



HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Knowing where you've been, helps you see where you're going

A Periodic Publication of the North Baltimore Ohio Area Historical Society

April 2012

Eagles Grant Will Fund Museum Records Improvement



Left to right: Chuck Harden, Rick Van Mooy, NBOAHS President Tom Boltz, Ed Richmond, Benny Kerr, Bruce Frankhart, Harley Caldwell, Jim Allison, Gary Bretz and Jay Harden. Photo Courtesy of TheNBXpress.com.

The Society thanks the North Baltimore Fraternal Order of Eagles # 2633 John W. Sterling Aerie for their very generous \$2,500 grant. The Society will use the funds to acquire the "PastPerfect" museum software program, which will enhance our ability to manage our collection of photographs, documents, and artifacts. PastPerfect is used by small- and medium-sized museums throughout the US and is recognized as the standard for collection management. The system will create a computerized record for each item in our collection which will contain a description of the item, its origin and significance, and its location in the museum. Once the program is implemented, the Society's records will be searchable and, as a result, much more useful for researchers, students, museum volunteers, and donors wanting to know what has happened to their donations. The Eagle's generosity, along with those of many other donors, has greatly improved the Society's ability to preserve North Baltimore's rich and colorful history.

NBOAHS Welcomes Members

The Society welcomes new members, solicits their input, and encourages them to attend Board meetings—usually held at 7pm on the first Thursday of each month. Members can also help with tasks such as managing records, greeting visitors, or helping with displays. Please use the form at the end of this newsletter to renew or apply for membership. Annual memberships expire as of Dec. 31.

The Society thanks the North Baltimore American Legion Post 539 for their very generous \$1,000 grant, which is being used to fund several new displays at the History Center. One will be installation of the old North Baltimore Post Office panels in the History Center garage. These wood panels date from the early 1900s and were used in several post office locations along North Main Street. When the current Post Office building at 115 East Broadway was erected in the mid 1950s, the panels were no longer needed. Bonnie Knaggs, former NBOAHS president, obtained the panels for the Society in the 1990s.

Legion members Jim Kuhlman and Sam Bretz will renovate and assemble the old Post Office panels



In the above circa 1905 photo, individual post boxes are to the left of the clerk's window.

France Stone Photographs Donated

The North Baltimore Ohio Area Historical Society wishes to thank Eugene Roe of Bowling green for his recent donation of historical photographs and documents related to the France Stone Company operations in North Baltimore. Mr. Roe was a France employee for many years. The photographs and documents pertain to the years from about 1910 to 1970 and add to our knowledge of this important local industry. See the article below for more on the significance of Mr. Roe's gift.

Events at the History Center

- April 24, 11 am, Crossroads Quilt Club
- April 25, 2:45 – 3:30pm, NB Library Children's Group
- May 3, 7 pm, NBOAHS Board Meeting

Did Steam Shovel Used to Construct Panama Canal End Up In North Baltimore?

Evidence suggests that a large Bucyrus steam shovel used to build the Panama Canal—or one just like it—was subsequently used for about 30 years in North Baltimore. According to Eugene Roe, a former North Baltimore resident and plant manager, the France Stone Company bought a large steam shovel from the Panama Canal Company, shortly after the canal was completed in 1914, and moved it to North Baltimore.

When the US Government began to construct the original canal in 1904, it purchased the most modern steam shovels of the day. According to many sources, these included the 95-ton Bucyrus Steam Shovel manufactured by the Bucyrus Steam Shovel Company. (The Bucyrus Company was founded in Bucyrus, Ohio, but moved to South Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1893.) There is a famous photo of President Theodore Roosevelt operating one of these steam shovels during his 1906 inspection trip to the canal construction site.



This Bucyrus steam shovel, similar to the one used in North Baltimore, is working on the Calebra Cut—one of the most difficult segments of the canal—circa 1910.

After the canal was completed in 1914, the huge steam shovels were no longer needed, and, according to canal historians, the Panama Canal Company sold them and other construction equipment to mining companies throughout the United States. According to Mr. Roe, the France Stone Company purchased 19 of these shovels for use in its quarries in Ohio and Michigan. It is likely that one of them was sent to North Baltimore. The 1976 History of North Baltimore states that France bought the shovel new but does not cite a source for this information. In either case, a Bucyrus shovel like those used in Panama was a major component of the local quarry's operations for over twenty years until it was scrapped sometime in the 1940s.



In this circa 1918 photograph, the Bucyrus Crane is sitting on the east side of the stone crusher building at the France Stone Company's North Baltimore Quarry. The Crusher building was torn down in the 1980s.



The two men standing beside the scoop provide some perspective on the size of the equipment. The North Baltimore crusher building is just to the left of the crane.

(More photos on next page.)



The Bucyrus steam shovel in operation along the north wall of the North Baltimore quarry. At the France quarry, the Bucyrus steam shovel was used until the 1940s when it was replaced by more modern equipment.



In this August 1949 aerial view, the Bucyrus shovel was rusting away in the scrap yard just west of the France Stone Company's maintenance building. The maintenance building is still standing in 2012, but the shovel was cut up for scrap metal sometime in the early 1950s.

The North Baltimore Ohio Area Historical Society

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2012 Membership Application

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All membership fees and donations are tax deductible.

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