

President's message:

Dear Readers,

Our wish is that you are doing well in this time of COVID. Our prayers go out to the families who have lost loved ones to this terrible disease.

The Niles Historical Society continues to operate in quarantine. The business of the Society goes on. The "Festival of Trees" at the McKinley Memorial was well received as were the gift bags given to Niles children who visited the Library.

2021 Membership letters have been mailed. You are encouraged to renew your membership or possibly for the first time join the Society. Membership donations are the main source of income for the support of the work of the Society. These monies support educational programs for adults and children, publishing the newsletter and upkeep of the Ward – Thomas Museum and grounds.

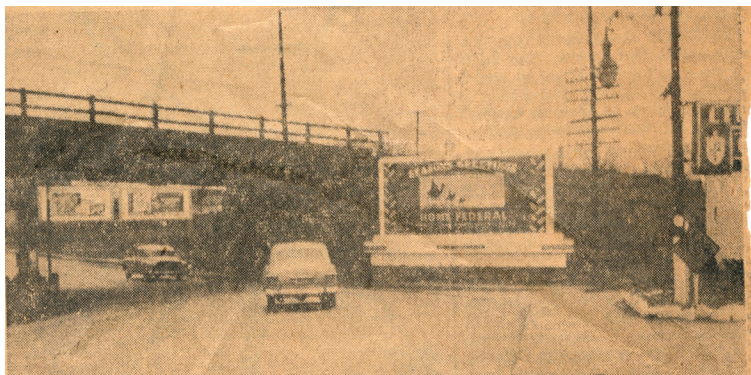
There are 2021 calendars available for sale.

Call Sandy at 330 – 652 – 8329.

Title: History of Niles Sports

Business meetings will be held as needed. The Westenfield Room is not conducive for social distancing therefore the Society is looking for an alternate meeting place. All safety measures will be observed. Any member who would like a copy of the 2020 audit and/or the 2021 budget may do so by sending a request to: curator@nileshistoricalsociety.org.

View of the Erie Railroad overpass as it looked in 1953, prior to the Grade Elimination Project. This project would alter the traffic patterns by connecting Robbins Avenue to Main Street, extend State Street to intersect with Robbins Avenue, and raise the B&O railroad yards to accommodate the second overpass on Robbins Avenue. Secondly, the project would eliminate the grade crossings on North Main Street near the General Electric plant with two new overpasses, one for the Erie Railroad and a second for the B&O railroad. See the article on page 2.



1914 Niles officials. 1. Police Chief L. Round, 2. O. R. Farror 2. **Bert Holloway**, Supt. of Water & Light Dept. 4. Mayor Frank Bryan.



Photograph of the Niles Police Dept.- about 1915. Seated left to right Officer Williams, Police Chief Link Rounds, Mayor F.E. Bryan (1914-1916), unknown, Officer Fitzpatrick. Standing left to right: Officer Richard Neiss, Officer Charles Mullet, unknown, Officer Lally. Officer Charles Berline, unknown, unknown and Officer Charles Nicholas.



Also taken about 1914, this photograph shows the Erie Railroad overpass at Robbins Avenue as it winds into Church Street. In the background is the way station for the trolley cars that would travel throughout the city. *Herb Stein Lincoln-Mercury* was located there in the early 1950s. *Leonard's Glass* and *Dr. Kuhn's Eyeglass Shop* was there more recently.

This continued to be the overpass until 1953 when the Grade Elimination Project began and Robbins Avenue finally intersected with North Main Street and the B&O railroad yards were raised six feet. A second overpass for the B&O Railroad over Robbins was erected. Within this project, Church Street no longer intersected Robbins Avenue and State Street was extended to Robbins Avenue.



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
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



The Nicholas family home at 118 Lincoln Avenue with *Ann Richards Nicholas* (1838-1914) with son *William Nicholas* (1879-1926). Man on left is unknown. ca 1910.

The next newsletter will have more information about the Nicholas family history.

Calendar of Events:

The February membership business meeting will be held at a time and place to be determined due to inability to social distance in the Westenfield Room.

Please consult the website www.nileshistoricalsociety.org and the "Seeing Eye" in the Tribune Chronicle for time and place of the meeting.

Agenda:

Audit of 2020 activity to be presented.

Budget for 2021 to be presented and voted upon.

Frederick Borts mentioned in a recent email that a correction to our website page on alley names should have Oak Alley located between Gilbert and South Bentley Avenues.

Also, Harry Stevens Alley was omitted. So, who knows where the alley named after Niles' Hot Dog King is located?

Photograph of *Harry Stevens*.



Follow the link:
<https://www.nileshistoricalsociety.org/alleynames.htm>

HENDERSON'S BARBECUE
1328 Robbins Ave. Phone 1349

Beer on Draught
All Good Brands of Bottled Beer Ice Cold

We Sell From 6 to 48 Bottles to Take Out or Will Deliver in Case Lots.

LUNCHES SERVED
All Brands of Cheese :: Potato Chips Pretzels
Barbecued Meats by the Pound
OPEN 8 A.M. TO 1 A.M. EVERY DAY

A Town Was Never Built on Chain Store Money

1328 Robbins Avenue

Perched at the top of Robbins Avenue hill is a site that has a long history. Built in 1920, this modest one-story building has been a mom & pop grocery store, a home to barbeque, a local dairy store, sold pizza, well-known stop for penny candy and presently home to Albie's Floral.

Following is the history of 1328 Robbins Avenue.

1930 - 1933.....	Henderson's Barbeque
1934 - 1940.....	George H. Barker Grocery
1940 - 1941.....	W.J. Vincent & Son
1941 - 1945.....	Woodruff's Dairy
1945 - 1949.....	Unknown
1949 - 1952.....	Nicholas' Market
1953 - 1964.....	Macali's Market
1964 - 1974.....	Nick's (Mihajovich)Deluxe Market
1974 - 1986.....	Marte's (Frasca) Deluxe Market
1986.....	Unknown
?.....	Daffey's Place (Lillian White)
2006 - ?.....	Cakes with Character (Talia Longberry)
2009 - ?.....	Firehouse Pizza
2011 - Present.....	Albie's Floral LLC (Al Rosenberg)

Information: Albert Rosenberg

NILES DAILY TIMES PAGE 104 SEPTEMBER 01, 1934

1934 - NILES - 1934

GRAND OPENING

We wish to announce the opening of Barker's new Barbecue and Beer Garden, built by the famous owner of Barker's Barbecue, who has been in the business for many years.

Barbecue Sandwiches

We will serve the same old style, and the same old way, as the famous Barker's Barbecue, who has been in the business for many years.

A Full Line of

- Beers and Ales
- Soft Drinks
- Appetizers and Fishcakes
- Candy and Ice Cream

CLUBS and LODGES
Catered to on Short Notice

Visitors Welcome
Friendly and helpful service, and a full menu, new during Christmas Week, just from our kitchen.

Barker's Barbecue and Beer Garden
NILES, OHIO

IN BUSINESS FROM 1934 TO 1940

MaryAnn McMahon, "my great grandfather, *George H. Barker*, ran a Butcher shop out of there before the Depression. He lost it during the Depression. He came from England, and lived in the big yellow home at the top of North Rhodes Avenue hill and Taft."

Editor: many neighborhood stores carried their customers on a tab expecting to be paid back, when they couldn't find work they couldn't pay their bills. Then when the stores couldn't pay their suppliers, they lost not only their store but also their home.

All of these businesses had one thing in common — they were all family run and served the local neighborhood for dry goods, fresh meats and bread and for the children sweet treats.



Marte's Market occupied the store for the longest time period, 12 years.

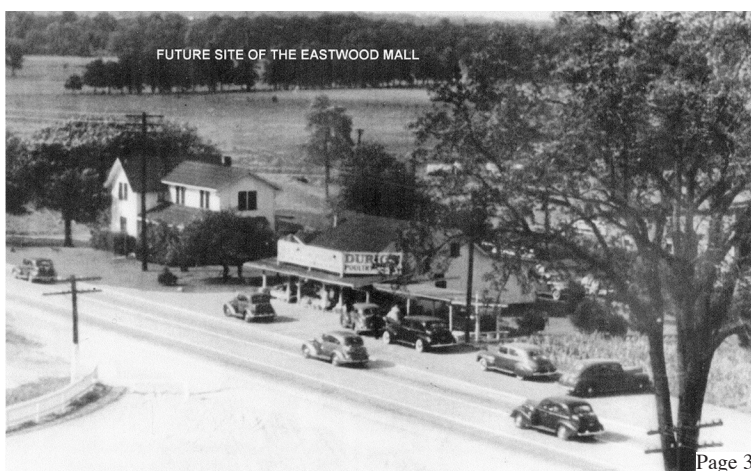


Albie's Floral is the present-day owner of 1328 Robbins Avenue with the store on the left side and living quarters on the right side of the building.



William Martin Nicholas, owner of Nicholas' Market from 1949-1952 is the grandfather of Funeral Home Director *William (Bill) Martin Nicholas*. His great-uncle was Charles Nicholas who appears in the Niles police photograph on page 1.

Bill Nicholas' mother is *Mary Kay Durig* whose grandfather owned Durig's Market on 422 which was bought by the Cafaro Company prior to the building of Eastwood Mall. Dick's Sporting Goods is now located on the site of the Durig's farm market.





View of North Main Street grade crossing with gates and watch tower guarding the railroad crossover at this location.

Making the Grade

Over fourteen people have died at the various railroad crossings located on Robbins Avenue and North Main Street with 32 more accidents reported according to a October 14, 1949 Daily Times article. This editorial continues encouraging the passage of a bond issue to pay for the Grade Elimination Project. It further states, "Niles has not had a major civic improvement since the completion of the Viaduct in 1933, this is an opportunity to provide additional locations for retail stores, widen North Main Street and provide a new wider bridge on Robbins Avenue across Mosquito Creek."

Three city engineers toiled to realize grade separation during the past two decades (1930s and 1940s) on work relative to realization of the Niles grade elimination project.

These included *Robert D. 'Mac' MacLean*, city engineer in much of the 1930 decade and into the early 1940's. It has been said that MacLean was active in behalf of the grade separation during the 'lull' which occurred in the depression-plagued 1930's, prepared a sketch of what the Niles project should be. Some who saw it say that it compares remarkably with the entire extent of the project to be completed tomorrow (July 21, 1954).

MacLean, came to Niles from Oakmont PA. after WW1, and was with Sharon Steel corporation for a number of years. His years as Niles' city engineer included the busy WPA years of the 1930's when many city streets were improved to provide aid for the unemployed.

MacLean's tenure as city engineer was followed by that of the late *Jerrie J. Flickinger* who served in the engineer's office from the early 1940's until his retirement in 1950. It was during that period that much of the important preliminary estimating and planning of the project was completed.

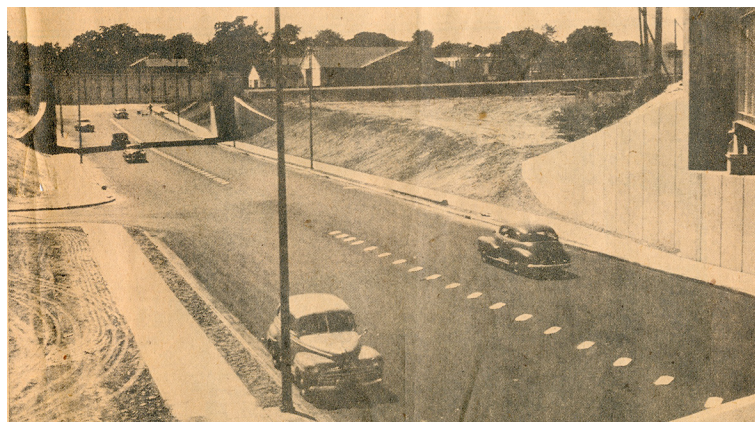
G.P. Fisher, the present city engineer was appointed in 1950 and has served during the important final planning and construction phases of the grade separation project. Considerable work involving city engineering, street changes, and utility line changes during the construction along with pre-construction planning and liaison work with other participating agencies.

Others who worked hard to see the grade separation 'dream' become reality include **Bert Holloway** (see top 1914 photo p. 1), who retired in 1953 after almost 50 years as the superintendent of the municipal Water and Light Department. Holloway worked closely with other officials in planning involving the alterations in city utility lines and related work in the project. So has his successor, *William Burgess*, appointed superintendent in 1953 and

J.J. Harvey, long-time assistant superintendent of the Water and Light Department.

Harvey, who makes a hobby of photography, is among the lucky local residents who have excellent pictures of the project grade separation areas as it appeared before construction and changes swung into full swing in the spring of 1953. These include a photo of the Main Street crossing before it was closed for construction in 1953 (article and photos appeared in Daily Times special insert July 1954).

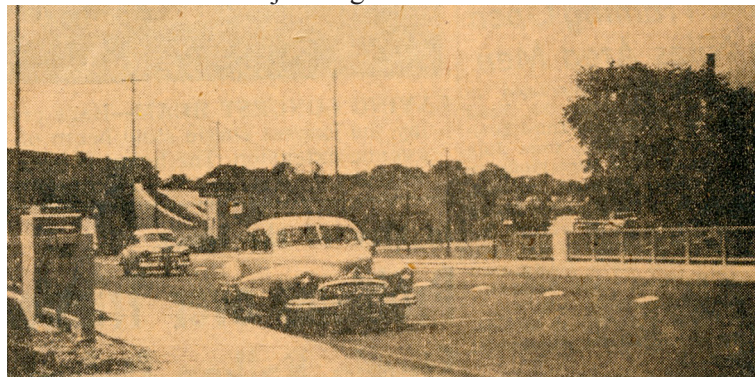
As a side note, when the Erie railroad was confronted with the argument that it is trespassing on city property on Robbins Avenue, it brings up the ordinance passed by the village council in 1884 which shows that the railroad had first right-of-way and sold to the village the privilege of passing a roadway under the trestle.



View of Robbins Avenue after the Grade Elimination Project.



View of B&O railroad yard and Church Street curve before the Grade Elimination Project began in 1953.



View of the new Mosquito Creek Bridge and a wider Robbins Avenue looking toward *Herb Stein Lincoln-Mercury* dealership.