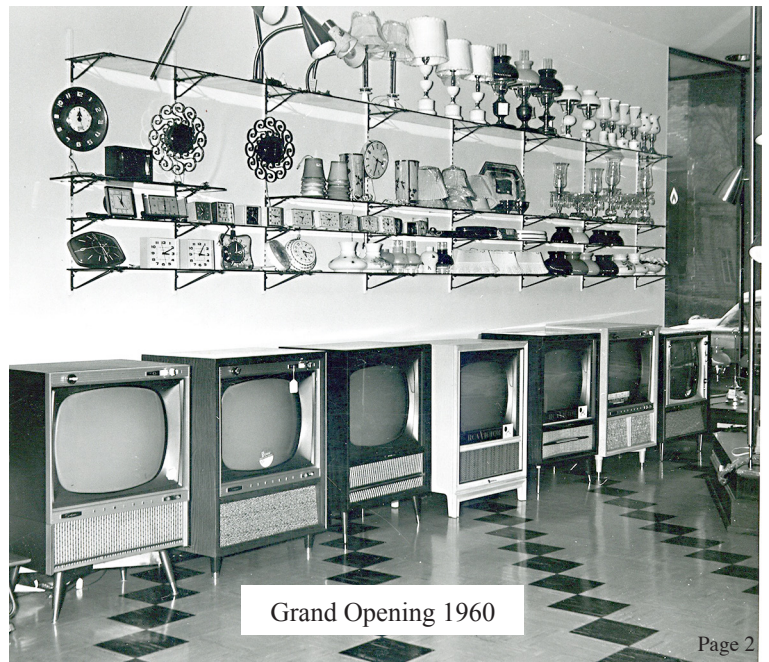
Beside home wiring, the company does industrial and commercial wiring, services all electrical appliances and does repair work.

After Ralph died in 1949, his wife, *Mrs. Esther Rice*, assumed the presidency of the corporation. Her son, *Don Rice*, upon graduation from McKinley High School in 1950, came to the assistance of his mother. The business was not new to him, as he was reared in a basket back of the cash register at the store.

At the age of 10 during World War II when Rice electric could not buy Christmas tree lights, Don can still remember spending evenings and Christmas vacation making and installing sets for customers.

After two years in the service, he returned and assumed many of the responsibilities from his mother. In 1958 he became vice-president and treasurer of the company.

When Mr. and Mrs. George Frech retired from the grocery business in 1959, Rice Electric still striving towards a bigger and better showroom and repair shop, completely remodeled, redecorated and moved to 15 North Main Street.



Grand Opening 1960