

VALLEY HISTORIAN

Greater Monessen Historical Society
505 Donner Avenue, Monessen, PA 15062
(724) 684-8460

Vol.10 Issue1 WINTER 2010

Tim Donner Joins Us!

Annual fund appeal

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Greater Monessen Historical Society, we wish to thank each of you, who sent in a contribution for our annual fund appeal. Without your generous support, we would not be able to operate the Museum, arrange exhibits, demonstrations and lectures or preserve the ethnic and industrial heritage of the Greater Monessen area. If you have not sent your contribution, please send it and be counted among those, who want to preserve our local history. In addition to your financial support, we also count on our friends to bring us their family treasures from the attic, cellar, garage or trunk. Think of us while doing spring cleaning. Call 724-684-8460 and let us know when we may expect you to visit. We will put a fresh pot of coffee on and perhaps offer you a cookie, while you tell us the stories associated with your items.

Membership Drive

We also are so grateful that 261 people have joined the Greater Monessen Historical Society nationwide. We are a growing organization. Please remember membership runs on a calendar year from January through December. If you have not renewed your membership for 2010, please do so today. It is \$15 for an individual and \$20 for a family.

You may not see us, but we are here ☺

The Heritage Museum does not have regular hours during the winter months of January and February. We are not vacationing in Florida and lounging on the beach. We are upstairs in the Archives sorting through donations and cataloging the items into our computer. Even though we streamlined the antiquated way items were stored and

Coverlet: a successful fundraiser

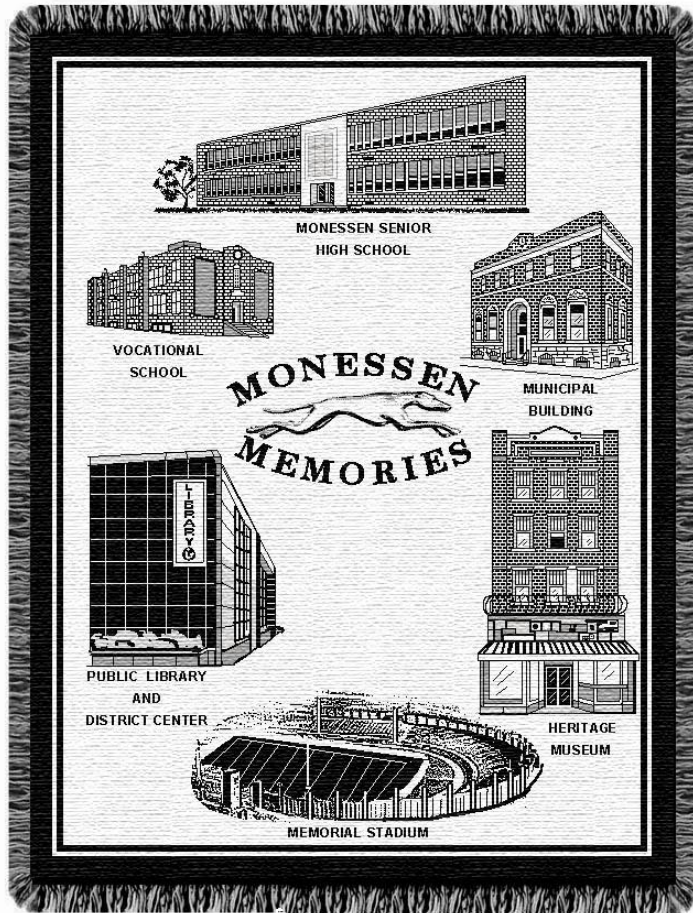
The Christmas fundraiser has been a success. There are still some coverlets available, before we have to reorder. Price is \$50 for the cream and black woven blanket. They make wonderful birthday and anniversary gifts. Reunion committees are purchasing them for door prizes.



African Americans To Be Featured

The annual spring ethnic exhibit at the Heritage Museum will honor the contributions of African Americans in the Greater Monessen area. It is tentatively scheduled to open in March of 2010. Do you have photos that tell the everyday story of African Americans in the Mon Valley area? Do you have African art, costumes, or items of cultural or historic significance? Please let us borrow them for the exhibit. Did you know it was an African American Republican Committee man, who opened the first governmental organization meeting that resulted in the formation of Monessen. The AME Baptist church sponsored an African American debating society in 1902?

Wouldn't Great Aunt Mary love one? The coverlet features the former Senior High School at Sixth and Reed, the old Vocational School on Rostraver (built by the WPA), the Municipal Building, our Public Library and District Center, the Memorial Stadium (built by the WPA) and the Heritage Museum. They are a practical gift everyone can use and enjoy.



Civil War Anniversary

The 150th anniversary of the beginning of the War of the Rebellion or Civil War will be observed with great ceremony starting in April of 2011. Our own Colonel James M. Schoonmaker, a highly decorated veteran of the conflict, was the Chairman of Pennsylvania's 50th anniversary commemorations of the Battle of Gettysburg in 1913. He was later selected as Pennsylvania's Outstanding Civil War veteran. Westmoreland County has asked the historical societies to begin gathering photos and memorabilia of the war for their own exhibits. Do you have ancestors who fought the war? Look for Civil War items you can loan to the Heritage Museum. Call and let us know what you have.

Mon Valley Cooperative Weekend

Cooperative weekend April 23-24, 2010

The "History Along the Monongahela" cooperative weekend sponsored by the Brownsville Area Revitalization Corporation, Donora Smog Commemorative Committee, Greater Rostraver Chamber of Commerce, Mon Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce, Monongahela Historical Society and the Greater Monessen Historical Society, which was postponed last autumn, will be held Friday and Saturday, April 23-24, 2010. Candis Kelley, our roving ambassador, will keep us posted on this worthwhile group effort.

Monessen area. The Museum is filled with photographs, uniforms and military memorabilia covering the War of the Rebellion (Civil War) through the Iraq Conflict. All service branches are represented. The Exhibit is in conjunction with the Veterans Day Parade on November 7, which Monessen is hosting for the first time in twenty years. Also planned are "Saturday Coffee and Conversations with a Vet", in which veterans will be available to relate their wartime experiences and answer questions over coffee and donuts.

G. C. Murphy 5 & 10

In 2010, the Westmoreland County "One Book, One Community" reading program will feature Jason Togyer's new book, "For the Love of Murphy's". It is a history of the McKeesport-based G. C. Murphy Company, which operated five and ten cent stores throughout the region. Our research shows the Murphy Company purchased the J. K. Skelley Store at 265 Donner Avenue and reopened it as a G. C. Murphy 5 and 10 on June 7, 1902. The store later relocated to between 5th and 6th Streets and remained in business until the early 1970's. We are searching for photos and Murphy items for a small exhibit to coincide with the county book program. We also want to hear from former Murphy employees.



Watch the mail

We will shortly be sending each of you the annual fund appeal and the yearly membership renewal. We know the economy has not been the best, but the fund campaign helps offset the operating expenses of the Museum. Utilities have to be paid and supplies purchased as well as the expenses of the various exhibits and programs. Please be as generous as possible. The yearly membership runs from January through December. We currently have 261 members. To continue receiving the newsletter, please be prompt in renewing your membership. Membership is \$15 for an individual and \$20 for a family per calendar year (January through December 2010.). We are a volunteer organization and all funds go toward preserving the history of the Greater Monessen area and maintaining the Heritage Museum. We thank you for your continued support!

Time to Hibernate

Just like the groundhogs, we are getting ready to hibernate for the winter. The Heritage Museum will be closed for January and February, but instead of sleeping, we will be working behind the scenes. There is much to catalog. **We could use some help.** ☺ There is sorting and organizing to do. We also have to plan the next spring ethnic exhibit. What nationality should we honor

next? If you have some historic memorabilia, family photos or genealogies to donate, please call, and we will make arrangements for you to drop it off. You may even catch us at the Museum on certain days. We will just not have regular open hours, as during the rest of the year.

Cooperative weekend Postponed

Speaking of spring, the "History Along the Monongahela" cooperative weekend sponsored by the Brownsville Area Revitalization Corporation, Donora Smog Commemorative Committee, Greater Rostraver Chamber of Commerce, Mon Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce, Monongahela Historical Society and the Greater Monessen Historical Society has been postponed until warmer weather returns. Candis Kelley will keep us posted on this worthwhile group effort.

Volunteers wanted

We wish to thank everyone, who volunteered to help at the historical society in the past year. We could still use some help. We need people with some computer knowledge, bakers, cooks, hosts and hostesses, exhibit designers, a manager and others with special talents and skills. Give us a call at 724-684-8460. Even if you are available only a few hours a month, a week or a day, you are needed. We are a volunteer organization that depends on people interested in preserving and saving local history. There is much to do. We need idea people too! The Greater Monessen Historical Society is everyone working together to get the job done.

School photos still needed

We are still looking for school building and school activity photos. Please check your scrapbooks, photo albums, cedar chests, attics, and cellars. We wish to borrow the photos and make a copy for our exhibits. Someone must have class photos or playground photos.

We Appreciate Your Support!! ☺

During the last few weeks, the Historical Society sponsored two fundraising events at the Heritage Museum. We had representatives from Celebrating Home and Tastefully Simple visit and demonstrate their products. Thank you to all who attended. We hope you enjoy your purchases.

Monessen Memories Coverlet

Several years ago, we sold a woven coverlet featuring historic places that featured memories from Monessen. The project was so successful, we have created a new

coverlet with new scenes. **What a special Christmas gift!** For this new coverlet, we chose the former Senior High School at Sixth and Reed, the old Vocational School on Rostraver (built by the WPA), the Municipal Building, our Public Library and District Center, the Memorial Stadium (built by the WPA) and the Heritage Museum. The coverlet is in shades of cream and black and is of good quality. They are priced at \$50 and will be available at the Museum. We are taking preorders now! What a wonderful Christmas gift for anyone with Monessen ties! Order today!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



Where will you shop for the Holidays?

As you think about your holiday shopping list, please remember to **shop Monessen**. The Heritage Museum Shoppe has unique ethnic cookbooks for those hard to choose for people on your list. We have a wide selection including Slovak, Ukrainian, Carpathian, Polish, Greek, and Italian. There are magnets, pens, postcards and travel mugs for stocking stuffers. We have tote bags, MHS yearbooks and books dealing with local history and by local authors. The Heritage Museum front window will once again be a look at Christmas from days past and be a creation of our volunteer, Shirley Beneccio. Thanks for volunteering to do this for us!

We want that Photograph!

Are they in albums inside a drawer? In boxes in the closet? Attic? Cellar? Each of us has family photographs that tell the story of bygone days. They may also tell the story of the Mon Valley area. Family photographs of neighborhoods, events, weddings, businesses, holidays, etc. exist. **We want them!** Our rich ethnic history was preserved through photographs that are hidden away. May we borrow them to scan? As you come across these gems that show Grandpa with his new Model T, please consider loaning them to the Historical Society. Our mission is to preserve the ethnicity and local history of the Greater Monessen area. You can help by letting us copy your family photos. We're waiting for your call! ☺

Do you have any suggestions or new ideas?

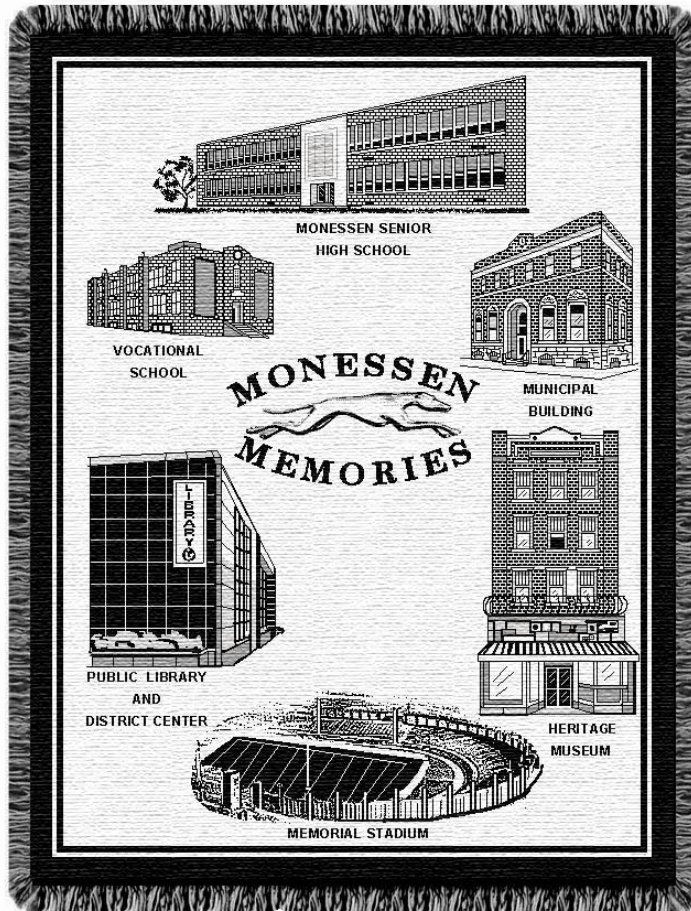
The Historical Society is always glad to have suggestions or new ideas. Do you have program ideas you would like to see or suggestions for events or fundraising activities? We are very receptive to what our partners think. Email your thoughts to: monessen@verizon.net

We remind everyone that admission to the Heritage Museum is free. ☺

Recent Donations to the Heritage Museum

Thirty-nine photographs from Louis Studio: Al Colaizzi

Monessen 100 year birthday cake photo, centennial T-shirt, Monessen Jr. Sr. High photo, Monessen Raven Christmas photo 1995, Michael Moore parade album, Monessen Democratic Committee 11th Annual Banquet booklet, Monessen centennial stamper from Post Office: Ted Harhai



Cultural Heritage Days a success

Thank you to everyone who stopped by the Historical Society booth and purchased ethnic cookbooks, magnets, etc. We also are so happy to those who helped identify the large photographs from the Louis Studio and the people in the Hugo Parente albums. Everyone remarked how much fun it was to figure out the identity of the unknown people. We will do it again with another group of mystery photos.

Memories of Marian Williams: Jean Witt

Finnish Hall photos, centennial caps, Map of Monessen 1900, drawing of War Memorial, Roll of Honor, Copy of check for police equipment: Ted Harhai

Altitude pressure gauge for a furnace from Monessen Plumbing and Electric: Joe Milosevich

Copy of program for Monessen High School stadium dedication, October 8, 1937: Ted Harhai

15th Air Force Reunion 1989 booklet: Mike Mazur

MHS photos of Class of 1922: Arlene Smith Weitz

Monongahela Valley Hospital Dedication Booklet: Anne Makinen

1937 Pittsburgh Steel Calendar: John Billy

1962 Aerial view of Monessen photo, Photo of John Kennedy, Photo of Woodrow Wilson, Seneca Blvd Project report, Seneca Blvd photo album, Third Street houses photo album, 1979 Mayor's court book, Asst. newspaper clippings 1990-1995, Visitor's register 1980's, 1964 Code of Ordinances, 1901 Cancelled coupon bond series, Westgate urban renewal survey, 1991 Fair Housing Analysis, MHS cafeteria saucer: City of Monessen

Binder of 1941-1942 Greyhound Gazette: Dorothy Jozwiak

Monessen Reds Football Team photo 1935: Marilyn Pivarnik

MHS yearbook 1924 & 1912, 1913 photos of Blast Furnace: Vito Beneccio

Station of the Cross from old St. Hyacinth Church: Ray Wattras

MHS yearbooks, 1943, 1948, 1949, 1950 & 1953: Anonymous

Photos of B.V. Main Street, unknown A&P store photo, MSW #24 & #10 photo: Gary Strelick

Asst. Page Steel & Wire Division Fence products: Joseph Righetti

WWII photos of William and Lena Greco & William and Louis Greco, newspaper article on William Greco and John Columbus: Kathleen Kelemen

James W. Riddell booklet, "My Part in World War II", dog tags, medals, Arm patches, forty-eight star flag, scout scarves, 1969 Valley independent newspapers (2), Cunard White Star Line suitcase: Basil Luciani

Photo of 12th St. R.R. Crossing, Maronda Homes Building photo, Photo of NAACP Banquet: Ted Harhai

W.W.I picture of signing the armistice, picture of Herbert Allison, picture of Laurence Lescanac, VFW Diamond Jubilee Award, VFW Post 1190 photo album, Life Membership certificate of Allison-Lescanac Post 1190, Mortgage burning photo of 1983, Achievement award photo 1963 Marble champs, Donora Veterans Day parade 1981 photo, Monessen City Park Tank photo, 1974 Memorial Day photos, 1969 photo of U.S. Naval Training Center, Post 1190 photo of men, 1950 Monessen Veterans Day Parade photo, photos of Post 1190 funerals and parades: VFW Post 1190

U.S. Marine Flag of Mon Valley Devil Dogs, U.S. Marine uniform WWII: Mike Yusko

Newsletter from VFW magazine (10): Mike Mazur

Photo of Benjamin Franklin School: Virginia Mariozzi

Monessen Rail Mill Sign: Alumisource, LLC.

Monessen Greyhounds Terrible Towel: Sylvia Spadafore

MHS Girls Greyhound Jacket, MHS yearbooks (1969, 1971, 1976, 1977): Lynn Leone

Collier's Photographic History of WWI, Disabled American Veterans Plaque: Gene Veschio

A memorial contribution of one hundred dollars was given in memory of Eleanor Musial by Elayne Busovicki.

Visit the Veterans Exhibit

Please take time to visit the Heritage Museum and view the tribute to the men and women, who fought for the Nation. Admission is free as always!

Film wanted

We are searching for film of the burning of the old Monessen High School in 1946 or the visit of President John Kennedy.



Annual Architectural Design Challenge

About 135 middle and high school students from 17 Westmoreland County schools are participating in the 14th Annual Architectural Design Challenge, sponsored by the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation (PHLF) and offered in 2009-10 in cooperation with the Greater Monessen Historical Society (GMHS).

During orientation sessions in Monessen on October 29 and October 30, students toured the main street area of Monessen, photographed and documented their building site, discussed the needs of the community, and learned about the design process. Vito Benecio, Dr. Martin Dudas, Madeline Dudas, Candis Kelley, Susanna Swade, Julie Thieser, and Gary Strelick from the GMHS, along with Louise Sturgess and Karen Cahall of PHLF, served as tour leaders. We thank Pastor John Custer for allowing us to hold the orientation sessions on both days in Orchard Christian Fellowship Church.

Over the next several months, students will work in teams to (1) create a model showing their vision for the vacant Monessen Savings & Trust Building (500 Donner Avenue) and the vacant lot beside it; and (2) create a main street facade drawing of the south side of the 500 block of Donner Avenue incorporating their design recommendations (for signage, lighting, facade restoration, in-fill construction, etc.). Middle school students will present their models and drawings on Monday, February 22, 2010, and high school students will present on Tuesday, February 23. Professional architects, Monessen citizens, and members of the GMHS will be invited to listen to and comment on the student projects.

One Hundred Years ago in the newspapers November 1909-January 1910

An afternoon tea was given on November third by Mrs. John Allen of Tenth Street, in honor of the birthday of her daughter, Miss Frances Gould.

Professor F. A. McCloskey opened a school of dance in Kelly's Hall on Thursday evenings. Class work will be conducted from 7:30 until 9 PM followed by two hours of dancing during the ten week course.

Chicken thieves are operating in McMahan Borough despite the vigilance of concerned farmers.

The twice enlarged Bijou Theatre is featuring the picture, "The Cattle Thieves". Louis Brusa sang "If Those Lips Could Only Speak" due to many requests from the public to hear the song again.

The Colonna Reading Club has been organized and will meet weekly. Good authors and different works will be read and discussed.

In November, the Jeffersonian Literary Society of the High School debated the subject, "Resolved that Shylock was the strongest character in the "Merchant of Venice". Lillian Chamberlain and Mabel Gregg for the negative won the debate. Mary Jamieson and Regina Conway took the positive stand. Mildred Herron played a violin solo and Louise Frazier read a Thanksgiving proclamation. Herman Snyder presented "Thanksgiving now and a year ago", while Thomas Ryan gave a recitation.

Membership in the Monessen Board of Trade has reached one hundred.

Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Burns had a nine pound baby on November 21.

Turner's Hall will be dedicated at the corner of Second and Donner on November 25. Building costs reached \$30,000 for the new three story building that houses a modern gymnasium, lodge room and hall. Membership is around 400.

Come to the Christian Church on Sixth Street for Thanksgiving Dinner. Tickets are thirty-five cents for a meal consisting of roast turkey and stuffing, gravy, hot biscuits, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, coleslaw, celery, pickles and coffee. Ice cream will be five cents extra. Cake will also be five cents extra.

The Sanitary Committee of the Borough Council and the Board of Health have announced a campaign to clean Monessen of filth and dirt in the streets, alleys and around private residences.

John Kilroy, the owner of the Kilroy Hotel, died Sunday November 28 from stomach trouble at age 65. He came to Monessen in 1898.

Monessen's Lincoln Club celebrated their first anniversary on December 4 with a banquet at the Sheetz Hotel. Daniel Reamer, the Burgess, spoke as did Colonel Charles Derickson, on the life of Lincoln.

The Luna Theatre is showing the picture, "Through the Breakers", which deals with the sin of neglect of the home by the wife and mother.

On Christmas Eve, the Grand Hotel parlor held a Christmas tree illuminated with ornamental lights and laden with gifts for the guests and employees. Santa Claus arrived at 10 PM to pass out the gifts. Each employee also received a turkey from Mr. Schuyler.

Philip Shepler, pioneer resident and former member of the firm of Shepler and Vennerii Meat Market on Schoonmaker, died of tuberculosis December 29.

Three thousand tickets were sold for the Star Theatre on New Year's Day. The box office glass windows shattered due to the pressing of the crowd during the first performance. William Lewis of Sixth Street won the drawing for a Shetland pony.

Monessen will be one of the first towns in Pennsylvania to follow the new law regulating automobile speeds through the streets of a town or borough. New signs bearing the words, "Danger, Go Slow" in five inch letters will be erected. Between the new signs, the speed limit will be twelve miles per hour.

On January 7, 1910, the high school Jeffersonian Literary Society debated whether "Football should be abolished". James Herron and Eugene Weller argued the negative and won. They were paired against Cora Smith and Rachel Johnson. Regina Conway performed a piano solo and Mildred Herron gave a vocal solo. Margaret Ruse presented a recitation, while Ethel Gantt read an essay.

W. H. Wagner had a surprise forty-third birthday party on January 7.

James A. McGuire, age 70, and the first engineer of the Carnegie Hoop Mill, has resigned his position and moved to Crafton to spend more time with his family.

The Monongahela Hotel was sold to Harry Seanor and Denna Shea of Greensburg.

George Nash, Superintendent of Pittsburgh Steel, celebrated his fifty-second birthday with a surprise party in the banquet room at his home attended by seventy men. The foremen of the plant presented him with a mahogany desk.

Yee Foon, a Chinese student, was enrolled in the McKinley School in the second grade. Way Sing, the laundryman, is his guardian.

Jacob T. Roley, of Belle Vernon, died in his fourth term as justice of the peace of Belle Vernon. Squire Roley was seventy-five. Burgess Daniel Reamer was a pallbearer.

Due to extreme crowding in the Iowa Building, the room housing the manual training equipment in the Jefferson High School will be cleared out and utilized to relieve the congestion.



End of Year Weddings of 1909 & Early Weddings of 1910

Isaac J. Miller of Monessen and Carrie Knight of Elwood City were married November 2, 1909 in Beaver. The groom was formally a singer at the Luna Theatre but is presently working in the Star Caf .

D.S. Muckley, General Superintendent of the Page Plant, was married and is now living in a home at the corner of Reed Avenue and Oneida Street. The groom was treated to a business party by his associates at the Sheetz Hotel on November 16.

Alice Geller of Monessen and Wilson Troupe of Munhall will marry December 22, 1909 at the home of her Aunt, Mrs. Theodore Weston, on Schoonmaker. They will live in Homestead.

Urban A. Mullin of Monessen and Lucy A. Black of Pawtucket, R.I. married on December 28. They will eventually live on Fourth Street. The Groom works in the Chemistry Dept. of the Pittsburgh Steel Co.

Charles Kaplanis of Monessen and Hilda Cypher of New Castle were married on December 29 in Pittsburgh. The groom is part owner of the Luna Theatre and the Luna Restaurant on Donner Avenue. They will reside in Monessen.

Miss Ray W. Johnson, of Goshen, N.J. wed George V. Barrett of Monessen on December 30. Mr. Barrett is a millwright at the Pittsburgh Steel mill. They will live on Donner Avenue.

Miss Arena Duff of Donora, a Monessen teacher, has married and did not return in the new year.

Miss Sarah Lenhart, stenographer to the superintendent of schools, was married in Belle Vernon on January 1, 1910 and moved to Ohio.

Anna Hartstein of Donora and Samuel Morton of Monessen were united in marriage on January 4. The groom is employed in the local mills.

The sister of Mrs. George Nash, Amelia Theiss, will marry Warren Howard January 5, 1910 at the Nash Home. The groom works for the Pittsburgh Steel Co.

Edwin J. Taylor, the foreman at the P&L.E. freight station wed Isabella Murphy of Belle Vernon in Cumberland MD on January 13, 1910. They will live in Monessen.

Muriel Brandis of Monessen and Thomas Cooper of Belle Vernon were married January 19, 1910. The groom is a glass worker. They will live in Monessen.

Hanukkah in 1909

On December 12, 1909, the local Jewish congregation held an elaborate service in the Star Theatre. Music was by Mr. Brenner with an invocation by H. Levendorf. Harry Cramer, Edith Tanzer, Anna Martin, Rose Cramer, D. Janavitz, D. Lebowitz, I. Slifkin, Lucy Borenstein, B. Cramer, A. Safier, B. Rosen, Ethel Kline, Freda Shapira, Ruth Rosenbloom, Elsie Janavitz, Jesse Nayhouse, Harry Weiner, Berdie Goodman, Dora Kaufman, and Belle Pollock were in charge of recitations. I. Levendorf and M. Klein gave violin solos. A. Tanzer delivered the address and H. Levendorf the benediction.

Original Christmas Poem

Written in 1909 by fourteen year old Mabel Eaglen, a Monessen school girl, and published in the newspaper.

Christmas is coming, best day of the year,
With snow and ice, and sleigh bells so dear,
Holly and mistletoe, candles and toys,
Ready for all good little girls and boys.
Now we are ready, the toys are arranged,
And the great pleasure nothing can change,
Children are all snuggled down in their beds,
Pretty clean faces and brown curly heads.
Soon they'll awaken with bright glowing eyes.
Laughing with jolly and amazing surprise,
Dancing with wonder around the tree,
Happier children there never could be.

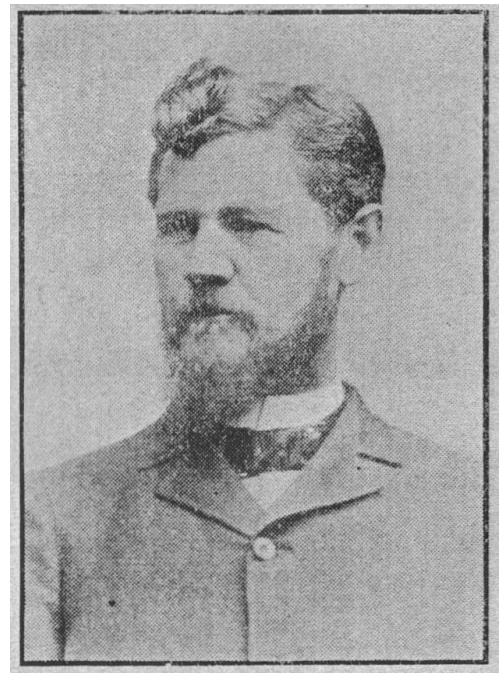
Last horses sold in 1928

Monessen City Council voted in February of 1928 to sell the last city-owned team of horses and replace them with a motor truck. Council also voted to purchase a car for the superintendent of the sanitary department and to buy a new motorcycle for the police department.



New High School was overcrowded by 1919

The new Monessen High School that opened in February of 1915 at the corner of Sixth and Reed was overcrowded by the fall of 1919. The School Board made plans to utilize all basement rooms to relieve the crowded classrooms. The Monessen School District during the 1919-1920 school year employed 117 teachers and had 4300 pupils.



Founding Landowner died 100 years ago from accident

Alexander McMahan died December 25, 1909 at 7:30 PM at the Woodlawn Inn Hotel in McMahan Borough as a result of an accident he had on November twenty-second. Mr. McMahan and a driver were coming down Ninth Street hill, when the horse staggered and plunged over a thirty-five foot embankment. The driver was unhurt. Following the development of a blood clot in his brain and partial paralysis, little hope was given for his recovery.

Dan's Archives

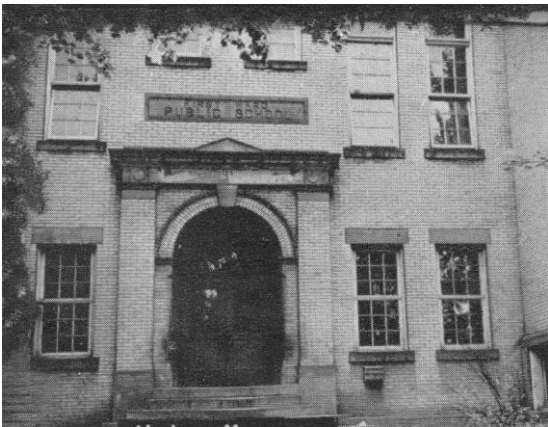
He was born in Allegheny County in 1843, the son of Hugh McMahan and Margaret Manown-McMahan. Mr. McMahan promoted the town of Fordham, an earlier venture for the site around Monessen, but the project was abandoned. With the formation of the East Side Land Company, the McMahan farm, as well as the land of others, was purchased to begin the new venture.

Mr. McMahan was formerly a member of the McMahan Borough Council and was currently first chief burgess of McMahan. He was a Democrat and a Catholic.

He was survived by his wife and ten children. There are also three sisters and two brothers. Requiem High Mass was said at St. Leonard's Church by Rev. A. J. Wigley with interment in the family plot at Belle Vernon Cemetery. His estate was valued at \$52,685.

Child Labor a concern in 1906

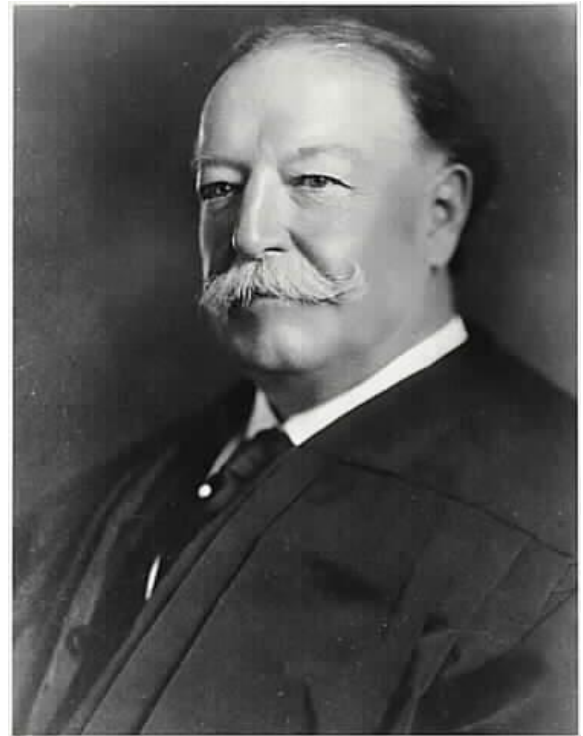
Superintendent of Schools, R. W. Himelick urged Monessen mill owners not to employ school age children in the plants, when they should be getting an education. The industrialists responded that they would do everything in their power to get all school age children back into the schools. The number of employed children was said to be only thirty. Pittsburgh Steel Superintendent George Nash immediately ordered all foremen to refuse employment to school age children.



Linden Elementary School

THE PERFECT HOLIDAY GIFT!!!!!!

Do you need a really unique holiday gift for someone who has everything but would love a real piece of local history? We are selling the original slate blackboards from the old Linden School. The large slate sheets are just \$20. Call the Museum today at 724-684-8460 before they are all gone..... Imagine how many teachers used these blackboards to teach generations of Monessen pupils. When it was closed, Linden School was the last coal heated Monessen school building.



A Presidential Visit

Ninety years ago, the Monessen Board of Trade (Chamber of Commerce) invited "one of the country's greatest living statesmen" to be the keynote speaker at their annual lecture series. Former President William Howard Taft accepted, and through his secretary said he had heard of "this busy bee-hive of industry" and comes with a great deal of interest in the city. Ticket prices were set at \$1.50 and October 16, 1919 chosen as the date by the Educational Committee of the Board of Trade.

The newspaper said the ex-president will be greeted by one of the largest audiences in the history of Monessen. President Taft arrived early in the day and lunched at the home of J. Howard Kelly, who escorted him to the capacity filled high school auditorium. He spoke for over an hour on the topic of the League of Nations in a forceful manner and to great applause. The follow-up story in the newspapers said President Taft had a pleasing introduction with a generous and telling manner and spoke in an analytical style that was deliberate in procedure with humorous sarcasm. Following the lecture, a reception was held with audience members permitted to cross the stage and shake hands with the statesman. The crowds felt it was the best lecture ever delivered in Monessen.

President Taft graciously accepted a request to stay over and address the school students the next day. A lunch followed at the Economical Club of the Pittsburgh Steel Products Company. The Pittsburgh Steel orchestra furnished music for the affair. A four course meal consisting of spring chicken, fruit cocktail and cigars was served by the Boy Scouts, who acted as waiters. T. J. Dobson was the vocalist chosen to accompany the orchestra. W. C. Reitz was toastmaster. H. R. Pore spoke on behalf of the town.

In his remarks to the workmen of the plant, who were allowed to observe the proceedings during their lunch time, President Taft urged full production to combat the high cost of living. He said the high cost of living would gradually decrease through productivity and appealed to the workers to do their part. In closing, he paid tribute to Monessen as a great industrial district known the world over.

The Monessen Board of Trade announced after expenses they had made one hundred dollars profit from the sale of tickets and would divide the money between the high school library and a fund for future lecture courses.

GMHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS
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The Board of Directors of the Greater Monessen Historical Society wishes to thank everyone for all their help and support during the past year. We look forward to working together on new ideas and projects in 2010.