

In this month's edition of the Niles Register *Ralph Tolbert* included black and white photos of old buildings in downtown Niles. Currently on display in the Westfield Room are colorful drawings created by *David Birkovich* of these same structures. Come and visit see what beautiful buildings existed in our city.



Mahoning Valley Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution. Father and son, *Jonathan and John Guerrier*.

Steel Valley Ukers

September and October were busy months for the Society members. Heritage Day and Yard Sale took place on September 10. There were several vendors with goods for display. The Steel Valley Ukers provided entertainment. *Jonathan and John Guerrier* of the Sons of the American Revolution dressed in authentic costumes and erected a tent reminiscent of the revolutionary period. On display were weapons and items that would be utilized in an encampment.

Ralph Tolbert presented Niles history in the newly renovated Westfield Room. Many items were donated by members of the community for the yard sale. The money generated will be used for daily operation expenses. Thank you to those who donated goods and to Niles Table, Tent and Chair Rental for a partial donation of tent, table and chairs used for the event.

Several tours of the Ward – Thomas property were presented upon request. Folks visiting the area and various organizations enjoyed the history presented by our docents.

The Society participated in the annual Pumpkin Walk at the M^cKinley Memorial, distributing treats to some 250 ghosts, goblins and superheroes on October 22.

Upcoming events include the 10th Annual M^cKinley Christmas on Saturday, December 10, 12 – 4 PM. There will be entertainment and prizes at each site which includes the M^cKinley Memorial, M^cKinley Birthplace House and the Ward – Thomas House. The Trolley will be available to transport visitors to each site. Music, Crafts, treats and Santa will be available to all visitors on the tour.

And finally, replacement of the barn roof has begun. Dan Faith Construction was contracted by the City of Niles to replace the roof. Thank you to *Dave Martin*, the Society vice-president, for organizing a crew to clear debris that has lived in the barn loft for years. Unfortunately, it is not economically feasible to retain the slate roof. Included in the repairs are replacement of rotted eaves and gutters.

Anna Marie Beagle, President

Visit the Niles Historical Society website and explore the historical photographs and stories. <https://www.nileshistoricalsociety.org/>

The Other M^cKinley Museum – Part One.



In 1890 the land upon which M^cKinley's house stood on Main Street, was needed as a site for the City National Bank (later M^cKinley bank). It was not known who undertook and financed the project, but M^cKinley's house was cut in two and the part in which M^cKinley had been born was moved to Riverside Park, some time after 1896, possibly as a museum attraction. The second half of the house was moved to Franklin alley and used as a shop where the Harris rotary offset presses were made.



Photo of the M^cKinley birthplace in its location at Riverside Park (corner of Salt Springs and Rte. 46 in Mineral Ridge). With the demise of the amusement park, the M^cKinley house was occupied by tenants on the Riverside Park site until 1908.

In 1909 *Mrs. Joseph Wess*, the former *Lulu Mackey*, the first female member of the Trumbull County bar, decided to buy the house and restore it as nearly as possible. Miss Mackey had it moved by *Frank Kramer* to her property at M^cKinley Heights. She purchased the other section and had it moved as well, then proceeded to create a privately-owned museum which she operated until her death in 1934.

The museum was located on the Tibbetts property where the M^cKinley Heights Plaza is today at the intersection of Routes 422 and 169 (Route 169 is still referred to as Tibbetts-Wick Road).

After the new National M^cKinley Memorial opened in 1917, people still visited this museum to see some of the original M^cKinley furniture and artifacts collected by Lulu Mackey.

Part Two will appear in the January-February newsletter.



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 two buildings now occupy the southeast corner of a block shared with the M^cKinley Memorial and bounded by Main Street, West Park Avenue, Arlington Avenue and Church Street.

The Birthplace Association plans to landscape the land after tearing down the two vacant buildings. The Association accepted bids for the project several months ago, but Holloway said the bids won't be opened until the legal wrangling is completed.

This article appeared in the Daily Times March 10, 1989

written by Jim Flick



A photo of the Memorial marker thanking the IOOF for their donation of the Swaney Building which made it possible for the M^cKinley Memorial to clear their northwest corner. Pictured L to R:

Walter Blum, Leonard Holloway, Ann Yancurra, and Bill Stephens.



The unobstructed view of the M^cKinley Memorial from the corner.

Calendar of Events

Business meeting: November 5, 2022, Saturday, 10 AM

Open House: November 6, 2022, Sunday, 2 – 4 PM

M^cKinley Christmas: December 10, 2022, Sunday, 12 – 4 PM

No business meeting in December or first Sunday of the Month
Open House

A Legal Snag Is keeping the Buildings Standing. No Longer Standing on the Corner.

The plan to demolish the last two buildings which share a city block with the William McKinley Memorial and Library has hit a snag according to *Leonard Holloway*, President of the Board of Trustees of the National McKinley Birthplace Association.

The title for the Bollotin Building, 2 North Main Street, is tied up in litigation, blocking the association's efforts to buy the three-story building for \$20,000 and tear it down this spring, Holloway explained.

"It's been a screwed-up mess, I'll tell you that," he sighed.

The association had also planned to demolish the adjoining building, which the Niles chapter of the International Order of Oddfellows donated to the McKinley Birthplace organization in October 1987. The Oddfellows rented the first floor of the building to two businesses and used the second and third floors. The building was damaged by fire on November 8, 1985.

Holloway explained he believed the McKinley Birthplace Association had a valid deal to buy the Bollotin Building from *Jerry Bollotin*, 74, who currently resides in New York City, but had occasionally occupied the structure since 1984.

However, it turns out Bollotin somehow arranged for the purchase of the building nearly five years ago using funds from his deceased sister's estate and does not hold sole title to it.

Property records obtained from the Trumbull County Recorder's office show the owner of record is "The Estate of *Sarah Bollotin*," Jerry Bollotin's sister. The building was purchased on June 1, 1984 from *Carole A. Prinz* of Hillsborough County, Fla. according to the deed for \$22,828.99.

The tax card in the County Auditor's Office reveals the land and building were valued at one time at \$49,800, but a penciled notation adds, no leasing-building condemned.

The Bollotin Building was also damaged by the November 1987 fire. The 1989 tax value of the building is listed at \$39,000. The building was built in 1903 and renovated in 1980, the tax card adds.

Jerry Bollotin's name does not appear anywhere on the deed or tax card. Sarah Bollotin is listed on the county property records as "deceased" apparently having died sometime before the transaction was consummated.

Holloway said the tangled issue now lies in the hands of several New York City lawyers and he has no idea when it might be resolved. "it's been a heck of a rigamarole."

The last occupant of the Bollotin Building was *C.E. Davis Advertising*. City officials allowed the business to remain in the building after it was condemned while another location was sought. However, the advertising firm moved out in late 1985 after Bollotin pasted two signs in the hallway outside the offices.

"Danger-Slow-release cyanide, stay out of the cellar. Fumigating against rats both two and four legged. Will be back in 10 days," one sign read. The other said, "Danger-10,000 volts. Come in for the shock of your life."

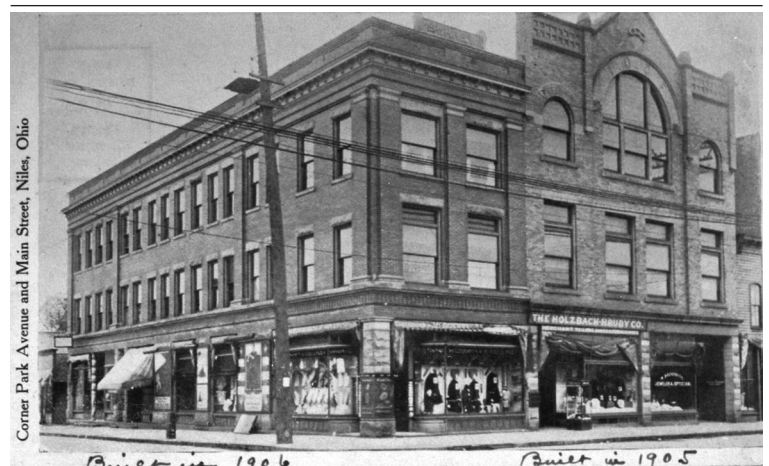
The last occupants of the Odd Fellows Building were a restaurant, Charley's Chew-Chew, and G&S Keys and Crafts. The restaurant-owners retired, while G&S moved to 219 East Park Avenue last fall. ...continued on page 4



Photo of the Swaney Building when it housed Calvin's Drug Store and the IOOF. These two buildings were demolished January 1990.



North Main Street looking toward intersection of Park Avenue and the west side of South Main Street. Frame building at left of center was the Harris House, sold by the Harris heirs to the Niles Trust Co. in 1920 for the construction of the Niles Bank Building. The Swaney block-now gone is next on the right. The IOOF building, also gone, housed Backenstos Jewelry, Wells Fargo and Singer Sewing Machine Co. Large building in right foreground is the Wagstaff building, occupied by Niles Plumbing and Heating and Niles Electric Co. It was torn down when the Memorial was erected.



Swaney and IOOF building were built sometime between the years of 1904 and 1908 and was occupied by Holzabach & Hruby Clothing store located on the northwest corner of Park and Main.

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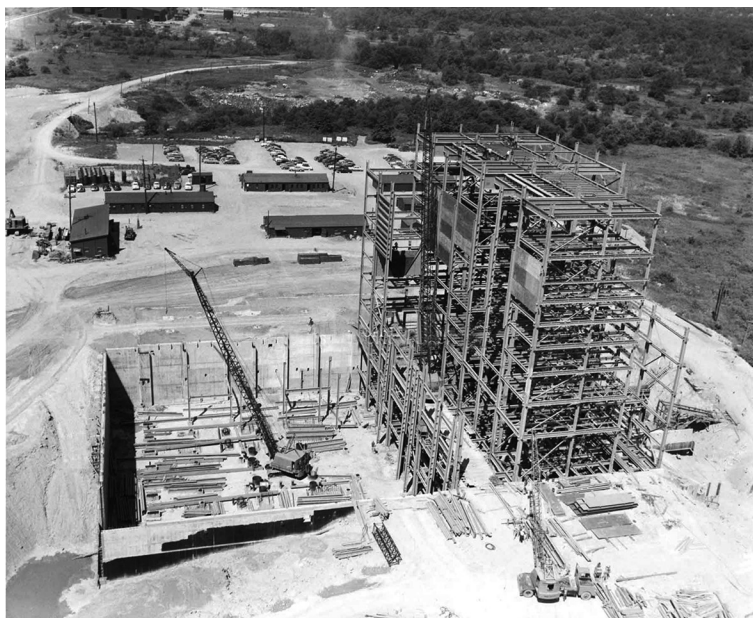
Ohio Edison Company—1047 Belmont Avenue. The first boiler was ignited in Ohio Edison Company's Niles Power Plant on December 19, 1953. The plant was located on a 130 acre site along the banks of the Mahoning River on Belmont Avenue. The structure itself covers an area of about 166 by 220 feet in order to accommodate the huge boilers at the plant. The original structure rose to a height of a 13 story building with two 300 foot high stacks towering over the plant.

Another Niles Landmark Disappears

Today's daily headlines tell of advances in gas, oil and even solar energy. But in 1953 the big news in Niles was the new Ohio Edison Power Plant to be constructed south of town on the banks of the Mahoning River which would be fired by coal.

This was to be the biggest construction project in the area in many years. Niles was chosen as the site by Ohio Edison for this plant due to the availability of water from the river and the proximity of railroads for delivering the vast amounts of coal that would be needed for the generators. Nearby residential, commercial and industrial growth also influenced the decision.

Originally the plans were for a single 106,000 kilowatt generating unit. However even before construction began at the over 100 acre site, Edison president *Walter H. Sammis* announced a second unit would be added thus doubling the output of the facility. He cited the Korean situation and the nation's rearmament program as reasons. This resulted in a 12 story structure and two 300 foot high stacks being built to accommodate the generators and boilers. The cost was over \$35,000,000.



Construction of the plant took almost 4 years.

What happened inside was a complex process. In order to produce the electricity, the coal had to be broken into 1/4 inch size pieces. Conveyors took the coal to the top of the plant and dumped it into bunkers which in turn took it through the automatic feeders where it was mixed with air and swirled in the cyclone boilers at 136 mph. and at temperatures of over 3000 degrees. The water turned to dry steam which drove the turbine blades and continued to the condensers underneath. There the river water cooled the steam and condensed it back to water to be returned to the boilers. The generator acted as an electro-magnet producing the electricity. The electricity that was produced went to the substation outside the plant where transformers increased the voltage and made it ready to be delivered to the surrounding communities.

The first boiler was fired on December 19, 1953. The headlines of the Niles Daily Times read "Ohio Edison Generator Switch Thrown Today". Each day 2500 tons of coal was used in operating the two generators while 200,000,000 gallons of water was pumped from the Mahoning River and cleanly returned to it. Over 900 men were employed in its construction.

The new electric power plant was officially dedicated in October of 1954. Among others the speakers included Ohio Edison's Walter H. Sammis as toastmaster and Niles Mayor *Edward P. Lenny*. *John T. Swartz* officially dedicated the plant since he had met Thomas Edison himself several times. This event was scheduled to coincide with the celebration of the 75th anniversary of Edison's invention of the incandescent light bulb. To signify the advances in electricity the ceremony started being lit with only gas lights and replicas of Edison's first electric lamps. This evolved to an ending with brilliant floodlights illuminating the new plant. A three day open house of the facility followed with at least 15,000 touring this new industry in Niles.

Now just as Edison's incandescent light bulb has been phased out in recent years in favor of more energy efficient types so has the the idea of electricity produced from coal. The Ohio Edison Power Plant no longer serves the community as it once did but its tall stacks still tower on the horizon as a reminder of its place in Niles history.

The plant and 400 foot smoke stack is demolished on Thursday, April 28, 2022.



"When the event finally came around 4:40 p.m., a crowd of approximately 200 people had gathered on a hill at the dead end of Clearfield Avenue to watch the spectacle, while others watched from the bridge on Belmont Avenue and other spots around the township. The 400 foot smokestack at the former Ohio Edison power plant goes down Friday afternoon after a second blast from demolition company B&B Wrecking out of Cleveland".

<https://www.mahoningmatters.com/news/local/article260883262.html>

The plant operated first as Ohio Edison, then First Energy, then GenOn, and eventually NRG.