



Archives

DECEMBER
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WILKINSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
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Wilkinsburg Pollinator Garden Group has provided a beautiful holiday display in the lobby of the Borough building. Clif McGill, a well-known lifetime resident of the Borough has planned the theme of Peace. During December the peace tree, photographs and the oak/dove peace stake will be on display.



The **Wilkinsburg Pollinator Garden Group** is honored once again to present a tree and holiday display here in the Wilkinsburg Borough Building. Each year, we present the display with a theme. This year we've decided to simply yet profoundly celebrate the subject of peace. Peace and joy should be natural elements of holiday celebrations, yet for many people and countries worldwide, the subject of peace has taken on an importance as never before. For many it's become a necessary element for survival. Amid all the celebrating of the holiday season, remember that you are privileged to live in a nation that values this. It is why we are especially proud to feature the wonderful work of **Project Peace** in our display. Project piece is a youth program sponsored by the **Wilkinsburg Sanctuary Project**. For a few years, young participants have been engaging in creative, constructive, and beautifying projects throughout our borough. While our community has been the beneficiary of their work, it also has been an adventure in education and service for the youth. Two examples of their work are featured in this display: the garden stake with the dove of peace sitting atop the letter "W" (for Wilkinsburg), and the two birdhouses underneath the tree. Photos of a few of the participants are also on display. If you are interested obtaining either a peace stake or a birdhouse, please contact us at: info@wilkinsburgpollinators.org for details, or find us on Facebook.

In closing, it should be said that we members of the Wilkinsburg Pollinator Garden Group are happy to collaborate with other uplifting organizations to help make and keep Wilkinsburg a green and peaceful community.

We Wish You a Very Joyous Holiday Season and a Prosperous, Peaceful New Year!

Wilkesburg Council celebrated Veterans at a special Meet & Greet party.

During November, Veteran's Month, Wilkesburg honored all who served our country. A free meet and greet celebration was organized by Councilperson Linda Atkins. This special party honored Veterans and their families. Held in Council Chambers of the Borough building on November 19, this gathering featured the musical duet of saxophonist Jaki Young and keyboard musician Bashir Ansari. Vocalist Bonita Thomas led the attendees in song with "America the Beautiful" and "Lift Every Voice and Sing".



Musical entertainment for the Veteran's celebration included Dr. Jaki Young with her saxophone, Bashir Ansari on keyboard with vocals, and Bonita Thomas who performed several songs.



Image shows, (l to r) Wilkesburg Council Vice-President Renee Haynes-Johnson, Abe Lincoln, saxophonist Dr. Jaki Young, Councilman Linda Atkins (chair of the Special Events, Music, Arts & Seniors Committee.) and vocalist Bonita Thomas. Right image shows the audience, (with buffet table laden with food at far right!)

Renovated Kelly Primary School held grand ribbon-cutting ceremony December 1, 2025

Kelly Primary School, built in 1969, has needed to be upgraded for a very long time. The forward-thinking Wilkinsburg School Board knew that the families of Wilkinsburg deserved to have PK-2 Borough children educated in a bright, beautiful building which also utilized state-of-the-art technology. The renovations were paid for with pandemic relief funds as well as grants and some loans. The new spaces are modern, appealing and will give every young student a great foundation for future learning. Renovations and updating included S.T.E.A.M. science, technology, engineering, art and math spaces. There are numerous flex spaces to adapt for small group learning. Smart boards bring new technology into primary classrooms.



New, bright entrance to Kelly Primary School is a welcoming feature to all who enter.



Left: New safe playground features paths and “roads” to enhance creative outdoor play.



Right: Dimmed lights in the after-school program help attendees to “wind-down” after class.

Additional photos of the “new” Kelly Primary School, a great investment in Wilkinsburg’s PK-2 children.

Ribbon-cutting for the newly renovated Kelly Primary School was attended by over a hundred people, including former and current School Board members, School Superintendent Dr. Jocelyn Artinger,, PA State Senator Jay Costa, Mayor Dontae Comans, community leaders, teachers, parents and neighbors.

Tours were led throughout the new rooms where visitors could see the new cafeteria, classrooms, music rooms, library, art room, playground and additional creative spaces.



Kelly Primary has a clean, bright exterior with colorful benches lining the wide entrance path.



Many classrooms have special dimmable lighting, Smart white boards and movable seating components. The gymnasium can also serve as an auditorium for performances.



The large bronze bell near the front entrance is the only relic remaining from the original Kelly School. That school was simply “Third Ward School”, built in 1890 and was located at the corner of Pitt Street and McNair Avenue. A bell-ringer would alert students that classes were ready to begin each school day. It is interesting to note that this bell, cast in the foundry of A. Fulton was made in early 1891. By mid 1891 Pittsburgh had dropped the “h” and was known as Pittsburg until 1911. It seems that in 1891 the foundryman was not familiar with our new Borough, as it was misspelled “Wilkinsburg”.

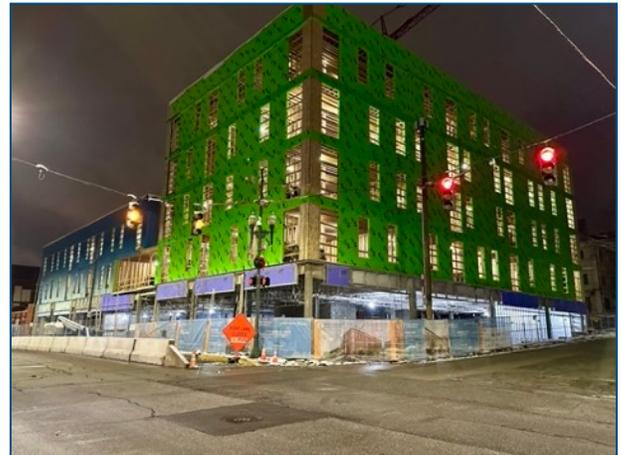
What is happening along Pennsylvania's section of the Lincoln Highway?



This sheet copper statue of Abraham Lincoln stands in the Council Chambers of the Wilkinsburg Borough Building. It was originally placed in 1916 at the crossroads of the Lincoln Highway (now Route 30 Ardmore Boulevard) and the William Penn Highway. After more than a century outdoors, the statue became too fragile to stay in that location, so it was retired to remain indoors, and in July 2021 a new bronze Lincoln replaced it at the crossroads.

This first practical coast-to-coast highway in America was opened October, 1913 and named the **Lincoln Highway** to honor the 16th President. Wilkinsburg was one of the lucky towns which was situated on the original alignment of the Lincoln Highway, thus enhancing business opportunities for those who owned restaurants, hotels, car repair shops, gasoline stations, etc. along the route.

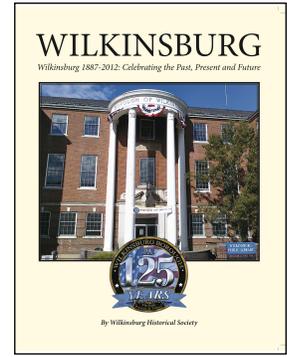
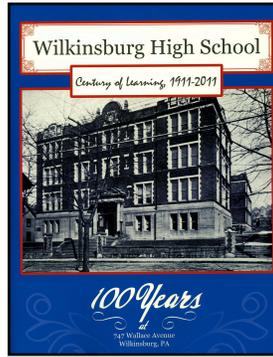
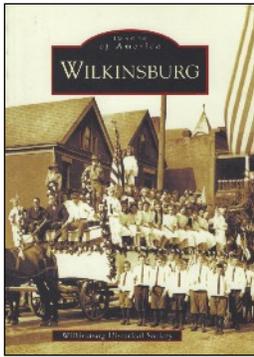
Progress continues on the construction of the **Penn-Lincoln Apartments** at the intersection of Penn Avenue and Center Street in Wilkinsburg. Penn Avenue is part of the original alignment of the **Lincoln Highway**. It was at this exact location that in 1927 the six-story Penn-Lincoln Hotel was built. The hotel, designed by famed architect Benno Janssen, featured retail space and offices on the first floor, and also a **Lincoln Restaurant**. The hotel was torn down in 2014. This new development will feature 41 affordable apartments and 12,000 sq. feet of retail space on the first floor.



The **Lincoln Highway Association** will celebrate our nation's 250th anniversary by hosting our national conference in York, PA. There will be bus tours, special events and presentations about over 250 years of transportation history along the Lincoln Highway. Pennsylvania has a number of historic **Lincoln Highway** places to visit and it's quite special that the National conference for 2026 is in York, Pennsylvania!

To learn more about the conference and tours, pre-register and start making your plans, visit the Lincoln Highway Association website:

www.Lincoln250PA.org



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 _____	



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.