



Archives

NOVEMBER
2025

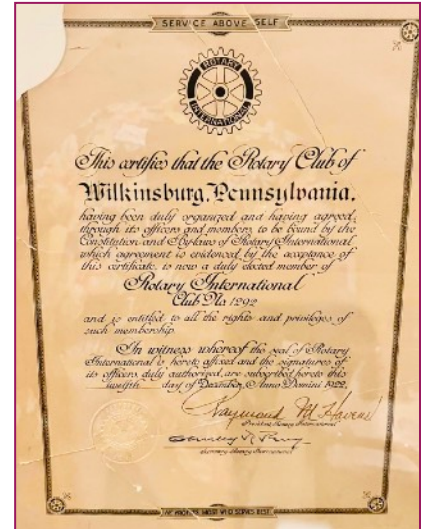
WILKINSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
VOLUME 31, ISSUE 9

Rotary International - History of the Rotary Club in Wilkinsburg

Rotary was organized on February 23, 1905 in Chicago when lawyer Paul Harris founded the Rotary Club of Chicago to allow professionals of diverse backgrounds to exchange ideas and form friendships. The name 'Rotary' came from the early practice of rotating meetings among the members' places of business. The purpose and vision of Rotary evolved to include humanitarian service with members addressing local community needs and by 1912 was attentive to global needs. The main motto for Rotary is "Service Above Self", emphasizing the idea of unselfish volunteer service.

The idea to create a Rotary Club in Wilkinsburg began in 1920. The organizing committee convened a group of petitioners that included a Justice of the Peace, a men's tailor, a banker, a food merchant and a clothier. At that time members were exclusively men and the membership needed to represent a diversity of careers and talents. Club No.1292 was officially chartered on December 12, 1922 by Rotary International with twenty new Rotarians.

From its 1922 inception the Wilkinsburg Rotary Club became involved in humanitarian work. The members supported the Pennsylvania Crippled Children's League, the Wilkinsburg Boy's Club and other humane organizations. After the Great Depression the Rotary members built a cabin at Camp Twin Echo to help the East Boroughs Boy Scouts. The club raised funds for the Columbia Hospital Student Training Fund for Nurses. In 1951 the club supplied 33 war-ravaged families in Germany with bundles of wearable clothes and CARE packages. In 1963, the gazebo at Franklin and Wood Street was erected and given to the community by the Rotary Club. In 1982 a new roof and paint were given to the gazebo rest area. In 1968 a yellow brick shelter, located at Penn Avenue and West Street was erected to provide a pleasant place to wait for transportation. Over the years the Wilkinsburg Rotary Club has generously supported: Wilkinsburg Community Ministry, Wilkinsburg Boys and Girls Club, Meals on Wheels, Friends of the Library of Wilkinsburg, Junior Achievement, Camp Twin Echo of the Boy Scouts of America, Rotary Youth Exchange Students, donated U.S. Savings Bonds to high achievers from Wilkinsburg High School and contributed through Rotary International to the Brother's Brother organization. That initiative helps provide clean water, sanitation, and solar projects in Africa and the Caribbean. Locally, Rotary members created a winter coat and boot drive in Wilkinsburg to collect warm outerwear distributed to those who need them. A few years ago Wilkinsburg Rotary members refurbished and removed graffiti from the yellow brick shelter at the corner of Penn Avenue and West Street. The variety of Rotary humanitarian projects is quite impressive!



Wilkinsburg Rotary Club hosted author and Urukundo Learning Center founder “Mama” Arlene Brown as guest speaker at recent Rotary meeting.

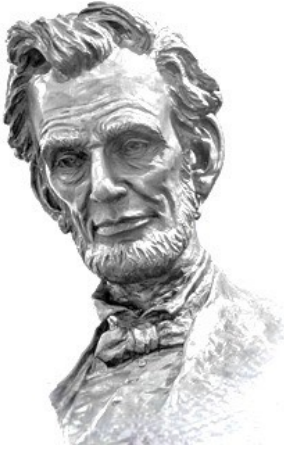


October 7, 2025 Arlene Brown, at the invitation of Wilkinsburg Rotary president John Irwin, presented a fascinating and heartwarming story of her founding of the Urukundo School in Muhanga, Rwanda. In 1994 “Mama” Arlene heard about abandoned and orphaned children in Rwanda. This spurred the retiree to join a mission trip to Africa and get involved. Arlene founded a home for young orphaned girls and later the Urukundo Learning Center, a school which has grown to 1200 boys and girls. In recent years various Rotary Clubs have helped fund a school bus, furniture and computers. Rotary International has funded efforts to bring good water to the school. In March 2025 the Wilkinsburg Rotary via John Irwin brought refurbished musical instruments and a dozen soccer balls for the school children in Rwanda.



Hope Made Real is the name of “Mama” Arlene Brown’s 270-page book about her mission to help the children of Rwanda by establishing a home for young school-age orphans and later creating the Urukundo Learning Center to educate the children. Mama Arlene, who will be 95 years old in December has worked tirelessly over three decades to change the lives of the boys and girls who come to Urukundo. (and she’s not slowing down!) hopemadereal.org is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. It is tax exempt and contributions are tax deductible. You can log on and explore the website to read their monthly newsletters, learn more about the mission, donate funds or buy the book, ***Hope Made Real***.

Wilkinsburg Rotary International meets every Tuesday at 12:15 pm for lunch. The meetings are held in the Social Hall of the South Avenue United Methodist Church located at 733 South Avenue, Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania 15221. Please use the Ross Avenue entrance. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to join the group for lunch and experience all the good that Rotary does in the community and throughout the world.



Join us for the Lincoln Highway 250th Conference!

Celebrate America's 250th birthday with Lincoln Highway fans at the 2026 Lincoln Highway Conference in York, PA!

Save the dates: June 22-26, 2026


Explore historic towns, ride vintage trains, visit Underground Railroad sites, and dive deep into the story of America's first transcontinental highway — all during this once-in-a-generation event hosted by the Lincoln Highway Association. Full details and registration: <https://lincoln250pa.org>

Join fellow travelers, road history lovers, and heritage enthusiasts from across the country in the heart of Pennsylvania this summer!

What is this event?

Join the Lincoln Highway Association's 2026 National Conference titled "Road to Independence" for five unforgettable days of tours, talks, music, and celebration along America's first coast-to-coast highway.

The 2026 Lincoln Highway Association National Conference is coming to York, PA — and it's part of America's 250th birthday celebration! History comes alive for you!

 June 22–26, 2026

Tours • Talks • History • Community

More info and registration: <https://lincoln250pa.org>

[Log on for registration and the itinerary](#) #Lincoln250PA #LincolnHighway

Booking your visit:

Coming to #Lincoln250PA? Don't forget to book your room at the historic Yorktowne Hotel — just \$155/night for attendees!

Use code LINC26 when booking: <https://lincoln250pa.org>

For questions contact:

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<https://lincoln250pa.org>



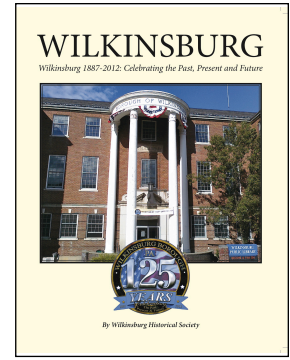
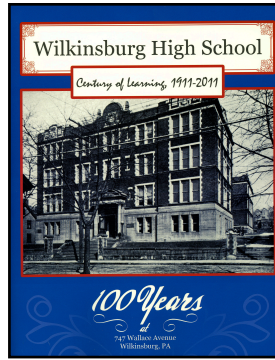
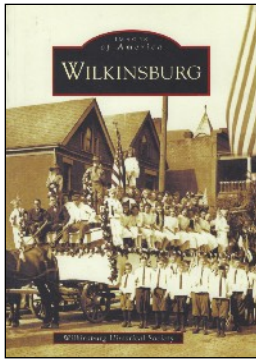
Penn-Lincoln Hotel site on track to become the new Penn-Lincoln Apartments.



This 2012 image of the Penn-Lincoln Hotel shows the abandoned building before it was demolished in 2014. Located on Penn Avenue at Center Street, the hotel was built in 1927 and was designed by prolific architect Benno Janssen who also designed the Longue Vue country club, Pittsburgh Athletic Association, Mellon Institute, and the William Penn Hotel. Extensive studies were conducted by the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation to determine feasibility of restoration and reuse. Ultimately it was torn down due to the poor condition of the building, high cost of restoration and lack of a market for a hotel in the area.



This November 2025 image shows the old hotel site under development as the five-story Penn-Lincoln Apartments construction is well underway. This project, developed by ACTION-Housing will include 42 one, two and three-bedroom affordable apartments. Retail space on the first floor will provide additional economic opportunities. This project is on track to be completed in 2026.



These are the three books that the **Wilkinsburg Historical Society** wrote and published during the past twelve years. They help to promote and preserve the history of Wilkinsburg and raise funds for the various projects of the Society. All three books are still available to purchase from the Society. Another way to support the activities of the Historical Society.

On the far left is ***“Images of America - Wilkinsburg”***, a 128 page soft-bound book printed by the Arcadia Publishing Company. It includes over 220 black and white photos depicting the history of our town from the early land patents in the late 1700s up to the 75th celebration of Wilkinsburg in 1962. The book is available from the Wilkinsburg Historical Society for \$20.00, plus \$3.00 for shipping.

The middle book above is ***“Wilkinsburg High School - Century of Learning 1911-2011”***. This book chronicles the history of the local high school from its early start in the late 1880s, the creation of the magnificent structure in 1910, and each decade since with highlights of the events that were important in the lives of the students and the Wilkinsburg community. For over 100 years the Wilkinsburg High School served the Borough of Wilkinsburg students and this book has several hundred photos showing much of this important history. This *Century of Learning* book is available from the Wilkinsburg Historical Society for \$15.00, plus \$3.00 for shipping.

The book on the far right is ***“Wilkinsburg - 1887-2012, Celebrating the Past, Present and Future”***. This book was produced by the Historical Society in 2012 to recognize the 125th anniversary of Wilkinsburg’s incorporation as a Borough. This soft-bound book has 196 pages and includes chapters on the history of Wilkinsburg, the celebrations from the past, information about Wilkinsburg’s government, and all the events that occurred during the 125th celebration. There are several chapters about the clubs and organizations in Wilkinsburg as well as the churches and worship centers in the Borough. The “future of Wilkinsburg” section recognizes advertisers and sponsors who helped to fund the creation and printing of the book. This book, originally \$15.00, is now available for \$10.00, plus \$3.00 for shipping.

<p>Make check or money order payable to: Wilkinsburg Historical Society Orders can be mailed to: Wilkinsburg Historical Society, P.O.Box 17252, Pittsburgh, PA 15235</p>			
Images of America - Wilkinsburg	(\$20.00 + \$3.00) = \$23.00	Quantity_____	Total _____
Century of Learning 1911-2011	(\$15.00 + \$3.00) = \$18.00	Quantity_____	Total _____
Wilkinsburg 1887-2012	(\$10.00 + \$3.00) = \$13.00	Quantity_____	Total _____
Name_____		Address_____	
City_____	State_____	Zip _____	

inside	the Wilkinsburg Sun
Beauty Done	2
Deacons	3
WDCD	4
Spunk & Smiles	5
Chamber of Commerce	7

NOV. 10, 2011 / November 10th A Free Courier-Newsweek Edition You Get! Your Area Included

Pittsburgh's First Responsible Wood Production Facility Opens Here

Lafayette, a nonprofit and long environmental stewardship with a mission to develop, has opened a new mill called The Mill in Wilkinsburg.

The Mill is a 100% employee-owned facility that produces low-kilowatt and sub-1000 kilowatt light-weight lumber, joists, posts, studs, and trusses.

The Mill will clean wood from LWC (low kilowatt) wood of natural wood from locally produced wood. LWC wood is of higher and 20 times of kilowatt wood.

The project creates jobs and career paths for people who have had success in other areas of the wood industry, including those who have been in the industry for many years, and those who have been in the industry for a short time.



Photo: Newsweek

Wilkinsburg Mayor Ed Jones, owner of the facility, and producer, for The Mill.

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THANKS BREAKFAST, Nov. 20 - p. 7 • THANKSGIVING FOOD DISTRIBUTION, Nov. 23 - p. 2

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: <http://eepurl.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**

The "Archives" Historical Society newsletter is published monthly, March through November.

We do not usually publish the Archives during the three Winter months of December, January and February.

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 Please keep your membership dues up to date.
 Contributions are needed for "Lights for Lincoln", to get improved lighting for the Lincoln Plaza area. Abraham Lincoln stands in the dark after sun-down. Your donation can help us illuminate this outstanding area overlooking the Lincoln Highway.

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, 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.