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WILKINSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER VOLUME 26, ISSUE 8

Fundraising to pay for a life-size bronze statue of Abraham Lincoln is ongoing. The century-old former pedestal was evaluated and not up to the standard needed to support a heavy bronze statue. Therefore, the new bronze Lincoln will have a dark, nearly black, granite pedestal for Mr. Lincoln to stand on. The granite will cost approximately \$10,500, the bronze statue is \$70,000. The bronze statue of Abraham Lincoln will be a beautiful focal point on the intersection of the historic Lincoln Highway and Penn Avenue.

The **Wilkinsburg Historical Society** has raised slightly over \$66,000 toward the cost of the statue plus pedestal. Every contribution is important to help get this project completed.

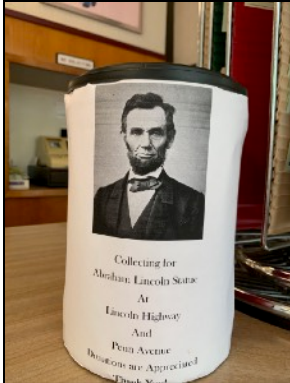
MANY thanks to all who have given funds. Please consider another gift if you are able to help.

The Lincoln Statue project is organized by the Wilkinsburg Historical Society.

Contributions from the community are still needed to pay for the bronze statue and the granite base. Donations may be made to :

Wilkinsburg Historical Society, P.O. Box 17252, Pittsburgh, PA 15235

or [https:// www.gofundme.com/lincoln-statue-for-wilkinsburg](https://www.gofundme.com/lincoln-statue-for-wilkinsburg)



Donations for the Lincoln Statue project have been made by individuals, Wilkinsburg businesses, organizations, Borough officials, Wilkinsburg alumni groups, and everyday people who care about Lincoln's legacy. Some donations have come through the GoFundMe site, while most of the money received has been donated directly to the Wilkinsburg Historical Society. Many of these gifts have been anonymous. Some of Wilkinsburg's merchants have donated several times. One long-established business has given a generous contribution, provided by their patrons in this Lincoln themed coffee can. Thanks to all the unknown givers!

One especially touching and generous donation was received in mid-August from the Girl Scouts of Western PA, by a troop about 10 miles east of Wilkinsburg. The troop leader wrote, "We are a troop of 23 Girl Scouts, ranging in age from 6 years to 14 years old and every year we participate in a "Take Action" Project. This project is to empower the girls to "Take Action" on an identified need in the community. Your fundraising for a new President Lincoln statue at the corner of Penn Avenue and Lincoln Highway has inspired my troop. They especially like the fact that Wilkinsburg School children collected coins to contribute to the funding of the original Lincoln statue dedicated on June 19, 1916. We, as leaders try to instill in the Scouts the idea that they are part of a larger community and our responsibility is to "make the world a better place". Please accept our donation of \$161.34 to the Lincoln Statue Fund. We are wishing your organization great success."



The historic restoration of the Wilkinsburg Train Station is nearly complete. Ribbon-cutting had been tentatively planned, but the Covid-19 issues have delayed several key building components. The pandemic halted quite a few businesses in the construction trade. The custom glass for the train station windows and doors is one of the elements that are still on delayed order. As pandemic restrictions are gradually lifted and businesses get back to work in fabricating components, the train station restoration will be finished. In this September 2020 image the workers are preparing the new concrete driveway. The WCDC, under the leadership of Tracey Evans, will soon be announcing the opening of the fully restored train station and the beginning of its next century of life in Wilkinsburg.



Wilkinsburg Public Library director Anna Newborg has spent a great deal of time this summer creating a walking tour of historic Wilkinsburg. Working with the Wilkinsburg Historical Society the tour includes 66 points of interest of Wilkinsburg. Anyone can download this GPS guided tour on your mobile device, by first downloading the pocketsights app. Go to pocketsights.com for the app and then search for “Historic Wilkinsburg”. There are lots of other tours you may wish to explore on pocketsights too.

The tour self-guided, it is free to use, and can be utilized from the comfort of your home or by actually walking around in Wilkinsburg and seeing historic buildings or the site while they once were. The Historic Wilkinsburg tour will certainly enlighten those who navigate it. Tourgoers will learn the great history that Wilkinsburg has, as well as gaining interest in preservation and revitalization of the Borough. This is a free app for any mobile device.

PNC Bank building, originally First National Bank of Wilkinsburg is 125 years old.



The First National Bank of Wilkinsburg was opened in 1894. The impressive stone building had offices on the upper levels with the bank and a hardware store on the first floor. In the early 1950s the bank name had been changed to Pittsburgh National Bank and later PNC Bank. This branch was closed as a full-service bank in late 2019. Recently (August, 2020) it has been under wraps as the owners are working on the masonry. This historic building has housed a variety of businesses in the past and still has a bright future for additional uses.



These interior images were taken in 1909 when the First National Bank was just 15 years old. The curved marble staircase went to the lower level where few customers ever ventured. The right image shows the first floor where customers could access tellers and conduct financial business in the small offices.

Chatham Cougars utilize Graham Field for soccer season 2020, after providing a multi-million dollar refurbishment and upgrade.



Chatham University is now using the beautifully refurbished Graham Field for their soccer and lacrosse teams. Their colors are purple and gray, their mascot is Carson the Cougar. In these images the freshman soccer team readies for a practice in late August, 2020.



The 7 acre Graham Field opened in 1916 but the covered grandstand was not added until 1929. The roof had GRAHAM Field in large letters. (see top left image). In 1930 the Wilkinsburg Airport was opened just a mile and a half up Penn Avenue hill, on Graham Boulevard. Pilots of small planes expressed confusion over the airfield on Graham Blvd. and the athletic Graham Field. This aerial image from the mid-1930s shows the athletic field. Soon the roof sign was changed to simply, "WILKINSBURG".



September is love your library month!

All donations made to the Wilkinsburg Public Library will be matched on a pro-rated basis.
Visit loveyourlibrary.org to donate!

The Wilkinsburg Public Library has re-opened for in person services. Library patrons can still continue to take advantage of touchless services to learn about these and other services visit WilkinsburgLibrary.org/howdoi

Don't forget that you can always access the library from home using free e-resources. Of special interest to Wilkinsburg Historical Society members is the free in-home access to ancestry.com. visit <https://elibrary.einetwork.net/ancestry-in-library/>.

For more information on e-resources visit: <https://Wilkinsburglibrary.org/resources/>

Mark your calendar for **October 13** when the library will be hosting a virtual antique appraisal with local expert Jeffrey Poole. The details and registration info will be posted on the library Facebook page and website at <https://Wilkinsburglibrary.org/virtual programs/>

And in partnership with the Wilkinsburg Historical Society the library has created a historic tour of Wilkinsburg now live on the pocketsights app. Explore historic Wilkinsburg in person or from the comfort of your home! Download the pocket sites app on your mobile device and search "Wilkinsburg".

