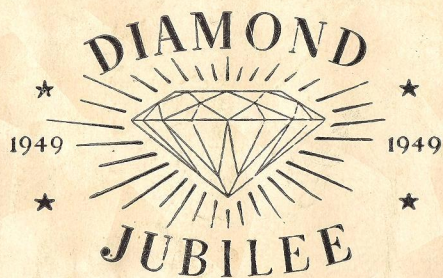


HISTORY
of
SHARPSVILLE
PENNSYLVANIA



September 26, 1839

James Sharp
Direct your youth Sharon Mercer County Pennsylvania

Dated Signature of James Sharp, Sept. 26, 1839.

HISTORY OF SHARPSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

James Sharp

It is unfortunate that the present town entrance markers, which describe Sharpsville as "founded in 1798" are so misleading. The oldest part of the present town was not laid out until 1837. Any visitor of the site in 1798 would have found neither town, James Sharp, nor any other resident; and on inquiry would have learned that the land still belonged to the state.

A large tract of land, lying chiefly on the north side of the river but including the site of early Sharpsville, was surveyed on November 19, 1799, for Phineas Dunham, who had settled there earlier in the year. He never received a patent for the tract, however; and it was later found that through an error the survey had taken in part of another piece of land. The tract was re-surveyed on August 18, 1811, for Jonathan Dunham, who received a patent from the state on July 31, 1812, for 400 acres of land.

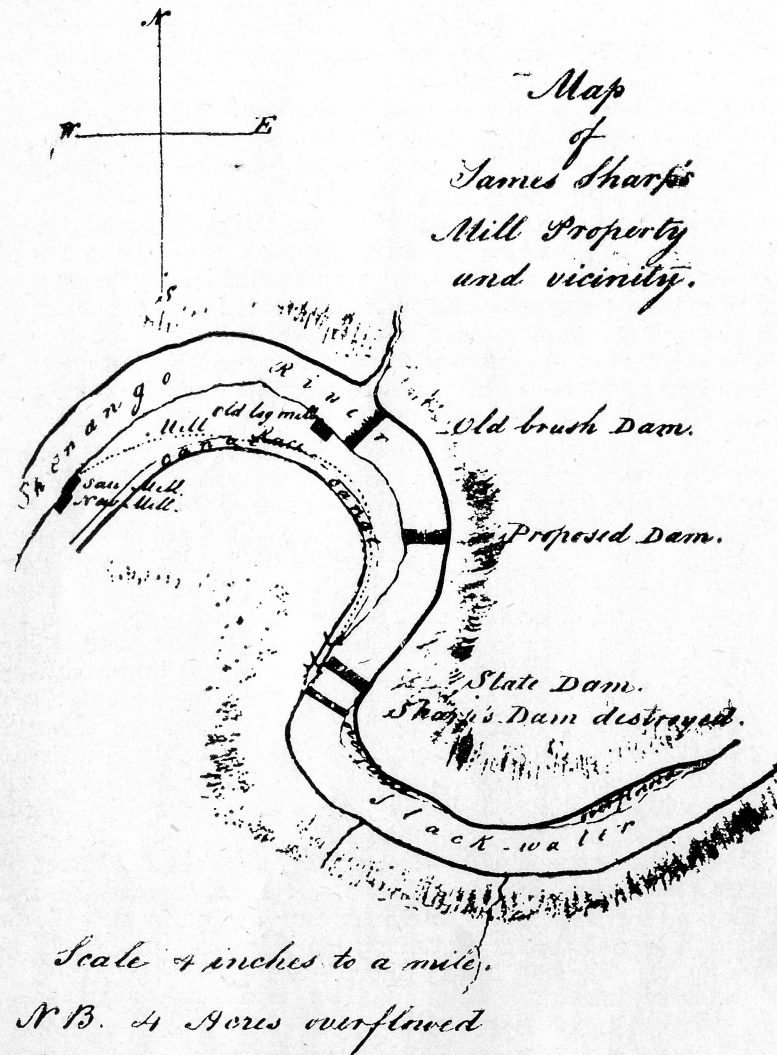
Mr. Dunham, who lived on the north side of the river, sold parts of this tract; and among the purchasers was Hugh Means, who on January 22, 1813, bought 25 acres in the bend of the river. Mr. Means, a Revolutionary War veteran, had a gristmill east of present New Wilmington; and it may be that he bought the land as a possible mill site. Hugh Means never occupied this land, however, though his son Thomas lived some time in the vicinity, holding a 250-acre tract.

James Sharp, then a man in his early twenties, settled here in 1820 with his wife, Nancy, and a young son, named Hugh, for Nancy's father, Hugh Means. James Sharp, too, was a miller, and built a log gristmill and a brush dam about halfway between the present mill and the old canal lock. According to court records, the dam was built April 11, 1825. Because an act of Assembly of 1803 had declared the Shenango a public highway, Sharp was sued for obstructing navigation; but the case was dropped.

During the next few years we catch only glimpses of James Sharp carrying on his business. In 1831 he served as a traverse juror; in 1833 he and his wife sold a lot which they owned in New Castle; in 1835 Hugh Means died, and among his bequests was one of seven dollars to "my daughter Nancy Sharp."

About this time Sharp rebuilt his mills with considerable improvement. The old brush dam gave way to a new one, of stone and timber, above the later canal lock; and from this dam a race led to a sawmill and a gristmill at the site of the present mill.

This arrangement did not last long. On April 26, 1836, Charles T. Whippo and his assistant, Henry C. Moore, began to survey the route of the Erie Extension of the Pennsylvania Canal. Generally, they ran a course parallel with the river, on its left bank. Reaching James Sharp's land, they ran their line between the mill and his house and continued, almost following the millrace, to a point just below the milldam; above this point the engineers planned to use slack-water. Contracts for canal construction were let the same year; and like many other property owners, Sharp contracted to do minor con-



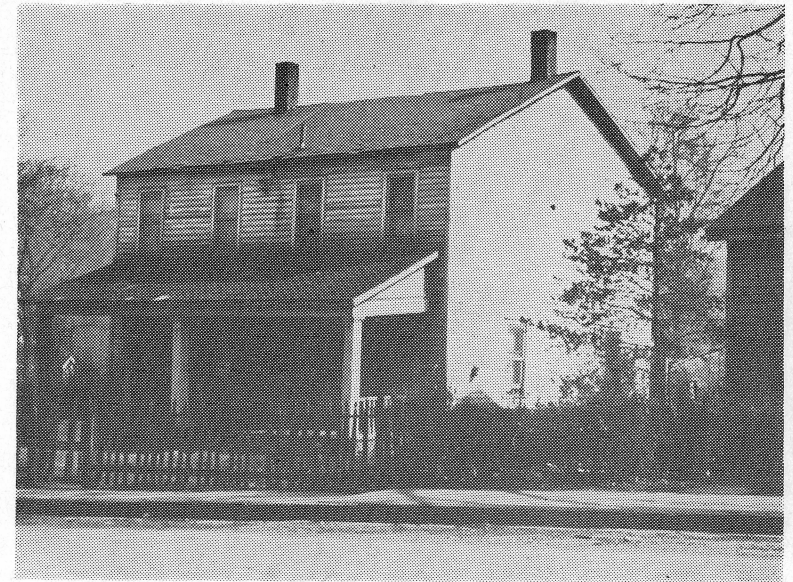
1840 Map

struction on his own land. On October 5, he and Neasbit Robinson signed a contract to build three towing path bridges.

To James Sharp, as to others, the canal appeared to offer an opportunity for profit. At his mill the new waterway would cross the Mercer-Hartford road; and the intersection seemed an obvious place for a town. Accordingly he laid out town lots—forty-four of them, at least—in a tract which he called Sharpsburg. In the same year, 1837,

the county court had a road laid out "Beginning at Sharpsburgh at the Junction of Sharon and Mercer Streets" and ending at "the State road at the Bridge near Daniel Budd's" in Sharon. Some of Sharp's deeds of sale refer also to "Canal Street" and to "third alley"; but beyond this we know little of the town as he planned it.

But while the canal promised future benefits, it inflicted present injury. The milldam stood above the site for the new canal dam, and had to be torn out; the millrace lay in the line of the canal, and was destroyed; the mills stood idle. James Sharp presented claims for some \$40,000 damages; the canal officials pointed out that these claims included the milldam, constructed contrary to the act of Assembly of 1803, and they offered him \$6,200. Sharp persisted in his claims. Finally he built a new dam, below the State dam and above the site of the former brush dam, and dug a new millrace between the canal and the river; but meanwhile his milling business had been at a standstill. Even the canal contracts were a disappointment. In



James Sharp House

1840 James Sharp went to court to collect sums of ten and fifteen dollars owed him and his son Hugh by Neasbit Robinson, who apparently had not been paid by the canal superintendent; and in the same year he sued Isaiah Mattox, and Edward and Charles Moyer, to collect \$9.19 which they, in turn, had not received from Livermore & Smith, contractors on the canal.

Neither had the real-estate venture met with much success; it appears that Sharp sold only seven of the lots he had laid out. On May 7, 1841, he agreed to buy a 200-acre tract, now the "Thornton

HISTORY OF SHARPSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

Farm," from David Hawthorn; but apparently he was unable to keep up his payments. On September 23, 1845, he sold to W. W. Bell & Co. the iron ore rights on his 400-acre Sharpsburg property, the purchasers promising to erect a furnace no farther away than Clarksville.

In 1846 James Sharp was sold out by the sheriff. On January 28, eight acres of land, in Hickory Township, were sold to John McClure, Jr.; on June 24, the tract he had agreed to buy from Hawthorn was sold to James Stewart; and on September 26, the 400-acre Sharpsburg tract itself (except seven town lots) was sold to Thomas A. Scott and Paul Hamilton.

James Sharp came here in 1820, "Laboured for . . . years to make an improvement" (as he wrote in one of his letters), and left in 1847. His town, which owed its origin to the canal, owed its early growth to the furnaces. Ironically enough, James Sharp lost his property in the same year that Vincent, Himrod & McClure built Blanche Furnace, later and better known as the "Old Sharpsville."

All the landmarks that remain today to remind us of our founder are the old mill site and his house. The Diefenderfer mill is now located approximately where the second Sharp mill originally stood. The old mill race has been filled in, and even the canal which once passed between the mills and house is gone. The house, the oldest in town, still stands however, at 426 and 428 North Mercer Avenue.

Erie Extension Canal

The Erie Extension Canal, extending from above New Castle to Erie, was divided into two lines: The Shenango Line, extending north to a point west of Conneaut Lake; and the Conneaut Line, extending from west of Conneaut Lake to Erie.

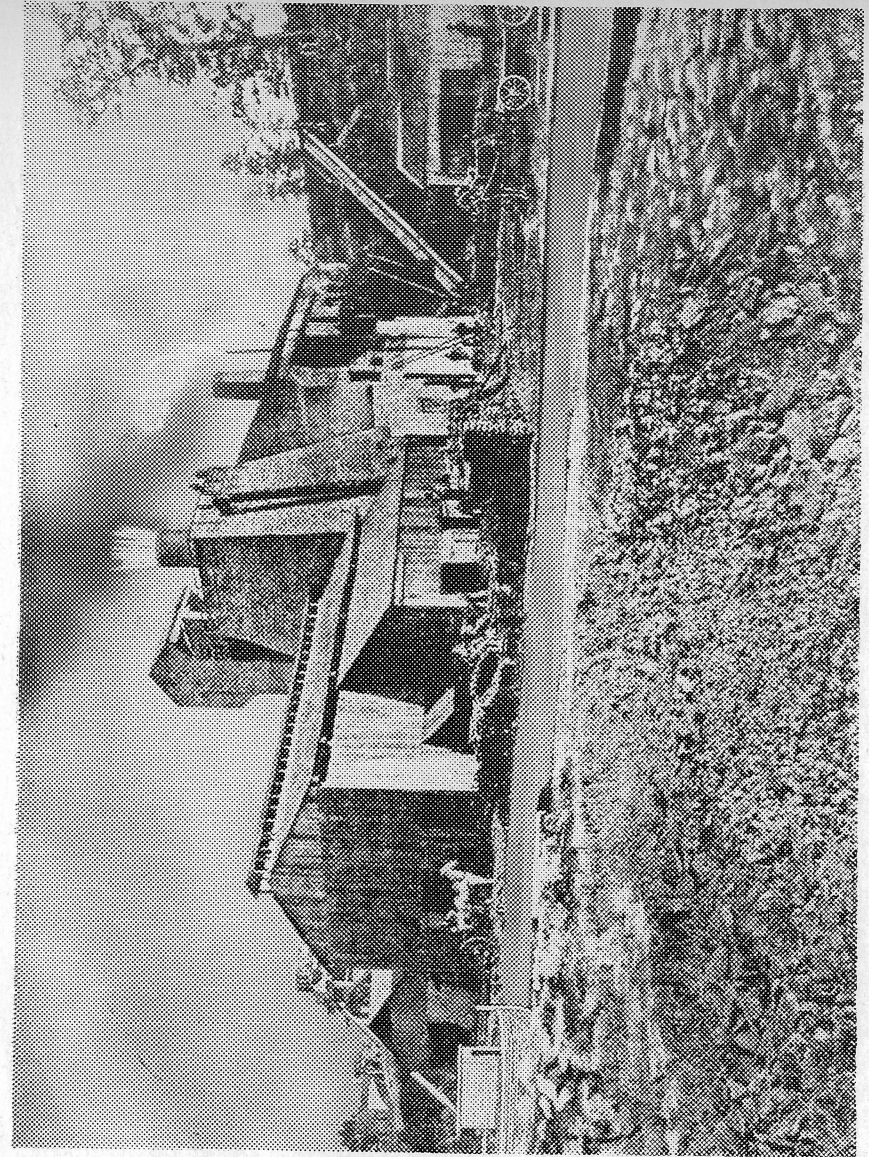
The Shenango Line included 44 locks, numbered from south to north. Locks No. 1 - 35 were constructed of cut stone; Nos. 36 - 44 had stone walls with wooden facing.

Lock No. 10, at present Sharpsville, was a guard lock: It was at a point where canal boats left slackwater to enter the canal channel, with a difference in water level amounting to seven feet.

The first contract to construct this lock was signed Sept. 12, 1836, by Maloney & Polley (Jeremiah Maloney and Abner H. Polley). They evidently abandoned the work; and on Jan. 10, 1837, a second contract was signed by McBride & Stewart (Francis McBride and William Stewart). They, too, failed to complete the work; and on Oct. 31, 1837, Charles T. Whippo, engineer on the Shenango Line, reported that "Lock No. 10 has also been abandoned. Some timber and stone have been delivered."

The third and final contract was signed Nov. 9, 1837, by Foreman, Phillips & Co. (George D. Foreman, Stephen Phillips, and Samuel Strain), who had previously, on Jan. 10, 1837, contracted to construct Lock No. 11.

Contracts for this lock included construction of the canal channel.



Between 1844 and 1871, when the old Erie Canal was aiding the industrialization of this section, several iron mills were established in Sharpsville and vicinity. The picture right shows the old Sharpsville furnace with the rarely seen canal and freight barge at the extreme left waiting to transport the pig iron, piled high on the bank, to Pittsburgh. In those days the stacks were built of stone and with open tops. The light from them made it possible to read a newspaper at night for miles around. Many oldtimers can remember when birds migrating to the south were attracted by the light and would plunge to their deaths around the furnace. Sometimes a workman's dinner included a wild duck which had been overcome by the fumes. This picture, taken in the 1860's, was provided by Charles F. Smith of Sharpsville.

HISTORY OF SHARPSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

for 108 feet above the lock and 108 feet below. On Nov. 10, 1838, a year after the contract was signed, Mr. Whippo, then principal engineer of the Shenango Line, reported the cost of the work done on this lock as \$8,160, and that of the work yet to be done as \$5,624, making a total of \$13,784. A year later, Nov. 25, 1839, W. Milnor Roberts, who had replaced Mr. Whippo, reported the cost of work done as \$13,720.25, and of work yet to be done as \$60.00, making a total estimate of \$13,780.25.



Canal Lock No. 10

The portion of the Shenango Line extending north to Greenville was put in use July 22, 1840, and opened publicly on Aug. 23. Three miles more were opened next year; and in 1842 the entire Shenango Line was opened.

The Conneaut Line, on the other hand, was never completed by the state. Difficulties of construction, mounting criticism of the expense of the work, realization of the limitations of canals in contrast to the growing railroads, finally led the state to abandon the Erie Extension. On Aug. 1, 1843, the canal was turned over, without cost, to the Erie Canal Company, incorporated by the state for that purpose; with the provision that this company should complete the canal, and that when it had given proof of having done this it should also receive the Beaver Division Canal (from Beaver through New Castle). On Dec. 18, 1844, this company presented to Governor Porter evidence that on Dec. 5, two boats had reached Erie through the canal (though it appears that some of the construction work was incomplete at the

HISTORY OF SHARPSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

time); and on Jan. 10, 1845, the Erie Canal Co. took over the Beaver Division.

The first passenger boats, or packets as they were called, were flat boats, 40 feet long and eight feet wide. They were very cumbersome and averaged only 2½ miles an hour as they were drawn along the canal by mules on the towpath.

When the entire canal was opened the packets of the Reed Line of Erie were placed in operation. In the bow of the boat there was a cabin for the crew. The rest of the boat was divided into washing rooms, dressing rooms and sleeping rooms for the ladies. There was a large lounging room used for a dining hall, a game-room, and a sleeping room for the men.

The faster boats were drawn by three horses, and fresh ones were substituted every 10 miles.

Besides the packets, there were freight liners which had cabins in the rear for the crew. Poorer passengers, including immigrants, often rode on them, although there were no accommodations for passengers.

Like all canals, the Beaver and Lake Erie Canal received its revenue from tolls. Passengers were charged a half-cent a mile, and livestock 1½ cents a mile.

For the traveler of the time the canal was much better than the stage coach that ran over the turnpikes. The Reed Line packets finally reached the speed of five miles an hour and this was faster than either horseback or stage coach.

It is interesting to note the time made by a passenger boat. A traveler could leave Pittsburgh at 7:00 p. m. and reach New Castle at 8:40 the following morning. The fare was one dollar each way. The "Crystal Palace" and "Indiana" were packets that ran daily between Sharon and New Brighton.

Thanks to the terms under which it had received the canals, the Erie Canal Company was able to operate them until 1870, though by then the company was controlled by the railroad. In 1870, the canal company was declared bankrupt; and the canal was sold to the Erie and Pittsburgh Railroad, which leased it to the Pennsylvania. During 1871, the canal was operated by the railroad; but it was abandoned after the fall of the Elk Creek aqueduct in Erie County that same year.

The Pierce Family

The growth of Sharpsville was brought about by the furnaces which the canal made possible. The leading figure in the iron furnace industry was General James Pierce, who came to Sharpsville about 1860.

Evidence of Mr. Pierce's success is the mansion which he built, still the most impressive house in town. It was built on an attractive five acres of ground. The building, completed in 1874, was of brick, three stories high and about 50 by 150 feet; the wrought iron work,

the tower and the tall pillars are characteristic of the period in which the house was built. There are 30 rooms, a basement, and three finished stories in the mansion. These rooms are large, having brick walls, frescoed ceilings, and woodwork of heavy oak.

This isn't the only Pierce residence in Sharpsville; there are at least three other homes built by Mr. Pierce. One of these is now occupied by the Eckles family and another by Dr. Walter Alexander. The oldest Pierce home in Sharpsville is what was known for more than a half century as the Pierce House. It was originally built for General Pierce, but when he erected another house it was used as a hotel. It is now known as the Park Way Apartments, located near the Pennsylvania depot.

General Pierce was born on Sept. 24, 1810, in Swanzey, Cheshire County, New Hampshire. He worked on his father's farm until he was 21 years of age; he worked in the lumber business for two years, and then went into the business for himself, manufacturing staves for sugar barrels. In 1839 he married Miss Chloe Holbrook, also a native of New Hampshire.

Besides taking an interest in the lumber business, he took up farming. He and a cousin, Jervis Bates, came to Erie County, Pennsylvania, in 1844, bringing with them cotton and woolen cloth. They bought horses with the proceeds and made the journey back with wagons and sleighs. Mr. Pierce returned to Erie County in the winter, selling clocks. There was very little money in this section at the time, and his profit of one thousand dollars consisted wholly of Beaver and Erie Canal bonds. He was unable to obtain the interest on the bonds at Erie; so he sold them for stoves. He sold his property in New Hampshire and moved to Cranesville, Erie County, Pennsylvania. In 1847 he came to Clarksville.

The first businesses in which he was engaged in Mercer County were mining and shipping coal in the vicinity of Clarksville. The coal was shipped to Erie by the Beaver and Erie Canal. The business was still in its infancy in the Shenango Valley and was only moderately successful. The mines soon became exhausted, and he then opened new mines at Mt. Hickory, near Hermitage, Hickory Township. These mines were very valuable and laid the foundation for a successful business career. He constructed a tram-road operated by horsepower which conveyed the coal from the mines. This was considered a wonderful achievement and proved to be successful until it was superseded by the Sharpsville and Oakland Railroad. Mr. Pierce took a great interest in each of these railroads and was a stockholder in both. He was one of the first to engage in the coal business in Mercer County. Until the day of his death he was one of the most prominent and successful operators in Mercer and Lawrence Counties.

In 1859 he became the owner of the Sharpsville furnace and started to work on the Jackson iron ore of Lake Superior; it was then that the blast furnaces of the Shenango and Mahoning Valleys were revived. In 1868 Mr. Pierce and William L. Scott of Erie built the two-stack Douglas furnace. He had money invested in seven of the nine

furnaces located in Sharpsville and had large investments in the iron mines at Lake Superior. These comprise his mining, manufacturing and railroad enterprise, but he was also president and principal owner of the Iron Banking Company of Sharpsville and a stockholder in the Sharon Banking Company. His farming operations were conducted on an extensive scale. Mt. Hickory was a model farm and was equal to any of its kind, and perhaps was not surpassed by any in Western Pennsylvania.

Despite his many business activities he had an active interest in the community. He took a great interest in education and was for a number of years a school director. He made liberal contributions in land and money for the erection of school houses. One of his contributions, of \$10,000, was made in his wife's name toward the female professorship at Buchtel College, Akron, Ohio. It was to be called the Chloe Pierce Professorship. Several of the churches in Sharpsville received generous donations and private and public enterprises were greatly aided by his contributions. The Baptist Church was built in 1872 on lots which he donated. Mr. Pierce, himself, however, was a Universalist and built a brick church and a frame parsonage on his estate facing Mercer Avenue.

General Pierce died at Mt. Hickory on Dec. 2, 1874, after an illness caused by a fall. His wife survived him 12 years and died on Aug. 16, 1886. His sons, Jonas J., Walter, Wallace, Frank, and James B. Pierce, were all engaged in large business enterprises and were prominent men in this portion of the state. One of these, James B. Pierce, was burgess of Sharpsville from 1922 until 1926. Frank and Wallace were affiliated with the Sharpsville schools as members of the board of directors. Walter Pierce established the first Sharpsville newspaper, "The Advertiser," in 1870.

Now, however, the Pierce family have all left Sharpsville, and the mansion stands unoccupied. The house is too large for a residence by modern standards. Suggestions have been made for using it as a hospital or some other public building, but none of these plans have been carried out.

Fires

Sharpsville has been the scene of several disastrous fires, the first of which occurred about 1877, when what was then the business part of the town was entirely wiped out. The block between the canal and Furnace Street on Mercer Avenue, embracing the grocery store of Miles Lightner, the bakery of Clothenstein, millinery store of Mrs. Hannah Dull, the drug store of W. S. Bebout, the general store of T. M. McMillens, the grocery and drygoods store of Mr. Harshaw, and the blacksmith shop of John Cole. These were never rebuilt, as the town was moving farther south.

The next was a fire on Walnut Street; the fire starting in a store owned by Mr. Skinner which stood near the present home of Miss

HISTORY OF SHARPSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

Cora Fuller, and burned all the stores standing on that block extending to Main St., of which there were several.

Again on July 5, 1884, occurred a fire which destroyed the larger portion of business places in Sharpsville. At this time fire consumed all stores between Cedar St. and the store building now occupied by Bookwalter. Included in this conflagration were two storerooms owned by Isaac Byerly, one used as a grocery store, the other as a millinery store, J. L. Fillman's shoe store, Joseph McMurray's drug store, J. O'Grady's restaurant and confectionery store, and the jewelry store of C. W. Jaxtheimer.

At a later date fire again took its toll in the lower part of the town and consumed the two-room store building owned by Samuel Dunham in which the postoffice had been located, and partly owned by Daniel Stambaugh, and the dwelling of John Mehl, Sr.

On May 30, 1895, while a large number of citizens were either attending Memorial Day services or local horse races at the Sharon race track, the alarm was spread that the livery stable of D. M. Hadley was on fire. The flames spread rapidly and in a short time consumed the livery stable, the grocery store of J. K. McBurney, the dwelling of J. D. Hadley and another dwelling adjoining, as well as several barns. Sharpsville was up to this time without fire protection.

Schools

The oldest school in Sharpsville is now used as a residence. It is a story-and-a-half frame building at 303 North Mercer Avenue, on the west side of the street, opposite the Valley Mould plant. This school was built in 1847 by Messrs. Vincent, Himrod, and McClure, then engaged in the furnace business, and was used for the children of their employes. It was also used for church services. This school, like others of its time, was a private school. There was then no system of public education such as we have today.

We do not know who was the first teacher in the oldest Sharpsville school. The school was included in the Hickory Township District, whose records give the names of the following teachers who taught the Sharpsburg school:

1853-56—Salary in 1853, \$17.50 for three months' teaching: Miss

Nancy Artherhold (Mrs. Jonathan Hofius).

1857—H. H. Koonce.

1849—Miss Laura Pollock.

1861—Miss Lucy Spearman (Mrs. Frank Powell).

1863—Miss Jennie Porter (Mrs. David Gilliland).

1865—Miss Mary Green.

1866—Miss Ella Snodgrass (Mrs. John Ross).

This school was sold by the furnace company to the Hickory Township School District, from whom it was bought in 1870 by Mr. Pierce, who had donated lots at the top of Mercer Avenue for the erection of a new school.

In addition to the lots, Mr. Pierce donated \$2,000 toward a new

HISTORY OF SHARPSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

building, and Frank Allen also offered \$500 towards this purpose. These offers were accepted on June 7, 1869, and the contract was let to Carver and Trout for a new brick building of four rooms costing \$5,750. The building is the four southeast rooms of the present Deeter Building.

At this time the school was still included in the Hickory Township District, and the Sharpsville schools continued to be part of the Hickory system until the town was organized as a borough in 1874.



Old School House Built 1847

The first public school in the borough of Sharpsville ran for a term of six months, with Professor James F. Burwell as principal; salary, \$75 per month. Other teachers were:

Room 5—Mr. John P. Derr, salary \$37.50 per month.

Room 4—Miss Anna Groves, salary \$33 per month.

Room 3—Miss Flora Albin, salary \$33 per month.

Room 2—Miss Alma Kelly, salary \$33 per month.

Room 1—Miss Eva Stranahan, salary \$33 per month.

The following is a list of people heading the Sharpsville schools and terms of service from incorporation of borough to date:

James F. Burwell, 1874-75.

A. J. Palm, 1875-76.

W. W. Kennedy, 1877-80.

Miss Ada Goudy, 1876-77.

D. A. Cooper, 1880-81.

L. L. Campbell, 1881-85.

Edwin Twitmyer, 1885-87.

L. T. McCartney, 1887-91.

W. W. Fell, 1891-93.
 T. S. Vickerman, 1893-1911.
 William Johnston, 1911-1921.
 W. P. Norton, 1921-28.
 H. E. Pebly, 1928-.

Additions were built to the Mercer Avenue School in 1876 and 1883. The building now comprises 10 rooms. The first class to graduate from Sharpsville High School was in 1884, 10 years after the incorporation of the borough. It was composed of 11 members. According to school records no class graduated from Sharpsville High School in the year of 1885, but there have been classes each year since, except 1892. Miss Emma Deeter, for whom the building was later named, taught here from 1882 until her retirement in 1928, when the name was changed in her honor.

The extension of the town toward Sharon, meanwhile, made the location of the Mercer Avenue School inconvenient for residents of the newer part of town. In 1892, accordingly, a new school was built at the corner of Seventh Street and Pierce Avenue. At first this building contained six rooms, but it, too, was later enlarged until it now contains 10 rooms. This building was later renamed in honor of Miss Emma Robinson, who taught here from 1900 to 1937.

Still later, the Thirteenth Street School was erected in 1922. This building contained only two rooms, however, and the pupils above second grade from the western end of town continued to attend the Seventh Street School.

Until this time the high school classes had met in the Mercer Avenue building. The growing population of the town made this arrangement unsatisfactory. Plans had been drawn up for a high school building. The present high school was built in 1920 and included 14 rooms beside a gymnasium. The first graduating class to attend all four years in the new building was the class of 1926. In 1928, this building was enlarged by an addition of new class rooms and a new gymnasium facing First Street. The old gymnasium was adapted for use as an auditorium. At this time all seventh and eighth grade pupils were transferred to the high school building, where there was now more room.

Since 1874, the Sharpsville Borough had formed a separate school district under the supervision of the county superintendent of schools. It was then a fourth-class district. The census of 1940 gave Sharpsville a population of more than 5,000, and changed the classification to that of third-class school district, no longer under county supervision. This also changed Mr. Pebly's title from supervising principal to superintendent of schools.

Two Sharpsville school men later held county positions. Mr. William M. Johnson, who was supervising principal from 1906 to 1921, later served as county superintendent of school from 1922 to 1935. Mr. John B. Cutler, who was a graduate of Sharpsville High School, served as high school principal from 1928 until 1938 and since then has held the position of assistant county superintendent.

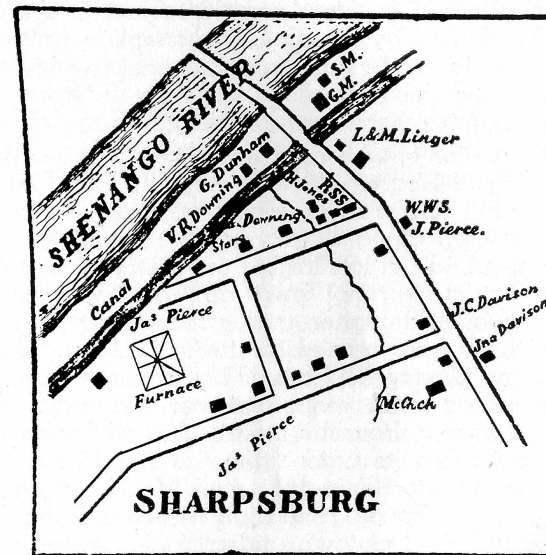
Incorporation and Growth

Incorporation of Borough

The first steps toward incorporation were discussed in 1871, and in the February 22, 1871, issue of the Advertiser, there appeared a long letter in favor of separating from Hickory Township.

Several controversies over the incorporation of the borough ensued for two or three years, until May 21, 1874, when Judge Maxwell issued a decree granting the petition and fixing the date for the first election as June 9, 1874, with results as follows:

Burgess, J. J. Hofius; High Constable, M. R. Zahniser; Constable, T. O. Hazen; Secretary and Treasurer, C. E. Agnew; Council, C. F.



1860 Map

Eldridge, G. C. Carnes, S. W. Johnston, Fred Patterson, F. B. Pauley, Dr. T. M. Brown; Judge of Elections, J. M. Kimball; Inspectors, L. D. Bumpus, Isaac Lynch; Assessor, T. G. Robinson; Auditors, J. T. Carmichael, W. S. Bebout, John Derr; School Directors, Samuel Dunham, J. R. Lytle, John D. Milliken, M. A. Johnston, John W. Stanton, D. M. McMillen.

The first U. S. Census after the incorporation gives the population a little less than 2,000 people. The growth of the town shown by the U. S. Census figures is as follows:

1880	-----	1826
1890	-----	2330
1900	-----	2970
1910	-----	3634

1920	-----	4674
1930	-----	5194
1940	-----	5129

Streets of Sharpsville

The streets of Sharpsville tell much about the history and growth of the town. The oldest part of Sharpsville, as we all know, is the lower end of Mercer Avenue. Even as late as the Civil War, Sharpsville scarcely extended south of the old Sharpsville tracks. A map dated 1860 shows 20 buildings, exclusive of furnaces. South of where the Sharpsville Railroad later ran, the only building of any importance was the old Methodist Church. The business center was chiefly on the east side of Mercer Avenue. The residential district grew up behind the business section. Here are the oldest streets of Sharpsville: The deeds of sale by James Sharp mention only one street, Canal Street. Even Mercer Avenue was then spoken of as the Mercer-Hartford Road. While the map of 1860 shows no street names, we had several, all of which were north of the old Sharpsville tracks.

General James Pierce, who died in 1874, was responsible for the more rapid growth of Sharpsville following the Civil War. He built up the top of the hill and created a new business section. New residential areas grew up along Shenango Street and on Baptist Hill. General Pierce also laid out lots farther out Mercer Avenue, up to the cemetery. This district was not built up until later, however. The streets in this newer and higher part of town were named in two ways. Some of them were named for trees: Hickory, Locust, Cedar, Maple, Walnut, and Cherry. The others have names suggesting their locations. The main east-and-west street was Shenango Street, which takes its name, of course, from the river within whose bend the town lies. Church Street takes its name from the Baptist Church built in 1872 on lots donated by General Pierce. The church in turn gave Baptist Hill its name. Prospect and High Streets remind us that this was then the highest part of town and also offered the widest view. Bridge Street was not laid out until later. It is still confused with Ridge Avenue, but it really leads to the upper river bridge not far from the old canal lock. General Pierce built his own mansion in the center of this part of our town. East Shenango Street and Baptist Hill were then the choice residential districts. Our town park is in the same part of town and gives the Parkway Apartments their name.

Sharpsville streets were still unpaved and sidewalks were not general. You probably have noticed that while most of our sidewalks are of cement, this old part of town has flagstone walks and stone curbs in many places. A photograph taken in the 1880's shows men with teams of horses grading Mercer Avenue at the intersection of Main Street, where a Sharpsville school building had been standing for the past 10 years.

The next important addition to our town was the Milliken territory. It included land west of Walnut Street. Since this subdivision

included several north and south streets, they were numbered rather than named. The first one beyond Walnut Street was called First Street. Of the east-west streets, it was thought that the one lying at the foot of the hill would replace Mercer Avenue as the town's thoroughfare; so it was called Main Street. The street south of this, following the top of the hill, was named Ridge Avenue. The next street was called Pierce Avenue for the family which still played a large part in the affairs of the town. Milliken Avenue was named for Dr. John H. Milliken.

The main growth of the town was toward Sharon. Strawbridge land was added next. This involved no street naming. Main Street, Ridge Avenue, and Pierce Avenue were extended farther west and the new north-south streets were numbered from seven to eleven. How rapidly this part of the town grew up is shown by the fact that in 1892 it was found necessary to build a new grade school at Seventh Street. Before this, all students attended Mercer Avenue Building.

The growth of Sharpsville in this direction was completed by the Knight annexation. Ridge Avenue and Pierce Avenue were extended further through this part of town. Main Street, however, was not extended because it ran too close to the railroad and the river. The system of numbering streets was continued through Eighteenth Street. New street names in this part of town are Penn Avenue, Hall Avenue, and Ashton Avenue. Part of this section was built up by the Westinghouse for the convenience of its employes.

One part of town we have so far omitted is the East End, formerly called Irish Town for the Irish settlers who came here from the County Mayo. Mercer Avenue and Walnut Street were extended through this part of town. Strangers are often confused here because these streets cross. The street that leads through Pine Hollow to Mercer is Walnut Street and not Mercer Avenue. New streets laid out in this part of town were Twitmyer Avenue, named for Dr. J. H. Twitmyer, and Covert Avenue, named for the Covert family.

Between the East End and the Strawbridge addition lies the most recently developed part of Sharpsville, which extends south to Buhl Farm. A few of the streets here are Martin Avenue, Mayfield Road, Hazen Road, Coleman Avenue, Pryde Avenue, Quarry Street, which was apparently named for the old quarry, and Oak Street. Some of these streets were named for local families, but they follow no particular system.

Street Lights

In the beginning the streets did not need lights at night, for the furnaces supplied the needed light. The open tops were later supplied with bells and then a need for a system of street lighting became apparent. Council then had some gasoline or kerosene street lights installed, and these did duty until the Sharpsville Electric Light Company was organized.

The original electric light plant was located on Sixth Street

HISTORY OF SHARPSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

where the garages of the Shenango Furnace now stand. It was approximately 20 yards from the spur leading in from the Pennsylvania Railroad.

The purpose of the plant originally was to provide light for the various furnaces (Alice, Mabel, Spearman, Perkins, and Claire). The plant was a crude affair that on numerous occasions failed to function properly.

A depression set in and the furnace owners could not afford to operate the plant at a loss because of the high cost of producing electricity and the upkeep of the machinery.

The four Robinson boys, Scott, Charley, Will and Harry, approached Mr. Perkins and the other stockholders and offered to buy the plant. The plant owners acceded and the four Robinson boys voted themselves into office and the furnace owners out of the offices of the plant. The Robinsons incorporated their holdings into the Sharpsville Electric Company.

The furnace owners guaranteed that they would be customers of the Robinson brothers and buy their electric power from them.

The Robinson boys then got up more power by installing two alternating generators and two boilers for their plant. Open arc lights were used and they built up their capacity to 100 arc lights. They had no meters; so they pro-rated and charged by the month.

In 1897 the Robinson brothers signed a contract with the Sharpsville Borough for street lights and established 13 incandescent lights in Sharpsville. They wired and placed the 13 poles themselves. The plant ran only on dark days, because lights were not used when it was sunny and bright.

Sharpsville never had gas lights on the streets, because gas was not available until after 1900.

The Robinson boys later sold their plant to the Youngstown Consolidated Co., for if they hadn't, this company would have established a power line and provided competition.

Fire Department

In the year 1899, the Borough Council purchased two hand-drawn fire wagons, fully equipped, for \$150 and organized a volunteer fire department for the Borough of Sharpsville. Dr. E. E. Henry was elected president, W. A. Graber, secretary, and George McIntyre, treasurer. This was the beginning of our present day Volunteer Fire Department.

On March 12, 1900, a meeting was called and the department was reorganized and "Nick" Mehler, popular barber, was elected fire chief for the ensuing year. The following year, 1901, council purchased a horse-drawn fire wagon for \$375 and made arrangements that when the fire bell rang, the fire team that got there first were to be paid.

Dr. Henry resigned in 1905 and was replaced by M. W. Thompson at a special meeting called on July 6, 1906. William Hittle was elected

HISTORY OF SHARPSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

fire chief. In 1913, council purchased a team of horses for \$625, pensioned off the old gray mare, and hired S. Richards as driver.

The year 1917 introduced the motor age and council purchased a red Ford fire engine fully equipped for \$1560. The team of horses was now used in hauling supplies for the borough, and pulling the snow plow to clean the streets. In 1924 council purchased a truck for borough work and the team was disposed of.

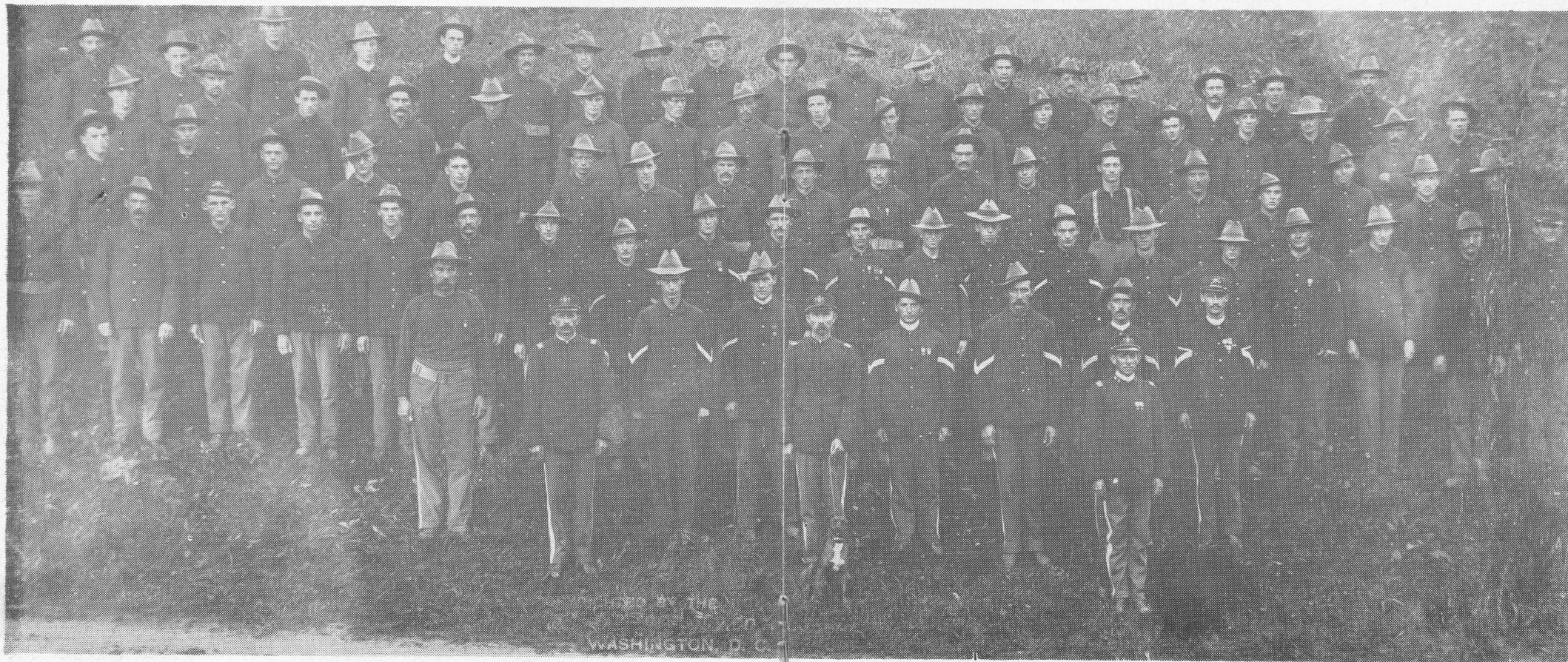
In 1923 council purchased a new White fire truck, equipped with a Howe pump; the cost was \$5,780. Before this, the Volunteer Fire Department was completely reorganized with George Mahaney as president, and the framework for the present day department laid. In 1939 council purchased an Ahearn-Fox truck which is in use today.

Water System

The water works plant was established in 1897, when two bond issues of \$14,000 each were approved by the people for its construction.

The plant was completed in 1898 and it was ready to supply water to the public. In the beginning, the water was used principally for sprinkling, and there was very little used in homes, in only about 150 the first year.

Water was first sold on a flat rate system, and in 1911 the meter system was adopted.



SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR 1898

Company G, 15th Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry

CAPTAIN JOHN W. SMITH, Company Commander

Mustered in at Mt. Gretna, Pa. — May 10, 1898.

Mustered out at Camp Haskell, Athen, Georgia — January 31, 1899.

Industries

Planing Mill

The first planing mill in Sharpsville was built by T. G. Robinson and John Cooke some time in the '60's. The mill was located directly across from the old Sharpsville Furnace and about 50 yards down from the present Erie Railroad station. The planing mill was situated between the Shenango River and the old mill race.

The old mill race provided water power to run the planing mill. It was here that the majority of logs were planed and cut to dimensions suitable for the building of homes and buildings in Sharpsville and the surrounding vicinity.

Mr. T. G. Robinson, who was also the local building contractor during this period, planed the logs and built the first Catholic Church, the first Baptist Church, and the first Methodist Church in Sharpsville.

Mr. John Cooke later sold out his interest to Mr. J. Taylor from Greenville. He moved to Sharon where he was engaged in the lumber and building business. Some of the descendants of his family still reside in Sharon.

About 1875, Mr. T. G. Robinson sold out his interest in the planing mill to a local railroad company branch, the Atlantic and Great Western Railroad. This local branch had a connection at Transfer and shipped directly to New York. It is thought some residents of Sharon are still receiving dividends from the sale of the Atlantic and Great Western Railroad.

The old planing building was torn down and moved to Byerly's Corners, where Mr. Byerly set up his own business of manufacturing carriages. This building was torn down only two years ago and the present cement block building of P. White and Sons now stands in its place.

The machines for planing were sold to a concern in Grinnell, Iowa, where they were used in the manufacturing of "headers" used to harvest wheat. Mr. T. G. Robinson went with the machines, set up the factory, but returned two years later to Sharpsville.

Sharpsville Furnace

The Sharpsville Furnace, a stone stack, was built in 1846 by Vincent, Himrod, Joseph and John McClure. It was called the Blanche Furnace. It was sold in 1853 to David and John P. Agnew, who ran it but a short time when it passed into the hands of "General" Pierce. The capacity at this time was estimated to be 12 tons per day. Mr. Pierce refitted the furnace, making it one of the best and most modern in the valley. It resumed operation in 1859, with J. J. Spearman as manager. In 1862, J. J. Pierce became manager and the firm of James Pierce & Son was formed. In 1870 the furnace was rebuilt except the stone stack, which was torn down in 1882 and in its place was built a new one of modern construction with a 13-foot bosh, 60 feet high, which was blown in on October

15, 1882. The annual capacity was 30,000 tons of pig iron. This furnace was rebuilt and the Sharpsville Furnace Company was organized.

After nearly a hundred years of iron manufacture it ceased operations about 1944 and was dismantled and moved away.

Geddes Foundry

An important industry of the earlier days was the old foundry that stood on ground now owned by the borough on Shenango Street. It was built by Messrs. James Pierce and Geddes to make castings for the Mt. Hickory Furnace. Mr. Pierce sold his interest to Mr. Young, who after a number of years, sold to Daniel Eagan. Mr. Eagan then purchased the Geddes interest and continued a successful business for a number of years, when he moved to Sharon and became interested in the Sharon Machine Company and Sharon Steel Castings Company, and was the founder of the American Steel Castings Company, of which he was first president.

Valley Mold & Iron

The Thomas D. West Foundry Company is universally known as the originator of the Direct Bessemer Ingot Moulds for use in the larger steel plants wherever located in the United States, Canada, and foreign countries. The Thomas D. West Company originally was incorporated by Messrs. George H. Boyd and Thomas D. West and brought from Cleveland, Ohio, to Sharpsville in 1892, and located on a plot of ground near the Alice Furnace. At this time the company was experimenting with making ingot moulds direct from molten metal. In the year 1904 the company discontinued the use of cupolas and arranged with the Shenango Furnace Company of Sharpsville to furnish molten metal. This new process proved a great success and the company soon grew to be the largest ingot mould foundry in the world, and increased their output from 50 to over 1,000 tons per day.

In 1910 the Thomas D. West Foundry Company purchased the Alice Furnace from Pickands-Mather Company. The Alice Furnace was built in 1868 by Henderson, Allen and Company. It has been known as the Allen, the Henderson, and the Florence. It was remodeled in 1882, having an annual capacity at that time of 18,000 tons. At this time the name was changed to the Valley Mold & Iron Corporation.

In June, 1927, operations were started on a new plant in Hubbard, Ohio. In March, 1943, most of the Sharpsville plant was moved to Cleveland, Ohio, and all that remains in Sharpsville at present is a few of the old buildings.

Safety First was inaugurated by Thomas D. West, founder of the T. D. West Foundry. In 1908 Mr. West organized in Sharpsville the American Anti-Accident Association, better known as the "Four A's." Mr. West declared that most industrial accidents were due to

HISTORY OF SHARPSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

carelessness and could and should be prevented. He advocated safety appliances on all machinery and greater caution on the part of the workers.

Sharpsville Steel Fabricators

In 1869 Gemmill and Hawthorn started a boiler factory in Sharpsville which they operated for a number of years. It finally passed into the hands of James R. Gemmill, who successfully operated it until a few years ago when he sold it to a company known as the Sharpsville Boiler Works. It has since been greatly enlarged and remodeled. It is situated at the corner of Main and Sixth Streets.

It was later reorganized and at present is known as Sharpsville Steel Fabricators, Inc.

Claire Furnace

In 1868-69, "General" Pierce and William Scott, of Erie, built the Mount Hickory Furnaces No. 1 and No. 2. They were built of brick and iron on stone foundations. In 1886 these were torn down and one stack, 15½-foot bosh and 75 feet high, was erected. This furnace used Lake Superior ore and produced Bessemer and foundry pig iron. Its capacity was 40,000 tons annually. It was entirely rebuilt, no part of the old furnace being used, by the Reliance Coke and Iron Company.

About 1933 operations were discontinued and it was later sold to a wrecking company which dismantled it for scrap.

Jackson Oilers

Mr. J. W. Jackson, founder of the Jackson Oil Can Factory, came to Sharpsville from New Wilmington in 1872 as a tinner. At that time Sharpsville was quite a railroad town and it was the duty of the engineers to furnish their own oilers. Mr. Jackson, being a tinner, the engineers had him make their oilers, and it was from such experiments the first Jackson Oiler grew. Mr. Jackson followed his trade until 1891, at which time he started manufacturing the Jackson Oiler.

Shenango Furnace

There are three groups of furnaces which were owned and operated by the Shenango Furnace Company, the Douglas, the Mabel, and the Spearman Furnaces.

Douglas: — In 1869, Jonas J. Pierce purchased 50 acres of land in the southwest suburb of Sharpsville on the line of the E. & P. R. R. In 1870, the firm of Pierce and Kelly was organized and Furnace No. 1 was built with a stack 50 feet high and 11-foot bosh. It was put in blast in March, 1871. In 1872, "General" Pierce and son, Wallace, obtained an interest in the firm, which then became Pierce, Kelly and Company. Stack No. 2 was erected in 1872, with stack

HISTORY OF SHARPSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

50 feet high and 15-foot bosh, and put in blast in February, 1873. These were rebuilt and enlarged in 1879 and in 1881.

Mabel: — This furnace was formerly known as the Ormsby Furnace, being built by J. W. Ormsby and Sons. No. 1 was built in 1873, and No. 2 in 1880.

Spearman Furnaces: — Built and operated by Spearman Iron Company, which was organized by J. J. Spearman, who also superintended the erection of the furnaces. They were built in 1872. No. 1 was blown in January 15, 1873. No. 2, September 15, 1875.

W. P. Snyder of Pittsburgh bought all three of them and later incorporated the Shenango Furnace Company in 1906. At present Stack No. 1 is on the site of the Douglas and Stack No. 3 on the site of the Spearman. They have an annual output of 400,000 tons of pig iron.

The slag is sold to the Cambria Slag Co., which was at first the Standard Slag Co. It is processed by them and marketed for various construction work.

The Shenango-Penn Mold Co., a foundry, was incorporated in 1927. They obtain iron from the furnace company for ingot molds and stools, having an annual output of 360,000 tons.

History of Development

Natural Gas Is Factor In Town Development

Long before there was gas in Sharpsville, many people were interested in its advantages and were considering ways and means of securing it. At one time, Pierce Brothers were granted a franchise to erect a gas manufacturing plant, but realizing the cost involved and the high price at which manufactured gas must sell, action was never taken on this franchise.

Interest was maintained and concentrated on getting natural gas into Sharpsville and finally, Charles Runningbrew prepared and circulated a petition asking the Oil City Fuel Supply Company (which has since been consolidated with the United Natural Gas Company) to supply the community with natural gas. This petition was signed by a large number of the residents of Sharpsville and the request was favorably acted upon by the gas company. Pipe lines were laid in the city in the fall of 1902 and spring of 1903 — thus, the best fuel known to mankind was made available to the people of this community.

When natural gas came to Sharpsville, the borough had a population of about 3500. The first year the gas company had 138 customers. Harry Thompson, who lived on Walnut Street, was the first resident to whom natural gas was served. Claire Shannon, the hardware dealer, was the first gas fitter and meter reader for the company.

Sharpsville Railroad

In the early days, Mr. James Pierce built a gravity track from his coal mines to the river. The cars filled with coal were sent down by gravity and hauled back empty by mules.

This was used for some time but soon proved inadequate, and a railroad was built from Oakland to Sharpsville about 1862. This was operated as a coal road for some time without any regular organization.

On January 26, 1866, an organization known as the Sharpsville and Oakland Railroad Company was effected. Mr. Pierce became and continued its president until the time of his death.

About 1875 this road was reorganized with a capital stock of \$350,000. It was a feeder for both the Erie and Pittsburgh Railroad, and the Erie Railroad, and was operated in the interest of the Baltimore & Ohio and Pennsylvania Railroads with runs from Sharpsville to Wilmington Junction.

In a time schedule dated Nov. 8, 1909, it was possible for passengers going to Mercer to leave Sharpsville in the morning, making connections at Wilmington Junction with the Mercer-New Castle section of the Pennsylvania, and return to Sharpsville at 4:50 p. m. the same day, having five hours at the county seat.

It continued to operate trains until February, 1931, at which time operations ceased and soon after the track was removed.

Pennsylvania Railroad

This railroad, first known as the Erie and Pittsburgh Railroad, was completed to Jamestown in 1860, and then through to Sharpsville in 1864, and the company advertised to run regular trains from Erie to New Castle after Oct. 31, 1864.

The Erie and Pittsburgh was operated as a feeder to the Lake Shore Railroad until March 24, 1870, when it was leased to the Pennsylvania Railroad for a term of 99 years.

Erie Railroad

The Erie Railroad in Sharpsville was at first known as the Atlantic and Great Western, having been granted a title by an act of the legislature of March 10, 1859, although it was not built through Sharpsville until several years after 1870.

In 1880 it was sold to the New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio. The combination of the abbreviations produced "Nypano" by which the railroad was commonly called while it was operated under this title. In March, 1883, the road was leased for 99 years to the New York, Lake Erie and Western Railroad, the Erie of today.

Sharpsville Advertiser

The Sharpsville Advertiser was established October 21, 1870, by Walter Pierce. The first number was issued from the presses of the Sharon Times, then owned and edited by George D. Herbert, later of Harrisburg.

In February, 1871, the paper was enlarged, and was printed at the Advance office in Greenville, the copy for each issue being sent from here.

In August, 1871, the printing material in the office of the Mercer Signal, a Democratic paper started in that place in January of that year by William McKnight and discontinued after a career of seven months, was purchased by Walter Pierce and the plant moved to Sharpsville. The office was located on the second floor of the two-story frame building on Mercer Avenue owned by Samuel Dunham and D. Stambaugh, in which the Post Office was located, Mr. Dunham being the postmaster. In 1872, the "Advertiser" was moved to the Opera House building, just then completed.

Mr. P. J. Bartleson, who had been a silent partner of Jacob Miller, superintendent of schools of Mercer County, in the publication of the Greenville Argus, having disposed of his interests there, came to Sharpsville in August, 1871, and assumed charge of the "Advertiser."

Owing to ill health, Mr. Pierce, who had many other business interests to look after, disposed of the paper to P. J. Bartleson, who

HISTORY OF SHARPSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

became sole proprietor in April, 1894. Mr. Bartleson was associated in business with his son, Frederick H. Bartleson, who was at that time the postmaster. Mr. Pierce died in September, 1899. He was a man of very progressive spirit, and did much toward the upbuilding of Sharpsville.

When the paper was started there were just three blast furnaces here — the Sharpsville, the Allen (now Alice), and the Mount Hickory (now Claire). The town at that early date had not been incorporated as a borough, and very few houses had been erected east and south of the Erie and Pittsburgh Railroad.

Telephones

The first telephone poles were hauled to Sharpsville in 1887, and the construction men boarded at the Pierce House, which was operated by Benjamin Hughes. In August of the same year a central office was established in the corner room on the first floor of a frame building situated at Shenango and Park Streets. The room was leased from Jonas J. Pierce and occupied jointly with Western Union Telegraph Company.

In January, 1888, there were eight telephones in service, while in 1900 the number had increased to 125. A magneto switchboard was replaced with a manual common battery switchboard in October, 1925, and in May, 1937, dial equipment replaced the manual service. There were 2027 telephones in service in January, 1949.

Sharpsville Post Office

Mail was first received in Sharpsville on March 23, 1864, when the name of the post office was given as "Sharpsville Furnace." This name was changed to Sharpsville on February 21, 1871.

The first postmaster was William T. McKee, who was appointed in 1864. Serving consecutively since that time have been J. J. Pierce, Samuel Dunham, Wellis Kitch, T. M. Ford, F. H. Bartleson, Karl Smith, Frank J. Clary, Karl Smith, and Kenneth W. McIntyre.

First National Bank

The Iron Banking Company was established over one year prior to the incorporation of the Borough of Sharpsville. The first organization meeting was held April 1, 1873, at which the partnership was formed.

The bank was opened for business after a meeting of the partners on April 5, 1873, at which Mr. James Pierce was elected president and Lycurgus Hefling, cashier. The paid capital was \$22,500.

On April 1, 1876, a new partnership was formed.

On April 22, 1903, the First National Bank was organized, replacing the original Iron Banking Company. This organization has continued and is in existence today.

HISTORY OF SHARPSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

Cemetery

Riverside Cemetery Association was organized April 5, 1872, through the instrumentality of James Pierce, for the purpose of selecting and maintaining a suitable and decent burial place for Sharpsville and vicinity.

The first members were James Pierce, David Agnew, J. J. Pierce, James H. Stokes, Isaac Lynch, J. McDowell, W. S. Bebout, R. Templeton, J. W. Wick and George D. Kelley.

The grounds chosen are situated on a hillside overlooking the Shenango River; are bounded on the north by the Shenango River, on the east by Hickory Township, and on the west and south by Sharpsville Borough. It is a most attractive spot for the burial of the dead.

Street Cars

The Street Car Company secured its franchise in the borough in August, 1892. The franchise was accepted by the Shenango Valley Street Railway Company on September 12, 1892. It granted the company the right to construct and operate an electric railway beginning on Ridge Avenue at the western boundary line, eastwardly to Seventh Street, north to Main Street, east to James Street, to Mercer Avenue, north to Furnace Street.

None of the streets were paved at that time, and the company was required to ballast with gravel, broken stone or slag.

The electric street cars continued to furnish transportation to Sharpsville until October 12, 1939, when motor buses were placed in operation.

Societies

Adoniram Lodge No. 739, I. O. O. F.

Greetings to Diamond Jubilee visitors from Adoniram Lodge No. 739, Independent Order Odd Fellows, and associated Lodges of the Order. Instituted on November 7, 1870. First Noble Grand — W. S. Bebout. Meets every Friday night.

Sharpsville Rebekah Lodge No. 110

Sharpsville Rebekah Lodge No. 110 — Organized October, 1902. First Noble Grand — Mrs. Nancy Randall. Meets second and fourth Thursday of every month.

Endeavor Rebekah Lodge No. 367

Endeavor Rebekah Lodge No. 367 — Organized April, 1909. First Noble Grand — Mrs. Margaret Ramig. Meets second and fourth Monday night each month. Visitors always welcome.

Sharpsville Lodge, No. 517, F. and A. M.

Sharpsville Lodge, No. 517, F. & A. M., was granted a charter September 4, 1872, and its first regular meeting was held October 21, 1872. This lodge has occupied the same hall since its organization.

The first officers were: James R. Lytle, worshipful master; Jonathan J. Hofius, senior warden; Alfred D. Palmer, junior warden; Hugh C. Harshaw, secretary; George Fuller, treasurer.

Sharpsville Chapter Order of the Eastern Star

Sharpsville Chapter Order of the Eastern Star was constituted May 24, 1917, by Grand Patron of O. E. S. of Pennsylvania, J. O. Jones of Greenville, and Mrs. Margaret McGill, Grand Matron of O. E. S. of Pennsylvania, in the Patterson Hall on Mercer Avenue and Shenango Street, where meetings were held until fire destroyed the hall. The chapter moved to the I. O. O. F. Temple on Walnut Street, where meetings were held for several years, following which the organization moved to the third floor of the First National Bank building.

Mrs. Elizabeth Hum was the first Worthy Matron and William Molzahn was first Worthy Patron (both deceased). Mrs. J. J. Davis (Bess) is the present Worthy Matron.

American Legion

The Sharpsville Post, No. 162, American Legion, was organized in the early summer of 1919. A temporary charter was granted the new Post in November, 1919, and the permanent charter was given by National headquarters on August 1, 1920.

Dr. P. E. Biggins was the first commander. Meetings were at first held in the Town Hall but in May, 1920, quarters were secured at Park Way. On June 1, 1926, they moved into their present home at 59 Walnut Street.

A War Memorial in honor of those who served the United States in time of war was placed and dedicated in the park during May, 1930, by the local Post.

The Sharpsville War Service Committee was the outgrowth of a Legion Committee and had representatives from nearly every organization in Sharpsville. Their purpose was to give reminders, of which over 800 were sent, to men and women serving in World War II.

List of Clubs and Organizations

The following is a list of clubs and organizations formed after 1900, with the dates of organization:

- Current Topics Club — 1901.
- High School Alumni Association — 1912.
- Blessed Mary General Gustavo Beneficial Society — 1913.
- Sharpsville Sunshine Society — 1917.
- Sharpsville Beagle Club — 1919.
- American Legion Auxiliary — 1921.
- Dames of Malta — 1922.
- Varsity "S" Club — 1923.
- Sharpsville Service Club — 1932.
- Sharpsville Woman's Club — 1937.
- Veterans of Foreign Wars — 1946.

Church History

First Methodist Church

The Sharpsville Methodist Episcopal Church grew from the Hays Class, organized at the home of William Hays, a tenant on the Seth Fruit farm, just west of Clarksville, in 1835, when Ensign B. Hill and Reuben Peck were pastors of the "Salem Circuit," which included this neighborhood.

During 1836 the class changed its meeting place to the home of Andrew Byerly, on the farm later occupied by J. B. Hawk; and here, on Sept. 25, 1836, the society was organized with James Hays as class leader. With this move the Hays Class became a Sharpsville group, and in time those members who lived nearer Clarksville became attendants of the Clarksville Methodist Church, organized in 1821.

The Hays Class belonged, when first organized, to the Salem Circuit, Meadville District, Pittsburgh Conference; and was thus older than the Erie Conference, organized in 1836, in which Sharpsville is since included. From 1837 until 1869 Sharpsville belonged, with Greenville, Clarksville, Big Bend, Keel Ridge, Charleston and Sharon, to the "Old Clarksville Circuit." In 1869 it became a separate station.

The Methodist Society first met within the present limits of Sharpsville about 1847, in which year Messrs. Vincent, Himrod, and Joseph and John McClure constructed the first blast furnace in Sharpsville and also built a school, still standing, at 303 North Mercer Ave.,

and now used as a residence, which they offered to church organizations for Sunday services. This building was used by the Methodists, with other groups, until 1858, when the first Methodist Church, a 30 by 40 frame building, was erected on North Mercer Avenue. This church, enlarged in 1875, was used for more than 25 years, and is well remembered by older members of the church; its foundation was used in the brick building now standing on the west side of Mercer Avenue just above the old Sharpsville Railroad. The present Church, on Shenango Street, was begun in 1886 and dedicated in the following year. It was at first a frame structure, but was enlarged and rebuilt in its present form in 1915-16.

United Brethren Church

The United Brethren Church was organized in 1866 by Rev. Day. The organization was effected in the M. E. Church, where services were held for over two years. The following seven years the store-room of the Erie Canal was utilized. In 1884 a one-story frame building was erected at the corner of Sixth and High Streets. This was built by William Reichard at a cost of \$1500, and was dedicated June 2, 1885, with appropriate services. This building was later sold to the Shenango Furnace Company and the beautiful brick structure on Ridge Avenue was built in 1920 and dedicated December 4 of the same year.

The church was closed by the U. B. Erie Conference in the spring of 1939 and the church and property were sold to the Nazarene denomination at that time.

First Presbyterian Church

The First Presbyterian Church of Sharpsville was organized on May 12, 1870, by a committee of the Presbytery of Beaver, which included Rev. W. M. Taylor of Mt. Jackson, Rev. J. M. Neely of New Wilmington, and Elder James Wilson of Sharon. There were 28 charter members who continued to meet in the Pierce Hall and in other buildings until in 1882, on the corner of Main and First Streets, a new church building was erected at a cost of \$4,000.

The first Elders of the Sharpsville Church were David Agnew and David McMillen. Later, Leander Ormsby, C. F. Eldredge, and John D. Hadley were added to the Elders.

The Rev. Newell of Clarksville served as supply pastor from the organization until 1872. In 1872 Rev. J. W. Hamilton became the first full pastor.

The new Presbyterian Church, built of native stone and located on Ridge Avenue, was started by the congregation and pastor, Rev. Joseph Woods, in 1930. The new building is spacious and adequately houses the congregation, now numbering nearly 600 members.

Mr. Fred Dunham and Mr. Joseph B. Cutler are two of the oldest Elders now serving. Mr. Louis Burckart, Sr., is the senior member of the trustees. Rev. Wm. Sheldon Blair is the present pastor.

First Baptist Church

Seventy-five years ago, April 30, 1871, the First Baptist Church of Sharpsville was organized with 14 members, and reorganized as a church June 11th, at which time the membership was increased to 20.

Meetings were held in the school house on lower Mercer Ave. Soon this building became too small and it was necessary to make arrangements for a church.

July 22, 1872, the first regular covenant meeting was held, at which time the congregation voted unanimously to proceed immediately towards erecting a meeting house. By this time they felt they could not continue to meet in the school house, so efforts were made to secure a more commodious place of worship until the meeting house would be ready. By contacting General Pierce at Mt. Hickory, he very graciously granted the use of Pierce Hall.

The next important step was to organize a Sunday School. Rev. Griffith received \$50.00 at the end of each quarter as missionary of the General Baptist Association of Pennsylvania and he, being most anxious to organize a Baptist School, called the board together and told them if they would organize a Baptist Sunday School and keep it as such he would send the equivalent of his salary in books and supplies as a gift from him. The offer was accepted, the supplies came, a Sunday School was organized and has been in existence ever since.

June 8, 1872, the new meeting house was dedicated free from debt. General Pierce donated the lot on which this church was built and also the old bell which still tells us the hour of worship.

In 1911, during the pastorate of Rev. Clyde Donaldson, the members felt a need of more Sunday School room. After careful consideration and planning it was decided to remodel the old building. January 31, 1915, the newly-remodeled building was dedicated.

First Universalist Church

The first preachers were Rev. B. F. Hitchcock and Rev. L. Shipman of Girard, who preached without organization from 1870 to 1875. In January, 1875, an organization was effected with 28 members. Services were held in Park Hall with Rev. Shipman in charge. The beautiful brick structure on Mercer Avenue was built in 1882-83-84, being dedicated February 10, 1884. The building is of pressed brick with stone trimmings, costing \$16,000, the larger part of which was donated by Mrs. Chloe Pierce, who also placed in the church a fine pipe organ as a memorial to her sister, Mrs. Abida H. Boles. In 1887-88 the sons of Mrs. Chloe Pierce built a beautiful and substantial parsonage costing \$4,000 and presented it to the church as a memorial to their mother.

After about 22 years without any services, the church was sold by the Universalist Conference in 1945 to the Seventh Day Adventist.

Free Methodist Church

The Free Methodist Society was organized in 1886 after about two years of pioneer ministry by various ministers. The first preaching service was conducted by the Rev. Sidney Saeger in the yard of Mr. P. W. Frye. A church building was erected on Furnace St. in 1888 under the labors of the Rev. W. B. Roupe, and the Oil City Annual Conference convened in this church in the fall of that year. The church was dedicated at this time, the late Bishop E. P. Hart presiding.

A notable revival was held in the year 1889 with the Rev. R. H. Bentley as pastor. Two hundred and forty-five people professed conversion during this meeting. Other outstanding revivals were witnessed in the ensuing years by several pastors.

In 1904, under the direction of the pastor, the Rev. A. J. Beattie, the church building was moved from Furnace St. to its present location on Ridge Ave. Until the year 1925 there had been no parsonage for the church. The Rev. F. W. Parks, a preacher and carpenter of ability, set about to erect a parsonage annexed to the church. A fine seven-room dwelling was completed by the pastor and some of his members.

In 1945, under the leadership of the Rev. A. J. Miller, the church was remodeled to a considerable extent and many other improvements were made. Other pastors added to the appearance and influence of this church, many of whom were outstanding men and women. This church stands as a monument of God's grace and to the consecration of her pastors and people. Rev. Robert J. Magee is the present pastor.

Church of the Nazarene

This congregation in Sharpsville was organized in 1939, meetings being held in the building on Shenango Street now occupied by the Veterans of Foreign Wars. After three years, they moved to the old Presbyterian Church on Main Street.

On April 1, 1941, they moved to the church formerly occupied by the United Brethren, which is located at the corner of Ridge Avenue and Eighth Street.

There were 19 charter members at the time of organization, and the present membership is 62. Rev. Harry B. Hall is the present pastor.

Seventh Day Adventist

In 1945 the Seventh Day Adventist, a congregation which had previously held their services in Sharon, bought the Universalist Church and moved to Sharpsville. The church was remodeled and re-decorated and on October 6, 1945, rededicated entirely free of debt. They sustain an extensive mission program. The present minister is Elder O. G. Carnes.

St. Bartholomew's Parish

Before 1873 there was no Roman Catholic Church in Sharpsville. Catholic residents at that time attended Holy Mass at Sharon or Hermitage. But during this year the Right Reverend Bishop appointed Reverend Thomas J. McManus as pastor and to him fell the lot of building a church. Services were held in the town hall until a frame church structure was erected. A four-room rectory on an adjoining lot was built, and Father McManus remained as pastor until his death on December 20, 1876.

Reverend William Coonan succeeded Father McManus for a short time, leaving on October 10, 1877. During the following two years Reverend K. O'Branigan, a serving curate in Sharon, assumed the spiritual care of the Sharpsville Catholics. On October 18, 1879, Reverend John C. McEntree was assigned to St. Bartholomew's. He was succeeded in October, 1885, by the Reverend Thomas J. Clarke.

The original wooden structure burned to the ground on August 16, 1886, but the conflagration inspired strenuous efforts on the part of Father Clarke and the parishioners. A new brick building, large enough for 300 people, was constructed. The new church had a 120-foot tower. Father Clarke remained in charge until 1889, when Reverend P. McGovern took over for seven months. He was succeeded by Reverend C. J. McGinley on April 20, 1890. He died on February 14, 1897, Reverend D. Lehane taking charge until a pastor was appointed.

For the next two years Reverend John McCloskey was a successful rector. Following him on April 19, 1901, came Reverend M. A. Miller, who was very active. The first brick church was condemned and a new one was begun in 1908. The building was of Gothic style and Flemish brick.

Its interior was designed by Father Miller. Although its construction was delayed by World War I, St. Bartholomew's was dedicated on December 4, 1921.

Father Miller also supervised the remodeling of the rectory and the landscaping of the church property. He was the first of the pastors to own an automobile and therefore was the one who built the garage.

When Father Miller died on December 27, 1925, Reverend P. A. Lynch became pastor. During his five-year stay, Father Lynch re-decorated the interior of the church and installed the present pipe organ.

Reverend George L. Shea came to St. Bartholomew's on June 6, 1931. During his pastorate a group of three nuns, Servants of the Holy Ghost Sisters, arrived in Sharpsville in July, 1941, to assist him in religious education. The basement of the church was completed before he died on August 6, 1944. Reverend T. F. McGovern arrived on September 22, 1944, from St. Timothy's in Curwensville. His plans for St. Bartholomew's are bright and include a new rectory.

Grace Church (Evangelical and Reformed)

The Grace Church became a formally organized congregation in the year 1889. The place of worship on Main Street was erected the following year and has been the home of the congregation since that time.

Previously, in 1887, Rev. J. B. Zumpe was attending the interests of the Reformed people who resided in Sharpsville. The first meetings of the original group of 16 brought together by Rev. Zumpe were held in the United Brethren Church. Until the acquisition of their own place of worship, they also were privileged to gather in the Baptist and Presbyterian Churches.

Rev. J. L. Mayer, during the time when he was supply pastor to the Sharon Charge, assumed the care of the Sharpsville people. It was then that the house of worship on Main street was built, being dedicated October 12, 1890.

In 1891, Jerusalem Church, formerly on the Sharon-Mercer road, was joined with Grace Church by action of the St. Paul's Classis, thus forming the Sharpsville Charge. This relation of the two congregations was finally dissolved by the Classis in 1909.

In May, 1891, Rev. U. O. Derschner was named by the Classis to supply the Charge. He continued in this capacity until August of that year, when he was elected and duly installed as pastor of the Charge.

The Church School building was erected in 1928. Also, the original edifice was renovated. The dedication of the new addition and the improvement of the frame building was held in October of that year. In 1938 the interior of the sanctuary was redecorated and rededicated.

Growth of Town

- 1812—Jonathan Dunham received Patent from State for land, which included site of early Sharpsville.
- 1813—Hugh Means bought 25 acres in the bend of the river.
- 1820—James Sharp, his wife and son, settled here.
- 1825—About this time, James Sharp built brush dam and log grist mill.
- 1834—About this time, James Sharp built second grist mill and saw-mill at site of present mill.
- 1836—James Sharp and Neasbit Robinson contract to build three towing path bridges.
- 1837—Name SHARPSBURG appears in history.
- 1837—James Sharp laid out plot of lots, which he called Sharpsburg.
- 1837—Road from Sharpsburg to Sharon laid out.
- 1840—Canal opened from above New Castle to Greenville.
- 1844—First canal boat reached Erie.
- 1846—James Sharp sold out by the sheriff.
- 1847—School building built.
- 1847—James Sharp left vicinity of present Sharpsville.

- 1859—James Pierce became owner of Sharpsville Furnace.
- 1860—County map shows Sharpsburg.
- 1862—About this time Sharpsville Oakland Railroad Company started.
- 1864—Post Office established — "Sharpsville Furnace."
- 1864—Erie and Pittsburg Railroad started operating trains through Sharpsville.
- 1866—Sharpsville Oakland Railroad organized.
- 1868—Alice Furnace built.
- 1869—Contract for first part of Deeter School.
- 1869—Boiler factory started.
- 1870—Douglas Furnace built.
- 1870—Sharpsville Advertiser established.
- 1871—Erie Extension Canal ceased operating.
- 1871—Post Office changed from "Sharpsville Furnace" to "Sharpsville."
- 1872—Riverside Cemetery Association organized.
- 1873—Mabel Furnace built.
- 1873—No. 1 Spearman Furnace started operations.
- 1873—Iron Banking Company established.
- 1874—Sharpsville Borough incorporated.
- 1884—First High School class graduated.
- 1887—Sharpsville Times started publication.
- 1887—First telephones in Sharpsville.
- 1892—Street car franchise granted.
- 1892—First part of Robinson School built.
- 1897—First electric street lights in Sharpsville.
- 1898—Sharpsville waterworks built.
- 1898—About this time first stone walks in borough.
- 1903—Natural gas piped to borough.
- 1906—Shenango Furnace Company incorporated.
- 1907—First paved streets in Sharpsville.
- 1907—Nickelodeon opened in Sharpsville.
- 1918—Sharpsville Advertiser suspends publication.
- 1920—First part of high school building built.
- 1922—Thirteenth Street School built.
- 1931—Sharpsville Railroad ceases operations.
- 1939—Street cars replaced by motor buses.
- 1949—Diamond Jubilee, June 26 to July 4.

HISTORY OF SHARPSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President ----- Samuel H. Riley
 Vice President ----- Charles E. Robins
 Secretary ----- Mrs. George Engelhardt
 Treasurer ----- Mrs. Thomas Reichard
 Finance Chairman ----- Claire Osborne
 Elected Members ----- Donald Hittle - Donald Williams
 Program Committee—William D. McLean, Jr., chairman; Mrs. Ralph Rice, co-chairman.
 Decoration—E. J. Davey, chairman; Ralph Mehler, co-chairman.
 Concessions and Novelties—Dr. W. L. Alexander, chairman; Dominick Williams, co-chairman.
 Food Concessions—Mrs. S. S. Gill, chairman; Mrs. Mead Clarke, co-chairman.
 Church Services—Rev. W. S. Blair, chairman; Rev. Robert Dickey, co-chairman; Rev. T. F. McGovern, co-chairman.
 Parade—Raymond L. Kane, chairman; George Davenport, co-chairman; Mike Perfett, co-chairman.
 Antiques and Hobbies—George Mahaney, Sr., chairman; Raymond Cartwright, co-chairman.
 First Aid—Joe Palazzo, chairman; Paul Perfilio, co-chairman.
 Registration and Information—Ralph Kelly, chairman; Mrs. Lloyd Diefenderfer, co-chairman.
 Historical—Orvis Anderson, chairman; N. G. Brayer, Thomas Lally.
 Transportation—William Engel, chairman; George Scott, co-chairman.
 Music—John Rockwell, chairman; Paul Williams, co-chairman.
 Housing—Mrs. Bertha Davis, chairman; Miss Margaret Robinson, co-chairman.
 Athletic—Thomas Lally, chairman; Clyde Gill, co-chairman.
 Publicity—Charles E. Robins, chairman; Miss Ann Mallick, co-chairman.
 Building—Wade D. Mertz, chairman; Samuel S. Gill, co-chairman.
 Queen's Contest—Mrs. C. E. Robins, chairman; Mrs. Alton Snyder, co-chairman.
 Spectacle—Donald Williams, chairman; C. D. Moore, co-chairman.
 Car and Electrical—James McCracken, chairman; Harold Pryde, co-chairman.
 Lighting—Eugene Donegan, chairman; Michael Costello, co-chairman.

SPONSORS OF THE SHARPSVILLE DIAMOND JUBILEE

Dave Irwin	Dr. A. R. McCammant
Warner & Smith Motor Freight	Mrs. F. H. Reichard
Valley Supply Co.	Carl Achenbach
Miss Margaret Teglo	Geo. Mahaney, Sr.
Anthony Goral	Geo. Schmidt
McKean & Osborne	Howard Gilmore
Wade Mertz	Homer McDowell
Kelly Greenhouse	T. F. Wickerham
Snyder & Freeman	Clinton Shaner
Helen Belonix	Mrs. Reichard
Harry Locke	W. S. Stewart
L. A. Love & Son	Bloch Brothers
Jos. Smartz	Frances Weber
Reed Stevenson	Frank Porter
Bertha Davis	Sam Pezzatta
Harold Stafford	Thomas Grocery
John Jackson	Shenango Furnace
Lee Supply Co.	Sharpsville Service Club
Lloyd Diefenderfer	Walter S. Alexander
American Legion Auxiliary	Borough of Sharpsville
American Legion Post 162	Sharpsville Steel Fabricators
Endeavor Rebekah Lodge 367	Eugene Donegan
Rebekah Lodge 110	Mike Erme
Dames of Malta	Williams Cafe
Dr. J. A. Biggins	Chas. Bilkey
Dr. P. E. Biggins	Timor Holland
Dr. M. Wilson Snyder	Robert C. Zahniser
Shannon Hardware	Jos. B. Walders
Dr. Nelson Bailey	Max Weiner
Dr. L. S. Tyron	Gene DeSantis
Chas. McCracken	Sharpsville Fire Department
Paul DeSantis	Ralph Mehler
James Cerroni	Sharpsville Women's Club
Ridgeway Auto Service	Anthony Colini
(Ted Petricini)	Ross Palazzo
Davis Hardware	John Domiski
Martin Cusick	Virgil Rossi
Dr. Dan Phythyon	M. Passan
Dr. Hyde	Rocco Perfilio
Kenneth Miller	C. E. Blose
Pete A. Combine	George F. Mahaney, Jr.
Sharpsville Ministerial Association	Donald E. Hittle

