



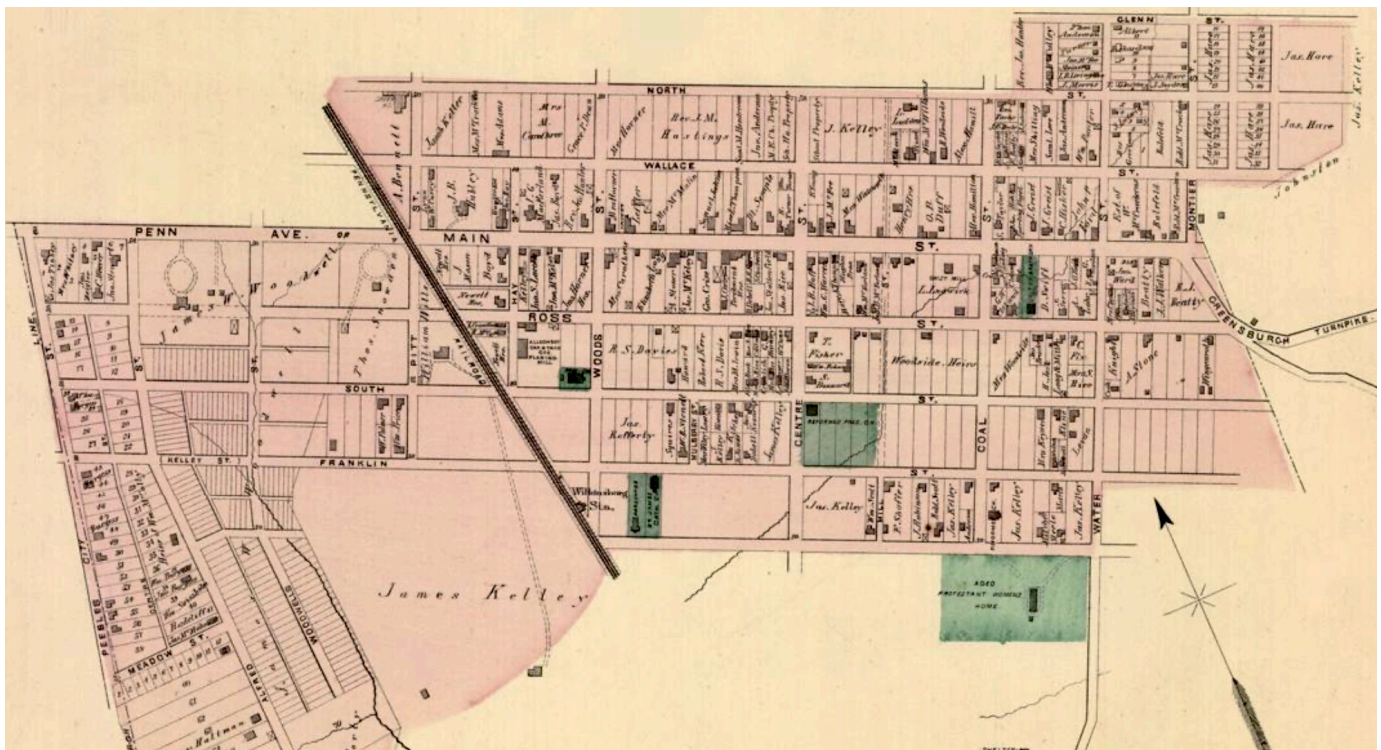
# Archives

MAY  
2026

WILKINSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER  
VOLUME 32, ISSUE 3

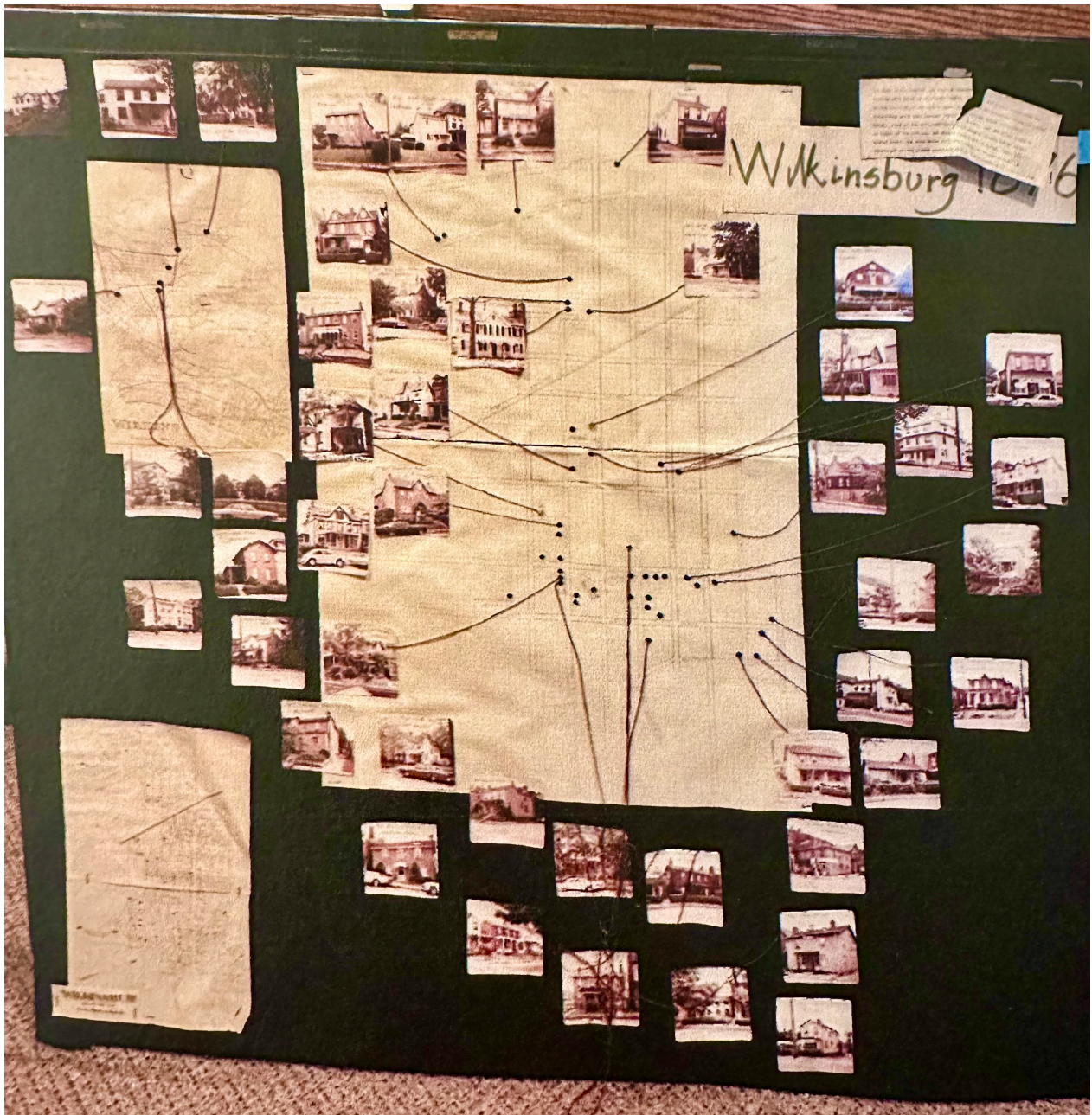
In 1976 as Wilkinsburg featured various ways to celebrate the Bicentennial of America, one of the Wilkinsburg Public Library employees created a project to determine how many of Wilkinsburg's existing (in 1976) homes were already over a century old. She obtained an 1876 map which showed the land parcels, name of owner of the property, and a small dark rectangle on the map to show those lots which had been improved with a structure built on it. The library employee then travelled through Wilkinsburg, camera in hand, and captured photos of each of the homes, as they existed in 1976. Many of the century-old homes no longer stood in 1976. Some of the map names had changed e.g. Water Street was later renamed Swissvale Avenue. Main Street later became Penn Avenue. As the internet did not exist in 1976, the research on this project was difficult. An interesting display was produced and is shown on the next page of this issue of the Archives.

This map of Wilkinsburg is copied from the G. M. Hopkins Co. 1876 map which can be found at [historicpittsburgh.org](http://historicpittsburgh.org) as Wilkinsburg Plate 15. This site is part of the University of Pittsburgh Library System, cartography division. You can zoom in on this 1876 map to see more of the details, or go to the [historicpittsburgh.org](http://historicpittsburgh.org) website to be able to zoom in for a clearer image.



This photo display was created in 1976, fifty years ago, at the Wilkinsburg Public Library. It was designed to recognize the homes which were built prior to 1876 and were already over a century old. Some homes had been extensively remodeled while others remained as originally designed. This was part of America's Bicentennial 200th birthday celebration. One historic home, the John F. Singer House, a Gothic Revival masterpiece at 1318 Singer Place, was built in 1863-1869. but did not appear on the G.M. Hopkins 1876 map.

This display was part of the 1976 Bicentennial of America celebration. This year, 2026, is the Semiquincentennial, 250th birthday of America. There will be a similar display in the Borough Building lobby of some Wilkinsburg homes which are now over 150 years old. Those historic homes have been cared for, maintained and deserved to be recognized.



Historic Simon Sarver home at 1023 Ross Avenue is a good example of a modest pre-Civil War Wilkinsburg home that is still maintained and occupied. This house, built in 1862 was one of the earliest homes built on Ross Avenue and was surrounded by several acres of pasture which the Sarvers used for cattle grazing.

**Sarver Home**

*Wilkinsburg - Biography  
Lohr*

*Sept. 24, 1964*  
The Gazette  
Sept. 24, 1964

## An Ancestral Place

"The Little House" at 1023 Ross Avenue was built in 1862 by Simon Sarver at the time that he married Katherine Snyder. Renewal materials were added a dozen years ago. Standing here are Mr. and Mrs. Earl S. Lohr and their daughter Suzanne. Mrs. Lohr, the former "Peg" Sarver, owns this property which was built by her grandfather 102 years ago.



Mrs. Earl S. Lohr, President of the Wilkinsburg Historical Society, has a bonifide claim to her interest in the Community of Yesteryear. Although the Lohrs now live on North Ave-

nue, Mrs. Lohr's ancestral home at 1023 Ross Avenue is still owned by her and leased to close friends, the Stacey Noahs.

Built in 1862 at the marriage of Katherine Snyder to Simon Sarver with land on both sides, it was the scene of a small dairy business with stable in the rear, on the Nine Mile Run that had its course just back of Penn Avenue.

The Snyder family came into Wilkinsburg from Westmoreland County in the mid-1800s and had property in the vicinity of Ross, Mill and South Avenues. The Snyders were always well represented on the Police and Fire Departments in the early years of the Borough.

Mrs. Lohr's father, George E. Sarver, was Captain of the Volunteer Fire Department at the turn of the Twentieth Century. He lived in the house of his birth at the time of his death, ten years ago at the age of 86. Katherine Snyder Sarver,

Mrs. Lohr's grandmother, died in 1918 at 84 and in her obituary was the notation "She was one of the Pioneer Residents of Wilkinsburg who rode in the parade at the Silver Anniversary in 1912 as one of the oldest residents of the Borough."

Not only has this home on Ross Avenue been a reminder to Mrs. Lohr of her ancestry, but in her present home are many of the furnishings that the bride of 1862 purchased which are now prized as family antiques.

Note that this newspaper article was written September 24, 1964 for the Wilkinsburg Gazette.

# Sentiment lives for Sarver home

WILKINSBURG—For a number of years the smoke house at 1023 Ross Ave. has been a topic of community conversation.

Because of the wide interest, Mrs. Earl Sarver Lohr has presented a sentimental capsule of the property's history to the Wilkinsburg Historical Society.

In the year 1862, Sara Catherine Snyder Sarver was carried over the threshold of the little house. The young bride became mistress of the four room domicile.

A central chimney served the fireplace in each of the rooms, and a circular staircase led from the two adjoining downstairs rooms to the two adjoining rooms on the second floor.

The depth of the property included a gully made by the waters of the Nine Mile Run Creek.

There was a barn to house cattle, and until her death in 1918, Mrs. Lohr's grandmother was permitted by the town officials to keep her cows...right in the heart of Wilkinsburg!

Few children today ever come in contact with a cow, but young Peg Sarver Lohr could always go to grandma's house and visit "Old Bossy".

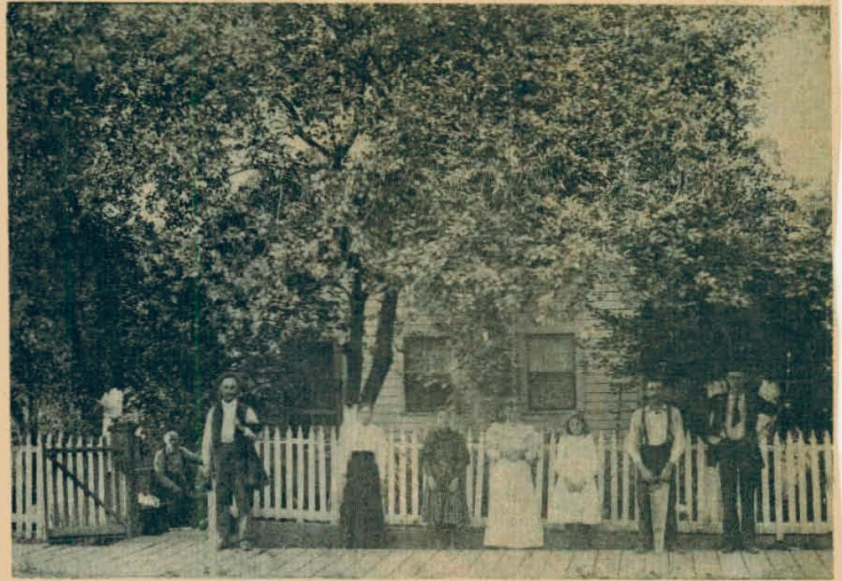
It also meant she, like other school children of the day, could earn pin-money by delivering the fresh, sweet and buttery rich milk produced by the cows.

It seems like only yesterday...getting up just a little early and hurrying to deliver the milk before attending classes at the McNair Schoolhouse.

And then, there was always fence sitting to help a child while away some time. Mrs. Lohr recalls being perched there and listening to the hand-clapping spirituals coming from the first A.M.E. Church...located in a store room on Penn Avenue.

The property came under the ownership of Mrs. Lohr's parents, and prior to the death of her father, it was deeded to Mrs. Lohr and her husband.

And so it stands...a little house...a curiosity...and a place where once a little girl found happiness, contentment...and love.



MEMBERS OF THE Sarver family paused one summer day in the 1890s for a portrait before the white picket fence that bordered their home at 1023 Ross St. in Wilkinsburg. The property now is owned by Mrs. Earl Sarver Lohr.

Note that this article was written July 1, 1970 for the Wilkinsburg Gazette.

## More about the little Sarver house

WILK. GAZETTE 7-15-70

WILKINSBURG—Curiosity has been peaked by the recent story dealing with the little Sarver-Lohr house at 1023 Ross Ave. (The Gazette, July 1).

One of the most frequent inquiries deals with the size of the home, which today is much larger than the original four-room, two story structure built around a central fireplace.

According to Mrs. Earl S. Lohr, whose family built the house, rooms were added to the building at three different periods of renovation.

The last remodeling, during the 1930s, also added a side porch. The house at this time became the first home of Earl Lohr and his bride, Marguerite Sarver, and thus the third generation of the Sarver family went to live therein.

During the 1960s it became a problem to successfully paint the aged wood of the structure, and the house was covered with aluminum siding.

This changed the appearance of the house very little, and in 1967 it was chosen to be photographed for the book "Landmark Architecture of Allegheny County"; (Van Trump and Zeigler).

One of the statements in the volume pertaining to the home reads: "The structure recalls very gracefully the half rural aspects of Wilkinsburg in the middle of the nineteenth century."

The oldest structure of its kind in the community, the little house is 108 years old.

When the property was purchased from James Kelly by Simon Sarver, this was indeed a

rural area. The Sarver home, when completed, had sufficient land on two sides to graze a few cows.

These noble animals were the beginning of the first Mrs. Sarver's very own dairy.

As the town grew, with real estate at a premium, lots were sold. The cows were then driven up to what is now the Blackridge area at Old Gate Road and a section of Judge Black's pasture was rented for them.

A number of Wilkinsburg men can recall the days of their youth when they were employed by the Sarvers as "cow boys."

The back yard and barn area, which extended almost to the rear doors of Penn Avenue business houses, was sold in the 1920s and the property became bisected by Stoner Way.

Later, a large, two-car garage with a storage loft was erected. There remains today a sizeable garden area, tended with love by the present occupants, Mr. and Mrs. Stacey Noah.

This January, the property was deeded to the Lohr's only daughter, Suzanne, following a cherished family tradition.

Suzanne is the fourth generation child to have lived at 1023 Ross Ave. Her first five years there were in the company of her grandfather, George Sarver. He was born there in 1868 and died there, with his 86 year lifetime spent in the little house.

Despite the many changes in the community around it, the little house, in its 108th year, continues to stand firm.



CONSIDERED THE oldest home still in use in Wilkinsburg is the little house at 1023 Ross Ave. The 108 year old building is now owned by Suzanne Lohr (left) who is the fourth generation of the Sarver family to hold ownership. With her is her mother, Mrs. Earl S. Lohr.

Note that this article was written July 15, 1970 for the Wilkinsburg Gazette.



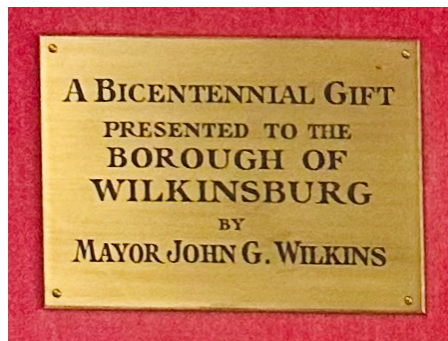
**Lincoln Highway Conference will be held the week of June 22-26 in York, PA. This week-long event celebrates the Lincoln Highway, the first coast-to-coast highway in our nation. Dubbed the “Road to Independence” the celebration includes the 250th birthday of the USA.**

This conference features tours to choose from, lectures, videos, music, celebrations. You can decide on several extra activities to celebrate the nation’s 250th anniversary as well as the Lincoln Highway. There will be bus tours, walking tours, visits to Gettysburg Battlefield where the July 1-3, 1863 battle took place. special events and presentations about over 250 years of transportation history along the Lincoln Highway. There is an extra bus trip on Friday June 26 to Philadelphia to Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell.

To learn more about the conference and tours, pre-register and make your plans, visit the Lincoln Highway Association website: [lincoln250pa.org](https://lincoln250pa.org)

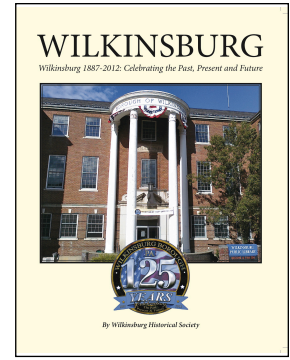
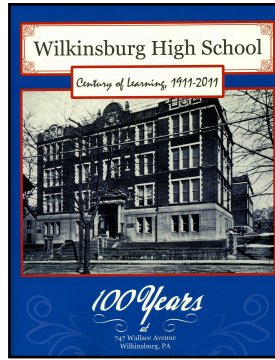
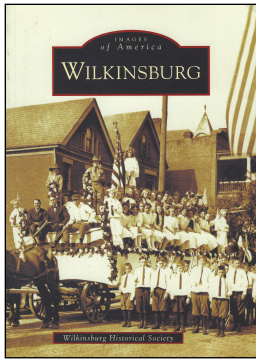


Scan the QR code to see the entire itinerary, and make your plans for the Lincoln Highway National Conference in York, PA. Registration deadline is May 31, 2026.



These two framed flags flew over the Wilkinsburg Borough Building on July 4, 1976 as a part of the Bicentennial of America celebration. They were then framed and on display in the Borough Building lobby for the past fifty years. These were a gift from Mayor John G. Wilkins.





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: <b>Wilkinsburg Historical Society</b>          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**

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VOL. 19 NO. 8 May 2020 A FREE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER BRINGING YOU QUALITY NEWS ABOUT WILKINSBURG



**Wilkinsburg Bird Town Programs**

Because Wilkinsburg has been designated an official Bird Town, thousands of volunteers for the Audubon Society, their programs will be available to help us appreciate the wild birds that call our town home.

The programs, led by local biologists of the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania (ASWP), are also made possible by the Wilkinsburg Community Development Corporation and the Wilkinsburg Wildlife Garden Group. Registration is required.

**BIRD TOWN PROGRAMS**

**Birds of Prey | Thursday, May 7 | 6:30-8:30 p.m. | Historic Train Station at 901 Main Street**

Discover the fascinating world of eagles, hawks, owls and vultures which once call Wilkinsburg home. Meet a live Bird of Prey! This program is suitable for adults, and children with an adult.

**Create a Backyard Habitat | Saturday, May 9 | 10:00-12:00 p.m. | Leiber Building at 715 Wood Street**

Learn practical steps for creating a quality wildlife habitat at home, whether you have a yard or small patio. Improve your outdoor space for birds, butterflies, and people! This program is geared towards adults. Older interested children are welcome.

Register at <https://bit.ly/wilksbirdhub>

**Application Kickoff for Penn-Lincoln Apartments is May 14**

The long-awaited development of the Penn Lincoln Apartments is expected to open later this year.

Rental applications for the 41 affordable apartments at the corner of Penn Avenue and Center Street opened May 1, 2020, and will be accepted through June 1, 2020.

Developed by ACTION Housing in partnership with Homosa Housing, the structure floor plan includes brand new 1, 2, and 3-bedroom units with modern finishes.

Move-ins expect to take place after August 2020. Applications will be accepted throughout the month of May and entered into a lottery after June 1.

The property management team from T&L Development will be on site at Homosa House, Tremont, Wednesdays and Thursdays throughout May to answer questions and accept in-person applications.

Also, interested parties can swing by on Thursday, May 14 from 5-6 p.m. at Homosa House, 807 Willow Ave. in Wilkinsburg, for an application kickoff event.

For more information about the new apartments, call 412.364.4802 or email [pm@actionltdhousing.com](mailto:pm@actionltdhousing.com). Also, see ad on page 8.

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. [wilksburghistory.wordpress.com](http://wilksburghistory.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.