

## MAP DIRECTORY

**1. Patterson Family Plot** - The Pattersons owned and operated Paris Candy, opened in 1910 by James Patterson (1891-1962) on the corner of Front and Main Streets. A second store was opened in 1926 at 220 E. Main Street and was run since 1936 by Patterson's son Theodore "Ted" (b. 1914) and his wife Harriett (1917-1987). The original store closed in 1951 and the second store, featuring mahogany booths, china table tops, Tiffany light fixtures, beveled French mirrors and hand-laid tile flooring closed in 1985.

**2. Drs. Robert** (d. 1965) and **Abby** (1879-1955) **Henderson** both worked at Pawating Hospital and together in one year delivered 75 percent of the babies born in Niles.

**3. Thayer Family Plot** - The Thayers have owned a jewelry store in Niles since 1909. The jewelry store has been in operation since 1864 when it was known as LaPiere and Micks. In 1890 the name changed to LaPiere Jewelers and continued under that name until 1909 when William A. Thayer (1874-1956) bought the store and changed the name to Thayer's. Thayer's is still in business today and was presented with a certificate from the Michigan Historical Society in 1979 acknowledging Thayer's as the third oldest jewelry business in Michigan.

**4. Knox Memorial** - Tallest mark in cemetery, approximately 30 feet tall.

**5. Ward Family Plot** - Montgomery Ward (1844-1913), inventor of the mail order industry, lived in Niles from 1852 to approximately 1862. He then moved to Chicago to start the business that would make him famous. A Ward retail store opened in Niles June 2, 1928, fifteen years after Montgomery Ward died. He himself is not buried in Silverbrook Cemetery, but his father, mother and one sister are buried in this plot.

**6. Ralph** (1870-1962) and **Mary** (1874-1969) **Ballard** lived on a fruit farm west of Niles and were avid Niles historians. Together they wrote several books about Niles, and school officials honored the Ballards for their community service by naming a school after them. Mr. and Mrs. Ballard were instrumental in founding the Fort St. Joseph Museum and donated several artifacts to the collection.

**7. Ezra Chilson** (1762-1838) was a veteran of the Revolutionary War. Although born in Rhode Island, Chilson served most of his time with Massachusetts regiments. After the war, Chilson joined the surge of migrants travelling west and ended his days in Niles.

**8. Beeson Family Plot** - The Beesons were among Niles' earliest residents. Jacob Beeson (d. 1885) came to the area in 1829, was elected Supervisor of Niles Township in 1832 and with his brother William (1809-1872), built the first mercantile warehouse in Niles. The old Beeson store on the corner of Front and Main later became Paris Candy Store in 1910 (see #1 Patterson Family). Lewis Beeson (1850-1924), son of William, was elected mayor of Niles in 1904. The Fort St. Joseph Museum has an extensive collection of his American Indian relics.

**9. Colonel Francis Quinn** (1827-1876) was born in Ireland and immigrated to Niles sometime before 1850. Because he was instrumental in raising volunteers for the Twelfth Michigan Infantry, and because of his political ties with Michigan's Governor Blair, Quinn was made colonel of the Michigan Twelfth, despite his complete lack of training or qualifications. The Michigan Twelfth was soon engaged in the Battle of Shiloh, during which poor leadership almost wiped out the battalion. Quinn was subsequently relieved of his duties by Governor Blair and ended his days in disgrace in Chicago.

**10. Fence in Tree** - This section of fence, which dates to the mid-1800s, is completely surrounded by living tree. The family plot of A.B. Staples was enclosed by fence at one point but most of the fence was taken down during the 1940s. By then this section of fence had already been incorporated into the tree. This curiosity was noted in Robert Ripley's Believe It or Not, a syndicated column in the 1930s.

**11. Joseph Albert Nolan** (1857-1921) was a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor. Nolan enlisted in the United States Army in September of 1899 at age 42. In 1900, while on patrol at Labao in the Philippines (during the Philippine Insurrection), his unit was attacked by Filipino "Insurgents." Nolan volunteered to get help and traveled approximately 22 miles through the forest with a Filipino guide. He returned with help just in time to rescue his unit. Nolan's Congressional Medal of Honor was issued March 14, 1902.

**12. Wells Family Underground Vault** - Seven burials, the last of which was in 1936, are entombed at this site.

**13. Finley Family Plot** - The Finley family has been in the Niles area since 1850 when Pasquel LaRue Finley arrived by wagon train in search of better farming and business opportunities. Pasquel, a white Frenchman who married a half-black woman named Sarah, was involved with the Underground Railroad and helped many blacks escape to freedom in Canada. Two of Pasquel's sons, Edward and Richard, fought with the Michigan Volunteer Colored Army in the Civil War.

**14. Tyler Family Vault** - The Tyler Refrigeration Corporation of Niles began in 1927 when Jerry Tyler, his wife and two employees manufactured two types of metal display stands. The company prospered into a huge industry that makes commercial refrigeration units even to this day. Jerry Tyler, his wife Mary and son Michael were killed in a Chicago hotel fire in 1946. Other members of the Tyler family are buried outside near the vault.

**15. Anna Eissner** (1856-1875) died in a shipwreck off Scilly Island, England. The above ground vault at one time could be opened by family members who wished to visit the inner crypt, but vandals who damaged the vault caused cemetery officials to cement the lid closed.

**16. Masonic Lot** - Available to any Masonic Lodge member. As yet, no member is buried in the lot.

**17. Dodge-Casto Family Plot** - John and Horace Dodge, co-founders of the Dodge Automobile Company, were born and raised in Niles. Their mother's maiden name was Casto. John and Horace are not buried here, but their parents rest at this site.

**18. Major Eli A. Griffin** (1833-1864) was a member of the 19th Michigan and served under General William T. Sherman in the Civil War. Major Griffin died in the Battle of Lost Mountain, Georgia. The entire lot consists of Griffin graves, placed in a circle.

**19. Isaac Gray** (1794-1830) was born in Nottingham, England and came to Niles in 1828, making him one of the first settlers in the area. Gray ran a general store and was appointed postmaster in the same year he died. Gray's grave is the oldest in the Silverbrook Cemetery.

**20. French Family Plot** - The Frenches have been in the paper making business since the 1870s, and the French Paper Company, which is still in operation today, is the oldest family owned business in Niles.

**21. Double Monument: William Graves** (1809-1881) came to Niles in 1835 and served as its president in 1845, mayor in 1875 and two terms as treasurer. Graves served one term as Michigan's Secretary of State from 1853 to 1854. **Henry A. Morrow** (1829-1891) raised a regiment of volunteers, the 24th Michigan Infantry, in 1862 and, after participating in the Battle of Gettysburg, was promoted to Brigadier. Morrow climbed the ranks throughout his military career and ranked General by the time of his death. Morrow married Bell Graves, the daughter of the above mentioned William Graves.

**22. Lacey Family Plot** - Ephraim Lacey (1768-1835) and his sons Elijah (d.1862) and Obed (1810-1844) were among the first settlers to locate in Niles. The village was laid out in 1829 by the Laceys, William Justice and Samuel Walling and named by Obed. Elijah was involved in politics and in 1859 became the first mayor of the city of Niles. The Lacey graves were moved in 1894 to Silverbrook Cemetery from the Presbyterian Church graveyard on 5th Street.

**23. Chapin Family Plot** - Henry A. Chapin (1813-1898) was an iron ore baron, and in 1882 built the Chapin mansion and carriage house which are now the Niles City Hall and the Fort St. Joseph Museum.

**24. Receiving Vault** - This small building stored bodies over the winter until the ground thawed enough for burial.

**25. Hunter Family Plot** - Henry (1851-1903) and Lemont (no dates) Hunter were brothers and co-founders of the Hunter Ice Company, formed in 1898. The brothers harvested ice from Barron Lake, renown for its purity. The company supplied ice to the Michigan Central Railroad for its passenger and freight service. Hunter Ice was run by Lemont after his brother's death and then passed on to his children Edward and Irma. The company was sold in 1924.

**26. Orville Coolidge** (1839-1918) was a Berrien County lawyer and served three terms as circuit court judge. He also served as mayor of Niles in 1890. Coolidge was the author of *The Twentieth Century History of Berrien County*, published in 1906.

**27. Lardner Family Plot** - Ring Lardner (1885-1933), born and raised in Niles, was one of the most famous writers of his time. Lardner started his career as a sports writer in Chicago and later wrote short stories based on the characters he met in baseball. Although Ring himself is not buried in Silverbrook Cemetery, his father Henry (1839-1914), mother Lena (1844-1918), and sister Lena (1875-1960) are buried in this plot.

**28. James Glen** (1814-1876) was one of the engineers who designed the Canadian Sault St. Marie locks. Glen drew the first map of Silverbrook Cemetery, which dates 1865.

**29. Dr. Evan Bonine** (1821-1892) moved to Niles in 1858 and held many political positions, including mayor, postmaster and state representative. During the Civil War Bonine was division surgeon of the Third Division of the Ninth Army Corps. Evan went to California in 1849 to take part in the gold rush and kept an account of his travels, a transcription of which is on file at the Fort St. Joseph Museum.

**30. Dagmar Stegmann** (1904-1925) was born in Copenhagen, Denmark and came to the U.S. to perform stunts from airplanes. While performing a routine exhibition in Niles, her equipment failed and Stegmann was caught hanging from one wing. The pilot flew over Barron Lake and instructed her to cut loose and fall into the lake. Stegmann misjudged the time and distance and cut loose over 200 feet above the water, plunging headfirst into the lake. She died from injuries sustained on impact one hour later.

**31. Original Baby Plot**, closed c. 1955. The infant mortality rate was much higher one hundred, even fifty years ago. Baby plots such as these were designed to conserve space rather than use a full sized lot.

**32. American Indian Reburial Mound** - American Indians of this region periodically used this area to rebury their ancestors' bones that have been excavated over the years.

**33. Veterans' Plot** - To honor America's heroes, this plot has been designated for our country's veterans. Each Memorial Day, United States flags are flown from the white poles during the ceremony and parade.

**34. Silverbrook Abbey** was built in 1926. This mausoleum holds many people who have contributed significantly to the history of Niles. Below mentions but a few. **William F. Harrah** (1871-1959) joined the National Wire Cloth Company of Niles in 1903. Ten years later the company had grown into the National-Standard Company, the international leader in the manufacture of wire, fabricated metal and industrial products. **Rudolph F. Kompass** (d. 1957) was co-founder of Kompass & Stoll Company, furniture manufactures. Kompass was born in Canada and was of German heritage. He met his partner Matthew Stoll in Grand Rapids where both were learning the furniture business. Kompass & Stoll made furniture until 1900 when they began making kitchen cabinets. **Dr. Fred Bonine** (1863-1941) was a world famous eye doctor. His father Evan Bonine was a surgeon in the Civil War. Dr. Fred treated hundreds of patients a day (his record was over 500), and a special train left daily from Chicago just to bring Dr. Bonine's patients to Niles.

**35. Plym Family Plot** - Francis J. Plym (d. 1940) founded the Kawneer company in 1906 in Kansas City and moved the business to Niles in 1907. Plym was issued patents for inventions which significantly contributed to the development of metal store fronts. Plym's son Lawrence (d. 1993) continued the business after his father's death. Francis' wife Jennie (d. 1971) was also very involved in philanthropy and gave money for the Niles Community Library. She wrote several booklets on the history of Niles which are still available at the Fort St. Joseph Museum. The Plyms gave money for, among other things, a public park, improvement of the Pawating hospital, scholarships, the library, and Fernwood Nature Center.

**36. Baby Plot**, opened c. 1955.

**37. Chime Tower** was built in 1936. Records played in the office would broadcast over speakers in the tower during funerals.

**38. Walter** (d. 1985) and **Kay** (1897-1988) **Boydston** founded the Fernwood Gardens. The property was originally their private residence, but in 1963 the Boydstons sold the property to the Plyms. Fernwood became incorporated as a non-profit education center, and Mrs. Boydston became its first director. Mrs. Boydston continued the planting she had started in 1942, and became a specialist in the field of ferns.

**All this information, and much more, is available at the Fort St. Joseph Museum in exhibits and research files.**