

The

Cedar Tree

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

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

In March, my wife, Peggy, and I took a trip to celebrate our birthdays. She made the mistake of letting me plan the trip, so historical sites placed very high on the agenda.

We spent two days in Charlottesville, Virginia, where we visited the homes/estates of the third, fourth, and fifth presidents of the United States—Thomas Jefferson's Monticello; James Madison's Montpelier, and James Monroe's Ash Lawn-Highland. We were able to walk the same grounds and stroll through the same rooms where these eminent "Founding Fathers" lived and worked. At one point, I looked out the window of James Madison's library on the second floor of his house and saw the same view of the Blue Ridge Mountains that Madison saw as he researched why past democracies failed while preparing for his May 1778 trip to Philadelphia for the monumental Constitutional Convention for "the sole and express purpose of revising the Articles of Confederation."

As we walked out the back of James Madison's Montpelier towards the formal gardens, we noticed a very large, distinctive and unusual evergreen tree. It was so unique that I looked for some sign that would identify the tree. I was delightfully surprised to discover it was a Cedar of Lebanon tree that had been planted in James Madison's era! Until then, I have only seen pictures and read descriptions of Cedar of Lebanon trees. It was a magnificent tree. Here before me was the same type of tree that the Reverend Joseph Clokey retrieved from a Holy Land visit in the 1850s; planted somewhere near the intersections of what is now Bower Hill and Washington Roads and gave this area its Mt. Lebanon name. Had I not known about the early history of

our community, this tree, while still notable, wouldn't have had the same impact on me after determining its type.

We then moved on to the northwest corner of South Carolina to the town of Gaffney—the closest town to the Cowpens National Battlefield. The Battle of Cowpens took place on the morning of January 17, 1781. A much smaller force of approximately 800 Continental Regulars and Colonial Militia under General Daniel Morgan (who has ever heard of him?) took on a larger British force of about 1,200 men under Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton. In less than an hour, over 75 percent of the British force was captured, killed, or wounded. Morgan knew the attributes of his men and the probable tactics of his adversary and planned accordingly. The British defeat at Cowpens caused General Cornwallis to move his forces out of the Carolinas to eventually face George Washington at Yorktown, where he surrendered in October, 1781. Very few people visit the Cowpens battlefield as it is way off the beaten path; the two National Park Service Rangers there were thrilled when we walked into the visitors' center. We leisurely took the 1.2 mile circular walking trail that encompassed the entire battlefield! After visiting Gettysburg and Antietam and comparing the scope of those engagements to Cowpens, I think you can get a much better perspective and understanding of how different Revolutionary War clashes were compared to battles fought 80 years later. Experiencing that location first hand mattered in my understanding the time period. That's one of the reasons why it is important to care about, to preserve, to help interpret, and to experience "history" first hand.

Jim Wojcik, President



MT. LEBANON HISTORY CENTER

200 LEBANON AVENUE

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.**

SAVE THE DATE

Our Annual Fundraising Dinner will be held
Wednesday, October 22,
at St Clair Country Club.
Details to come in the next Newsletter.

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

history lessons



High School students Jeremy Laun (center) and Trenten Montesino (right) from Pete DeNardo's AP history class at Mt. Lebanon High School met with former Society board member Mel Bickel to interview him for a documentary they are making titled *Victory Valley: Pittsburgh and WWII* about what Pittsburgh was like during WWII. Their documentary is scheduled to be shown at Mt. Lebanon Library, 1:30 p.m., May 18. In addition, Jeremy, Trenten, and classmate John Iannotta also interviewed Society members Todd DePastino and Dick Price.

More information about this project on page 6.

Day of Giving 2014 is Coming!

For the first time, the Historical Society of Mount Lebanon has been approved to participate in the 2014 Day of Giving. As such, we will receive a pro-rated portion of the match pool for all donations made to the Historical Society on that day that come in through the Day of Giving website.

Please mark your calendars for Tuesday, May 6, 2014, from 6 a.m. to midnight

so that you can log in to pittsburghgives.org to make a donation to the Historical Society.

Don't have a computer? Don't worry! We will open the history center from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on that Tuesday so that our volunteers can assist you with your donation. Just come to the History Center with your credit card in hand.

The Day of Giving has been a long standing Pittsburgh tradition and we are proud to participate. Make your gift count! On May 6, 2014, log in to pittsburghgives.org to support your Historical Society!

PITTSBURGH GIVES.ORG
A Resource of The Pittsburgh Foundation

National Historic District Designation

The Historic Preservation Board is hosting a public information session to answer your questions about the National Historic District Designation for a large portion of Mt. Lebanon. They will have all sorts of information about the nomination process, including maps identifying the district, criteria used to define the district, and the expected timeline for the final designation. Several members of the Historic Preservation Board will be available to answer questions. The session is scheduled to take place at 6 p.m., Thursday, April 24, in the Municipal Building, 710 Washington Road.

Please Note: *The Historic Preservation Board and The Historical Society of Mount Lebanon are two distinct organizations with different but complimentary goals and objectives.*

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MOUNT LEBANON
SPEAKER SERIES PRESENTS

Held in cooperation with
Mt. Lebanon Library

The Life and Art of Norman Rockwell

An evening with art historian Julie Agar and America's most beloved artist.

A personal friend of Rockwell's, Julie will share her knowledge of his fascinating life and iconic work, including his *Saturday Evening Post* covers and the *Four Freedoms* series, which defined the nation during the 1930s and 1940s. She also will discuss her take on *American Mirror: The Life and Art of Norman Rockwell*, the controversial new biography.

Free. Refreshments will be served.

**7 P.M.,
Wednesday,
May 21, 2014
Mt. Lebanon Library,
16 Castle Shannon Blvd.**

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MOUNT LEBANON
200 LEBANON AVENUE, PITTSBURGH PA 15228



INFO@LEBOHISTORY.ORG

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MEMBERSHIP

MANY THANKS TO OUR NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS
(FROM JANUARY THROUGH MARCH, 2014)

Helen Aldisert & Lang Krayser	Elaine Wertheim
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Mary Ann Burgess	Jehnie Reis
Carolyn Byham	Cynthia & Jerome Richey
Mike & Karen Cahall	Elizabeth (Bette) Ruh
Bill Callahan	Bunny Schorr
Marty Carney	John and Lee Scott
Peg & Bill Christopher	Jim & Ann Simmons
David Davis	Matt Smith, State Rep.
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Carmen DiGiacomo	Alexander Stevenson
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James C Fox	Reginald & Lillian Tate
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Dan and Dotty Gigger	Toni Tierney
Sandy & Lee Golomb	Jan Titonis
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Kathy Hayes	Luetta Waddell
Lucille Heckman	Carol and Jon Walton
Geoffrey R Hurd	Lisa White and Family
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Nadine Bognar
Toni Tierney

Upcoming Speaker Series Lectures

ALL PROGRAMS ARE FREE AND START AT 7 P.M.
AT MT. LEBANON LIBRARY

WEDNESDAY, MAY 21: Please see flier on page 4 for information about [The Life and Art of Norman Rockwell](#).

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17: On the 152nd anniversary of a famous Pittsburgh disaster, author Mary Frailey Calland will present the story of her novel, *Consecrated Dust*. On September 17, 1862, an explosion at the Allegheny Arsenal in Pittsburgh killed seventy-eight girls who were rolling bullet cartridges for the Union army. News of the catastrophe was buried, however, beneath the horrendous casualty reports from the Battle of Antietam, fought on the very same day. Inspired by these two real-life tragedies, *Consecrated Dust* tells the story of four young northerners—feminist Clara Ambrose; soldier Garrett Cameron; industrialist Edgar Gliddon; and immigrant Annie Burke—friends, lovers, and bitter rivals. In the teeming streets and factories of Pittsburgh, and on the battlefields of the Army of the Potomac, they struggle to survive, forced to choose between love and duty, sacrifice and greed. Their choices ultimately lead to their presence at both the Arsenal and the Antietam battlefield on that fateful September day, a day that reveals the true meaning of courage—a day not all of them will survive.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5: In honor of Veterans Day, historian Todd DePastino will give the history of [Mt. Lebanon in World War II](#), including the remarkable and sometimes harrowing war stories of a few outstanding residents—details he picked up while curating the Historical Society's recent exhibit about Mt. Lebanon's community's experiences during World War II. Mt. Lebanon was surprisingly slow to embrace the war effort, but many of its residents gave all.

Happy 5th Birthday to The History Center

This June represents a significant milestone in the history of The Historical Society of Mount Lebanon: June 2009 was the grand opening of our History Center at 200 Lebanon Avenue. In these past five years you have trusted us to keep, catalog, and preserve your Mt. Lebanon related treasures. You have visited the History Center with your children and grandchildren and shared Mt. Lebanon history with old friends and relatives who have come back to visit. Because we have a History Center, we've been able to tell stories to every second grader in the school district of what it was like to be a Mt. Lebanon school student in the early 1900s, to be an informal stop on a high school reunion weekend, and a source of information for AP US history students and middle school English students. Our History Center has become a place where people of all ages stop in to look for something special, to share a memory, or to learn something new.

Here's a brief look back through the exhibits that graced our walls these past five years.

What We Wore – Our first exhibit looked back into time when shoes buttoned instead of Velcroed.

Washington Road – A “Then and Now” exhibit showcasing photos of Uptown Washington Road from 1964 and the present.

A Glorious Game: Soccer in Mt. Lebanon – We worked with the Mt. Lebanon Soccer Association to present a history of the sport and organization.

Trains, Trolleys, and Automobiles – We traced how various modes of transportation and the opening of the Liberty Tunnel impacted Mt. Lebanon's development into an “automobile suburb.”

Washington School – We told the story of Mt. Lebanon's first “modern” school building, which opened in 1922.

Mt. Lebanon: The First 100 Years: 1912–2012 – For Mt. Lebanon's centennial, we celebrated with an exhibit that covered the community's founding and growth. Our walls were covered with all sorts of other firsts—from the first golf game in the community to the first mass in St. Bernard's Church.

Mt. Lebanon Goes to War – Our most recent exhibit focused on the impact WWII had on the community. Displayed around the exhibit were photos and the stories of 59 Mt. Lebanon residents who sacrificed their lives in the war.

Our Next Exhibit

So is your house a Colonial or a Foursquare? How about a Bungalow or a Post-War Traditional? Is my house within the proposed National Historic District in Mt. Lebanon? What criteria were used to define the district? What's a contributing property? Why are the streets in Mission Hills and Virginia Manor curvy?

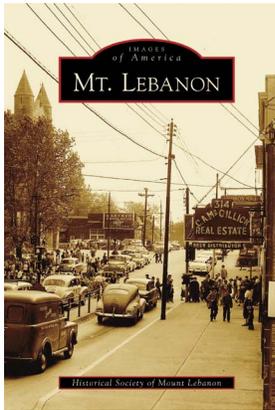
These questions and much more will be answered as you visit and explore our next exhibit dealing with Mt. Lebanon residential architecture and the National Historic District Designation. We will have examples of various Mt. Lebanon home types, characteristics of each style, and the time periods when the style was being built in our community. Maybe your house will be used as an example!

We will be displaying some 1920s to 1930s vintage Hall Real Estate Company advertising signs urging you to “buy your dream house in Mt. Lebanon.” We also will have on display a filing cabinet that lists the Mt. Lebanon properties that were for sale at the time. These files were sorted by price with the highest category listed as “\$10,000+” Possibly your house is listed here. You'll need to stop in to see how much it was selling for at that time.

We will also have on display information dealing with the National Historic District Designation in Mt. Lebanon, including a map of the district and material explaining what impact this designation has on our community.

We are still working on a catchy name for this exhibit, and we'd like your help. Come up with a name or two or three that you want our curators to consider for this new exhibit and, if we use it, you'll win a signed copy of the book *Living With Styles: The Houses of Mt. Lebanon*. This book is now out of print and only a few copies remain in circulation. Here's your chance to get one. Just email your ideas for a name to us at info@lebohistory.org Please put “Exhibit Name Ideas” in the subject line and submit it to us before midnight on April 30. If we have two or more similar entries for the winning title, the earliest one we received will win the book.

Our current exhibit, *Mt. Lebanon Goes to War*, will be coming down the afternoon of Saturday, May 3. (Only a few more days are left for you to see it!) We'll then spend the rest of May installing this new exhibit. While an exact date for the new exhibit opening hasn't been set yet, we are aiming for an opening no later than the first First Friday Celebration of the summer on June 6. You can still visit the History Center through May, just please excuse our mess!



If you love old pictures, 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!**



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NEWSLETTER EDITOR
 M.A. Jackson



Memory Lane...

With spring finally here, we celebrate with this picture that ran in the May 1913 *Hilltop Record*. We believe it was taken on Bower Hill Road near present day Meadowcroft Drive looking toward Washington Road. The caption touted Mt. Lebanon's "practically dustless" roads. Check out the wooden sidewalks!

working on a dream: the american experiment at home and abroad, 1936 – 2000

Mt. Lebanon High School advanced placement US history students will be presenting a series of special American history presentations over thirteen afternoons and evenings at Mt. Lebanon Public Library beginning the evening of April 23rd and running thru May 31st. The presentations are the result of their own substantial research and hard work, including peer and teacher reviews.

Presentations on their chosen topics are in the form of a team-teaching exercise, a documentary film, or a research paper presentation. Topics cover a wide range of subjects that relate to the overall theme such as: *The Strip: The Yesterday of Pittsburgh's Tomorrow*; *From Washington D.C. to Washington Road: Impacts of the Vietnam War in Mt. Lebanon*; and *Victory Valley: Pittsburgh and World War II*.

All presentations are open to the public, in fact, the more attendees the better for the students. You can see the schedule of topics, as well as read a brief summary of each presentation, by going to the library's website at www.mtlebanonlibrary.org, clicking on the calendar, and typing "Working on a Dream" in the search box to get the list of dates and times.

Several Historical Society members were interviewed by some of the students as part of their research and may be making their film premiere!