

The Mahoning Valley Historical Society Newsletter

HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS

Volume 53 Issue 3
Winter 2026

Inspiration through Heritage since 1875

Cookie Table & Cocktails Celebrates



100 Years of Broadcasting in the Valley

In This Issue

- *Cookie Table and Cocktails*
- *Tips on Property Research*
- *Meeting of the Youngstown Press Club*
- *Bites and Bits of History Winter Series Announced*



DATE CHANGE**Mahoning Melodies:
Setting the Record
on the Valley's Place
in Music History***Dante Bernard,
MVHS Museum Educator***February 19, 2026**

Tune in for a lively discussion on the Mahoning Valley's rhythmic past. Rewind with us as we explore archival footage and newspapers to build a track list of the area's diverse music scene.

Run a sound check on your local knowledge, and learn a little more about the artists who lived just around the bend.

**The Fight for Worker
Rights in the
Mahoning Valley***Sean T. Posey,
Local Historian & Author***March 19, 2026**

Join historian Sean T. Posey as he explores the rich and hard-fought history of labor struggles in the Mahoning Valley. From the major industrial strikes that shaped the region in the early twentieth century, to the transformative impact of New Deal labor policies, to the later expansion of unionization into the public sector, the program traces how local workers organized, demanded fair treatment, and influenced national debates about economic justice. Participants will gain insight into an often-neglected aspect of local and American history.

Another Year of Important Anniversaries!

Mahoning Valley Historical Society is now firmly into year 151 of our existence! As noted in the Annual Report edition of Historical Happenings last Fall, our yearlong celebration of the MVHS sesquicentennial was a rousing success!

On the horizon in 2026 are two more very significant anniversaries: one for our local audience and one for our entire nation. As indicated on the cover of this edition, 100 years of broadcasting in the Mahoning Valley is the theme for this year's Cookie Table & Cocktails fundraising event on Saturday, February 21. The décor and atmosphere at the Maronite Center that night will highlight the rich history of radio and television broadcasting in the Mahoning Valley market.

Our master of ceremonies once again will be local TV news feature reporter and anchor extraordinaire, Stan Boney. And if that's not enough to draw our members and friends out for a great winter event, perhaps the thought of 11,000-plus homemade wedding style cookies from more than 100 local bakers will "sweeten the pot!"

There will be other opportunities to learn about our local commercial broadcasting business history leading up to September 26, 2026. That is the centennial anniversary date of the first radio broadcast from what became WKBN Broadcasting Corporation, the region's first successful commercial broadcasting company, which occurred in the living room of co-founder Warren P. Williamson, Jr.'s home at 26 East Auburndale Avenue in Youngstown. Those call letters are still part of this market's very well populated and diverse radio and television markets.

*Celebrate America's semiquincentennial.*

The 250th anniversary of the approval and publishing of the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America, which occurred during the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in early July 1776, is coming up! Communities and historical organizations all over our country are preparing for this July's celebration, and planning related events, programs and publications for throughout this year.

MVHS will be part of several local commemorations. We are dedicating all of this year's Bites and Bits of History programs held on the third Thursdays at Noon at Tyler History Center to each month's designated anniversary themes. Upcoming editions of Historical Happenings and the MVHS weekly e-newsletters will outline other exhibits, programs and events that will carry the America 250 theme that we are planning both for our sites and audiences, and in partnership with other institutions in our community!

May we all experience health, happiness, many opportunities for learning about our history, and a renewed sense of both local and national cohesion and community in this new year!

Page 2 of your newsletter might have looked a bit familiar. There was a slight mistake & an old article from Bill Lawson was reprinted.

Here is the correct article. There was also a date change for Bites & Bits after the newsletter went to print.



Researching a Property



Points to Keep in Mind

- Street Numbers of Addresses can and do change.
- Street names can have changed.

Photographs of properties:

- Prior to the digital age, people paid to have film developed. THEREFORE they were very particular as to what they took photographs of. Interior views are VERY RARE. People-oriented views and exterior photos are far more common.

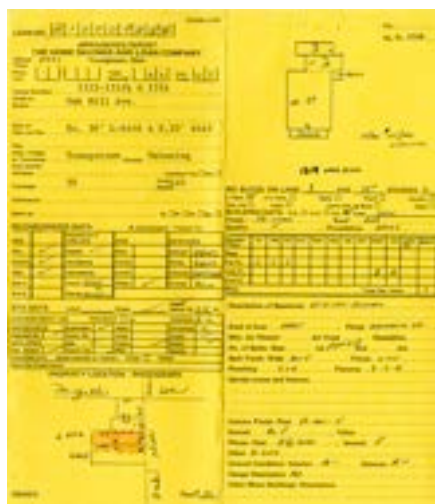


Places to Look

OWNERSHIP

Try visiting a Recorder's Office or County Courthouse. Look for the most recent deed. Each deed will refer to the next most recent, e.g. "as recorded in County Deeds Vol. 34 page 143." Read each deed. Sometimes a researcher will get lucky and the structure(s) will be mentioned within the deed. Keep a record of what is found and where the information is from. This will help to generate a list showing who owned it and for how long.

If the researcher bought the property, they may have been given a Title Abstract which typically covers at least 70 years back. This is a good starting place for finding ownership information.



OCCUPANCY

City directories are a good place to start. Find the entry for the street name & number, then look at the entry, which will usually provide the occupation of the owner(s). City directories can provide a general idea of when the property was developed as well. This works only if the property was listed in the city directory. Outside of city limits is not included in older directories.

Atlases and Maps may indicate landowners, and possibly location of structure(s).

Tax Records may be held at courthouse or historical organizations.

Once a list of owners and a list of occupants has been compiled, then one can look for information about the people associated with the property, or the business.

Probate Estate Case Files, in particular, can shed light on usage of property, e.g. inventory includes coffins, embalming items which is a good indicator for funeral home or an embalmer.

Census Records & Enumeration Maps can be used to find out what page or sheet of the census record is needed to look at for family information, e.g. 1950 enumeration maps available on National Archives website.

ARCHITECTS

Architectural Firms retain ownership of designs. The first owner is usually given floor plans but they don't get usually get passed on to additional owners.

If the architect is known, check to see if they are still in business. If not, it is highly possible a current architecture firm has inherited their old designs and records. Check around to see if a current firm has drawings.

Check local historical organizations to see if they have any drawings. Although rare, sometimes drawings have been donated. NOTE: copyright still resides with the architect that originally drew them so most drawings cannot be duplicated, although you may be allowed to at least look at them and take notes.

Check with the local historical society or other reference libraries. There may be additional resources that can help. The archivists and librarians are also a good source of advice and knowledge as to where and how to look for additional information.

Advertisements for housing developments can include floor plans. You can also check newspapers, company newsletters, brochures.





SAVE
THE
DATE

Saturday, February 21, 2026 * NEW LOCATION!

**Thank you to our
sponsors! We couldn't
do this without you.**

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WEDDING PLANNER

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HONEYMOON

DIRUSSO'S SAUSAGE

In 1926, WKBN made its very first broadcast from the basement of founder Warren P. Williamson Jr., marking the beginning of radio in the Mahoning Valley. This year, Cookie Table and Cocktails celebrates that legacy with a fun, radio and television-inspired theme.

Join us on Saturday, February 21, 2026, at our new location—the Maronite Center on Meridian Road. Now in its twelfth year, Cookie Table and Cocktails has become the “can't miss” event of the season and sells out quickly.

Tickets are \$75 per person or \$680 for a VIP, reserved table of eight, with pricing unchanged from last year. A delicious buffet dinner is included in your ticket price, but the real star of the night is the incredible cookie table, featuring more than 10,000 homemade cookies beautifully displayed for everyone to enjoy.

It's an evening of great food, local history, and unforgettable fun, all to support Mahoning Valley Historical Society. Join us as we celebrate a century of broadcasting at one of our community's sweetest traditions!



Indulgence Never Tasted So Good!

How You Can Help

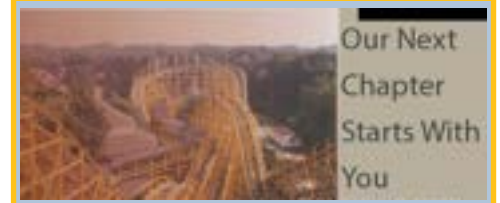
- Purchase tickets. You should receive your invitation by mid-January. If you haven't, give us a call at 330-743-2589 and we will send one out to you. Online reservations will be available after January 23, 2026.
- We are currently looking for bakers, so if you are interested, call Traci Manning at 330-743-2589, ext. 121 for the details. Bakers receive one free ticket to the event, a \$75 value.
- We are in need of items to create baskets for the basket raffle, or completed baskets. You can drop off either at Tyler History Center, 325 West Federal Street in downtown Youngstown.
- Sponsorships are still available. Call the Linda Kostka in the MVHS Development Department at 330-743-2589, ext. 125 for more information about sponsorships or baskets.



Thank You for Your Gift to the MVHS Annual Fund

At MVHS, everything we are able to do is because of the generosity of you, our supporters. The preservation of our extraordinary collections, our ability to acquire important artifacts, and funding for history education programs are made possible through your generous gifts. We thank the following for their support: *(Gifts received through 12/26/2025.)*

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It's not too late to make a gift to support MVHS. Here's how:

Visit our website at www.mahoninghistory.org/annual-fund

Mail a check to MVHS at 648 Wick Avenue, Youngstown, Ohio, 44502

Call Linda Kostka, CFRE, at 330-743-2589, ext. 125 to charge your gift over the phone

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
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| Ms. Linda Stanko | Gifts received after 12/26/2025 will be listed in the Spring 2026 edition of <i>Historic Happenings</i> . |
| Ms. Norma J. Stefanik | Great care has been taken to compile this donor list from our database. If you spot an error or omission, please accept our apologies, and let us know so we can correct our records. |
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Tax Law Change for 2026

Beginning in 2026, the new tax law gives people who don't itemize a charitable deduction for donations up to \$2,000 for married couples and \$1,000 for single filers. At the same time, if you itemize, you will have to contribute .5% of your adjusted gross income before getting any tax break. However, itemizers' tax breaks stop at 35% of your taxable income, even though the top tax rate is 37%.

Contact your tax professional or accountant for more information and how to file.



BITES AND BITS OF HISTORY PRESENTED BY THE JOHN AND LORETTA HYNES FOUNDATION



Bites and Bits of History lunchtime programs are held at noon on the third Thursday of each month at Tyler History Center.

Made in the Mahoning Valley: Local Firsts

Traci Manning, Director of Education at Mahoning Valley Historical Society



The Fight for Worker Rights in the Mahoning Valley

Sean T. Posey, Local Historian & Author



Mahoning Melodies: Setting the Record on the Valley's Place in Music History

Dante Bernard, MVHS Museum Educator



January 15, 2026

Join us as we kick off America 250 with the Ohio America 250 Monthly Themes. January kicks off the year with "Ohio Firsts and Originals". From the First Peoples and pilots to entrepreneurs and artists, this presentation explores several Mahoning Valley firsts



February 19, 2026

Join historian Sean T. Posey as he explores the rich and hard-fought history of labor struggles in the Mahoning Valley. From the major industrial strikes that shaped the region in the early twentieth century, to the transformative impact of New Deal labor policies, to the later expansion of unionization into the public sector, the program traces how local workers organized, demanded fair treatment, and influenced national debates about economic justice. Participants will gain insight into an often-neglected aspect of local and American history.



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MVHS Kicks Off a Busy School Year With Its Suitcase Program



Our 2025-2026 school year kicked off with a busy fall season. MVHS Museum Educator Dante Bernard presented nearly 120 programs to more than 2,500 students across the Mahoning Valley! Programs ranged from Immigration Storytelling to Native Americans of the Valley, the Underground Railroad and Old Fashioned School Day. We look forward to an equally busy spring semester sharing local history!



Dante Bernard presenting at a local school.



History of The Idora Park Experience Collection

By now, you've heard that MVHS is the new home of The Idora Park Experience collection, which will soon become part of a new museum on downtown Youngstown's East Federal Street. While our staff and consultants are diligently working to create an amazing, immersive, and interactive experience for the community and beyond to enjoy, we want to give you the opportunity to interact with the collection in the meantime. So part of the Idora collection will be featured in a new exhibit at Tyler History Center beginning in February of 2026!

If you're not familiar with how The Idora Park Experience came to be, it started with Jim and Toni Amey as a labor of love. As a teenager, Jim Amey spent a summer working on Idora's midway, gathering fond memories that fueled his passion for preserving the park's legacy. He and his wife Toni Amey began collecting pieces of Idora's past over 30 years ago.

While they didn't set out to start a museum, their collection of Idora Park artifacts grew to be one of the most extensive of its kind. The Ameys knew they needed to share their collection with the community, and they opened The Idora Park Experience, housed in a 4,400 square foot building on their Canfield property, twice a year for several years, allowing visitors to relive the magic of Youngstown's Idora amusement park.



Bill Lawson & Brooke Testa move Idora objects into storage.



The Ameys came to realize that their collection needed a larger venue, with regular open hours, so the public could enjoy it without the restrictions of their residential property. After many years of discussing the possibilities with MVHS, both parties reached an agreement to see the collection stewarded and exhibited by MVHS at its newest museum facility, slated to open in 2027.

While the public awaits this next exciting phase in the development of The Idora Park Experience, MVHS will showcase the collection in a sneak preview in Tyler History Center's Youngstown Foundation Community History Gallery beginning February 24, 2026. Visitors will be able to interact with arcade games, funhouse mirrors, and park fixtures while viewing popular ride signage, posters, game prizes, souvenirs, and more. The exhibit will remain open through 2026.



The Idora Park Experience features original Idora Park signs, ride cars, photographs, souvenirs, and much more.

Chalkware souvenirs from Idora Park.



SMAC Hosts Youngstown Press Club Meeting



At the end of October, the Stewart Media Archives (SMAC) hosted a meeting of the Youngstown Press Club. About 35 members and guests came to tour our facilities. Some of the broadcasting exhibits were covered up with Christmas décor but the group was able to see all the behind the scenes storage we have in the vaults on the first and second floor of SMAC along with the second floor of the Arms Family Museum. The Club seemed to enjoy all of the historic equipment, audio recordings, and documents. We hope to see them come back after the Christmas décor is put away for another tour and we enjoyed having them revisit their history.

Broadcasting Legend, Sid Davis, Passes Away

Broadcasting, both locally and nationally, lost one of the great newsmen in October. Sidney (Sid) Davis died in Bethesda, MD on October 13th. He was born in Youngstown in 1927, graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School and Ohio University, and started his broadcasting career at WKBN, becoming News Director for radio and television. In 1959 he was hired by Westinghouse Broadcasting Comp.'s Washington bureau where he worked from 1959-1977. During that time, he covered major US events such as the Eisenhower-Khrushchev debate, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and was in the press motorcade when President Kennedy was fatally shot in Dallas, TX in 1963. He continued his career until 1994 working for both NBC News, and Voice of America.



648 Wick Avenue
Youngstown, OH 44502

The Mahoning Valley Historical Society celebrates the history of the people of the Mahoning Valley.

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648 WICK AVENUE
YOUNGSTOWN, OH 44502
Tuesday-Friday
12:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Weekends by appointment
business_media@mahoninghistory.org

TYLER HISTORY CENTER

325 WEST FEDERAL STREET
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AT TYLER HISTORY CENTER

Tuesday-Saturday
12:00 to 4:00 p.m.

archives@mahoninghistory.org

Phone: 330-743-2589

Fax: 330-743-7210

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Thank You to our 2025
Memories of Christmas
Past Sponsors!

MVHS would like to thank our sponsors for another successful and joyous *Memories of Christmas Past* event. This year nearly 8,100 people visited this popular exhibit, and we couldn't have done it without our sponsors!

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