

VALLEY HISTORIAN

Greater Monessen Historical Society

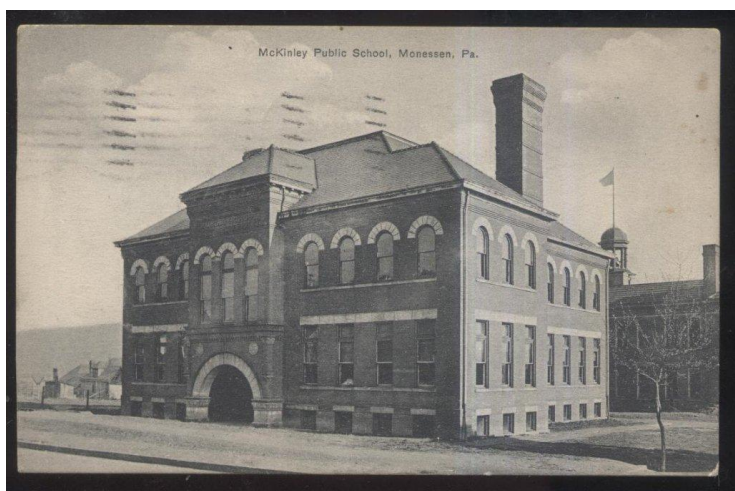
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Vol.16 Issue 4 Autumn 2016 (NOVEMBER)



McKinley Elementary School & Jefferson High School.
See last page for Ruth Stern Schrag's memories of the McKinley Building and other special places.

Annual Membership Drive and Fund Campaign

As the calendar year winds down, the annual membership drive and fund campaign kicks into gear. With over five hundred members, the Greater Monessen Historical Society continues to grow after twenty-one years of preserving the industrial and ethnic history of the area. Membership is fifteen dollars a calendar year for an individual, twenty dollars for a family and fifty dollars for a business.

Extra donations are needed for the general operating budget, the building fund or the endowment. While the outside of the Museum Annex has been completed, the interior is still gutted and awaiting complete renovations. Heating, cooling, plumbing, and electrical work is needed. Walls need to be

rebuilt. Floors and ceilings need redone. A back staircase must be installed to meet codes for occupancy. The basement (former speakeasy) needs extensive work. Please be generous! We appreciate your donations in past years and have put them to good use. The Annex will house a permanent Monessen exhibit and provide room for events, as well as space for displaying pieces of art.

Thank You so much!

The following are a list of individuals, businesses and organizations that stepped forward and provided sponsorship of our Monessen Founders Day Weekend of Living History. We appreciate each and every one of them. Please let them know that you too appreciate their teaming with GMHS to support a great event.

William Henry Donner Benefactors –

Dr. Martin and Madeline Dudas

Greyhound League –

Adelene “Lena” Alvarez

Black and White Society –

Douglas Education Center

Andy Dzurinko, CLU

Valley 1st Community Federal Credit Union

Mon-Valley Health Resources, Inc.

PA Rep. R. Ted Harhai

U.S. Congressman Bill Shuster

George Christy

General Joseph Yakovac, Ret.

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Great Dane Realty, Inc.

Abbott Chiropractic

Monessen Knights of Columbus #954

Frank's Service Garage Inc.

Highway Appliance

St. Vincent DePaul Society

First Catholic Slovak Ladies Assoc.

Wm. Hans Contracting

Michael Mermigas, DMD

Dalfonso Billick Funeral Home

Joseph Nursery & Landscaping



**Roman Catholic Church
Consolidation Exhibit**

The Autumn Exhibit at the Heritage Museum looks at the five former ethnic Roman Catholic churches of the city, which were consolidated together to form the Epiphany of the Lord Church twenty-five years ago. Monessen's Catholic heritage goes back to 1900 with the founding of St. Leonard's Church, which was built to serve the Irish Catholic population of the new borough. The other churches were: Most Holy Name of Jesus (Slovak), St. Cajetan (Italian), St. Hyacinth (Polish) and St. Anthony (Croatian). If anyone has photos of church events and parishioners, please bring them to the Museum during regular business hours or send scans to: monessen@verizon.net.



Make **change** happen,
volunteer!



Look Ahead: Spring 2017 Exhibit

The spring 2017 exhibit will highlight the Orthodox churches with their beautiful architecture, stained glass windows, history and icons. The exhibit will open in March of 2017.

One Hundred Years ago in the newspapers November, 1916 – January, 1917

A fire, believed to be ignited by mice, badly damaged the basement of the McKinley Elementary School. It was discovered by the janitor when he arrived for work. (11-17-1916) Daily Independent

The Monessen School Board awarded a contract for \$48,500 to August Weber & Company, for the construction of an annex to the Iowa Elementary School. (11-17-1916) Daily Independent

The Polish citizens of Monessen held a parade on Schoonmaker, followed by a program at the Star Theatre with speakers and song to commemorate the Uprising of 1830 against the Russian Czar. (11-27-1916) Daily Independent

Twelve wells along Seneca Street were checked and found to be infected with typhoid fever germs. They were ordered to be permanently sealed, as the sewage runs from the top of the surrounding hill. (12-08-1916) Monessen News

The roof of the Iowa Elementary School caught fire from a defective flu forcing the evacuation of nearly five hundred pupils. (12-11-1916) Daily Independent

The Salvation Army will dedicate their new home at 326 Donner Avenue, which was purchased at a cost of \$6000. (12-16-1916) Daily Independent

Potter & McCune, a wholesale grocery business, has leased the J. A. Hagerson Feed Store, at Eighth and Donner. (12-19-1916) Monessen News

The Monessen Opera House was purchased by the Italian Beneficial Society for \$15,000. (12-20-1916) Daily Independent

The Monessen Board of Trade has purchased a \$15.00 Christmas tree, which will be erected on Donner Avenue. Monessen Plumbing and Electric Co. will string lights on the tree, and the Westmoreland Lumber Company will construct a large star for the top. The decorations are from the Monessen Federation of Women's Clubs. (12-22-1916) Monessen News

George Nash, the Superintendent of the Pittsburgh Steel Company, presented a check in his wife's name to pay off the \$1000 debt of the Monessen Baptist Church. (12-28-1916) Daily Independent

The Manown Building, on Seventh Street, will be torn down to make room for the new Post Office building. (01-16-1917) Daily Independent

The Italian Political Society will dedicate their new \$12,500 addition at Fourth Street and Knox Avenue. (01-19-1917) Monessen News

Autumn and early Winter Weddings and Engagements of 1916-1917

Ben Dregella, age 18, and Miss Margaret Weltz, age 16, eloped to Wellsburg, West Virginia, on October 30, 1916. The groom is employed at Pittsburgh Steel. (11-03-1916) Monessen News

John P. Fitzgerald, of Dunlevy, and Miss Mary A. Bezy, of Charleroi, got a marriage license on November 6, 1917. (11-07-1916) Monessen News

Miss Hazel McClure, of Belle Vernon, and George Nus, of Monongahela, were married in Homestead on November 6, 1916. The groom is a machinist at the

Diamond Machine Co. in Black Diamond. (11-07-1916)
Daily Independent

Walter Clay O'Neal, of Monessen, married Miss Helen Estella Smith in Cumberland, Maryland, on November 8, 1916. The groom is employed at the Pittsburgh Steel Co. (11-09-1916) Daily Independent

Frank Mandarino and Lena Fair, of Monessen, received a marriage license. (11-10-1916) Monessen News

Lewis Williams and Miss Nathina Niseby, both of Monessen, received a marriage license in Greensburg. (11-14-1916) Daily Independent

John C. Connor and Miss Clara Robinson, both of Gibsonton, obtained a marriage license in Greensburg on November 13, 1916. (11-14-1916) Daily Independent

Edna Eleanor Waltner, formerly of Monessen is engaged to Rev. Alfred C. Huth. Their wedding will be in the spring. (11-14-1916) Monessen News

Rank Cutara, of Sharpsburg, and Miss Vincenza Parnella, of Monessen obtained a marriage license. (11-14-1916) Monessen News

Miss Kathryn Davis married J. M. White, of Cleveland, on November 14, 1916. (11-14-1916) Monessen News

Cora Carney, of Monessen, filed for divorce from John V. Carney. They were wed on June 1, 1903. (11-15-1916) Daily Independent

Biddy "Shorty" Long, of the Pittsburgh Steel Co. office, supposedly eloped to Fairchance, West Virginia, on November 12, 1916 to marry Miss Sweeny. (11-17-1916) Monessen News

Miss Iva Peifer is engaged to Adam Horn. (11-22-1916) Daily Independent

Miss Bertha Sampson is engaged to John Lear. (11-22-1916) Daily Independent

Miss Elsie Larson is engaged to Eric Peterson. (11-22-1916) Daily Independent

Peter Kachmar and Miss Mary Waroniak, both of Monessen, were issued a marriage license. (11-24-1916) Monessen News

Gerhead Laata and Miss Aurora Dolek, both of Monessen, received a marriage license. (11-24-1916) Monessen News

Constantinos Triantafillis and Angeliki Chryssopoulon, both of Monessen, obtained a marriage license. (11-28-1916) Monessen News

Luigi Carpino and Rose Calabrese, both of Monessen, were issued a marriage license. (11-28-1916) Monessen News

Dr. I. J. Schurgot and Miss Helen Stahlnecker, of 684 McKee Avenue, eloped on October 6, 1916 and were wed in Wellsburg, West Virginia. (12-01-1916) Daily Independent

Miss Gladys Vaughn and Harry Ambrose Carney, both of Monessen, were married on Thanksgiving at St. Leonard's Catholic Church. The groom works at Pittsburgh Steel. (12-02-1916) Daily Independent

Robert McKelvie, of Monessen, and Miss Ruth E. Johnson, of Ligonier, received a marriage license. (12-16-1916) Daily Independent

Miss Goldie E. Dessellems and Loar S. Spielman, of North Charleroi, were married. (12-16-1916) Daily Independent

Miss Mary Strickler, of Vanderbilt, and Edward Staudenmayer, formerly of Monessen, were married on December 20, 1916. (12-22-1916) Daily Independent

Floyd Grady, of the Page Woven Wire Fence Company, left on December 22, 1916 for Atlanta, Georgia, to supposedly get married. (12-23-1916) Daily Independent

Miss Martha Mitchell, of McKee Avenue, and Clair Emler, of Donora, eloped to Cumberland, Maryland, on December 23, 1916. (12-26-1916) Monessen News

Miss May Barth, of Washington Avenue, and Charles Warren Kinder, of Charleroi, got married on Christmas Day. (12-27-1916) Daily Independent

Ray Leeper, of Newcastle, Delaware, and Miss Margaret Bainbridge, of Webster received a marriage license. (12-27-1916) Daily Independent

Miss Gertrude Burwell and John J. Liston were married on December 28, 1916, at St. Leonard's Catholic Church. (12-28-1916) Daily Independent

Mrs. James E. Neill, formerly of Fifth and McKee, filed for divorce from James E. Neill, of 472 Donner Avenue. (12-29-1916) Monessen News

Miss Celia Weingarten will marry Louis Altberger on December 31, 1916. (12-29-1916) Monessen News

Samuel E. Endress and Miss Frances Sena Mosier, of Crest Avenue, Charleroi, were married on Christmas. They will live in Seattle. (12-29-1916) Monessen News

Robert McKelvie, machinist at the Tube Mill, married Miss Ruth Johnson. (12-29-1916) Monessen News

Miss Thelma Celeste, of Richmond, Virginia, and John Hopkins Ellenberger, the Pittsburgh Steel electrician, were married. They met when the groom vacationed in Richmond two years ago. (12-30-1916) Daily Independent

Jacklo Maunerksela and Miss Marie Sofia Sippola, both of Monessen, received a marriage license. (01-02-1917) Monessen News

Mary Eckersburg, of West Newton, filed for divorce from Frederick Eckersburg, of Homestead. (01-03-1917) Daily Independent

Miss Mabel Wernko and George Clark, both of Charleroi, got married on January 3, 1917 at St. Jerome's Catholic Church. The bride is a pianist and organist at the Coyle Theatre. The groom is a salesman at Teitlebaun's Store. (01-04-1917) Daily Independent

Miss Mayme Boyd and Leslie Horn were wed on January 06, 1917. (01-08-1917) Daily Independent

Steve Gambal and Miss Tressa Tesach, obtained a marriage license. (01-09-1917) Monessen News

Miss Frances Borzykowska, of Pittsburgh, and Joseph Cetnarowski, of Monessen, were married on January 8, 1917. J. Gladys was the best man. (01-09-1917) Daily Independent

Tony Szykarczuk and Miss Julia Kadzia got a marriage license. (01-12-1916) Monessen News

Bill Alfonso and Miss Conattira Dastolfo received a marriage license. (01-12-1917) Monessen News

John Michoilsky and Miss Marie Kwalek applied for a marriage license. (01-12-1917) Monessen News

Miss Olga Lupri, of Dunlevy, and Emmett Chechi, of Monessen, were married on January 11, 1917. The groom works in the Tin Mill. (01-12-1917) Daily Independent

George Grimsley, formerly of Monessen, and Miss Minnie E. Herman got married on December 16, 1916. (01-13-1917) Daily Independent

Peter Garber, of Monessen, and Miss Mary Drotos, of Donora, received a marriage license, in Greensburg, on January 12, 1917. (01-15-1917) Daily Independent

Ellen Crispen Neil granted a divorce in Washington, PA, from James Neil. (01-15-1917) Daily Independent

Frank Jaukowsky and Miss Helen Szelonz received a marriage license. (01-16-1917) Monessen News

Miss Flo Jean McDowell, of Connellsville, and Archibald W. Wertz, of Waynesburg, obtained a marriage license. (01-16-1917) Daily Independent

John Yobuck and Miss Frances Yenchih received a marriage license. (01-19-1917) Monessen News

Josef Bojonek and Mary Jryer received a marriage license. (01-19-1917) Monessen News

Frank Jankowski and Miss Helen Zelouz obtained a marriage license. (01-19-1917) Monessen News

Tony Szykarczuk and Miss Julia Kadzia applied for a marriage license. (01-19-1917) Monessen News

Miss Hazel Wolfe and Bert Larson, of Rostraver Township, got married on January 17, 1917. They will live at 59 Elm Avenue, Donora. (01-19-1917) Daily Independent

Miss Margaret Casson is engaged to Daniel Brown, both of Iron City. (01-23-1917) Monessen News

Albert Martin and Miss Clementine Dandy have a marriage license. (01-26-1917) Monessen News

John Gombos and Miss Susan Hutz, both of Monessen, obtained a marriage license, in Greensburg, on January 26, 1917. (01-29-1917) Daily Independent

Miss Gladys Narey and Ab Austin, both of Monessen, are to marry in the next few weeks. (01-30-1917) Daily Independent

Anna M. Elliott, of Pittsburgh, and John H. Allen, of Monessen, received a marriage license in Pittsburgh, on January 29, 1917. (01-30-1917) Daily Independent

Late Autumn and Early Winter Births of 1916-1917

Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Robert, of Reed Avenue, had a son on October 30, 1916. (11-03-1916) Monessen News

Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Peagan, of McKee Avenue, had a son on November 4, 1916. (11-07-1916) Monessen News

Mr. and Mrs. Knoll, of Chestnut Street, had a twelve pound baby boy. (11-09-1916) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Adam Bloom, of Smithton, had an eight pound baby girl. (11-10-1916) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Elder Eakman, of Grant Avenue, had an eight pound baby boy. (11-20-1916) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Harvey, of Forest Street, had a baby boy on November 20, 1916. (11-21-1916) Monessen News

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Schneider, of Smithton, had an eight pound baby girl. (11-24-1916) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Hawkins, of Eighth and Donner, had a baby girl. (11-24-1916) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Miller, of Schoonmaker, had a baby girl on December 1, 1916. (12-01-1916) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. William Graeser, formerly of Monessen, had a son on December 4, 1916. (12-05-1916) Monessen News

Dr. and Mrs. I. J. Israel, of Donner Avenue, had a baby girl on December 4, 1916. (12-05-1916) Monessen News

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Foster had a baby boy on December 08, 1916. (12-11-1916) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Ditty had a baby girl on December 20, 1916. (12-20-1916) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. J.D. Sherrell had a son. (12-27-1916) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Nicolas, of Luce Avenue, had a baby boy on December 23, 1916. (12-29-1916) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Jones, of Schoonmaker Avenue, had a baby girl on December 31, 1916. (01-02-1917) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. James Worells, of 432 Clarendon Avenue, had a ten pound baby girl on December 31, 1916. (01-02-1917) Monessen News

Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Jeanetto, of 434 Knox Avenue, had a baby boy. (01-05-1917) Monessen News

Dave Seder and his wife, of Donner Avenue, had a ten pound baby boy on January 11, 1917. (01-12-1917) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. C. Farnsworth, of McKee Avenue, had a baby boy on January 15, 1917. (01-15-1917) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. William Schumm, 1004 Morgan Avenue, had a baby girl on January 15, 1917. (01-16-1917) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Mike Zimbraski, of 681 McMahan Avenue, had an eleven pound baby girl on January 16, 1917. (01-16-1917) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Goodwin had a nine and a half pound baby boy. (01-19-1917) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Wagoner, of Reed Avenue, had a nine and a half pound baby boy on January 20, 1917. (01-23-1917) Monessen News

Memorials

In memory of William "Chase" Evancho by Candis Kelley.

In memory of Mary Pavelek by Dr. Martin and Mrs. Madeline Dudas.

In memory of Amil Yagodich by Mary Ellen Pastorkovich.

In memory of Thomas Churan by Dr Martin and Mrs. Madeline Dudas.

In memory of Al Ulens by Dr. Martin and Mrs. Madeline Dudas.

Building Fund

Michael J. Tweardy



Santa Letters (Spelling and punctuation retained as written in 1916)

Dear Santa Claus:

Send me a drum and a horn and a sleid and send me a king and send me a bank and I want a airship. and I want you to send me a ars trans and a rocking horse. and send me a puppy.

Eddie Daakkonen
328 Fourth Street
Belle Vernon, PA

Dear Santa:

I am a little girl 7 years old and I would like you to bring me a doll baby a story book a game a box of paints. I have two little sisters, Mary and Catherine who can't write so please bring Mary a game of scheckers a dollbaby a ironing board and please bring the baby a dollie and a Christmas tree and some candy and nuts.

Mildred Freidhoff

Dear Santa Claus,

I would like you to please bring me a game of parchessi, a fairytale book, a book of Uncle Tom's Cabin, an aluminum cooking set, a nbew hat and some pretty handkerchiefs and a Christmas tree and candy and nuts. I have tried to be a good filr and studied my lessons and thankyou for what you brought me last year,

Marie Gardell

I'm a dood little boy six years old an' I lives in belle Vernon wif my dear mother. I lives at Wood street an' I wants to see you chismas. Plese dear santy bring me a erector to build things this winter I don't go to skeol yet Plese bring me a sweater and a pare of rubber shoes an' a bible story book an' I will love you all the time

Yoar little fren Thurl J. Kisner

Santy Clause deer, you is sweet I aint sind I won
 monky an rabbit to play wid him, bring me a baby
 wid pretty toes and laff doant sind him by a bird az
 you did the las one the bird done somting toe him he
 hollers all the time sind me a rattle and a book and
 enuff writin paper my teacher makes me write all the
 time I sleeps in the first bed in the rum I luv you

Mary finnigan 86 Thurrd street

Dear Santa Claus,

I want a baby doll I want a dozen dishes I want a
 bank I want a cradle I want a bank I want a
 rocking chair I want a sleid I want a burgyy I want
 a baino I want a chair I want a book

Hilja Saakkroner

Dear Santa:

I have been a good boy all year so please bring me a
 pair of skates, a pair of cowboy gloves, a penknife
 and a Chrismas tree and bring my little brother some
 playthings and candy.

Hugh McNeill, Fourth street

Oh dear santa claus are you come this time thankyou
 santa claus bring me a doll and box of candy and a
 muff you are good santa claus and muff and fur for
 my doll. To santa claus good by

Catherine Mondack

SANTA CLAUS AND THE CHRISTMAS TREE
 GET THEM PRETTY WELL TRIMMED!!!

FAIR AND SQUARE

Money has a habit of getting careless around Christmas time. Generosity is Santa Claus's middle name. See that the old gentleman has a satisfactory Christmas feast. Un-Christmas prices for all Christmas dinner delicacies. Thank you kindly; the same to yourself and many of them.

Try a pound of Albert's best coffee, 30c a pound, with Sterling Stamps.

JULES E. ALBERT
 Phone 4-W
 910 Knox Ave. MONESSEN, PA.

Special Sale
 THIS WEEK ONLY

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| Gold Medal Flour, 98 lbs. |\$4.75 |
| Golden Loaf, 98 lbs. |4.99 |
| Pillsbury, 98 lbs. |5.15 |
| Seal of Minnesota |5.25 |
| Larrabee's Best |5.25 |
| Blue Ribbon, 48 lbs. |2.35 |
| Pastry Flour, 48 lbs. |2.20 |
| 2 1/2 lb. sack | 1.10 |

Your money back if not satisfied

Oscar Albert
 910 Knox ave. Phone 268w

Newspaper ads from late 1916

Visit the Museum Shoppe

Shop local at the Monessen Heritage Museum for unique holiday gifts. We have books by local authors, stocking stuffers and items for that hard to buy for person on your list. Check out our Shoppe catalog.

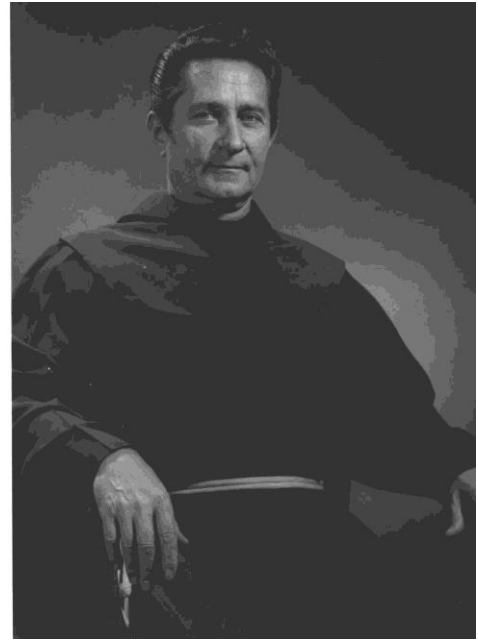
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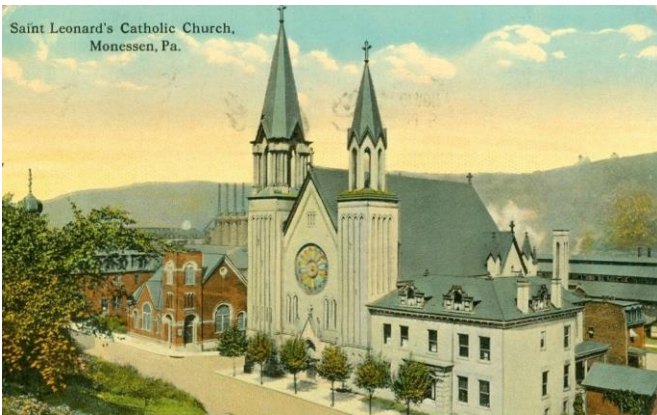
Photos From the Current Exhibit



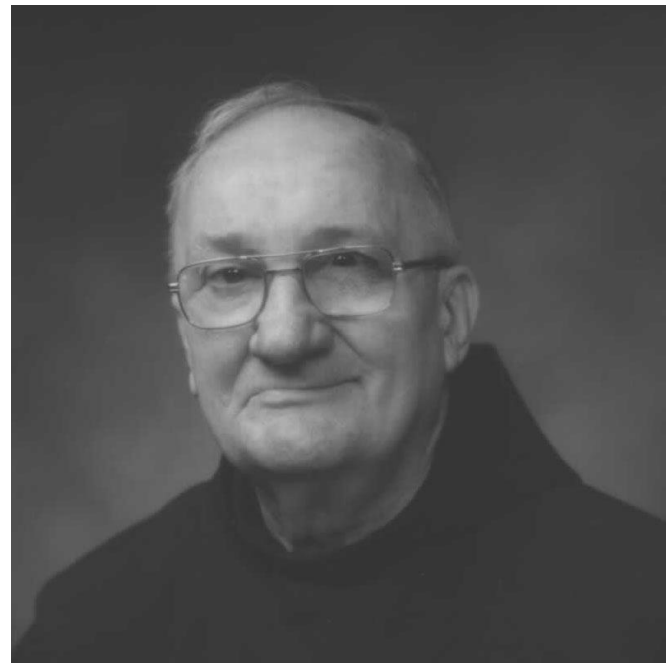
Original St. Hyacinth (Polish) Church, 1909



Father Bruno Raspudic, St. Anthony's



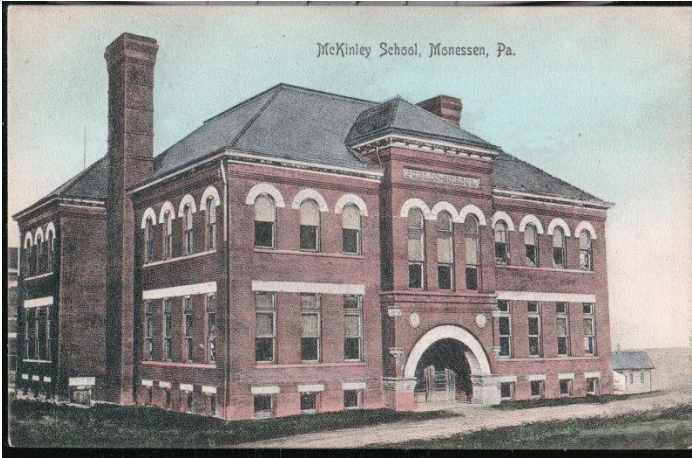
St. Leonard's (Irish) Church, 1930



Father Theodore Benkovic, St. Anthony's



Epiphany of the Lord Chapel (formerly St. Hyacinth)



Oiled Wooden Floors

Ruth Stern Schrag

All eight of the classrooms of the McKinley School, which I attended for the first four grades, had wooden floors. I can remember the janitor pushing what I thought were shavings from the pencil sharpeners through the oil that he had sprinkled on those floors of wood. The floors emerged clean, smooth and with an unmistakable odor. I grew to love that smell. Probably because I loved that school. I can remember walking up the hill on a cold winter day to the little red brick school. As I entered the building, I would be greeted by the pleasant, pungent odor of oiled wood and chalk dust. That smell became part of the welcoming warmth of the McKinley School.

Many of the places I loved most in my childhood were infused by the aroma of oiled wood. I recall climbing the steps to the second floor above Janosik's Drug Store and entering the four book-filled rooms that made up Monessen's first public library. I fell in love with books in that wonderful quiet retreat, sitting on the wooden floor, absorbing the magical adventures of Elsie Dinsmore along with the scent of the oiled wood and dusty books.

Long after the schools and libraries I knew were floored in tile and terrazzo, there was one place I could still go to indulge my pleasure in oiled wood floors. Taylor's Book Store on Donner Avenue was

truly an anachronism. The door opened to the soft "ting" of an ancient bell that eventually brought old Mr. Taylor out from a mysterious back chamber to the main room. In the center of this room, lined with glass-topped counters, was a pot bellied, wood-burning stove with an exhaust pipe that went up through the tin ceiling. The floors were, of course, of oiled wood. The combined smell of the oiled wooden floors and the wood-burning stove was as distinct and pleasant as old Mr. Taylor's store. In the dim light shed by the single chandelier, the merchandise was hard to identify, but Mr. Taylor could find almost anything you asked for – from a map of Alaska to fine lead for a favorite mechanical pencil. You might have to wait a while for him to track down your items through dusty drawers and cabinets and under counters, but he almost always produced what you asked for, and the wait in the dusty, warm, sweet-smelling store was, in itself, a treat.

The McKinley School was Monessen's first elementary school and was constructed in 1899, while William Henry Donner was on the School Board. It fronted on Reed Avenue. The building was torn down in late 1946. The first high school, the Jefferson, sat behind the McKinley building and fronted on McKee Avenue. The parking lot for the Dalfonso Billick Funeral Home is located on the site of McKinley School. The school was named after William McKinley, who was President of the United States, at the time of its construction. President McKinley, a veteran of the Civil War, was Commander in Chief during the Spanish American War.

**Admission to the Monessen Heritage Museum is FREE!
Visit us today and learn about early Monessen!**