Valley Historian





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The Greater Monessen Historical Society
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Vol.26 2026 Autumn

Monessen 125 Book Is Available to Order!



The Board of Directors is pleased to announce that the Monessen 125 book is printed and ready to purchase. It covers Monessen history from 1892 to 2023.

Every twenty-five years since 1923, a commemorative book has been written covering the history of the City of Monessen and issued in the jubilee years, as an official story of the city. For the 125th anniversary, we decided to alter the format somewhat. We included subjects suggested by committee and board members, items that appeared in our newsletters and on our Facebook site, questions we received at the Monessen Heritage Museum, and areas of interest we felt were not covered or adequately covered in previous anniversary books.

We dedicate this volume to our immigrant ancestors, who settled in Monessen bringing their traditions, customs and food to build a city that is a great melting pot on the Monongahela.

Copies of the book are available at the Monessen Heritage Museum for $35. For mailing, there is a $8 shipping cost. The book is available on our website under the Museum Shoppe page. They make great gifts for the upcoming holiday season.

Founders Day, 2026

Our annual Founders Day Dinner was held on Saturday, October 3, 2026 at Jozwiak Hall in the Monessen St. Vincent DePaul Society building on Grand Blvd. The theme was "America 250", in honor of our nation's 250th birthday. DJ Eesh provided musical entertainment.



Our sponsors mean so much to us!

The following are a list of individuals, businesses and organizations that stepped forward and provided a sponsorship of our Founders Day Dinner 2026 "America 250." 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 M. Schoonmaker Brigade – The Robert Miner Family Foundation

Colonel James M. Schoonmaker Brigade – Janet Imbrescia

Greyhound League – Lena Alvarez

Greyhound League – Ted Harhai

Former PA State Representative, Former Monessen Mayor, Former Monessen Councilman

Greyhound League – Highway Appliance

Black and White Society – In Memory of Karen L. (Ostapowicz) Susick, Monessen High School Class of 1968, by Her Loving Husband, Dr. Tim Susick

Black and White Society – Douglas Education Center

Black and White Society – Joshua R. Huhn, DMD, LLC

Black and White Society – Andy Dzurinko

Donner Dollar Club – Shire Law Firm

We offer our special thanks to the St. Vincent de Paul Society for the use of Jozwiak Hall.



Annual Fund Drive and Membership Renewal

The annual Fund Drive forms will be sent out soon and cover your membership renewal. The Board has kept the dues the same as in past years. Consider giving gift subscriptions! Please be as generous as possible. 😊



GMHS President Daniel Zyglowicz stands with Homeowner Shirley Beneccio in front of the Historic Home for 2026

Historic Home Selected

The Greater Monessen Historical Society has selected the "George and Elizabeth Shrader Home" on Marion Avenue, as our "Monessen Historic Home" for 2026

In 1926, George and Elizabeth Shrader subdivided the farm that they had purchased in 1919 into building lots. It was named George Shrader's Fifth Addition to the City of Monessen. The area covered included the Hilltop Fire Station along Marion Avenue to Cross Street. Then from Cross Street to Grand Blvd. Then from Grand Blvd. back to the Hill Top Fire Station. The streets covered in the Plan of Lots are Marion Avenue, Cross Street, Meadow Avenue, Grand Blvd, and Shrader Avenue. At the time, the Manown Schoolhouse was located where the Hill Top Fire Station is now located.

George Shrader was a building contractor and started constructing homes on some of the lots located on Marion Avenue. One of first homes constructed was 1514 Marion Avenue between 1926 and 1929. Members of his family would live in the home until around 1935 when it was sold to the Kotch Family. They lived in it until 1938. At some point during their ownership, they constructed a garage. In 1938, George and Margaret Houlis bought the house, and their family would own it until 1987 when Carmen and Shirley Beneccio bought the house. They raised three boys in the home: Vito, Marcello, and Sereno.

The house still retains original doors and doorknobs on the second floor. The woodwork in most of the rooms is original. The first-floor dining and living room retain the original hardwood floor. The first floor consists of a kitchen, dining, and living room. There is a small bathroom off the kitchen. The second floor consists of two bedrooms, bathroom, and hallway. There is also a laundry chute from the second-floor closet to the basement. The attic was converted into another bedroom. There is a full basement. The lot runs 50 feet along Marion Avenue and then 200 feet back to Shrader Avenue.

Can You Help Us?

The Historical Society is working with Tom DeRose and Alex Stupakis, MHS Alumni. They want to digitize MHS sports films of 1969, as well as other class years. Do you have any sport films from our Alma Mater you would be interested in loaning or donating? Funding is critical in how many can

be done at one time, or if this will be done in phases.

Also, the GMHS Board has decided to sponsor a Monessen Sports Exhibit in 2027. Do you have items in the attic or cellar that can be donated or loaned? Please let us know. 724-684- 8460.

Planned Estate Giving

Make a Plan. Make a Difference. Create a Legacy.

Making a gift of estate assets can be simple to do and will provide lasting support for the Greater Monessen Historical Society's efforts to connect people to history. It will also ensure that the heritage and legacy left by our immigrant ancestors continues into the future.

Your Family Genealogy

Have you donated a copy of your family tree to the Heritage Museum? Please consider donating your research to us.

Please Keep in Mind that We are Always in Search of:

***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!



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.

***We Need a Docent for Fridays at the Museum! Can you help? Contact the Museum for details.**

Call for Actors and Actresses

We are also looking for people to portray Monessen historical figures, such as Mrs. William Henry Donner, at events. If interested, please contact us.

Museum Gift Shoppe

Check out our webpage to see items available in our Gift Shoppe. We have the largest collection of nationality cookbooks available in the area. They make wonderful gifts. Recently, we added several new cookbooks to the list. Some cookbooks are featured in this newsletter.

One Hundred Years Ago in the Newspapers November 2026

The Monessen Russian Orthodox Church Choir performed on radio station, KDKA on Saturday. (11-02-1926) Daily Independent

Thomas McKee Post, American Legion received war trophies to display. A German machine gun, rifles, hand grenades, shells, helmets, insignias and powder boxes. (11-02-1926) Daily Independent

Thirty families in Pricedale received eviction notices from the Pittsburgh Coal Company, due to striking. (11-04-1926) Daily Independent

R. T. Dale, from the Ford Motor Agency, painted on the roof of the Monessen Foundry and Machine Company the word "Monessen" in large ten foot high letters, along with an arrow. (11-06-1926) Daily Independent

President Calvin Coolidge issued a proclamation asking citizens to display the American flag on Armistice Day. The local American Legion said anyone wishing to display the flag can contact them to receive a flag, (11-06-1926) Daily Independent

Turtle soup supper tonight at the Moose Lodge. (11-08-1926) Daily Independent

Roast beef dinner at the U. B. Church on Thursday for forty cents. Vegetable soup is twenty cents a quart. (11-10-1926) Daily Independent

The Ladies Aid Society of Christ Lutheran Church will serve a sauerkraut supper in the church basement at 221 McKee Avenue on December 11, from 5-8 PM. (11-10-1926) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. N. J. Weiss, of McKee Avenue, traveled by car to Philadelphia to spend a week at the Sesquicentennial. (11-16-1926) Daily Independent

After paving Donner and Schoonmaker Avenues, it has been suggested to make each street one way. (11-22-1926) Daily Independent

Philadelphia authorities alerted Monessen police that Eleanor Fuller, of Philadelphia, deserted her husband and four children to go live with William Palmer, of Monessen, at 634 Locust St. Supposedly, she wrote to her husband saying she was being held against her will and wished to return home. (11-27-1926) Daily Independent

Weddings, Divorces and Engagements November 1926

Louise Felgar was granted a divorce from Thomas Felgar. (11-01-1926) Daily Independent

Miss Jeannette Carson, of Donner Avenue, and Eldin Bentz wed in Pittsburgh on Saturday. They will live at 548 Donner Avenue. The bride is employed in the offices of the American Tin Plate Company. The groom works for the P&LE Railroad. (11-01-1926) Daily Independent

Miss Dorothy Lewis, of Donora, married Martin Doylle, of Donner Avenue, on

Saturday at St. Leonard's (Irish) Roman Catholic Church. (11-03-1926) Daily Independent

Miss Anna Sulick, of Reed Avenue, wed John Kopan, of Swedeland, PA, at Most Holy Name of Jesus (Slovak) Roman Catholic Church, yesterday. (11-05-1926) Daily Independent

Today, Miss Roselle Nicholson, of Jacobs Creek, and J. I. Smith, of Monessen married at St. Leonard's (Irish) Roman Catholic Church. The groom is the paymaster at the American Sheet and Tin Plate Company. (11-10-1926) Daily Independent

Miss Marjorie Catherine Renpert and Anthony Charles Laneve, married today at 415 Sixth Street. (11-10-1926) Daily Independent

Miss Roselia Skurkay and Michael Kiseda were married in St. Mary's Byzantine Church today. They will live at 214 Second Street. The groom is an assistant cashier at the Peoples National Bank. (11-15-1926) Daily Independent

It was announced last evening that Miss Lois A. McVay, of McKee Avenue, and Paul J. Yeaton wed on January 19, 1926. The bride is a cashier at Johnsons Restaurant. The groom works in the Open Hearth at Pittsburgh Steel. They will live in the Twin Apartments at the corner of Third and Schoonmaker. (11-19-1926) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. John Krupanic, East Schoonmaker Avenue, celebrated their Silver Wedding Anniversary last night. (11-22-1926) Daily Independent

Miss Anna Ross, of Reed Avenue, a member of the MHS Class of 1925, and Frank Broman, of MHS Class of 1923, married today in the Parsonage of the M. E. Church. The groom is employed by the American Sheet and Tin Plate Co. They will live in an apartment on Reed Avenue. (11-24-1926) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Myer Miller, of Reed Avenue, celebrated their twentieth wedding anniversary yesterday. (11-26-1926) Daily Independent

Paul J. Zoretich filed for divorce from Antonia Zoretich, due to desertion. They were married twenty years. (11-27-1926) Daily Independent

November Births, 1926

Mr. and Mrs. John Balluch had a fourteen-pound son. (11-02-1926) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Scotch, of 1037 Morgan Avenue, are the parents of a seven-pound baby girl today. (11-04-1926) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Michael Terpak, of 1411 Schoonmaker Ave., had a baby girl on Sunday. (11-08-1926) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph W. Maughan, 364 East Schoonmaker, are the parents of a 10 ½ baby boy, born Saturday. (11-08-1926) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Rotolo, 1234 McMahon Avenue, had a baby boy on Saturday. (11-10-1926) Daily Independent

Today, Mr. and Mrs. John Tresky, of Graham Avenue, had a son. (11-11-1926) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Alex Farkus, 945 Leeds Avenue, had a nine-pound baby daughter last evening. (11-16-1926) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Gregg, of Motheral Avenue, are the parents of a son, who was born on Friday. He is the fifth boy in the family. (11-16-1926) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Doyle, of Schoonmaker Avenue, celebrated the birth of a daughter on Sunday. (11-16-1926) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Greco, 630 McMahan Avenue, had an eleven-pound baby boy today. (11-17-1926) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Angelo Brighenti, are the parents of a ten-pound baby girl today. (11-19-1926) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. R. S. Kelly, of Fourth Street, are the parents of an eight pound girl, who was born yesterday. (11-20-1926) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. John Fire, 440 Motheral Avenue, had a daughter yesterday. (11-23-1926) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. John Desko, 373 East Schoonmaker Avenue, had a thirteen-pound son today. (11-24-1926) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. L. C. Gess, of Reed Avenue, are celebrating the birth of their daughter yesterday at Dudas Maternity Hospital. (11-26-1926) Daily Independent

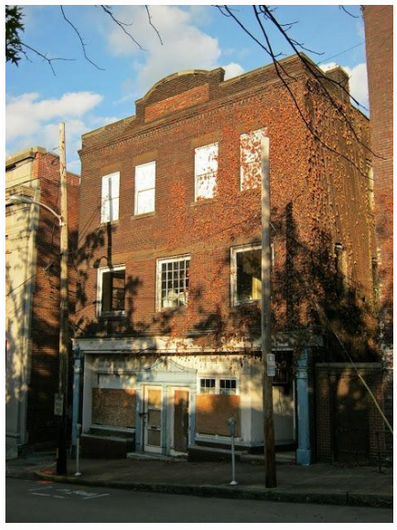
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Christian, 1209 McMahon Avenue, had a 9 ½ pound son today. (11-27-1926) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. John Joyce, of McKee Avenue, had an 8 ½ pound son at Dudas Maternity Hospital. (11-30-1926) Daily Independent

Mr. and Mrs. Howard Popp, of Knox Avenue, named their new son, Arthur Leonard, who was born on Sunday. (11-30-1926) Daily Independent

Former Library Demolished

Another piece of Monessen history was recently lost to demolition. The Barben Building at 112 Fifth Street was the second site of Monessen Public Library. It served as the library from 1944-1959. When the current library at 326 Donner Avenue was constructed, a "Book Brigade" of MHS students formed a human chain to "carry" the books from Fifth Street to Third Street. Monessen Library was originally founded in 1936 in the Barker Building at the corner of Donner Avenue and Sixth Street.



Barben Building

A Recipe For You!

St. Nicholas Bean Soup

San Nicola Zuppa Di Fagioli

1 can fava beans (Drained)

3 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil

2 quarts of water

1 onion (Finely Chopped)

3 ribs of celery (Finely Chopped)

4 cloves of garlic (Minced)

6 pieces of bacon (Diced)

1 large can of diced tomatoes

2 Tbsp. parsley (Chopped)

Pecorino or Romano cheese (Grated)

Salt & pepper to taste

1. In a large soup pot, sauté onion, celery and bacon in olive oil. Sauté until tender.

2. Add garlic and sauté for 1 or 2 minutes. Do not let garlic burn.

3. Add beans, tomatoes and juice, parsley and water.

4. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for about 1 hour until soup thickens.

5. Season with salt & pepper.

6. Remove from heat and serve drizzled with additional olive oil and grated cheese.

From "Celebrate Christmas, Italian Style" by Lawrence G. Kozlowski. Available in the Museum Shoppe or online through the webpage.
https://monessenhistoricalsociety.com/shop/

Cookbooks can be ordered online, by calling the museum or by visiting the Shoppe. Many varieties to choose from. Excellent gifts!

GMHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

Webmaster: Vito Beneccio

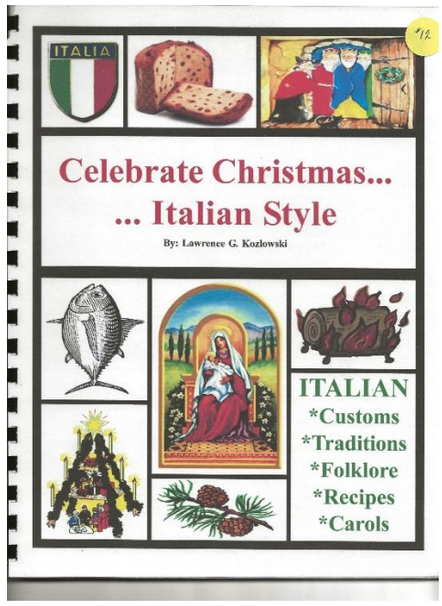


The Board of Directors extends their holiday greetings to all of our members, benefactors and friends. Thank you for your support!

Please call if planning to visit the Monessen Heritage Museum during the holiday season to make sure a volunteer is on duty. 724-684-8460

Mark Your Calendars! The annual GMHS Holiday Party is scheduled for Saturday, January 9, 2027, at noon. Hope to see you there. You are invited!

Holiday Gifts from the Museum Shoppe



Celebrate Christmas Italian Style, $15.00

Printed in color and includes an explanation of various Italian Christmas traditions. (spiral bound soft cover) 30 pp.

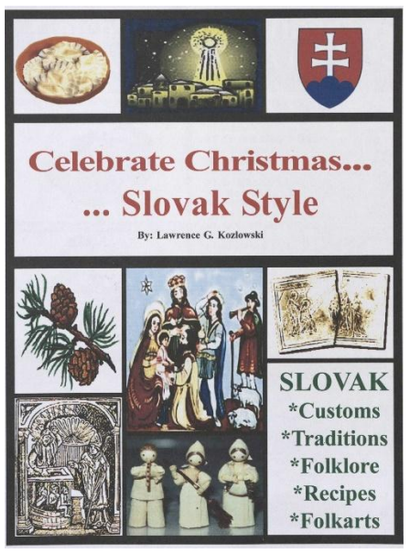
By Lawrence G. Kozlowski



Celebrate Christmas Polish Style, $15.00

Printed in color and includes an explanation of various Polish Christmas traditions. (spiral bound soft cover) 30 pp.

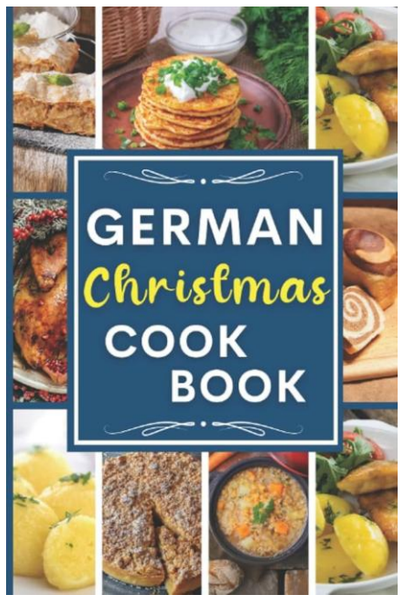
By Lawrence G. Kozlowski



Celebrate Christmas Slovak Style, $15.00

Printed in color and includes an explanation of various Slovak Christmas traditions. (spiral bound soft cover) 30 pp.

By Lawrence G. Kozlowski

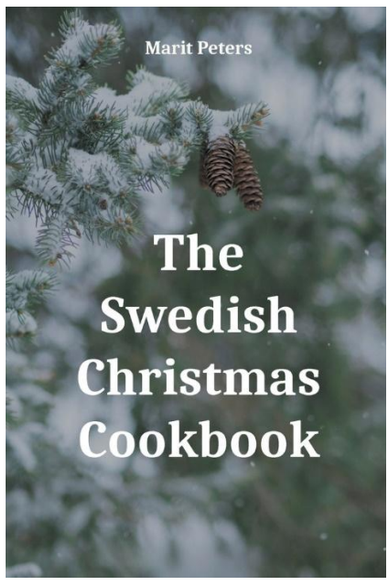


German Christmas Cookbook, $18.00

Spend this Christmas comfortably with the most delicious 70 German Recipes

(soft cover) pp 118

by Carmen Marles



The Swedish Christmas Cookbook, $12.00

The main Christmas meal is on Christmas Eve – 24th December – with a famous Julbord, a buffet of numerous dishes over several

courses. Dishes include meats such as ham and meatballs, various herring dishes and smoked salmon, and a wonderful array of biscuits and desserts.

(soft cover) 80 pp

by Marit Peters



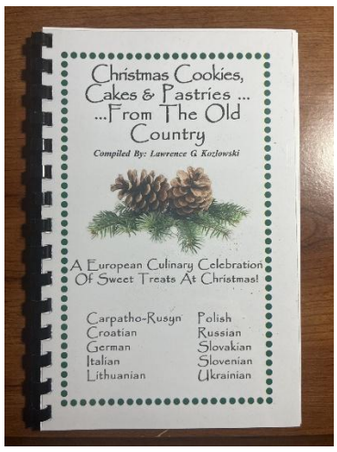
Slovak Catholic Sokol, $20.00

The Fourth Edition of the Slovak Catholic Sokol Cook Book was published in 1986 to honor the 100th Anniversary of the dedication of the Statue of Liberty.

(hardcover) 278 pp with index

by Slovak Catholic Sokol

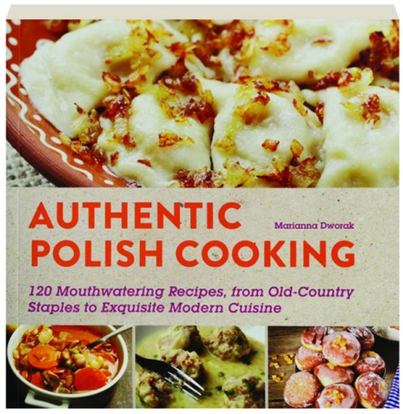
4th Edition 1986



Christmas Cookies, Cakes, & Pastries……From The Old Country, $12.00

Recipes include Carpatho-Rusyn, Croation, German, Italian, Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, Slovakian, Slovenian, and Ukrainian.

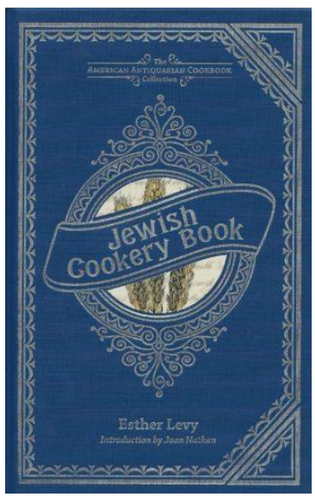
Compiled by Lawrence G. Kozlowski. (Soft cover) 40 pp



Authentic Polish Cooking, $15.00

(soft cover) 170 pp

By Marianna Dworak



Jewish Cookery Book, $15.00

(hard cover) 200 pp with index.

First published in 1871 and reprinted in 2012.