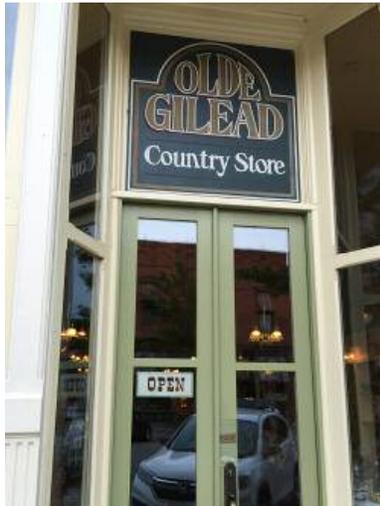


JUN 21



## GRAND RAPIDS, OHIO

Leaving Hamilton, we set off for Grand Rapids, Ohio, to have lunch and visit my Florida neighbor. Grand Rapids is just a few miles east of highway 109 which becomes M52 in Michigan and goes right into Adrian! Our plans were delayed by over an hour due to something major that was happening north of Dayton on the I75 freeway. I never found out what happened, but traffic was stopped for probably about 10 miles. It took an hour to drive .9 miles to the nearest exit where we could take the back way to Grand Rapids. We finally made it, had a nice lunch and visit, and were treated to a history tour of the town and surrounding area.

Grand Rapids is a village in Wood County along the Maumee River.

Grand Rapids was originally called Gilead (see photo of the Olde Gilead Country Store), and under the latter name was platted in 1833. A post office called Gilead was established in 1837, and the name was changed to Grand Rapids in 1868. The village was incorporated in 1885.

Visitors can step back in time to the 1870s at Providence Metropark and board The Volunteer, an authentic 1800s, mule-drawn canal boat, for a trip along a restored stretch of the original Miami and Erie Canal. The ride represents life on the canal as it was experienced 150 years ago. The boat passes through one of the original canal locks in front of the historic Isaac Ludwig Mill and Interpretive Center, a restored and working canal-era sawmill and grist mill.

The fall season brings color tours to the river valley and the very successful Applebutter Fest.

At least two U.S. Presidents and one of the nation's preeminent explorers have spent time near the village. Future President William Henry Harrison passed through the north side of the village with Gen. Anthony Wayne's forces on their way to the Battle of Fallen Timbers. Serving with Harrison was William Clark, who several months later would meet Meriwether Lewis, and form the friendship that would be the basis of their expedition to the Pacific Ocean.

President Rutherford B. Hayes owned a hunting lodge on the north side of the Maumee River.



## THE MIAMI-ERIE CANAL - GRAND RAPIDS, OHIO

The Miami and Erie Canal was a canal in Ohio that ran about 274 miles from Cincinnati, Ohio to Toledo to create a water route from the Ohio River to Lake Erie. Construction on the canal began in 1825 and was completed in 1845 at a cost to the state government of \$8,062,680.07.

At its peak, it included 19 aqueducts, three guard locks, 103 canal locks, multiple feeder canals, and a few man-made water reservoirs. The canal climbed 395 feet above Lake Erie and 513 feet above the Ohio River to reach a topographical peak called the Loramie Summit, which extended 19 miles between New Bremen, Ohio to lock 1-S in Lockington, north of Piqua, Ohio. Boats up to 80 feet long were towed along the canal by mules, horses, or oxen walking on a prepared towpath along the bank, at a rate of four to five miles per hour.

Due to competition from railroads, which began to be built in the area in the 1850s, the commercial use of the canal gradually declined during the late 19th century. It was permanently abandoned for commercial use in 1913 after being damaged by a historic flood. Only a small fraction of the canal survives today, along with its towpath and locks.

It's interesting to see the towpath and imagine what life was like all those years ago.



### LABINO PARK: DOMINICK LABINO - FAMOUS RESIDENT OF GRAND RAPIDS, OHIO

Grand Rapids had a famous resident: Dominick Labino. Being a lover of all things glass, especially the vehicle hood ornaments made by Rene Lalique, Harvey Littleton's works at the Toledo Museum of Art, the "dress" sculptures of Karen LaMonte, and everything by Dale Chihuly, Mr. Labino's story was of great interest to me and I was happy to learn about him.

Dominick Labino (1910–1987) was an internationally known scientist, inventor, artist and master craftsman in glass. Labino's art works in glass are in the permanent collections of more than 100 museums throughout the world. Labino held over 60 glass-oriented patents in the United States.

Dominick Labino was trained as an engineer at the Carnegie Institute of Technology and began his professional career at Owens-Illinois, Inc., a glass manufacturing plant in Clarion, Pennsylvania.

In 1944, Dominick left Owens-Illinois to pursue the fiber glass industry with long-time business partner and Executive VP of I-O, Randolph H Barnard. Barnard formed Glass Fibers, Inc. in Toledo, Labino was the head of Research and Development. In 1958, Johns-Manville acquired Glass Fibers, Inc., creating Johns-Manville's modern fiber glass division. Labino stayed on as Vice President and Director of Research and development until his retirement in 1965.

Labino continued to serve as a research consultant until 1975. Labino was an innovator in the processes and machines used in forming glass fibers. Three of his inventions employing fiberglass were used in the Gemini and Apollo spacecraft to insulate them against extreme temperatures.

According to art historian Martha Drexler Lynn, "Labino had a life-long love of tools, inventing and problem-solving which he coupled with a passion for artistic endeavors." His interest in blowing glass began in the 1930s, when he ran the Owens-Illinois milk bottling plant. There he

had a laboratory in which he created glass formulas. In 1940, his predecessor at the plant, Ben Alderson, showed Labino how to blow glass. Labino later blew glass as a hobby; at Johns-Manville he built a home glass furnace at which to pursue the craft. An early project was a glass paperweight that he created in 1958 for a friend's retirement. By 1960 he had melted a batch of glass and created a primitive blowpipe.

In 1963 Labino set up his own glass studio on his farm near Grand Rapids, Ohio. He designed glass-blowing and finishing tools; built his own furnaces and annealing ovens; and began freehand blowing with molten glass. Through his research and development of new technologies, like the fusing of colors, he provided artists with the methods and tools to create glass as art in their own studios, no longer making it necessary to involve glass factories in their creative process.

Labino opened his studio under the auspices of the Toledo Museum of Art School of Design.

Labino always signed each of his art glass pieces "Labino," and dated with the month and year (for example: "5/69"), from the smallest and least complex in design and formula, to the largest and most intricate. It was a point of great pride for the designer.

Now I'm wondering if I have seen the glass work of Dominick Labino...I will surely be on the lookout for it!