

President's Notes:

Happy Autumn!

In response to the information provided in the July – August newsletter the Niles Historical Society has received a \$500 donation toward the repair of the barn roof which is approximately \$18,000. Quotes on chimney repair on the Ward – Thomas House is anywhere from \$6000 - \$18000. Then there is the repair of the greenhouse. A major fund raiser will be required for the repair of the greenhouse. There are funds left from the last renovation fundraiser which are a fraction of the money needed to achieve a permanent fix.

Several passes to the Boscov grand opening on October 7 are still available. We thank our members who have made donations to the Society for passes. Please see the previous newsletter for details.

In memoriam gifts in honor of *Elizabeth Clingan Baird* who passed away recently were received. A \$5349 donation was made to the “new building fund” from the sale of the Southside Presbyterian Church property. Upon the suggestion of *Audrey John*, the donation was designated to that fund by *Missy Walsh*, one of eighteen remaining members of that congregation who shared the proceeds of the sale of the property.

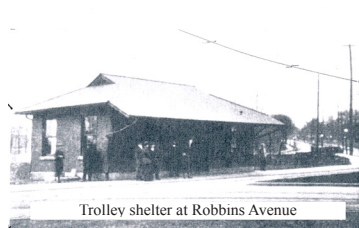
In July of 2020 the Society was notified that it was a beneficiary of the estate of *Walter Hewitt* who passed away on June 10, 2020. Walter was a long-term member of the Society and especially appreciated the newsletter.

On July 28, 2021 I received an e-mail from Walt's nephew *David Hewitt* (Niles McKinley Class of '69) that Walt left a bequest of \$20,000 to the Niles Historical Society. David's message: “Walt wanted to honor his parents, *Orris Oliver* and *Blanche Hewitt*. O.O., as he was known, was the Safety Director of Niles during prohibition, and vigorous in his desire to uphold the law, to the point where someone bombed his home one night. He later ran for mayor but was unsuccessful. That demon drink!”

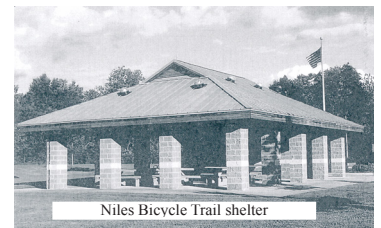
David and I spoke about an appropriate tribute. It was decided that the bequest be used toward the renovation of the Westenfield Room. A plaque will be placed there with the story of O.O. Hewitt. O.O. Hewitt and Walter Hewitt led interesting lives. Their stories will be shared with our readers in a future issue of the newsletter.

The Westenfield Room is ready for new displays of Niles history and is now better suited to use as a meeting space and media center where lecture programs can be presented.

Anna Marie Beagle



Trolley shelter at Robbins Avenue



Niles Bicycle Trail shelter



1913 flood photo trolley shelter



Robbins Avenue underpass trolley shelter

A Tale of Two Shelters — Bob Smith

Above is shown the trolley/interurban junction ‘shelter’ of the Mahoning & Shenango Railway and Light Company (photo c1916) looking east with the globe lamps along Robbins Avenue. The tracks in the foreground went around to downtown Niles.

Note its ‘uncanny’ resemblance to the Niles Bicycle Trail shelter. The trolley shelter at Robbins Avenue at Church Street (former) was built (c1907) as part of the Warren ‘cut-off’ junction. A 1913 flood photo shows this shelter as 30’ X 15’.

The Niles Bicycle trailhead pavillion-shelter at State Street/Robbins Avenue was constructed during 2012 at a cost of approximately \$100,000/ Its size is 42’ X 30’. This shelter is only 825 feet from the location of the former trolley shelter. looking southeast. The Niles Bicycle Trail is a part of the Western Reserve Greenway Trail. The last area link, from Niles to Warren will hopefully be completed in the near future.

The Mahoning and Shenango River valleys of western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio were served by local streetcars and interurban railways from 1893 to 1941. The separate companies were unified into the Mahoning & Shenango Railway and Light system in 1905. In 1920 it was renamed the Penn-Ohio Electric System. At its peak, it provided service in and between Youngstown, Girard, Niles and Warren (Ohio), and New Castle and Sharon (Pennsylvania). The main interurban line from New Castle through Youngstown to Warren was converted to buses during 1931-32. The Youngstown - Sharon interurban survived until 1939. The last local streetcar line in Youngstown was converted to electric trolley buses in 1940. The final remnants, the local lines in New Castle, were converted to buses in 1941. A separate line, the Youngstown & Southern Railway, continued electric passenger service until 1948.



The Niles Car barn bus belonged to the Mahoning Valley Electric Railway Company. It was used to take the “track-walkers” out to remote areas, where they would walk along the tracks with a bucket of sand. They would sand the tracks where necessary and make sure the switches were clean. The man holding the bucket, was *Joseph Marsico*, a track walker for the company.



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



In the July-August 2021 newsletter of the Niles Historical Society, the history of the Erie Railroad station on the old Depot Street, now Mahoning Avenue, featured the modern station built in 1915.

The above photograph shows the western view of the old station that was built in 1872 and demolished to make way for a new larger and modern railway station.

The original photograph is available at:

<http://freepages.rootsweb.com/~sponholz/genealogy/SteamtownA-303NilesOH.jpg>

Events Calendar:

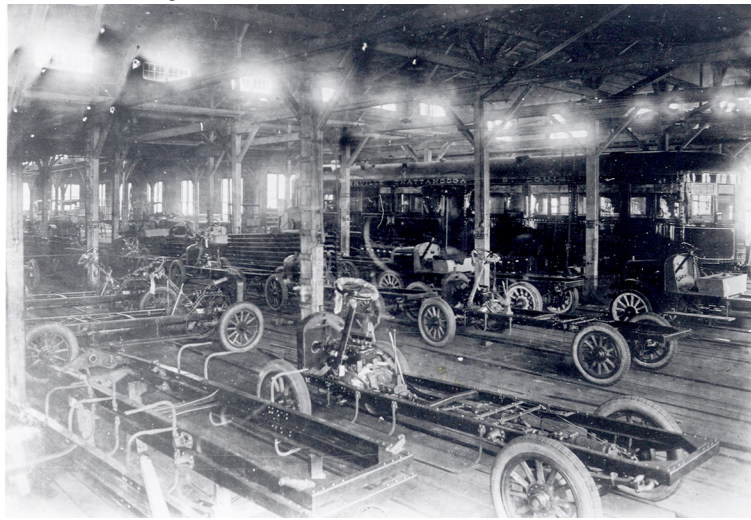
The Society will continue to have business meetings on the first Saturday of the month at 10 AM in October, November and December.

Open House will also continue on the first Sunday of the Month in October, November and December from 2 – 5 PM. Last tour is at 4 PM.

There is ongoing discussion and planning for McKinley Christmas. This will depend on the current health status.



Image of the Westernfield Room that shows the new floors and freshly painted walls. Not visible is the added insulation in the walls. Page 4



Inside the Niles Car & Manufacturing Company about 1915 when the streetcars were being phased out and truck chassis were being built. Note the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis interurban car in the background.

The History of the Niles Car and Manufacturing Company. By—Les Best

The Niles Car & Manufacturing Company was formed in 1901 when the desire for transportation was at its peak. According to the company's Articles of Incorporation, the company "intended to manufacture and deal in all kinds of street and railway cars, motors, steam engines, water tanks, and acid tanks for all manufacturing and dealing in railway supplies and appliances of all kinds." Original investors included *G.B. Robbins*, director of the Dollar Savings Bank, and *W. C. Allison*, the Allison and Company planing mill president. The mill's property would eventually become the site of the factory.

For many years, the company built some of the finest streetcars. But many are unaware of the short-lived truck assembled in Niles, OH, by the same company.

On November 30, 1915, notice was given of a stockholders meeting stating that a vote by three-fifths, the following clause be added to the third item of the Articles of Incorporation: the purpose of manufacturing and dealing in motor trucks, power vehicles, and motor supplies and appliances of all kinds, and of doing machine work of all description (entered by *C. E. Rose*, Sec'y of the Niles Car & Manufacturing Co.)

Word of the added truck production spread across the county. The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette published the news of the soon production of "high grade trucks" and that the company operated an "immense factory." The article stated, "this company is well and favorably known all over the United States". Thus began the building of three sizes of trucks in Niles. The smallest was the 1500-pound type for all types of local deliveries, the medium weight for light draying, and the biggest probably in the 5-ton range for heavy drayage.

Production was to begin in February of 1916. At first, a limited number of these models were built. It was later estimated somewhere between fifty to one hundred of each type would be turned out, and agencies will be established. A *Mr. Hill* from Ravenna was hired to oversee the production and body design.

In April 1916, there were approximately three dozen under production, but shipments hampered production due to late shipments. Despite material delays, it was reported that the 2-ton version chassis had its picture taken for catalog purposes; the body which was installed was Niles road-ready.

May 13, 1916, saw the first truck shipped to a service station in Cleveland, with several more in the construction phase. They were receiving many inquiries and the future looked promising. Later that month, the *Niles Times* published a help wanted ad for the truck assembly plant. Delivery was made to the Friedman Transfer Company of Youngstown. This truck used a patented worm drive rear end for propulsion and was the finest tuned yet. A second delivery to the same company soon followed within the week. By the end of July 1916, many trucks were assembled and ready for shipment. Unfortunately, supply shortages continued, increasing prices, resulting in dreaded delays.

By 1917, the company decided to cease producing the electric rail car and focus exclusively on the production of motor trucks as an assembled vehicle. Unfortunately, the company entered a saturated market with little marketing experience.

Notice of Stockholders' Meeting appeared in the *Niles News* on May 31, 1917. Meeting to be held on the 11th of June, 1917 at 2 o'clock P.M. for the purpose of considering and acting upon a proposed agreement for the sale of the Real Estate, Machinery, Tools and such further portion of the assets. Per. *Chas. E. Rose*, Secy.

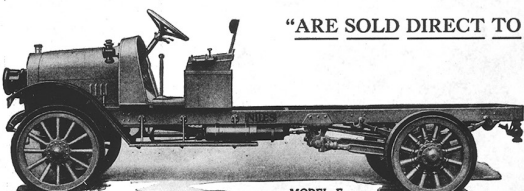
The March 10, 1918 issue carried a ¾ page Announcement that The Niles Car and Manufacturing Co. had been moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania after being purchased by Niles Motor Truck Company.

Finally on October 1, 1926 it was reported that the first steps toward the dissolution of the Niles Car and Manufacturing Co. took place with the Bd. Of Directors at the Niles Trust Co. Thus ending truck manufacturing in Niles.

Editor's Note: During WWI, the plant became Engel Aircraft, manufacturing components for airplanes. Later it became Stevens Metal Products and in 1976 until the present it was the home of Cleveland Steel Container Corporation at 412 Mason Street.

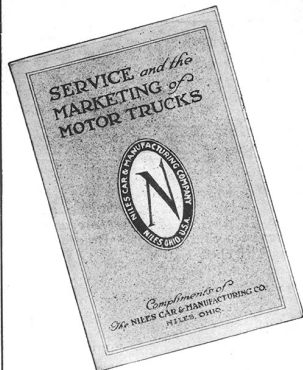
NILES WORM DRIVEN MOTOR TRUCKS

"ARE SOLD DIRECT TO YOU"



MODEL E "Built to Endure"

An unprecedented demand for the booklet shown below followed our first advertisement. Every prospective truck buyer should read it. It tells in non-technical language the things you should know about motor trucks.



ADDITIONAL COPIES NOW ON HAND
WRITE FOR "YOUR" COPY AT ONCE

Our Sales Plan

WE firmly believe that by marketing our trucks direct to the user, thereby saving you the dealer's profit, we are enabled to offer you a better truck, at a lower price, than would be otherwise possible. This, coupled with our **Original Service Plan**, provides all the good points the dealer claims, and in addition protects you against collusion and misunderstanding.

Quality is Consistent Throughout Niles Construction

NILES TRUCKS are equipped with powerful Continental Motors—Timken David-Brown Worm—Timken Bearings throughout—Covert Transmission—Borg & Beck Clutch—Eisenmann Magneto—Stromberg Carburetors—Flexible Heat-Treated Frame—Ford's Genuine Honeycomb Radiator—Gummier Steering Gear—Blood Universal Joints with Tubular Drive Shaft. Standard Equipment includes Oil Lamp, Complete Prest-O-Lite Outfit with Instant Friction Lamps, Reduction Valve, Stewart Odometer, Thunderbolt, Fuel Level Indicator, Tool Kit, Tool Box, Jack, License Brackets, Etc. All parts interchangeable.

Model B, 3-4 to 1 Ton, \$1175.00 To You
Model E, Two Tons, \$1875.00 To You

Prices include Seats, but no Bodies, and are F. O. B. Niles, Ohio

We also manufacture Large Electric Interurban Cars. Our facilities are unequalled for producing accurate work. We urge a visit to our factory.

THE NILES CAR & MANUFACTURING CO., NILES, O., U. S. A.

SERVICE STATIONS IN ALL IMPORTANT CITIES

Advertisement that appeared in the June 1916 *Motor Age* magazine describing the advantages and types of motor trucks built by the Niles Car & Manufacturing Company.



Location, Location, Location...

McGurk family information supplied by Brian McGurk.

The book, A Pictorial History of the Buildings of Niles, Ohio available through the Niles Historical Society, identified the location of the Fostoria House as the old Stiver Chevrolet dealership on North Main Street (see page 28 in the book). Thanks to *Brian McGurk*, the correct location has been established on Mahoning Avenue next to the old Erie Railroad Depot.

When the Fostoria Glass Company built their Niles plant in 1910, many skilled glass workers moved to Niles. Some lived and took their meals at the Niles Fostoria House. "My paternal grandfather, *James McGurk*, built and managed the McGurk Hotel located at 62 Railroad Street (Depot Street, now Mahoning Avenue).

The McGurk Hotel and Saloon was built and managed by my paternal great grandmother, *Mary O'Neill McGurk*, in 1894 and later by my grandfather, *James McGurk*. Mary was the widow of *Frank McGurk*, Irish immigrants, who had died in 1885 from injuries resulting from mining gold and silver in Colorado. In 1908 Niles voted to go dry so they rented out the building until the 1930's. My father, *Francis*, was born at the hotel in 1900".

Brian McGurk stated, "I have a double connection to the Fostoria House picture as my maternal grandfather, *Peter Stein*, was a glass blower from Fostoria who moved his family to Niles in 1910 and would have known all those pictured on the porch of the McGurk Hotel/Fostoria House".



The McGurk Hotel, which later became the Fostoria House, can be seen to the left of the Erie Depot on Railroad Street in this postcard. The old Erie Railroad station was replaced by the new station shown above in 1915.

See the July-August 2021 Niles Historical Society newsletter for Erie RR station history.

In August 1910, this building was rented by *Mrs. R. Simpson* of Fostoria, Ohio and opened as a first-class restaurant and boarding house. In a few weeks this will be the headquarters for the glass blowers and the hotel will be known as the Fostoria House. The new proprietor will furnish the entire house in preparation for the occupancy of the glass workers and have everything in readiness for their arrival. The hotel features 20 rooms with steam heat and a restaurant.

Mrs. Simpson has had considerable experience in the restaurant and hotel business and thinks that the McGurk Hotel is an ideal place for business. *Niles Daily News August 10, 1910.*

Niles Car & Manufacturing Company

During the early twentieth century the Niles Car and Manufacturing Company was founded in Niles. Beginning operation in January, 1902, the company already had orders for a number of cars to be used in Chicago. At this time the company already employed 250 men. The cars made in Niles were ordered from every state in the Union and could be customized to order. Handsome wooden cars in various sizes, they were beautiful with their Gothic windows, some of them fitted with leaded stained glass or beveled glass.

The company also produced cars for hauling freight but were most noted for the luxurious passenger cars which were in use from coast to coast. Eventually other forms of transportation took their place and now you can only see them in museums or other special places where they have been preserved.



Photo of one building of the Niles Car & Manufacturing Company on Mason Street taken from atop the water tower in the early 1900s.



Erie Street view of the Niles Car & Manufacturing Co., makers of one of the finest lines of plush electric cars of the area. This building was located on the block bounded by Erie, South Cedar, Allison Avenue and Mason Street and operated for 16 years before being converted to truck chassis production. Continued Page 3