

The Cedar Tree

Vol. 16 No. 2 Spring 2013



200 Lebanon Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pa 15228 • 412-563-1941 • info@lebohistory.org • www.lebohistory.org

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Members:

Spring has finally arrived in Pittsburgh. Grass soon will be greening and growing, buds will be forming on trees and bushes, azaleas will be blooming. It's a time of new growth and new beginnings. I can't think of a better time to let you know of a great opportunity for new growth for our Historical Society. The building we currently occupy is owned by the Mt. Lebanon Municipality. They acquired the property when the commission disbanded the parking authority in January 2012. The municipality does not currently need the property, nor do they foresee a need for the property. Therefore, they wish to dispose of the property sometime this year.

This represents an outstanding opportunity for the Historical Society to secure the property for a permanent, expanded, and more visible location. Since opening our History Center three-and-a-half years ago, we've seen a need for more space to house our expanding collection of artifacts and rotating exhibits. We have had to turn down offers from the Heinz History Center for displaying some of their traveling exhibits because of our lack of space. We also could attract more visitors and members with a more visible Washington Road presence.

You may know this property as 794 Washington Road, or the SHACOG office, or the old Mt. Lebanon Tax Office. We know it as the McMillan House; former home of Dr. McMillan, a noted Mt. Lebanon physician, and his family of four. Dr. McMillan used the basement of this house for his medical practice while raising his family in the rest of the house. Some of you may have been treated by Dr. McMillan while growing up. His medical office is now the location of our History Center at 200 Lebanon Avenue.

We want to restore the McMillan House to the look and feel of a 1930s era Mt. Lebanon Spanish/Colonial house while preserving and interpreting the history of Mt. Lebanon in the expanded space. Some of the restoration plans we have include: removing several walls that were erected to create offices, removing a dropped ceiling to reveal a stained glass window, restoring deteriorating windows and the fireplace's ceramic finish, and painting the walls in colors popular during the 1930s.

We plan to use the first floor for both permanent and rotating exhibits. The second floor would be used to safely store our collection.

While this may seem like a daunting task, we have done much preliminary foot work, including a home inspection and assessment, restoration cost estimates, pro-forma financials going forward, and feasibility assessments for a capital campaign. The Society's board is convinced that this is a very possible endeavor—as long as we have your support and the support of the community. Expect to hear more about this quest this summer. (If you happen to know of any "angels" who would like to fund a major portion of this endeavor, PLEASE let me know!)

While we are still finalizing cost estimates and other details, now is a great time to participate in and enjoy the many things we are doing this spring and summer. This newsletter includes details of upcoming Walking Tours, an Antiques Road Show, the next Speakers' Series, and our great new exhibit: "Mt. Lebanon Goes to War." While our current space is small and we have dreams for the future, we still are providing you with many wonderful opportunities to enjoy and learn more about this place we all call home.

Best Regards, Jim Wojcik, President



MT. LEBANON HISTORY CENTER

200 LEBANON AVENUE
(CORNER OF WASHINGTON ROAD AND
LEBANON AVENUE, ACROSS FROM
SOUTHMINSTER CHURCH)

HOURS

10 A.M. TO 1 P.M., THURSDAYS &
9 A.M. TO NOON, SATURDAYS

MAKE AN APPOINTMENT AT:

412-563-1941 OR

INFO@LEBOHISTORY.ORG

We love
Reunion Groups!
Consider scheduling a private
tour of the History Center
and a Walking Tour for
your Reunion.

the historical society of mount lebanon . . . looking forward to the past

MT LEBANON GOES TO WAR

AN OVERVIEW OF OUR NEW EXHIBIT

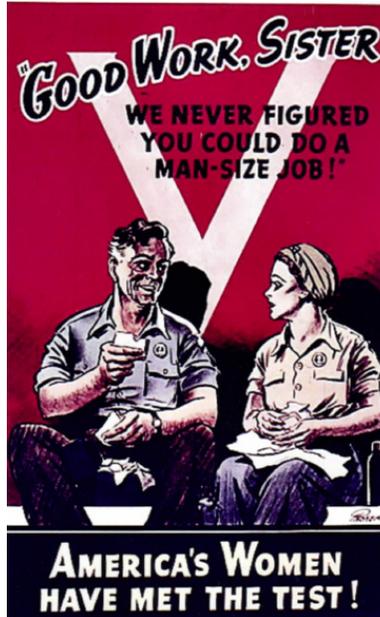
When I was asked to curate the new “Mt. Lebanon Goes to War” exhibit, I never expected to discover more stories, artifacts, and documents than could fit into the exhibit space. The exhibit features uniforms and equipment, airplane spotting handbooks and genuine scrap, along with many fascinating photographs. We also show old newsreels, cartoons, Army training films, and resident oral histories on the Society’s new flatscreen TV to give visitors a sense of the sights and sounds of the era.

My digging through the historical society’s archives yielded a few surprises, and I made sure to include them in the exhibit.

I never knew, for example, that there was a good deal of isolationist (perhaps more fairly referred to as “non-interventionist”) sentiment before the war. One “peace committee” formed within the Mt. Lebanon United Presbyterian Church in 1939 argued strenuously that the United States should not get involved in the wars already underway in Europe and Asia. I was struck also by how slow much of the community was to come around to the dangers of Nazism. The Mt. Lebanon school district’s emblem still bore swastikas well into the war, and the Mt. Lebanon Women’s Club didn’t get heavily involved in the war effort until 1943.

Residents in early 1944 noticed a lot of young people—“sons of prominent families”—joyriding far beyond what should have been possible on tightly-rationed gasoline.

Mt. Lebanon police cracked the case: the kids had stolen thousands of dollars worth of gasoline ration coupons, a serious crime for which they were jailed.



On the other hand, most of Mt. Lebanon’s young people mobilized quickly and with great energy for the war effort. The high school student newspaper noted in early 1942 that their lives had done an about face. “Students have become more serious in their work,” it declared. “Everyone has realized they must play a vital role in the war.” Much of the exhibit deals with these new roles: war bonds drives and air raid drills; Victory gardens and airplane spotting; rationing and scrap collecting.

Then, of course, there was the incredible flood of Mt. Lebanon’s young men and women into military service. They served all over the globe in every branch of service. In all, well over ten percent of the community’s population joined the armed forces, an astonishing statistic considering that today’s military represents less than one percent of Americans. Each of these service men and women had a story to tell, and we

highlight a few.

Perhaps most sobering are the portraits that ring the top of our exhibit: the sixty-five men from our community killed during World War II. I like to think of this exhibit as a small gesture of honor to these young men from Mt. Lebanon who never got to return home. — **Todd DePastino, exhibit curator**

DID YOU KNOW...

About 1855 Henry Bockstoce, who owned a tree nursery where Mt. Lebanon Cemetery now stands, built a schoolhouse at Washington Road near Academy Avenue. After the Civil War, “the Academy” (as it was called) was turned into a dance hall and skating rink.

In an October 1982 *Mt. Lebanon Magazine* article, now-deceased resident Chris Williams reported that when she moved to Academy Avenue in 1924 the street was often visited by an organ grinder with a little monkey. A German band also came out to play. “Of course we’d toss them money,” she said, adding that instead of a farmers’ market, they had hucksters who rode through the neighborhoods in wagons selling eight quarts of strawberries for a dollar and corn for 12 cents a dozen.

UPCOMING SPEAKER SERIES LECTURES

ALL LECTURES ARE FREE

MEDICINE IN THE LATE 1800s

7:30 p.m., WEDNESDAY, MAY 15,
MT. LEBANON PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Mt. Lebanon resident and Point Park University instructor Dr. Lorelei Stein spent many hours last summer at the Mt. Lebanon History Center researching materials that belonged to Dr. Cyrus Schreiner—who practiced medicine in the South Hills area between 1877 and 1900—for a paper she submitted to the Southern Association for the History of Medicine and Science. That paper, which she delivered at the association’s conference in Charleston, South Carolina, in February, focuses on the daily practice of medicine by physicians such as Dr. Schreiner and how the many medical and scientific discoveries of the 19th century impacted their practices. At this program, Dr. Stein will share her discoveries.

TEMPLE EMANUEL

7 p.m., MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16,
TEMPLE EMANUEL, BOWER HILL ROAD.

Join us for a tour of the synagogue and its nationally regarded garden. The tour includes an explanation of the symbolism of the synagogue’s spaces and artifacts and a history of Jewish migration to the South Hills and Mt. Lebanon.

ANNUAL MEETING: TBA

7:30 p.m., WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6,
MT. LEBANON PUBLIC LIBRARY. Details have not been finalized, but we are working with Arthur Fox to reschedule his lecture “Pittsburgh During the Civil War,” which was cancelled because of his sudden illness.



scenes from the exhibit opening



Clockwise from top left: Laverne Gephart and Russell Gephart (Navy, LST 44, Normandy and southern France invasions) stand with exhibit curator Todd DePastino at the entrance to the exhibit. Society volunteer Barbara Logan and Todd in front of the V-Mail display. John Bozek, 15th Air Force, B-24 navigator, stands before a photo of the same type of plane that he flew 50 missions in. Todd DePastino's wife, Stephanie Ross (center), and their daughters Libbie (left) and Ellie (right) enjoy the exhibit. Society board member Mel Bickel was a paratrooper with the 11th Airborne Division. He holds his jump boots that are laced a special way that supports your lower legs for landings.



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**MANY THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO
HAS RENEWED!**

If you have not yet renewed, please return your membership dues promptly so we don't have to send a reminder letter! If you did not receive a letter that means you are good through 2013. Questions?
412-563-1941 or
info@lebohistory.org

NEW TO OUR COLLECTION

Chris Andrianos: Haller's Garage business card; 1955 Mt. Lebanon Lantern; Devilette Newsletter

Anonymous: Trilli & Dunbar Co Real Estate South Hills map; two 1974 Trilli & Dunbar Relocation guides; Hammill-Quinlan Realtors "Move-In" guide

Maxine Bickel: 2 Trolley Day Buttons

Jeff Coghill: 4 Wooden Nickels

Carmen DiGiacomo: Mt. Lebanon Baseball Association 1977 regulations; Recycle campaign newsletter; Nov. 1979 issue of Under Washington's Wig; 1982 4th of July Program; September 24, 1988 Army vs. Northwestern Football Program; 1980 PTA Membership Card; 1971 Mt. Lebanon Long Range Plan; Michael Charles Studios Receipt; May 1971 Mt. Lebanon View; February 1975 report on the Citizens Advisory Committee on communications; 1979 newspaper account of Washington School Football Team; 1979 photo of Washington School Football Team; 1979 Parks & Recreation trophy; 1978 Mighty Mites Baseball Team photo

Bernie Egg: Mt. Lebanon 25th Anniversary Booklet

William Goodboy, Sr.: 1896 Mt. Lebanon School History Book; 1841 Book on Surveying (R. L. McCully signature); 1918 Legislative Handbook & Manual of the State of Pennsylvania from George H. Soffel; Idabelle Goodboy in memorium card

Gerri Greenwood: 6 Washington School Class Pictures; 1951 "All About Mt. Lebanon" booklet

Robert Piraino: Discharge papers



**Picture donated by Donna Williams
of a house on Cornell Place**

Joe Polk: 2 Mt. Lebanon megaphones w/ gold rope

Cindy Richie: South Hills College Club annual yearbooks for 1945-2000

Kathryn Schumn Stanis: High School band jacket

Charles Thornburg: 1960 High School Football schedule; 1957 Mellon Jr High annual spring concert program; 1958 Mellon Jr High spring concert program; 1960 Mt. Lebanon vs Washington High School football program; Class of 1962 baccalaureate service program; note to 1962 graduating class from school board; Class of 1962 commencement program; 2 Class of 1962 commencement tickets; Class of 1962 commencement invitation; 1962 senior prom booklet; 4 Howe School class photos (1952-56); Howe School patch; 1961 High School girl's gym show; High School Student Mounty, Volume 12 #3; High School career night program; 12th annual Art for Mt. Lebanon Exhibition Catalog; 1959 Devilette; 1958 Mellonaire; June 1962 Mt. Lebanon Lantern; Woman's Club commencement dance invitation & key chain; 1958 High School Band Stadium Review program; 1960 High School Play program

Karen & Richard Viggiano: Jefferson Elementary School chorus concert LP 1971-72

Donna Williams: Cedar Lodge brochure; photo of the Virginia Lee Tearoom; assorted photos taken around Mt. Lebanon, including in the Willow/Chalmers/Salem area; copies of various newspaper articles relating to Mt. Lebanon 1940s and 1950s

Many thanks to everyone who has donated an item to our collection. If you have something related to Mt. Lebanon's past that you would like to donate, stop by our History Center or contact 412-563-1941 or info@lebohistory.org.

JOIN A
**HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF
 MOUNT LEBANON**
 WALKING TOUR...

Saints & Stained Glass

6 p.m., Tuesdays, May 14, July 9, and September 10

Take a tour inside two of Mt. Lebanon's most historic churches—St. Bernard's and Mt. Lebanon United Presbyterian. The 90-minute tours cover the history of both churches with a focus on the stained glass windows. **Meet in front of St. Bernard's Church.**

Commerce & Architecture

10 a.m., Saturday, June 8, and 6 p.m., Thursday, September 19

These 90-minute walking tours of Washington Road **begin at the Mt. Lebanon History Center (200 Lebanon Avenue)** and proceed down Washington Road to Rollier's and back. Along the way the architecture of the buildings and the history of the business district will be explored. The tour includes the municipal building's Art Deco lobby.

Bells & Beauty

12:30 p.m., Sunday, May 19

Tour Southminster Church, which was designed by Pringles and Tufts architects in the 1920s. Learn about the stained glass windows and change-ringing—the bell music Southminster is famed for. Attendees will also have a chance to hear actual change-ringing and, if desired, ascend the 40 or so stairs to see the bells in Southminster's bell tower. **Meet in front of the church's main entrance on Washington Road.**

**ABOVE TOURS ARE \$10 FOR NONMEMBERS; \$5 FOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERS.
 CASH OR CHECK ONLY**

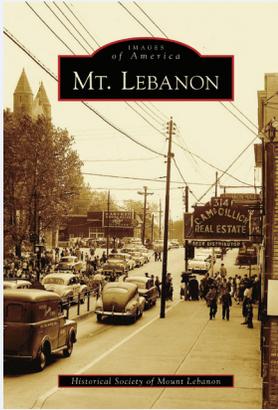
Graves & Goblins

7 p.m., Thursday, June 20, and 1 p.m., Sunday, October 26

Take a tour of Mt. Lebanon Cemetery—see the beautiful headstones and mausoleums and hear some “haunting” stories. **Meet at the Cemetery's front gate along Washington Road. SUGGESTED DONATION, \$5, HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERS; \$10 NON-MEMBERS.**

SPACE IS LIMITED. RESERVATIONS REQUIRED AT
 CREADY@GMAIL.COM OR 412-418-9348.





If you love old pictures, like the one at right, make sure to get a "Mt. Lebanon" book filled with 127 pages of black and white photographs. Books are \$23.50 at the History Center and the municipal building, 710 Washington Road. Or order online at www.lebohistory.org. **THEY MAKE GREAT GIFTS!**



things that aren't there anymore

Remember the corner market? Mt. Lebanon used to have corner markets scattered throughout town. This one—Red Star Market—was located at the corner of Washington Road and Cedar Boulevard.

Please consider sharing your photos of Mt. Lebanon's past. We'd love to have an image of the market that was located across from Howe Elementary on Broadmore. Let us know if you have one! Email scans to info@lebohistory.org or drop them off at the history center—we will scan them and return the originals.



The Historical Society of Mount Lebanon
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Pittsburgh, Pa 15228
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info@lebohistory.org
www.lebohistory.org

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NEWSLETTER EDITOR
M.A. Jackson

Don't Miss Our Antiques Appraisal Event with Dr. Lori

(AKA: WHAT TREASURES DO YOU HAVE?)

At 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 14, the Historical Society will welcome back Dr. Lori, a nationally-known antiques appraiser, for an event co-sponsored by Maniet Financial at the Mt. Lebanon Recreation Center on Cedar Boulevard. The event is free, but space is limited, so if you'd like to bring an item to be appraised, please reserve a spot by calling Maniet Financial at 412-722-0150. When Dr. Lori was here two years ago, the event was a "sell-out" and many people found they had some amazing treasures.

Dr. Lori has a Ph.D. in art history and is a certified fine art and antiques appraiser with 30 books to her credit. She appears on the Discovery channel's *Auction Kings* and has appeared on Anderson Cooper's talk show, Comedy Central's *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, and NBC TV's *The Tonight Show*. **Think of the evening as Mt. Lebanon's own Antiques Road Show!**

