



SHARPSVILLE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

The cultures of the various ethnic groups that have come to these shores have undoubtedly enriched this nation and the Shenango Valley. Yet, with the greatest influx of European immigration now over a century ago, we are in danger of losing our connection with the traditions and memories of our immigrant ancestors.

There is still time, however. Even if great-grandma is no longer with us, someone is still around who remembers how she cooked and dressed and her struggles adapting to a new country; her prejudices and devotions, her wisdom and superstitions, and her stories (including those about *her* grandma).

Here at the Historical Society we would love for you to tell us those memories. Whether your heritage is Italian or Slovak, Irish or German, Welsh or Greek—it is all worthy of preserving. Even if your forbears came from other parts of this country, the Yankee or Appalachian folkways, as well as those of the African-American of the South, are just as distinctive and enriching to our culture.

Tell us about making sauerkraut at home, or the best recipe for halupki, or *the* right way to make sauce. Tell us about those Christmas feasts, what grandpa grew in his garden, those Old-World songs and musical instruments, and those phrases in the native tongue that resist translation.

Tell us before it's forgotten.

A Look Back

Offered without comment

In 1903, a number of Ohio newspapers reported on this legal action:

[Miss] Lucille Milliken of Sharpsville, Pa. has sued the Youngstown and Sharon Railroad Company for \$10,000 damages. She was regarded as the beauty of Sharpsville but on Oct. 6 she was in a collision on the road and the shock resulted in making her cross-eyed.

Collections update

Rose Beader donated a Second World War Uniform belonging to her brother-in-law (Steve Metrick, a staff sergeant in the 5th Army Air Corps) and a uniform cap from the First Catholic Slovak Union.

Tim Schell donated diplomas and marriage certificates from the 30s and 40s from the estate of his recently departed brother, Bill.

Nancy & William Dilley donated a postcard for the Emma Robison School from about 1940.

Carole Ellison donated a photo of the Sharpsville A's baseball club, the Shenango Furnace baseball team, and of the 1974 Centennial parade and pageant.

Bob Layman donated a collection of 19th and early 20th century books

The Society also acquired a copy of the 1977 booklet "[History of] South Pymatuning Township" and a 1910 photo postcard of the United Brethren Church that once stood at the corner of 6th and High Streets.

Upcoming Events

**Gambling Spree bus trips to
Seneca Niagara Casino July 9th
Hard Rock Casino September 10th**

Call for 724-813-9199 for info and reservations

Please also support the quality productions of Area Community Theatre of Sharpsville (ACTS), showcasing local talent.

**Songs of Sondheim Musical Revue
September 4th 6th 7th
Pierce Opera House**

From the Collections

Over There

With the end of the month marking the centenary of the onset of the First World War, a number of remembrances will no doubt be seen across the media. At the Historical Society we, too, have a few reminders of that conflict that even today casts its long shadow.

One of the items we have on display is the uniform of Charles W. Woods, in that era's familiar olive drab wool melton cloth. It is shown with a panoramic regimental photograph of his U.S. Army unit, the 305th Ammunition Train, 80th Division, when they were stationed at Camp Lee, Petersburg, Virginia. The division saw heavy action in the Meuse-Argonne campaign in the final months of the war. In a letter dated October 17, 1917 to *The Sharpsville Advertiser*, Charles gives a brief report of life at Camp Lee:

"... This is a great life. The boys are getting fat; the drilling is great stuff and gives you lots of 'pep.' We have to roll out at 5:45 a.m. and get mess at 6 a.m. Then we start and drill until 11:30 a.m., have mess again and start drilling and keep it up until 4:30 p.m. Have mess again at 5:15 and retreat at 6 p.m., then we are free. But the lights are out at 10 o'clock, so you see we are kept busy all day long.

We got our suits Friday and are as proud of them as a small boy is of pockets. We look like soldiers, but a great many of us don't feel like soldiers. . . ."

A poignant memento is the card sent to Charles' mother to inform her that the troop ship crossed the Atlantic safely. This was no idle worry, as German U-Boats had sunk over 5,000 ships during the war. However, by the time the Americans had begun to arrive in force in late 1917 and early 1918, the convoy system and other anti-submarine measures had reduced shipping losses to less critical levels.

I HAVE ARRIVED SAFELY OVERSEAS.

Charles W. Woods

This card will be held until safe arrival of the boat on which I sailed.



Another intriguing artifact of the war we have on display falls within the category of "Sweetheart" or "Mother Pillows". These souvenirs were sent home by servicemen of both world wars to a mother, wife or girlfriend. There were often printed or embroidered with the name of the branch of service or the stateside army base the soldier was first sent. Our example was sent by William Schell, Sr. to his new wife CoEdythe.

While typical examples were square, the one in our collection is an oblong variant that is more of a pouch than pillow in that it opens up to reveal a pocket where the gal can keep letters or perhaps a hanky from her soldier boy.

Finally, we have a very grainy newspaper photo of the September 20, 1917 send off of the troops from the Pennsylvania Railroad station. An original of that photo would be a wonderful addition to our archives.

A brash and typically-American confidence accompanied our entry into the war—think of the lyrics "And we won't come back til it's over, over there". Nonetheless, the men who answered our nation's call did so knowing the fate of the millions before them at the charnel houses of the Somme, Verdun, and Passchendaele.

In remembrance of the 236 men of Sharpsville who served in the Great War, we list their names. It may perhaps contain one of your relatives; at the very least it shows the persistence of many of the family names in Sharpsville (though with the spelling in some cases altered):

Walter Alexander, Luigi Arduini, Malcolm Anderson, Louis H. Addicott, Carl Addicott, Joseph Adverso, George Achenbach, William Achenbach, Robert Anderson, Kenneth Anderson, Walter Austin, James W. Boles,

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A Look Back

Sharpsville's Newspapers

During the 19th century, one of the hallmarks of a "proper" town was it having its own newspaper. Even when its population was less than 1,800, Sharpsville's aspirations surpassed its size. Much of the credit for town-building lies with General James Pierce who brought us industry and rail links, founded a bank, hotel, and newspaper, and donated land for churches, a school, and cemetery. To be sure, Pierce possessed a spirit of civic-mindedness, yet there was also an element of self-interest: laborers would come here to work at his furnaces only if there were places to shop and worship, schooling for their children and the other basic amenities of a town.

The Sharpsville Advertiser was first published October 21, 1870, with Walter Pierce, son of the General, its owner and editor. Initially a two-page weekly, it expanded to four pages with the fourteenth issue. The four page issue was of the ready-print variety. Ready-prints were a way for small-town and rural newspapers without the resources for a full staff of reporters to produce something approaching a complete edition. The front and back (pages 1 and 4) arrived pre-printed with national and international news, serialized fiction, and national advertisements. The inside pages (2 and 3) were devoted to local material and ads. In addition to a hodgepodge of news from Sharpsville and its neighbors, the local material made liberal use of reports copied from other papers along with editorial quips.

The offices of the *Advertiser* were first housed in a two story frame building near the corner of Mercer Ave. and High St.; in 1872 there were moved to the newly completed "Pierce's Block" which also contained the Iron Banking Co. and the Opera House. At first, the paper was printed at the offices of the *Sharon Times*; in February 1871, the presses of the *Greenville Advance* took over the printing. In August 1871, a Mercer paper was discontinued after a short seven-month run. Pierce bought its presses and moved them to Sharpsville. At the same time, P.J. Bartleson was hired as an associate editor. He later assumed full editorship, and in 1894 ownership. With his death in early 1919, the paper died with him.

But the *Advertiser* wasn't the only newspaper published here. For a brief period, a competing weekly, *The Sharpsville Times*, was published by M.W. "Whig" Thompson and Samuel W. Hazen. It was started in 1887, but lasted at most a couple years. With earlier experience at other big-city papers, Whig left town in 1888 to work at the *New York World*. (He returned to Sharpsville in 1896 where he engaged in a successful printing business and was a civic leader, serving as a school director, councilman, and burgess.) In many towns a second newspaper provided a different political outlook since, in these days, an unapologetic partisanship was common. Though the Pierces were Democrats in a heavily Democratic town and the men of the *Times* Republicans, the *Advertiser* was officially an Independent paper; the *Times* did not even declare a political leaning. Thompson and Hazen probably thought they could do a better job of fitting in more local news than the competition. While like nearly all newspapers of the day, it freely reprinted items found in other papers, its four pages were not of the ready-print type. And at 75 cents a year, a subscription was half the cost of the *Advertiser*.

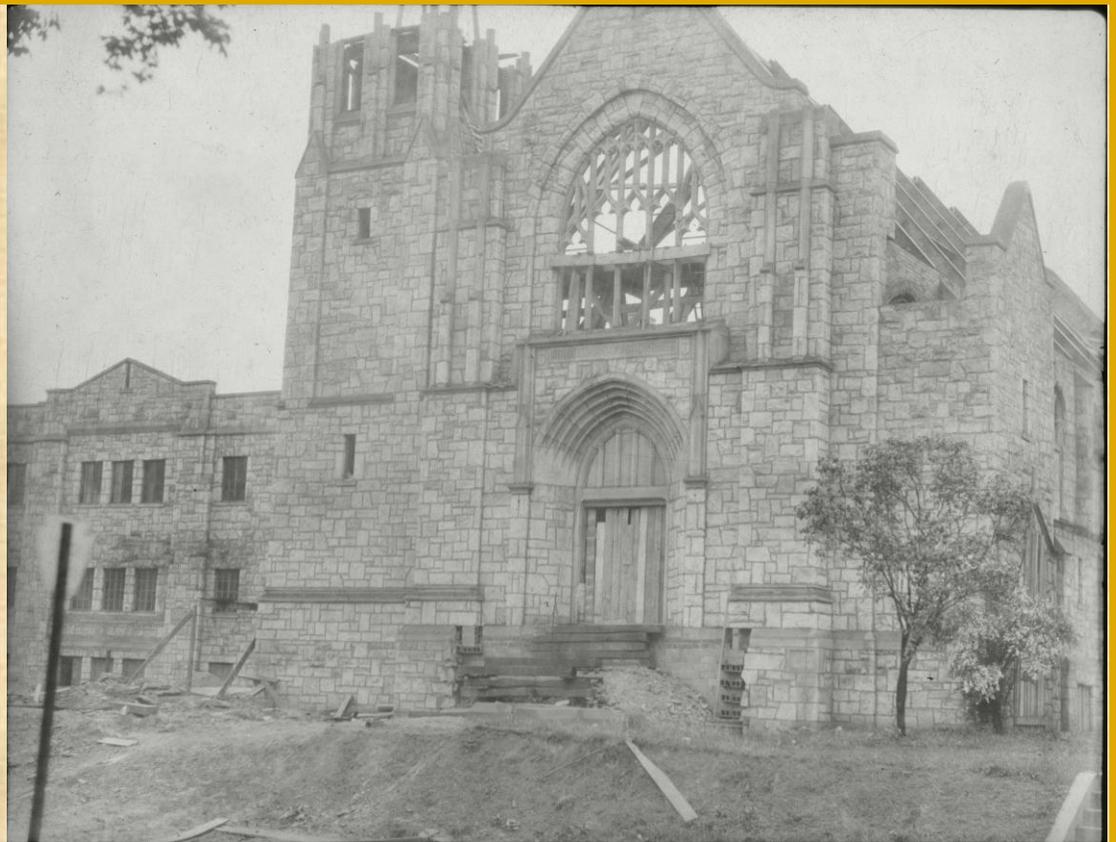
Surviving copies of about 14% of *The Sharpsville Advertiser's* issues have been traced to various libraries, archives, and private collections. The Society has 18 issues, with the largest collection held by the Mercer County Historical Society. (We hope to underwrite completion of a project to microfilm and digitize the available editions. Volunteers are needed to photograph the newspapers using the apparatus at Mercer; no special skills are required. If you are interested in helping to make accessible this important historical resource, please contact us.)

The paper's name was revived on April 9, 1959, when the first edition of this new weekly was printed. Judging from the six editions in the Society's archives, it published purely local news, with an anodyne reportage perhaps in keeping with the placid days of the Eisenhower era. This incarnation of the *Advertiser* had a much shorter run, though, ending in 1967 when its owners stumbled onto something of a rough patch. Their press and the skill to run it were understandably deployed for other print jobs—such as the large quantity of betting slips found during a state police raid.

A Romanian language newspaper, *Adevărul* [*The Truth*], was briefly published here starting in June 1962. It was edited by V. Basarab who described it as "A Romanian newspaper fighting communists and fellow travelers in the free world."

One other newspaper may likewise have made a fleeting appearance in Sharpsville, based on an intriguing account from the *Pittsburg Dispatch*. In March of 1890, a body was pulled from the river at Beaver Falls, badly decomposed. Some said it was the corpse of Green of Youngstown, while others thought it was the body of Frisco, an Italian quarry boss who had been missing from Clinton, Pa. for several weeks. In his coat pockets was found 45 cents, two railroad guides, and a copy of the Sharpsville, Pa. *Comet*. This is the only mention found of a newspaper by that name published here.

This photo of the construction of the First Presbyterian Church on Ridge Avenue dates from around 1929. Note the light colored stone (quarried at the Blaney Farm, east of town) before it absorbed the soot from the Shenango Furnace.



A successor to the church's original building (completed in 1882) at First and Main, this structure took several years to build. Situated at the geographic center of Sharpville, construction began in 1928. Funds for its completion, however, dried up with the Great Depression. Services were not held here until 1935—in the then unfinished educational wing. Though it was still unfinished, the sanctuary was first used for worship between 1940 and 1942. Only in 1950 was construction finally complete. Despite this long struggle, the building remains an attractive enhancement to the town and home to an active faith community.

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Engaging the Community

The local community was once again brought together by our annual Ice Cream Social, with a continuation of our Outstanding Citizen Awards. Honored were:

John Getway, Marilyn Linzenbold, and Donna Murray

Thanks to all who helped make the event a success, especially:

**Bruster's Ice Cream Dean Dairy
South Py Dairy Queen Sharpville Police
Department, Sharpville Fire Department
Sharpville Borough Street Department**

and performers

Marie Lineberger

"The Sisters" "The Grace Notes"

Northwest All-Stars Panthers Cheerleaders

Gary Sass and Dojo Shoto Ikki Kai Karate Dojo

"Y's Guys & Gals" Rocky Piccirilli

and donors for our Chinese Auction gift baskets

Pizza Joe's Walmart Palo Floral Wilhelm Winery

Home Depot Muscarella's Pet Supplies Plus

Lock Stock & Barrel Sharpville Floral

Petco Area Community Theatre of Sharpville

With Gratitude

We recently received donations from:

Barb & Don Morrow

Churchwomen United of the Shenango Valley

In the discussion of the World War I sweetheart pillows, kind assistance was provided by Patricia Cummings, author of the copiously illustrated reference on the subject: *Sweetheart & Mother Pillows, 1917-1945*. The book is available from booksellers or by contacting the author directly at pat@quiltersmuse.com.

Contact Us

website: www.sharpsvillehistorical.org

email: sharpsvillehistorical@hotmail.com

or 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

Over There, cont'd

J.J. Brannon, Frank Brannon, George Baker, LeRoy Boyd, Charles Barlett, Charles A. Bell, Ralph Bell, John Bovieri, John Baldinelli, Thomas J. Boyle, Clyde Bailey, Charles Bailey, F. Briztelli, Clement Bates, E.H. Best, John Borris, Rocco Bonequest, Floyd Bortner, Peter Banigui, David Block, Dr. P.E. Biggins, Sanducio Beguillio, Fred Bender.

Fred Cunningham, Thomas Cunningham, John Conway, Ralph Cannon, Edward Cook, Joseph E. Conway, Sessie China, John Capaceppi, Joseph Campelli, Herbert Childs, Charles Collins, Phillip Ciavoglis, E.A. Cattron, Oscar Cartwright, Gilliland Crowley.

Harold Dickson, Joseph Donahue, Angelo DeAngelis, Charles Davis, James Depizzo, Rocco DeGuilius, Joseph DeAngelis, Elmer Davis, G.J. Davenport, Arthur Dellaluna, Michael Dantra, Raymond Donner, Howard Downing, James Dambrosco, Edward Davey, Luigi Diasinni, James Dolan, Michael Dolan, Charles M. Doyle, Walter Dunham, Lourene Dimarco, William Donahue, Pietro Drogel, Angelo DeGuille, Eugene Dailey, Charles Ewing, Paul Funkhouser, Ameglo Fratangelo, John Frye, Dr. B.E. Frye, Earl J. Fetzner, Albert Friedel, W.J. Fromm, Peter Funelli, Samuel Frye, Edward Freddle.

N. Garofali, Frank Guigi, Joseph Grandy, George Gorey, Clarence Gaylord, Joseph M. Guyton, John Gilliland, Edward Hanley, Joseph Higgins, Timor Holland, Charles Holland, Charles K. Harris, William B. Hart, John Hart, Theodore R. Hofius, Carl Hassell, James Hale, Luther Hunter, James Hambrosy, Thomas Home, Angelo Iannucci, Arduino Iannucci, William Janett, Thomas Joyce, Patrick Joyce, John A. Jackson, John B. Johnson, Homer Kendrick, John Keough, Thomas Keough, Raymond Kennedy, Fred C. Kasbohn, Raymond Kane, Ray Lewis, Glemmer Law, C.H. Long, Edison Laurent, J.H. Lucas, Frank Lombardi.

Louis Moderelli, Elmer Masterson, John Mehler, John Mylott, James Mango, T. Mulligan, W.H. Mitcheltree, E. Modarelli, R.C. Miller, Edward Myers, Dominick Maltessa, Earl Mahan, Earl Montgomery, Louis Mantua, Stephen Marrie, Patrick Marrie, James Moon, Charles Murphy, Domenick Marzelli, Michael F. McNerney, John McNerney, W.J. McNally, Michael McGing, Robert McDowell.

Joseph Nelson, James Nurse, Robert Nelson, Vincenz Narcessi, Joseph Nuchie, Myron Nickle, John J. O'Neil, Charles R. Orr, Maurice J. O'Leary, Carlton O'Day, Michael Possimato, Mariano Polidori, Sylvester Perfume, William J. Palmer, L. Petrochino, Luigi Pezzutti, William B. Porter, William Porterfield, Charles Pew J.L. Phillips, James Pompei, Jesse Quigley, George Riggs, Charles Reardon, Jack Reardon, Robert Ritzie, John Rosen, Tony Rinaldi, John Riley, Duane Riggs, Tony Rosse, Thomas Reichard, Jesse Rust, John Rossi, Cleveland Rockwell, Walter Randall, William E. Rohr, Skyles Runser, Frank Ruperto, Domenick Rinna.

Chalmers Schell, Frank Seibel, William Schell, A.R. Stubbs, Albert Schell, A.H. Scott, William Stull, C.L. Self, R.K. Sherry, Lucas Santis, Bert Lee Smith, James Shellito, L. Spinnilli, James Stigliano, Arin Stewart, Frank Stewart, Anthony Stigliano, Steve Swab, C. Shaller, James Sample, Russell Solida, Olen Smith, Joseph Schacklock, Charles Smith, Florence Smith, Clinton Shaner, William Sprow, Arthur Stewart.

Thomas Tiberris, John Taylor, Henry A. Tope, Peitro Tzoofair, Benjamin Tiberris, R. Ticknor, Rickard Tinsley, Michael Virostick, Stephen Watkins, Stanley White, F.J. Wasley, R.A. Woods, Charles Woods, Joseph White, Paul Wert, Roy Wallace, Lloyd Wilson, Warren Wert, Frank Zomparelli.