



Archives

JUNE
2026

WILKINSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
VOLUME 32, ISSUE 4

Wilkinsburg has historically been a patriotic community, often organizing holiday parades through the Borough. This issue of the *Archives* features Memorial Day 1969 with a parade and flag-placement at Woodlawn Cemetery on Penn Avenue. All of the photographs were taken by James B. Richard, a man who was passionate about Wilkinsburg history.



Memorial Day parade in 1969 included marching groups from Wilkinsburg and neighboring communities. This view is on Wood Street near the secondary entrance to G.C. Murphy store.

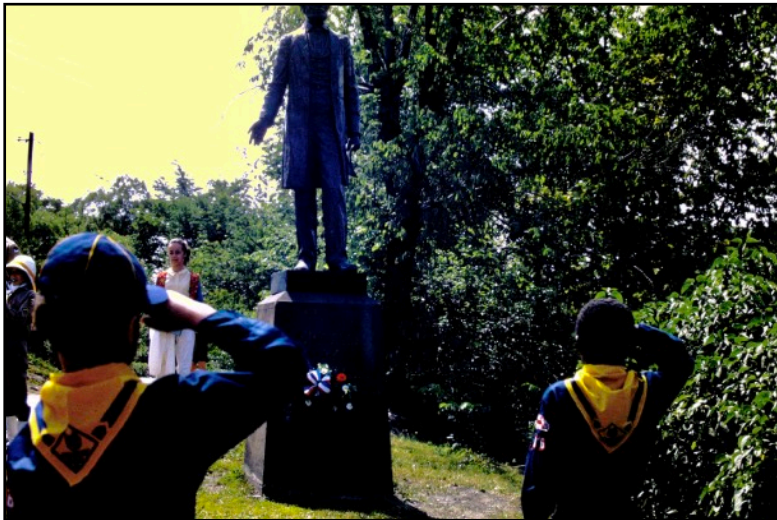
The drum and bugle corps, shown on Wood Street, provided a musical component to the parade marchers.



Wilkinsburg's Boy Scout troops participated every year. In this image two of the scouts are carrying wreaths to place at the Lincoln statue and at the Soldier's statue in Woodlawn Cemetery, 1460 Penn Avenue in Wilkinsburg 15221. This group is marching on Wood Street near Penn Avenue in front of Caldwell and Graham's Dry Goods store.



The Boy Scouts marched from Wood Street to Penn Avenue (Lincoln Highway) and then up Penn Avenue hill to the Lincoln Statue, carrying the wreath to place at the statue. The scouts paused for a moment to salute, showing respect and recognition for Abraham Lincoln. They are accompanied by veterans representing the John Clarke post of the American Legion and the George Rankin post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.



For over four decades it was a tradition to place a wreath, adorned with red, white and blue ribbons, at the base of the Abraham Lincoln statue. Shown is Wilkinsburg's original statue of Lincoln, dedicated in 1916. It was constructed of sheet copper over a metal framework. Due to weathering, copper deterioration and vandalism the statue was retired and is now in Council Chambers, safe from the elements. It was replaced with a new bronze Lincoln in 2021.



A decorated platform was constructed in Woodlawn Cemetery across from the Veteran's section for speakers to present their thoughts. They believe it is their duty to remember and share about the brave men and women who lost their lives during military service to America. Several Boy Scouts and residents are seen paying close attention to the speaker.



About a quarter mile inside the entrance to Woodlawn Cemetery is the Civil War Soldiers memorial statue, placed about 1905. The base has the words “In Memory of Our Soldier Dead” and is topped with a granite Civil War soldier.



Boy Scouts from various troops in Wilkinsburg worked for several hours placing American flags on the graves of those who had served in the U.S. military branches. They worked along with the Veteran’s groups to be sure that all were honored. In past decades much of the Wilkinsburg community honored those who had died in military service and attended Memorial Day events.



The Veteran’s section of Woodlawn Cemetery shows the flags and flowers on the graves of our brave service members. Many of these interred are local people who grew up in Wilkinsburg. This image was taken May 30, 1969, fifty-seven years ago. In recent years there are still Veterans groups who place American flags on Memorial Day in Woodlawn Cemetery.

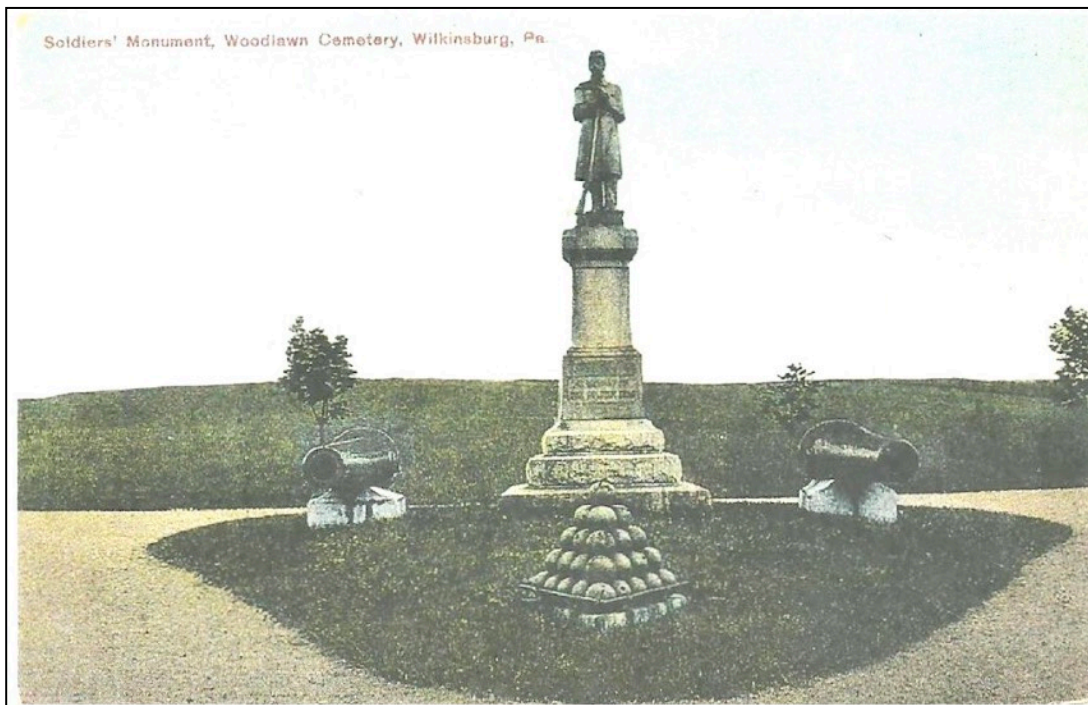
National Memorial Day was first organized by GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) Union Veterans. It was 100 years later, in 1971, that it would become an official federal holiday.



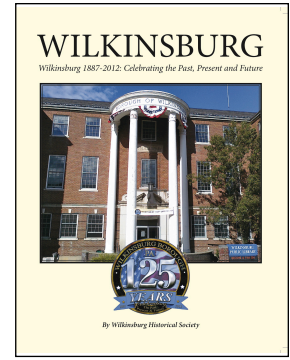
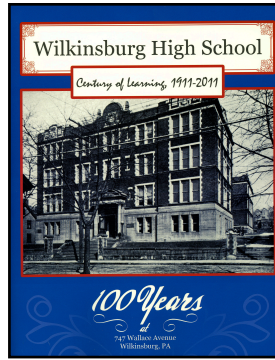
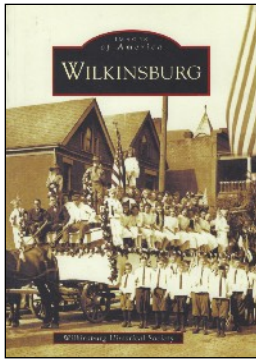
Woodlawn Cemetery Civil War monument. Inscription reads: "In Memory of Our Soldier Dead"

Honoring the dead who have fought in battle has been a tradition for thousands of years. In America, it was the GAR Civil War Veterans of Waterloo, New York who hosted an annual day of remembrance beginning in May of 1866. All businesses closed and all the residents participated in decorating the graves with flowers and flags. Within a few years the veterans groups had called for a nationwide day of remembrance. These GAR Civil War Union veterans also organized to assist in getting veterans pension, housing, medical and widows benefits.

For many years memorial day was known as Decoration Day, a day to "decorate" the graves of the fallen soldiers. In Wilkinsburg the G.A.R. Lowry Post, at one point with over 150 members, would march up Penn Avenue on Memorial Day to Woodlawn Cemetery to the Civil War soldier monument. The parade would continue to the Civil War grave section and decorate the graves with flowers and American flags. Each of the soldiers graves in Wilkinsburg's Woodlawn Cemetery (1460 Penn Avenue, 15221) are still decorated with an American flag every year by veteran's groups.



This vintage postcard shows the Civil War Soldiers' Monument in Woodlawn Cemetery in Wilkinsburg, circa 1910. It was originally flanked with two cannons which were sold during World War II during a metal collection to assist America in the war effort.



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.

NFL's Aaron Donald Brings New Housing Here

Construction is well underway on Upper Wilkinsburg's new housing project. The new housing project is being developed by the Wilkinsburg Community Development Corp. and is located on the corner of 10th and 11th streets. The project is being developed by the Wilkinsburg Community Development Corp. and is located on the corner of 10th and 11th streets. The project is being developed by the Wilkinsburg Community Development Corp. and is located on the corner of 10th and 11th streets.



Old Telephone Exchange Has New Lease on Life

Plans for the new Wilkinsburg Community History Center are well advanced. The building is being developed by the Wilkinsburg Community History Center and is located on the corner of 10th and 11th streets. The project is being developed by the Wilkinsburg Community History Center and is located on the corner of 10th and 11th streets.

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.