

President's Message: Happy July!

The Niles Historical Society continues to work toward improving the space used to present Niles history. In May and June the Society hosted other local historical societies. The Trumbull County Historical Society included the Ward – Thomas property in its “Race to the Past”. Team participants were given clues at each point of the race to the next historical site to find. The Ward – Thomas House was the last stop.

The Struthers Historical Society requested the use of the Westenfield Room for a meeting on June 5 and then toured the property. On June 17 the property was visited by a group of “Campers”. This group’s leader schedules outings for its members. After visiting the McKinley Memorial, McKinley Birthplace and having lunch locally, the group then toured the Ward – Thomas property.

Not only did the visitors enjoy their tours but their enthusiasm for history and delight in the experience made our job as docents worthwhile.

The Collections Committee was formed according to the constitution. *Lynda Ralston* is the Chairperson of that committee. Amendments to the Constitution of the Niles Historical Society will be presented to the membership via email for comment and approval. Because attendance at meetings is barely 10 – 12 members, notification to a larger group considering the Society’s actions might be beneficial.

The City is still requesting quotes for repair of the barn roof. Besides repair of the barn roof, the greenhouse is due for a very expensive maintenance project. Those members who have provided email addresses please be aware that you will be receiving notifications of Society actions and minutes to meetings.

The slate roof that protects the interior of the barn is leaking and damaging the wooden roof supports and main floorboards. Replacing the roof with regular shingles will also involve the removal of the slate shingles that are original to the barn roof.

The barn interior is not just wood rafters, beams and siding, but also displays of historic memorabilia of Niles such as the big brass bell from Washington Elementary School.



The barn also features several rooms with everyday items that were in homes 100 years ago.



How Niles Got Its Name.



Hezekiah Niles as a Young Man

By 1834 the settlement had reached the proper proportions of a village so *James Heaton* planned the streets, marked off the lot division and named the village.

Until 1834 the settlement was appropriately called “Heaton’s Furnace”, but James Heaton gave it a new name ‘Nilestown’ in honor of *Hezekiah Niles*, editor of the *Niles Register*, a Baltimore paper, whose Whig principles Heaton greatly admired.

Nilestown remained the name until 1843 when the Post Office Department for convenience shortened it to ‘Niles’ and that is how Niles got its name.

Hezekiah Niles was born October 10, 1777, and passed away on April 2, 1839, an early editor and publisher of the *Niles’ Weekly Register*, which was a national weekly news magazine based out of Baltimore. Also known as the *Niles’ Register* and the *Weekly Register*, the publication of the Chester County, Pennsylvania born Hezekiah Niles was rich in detail for many of the most nationally significant events that occurred in Maryland. It covered not only politics, but economics, science, technology, art, and literature.

Born to a Quaker family, Niles’ father left that faith to fight in the American Revolution and in 1777 the family fled to Wilmington, Delaware, just paces ahead of the British Army. There they took refuge in the home of *James Jefferis* near Jefferis’ Ford on the east side of Brandywine Creek. According to Niles, it was at this time that his not-yet-begun life nearly ended, asserting that a Hessian mercenary threatened to bayonet his very pregnant mother while she carried him.

He and his family survived the war and went back to Wilmington where his father rejoined the Quaker faith he had left.

Not unlike another famous Revolutionary Pennsylvanian, *Benjamin Franklin*, Niles was apprenticed to a Philadelphia printer for three years. He later carried his trade to Wilmington for a few years and tried to set up a printing business that went belly up by 1801. Four years later in 1805, he published a literary magazine called *The Apollo*, which had a very short shelf-life and in 1805 he moved south to Baltimore. By 1811 he was editing a daily Charm City broadsheet, the *Baltimore Evening Post*, which was associated with the Democratic-Republican Party.



Top of the April 9, 1836 front page of the Niles’ Weekly Register

It was in 1811 that Niles as a newspaperman really comes into his own in Maryland, when he issued the prospectus for the *Weekly Register* and garnered a total of 1,500 subscribers even before the first issue hit the press. That first edition hit the streets of Baltimore on September 7, 1811. He would edit and publish the *Weekly Register* for 25 years, making it one of the most widely circulated magazines in the United States. His news magazine was on a scale of a more familiar *LIFE* in its day and Hezekiah became one of the most influential journalists of his time. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hezekiah_Niles



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

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In all of the later business organizations, Mr. Pew has been an indefatigable worker, and his willingness to aid has been counted as one of the chief instruments in making Niles a prosperous manufacturing and commercial center. He served as president and secretary of the second Board of Trade, and as an active member of the present Niles Chamber of Commerce.

Benjamin J. Pew was also active in the landscaping of Union Cemetery and was a member of the Cemetery Board of Trustees. The deed below shows his signature as a Trustee of the cemetery.

Benjamin F. Pew news article appeared in Centennial Edition (1934) of the Niles Daily Times.

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, That we.....
B. F. Pew, Harry Hughes & Chas. H. Mason
the TRUSTEES of Union Cemetery, in consideration of...\$100.00.....Dollars
paid to us by...Edward Stone.....Grantee..... of.....Niles, Ohio.
the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, do hereby grant, bargain, sell and convey unto the said grantee.....
the.....West Half.....of Lot No. 27.....Twenty seven
Section.....L.....containing.....One Hundred & sixty two
square feet of land in the UNION CEMETERY, situate in original lot No. 5, in the Township of Weathersfield,
Trumbull county, Ohio. For a more particular description of said parcel of land reference is here made to the
Records of Trumbull County, Book of Maps.....Page.....
TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the above granted and bargained premises to the said grantee.....
heirs and assigns forever; subject, however, to the conditions and limitations, and with the privileges specified in
the rules and regulations hereto annexed.
IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, the said TRUSTEES of UNION CEMETERY hereunto set their hands this
Twelfth.....day of.....September.....in the year of our Lord, One
Thousand Nine Hundred and.....TWENTYTHREE.....
Signed, sealed and delivered
in presence of
Homestead
Georgia A. King
Chas. H. Mason
Harry Hughes

Calendar of Events:

Westenfield Room Meetings

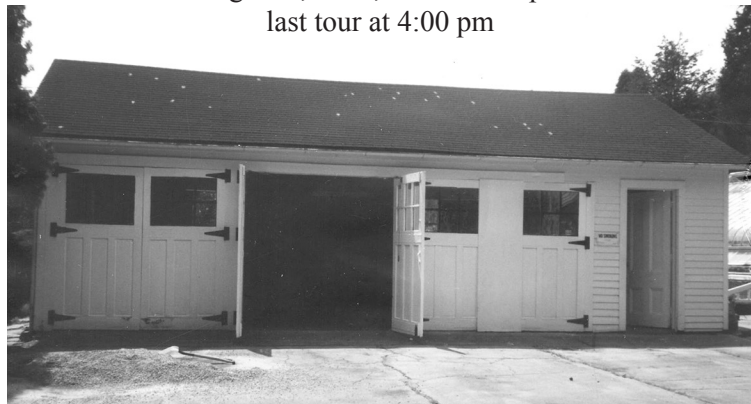
July business meeting: July 9, 2022, 10:00 am
August business meeting: August 6, 2022 10:00 am

No open house in July due to the holiday
The Society will not participate in
Harry Stevens Day on July 3, 2022.

Heritage Day will be celebrated in September.
A yard sale will be part of this activity.

August Open House:

August 7, 2022, 2:00 – 5:00 pm
last tour at 4:00 pm



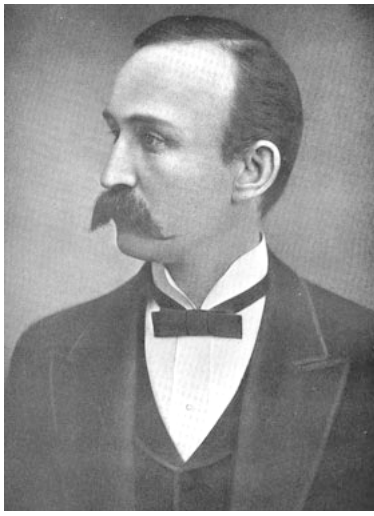
The old carriage house which became the Westenfield Room.

Benjamin Franklin Pew.

Besides being one of the oldest businessmen of Niles, *Benjamin Franklin Pew* has been one of the most constructive factors in the development of the city.

Mr. Pew was born April 10, 1850, at Lordstown, about four miles from the present city of Niles, a son of *Horace* and *Nancy Ann (Osborne) Pew*. His grandfather, *Thomas Pew*, was a prominent pioneer character in Trumbull County, establishing his home in Warren Township, 2-1/2 miles from Warren. Horace Pew, who was born and reared on his father's farm there, continued to be identified with agriculture until 1865, when he and *John Ohl* became partners in a general mercantile business at Niles under the name of Pew, Ohl & Company. After 1873 he removed to Cleveland, where he spent his last days.

Benjamin had three brothers, *C.S. Pew*, *Horace C. Pew*, *Marlan Pew* and two sisters, *Mrs. Gertrude Pew Robinson* and *Miss Mildred Pew*. He lived at 627 North Main Street. He originally resided at the old Pew home 234-236 West Park Avenue now occupied by the *Harry D. Evans* and *John B. Evans* families.



Benjamin Franklin Pew



Photo taken of the Bahm Shoe Center located at 43 East State Street, Niles which was formerly a department store.

housed the *Bahm Brothers* clothing store on East State Street. Mr. Pew retired from the grocery business before his death in October 1924.

Since he was a young man, he has been interested in the real estate business. Mr. Pew bought 50 acres of land from the Eaton estate and laid it out as the Pew addition.

At the time he made the purchase, the entire north section was mere pastureland. Mr. Pew plotted the land and set out the trees. A saw mill was built, and the lumber was seasoned for three houses. From then on houses began to be built in the Pew addition.



The home of B. F. Pew and later of his daughter, *Mrs. Edna Caldwell*. The house stood at the corner of North Main and Madison and was built as a three family dwelling, with two apartments on the second floor. Mrs. Caldwell lived all her life in the house and upon her death bequeathed the house to the Methodist Church who sold it to developers, who put in a strip plaza.

Benjamin F. Pew was reared in the home farm owned by his father, now included in the corporation limits of Niles. He had a public school education, and when only 15 years of age was made the responsible manager of the store in which his father was a partner, operating the second general store in Niles in the building on State Street now occupied by the McDowell drug store. This business transacted sales to the value of between \$75,000 and \$100,000 a year. It and many other concerns went down in the Panic of 1873, and Benjamin F. Pew was compelled to begin all over again.

For the next ten years he was in the livery business and in 1884, thirty-six years ago, engaged in the retail grocery business, which he has continued to the present time. The store was in the building which



At the time of the purchase, the entire section of Niles, north of Federal Street was pasture land. It included Franklin, East Madison and Charles, now East Woodland. (Benjamin Pew's middle name was Franklin.) The *Jennings* house on the corner was one of the first three houses built in 1894-1895.

BUILD YOUR OWN HOME!
— IN PEW ADDITION. —
The Most Beautiful Resident District of Niles.

I have several lots 60x150 feet, all sewer connections made, that I will sell at \$400 CASH and will build you a house to your liking and give you a chance to pay for it as you pay rent. Twenty year old Maple Shade Trees on every lot.

Call at my place of business and I will fully explain my plan,

B. F. PEW

41 State Street Niles, Ohio

August 15, 1916 advertisement for lots in the Pew Addition.

Mr. Pew and *R. G. Sykes* were the chief organizers and assumed most of the responsibilities in connection with the first Board of Trade at Niles. This organization, with Mr. Pew as leader, had much to do with attracting some of the early industries to the city, and it also planned and carried out the campaign resulting in a waterworks and lighting system. These undertakings were carried out against the general apathy or active opposition of many local citizens. While the first Board of Trade practically revolved around the energies of these two men, the subsequent Boards of Trade and the present Chamber of Commerce were born out of the ashes of the Pew-Sykes organization.

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140-year-old Tradition

June 1976 was the beginning of the end of the Antler Hotel. The razing of this hotel ended 140 years of inn-keeping on the northeast corner of East Park Avenue and Main Street.



The Sanford House was a large, comfortable inn with homey accommodations at a very reasonable price. Within a short time, this inn became a very popular place for local people and those who stopped overnight or for a period of time.

About 1836, *Jack Dempsey* built the American Hotel on the northeast corner of East Park Avenue and Main Street. His hotel was managed by *Jacob Robinson* until 1867. Then *Leroy Sanford* purchased the American Hotel and named it the Sanford House. *Charles Pew* purchased the Sanford House in 1895. He kept the name, The Sanford House, and rented rooms for \$2 a day.



The Allison Hotel built on the site of the The Sanford House in 1904 had its formal opening in 1905. It was located on the corner of North Main and East Park Avenue in downtown Niles.

Supposedly, the Sanford House was dismantled to make room for a new hotel, which was to be called the Allison Hotel. But, according to some old-timers, the Sanford House was not torn down; The Allison Hotel was built around it.

During the 1930s the name of the Allison Hotel was changed to The Heaton Hotel and later to The Antler Hotel, which was torn down during June 1976, ending a 140-year-old tradition of an inn on the corner.

The Antler Hotel, originally known as the Allison Hotel, was located on the site of the Sanford House.

The building is shown being torn down, June 1976, during urban renewal.



Demise of Another Landmark

Residence of *Dr. J. R. Hoffman*, brother of *Homer Hoffman* who owned Hoffman's Department Store. The barn and windmill were actually part of the B.F. Pew property. This house at 619 North Main is still standing.



The tower home at 619 North Main Street as it appeared in 2013.



The photograph above shows the condition of the tower home in June 2022. There are plans to demolish this once stately residence due to its decrepit condition and prime location on North Main Street.

Consider sharing your family photographs of Niles with the Niles Historical Society. Contact *Anna Marie Beagle*: ambgeb@aol.com

To view the historic homes and buildings of Niles, visit our website and select the links to: Historic Stories and Historic Photographs
<https://www.nileshistoricalsociety.org/>