



SHARPSVILLE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

The past few weeks were busy ones for the Historical Society and all of Sharpville. In the lead-up to the town's Sesquicentennial, the Society conducted a Tour of Riverside Cemetery in May and a Historical Walking Tour of Shenango Street in June. We hope to build on the considerable interest in these tours and the engagement by those who attended and conduct similar tours in the future. (During these weeks we also saw a continuation of the Historical Walking Tour we've conducted for Sharpville's seventh-graders since 2016. While this year, health issues reduced the number of guides from the Society, the teachers were able to take up the slack.)

The reception to our book outlining the history of the town, *Traces of Old Sharpville*, has been enthusiastic. Its third printing is nearly sold out. Other merchandise we commissioned for the 150th include T-shirts, mugs, Christmas ornaments, bookmarks, and engraved charcuterie boards. All have been selling well, but if you still want a memento from your hometown for yourself—or a friend or relative who has moved away—let us know.

The unveiling of the mural on the east side of the fire station was also conducted in June. (The last "unveiling" in Sharpville was when the War Memorial in the town park was dedicated in 1930. So, this was a big event.)

This all led up to the festivities of June 20-21-22. They included the opening ceremonies, 5K and half-marathon races, the craft and food vendors, kiddie rides, a full line-up of music acts, fireworks, and, of course, the parade. These met the high bar of past anniversary celebrations in 1999, 1974, 1949, and 1924, and were a proud display of the tight community bonds that make Sharpville a special place to live and work.

What for the future? There was certainly an energy and enthusiasm for renewing civic engagement among those who planned and those who helped with the 150th celebration. We hope that this will lead to a continuation of community-building events. We also hope that this renewed interest in Sharpville's past will lead to more members and involvement with *your* Historical Society. We are in need of those with various interests and skills—even if you can commit only a limited time involvement—to help the younger generations tell the fourth half-century of Sharpville's story.

Upcoming Events

GAMBLING SPREE BUS TRIPS

Seneca Niagara Casino, July 18th

Live! Casino Greensburg August 21st

Two-night Getaway to Seneca Niagara Casino, September 17th - 18th - 19th

Call 724-813-9199 for details



Open House

As a reminder the Historical Society is open
the first and third Saturday of the month
from 1:00p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Come see the unique architecture—both interior and exterior—of our historic building and a large display of our artifacts, documents, and photos of Sharpville history.

Our basement display has expanded and may include items you may have missed on a prior visit.

Contact Us

website: www.sharpsvillehistorical.org

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see our website for officers' phone numbers

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A Look Back

1974 Sharpville Centennial

The festivities from 50 years ago are depicted in the photographic slides taken by well-known and -liked teacher and coach Al Rococi and recently donated to the Historical Society by his daughter Rachel. On this page is depicted one of the highlights of the celebration—the parade. In the upper right is the voiture of the 40 & 8 Veterans group. (The curious vehicle made to resemble a railroad locomotive commemorates the trains that took World War I soldiers to the front in France, with 40 men/8 horses stenciled on the boxcar indicating the cramped capacity.) The float at the bottom left is the jail for those picked up by “Keystone Kops” for not wearing a centennial button or centennial garb (or for any reason, for that matter). They were brought before a “Kangaroo Kourt” which assessed fines, jail, or some other jocular punishment.



1974 Centennial Photos, cont'd.



A Pet Parade was held at the football field. The second photo shows the backdrop of the Pageant to be performed that evening.



Some of the parade participants were encamped at Mahaney Park prior to the start.



We believe this is a photo from the judging of the best beard contest

In Memoriam

Bob Rannard served as a board member of the Sharpsville Area Historical Society for nearly twenty years, and devoted much time and energy to preserving Sharpsville's history.

His judgement and expertise in our restoration projects, both interior and exterior, were invaluable. In addition, the technical expertise he lent toward our community-building and fundraising stage productions will be irreplaceable. His wise advice and pleasant personality were known to all.

Bob's recent passing is deeply mourned.

With Gratitude

We received generous donations from
Ann Morris Skip Hittle
Cindy Susi

We also received a mural sponsorship from
Borough of Sharpsville



Here is lead artist Christian Kuharik in front of a portion of the town mural that was unveiled in June. The historically themed mural was commissioned by the Historical Society to both promote the town to visitors and to help forge a stronger community spirit by connecting us to our shared past. The idea for a mural was brought to us by board member Rita Sloan, whose energy and fundraising largely made it a reality.

Items for Sale

Traces of Old Sharpsville

A thoroughly researched history of Sharpsville with short, readable articles grouped into themed chapters and many photos — \$40

Charcuterie Boards

Engraved with images of Pierce Mansion, First Universalist Church, Jonas Pierce House, or the Santa Visits Every Home Sign — \$40 each

Santa Collection

Featuring images of Sharpsville's beloved Santa visits

Mugs — \$15

Ornaments — \$15

T-Shirts — \$20

Bookmarks

Engraved with the 150th Anniversary Logo — \$5

Available at shops throughout town or contact 724-877-9958 or visit sharpvillehistorical.org

We still have limited quantities of:

Natural Stone Drink Coasters featuring lithographed scenes of Old Sharpsville — \$5

CAT'S MEOW art portraits of the First Universalist church or Pierce Mansion — \$10

T-Shirts with the Historical Society Logo S-M-L — \$12; XL and above — \$15

Around Town

The Society receives frequent questions about the yellow brick house—now empty for many years—on the Sharpsville side of Mercer Avenue, close to Hazen. Here is what Jim Lawton had written about the property in 2000.

The Fromm Farm

Built in 1862 by Mr. John Everhart, and at the time was the only building on Mercer Avenue. The farm consisted of 100 acres. Mr. Everhart built the homestead for his new wife. He lived in a log cabin for five years during which time he built the homestead with the wood from the farm. Mrs. Evelyn Caswell, the daughter of Peter Fromm said, “All the wood that built the homestead came from the farm.” John died due to complications from a fall down his stairway at home.

Peter Fromm later purchased and ran the farm. Mr. Fromm played the violin at the Pierce Opera House from the late 1800s to 1912, and also played the pipe organ in the Pierce [First Universalist] Church. When he was a boy, Mrs. Pierce would give him one penny to turn the crank [of the blower] to run the organ when she was playing. The farm later was divided between Peter and his brother Ed.

Peter Fromm died Nov. 23, 1969. He was 89. Mr. Fromm was born in Hickory Twp. on Oct. 30, 1880, and had lived most of his life in this community. He was a son of August and Mary Romelfanger Fromm. He was born where St. Rose Cemetery is today. The family donated the land. The St. Rose of Lima Church formerly stood in the cemetery. [Though now gone and unremembered, this was the pioneer Catholic church in the Shenango Valley, dating from 1845. It served the mainly German Catholic miners in the coal fields of Hickory Township.]

His wife, Mary Furey Fromm, died in 1951. He was a retired employee of the Sharon Works of National Castings, Midland Ross Corp., where he was a drop forger. He was a member of St. Bartholomew’s church, Sharpsville, where he was a parish committeeman for 52 years. Mr. Fromm married Mary Furey on Aug. 12, 1914. The trees [that once stood] in front of St. Bartholomew’s Church came from the Fromm farm.

Surviving in 1969, were three daughters, Evelyn, wife of Carl Caswell, Sharpsville, with whom he made his home, and Marcell, wife of Donald Kilgore (they were married Oct. 5, 1940), and Veronica, wife of James O’Neil, both of Hickory [Twp.], two sons, Charles, Hickory, and William, Sharon; a sister, Mrs. Mary Burnett, Hickory. He was buried in St. Mary’s Cemetery.

Carl Henry Caswell, Evelyn’s husband, died on Oc. 22, 1995. He was 81. Mr. Caswell was born Aug. 30, 1914, in Sharon to Guy Henry and Florence Rankin Caswell. He was a 1934 graduate of Sharpsville High School and attended Youngstown State University.

At some time in the early 1970s, the white, wood-frame house was bricked over. The ornamental woodwork of the front porch and one window hood gives a glimpse of the dwelling’s original character, similar to other farmsteads in Hermitage from that era. Evelyn Caswell died in 2002. The property remains in the name of the Evelyn Caswell Trust. Below are photos taken by Jim Lawton in 2000.

