

**Historical Marker - L0475 - The Chapin House / Henry Austin Chapin (Marker ID#:L0475)**



**Front - Title/Description**

***The Chapin House***

This Queen Anne style house, completed in 1884, was the Henry A. Chapin family home until 1902. In 1932 when the city of Niles bought the property at auction for three hundred dollars, the Chapin grandchildren stipulated that it be used only for civic purposes. Now serving as the Niles City Hall, the house is built of local brick and terra cotta tile. The interior is ornamented with leaded glass windows and transoms, handcarved woodwork, and stenciled ceilings. In 1939 the Works Progress Administration joined the carriage house to another outbuilding, thus creating the Fort St. Joseph Museum structure. The museum holds over ten thousand items, including Fort St. Joseph and Potawatomi Indian artifacts, local memorabilia, and a collection of original drawings by Chief Sitting Bull.

**Significant Date:**

Industry and Invention (1875-1915)

**Registry Year:** 1976    **Erected Date:** 1978

**Marker Location**

**Address:** 508 East Main Street

**City:** Niles

**State:** MI    **ZipCode:**

**County:** Berrien

**Township:** Niles

**Lat:** 41.82981100 / **Long:** -86.25375000

**Web URL:**

**Back - Title/Description**

***Henry Austin Chapin***

Henry A. Chapin (1813 1898) spent most of his early life in Ohio. He married Ruby N. Nooney in 1836 and settled in Edwardsburg, Michigan. In 1846 Chapin and S. S. Griffin opened the first general store in Niles. With his son Charles, Henry A. later established an insurance and loan agency. Their firm had interests in nearby paper mills and electric companies, and real estate in Alabama, Illinois, and Michigan. The bulk of the family capital came from the discovery of iron ore in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The Chapin Mine, near Iron Mountain, began operations in 1879. "Mr. H. A.," as he was known, received up to three hundred thousand dollars yearly in royalties from the mine. Owing to the Great Depression, the Chapin Mine closed in 1934, after fifty five years of continuous production.