



SHARPSVILLE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

The consolidation of the Borough of Wheatland with the City of Hermitage is scheduled for January 1, 2024. While merger makes sense on paper—with an elimination of redundant city services and other cost savings—the question remains about what happens to a town’s identity and history when it disappears?

Fear of losing a place’s individual identity, as well as opposition from entrenched interests, have been the main roadblocks to municipal consolidation over the past hundred years. Other than the Hermitage/Wheatland and the 2021 DuBois/Sandy Township merger, it had been decades since municipalities combined in Pennsylvania. On the other hand, municipal consolidation was quite common during the 19th and early 20th centuries. As examples, the five boroughs voted to combine as New York City in 1894, and the City of Allegheny (on the North Shore) became part of the City of Pittsburgh in 1907. In the preceding decades, Pittsburgh had swallowed up 19 boroughs and eight townships. The history of extinct localities, however, does not disappear.

Even a ghost town from the Old West still has a history. Though no one may have lived there for over a century, many ghost towns have well-documented histories—and if the ruins are still standing—can serve as a tourist attraction. In Wheatland’s case, of course, there are still 575 residents—and many more who grew up there but moved away. So, not only is there documented history, but living memory. (By the way, Wheatland, like Sharpsville, got its first post office in 1864, “Wheatland Furnace,” when it was legally part of Hickory Township. It was incorporated as a borough in 1872, two years before Sharpsville.)

Some of these memories, however, will eventually fade as those who attended grades 1-8 at the Wheatland school (torn down in 1978) or lived in the flats (swept away by the 1985 tornado) pass away.

An understanding of the history of a place is necessary to its identity. (And the stories of Wheatland, without a historical society of its own, can perhaps now be better told by the Hermitage Historical Society.) But can a community still retain its identity, once its name disappears (at least officially)? In major cities, many residents proudly identify by their neighborhoods, which are often relics of a defunct municipality. But will tiny Wheatland be able to maintain its own identity? (The Patagonia section of Hermitage is probably the closest local example.) Or will a generation from now, will it be regarded as a curiosity that this section of Hermitage was once a separate borough?

Upcoming Events

Beller

A play in two acts and
45 phone calls

Saturday June 10th 7:30 p.m.

Sunday June 11th 2:30 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church
600 E. State Street, Sharon, Pa.

Tickets \$20

Includes beverages and a Southern dessert

Available at Mehler Insurance or
sharpsvillehistorical.org



GAMBLING SPREE BUS TRIPS

MGM Northfield Casino, May 24th

Thistledown Casino, June 21st

Two-Night Getaway

CAESARS CASINO

Windsor, Ontario

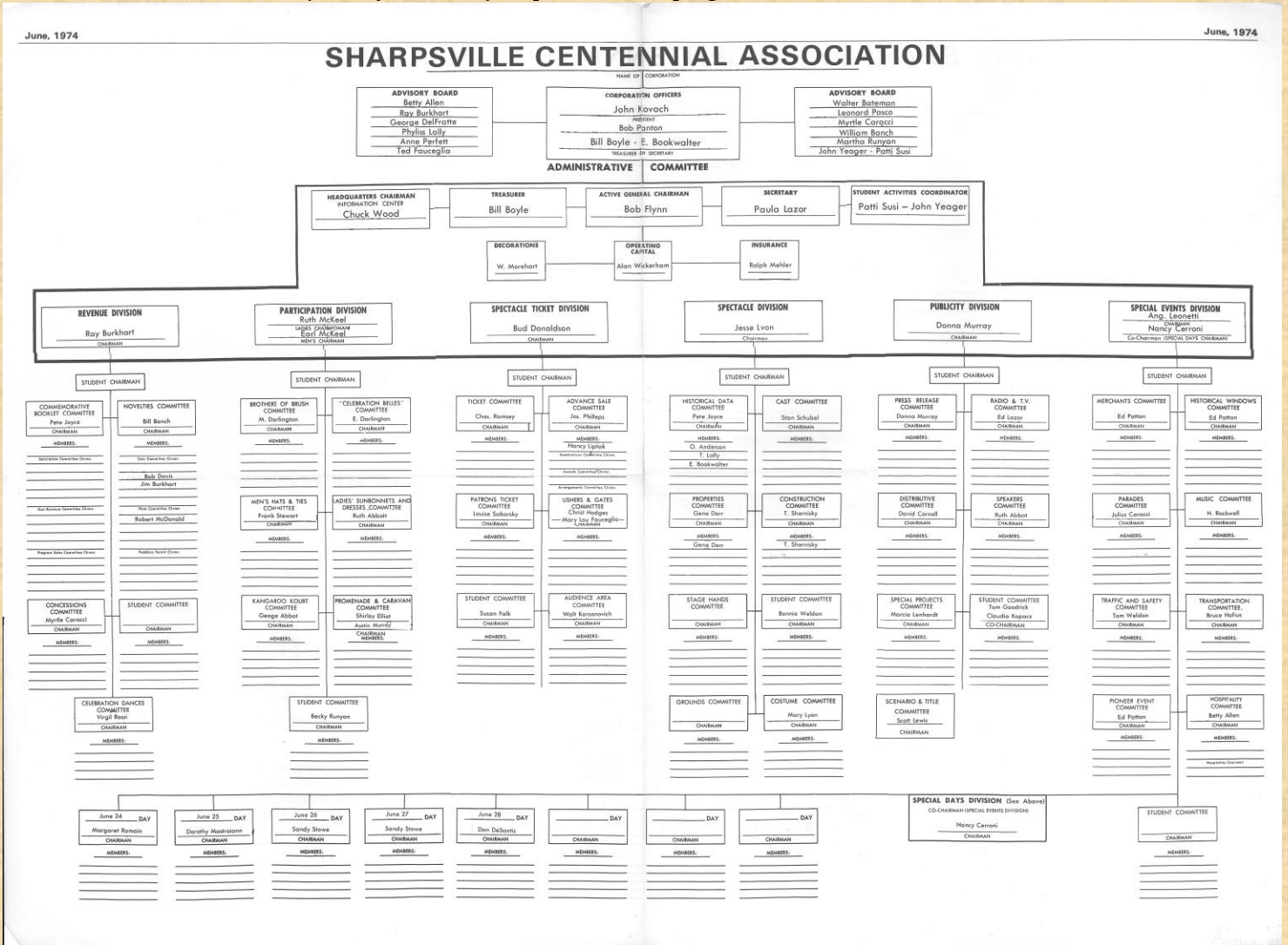
July 11th-12th-13th

Book your Reservations Now!
Call 724-813-9199 for info

A Look Back

Sharpsville's Centennial

The 150th Anniversary of Sharpsville's incorporation as a borough is coming up next year. As plans are being made for a grand celebration, a look back at the 1974 Centennial is in order—when all stops were pulled out—with the doings far exceeding the anniversaries in 1924, 1949, and 1999. This organizational chart appears to be on the same level as that needed by a major military or political campaign.



The organizing committee produced a large number of documents: letterhead and envelopes with the Centennial logo, thank-you cards, table tents, programs (in various formats), and a 70-page commemorative booklet, that greatly expanded on those produced for the 1924 and 1949 anniversaries. The seriousness of the organization did not preclude planning for many antics to play a part.

The Society has an extensive collection of documents and mementoes from the Centennial. While we don't want to discount the possibility of mementoes out there that have not already been donated, what we would especially like is video of the events, such as the parade, pageant, or carnival. If there are any home movies out there, we will be glad to have them transferred to a DVD and return the original (and a copy of the DVD) to the donor.



No celebration would be complete without its own version of the Keystone Cops. Judge George Abbott, seated, sentences reluctant John Kovach, in top hat, who is assisted into the local "jail" by officers, from left, Bob McDougall, Jim Aughter, Ed Zink and Jim Marrie.



Tennyson's famous line, "In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love," many times has been jocularly modified to "thoughts of baseball." In this vein, we have a photo from an era when youth baseball was non-existent, and scholastic ball uncommon, but when adult ball leagues reigned. Depicted here is the Sharpville Athletic Association, the A's, team at Joyce Field. Front row: Bill Schell, Saylor Tennant, Carl Ginger, Joe Grandy, Bill Donahue, Bezle Davis. Back row: Manager Charlie Miller, Chalmer Schell, Orlo Pierschky, Raymond Kane, Rosey Ginger, Jim Joyce, John Joyce

With Gratitude

The Borough Street Department donated a 1915 blueprint of a proposed sewer line from Hemlock St. to Hickory St., a framed 1933 map of the Borough water system, and a framed 1940 plan and elevation of the structures at the Shenango Furnace Company.

Abby Alter donated documents and a large collection of paraphernalia from the Odd Fellows Temple in Sharpville.

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 of our historic building and a large display of our artifacts, documents, and photos of Sharpville history.

In Memoriam

Marilyn Linzenbold served as a board member of the Sharpville Historical Society for many years, and devoted much time and energy to preserving Sharpville's history.

When Marilyn and her late husband Art purchased the old Borough Building in 1985 for the Sharpville Floral Shop, their plans to include a part of the building as a "Museum of Sharpville" was what partly prompted the later formation of the Sharpville Area Historical Society.

Her recent passing is deeply mourned.

Contact Us

website: www.sharpvillehistorical.org
email: sharpvillehistorical@hotmail.com

see our website for officers' phone numbers

Headquarters: 131 N. Mercer Ave., Sharpville, Pa.

Mailing address: 955 Forest Lane, Sharpville, Pa. 16150

Meetings are held the First Monday of the Month at 7:00pm at our headquarters

Sharpsville Centennial, cont'd



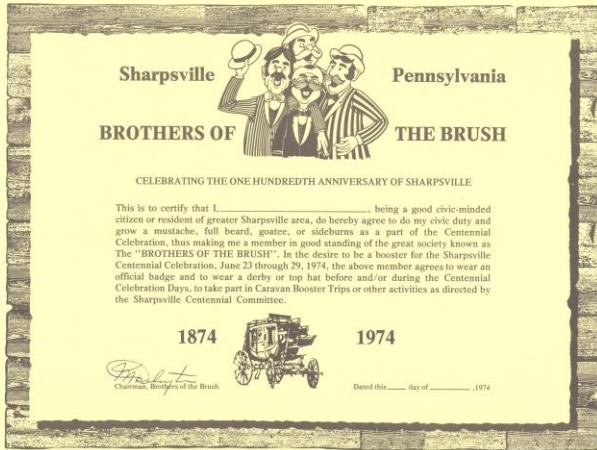
The parade was one of the Centennial's highlights, and a parade will certainly feature in next year's events. To the left are some photos of the 1974 parade.

Fundraising was largely through the sale of centennial certificates (in two denominations), and commemorative plates and medallions.



Sharpsville Centennial, cont'd

Old-timey costuming and, for men, the growth of beards and mustaches was strongly encouraged, and enforced for members of "Brothers of the Brush." For those who chose to remain clean-shaven, there was a "Smoothies Club," but their membership certificate required a reason for not growing a beard, mustache, or sideburns: Physical Impossibility; Afraid it would spoil my looks; Wife won't let me; Boss won't allow it. Women could join the Centennial Belles. Boys and Girls could join the Little Shavers or the Little Miss Belles. For those lacking dress-making talent or otherwise in need of an old-fashioned hat or garb, costuming could be purchased at the Centennial Country Store.

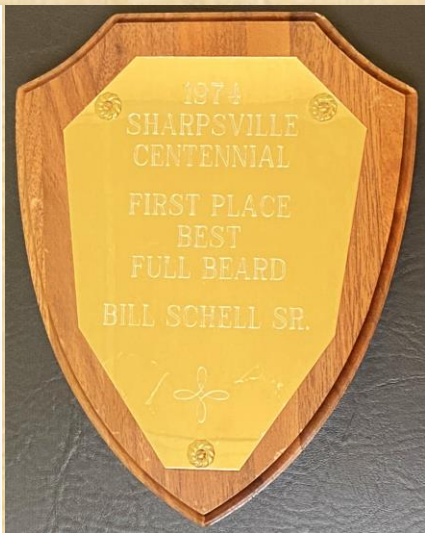


Above: Danny Yarinac purchases a derby from Paula Lazor at the Centennial Country Store and Mrs. Sue Curtis helps Mrs. Margaret Romain select a dress.

Below: The Charleston is demonstrated by Robert Flynn, pageant director, to Stanley O. Schubel, kneeling, and dance troupe members.



"Not long enough" is the decision of Mrs. George Abbott as she checks the growth of Dan Davis' beard. Mrs. Jesse Lyon records the vital statistics for posterity.



The Herald

A Page of Opinion

A happy birthday to Sharpsville

One hundred years is a ripe old age, but the birthday party which the Borough of Sharpsville has prepared for itself and its neighbors are hardly symptoms of hardening of the arteries or a lassitude of the spirit. We take the liberty of speaking both for the Shenango Valley and Mercer

Centennial Committee's own historical publication and other commemorative souvenirs. The Herald tabloid promises to become a collector's item. The past 100 years have seen many changes in the borough and indeed even as it enters its second century as a governmental entity is once again undergoing change. Beginning life as a hard-fighting, hard-working, God-fearing industrial center, the borough today is largely a residential community of comfortable, well-tended residences and the gateway to the new Shenango River dam recreation area.

As with all communities, Sharpsville has experienced both good years and lean years, savoring the former and enduring with courage the latter. Throughout the period the community was buoyed by the strength and fortitude of its people to overcome adversity and resume the march forward.

Although generation has given way to new generation, that spirit continues in the people of Sharpsville and is the reason the borough can look forward with optimism and confidence into its second century. Happy birthday.

County areas in extending to the borough and its citizens the very best wishes upon their centennial. Beginning tomorrow, there will be much going on in Sharpsville to mark this landmark event, and for the full itinerary we recommend the special Sharpsville section in today's edition, one of the largest ever printed by The Herald. The work of the total staff of The Herald, editorial as well as mechanical, it will provide much interesting reading, not alone for residents of the borough. Along with the community



The Herald gave a tremendous amount of publicity toward the Centennial, with numerous articles before and during the event. While paid for by ad space, the paper published an 88-page tabloid supplement, described then as "one of the largest ever printed by The Herald." We have not come across a supplement so large before or since. (And, no, we don't need additional copies of the 1974 supplement; we have plenty.)

Their editorial, along with caricatures of the drivers behind the Centennial, gives the perspective of the editors of the "big-city" next door, Sharon. Congratulatory, but in a sense condescending—typical of Sharon—in describing our town as the "gateway to the new Shenango River dam recreation area."

Around Town, Main Street, cont'd.



The centennial produced an extraordinary number of souvenirs: ashtrays, mugs, ties, buttons. Businesses joined with their own centennial-themed giveaways.



SHARPSVILLE, PA. CENTENNIAL

PAGEANT

"THE SHARPSVILLE STORY"
A Cast of Hundreds

JUNE 24-25-26-27

HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC FIELD
Show Time 9:00 P.M.

Come Early for Pre-Show Entertainment at 8:30 P.M.

100th SHARPSVILLE ANNIVERSARY 1874-1974

Don't Miss the Other Events of Centennial Week
PARADES — RIDES — GAMES — FIREWORKS

JUNE 23-29, 1974

Cast your vote and support your favorite Queen candidate by purchasing an advance sale coupon for \$2.00 (worth \$2.50 in general admission ticket value).

The big excitement was the pageant, with its "cast of hundreds."

Above: Danny Yarbina purchases a derby from Paula Lazor at the Centennial Country Store and Mrs. Sue Curtis helps Mrs. Margaret Romain select a dress.

Below: The Charleston is demonstrated by Robert Flynn, pageant director, to Stanley O. Schubel, kneeling, and dance troupe members.



SHARPSVILLE CENTENNIAL

SHARPSVILLE, PA.
ON THE STREETS

*** 5 BIG DAYS ***

JUNE 25-29

FIREWORKS - PARADE
RIDES - GAMES - FOOD
FUN FOR ALL

DOUGLAS AMUSEMENTS
CORTLAND, OHIO

The Sharpsville Carnival had its origins with the Centennial.

