

The Mahoning Valley Historical Society Newsletter

HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS

Volume 54 Issue 1

Summer 2026

Inspiration through Heritage since 1875



**Mahoning Valley Gathers
July**



**Mahoning Valley Goes to the
Fair - August**



**Mahoning Valley Plays
September**



**Mahoning Valley Grows
October**

In This Issue

- History to Go Events
- New Exhibits
- Reflecting on the 2025/2026 School Year



MAHONING VALLEY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MVHS Board of Directors

Stacey Adger, President
Cryshanna Jackson-Leftwich
Katie Kane Shipka
Keisha Saxon (Wirt Trustee)
Keith Miller
Mary Baumeier
Elayne M.S. Bozick (Wirt Trustee)
Jerry M. Bryan, Esq.
Donna Buzulencia
Allison Bye
Frederick Coombs, Esq.
Andrew Danus
Mary Dennis
Virginia Draa
Todd Franko
Brian Frederick
Rebecca L. Keck
Betty Jo Licata, Ph.D.
Deborah Liptak
Brian Macala, Esq.
John A. McNally IV, Esq.
Martha Pallante, Ph.D.
Regina Rees, Ph.D.
Paul J. Ricciuti, FAIA
Scott Schulick (Wirt Trustee)
John Slanina
Judith Solomon
David J. Stillwagon
Ana Torres
Samantha Turner
Hollie Wallace
Carole Weimer
Penny Wells
Janet Yaniglos
John Yeran

Administrative Staff

H. William Lawson, *Executive Director*
Anne-Marie Alexander, *Administrative Assistant & Events Coordinator*
Dante Bernard, *Museum Educator*
Brooke Testa, *Curatorial Assistant*
Stephanie Godsey, *Administrative Assistant & Bookkeeper*
Chelsea Hess, *Archives Assistant*
Constance L. Jones, *Project Manager, SMAC*
Linda Kostka, *Development Director*
Traci Manning, *Curator of Education*
Chris Rutushin, *Multimedia Specialist, SMAC*
Pamela L. Speis, *Archivist*
Jessica D. Trickett, *Anne Kilcawley Christman Memorial Collections Manager*
Anthony Worrellia, *Building & Grounds Supervisor, Arms Family Museum*

FROM THIS DIRECTION by Bill Lawson

Another fiscal year begins July 1st for Mahoning Valley Historical Society: our 151st year of collecting, preserving, and teaching the history of the people of the Mahoning Valley! This edition of Historical Happenings is full of information about programs and events in the coming summer months.

MVHS continues to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the American Declaration of Independence through themed programs like Bites & Bits of History, and will celebrate a century of commercial broadcasting in the Mahoning Valley with a new exhibit and related programs. Also on the schedule are annual favorites like the History-To-Go and Mahoning Valley Cultural Alliance series!

This past March the MVHS Board of Directors and staff were overjoyed and proud to learn that the Accreditation Commission of the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) had reaccredited our organization and the Arms Family Museum and Tyler History Center for another 10 years! This announcement finished a nearly three-year process of compiling and submitting a detailed self-study for the Historical Society, hosting two peer reviewers for site visits in July 2024, notification of a tabling action by the Accreditation Commission in November 2024, and

submission of a report and supporting documents addressing concerns raised by the Commission in January 2026.

MVHS and its museum facilities and programs have been accredited by AAM since 1977. Past MVHS Directors Harriet Wick Schaff and Patricia W. Cummins, with the support of successive Boards of Directors, aimed for and achieved this designation that reflects a commitment to high professional standards and continuous improvement of facilities, collections management and programs. That high calling has continued through generations of staff and board members, and four accreditation reviews, ever since.

Less than four percent of current museums of all disciplines across our country have achieved AAM Accreditation. While we celebrated reaccreditation this past spring, the MVHS Board and staff will continue to work to achieve our institutional goals and priorities with passion and persistence in the coming fiscal year and beyond.



New and Current MVHS Board Members Elected

During the 151st Annual Membership Meeting on Tuesday, June 23, at Tyler History Center, the Board Development Committee of Mahoning Valley Historical Society presented a slate of 10 nominees to serve three year terms on the Board of Directors. The members accepted these nominations, and unanimously elected the following persons as the Class of 2029.

New Board Members: Mary Baumeier, community volunteer; Andrew Danus, retired/community volunteer; Virginia Draa, retired YSU Professor/community volunteer; Betty Jo Licata, retired YSU Dean/community volunteer; Deborah Liptak, retired from Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County/community volunteer

Reelected Board Members: Donna Buzulencia, retired realtor/community volunteer; Frederick Coombs, Esq., retired attorney; Assistant Commissioner for Scouting America Great Trail Council; Mary Dennis, Architect, BSHM Architects; Brian Macala, Esq., Attorney; Ana Torres, Co-Director, Maag Library, YSU

Congratulations to all, and welcome new members of the Board of Directors!

Paws of Justice:

Recently the archival staff was asked to help find tidbits of interest for Judge Robert Rusu in preparation for America 250 events scheduled at the Mahoning County Courthouse. A hat tip to the historic four-legged employees of the Courthouse was the result.

In the June 18, 1910 issue of the Youngstown Vindicator, the newspaper reported on a battle between "... a court house rat the size of a weighty tabby-cat, and a big red rooster..." in a chicken yard near the courthouse property. Previously the "rodent army" had chewed through a water main in the first floor of the courthouse, before their discovery of the chicken yard. The article continued to describe the battles between the chickens and the rat population which was observed by county employees looking from the courthouse windows.

A possible solution to the lingering rodent problem presented itself to the new Courthouse once it was opened. The Vindicator reported on March 7, 1911 that "The Probate Court Office is the first in the new court house to have a mascot. A big, sleek-looking, well behaved cat with a winning disposition, was found in the office Tuesday morning, and unless it escapes, the home of marriage licenses in Mahoning County will be its abode in the future. The feline is of the Maltese variety. The pet won a home with the young ladies in the probate office, and they immediately set about to appease 'Kitty's' hunger Tuesday morning, by purchasing a bottle of milk. The mascot will be called Jack."

Two days later the newspaper reported that Jack had already proven himself to be "a valuable asset to the county building. The feline was turned into the basement Wednesday night, and managed to kill six big rats. For his very excellent work 'Jack' will be given a permanent home."

The Cats of the Mahoning County Courthouse

By December of 1911 Tabby had become the courthouse's official cat. The Vindicator reported that "The official county ratter tried to slip between two swinging doors Saturday but she was not quick enough and about half of her luxuriant tail was nipped off. After the dor(sic) had cut asunder what nature had joined together Tabby picked up the amputated section in her mouth and carried it into Engineer Geo. Eggleston's room." The paper reported that Tabby did not appear to be in distress over the accident.

In 1939 the Mahoning County Courthouse apparently had two kitties prowling the rooms and corridors, keeping the rodent population to a minimum. (Crackshot), a catnapping victim, as reported in the newspapers, was reunited with his furry co-worker Blackie, who "...was in a decline from loneliness and a broken heart..." after (Crackshot) had gone missing. As reported by The Vindicator in their March 1, 1939 issue, "(Crackshot) was returned to his hunting ground Tuesday by Mrs. N. B. Folsom, Poland, who said she saw the cat being kicked about and took him home." Two days later in the March 3rd edition of the paper, it was reported that both (Crackshot) and Blackie would be sporting fashionable leather collars and tags. After being returned to the Courthouse, apparently (Crackshot) had gotten out again, and had been found "wandering" West Front Street. The Courthouse's two-legged employees hoped that by collaring and tagging the felines, they would be "loss-proof."



"Crackshot" one of the Mahoning County Courthouse cats.
Photograph donated by the Estate of Nellie B. Folsom,
Builders of Youngstown File. MVHS Collections.

A Youngstown – Pittsburgh Connection



This spring, MVHS was contacted by a couple who were planning to open a new Isaly's store in Pittsburgh's historic Strip District. After discovering the Isaly's exhibit at Arms Family Museum, they reached out to learn more about the company's Ohio roots — and we were happy to help.

The new Pittsburgh location is expected to open in late summer or early Fall and will feature a small deli, house-made ice cream, Klondike bars, and skyscraper cones. Find out more about it at <https://isalys.com/retro-store/>. And be sure to visit Arms Family Museum to see the exhibit before it closes at the end of the year.

**HISTORY
To Go**

EVENT
SERIES

History To Go 2026 Programs Announced

MVHS is once again hosting its popular History To Go event series. Watch the MVHS website and social media posts for more detailed information on each and how to sign up.

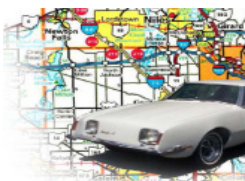
National Ice Cream Day

Sunday, July 19 – Noon until 4pm

Join us at Tyler History Center for a celebration of this sweet treat! Learn to make ice cream, take a walking tour, and enjoy the sounds of a barbershop quartet.

Generously sponsored by Joy Cone Company & Livi Steel.

Free



Amazing History Race 12

Friday, August 7 – 5:30pm

Begins and ends at Tyler History Center with a pizza party.

\$10 adults; \$5 seniors 60+ and students ages 5 – 13; Children under 5, free.

*Online registration opens in July

History on Tap

Thursday, August 27 – 5:30-7:30pm

Come out for a night of historical trivia & prizes!

Noble Creatures Ales & Lagers



Oak Hill Cemetery Tour

Saturday, October 24

Begins and ends at Oak Hill Cemetery Chapel

\$10 per person

*Online registration opens in October



Monday, August 3
African American Culture
5 pm at Tyler History Center

Monday, October 5
Jewish Culture
5 pm at Tyler History Center

Mahoning Valley Cultural Alliance Popularity Continues!

If you haven't yet been to a Culture and Cuisine dinner, you have two more chances to experience this ever-popular event! Space is limited for both, so make your reservations early, as we expect these two dinners to fill up quickly.
(Max attendance is 145 seats.)

You can call us to secure your spot at 330-732-2589, or pay online at www.mahoninghistory.org/mahoning-valley-cultural-alliance/events. You can mail in a check too, but your seat is not guaranteed in the event of an early sellout.

We're Dreaming of a White Christmas ... *Memories of Christmas Past*, that is!

We're dreaming of a White Christmas at Arms Family Museum for our 18th annual *Memories of Christmas Past* holiday exhibition! This year, the museum will highlight both Irving Berlin's 1940 song "White Christmas," and the 1954 Paramount Pictures film starring Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye, Rosemary Clooney, and Vera-Ellen. Learn about Irving Berlin and how his song transformed American culture, its first feature in the 1942 film *Holiday Inn*, and its recurrence twelve years later in *White Christmas*.

The museum will feature original film costumes, props, and memorabilia on loan from the Rosemary Clooney House Museum in Augusta, Kentucky. Other loaned items on display will include original *Holiday Inn* costumes from private collectors,

from the Bing Crosby House Museum in Spokane, Washington.

This year's event promises to be one of our most exciting and memorable yet. We anticipate over 10,000 visitors this season! Sponsorships are essential to the success of *Memories of Christmas Past*, and packages range from the \$150 Christmas Card level to the \$2,500 Event Sponsor. We think there is one that will fit into your corporate or individual philanthropic philosophy. Higher levels of sponsorship can be tailored to your charitable plans and needs.

For details and sponsorship benefits, call Linda at 330-743-2589, ext. 125.



Original 'White Christmas' Movie Poster

New Exhibit at Arms Family Museum: "Tuning In: A Century of Broadcasting in the Mahoning Valley"



Williamson house on Auburndale Ave, where the first broadcast was made, gift of WKBN Broadcasting Corporation, 3.1.14.016.025



Warren P. Williamson, Jr, gift of WKBN Broadcasting Corporation, 3.1.04.014.001

On September 26, 1926, WKBN, the Mahoning Valley's longest-running broadcasting station, was first signed on by Warren P. Williamson Jr., radio engineer Creed Chorpeneing and announcer Walter Lee Kaufmann II from Williamson's home at 26 Auburndale Avenue, on Youngstown's south side. The broadcast, which came over a wavelength of 360 meters, was a test program of conversation and phonograph recordings, using a transmitter of 7.5 watts of power. A few days later, WKBN broadcast from Youngstown's first annual radio trade show in downtown's Central Square.

Since then, WKBN, a CBS affiliate which ventured into television in 1953, has grown into a successful broadcasting business in the Mahoning Valley, attributed to the hard work of Williamson, his family, and the hundreds of station

employees, many who have become household names over the years - Sid Davis, Don Gardner, Ted Niemi, Tom Holden, Ode Aduma, Valeri First, Stan Boney, Dave Sess, and Lindsay Watson, to name a few.

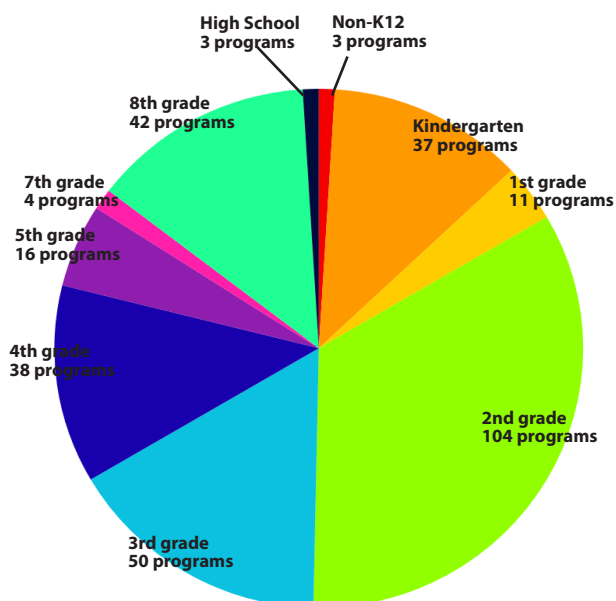
In this exhibit, visitors can learn about the evolution of local broadcasting - from radio days to television and beyond, with mention of other local stations such as WFMJ. On display will be a variety of images and artifacts from the Stewart Media Archives Collection, with some items on loan from WKBN and YSU's Department of Strategic Communications and Media.

Witness how the Mahoning Valley was shaped through broadcasting!

To celebrate WKBN's centennial, the new exhibit opens to the public on July 28, 2026.

2025-2026 School Year Wrap-Up

Grade Levels



313 Individual Programs

5800 + Students

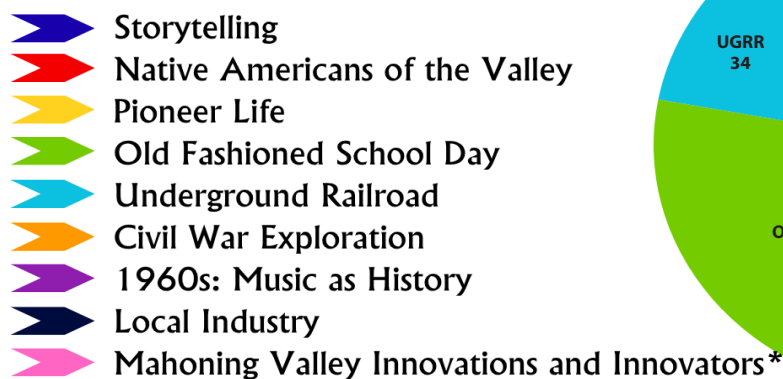
37 Different Schools

24 Mahoning Cty / 13 Trumbull Cty

13 New Schools

2185.4 Miles Traveled

The Suitcase Programs



*denotes a new program this year

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.

Welcome Back: Mahoning Valley Homecomings, Picnics, & Gatherings

Traci Manning
MVHS Curator of Education

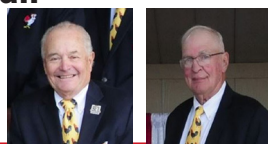


July 16, 2026

Explore the history of area homecomings, festivals, parades, and other community events. From Old Home Week to company picnic days at Idora Park, this program features images and stories from those who gathered to share meals and make memories.

"Something to Crow About: The Canfield Fair"

George Roman III &
Elwood Woolman,
Fair Board Directors



August 20, 2026

From its roots in 1846 with the Mahoning County Agricultural Society, the Canfield Fair has grown into Ohio's largest county fair! Learn about the history and legacy of this beloved end-of-summer tradition.

Balloonfest '86 - It seemed Like a Good Idea at the Time

Vince Guerrieri
Author and Historian



September 17, 2026

In 1986, the city of Cleveland set out to break a world record with a massive balloon launch, and on September 27, 1986, that's exactly what they did. But did it do more harm than good?

1926-2026: A Century of WKBN Broadcasting

Part 2

This image shows an early remote broadcast.



It was in 1926 that Warren P. Williamson, Jr. and his friend Creed Chorpening began to work toward going on the air with their broadcast station. While Warren Williamson was still working at Republic Iron and Steel Company and keeping the books at the Radio Electric Service Company, Creed, a brilliant engineer, worked repairing and assembling radios. Creed was vital in the early days of the company because he had the talent and time to make the equipment necessary to run a radio station instead of having to buy the equipment from a store. Their little 7.5-watt transmitter, which only reached about 10 miles, gave them the entry they needed into the broadcasting market here. Williamson and Chorpening began broadcasting on the newly licensed WKBN on September 26, 1926 from the living room on the first floor of Warren's house on Auburndale Ave. with the small transmitter located up on the second floor and a homemade antenna located in the backyard of the home. Their broadcasts consisted of playing records, reading from the newspaper, and having musicians in the house to play live music.

Williamson and Chorpening relocated the transmitter to downtown Youngstown to cover the first annual radio show run by Arthur Brock, at Wick and Commerce streets, where Brock and other dealers showcased various radio brands and also got Williamson and Chorpening free advertising for their business. For this first "remote" broadcast they moved the transmitter and the antenna to the building downtown and broadcast from the show. Just a couple of months later the Youngstown Vindicator asked them to broadcast the election results on their station. The Vindicator paid to put a telephone line in their

upstairs bathroom so that they could receive the results and broadcast them to the city. The next time they moved the transmitter was Thanksgiving Day to Rayen High School where Rayen played South. By the end of December 1926 the station had moved into the third floor of the YMCA building downtown where they could broadcast the YMCA's morning altar service and other programs in exchange for rent and power. It was there that the station increased to 50 watts of power on March 27, 1927, and by October of 1928 the station went to 500-watts. Then on September 7, 1929 WKBN joined the CBS network which helped the station by alleviating some of the need to create all of their own programming to fill the air time. In about 1935 WKBN needed to move their transmitter and antenna out to higher ground on Sunset Blvd. where they erected a single 360-foot tower to reach a larger audience.



This image is the transmitter building on Sunset Blvd.

In the next column we will explore WKBN's plan to move the station totally to Sunset Blvd. The move included adding an FM station, and also the planning for the future addition of TV.



These two images are from the YMCA studios.



MAHONING VALLEY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

648 Wick Avenue
Youngstown, OH 44502

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

HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS
is published quarterly and sent as a benefit of MVHS membership.
If you have any questions, please contact AAlexander@mahoninghistory.

Non. Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Youngstown, OH
Permit No. 140

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

ARMS FAMILY MUSEUM

648 WICK AVENUE
YOUNGSTOWN, OH 44502

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

STEWART MEDIA ARCHIVES

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
YOUNGSTOWN, OH 44503

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

ARCHIVES RESEARCH CENTER

AT TYLER HISTORY CENTER

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

archives@mahoninghistory.org

Phone: 330-743-2589

Fax: 330-743-7210

mvhs@mahoninghistory.org

www.mahoninghistory.org

Follow @MahoningHistory



Congratulations to the 2026 Historic Preservation Award Winners!



2026 Commercial Revitalization Award

The Von Isley Estate
547 S. Main St, Niles, OH

2026 Commercial Revitalization Award

Clarence R. Smith 1st Responders Wellness Center
547 S. Main St, Niles, OH



2026 Community Revitalization Award

Perkins House: Warren City Hall
547 S. Main St, Niles, OH

2026 Board of Directors Award of Achievement

Congregation Ohev Beth Sholom
1119 Elm Street, Youngstown, OH



2026 Board of Directors Award of Achievement

Ursuline Sisters of Youngstown
4280 Shields Rd, Canfield, OH