



Archives

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WILKINSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER VOLUME 26, ISSUE 7

Lincoln statue project continues with Wilkinsburg community-wide support!

The fundraising to pay for a life-size bronze statue of Abraham Lincoln continues. Additionally, the new statue will have a dark granite pedestal for Mr. Lincoln to stand on. The Historical Society has raised slightly over \$62,000 toward the cost of the statue plus pedestal. Every contribution is important to help get this project completed. **MANY thanks to all who have given funds.** Please consider another gift if you are able to help. The bronze statue of Abraham Lincoln will be a beautiful focal point on the intersection of the historic Lincoln Highway and Penn Avenue.



At the Penn Avenue/Lincoln Highway end of the Ardmore linear park a viewing area is ready to feature a new dark granite pedestal topped by a bronze statue of Abraham Lincoln. The recessed receptacle for the granite is precisely the same site where a sheet copper statue of Abraham Lincoln stood since 1916. That statue is corroded and distorted and has been retired to stand on display inside the Borough building.

The Lincoln statue part of the park project is wholly organized by the Wilkinsburg Historical Society. Contributions from the community are still needed to pay for the bronze statue and the granite base. Donations can be made to : **Wilkinsburg Historical Society,**
P.O. Box 17252, Pittsburgh, PA 15235
or GoFundMe-Lincoln-Statue-for-Wilkinsburg



Work continues on Wilkinsburg's newest linear park which stretches from Franklin Avenue to Penn Avenue along Ardmore Boulevard. The Ardmore wall has been restored, the sidewalk on top has been widened and landscaping has begun. Over 2000 fragrant *Rhus aromatica* (aka Sweet sumac) bushes have been planted to stabilize the steep bank, control erosion and to beautify the park. These are low-growing, spreading deciduous shrubs whose foliage turns gold and red in fall. Wilkinsburg will have a beautiful park soon!

Wood Street from Penn Avenue to Franklin Avenue is now two-way traffic.

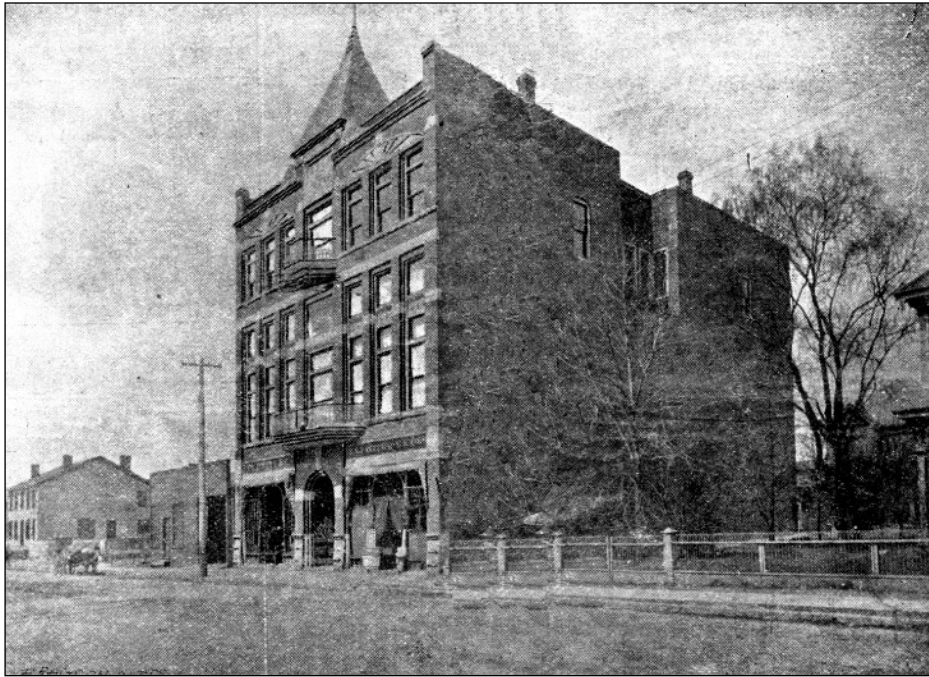


It has been nearly a century since Wood Street from Penn Avenue to Franklin Avenue allowed two way traffic. In the above picture taken in 1912, the Borough celebrated its 25th anniversary of being Incorporated as the Borough of Wilkinsburg. As this image shows, trolleys, automobiles, horse-drawn buggies and pedestrians all shared the street, going in different directions.



Beginning August 10, 2020 two-way traffic could travel on Wood Street.

Two views of this building, 1870 and 2020, 150 years apart.



1870s Odd Fellows Hall on the north side of Penn Avenue in Wilkinsburg.

At the far left is the Penn Avenue Hotel which housed travelers and stabled their horses in the rear of the building. The large building, Odd Fellows, was a fraternal organization which had its American beginnings in 1819 in Baltimore. Their principles were universal brotherhood, friendship, love and truth.



This distinctive building still stands on Penn Avenue and has changed little in the past 150 years. There is a fire escape on the street side, the cupola has been removed and the arched entrance changed. This large mural has enhanced the west side since 2010.

Harold Young Parklet is the new name for the former Penn Avenue parklet



Stage in the Harold Young Parklet



The backdrop for the new parklet is the immense side of 745 Penn Ave.. The mural was created by Brian Holderman in 2010 and is titled "10,000". This was to be a statement about environmental issues. The mural, funded by the Sprout Fund, commissioned 56 art works over seven years in 39 different Pittsburgh neighborhoods.



The parklet on Penn Avenue in Wilkinsburg was officially renamed on Saturday, August 8, 2020. It was named the Harold Young Parklet. Harold W. Young Sr. (1933-2014) did much for the Wilkinsburg community by helping underserved youth to learn about music and to play instruments. He was also the founder of the Homewood Jazz Workshop. Young was a gifted musician who shared his talents. He was a Wilkinsburg resident and Art in the Park was part of his vision. His daughter, Dr. Jacqueline Young carries on that tradition as an amazing musician who reaches out to youth. Jacqueline Young and the Jazz Workshop Quintet played music at the Harold Young Parklet on August 8 as part of the summer concert series of Art in the Park at 739 Penn Ave. 15221. The renaming event was attended by community residents, Wilkinsburg Council members as well as State Representative Ed Gainey's staff. Participants enjoyed beautiful weather and outstanding jazz music in this great Wilkinsburg "Harold Young Parklet."



August 8, 2020 was a special, historic day as the beautiful Penn Avenue Parklet was dedicated to the late, great Harold Young. A ceremony with Wilkinsburg Council members (image at left) and Representatives from State Rep. Ed Gainey's office presided. Afterward, the audience was treated to a wonderful jazz performance from the Jazz Workshop Quintet.

Wilkinsburg Public Library - The 2020 pandemic has changed the way businesses, organizations, governmental agencies and individuals all operate. Some of Wilkinsburg's organizations have been exceptionally creative in their day-to-day ways of connecting with others in the community. Wilkinsburg Public Library is one of those organizations. Some of the innovative ways that the Library has adapted to the challenges of 2020: "Library in the Park" on Tuesdays from noon to 4 PM at the new Harold Young Parklet (formerly the Penn Ave. Parklet). Crochet lessons online with the library's very talented Frankie Turner, as well as storytelling for the kids. Stories have been presented online by Miss Rachel, Amy Staggs and others. The Wilkinsburg Public Library also has offered free legal advice for interested people who sign up through the library for a 30 minute appointment. It is possible to take out books and pick them up without having to enter the library. Our public library offers craft activities in a bag for children to assemble. The Wilkinsburg Public Library is also working closely with the Wilkinsburg Historical Society to create a very special Tour of Historic places in Wilkinsburg. That will be another way that the Public Library is entertaining and educating so many people who care about our Borough.

POSTPONED - The Religious Architectural Heritage (RAH) committee of Preservation Pittsburgh had planned to have **Sacred Spaces III**, a September tour and open-house of Wilkinsburg's beautiful church buildings. After extensive review and considering the ever-changing social distancing expectations, maximum gathering limitations and disinfecting requirements this event has been **postponed**. There are significant challenges in following health guidelines and being respectful of the various churches who are willing to open their doors to the community. RAH committee has determined that it is best to postpone this event until the spring of 2021. The target date is May 22, 2021. More information will be available in the Spring!

Wilkinsburg is rapidly becoming known to be a place for beautiful art. As part of its Art-all-over initiative the **Wilkinsburg Community Development Corporation, (WCDC)** has the next phase of its in-house Gallery opening at the WCDC office at 725 Wood St. The featured artist will be Zoe Welsh whose artwork is displayed within. This art initiative is a collaboration with The Sleeping Octopus Events #artallover

Also from the WCDC, the eagerly anticipated completion of the historic **Wilkinsburg Train Station** restoration is planned for September 18th. Due to Covid restrictions and precautions there are some challenges to hosting a grand opening event. There will be opportunities to view the historically restored station in a virtual way as well as later chances for in-person tours of the beautiful 1916 station. Small group tours of the building will be open to the public. Plans are underway and details will be publicized as soon as they are confirmed.



Don't miss out on **The Wilkinsburg Sun**, a free monthly community newsletter published by the volunteer Wilkinsburg Community Newsletter Board, with the support of the Wilkinsburg Borough, the Wilkinsburg School District, the Wilkinsburg Chamber of Commerce and the Wilkinsburg Community Development Corporation. The Sun accepts submitted articles provided they are related to Wilkinsburg and are civic-minded.
<https://wilkinsburgsun.wordpress.com>
 Sign up to receive The Sun by email at eeurl.com/v0iBP and friend The Sun on Facebook.

Wilkinsburg Historical Society has a website, to share more information about the history of Wilkinsburg. wilkinsburghistory.wordpress.com

Mailing address: **Wilkinsburg Historical Society, P.O. Box 17252, Pittsburgh, PA 15235**

We usually meet on the third Monday of months March, June, August and November at the South Avenue United Methodist Church in Wilkinsburg. HOWEVER, THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS CHANGED EVERYTHING AND WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO MEET IN PERSON DURING 2020. SAFETY IS OUR UTMOST CONCERN AND NEW PROTOCOLS HAVE NOT YET BEEN ESTABLISHED. The "Archives" Historical Society newsletter is still published monthly, March through November.

Wilkinsburg Historical Society yearly dues for the Wilkinsburg Historical Society are:

\$20.00 INDIVIDUAL Member, \$35.00 FAMILY Membership

\$10.00 STUDENT or ASSOCIATE Members (for out of towners who usually can't attend meetings) Please keep your membership dues up to date.

Wilkinsburg Historical Society - Membership application Help promote the valuable history of Wilkinsburg.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

E-mail address _____

() \$20 Individual membership

() \$35 Family membership

() \$10 Student or associate membership

() \$_____ Additional donation

Please make check payable to: **Wilkinsburg Historical Society**
PO Box 17252, Pittsburgh, PA 15235

Anytime is a good time to pay your dues for the Wilkinsburg Historical Society. We have many preservation projects going on, plus the cost of sending out the Archives and providing displays for Wilkinsburg events. Many thanks to those of you who have already sent in your membership dues. Please use the address on the form, our PO box.