

The Mahoning Valley Historical Society Newsletter

HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS



PRESERVING THE VALLEY'S HISTORY FOR 133 YEARS

Volume 36 Issue 6

May & June 2009

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- Membership
- Museum Tours
- Archival Library
- Outreach Programs
- Facilities Rental

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Take a Walk Through Wick Park

During Youngstown's pre-industrial days, transportation was primarily on foot or horse drawn. Initial residential development was clustered in what would become the downtown. As transportation improved, the upper classes could afford to move away from the densely populated core. This movement was towards the north away from the noise and grime of the mills and commerce. Wick Park, a gift to the City from the family whose name it bears, was designed as an open space with horse trails. The area adjacent to the park and on Fifth Avenue north of the park became the domain of Youngstown's rich and famous.

Join the Young Leaders Advisory Board for walking tours of the Wick Park neighborhood on **Saturday, June 6th**. Tours will begin in the pavillion at **4:30 and 6:30 p.m.** This free event is sponosred in part by Youngstown CityScape. 🐾



Wick Park in 1906.

Mahoning Valley Historical Society's 134th Annual Meeting

Tuesday, June 16, 2009 ~ 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Youngstown Historical Center of Industry & Labor
\$30 for MVHS members - \$35 for Guests

The evening will include

- The Fifth Annual Historic Preservation Awards Program
- Displays from the Historical Society's Programs & Collections
- More updates on the Mahoning Valley History Center

Watch for your invitation!

Heaton Family Visits the Valley

Descendants of the Heaton Family, who were the Mahoning Valley's first iron makers, visited the local Heaton blast furnace sites during the first weekend in April.

Susan Heaton, her parents Richard and Janice Heaton, all of Princeton, Ill., and her uncle, Clifford Heaton of Urbana, Ill., came to Youngstown and met with representatives from Mill Creek MetroParks, the Struthers Historical Society and Mahoning Valley Historical Society Executive Director Bill Lawson. Richard and Clifford are great-great-grandsons of Reese Heaton, a brother of Dan and James Heaton.



Bill Lawson, Susan Heaton, Clifford Heaton, Richard Heaton & Janice Heaton

In 1803, James and Dan Heaton built a furnace, known as the Hopewell, on the side of Yellow Creek gorge, the first blast furnace built in Ohio and possibly the first one west of the Allegheny Mountains. The family also visited the Mill Creek Furnace built ca. 1830 and Pioneer Pavillion, a 1821 woolen mill built and operated by James Heaton.



Contributions to *The Campaign for the Mahoning Valley History Center* as of April 15, 2009 total \$3.178 Million dollars. The federal appropriation requests submitted in February are still on track and Congressman Tim Ryan's office moved the request forward for consideration in the 2010 fiscal year budget. The Campaign is also continuing the transition of day to day management to in house support.

More details on the project and construction will be available at the Historical Society's annual meeting on June 16th.

Hands-On History Summer Camps

Programs offered in June, July & August! for ages 6-14. Visit

www.mahoninghistory.org to register!

From This Direction

When asked to identify the most significant artifact in our Historical Society's collection, a less-than-serious response that always raises eyebrows is "the Ark of the Covenant." Of course I'm not referring to the long lost Biblical Ark, but a wooden replica once used at the Youngstown Lodge of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. The split seconds of wonder and fascination appearing on the faces of my victims melt away once they hear the rest of the story and get the (bad) joke!

Members of the Heaton family from Illinois were awestruck and overwhelmed by what they found during their visit to the Mahoning Valley in early April. Richard, Clifford and Susan Heaton are direct descendents of Reese Heaton, a brother of pioneer ironmasters Daniel and James. Reese also lived and worked in the Mahoning Valley before moving his family westward in the early nineteenth century. His son Issac stayed to work with his uncles in the local iron industry until the 1850's.

What these people saw and touched at the Hopewell and Mill Creek Furnace sites and Pioneer Pavilion was the real thing—landmarks of their family's very significant contributions to the Valley's history that are preserved and appreciated still by many local residents. This writer was reminded during time spent with the Heaton's of how transformational direct encounters with original structures, objects and documents can be, and that our mission to collect preserve and celebrate local history in all forms is indeed still vitally important.

~H. William Lawson

Get your Hands-On:

History Day

Rebecca Whittenberger, Curator of Education

For over 20 years, the Mahoning Valley Historical Society has participated in Regional History Day, at Youngstown State University. It is an event where local students create and showcase history projects related to a specific theme. This year's theme was "The Individual in History: Actions and Legacies," and was attended by over 200 students from middle schools and high schools all over the Mahoning Valley on April 4th. Each year the Historical Society recognizes and awards those students who focused on some aspect of local history in their project. Award winners receive a complimentary one-year membership to the Historical Society, and first place winners receive an invitation to display their project in the Arms Family Museum. This year's award winners were:

First Place

Edward M. Zitnik, Jr., Hubbard High School
"William McKinley as Our Governor"

Second Place

Abigail Agler & Dawn Lingenfelter, Hubbard High School
"An Unknown Hero: Milton Sutliff"

Third Place

Brittany Mihaly, Joe Mihaly & Sarah Ryser, Hubbard High School
"James A. Traficant, Jr."

Special Mentions

Henriette Ovaska & Hallie Yerian, Holy Family School
"The Shadow of Sickness on the McKinleys"

Brandon Reyes & Ryan Cox, St. Joseph the Provider School
"Kelly Pavlik"

Joseph Svirebely, Kayla Kilar, & Chelsea Thompson, Hubbard High School
"George Wick"

Also during the month of April, the Curator of Education was a guest speaker for the third consecutive year at the annual YSU English Festival. Six presentations were given over a period of three days to over 200 junior high and high school students from schools across the Mahoning Valley. Created especially for this event, the presentation was entitled "The Home Front During World War II" and featured authentic World War II artifacts from the Historical Society's permanent collections. ✪

Save the Date!

July 18th
Saturday



COOL
Delights

History on Tap returns to the Historic Harry Burt/Ross Radio Building!

Live Entertainment ♦ Signature Cocktails ♦ Unique Auction Items

Artifact-ually Speaking

Pamela L. Speis, Archivist

Ask older local residents what they remember about Youngstown, and many will mention one of the theaters: Keith Albee Palace; State; Liberty-Paramount; Warner; Park; and Strand to name a few. Some theaters changed names, others moved their locations or changed the type of entertainment they offered.



Park Theatre in 1901

Vaudeville, live theater acts, film and burlesque all had their place in downtown Youngstown. One of the theaters mentioned most frequently is the Park. It is not the theatrical companies, plays, musical comedies, or motion pictures that everyone recalls having come to the Park Theater, it is the burlesque.



The first mention of a "Park Theater" in downtown Youngstown comes from a program dated 1898 for a theatrical troupe. Sadly the location of the theater is not given in the program or the city directory for that year.



The first known location for the Park Theater is 111-115 East Federal Street from 1901 until at least 1941. In these early years the Park was known for its theatrical performances, live acts, musicals and motion pictures. Programs surviving in the collections provide detail about the performances during this time period.



Park Theatre in June of 1961

Sometime in the late 1940's the Park shifted to a different sort of live act, the burlesque. By 1969 the Park had relocated to 446 West Federal Street, remaining there until 1979. It then operated as the Park Theater, and the New Park Theater, offering adult entertainment of live and film varieties. It is this incarnation that the Park is remembered for, not for the major headliners that visited the Valley in the early 20th Century.



Local artist Al Parella worked at WKBN for 25 years as the station's art director. In the earliest days of TV broadcasting the art director was an invaluable resource for a TV station, as all advertising art and graphic art that the station needed was produced in house.



Sketch of Warren P. Williamson, Jr.'s home on Auburndale, with first WKBN antenna.

Mr. Parella was born in Youngstown in 1909 and died at the age of 90 in 1999. He was a graduate of South High School and was an honors graduate of Cleveland School of Art. He worked at a variety of places before WKBN including the Thompson Advertising

Agency, and as a cartoonist for the *Youngstown Telegram*. He taught classes in advertising at Youngstown State University, and during World War II he served in the Air Force as a graphic artist and camouflage expert.



Advertising graphic for WKBN Sports

Pamela Speis Appointed to State Records Advisory Board

Archivist Pamela L. Speis has recently been appointed to the Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board (OHRAB). This appointment is for a renewable three-year term. The Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board is the central body for historical records planning in the state. Board members represent Ohio's public and private archives, records offices, and research institutions.



They are appointed by the governor. The mission of the OHRAB is to enrich the culture and protect the rights of Ohioans by fostering activities that identify, preserve, and provide access to the state's documentary heritage. Congratulations, Pam!

The Mahoning Valley Historical Society,

founded in 1875, educates and promotes an interest in the history of the Mahoning Valley by collecting, preserving and developing material representative of the people who have inhabited the region.



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Historical Happenings,

is published bi-monthly by the Mahoning Valley Historical Society. It is sent as a free benefit of MVHS membership. MVHS is a private non-profit corporation, which owns and operates the Arms Family Museum of Local History, the MVHS Archival Library, and the Business and Media Archives of the Mahoning Valley.

Leann Rich, Editor



Volunteers Honored

On April 28, 2009, the Mahoning Valley Historical Society said "thankyou" to our hardworking volunteers. As part of National Volunteer Appreciation Week, MVHS volunteers enjoyed a delicious lunch and tokens of appreciation to honor them for their help.



The Dorothy J. Honey Volunteer of the Year Award, established in 2003, was awarded to Silke Grothe. A native of Germany, Silke has been working with several staff members processing collections and fabricating exhibits. Congratulations, Silke!

Our thanks also go to these dedicated volunteers that have worked with MVHS over the past year: Jennifer Centric, Nick Demko, Ester Hallaman, Lynette Host, Mike McCleery, Paula McKinney, Richard Mitchell, Gordon Morgan, Jr., Amy Oakley, Joseph D. Palen, Cortney Parsons, Priscilla Sutton, Brenda Vavlas, and Amany Youssef. 🐾

Upcoming Events

History to Go

Wick Park Walking Tour

June 6, 2009
4:30 and 6:30 p.m.

MVHS Annual Meeting

Youngstown Historical Center of Industry & Labor (Steel Museum)

Tuesday, June 16
5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Hands-On Summer Camps

"Beautifully Useful!" Decorative Arts Camp
"Pioneer Days!" Camp
"Hi-Tech History" Video Camp

June 23-26
July 14-17
August 4-7

MVHS Board of Directors

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