

Valley Historian



Published by the Greater Monessen Historical Society
(Recipient of the Arthur St. Clair Award)
Monessen Heritage Museum
505 Donner Avenue
Monessen, PA 15062
monessen@verizon.net (email)
www.monessenhistoricalsociety.com (webpage)
[724-684-8460](tel:724-684-8460)

Vol.18 Issue 4 Autumn, 2018 (November)



givebig
PITTSBURGH

Give Big, Pittsburgh
Tuesday, November 27, 2018

The annual day of giving (Give Big, Pittsburgh) for the Greater Monessen Historical Society & local nonprofits will be held on Tuesday, November 27, 2018, from 12 AM to 12 AM. Why should you participate in Give Big Pittsburgh? Give Big Pittsburgh will raise money for GMHS through a single online donation platform, providing a simple way to connect donors to the charitable causes they care about most. This 24-hour online fundraising effort hosted by the Pittsburgh Magazine in conjunction with the Pittsburgh Foundation and local sponsors, will offer GMHS the chance to raise funds to support our

critical mission with a percentage match. Go to:
<https://www.givebigpittsburgh.com/>
Please mark this on your calendar!



Roman & Olivia Simkins

Armistice Remembered

Our annual dinner for 2018 remembered the centennial of the Armistice, which ended the Great War (World War I) in 1918. GMHS also paid tribute to the new nations of Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia that were created at the end of the war. One hundred guests enjoyed an Eastern European menu. GMHS President

Daniel Zyglowicz spoke on what life was like in Monessen during that time. GMHS Board member Candis Elyanich Kelley read the poem, "In Flanders Fields". Dan, Roman and Olivia Simkins presented a program on the "Life of a Doughboy". The First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association was the chief sponsor of the night. The Board of Directors wish to thank all our generous sponsors who supported the annual Founders Day and dinner.

The following are a list of individuals, businesses and organizations that stepped forward and provided sponsorship of our Monessen Founders Day 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.

Colonel James Schoonmaker
Brigade:
Gloria Hayes in memory of Don Hayes

Miss Mary Jones Auxiliary:
Monessen Lions Club
Monessen Knights of Columbus #954

Greyhound League:
Adelene "Lena" Alvarez

Black and White Society:
Douglas Education Center
Andy Dzurinko, CLU
Monongahela Valley Hospital
George Christy
General Joseph Yakovac, Ret.
RFP & Associates LLC
Dr. Joshua R. Huhn, DMD, LLC
Ted Harhai
Dr. Martin & Madeline Dudas
Davies Ford, Inc. of Charleroi

Patrons:
Janet Imbrescia
Nick & Kathleen Swade Mappas
Shire Law Firm
La Eda's Family Restaurant
Highway Appliance

Hallsworth House
Great Dane Realty, Inc.
Dalfonso-Billick Funeral Home, Inc.
Frank's Service Garage, Inc.

Autumn Exhibit

The fall exhibit highlights Monessen's 120th anniversary, Mayor Hugo Parente's 110th birthday and the careers of Louis and James Manderino, who rose to the top in Pennsylvania politics.

GMHS Holiday Party

The annual GMHS Holiday Party will be held on Saturday, December 8, 2018, from 11 AM until 2 PM. Stop by to see old friends and view the exhibits.



In Shock and Grief

In the aftermath of the senseless violent acts against the Jewish Community of Pittsburgh, the Board of Directors of the Historical Society extends its deepest sympathy to the Tree of Life Congregation, the Jewish community, and to all of our friends in Pittsburgh and the surrounding area.

We know many of our members have been personally and profoundly affected by this tragedy. We grieve with you and stand in solidarity with you against all hatred and violence in the world.

Holiday and Winter Hours

The Heritage Museum will close on December 22, 2018 and remain closed until January 9, 2019 to give our dedicated volunteers a well-deserved vacation. Beginning in January and lasting until mid-March, the Museum will not be open on Saturdays, except by special appointment. Also, if planning to visit during the week, please call ahead to make sure someone is on duty, as our regular hours are weather permitting only.



Renovation of the Milsom/Endicott Johnson Annex Building

The Board of Directors is working hard to raise the funds needed to start renovations in the annex building. Through your generosity in past years, we were able to replace all of the windows in the building. The roof was replaced along with part of the upper back support wall. Volunteers gutted the interior. A grant provided paint for the building. Now, we must begin a new phase: Renovating the first floor to a first class museum space for housing a permanent Monessen display. We need your help! Please think of the museum and be generous. We need nearly everything: electrical work, AC, Heating, walls, ceilings, flooring, plumbing, etc.

Annual Membership and Fund Drive

The Membership Renewal letter and fund appeal for the Historical Society has been mailed. You are the reason for why we are here! We depend on your generosity to sustain us and help us grow! Please be as generous as you can be. We need your donations to continue the Annex renovation work! Memberships cover the expenses of keeping the museum open and preserving local history. Gift memberships make great gifts!

In Search of

The Historical Society is looking for:

- *Ledger books**
- *Society minute books**
- *Membership lists of organizations**
- *Church bulletins**
- *Funeral prayer cards**
- *Advertising items for local businesses**
- *Photos of ethnic celebrations**
- *Photos of religious celebrations**
- *Photos of old businesses**
- *Photos of schools**
- *Photos of industries**
- *Event programs**
- *Family genealogies**

Social Media

The Greater Monessen Historical Society has a Twitter account. Follow us at @MonessenHistory. We are also on Facebook and have over 3000 followers worldwide! We can be located on Facebook under "Greater Monessen Historical Society". See our latest events, news and photos of previous events. Google us and find our webpage filled with all the necessary information to visit, donate, join or learn about us!

Scale Model Builders Wanted

The Historical Society is also searching for interested individuals who are able to

create models of well-known Monessen buildings that can be displayed inside the Monessen Heritage Museum.

Volunteers wanted

Do you have talents to share? Do you have spare time? Do you want to give back to the community? Do you enjoy history? If so, please consider joining our group and volunteering at the Museum. Call for details.

One Hundred Years ago in the newspapers November, 1918 to January, 1919

Miss Elvira Vine, of Shepler Road, a volunteer nurse at the emergency hospital located in the Elk's Home, passed away on November 2, 1918 from Spanish influenza. She was 22 years old. Her final wish was to be buried wrapped in the American flag. (11-02-1918) Daily Independent

Monessen Councilman, Arthur J. Pancook died from double pneumonia on November 3, 1918 at age 29. (11-04-1918) Daily Independent

All mills and stores in downtown Monessen closed yesterday afternoon to celebrate the ending of the Great War. A parade was led by the Home Defense Police with the Goddess of Liberty, soldiers, Pittsburgh Steel, Louhi Band, Slovak band, Slovak societies, Hungarian band, Hungarian societies, Italian band and Italian societies. Autos and trucks drove through the streets decorated with bunting and flags as confetti was thrown. (11-12-1918) Daily Independent

Miss Elizabeth Wilson and Miss Alice Potts, nurses at the emergency hospital, died of influenza. (11-16-1918) Daily Independent

Michael J. Skirpan has purchased an interest in the real estate firm of Shuster and Reed. (11-19-1918) Daily Independent

The Emergency Hospital housed in the high school will be closed and fumigated. At present, there are only seven patients left. They will be transferred to private homes. (11-25-1918) Daily Independent

One hundred and two African American laborers were brought from Baltimore to

work in the steel mill. They came on the B & O Railroad to West Newton, then were transported by truck to Monessen. (11-27-1918) Daily Independent

Fortunato Bindi, one of Monessen's loyal and substantial United States citizens, left for New York to sail for the Old Country to see relatives and view the changes brought by the war. (12-07-1918) Daily Independent

Monessen's new post office is now complete and awaiting furniture. Total cost is \$90,000. (12-13-1918) Monessen News

The three hundredth anniversary of the landing of the first African Americans in America and the fifty-fifth anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation will be celebrated on New Year's Day at the Wayman A. M. E. Church. (12-31-1918) Daily Independent

On behalf of the Monessen Czecho-Slovak League, Micahel Olsavicki placed an editorial in the Daily Independent in memory of the passing of former President Theodore Roosevelt. (01-08-1919) Daily Independent

The Grand Hotel has been sold to Samuel Anderson of Monongahela by Frank A. Beiter. (01-11-1919) Daily Independent

The Polish people of Monessen held a program in the Star Theatre to raise a relief fund for the starving in the newly formed country of Poland. (01-20-1919) Daily Independent

A sacred patriotic concert will be presented on January 26, 1919 in the high school auditorium by the Ukrainian Music Society for the purpose of erecting a monument for the Monessen soldiers who served in the Great War. (01-23-1919) Daily Independent

Phillips Garage, at Ninth and Donner, now has an office, storeroom for one hundred tires, and additional accessories to perform "expert" automobile work. (01-24-1919) Monessen News

Former President William Howard Taft has chosen Alfred Tanzer as an official delegate to the Atlantic Congress League to enforce world peace. Monessen is also honored by having a second delegate, H. W. Day, who was appointed by Governor Brumbaugh. They will meet in New York in February. (01-30-1919) Daily Independent

Professor Joe Davis, a Pawnee Indian, and his wife Princess Redwing, also a pure blooded Indian, visited the Monessen schools to demonstrate Indian life, customs, manners, songs, folk dances and lasso roping. (01-31-1919) Monessen News

Private Elmer Goyer, formerly an employee of Pittsburgh Steel, is visiting his cousin, Nick Goysich, of McMahan Avenue. He was one of fourteen men dispatched with a map along the Hindenburg Line and directed to reach the front. The other thirteen men were killed. For his bravery, he was awarded the Croix De Gere by the French. Shortly after he was gassed and hit by a German machine gun. (01-31-1919) Monessen News

More than three hundred people attended the annual Board of Trade banquet that was held in the dining room of the High School. (01-31-1919) Daily Independent

Late Autumn and early Winter Weddings, Divorces and Engagements of 1918-1919

A marriage license was granted in Greensburg this week to Aryid Niami and Lompi Paulia, both of Monessen. (11-01-1918) Monessen News

Oliver Rose and Miss Hannah Hopkins, both of Monessen, married on November 11, 1918 in Wellsburg, W.V. The groom is employed at Pittsburgh Steel. (11-13-1918) Daily Independent

W. M. Brown and Miss Viva May Price wed on November 7, 1918 in Kansas. The bride is a trained nurse. (11-14-1918) Daily Independent

Rose and Hopkins wedding (11-15-1918) Monessen News

Brown and Price wedding (11-15-1918) Monessen News

Regina Kesler married Thomas N. Bergstein on December 8, 1918. (12-10-1918) Daily Independent

Miss Mary E. Hackney married Lt. William J. Davidson on December 11, 1918. (12-12-1918) Daily Independent

Miss Gertrude Reese, of Atlantic City, will marry Samuel Meyers on the last day of February. (12-17-1918) Monessen News

A marriage license was granted in Greensburg to Arthur E. Harris, of Monessen, and Miss Hilda Ulander, of Rostraver Twp. (12-20-1918) Monessen News

Miss Dora Phillips, of Second and Aliquippa, and Clyde Eisle, of Donner Avenue, wed on December 24, 1918. (12-26-1918) Daily Independent

Phillips and Eisley wedding. (Spelling of groom's last name varies) (12-27-1918) Monessen News

Miss Loretta Keller, age 16, of McKee Avenue, and William Cutler, of Reed Avenue, eloped to Wellsburg, W. V. on December 23, 1918. The groom works for the Pittsburgh Steel laboratory. The bride is employed by Bell Telephone. (12-27-1918) Monessen News

Harry Stone, of Perryopolis, and Miss Pearl Chalfant, of Speers, wed on December 24, 1918. The bride is a Monessen teacher. (12-31-1918) Monessen News

A marriage license was given to Kaarlo F. Lohti and Hilma Poutti, of Monessen, in Greensburg. (12-31-1918) Monessen News

A marriage license was issued yesterday morning for Gould E. Conner, of Donora, and Elizabeth Gordon, of West Newton. (01-17-1919) Daily Independent.

Miss Marie Estenfelder, of Meadow Avenue, Charleroi, married John Kilroy, of Monessen, in Charleroi, on January 20, 1919. (01-21-1919) Monessen News

Estengelder and Kilroy wedding. Spelling of bride's last name differs. (01-30-1919) Daily Independent

Rush Bush, of Monessen, and Bertha McCormick, of Delmont, received a marriage license in Pittsburgh. (10-30-1918) Daily Independent

Autumn and early Winter Births of 1918-1919

A ten pound baby girl was born to Mr. and Mrs. Jack R. Keefer, of 508 Donner Avenue. (11-14-1918) Daily Independent

Keefer birth (11-15-1918) Monessen News

A son, John Pershing Lewis was born to Nicholas and Catherine Lewis, of 142 East Schoonmaker, on November 13, 1918. (11-16-1918) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Pilette, of 131 Oneida, had an eight pound baby boy on November 18, 1918. (11-19-1918) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Wallace Wilson, of 42 Sixth Street, adopted two twin girls, aged two years, as a result of the recent Spanish flu epidemic. (11-29-1918) Monessen News

Mr. and Mrs. F. Ellslager, of 1121 McMahan Avenue, had a baby boy on December 1, 1918. (12-02-1918) Daily Independent

Oelslager birth. (Spelling of last name differs from previous entry) (12-03-1918) Monessen News

Mr. and Mrs. William McLaughlin, of Second Street, had a baby boy on December 14, 1918. (12-17-1918) Monessen News

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Caville, of Lincoln Avenue, Charleroi, had a baby girl. (12-20-1918) Daily Independent.

Mr. and Mrs. Francis Obbert, of Belle Vernon, had a son. (12-20-1918) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. James Turek, of 225 Knox Avenue, had a nine pound baby boy on December 29, 1918. (12-31-1918) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Herman Carson, of Sixth Street, had a seven pound baby girl. (01-08-1919) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. John Dubinsky, of 176 Delaware Street, had a ten pound baby. (01-08-1919) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Louis Smitts, of 671 Ninth Street, had twins, a boy and a girl, on December 7 and 8, 1918, (01-08-1919) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Steve Teska, of 873 Schoonmaker Avenue, had a baby daughter. (01-14-1919) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Lambrosky, of 903 Ninth Street, had a ten and a half pound girl. (01-25-1919) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Sutton, of Donner Avenue, had a seven pound baby boy on January 30, 1919. (01-30-1919) Daily Independent

Dan’s Archives

A Look Back



Newspaper editorial on Monessen slums

From the Monessen Daily Independent, November 21, 1918.

“Will the Town Permit Slums to Thrive After the Epidemic Has Done Its Work”

Public Sentiment should back a movement for purging of tenement sections.

What about the slums? While the atmosphere is clearing of the awful scourge that has hung like a pall over this community for the past four weeks leaving homes in mourning and rendering children parentless, it is time for some reflection as to our policy for the future. There are many places in this town where the sunshine must be let in if we are to have a healthy community and keep the people free from disease. While this influenza epidemic made a general visitation on almost every spot on the globe, the death rate was greater and the disease laid a firmer hold on the places where housing conditions were the worst.

Monessen presents a sanitary situation that is alarming. The garbage cans of the town are running over as a result of inexperienced councilmen defying public sentiment and inaugurating a municipally controlled system with no person at its head. It has failed miserably and the people are now clamoring for a service, but they are suffering for lack of service.

The desire now is to shoulder it on the board of health; a body of men volunteering service without remuneration for the welfare of the community. This is not right, and while the board of health may assist in a solution, it is not to blame for the present condition.

Then again, what about the slums? There are places in this city where whole families have been taken down with influenza where the only ventilation comes through a transom over the front door, all the other portion of the house is under the hill. These families are crowded in without regard to number and air space per individual, and as long as they are able to pay the rent they are permitted to remain there without any sanitary regulations or civic compulsions as to health. The children are reared here and are sent out from these places into our public schools, and the only instructions in cleanliness they get is what is taught them in the schools. Are we all satisfied with this?

The community and not the landlord seems responsible for the unwholesome housing conditions. There has never been any building requirements in the town; no building inspector and no official requirements to meet with regard to property constructions. Persons who wish to profit from the sweat of the poor man's brow are at perfect liberty to do so.

The mills that employ the labor, import it here to do the work are mighty indifferent to the welfare of the people who come here. In fact, many of them assume no responsibility for the conditions in the town, and in addition to this indifference, which is little less than criminal, many of our town citizens who live here have property interests cast here, take little or no interest in what is going on.

This town must now wake up. We must throw off this indifference and all work to the upbuilding and purifying of Monessen. The men who employ labor must join us – they must join us in a crusade for better conditions – and church and lodge and school must work with one accord to develop a better citizenship. The tumble down houses

where there is neither light nor ventilation must be officially condemned, and the men who rent shacks must be taught that they assume certain responsibilities of people they house. A house with two small rooms with a commode in the hallway with no enclosure about it and six people forced by virtue of financial circumstances to live there, and sleep there, is simply one of the many examples of living conditions here.

Public sentiment must force the shack out of business and hereafter people living in Monessen must be comfortably housed or not housed at all. Every unsanitary, unfit place must be condemned and landlords told to either vacate unhealthy premises or put them in shape. In order to bring about the reforms that are needed, everybody must get busy and help with the big job that confronts the town right now.

GMHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Daniel Zyglowicz, President
& Editor of Valley Historian**

Gary Strelick, Vice President

Virginia Mussano Fisfis, Secretary

Mary Lou Mussano Simkins, Treasurer

Dr. Martin Dudas, Fundraiser

Candis Elyanich Kelley, Mailings

**Tim Donner, Honorary Seat (Great
Grandson of William Henry Donner)**

**George O. Morgan IV, Honorary Seat
(Great Grandson of George O. Morgan I)**

Visit the Museum

Have you ever visited the Heritage Museum? Admission is always free! We have rotating exhibits. Are you interested in seeing Monessen's history? Stop by today. We will give you a personal tour.

Museum Shoppe

Don't forget to shop at the Museum Shoppe. We have the largest collection of ethnic cookbooks in the area. Here is a recipe from the African American cookbook, "The Church Ladies' Divine Desserts", which is available for a donation of \$15, plus postage, if being mailed.

Coconut Custard Pie

Preheat oven to 350°. Stir together 1 1/2 cups graham cracker crumbs, 1/3 cup melted butter, and 1/4 cup sugar; press on bottom and up sides of a lightly greased 9-inch pie plate. Bake 12 minutes. Cool completely on a wire rack.

Increase oven temp to 425°. Whisk together 3 large eggs, well beaten; 2 cups whipping cream; 3/4 cup sweetened flaked coconut; 1/2 cup sugar; and 1 tsp. vanilla extract; pour into crust. Bake at 425° for 15 minutes. Reduce oven temp to 325°. Shield edges with foil; bake 20 minutes or until set. Cool completely.

**RENEW YOUR
MEMBERSHIP**



A photo of Slabey Essey taken in 1918 and donated to the Museum. As we commemorate the centennial of the end of the Great War, we remember and honor those Monessen soldiers who defended the country and served as doughboys in what was to be the "War to end all wars".



Sending wishes of peace, joy and happiness to our members, supporters and friends for the coming holidays.