

VALLEY HISTORIAN

Greater Monessen Historical Society

505 Donner Avenue, Monessen, PA 15062

(724) 684-8460

monessen@verizon.net (email)

www.monessenhistoricalsociety.org (web)

Tim Donner Joins Us!

Vol.10 Issue 3 SUMMER 2010

Society Expands!

We are Online!

We are Award Winners!

The Greater Monessen Historical Society is delighted to announce that we are moving forward in more ways than one. First, we are doubling our exhibit area. Mr. and Mrs. John Pokomo have generously donated the corner building at 501 Donner Avenue to the GMHS. We are grateful for the donation and thank them on behalf of the Board of Directors and our members. Many of you will remember the building as housing Milsom's Store, or Endicott Johnson Shoes, or for those of you with longer memories: Deaktor's Sanitary Market or A&S Food Stores.

Our second long awaited piece of news is that we are now on the worldwide web. Thanks to your donations, **we have a webpage.** Our web address is:

www.monessenhistoricalsociety.org

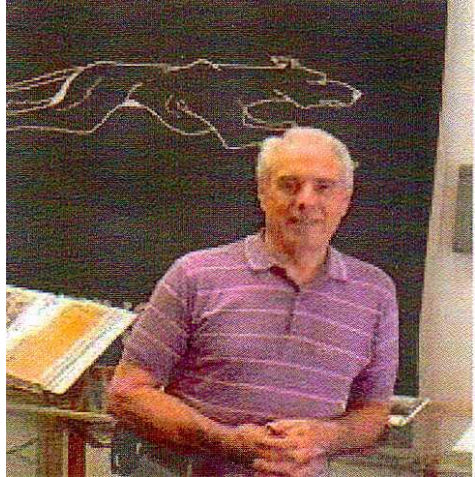
Tell your friends and neighbors. We couldn't have reached this point without your support and encouragement.

Third, the Greater Monessen Historical Society is the 2010 **winner** of the **Arthur St. Clair Historic Preservation Award!** The award is "presented annually to those individuals, organizations, businesses or educational institutions that have made a significant and



**Thanks to all of you, we are
growing and moving
forward into the future!**

sustainable contribution to the preservation of our historic places, documents, records or stories, and by doing so, are keeping alive Westmoreland County's rich history and heritage for future generations." It is named in honor of Arthur St. Clair, an important figure in the founding of Westmoreland County. When the cause of the American Revolution beckoned, Arthur St. Clair answered that call and rose to the rank of Major General in the Continental Army. After the war, he served as the President of the Congress under the Articles of Confederation and as the first governor of the Northwest Territory.



Gary Strelick, our vice president and building supervisor was chosen as GMHS 2010 Distinguished Honoree as part of the recent Mon Valley River Cruise. Gary is one of our longest serving members and willingly volunteers for projects with a smile. He is one of the main reasons our 100+ year old building is in such good condition. Gary always tackles the lists of jobs that need done without a complaint.

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



Monessen visit by former President Harry S. Truman.

Monessen Memories exhibit

For our autumn exhibit, GMHS will look through our second floor archives and display many of the historical items and photographs that have been donated by the public. Our Monessen exhibits are always popular. If anyone has any items or photographs they wish to donate or loan, they can drop them off at the Heritage Museum during regular business hours, Wednesday through Saturday from 10 AM until 3 PM. To arrange special times, please call 724-684-8460. Encourage your friends and neighbors to drop by for a hot cup of coffee and a relaxing visit back through the years. Admission is free, as always.

Congratulations Gary! Our 2010 Distinguished Honoree

Steeler ticket fundraiser

The Historical Society is participating in a special **fundraiser that will benefit Monessen Public Library.**

The prize will be two Steeler Football tickets for the Sunday, November 14, 2010 game at Heinz Field. (8:20 P.M.)

They are located in Section 228, Row C, seats 5 & 6.

Chances are **\$10.00 each.**

Tickets can be purchased at either the Monessen Heritage Museum or Monessen Public Library during regular business hours.

Ticket drawing will be on Monday, November 8, 2010 at 5 P.M. in Monessen Public Library.

We thank Dr. & Mrs. Martin Dudas for donating the Steeler tickets as prizes.

Nationality cookbook

We have discussed creating a nationality cookbook as a fundraiser for some time, but it always got pushed to the back burner. Thanks to Claudia Martucci, it is a reality. Claudia stepped forward and adopted the project. With patience, she sorted the recipes on file at the Museum and solicited others. She also asked for photographs and recipes from old Monessen restaurants. The result will be a nationality cookbook with 300 recipes that will be ready for the holiday season.

What can you buy for \$15.00?

Shouldn't everyone want to belong to the Greater Monessen Historical Society? Just \$15.00 will buy an individual membership or \$20.00 for an entire family. **Where can you go wrong?** The membership is based on a January to December calendar year and includes your dues and the subscription to the four newsletters. We have 261 current members. Through your help, we can continue to grow.

Rostraver visits

Mary Lou Magiske and Joyce Budd from the Rostraver Historical Society visited the Heritage Museum recently to look at our archives and displays. We had a wonderful visit and discussed issues affecting both of our societies. We both can be a valuable resource to each other and will plan some cooperative ventures in the future.

Mon Valley Slovak Cultural Society visits

The severe storm of Wednesday, August 4, 2010, created havoc as trees and power lines came down all over the valley. Luckily, the Heritage Museum did not lose power! We were able to offer the Mon Valley Slovak Cultural Society a place to hold their yearly picnic. A good time was had by all. **Wouldn't your group like to hold one of their meetings or gatherings at the Heritage Museum?**

Founders Day Saturday, July 10, 2010

The Greater Monessen Historical Society celebrated a two day Monessen Founders Day weekend on July 10 and 11 in the Heritage Museum. On Saturday, Floyd Kizzie presented "Mail Call", a talk on the African American military experience during our nation's wars. Later in the afternoon, Kathryn Cunningham, our local civil rights pioneer, entertained the audience with recollections of the 1963 March on Washington with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King.

On Sunday, in collaboration with Chef Tiffanie Rae Johnson, a fundraising dinner was held as the finale of the African American Exhibit. **Special thanks to all the**

GMHS members who volunteered to assist Chef Tiffanie in the kitchen! The menu consisted of fried chicken, mac and cheese, collard greens, candied sweet potatoes, green beans, corn bread, butter pecan cake and mint tea. Rev. Karl Jackson offered the invocation. Floyd Kizzie delivered an encore presentation of "Mail Call". During dessert, JoAnne Rone, Minister of Music, and members of the Mt. Calvary Gospel Chorus performed musical selections.

Another success: Second Annual Mon Valley River Dinner Cruise

The Greater Rostraver Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the Greater Monessen Historical Society, BARC (Brownsville), Donora Smog Museum, Mon Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce, Monongahela Historical Society and TEAM Charleroi sponsored the Mon Valley River Dinner Cruise on Tuesday, August 3, 2010. Approximately 230 people enjoyed the boat ride in a light rain. The Empress, of the Gateway Clipper fleet, docked at the Charleroi Trustees Park (behind the Montgomery Ward Building) and picked up passengers for the 2 ½ hour buffet dinner cruise.

A message from Candis Kelley

For the second year in a row, the Greater Monessen Historical Society, along with the Greater Rostraver Chamber of Commerce, Brownsville Area Revitalization Corporation, the Donora Smog Museum and the Mon Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce had a lovely time on the river.

As chairperson, for this museum's part in this event, I want to personally thank all of the many people involved with the historical society, who helped to sell tickets and enjoyed the cruise. Once again, everyone did a fine job.

The response to this year's cruise was very, very positive. And yes, next August, the Empress will travel from Pittsburgh to Charleroi and take the guests on another journey up the Monongahela River.

Remember, that will be the first Tuesday in August! Thank you, Candis Kelley

Recent Donations to the Heritage Museum

"Steelmaking: a salute to Monessen" and a Poem, "The Death of Wheeling Pittsburg Steel": Earlean S. Grogan.

Framed picture of the Point in Pittsburgh from July 4, 1976 and a Glass showing the Point: Dorothy Vernaccini.

MHS yearbooks (1953, 1955, 1956): Drew Lepresti.

Russian Bible, mass book and psalms: Bruce Adamson.

Lunch pail: Rev. Desire P. Grogan.

Greyhound letters for basketball and football, 4 bus tokens, Philipsburg, PA Bicentennial envelopes and photo of Ted Harhai with Boy Scout troop: Ted Harhai.

Two firefighter badges, "Going to Monessen in 1930" pin, five wood nickels from Aug, 1948: Richard Liposchok.

Monessen High basketball team cd and program from 1946: T. Dean Wilkins.

Permissible miners lamp (softy): Elsie Howarth.

MHS yearbooks (1941, 1942, 1943) & Irene Sobryak diploma, certificate of perfect attendance for grades 1-12: Gerald E. Barron.

1927 Photo of MHS, 1916 photo of MHS basketball team, 1917 MHS basketball team photo, 1918 photo of MHS Football team, 1918 MHS basketball team photo: T. Dean Wilkins.

2006 Charleroi girls Tip Off, 1994 Boys Annual Black Hawk Christmas Classic. 1982 Boys YMCA, & 1990 Donora Boys runner up tourney: Dean Wilkins

Electric display sign from Monessen Plumbing & Electric Company: Mrs. Betty Woods, daughter in law of owner Rinard Woods.

Three steel mill photos: Roth L. Curly Bellora.

Mon Valley Bus token: Vito Beneccio.

Two Monessen Centennial flags, four Monessen Centennial Banquet programs, eight sets of Monessen centennial earrings, two Monessen centennial paper weights, Monessen centennial "Festival in the Park" souvenir: City of Monessen.

"Black women in the armed forces, 1942-1974: and "Black defenders of America, 1775-1973": Donald Payne, Sr.

1945 MHS football program: Vito Beneccio.

1945 Monessen SWOC baseball team photo and blue & white screwdriver from John L. Gibson garage: Ted Harhai.

Binder of Italian postcards and prayer cards, two motorcycle photos, one hair brush and a hand mirror: Vito Beneccio.

W.T. Grant Co. yardstick, JoAnn Fabrics yardstick, John L. Gibson yardstick, Monessen Hardware yardstick, Monessen Sports Shop yardstick and Franks Service Garage ruler: William Makinen.

Drawing tablet of cartoons drawn by Secile Boyd: Benjamin E. Yates.

Memorials

In memory of John J. Penich by Mary Ellen Pastorkovich.

In Honor Of

In honor of the 70th Wedding Anniversary of Willard & Rosalie Krasik and their 95th Birthdays: Thomas Dalton.

Do you have?

In 2010, Mt. Calvary Baptist Church will celebrate their centennial. Our friend, Rev. Karl Jackson, is looking for photos connected with the church for an anniversary dvd. He is especially interested in anything that shows the church at its former location on Morgan Avenue. If anyone has anything connected to Mt. Calvary, please drop them off at the Heritage Museum.

Recent Inquires

Over the past three months, we have answered or received questions concerning the following:

Name of the Pittsburgh Steel blast furnace that bore the name of a woman: Jane Furnace

History of Page Park

How were the banks of the Monongahela River altered as the large industrial plants sprang up in Monessen?

Information on Basil Charles Sukolash (mid 1920's)

Information on Wasyl Pyszniak (early 1900's)

Does anyone have a photo or info on the A&P store at Sixth and McMahan?

Do you have any photos of the Wireton houses & stores?

One Hundred Years ago in the newspapers August-October, 1910

In early August of 1910, Monessen Moose Lodge, No. 80 purchased property on Schoonmaker Avenue for a lodge room and club house. Property belonged to Joseph Komay and is near the Westmoreland Hotel. (8-5-1910) DI

G. R. Eddy, the pharmacist, purchased a new electric sign for outside his business. It will contain 66 lights and spell the word, "Drugs". (8-10-1910) DI

The Afro-American Protective League will hold their first Emancipation Day celebration at Eldora Park on September 22, 1910. Local orators will speak. There will

be a baseball game, races and the Emancipation Proclamation will be read. An orchestra will provide dance music. (9-9-1910) MN

The Monessen Moose Club will bring the Frank Hatch Carnival Company to the Wireton grounds on September 26, 1910. (9-10-1910) DI

General Superintendent, George Nash, of the Pittsburgh Steel Company, entertained William K. Vanderbilt, Jr., and Colonel James M. Schoonmaker as they toured the rail line and stopped to see the mill. (9-13-1910) MN

Jack Keifer and Jules Pancook, of Monessen, are working the vaudeville circuit with a saxophone duet in addition to the oclerina, cello, clarinet, cornet, and trombone. They play under the name, "Pancook and Kiefer". (9-14-1910) [An article in the 10-10-10 newspaper spelled the name "Keifer".] DI

Mikalarias and Berbatis, Confectionery firm, announced a two week charitable donation of their store receipts to Monessen churches. Each church will be given a day, and they are to furnish a piano player. St. Leonard's Church will have the first day, followed by the Christian Church. (9-16-1910) DI

St. Leonard's Roman Catholic Church has received a new bell for their tower. The bell weighs 1600 pounds and will be consecrated on Sunday, September 25. (9-17-1910) DI

The present enrollment of the Monessen school district is 1,631 with thirty-six teachers in four buildings and two temporary study halls in the First Ward. (9-26-1910) DI

St. Leonard's Catholic Church blessed their new 1650 pound bell on September 25, 1910. Mrs. Elizabeth Kiefer donated the bell, which was cast at the McShane Foundry in Baltimore, MD. It is made of pure copper and black tin. (9-27-1910) MN

Miss Mary Jones has purchased the May Hotel from John W. Manown for \$50,000. (9-28-1910) DI

George Myford has completed new flats on Schoonmaker near Eleventh Steet and will call them "Bouquet Flats". (9-30-1910) DI

The George Nash Building at the corner of Sixth Street and Schoonmaker Avenue is nearly complete. It will be occupied by Greer Brothers Grocery on November 1, 1910. (10-8-1910) DI

The Star Concert Band has reorganized with Zach Forrester as President. New bylaws have been adopted and will be strictly enforced. No member is allowed to use any intoxicants. (10-10-1910) DI

Rev. Father Leo Stefl, of Most Host Name of Jesus Roman Catholic Church, has established an evening parochial

school after remodeling the basement of the Reed Avenue church. (10-12-1910) DI

The Motz Lumber Company broke ground for a new building for the French Beneficial Society. The building will be a two story brick structure with a stone foundation on Third Street. J. A. Lohman is architect. (10-13-1910) DI

Colonel James M. Schoonmaker along with his military friends visited Monessen and inspected the Pittsburgh Steel plant. (10-14-1910) DI

Captain J. M. McNeil, who served under Colonel Schoonmaker, visited his two daughters and son in Monessen. The captain is a pioneer riverman of the upper Monongahela and is the only person living, who has taken a steam boat over the falls above Morgantown, W. Virginia. (10-18-1910) DI



Late summer & early fall weddings of 1910

Miss Gertrude L. Meyers, daughter of M. Meyers, the Donner Avenue clothier, will wed Jack D. Burguare, of Muncie, Indiana, on August 21, 1910 at the home of Rabbi B. A. Lichter in Pittsburgh. The couple will live in Muncie, Indiana where the groom is connected with a typewriter company.

William J. Heilman, formerly night superintendent of the hot mills of the American Tin Plate Co., married Miss Yoder of Ohio on August 3.

Sara Liguori, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Francis Henry Calahan, of Edgewood Park, will marry Vernon Hazzard on August 25. The guest list will be strictly relatives. The couple will honeymoon in Europe.

Wilbert Boyd, of Webster, and Anne Wise, of Donora, were married on August 19, 1910 in Cumberland, Maryland.

Miss Jessie Ruse, of Monessen, and Mr. Francis Forsythe surprised their friends and married August 23, 1910. Bride was employed at C. S. Pore Hardware and lived with her sister, Mrs. John Reynolds, on Sixth Street. Groom is employed in the Open Hearth of the Pittsburgh Steel Company.

John F. Stahl, of Brownsville, and Miss Mary W. Talker, of Monessen, were wed on August 28, 1910 at St.

Leonard's Church. The bride is a clerk in the post office, while the groom is an employee of the P. & L. E. Railroad. The couple will live in Brownsville.

Miss Mae Williams of West Middlesex married Harry E. Price, of Charleroi, September 1, 1910. Groom is manager of the Charleroi Daily Mail.

Miss Mary Talfer, of Monessen, and John F. Stahl, of Brownsville, married August 28, 1910 at St. Leonard's Church. Wedding was kept a secret until the couple left for their honeymoon on the Great Lakes. Bride held the position of registry clerk in the post office, while the groom is a railway postal clerk. The couple will reside in Brownsville. (Diff. spelling of bride's maiden name)

Benjamin Harris Moore, 21 yrs. old, of Kingston, eloped with Sarah Myrtle Kreinbrook, of Monessen, on September 7, 1910 to Cumberland, MD. Sarah H. Moore, aged 19, and Mr. Stump, of Derry, decided to make it a double affair. After marrying, the two couples returned to Greensburg where their funds ran out. They walked the last 12 miles. The Moore's will live in Ligonier and the Stumps in Derry. A Sept. 16, 1910 anonymous letter to the editor disputed the walking, saying they hired an automobile to finish the journey.

Miss Ruth Markell, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. W. A. Markell, of Monessen and James Ferguson, of Belle Vernon have eloped to Cumberland, MD according to rumors. (9-4-1910)

Paul Bocz, of Howard, and Miss Elizabeth Baker, of Monessen, received a marriage license in Greensburg on September 2, 1910.

Mrs. Mary Showers, of Latrobe, was granted a wedding license September 13, 1910 to marry Harry B. Patterson of Latrobe.

James L. Rifenerick, of Monessen, married Miss Verna Madtes, daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Henry Madtes, former pastor of the First Baptist Church on September 14, 1910. The couple are living at the corner of Sixth Street and Reed Avenue. The groom is a shearman at the American Sheet and Tin Plate Co. The bride was formerly a MHS teacher.

John Butler, a pattern maker of the Pittsburgh Steel Co., returned to Monessen from vacation with a bride, the former, Miss Grace Weir, of Memphis Indiana. They will live on Reed Avenue. Wedding took place in Zanesville, Ohio on September 15, 1910.

The public was just informed that Percy E. Donner, brother of William Henry Donner, married Miss Elizabeth Cadwell Hamilton, of Pittsburgh, last November 15. The wedding took place in New York and has been a secret.

Adolph Homann, cashier of the First National Bank, and Miss Jeannette Pearsall, of Jeannette, got engaged on

September 17, 1910. Miss Pearsall is a sister of Mrs. J. Howard Kelly. Wedding will be in the early fall.

Dr. B. N. Berger, formerly of Monessen, and Miss Belle Lebowitz, of McKeesport, became engaged on September 18, 2010. Dr. Berger practices medicine in Homestead. The reception held at the Lebowitz home featured decorations of American Beauty roses and lavender.

Miss Mary Learnard and John R. Zollars were married September 20, 1910 at the home of the bride's parents on McKee Avenue. The groom is connected to the firm of Wide and Zollars of Donora. Bride was formerly a bookkeeper at Culler's Plumbing shop.

Miss Ethel Brown, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Alonza Brown, of Belle Vernon, eloped with Ray H. Huff, an electrical engineer of Dunbar. They were married September 20, 1910. The couple will live in Connellsville. (Sept. 28, 1910 paper spells the grooms last name "Hough" and says bride's mother is unforgiving.)

Michael T. Crowley, of Charleroi, a member of the firm of Correll and Crowley of Monessen married Miss Lillian Chalfant on September 21, 1910 at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Brownsville. The bride is the daughter of the late, Fred S. Chalfant, sheriff of Fayette County. They will reside at McKean Avenue and Third Street, Charleroi.

Mr. & Mrs. Mac Marker quietly celebrated their thirty-eighth wedding anniversary on September 21, 1910. They came to Monessen nine years ago.

James Gallenton and Miss Ethel Young, both of Monessen, were granted a marriage license in Pittsburgh.

Miss Lydia D. Waltner, daughter of Rev. and Mrs. C. J. Waltner of Christ Lutheran Church and A. T. Hennig, of Oshkosh, Wisconsin are engaged. Wedding will occur later in November.

Rev. J. R. Mouer, former pastor of the Monessen United Brethren Church, married in Lincoln, Nebraska, where he now lives. His first wife died soon after moving.

Miss Jeannette Pearsall, of Jeannette, wed Adolph Homann, a Monessen banker, at the Episcopal church of Jeannette on October 6, 1910. Temporarily, they will live at the Fifth Avenue Hotel.

Charles A. Light, of Monessen, and Miss Martha W. Malloy, of Monongahela, were married October 10, 1910 in Smithfield Street Methodist Episcopal Church in Pittsburgh. They will live on Donner Avenue. Groom is the owner of Light's Drug Store in Monessen on Donner Avenue. He purchased Frank Gamble's place.

Miss Lena Hazel Watts, age 17, daughter of Constable and Mrs. F. L. Watts, of Monessen, and Thornton Woods, age 24, were married October 10, 1910 in Greensburg by President Judge Lucian W. Doty. The bride's father

interrupted court proceedings to ask the judge to officiate at the ceremony. The judge stopped the proceedings and performed the ceremony in front of the entire court.

Miss Mary Kapusa, age 14, of Jeannette was granted a marriage license to wed Lojois Glako, age 22, of Duquesne on October 8, 1910 in Greensburg.

William Blumling, bartender at the May Hotel, and Miss Grace Seifried, of Sharpsburg, are engaged and will wed on October 19, 1910. The couple will live in Sharpsburg, but may move to Monessen later.

Mrs. Robert Jones, of Eleventh Street and Donner Avenue, will announce the engagement of her son, Robert Jones to Miss Estelle Hughes of Tenth Street on October 13, 1910. The bride is the bookkeeper with the firm of Hibbs Brothers.

Paul E. Teschke, of Monessen, and Clara Heilman, of McKeesport, were married September (October?) 12, 1910 at the McKeesport Christian Church. The groom is employed at the National Tin Plate mill.

Herbert E. Marks, formerly of the Tin Mill, married Miss Mary Kays Haines, of Pittsburgh on October 12, 1910. The couple will live in Wheeling, W. VA.

Squire James A. Watkins performed the marriage of Edward Elway, a driver for the American Express Company, and Miss Blodwin Williams, the night operator for the Bell Telephone Company, on October 15, 1910. They will live on Eighth Street.

Miss Bertha Ivill, of Rostraver, and Thomas Upstarf, of Charleroi, were married by Squire James Watkins on October 15, 1910. The couple will reside in Charleroi.

On October 27, 1910, Miss Anna Zundel, of Rostraver, will wed Joseph D. Dougherty. Bride is daughter of Mr. & Mrs. James Zundel. Groom is a farmer.

Fall Birthdays and Births of 1910

E. B. Culler, the Tin Mill carpenter, celebrated his 69th birthday on August 3, 1910 at his home on Highland Avenue.

Mr. & Mrs. Frank Fleming, of the Oaks on Eighth Street, had an eight pound baby boy August 4, 1910.

Elmer Campbell celebrated his 21st birthday on August 9, 1910 with a surprise party attended by forty friends.

Mr. & Mrs. J. W. Reynolds, of Sixth Street, had a baby boy August 18, 1910.

Dory Hayden of McKee Avenue was surprised by the members of the Presbyterian Church to celebrate his 30th birthday on August 19, 1910. His church friends presented him with a handsome leather chair.

Mr. & Mrs. William Harris of Reed Avenue had a baby boy, August 21, 1910.

Mr. & Mrs. W. R. Rogers had a daughter August 21, 1910. (The News reported it was a son.)

On August 22, 1910, Rev. & Mrs. A. T. Wallace, of Reed Avenue, had a baby girl.

Mr. & Mrs. T. J. Bulger, of Second Street, had a ten pound baby boy on August 28, 1910.

A baby son was born to Mr. & Mrs. J. B. White, of Reed Avenue, September 9, 1910 and named James Bunton White, Jr.

Miss Mena Anderson was surprised with a birthday party on September 15, 1910 at the George Nash home.

William Stevens, son of Mr. & Mrs. George Stevens had a surprise birthday party on September 17, 1910.

Mr. & Mrs. W. C. Leason, of 465 McKee Avenue, had a ten pound baby boy on September 23, 1910.

Mary Whorrall celebrated her seventh birthday on September 24, 1910. She is the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. G. W. Whorrall, of 21 Knox Avenue.

G. C. Diehl, Manager of the Daily Independent, was surprised with a birthday party in honor of his twenty-fifth birthday on October 4, 1910. His friends presented him with a library lamp.

Miss Grace Harvey, of the A. R. Ney Company, celebrated her birthday October 4, 1910 with thirty friends.

Mr. & Mrs. Sidney Davis, of Ninth Street and Reed Avenue, had a baby son on October 6, 1910.

D. W. O'Rourke, foreman of the nail department of Pittsburgh Steel, was surprised by his employees October 11, 1910 and given a Howard gold watch for his 56th birthday.

George Gardner, of Motheral Avenue, was surprised at his home on October 11, 1910 with a 30th birthday party.

Miss Emily Nash was surprised on her sixth birthday at her McKee Avenue home on October 13, 1910.

Mr. & Mrs. S. K. Long, of the Oaks Apartments, had an eleven pound son on October 16, 1910.

Volunteers are always welcome! Come join our award-winning team!

Dan's Archives



Mrs. Florence Harding casting her vote along with her husband, Senator Warren G. Harding in 1920 Presidential race

Monessen Women Vote for First Time

August 18, 2010 marks the 90th anniversary of ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, in which women were given the right to vote. Local women in anticipation of passage of the amendment and with the upcoming 1920 Presidential race between Senator Warren G. Harding and Governor James M. Cox, both of Ohio, met in Greensburg and formed a Republican women's party. Mrs. J. C. F. Motz, of Monessen, was elected an officer. The Westmoreland County commissioners met and declared an emergency ordering assessors to make a house to house canvas to register women of voting age. Women's organizations were notified they could volunteer to assist the assessors. Instructions were given saying not to embarrass women by asking any embarrassing questions. Assessors were

told to simply obtain assurance that the women are aged 21 or over. A forty cent poll tax will be assessed on each woman and would be payable to Tax Collector, Carl Woodward. His office remained open until midnight to expedite the matter.

Due to an anticipated large voter turnout on November 2, Monessen women were urged to vote as early as possible, preferably before the middle of the afternoon. It was announced that women would be available at the polls from 9 AM to 12 PM and from 1 PM to 4 PM to render assistance. Despite rainy weather on Election Day, more women voted in the early morning hours than men.

The Monessen News reported that because women voted in the November 2 election "the baby did not suffer nor did the husband or children go dinnerless or supperless, nor is every woman going around in silken garb with new sets of fur". They said it was the "dawning of a new era". 524 women voted in Monessen. County figures showed Monessen had at least 4000 women eligible to vote. Miss Anna Currie was the first woman to vote in the First Precinct of the First Ward. Miss Mary Gregg was the first woman to vote in the Second Precinct of the First Ward. Mrs. C. M. Ridenour cast the first woman vote in the First Precinct of the Second Ward. In the Second Precinct of the Second Ward, Mrs. Daniel Reamer was the first woman to vote. Miss Effie Cunningham claimed the honor of voting first in the Third Ward. Warren G. Harding was favored overall by Monessen voters with 1326 votes to 521 votes for Cox.

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