

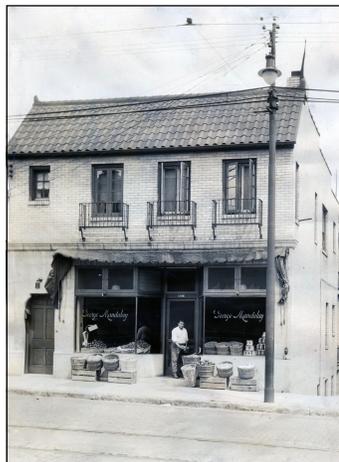
The Archives

APRIL
2016

WILKINSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
VOLUME 22, ISSUE 2

The next meeting of the **Wilkinsburg Historical Society** will be **Monday evening, April 18 at 7:30 PM.** in **South Avenue United Methodist Church**, using the left Ross Avenue entrance.

The program for the evening will be a slide show chronicling the story of **George Mandalay**, a man who arrived in New York Port from Palermo, Sicilia, Italy in April, 1914. He continued to work as a self employed gardener and lived on Taylor Way in Wilkinsburg. By 1918 he had registered for the Draft in World War I. After serving in the U.S. Army overseas in France with the 1st Army Corp, 41st Division, 2nd Battalion, 116th Engineers, he was honorably discharged and travelled to Italy to marry his sweetheart and return to Wilkinsburg. He and his bride Rosaria lived at 762 Penn Avenue while George established his food store. After Swissvale Avenue was widened in the mid-1920s George built the familiar structure at 1316 Swissvale Avenue that would become home for their growing family and the store for their growing business, **George Mandalay - Fine Foods**. The store existed for over 30 years.



Left to right: George Mandalay in 1918 as a private in the U.S. Army, George in front of his food store at 1316 Swissvale Avenue in Wilkinsburg and the interior of the store in the 1930s.

You can share your memories of Wilkinsburg!

The second part of the evening will be an opportunity for anyone to tell their memories and stories of time spent in Wilkinsburg. Volunteers from **Leadership Pittsburgh** will be at the Historical Society meeting to collect and record any stories that anyone wants to share. This is all part of the **StoryCorps** project to preserve stories, short or long, so that they don't get forgotten. Everyone has a chance to tell whatever their story is. **Please read page 2 of this Archives issue to get all the details regarding this.** Bring a friend or neighbor to enjoy the Society meeting, have refreshments and share the memories. Member Jody Guy is coordinating this project, so if you have questions, please feel free to contact her: Guyarts211@gmail.com

There is a little bit of history in us all.

On April 18th 2016, **Leadership Pittsburgh** volunteers will be available at the Wilkinsburg Historical Society regularly scheduled meeting, to assist in preserving Wilkinsburg history, one story at a time, as part of the **National StoryCorps** project. The stories shared underscore the premise that history is NOT simply major national and international past events that relate to a particular subject, place, organization, etc. We believe that history is experienced by us all, every day of our lives. We support the StoryCorp project's goal to preserve and share humanity's stories in order to build connections between people and create a more just and compassionate world, to teach the value of listening, and to weave into the fabric of our culture the understanding that everyone's story matters. Additionally we are creating an archive for future generations.

The interview session is at the heart of StoryCorps. We treat participants with the utmost respect, care, and dignity. StoryCorps maintains a relentless focus on serving a wide diversity of participants and is a public service. **You might begin to consider a story by completing this sentence: One memory I have related to Wilkinsburg that I will always remember is.....? Your story can be as short, or as long as you would like. The result can be an informal conversation between interviewee and interviewer or just the interviewee's story. All Wilkinsburg stories are saved at the US Library of Congress and can be searched by, #wilkinsburgstories and your name. Stories may also be recorded via phone conference if you are not able to attend April 18th.**

Since 2003, StoryCorps has collected more than 60,000 interviews with over 100,000 participants from all backgrounds -- the largest single collection of human voices ever gathered. Recordings are archived at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress so that future generations can hear the stories.

* In October 2003 StoryCorps was born with the opening of a StoryBooth in Grand Central Terminal in New York City.

* 2005: StoryCorps launches two MobileBooths from the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Our weekly broadcasts debut on NPR's Morning Edition.

* 2007: StoryCorps receives a rare Institutional Peabody Award. The first StoryCorps book, Listening is an Act of Love, is released.

* 2013: StoryCorps wins a \$1 million MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions. Our fourth book, Ties That Bind: Stories of Love and Gratitude From the First Ten Years of StoryCorps, is released.

* 2015: StoryCorps uses the \$1 million TED Prize to launch the StoryCorps App, an all-new tool for collecting the wisdom of humanity. The Great Thanksgiving Listen launches as StoryCorps works with teachers and high school students across the country to preserve the voices and stories of an entire generation of Americans over a single holiday weekend.

According to the results of two 2015 listener surveys*, StoryCorps:

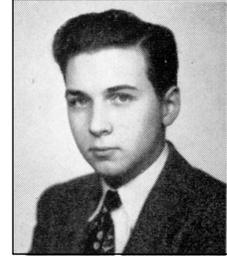
- Strongly agree that StoryCorps makes them feel connected to people with different backgrounds (88%)
 - Helped them see the value in everyone's life story and experience (80%)
 - Humanized social issues, events, and policies (80%)
 - Led listeners to think of people different from themselves as an important part of society (78%)
- NOTE: Leadership Pittsburgh Inc. founded thirty-two years ago, is recognized as the premier resource for community leadership in Southwestern Pennsylvania, and is affiliated with the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, to enhance the quality of regional leadership focused on awareness of community issues.

If you would like to review your story idea, don't hesitate to contact. Jody Guy, Guyarts211@gmail.com

A recent letter to the Society with memories of Wilkinsburg from WHS alum Paul E. Long

Greetings: I saw your web-site this week while browsing through the internet and was delighted by the memories of my old hometown it inspired. I am happy to know that Wilkinsburg has an historical society and to learn of the work you are doing. I am enclosing a check for associate membership dues.

It won't be possible for me to attend your meeting on the 18th about Mandalay's Store on Swissvale Avenue, but I would really like to be there. In high school John Mandalay ("The Ace") was a good friend of mine and I remember his parents' fruit market very well. If you look on page 36 of the 1948 High School Yearbook, you'll see my senior photo, and John's picture is immediately below mine.



Paul E. Long
WHS 1948

I am a native born Wilkinsburg-er having come into this world at the Columbia Hospital in February 1931. I was educated at McNair Elementary School, Horner Junior High School and graduated from Wilkinsburg High in 1948. I lived at 734 Franklin Avenue (corner of Mulberry - across from St. James Church) in the second floor above Anderson's Grocery and Confectionary. I have also lived at 801 Holland Avenue and at 1105 Center Street (between the high school and the Baptist Church- but that residence was demolished following the fire at the church.) I was editor of the high school newspaper during my senior year and worked at the Pittsburgh Press (former daily afternoon newspaper) for a few years after graduation before going into the Navy during the Korean War, 1951-1955. After naval service, I graduated from Pitt and took employment with the Federal Government in Washington D.C., residing in Maryland and Northern Virginia with my wife and family until my retirement in 1988. We then lived for seven years in North Carolina before moving to my current residence here in Lancaster.

Sorry I can't be at your meetings. I'll bet there won't be many in attendance who carries in their memories as many years back in Wilkinsburg history as I do.

Some remembrances: The first parade I remember ever seeing was in 1937 in front of the Penn Lincoln Hotel celebrating the borough's 50th anniversary.

I have watched movies at the Rowland, Regal and State Theaters (and the PRINCESS - does anybody remember that one??)

I used to enjoy skyscraper ice cream cones at Isaly's, sundaes at Bukes Grill, and hung around the soda fountain at Felser's Pharmacy downing cherry cokes with the high school gang. I also discovered at Toppers news stand that you can make a great barbecue sandwich out of chipped ham.

I rode the trolley cars - the 76-Hamilton, the 75-East Liberty, the 87-Ardmore and the 78-Verona (it had TWO trolleys, one in the front and one in the back!)

I have had chats with Congressman John McDowell, who was the editor and publisher of the Wilkinsburg Gazette, had a chance to meet baseball great Bill McKechnie and once reached up to shake the hand of Wendell L. Willkie when he was in town running for President in 1940.

In high school, I watched the gifted athlete, Alex Jaffurs - later to become mayor of Wilkinsburg - perform great feats in football, basketball, baseball and track. History is a great treasure ...but there's nothing like being there to actually see it! Keep up your good work for the old hometown!!

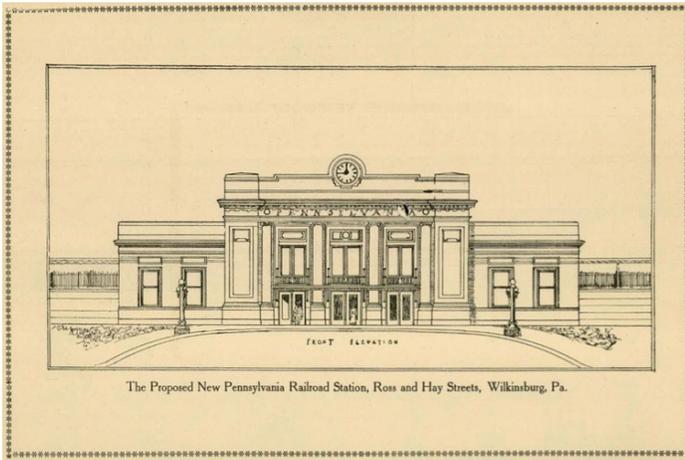
Marilyn Hemker Karpinski, long time member of the Wilkinsburg Historical Society and recording secretary for many years, passed away on Tuesday, April 5, 2016 in Pittsburgh. Marilyn was a lifelong resident of Wilkinsburg, having been born and raised in the family home at 816 South Avenue. She was a lifetime member of South Ave United Methodist Church and was happy to report that she was the the youngest member ever registered for the Sunday School. For several decades her grandfather, Vernon Covell, was the Superintendent of Sunday School at the church. When he received the phone call that Marilyn had been born Covell went directly to the church and registered her when she was just 16 minutes old. Marilyn was also a proud graduate of Wilkinsburg High School. She was a thoughtful, caring person with a positive spirit. Marilyn was a great friend to many and will be really missed.



These images are from Marilyn's personal photo album, all taken at their home at 816 South Avenue. The first one shows baby Marilyn in 1934 with her mom, Louise Hemker. In the background is the old telephone company building before it became the Boys and Girls Club. Second image shows toddler Marilyn with apartments on Mill Street behind her. Third image shows young Marilyn in her nurse outfit, one she often wore because of devotion to her Grandma Corrie who was bedridden upstairs.

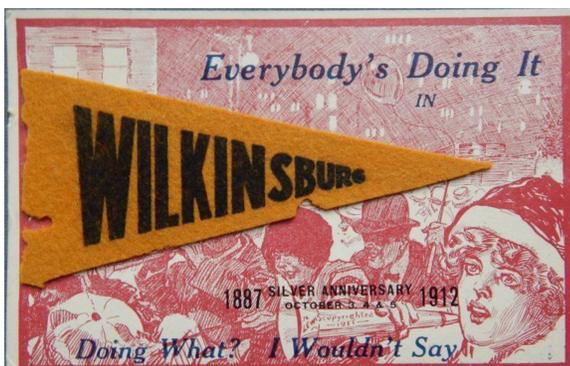


These images show Marilyn as a young adult, posing inside and outside of the South Avenue home. Marilyn was always proud of being a lifetime "Wilksburger". Wilksburg was her beloved town.



This image shows the **Proposed New Pennsylvania Railroad Station, Ross and Hay Streets, Wilkes-Barre, Pa**. This was the drawing presented to the public in 1914 so that the people of Wilkes-Barre could envision the beautiful new train station that would be built. Plans are underway for a 100th anniversary celebration on 6-16-16, hosted by the WCDC. More details will be available in the May *Archives*.

The Abraham Lincoln statue will be one hundred years old in June, 2016. This image shows the statue shortly after it was placed in 1916 at the intersection of Penn Avenue and Ardmore Boulevard. This stretch of road is the original Lincoln Highway. This year there will be changes to the grounds around the statue, as the Society is working with members Jody Guy and Jim Richard to create a more natural landscaping with perennials. These would be water wise perennials that don't need to be watered. The turf grass which needs to be mowed often will probably be replaced with low maintenance, low-growing perennials that return each year and need minimal care. This will reduce the maintenance of mowing and the cost of turning the water supply on and off each season. The water supply has been an increasing cost to the Society, and by eliminating this expense will save over \$400 annually, a significant savings.



This postcard dates back to 1912 when Wilkes-Barre was celebrating its 25th anniversary of Incorporation as a Borough. The standard printing reads, **“Everybody’s Doing It in Wilkes-Barre. Doing What? I Wouldn’t Say”**. The felt pennant was glued on by the printer to make this style of postcard customized for the featured town. Underneath the pennant the additional printing reads **Silver Anniversary 1887-1912 October 3, 4, & 5**

There is a grass-roots effort by some community members to help reduce Wilkes-Barre blight. Although it is not a Historical Society project, we want to share the information. This is the link to the site: <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/162791539/making-wilkes-barre-streets-cleaner-safer-and-walka?ref=email>

Wilkinsburg Historical Society has a website!

The Wilkinsburg Historical Society has a website to share more information about the history of Wilkinsburg. This site is continuing to build and has photo images of advertising items, businesses, churches, schools, celebrations, High School yearbooks and residential areas. Another section has past issues of the “*Archives*”, the Wilkinsburg Historical Society newsletter. We have posted information about membership dues and how to contact the Society. We will continue to add more information in the coming months. **To visit the site: wilkinsburghistory.wordpress.com**

Monthly programs are created by the Wilkinsburg Historical Society for members, guests and interested others to learn about our area. Bring a friend or neighbor to enjoy them.

Mailing address: **Wilkinsburg Historical Society, P.O. Box 17252, Pittsburgh, PA 15235**

We meet at 7:30 PM on the third Monday of months from March through November, usually at the South Avenue United Methodist Church in Wilkinsburg. WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

Wilkinsburg Historical Society yearly dues for the Wilkinsburg Historical Society are:

\$20.00 INDIVIDUAL Member, \$35.00 FAMILY Membership

\$10.00 STUDENT or ASSOCIATE Members (for out of towners who usually can't attend meetings) Please keep your membership dues up to date. MANY thanks to those who have already sent in their dues for 2016. We watch the expenses very carefully so that the impact of dollars received for dues and donations is maximized. An additional benefit to our paid members is that PH&LF Landmarks Preservation Resource Center on Rebecca Avenue gives free admission to our Society paid members. Thanks to all our members who have paid their dues.

Wilkinsburg Historical Society - Membership application Help promote the valuable history of Wilkinsburg.	
Name _____	
Address _____	
City, State, Zip _____	
Home Phone _____	Cell Phone _____
E-mail address _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Individual membership	
<input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Family membership	
<input type="checkbox"/> \$10 Student or associate membership	
<input type="checkbox"/> \$_____ Additional donation	
Please make check payable to: Wilkinsburg Historical Society PO Box 17252, Pittsburgh, PA 15235	

Wilkinsburg Historical Society is involved with preservation projects in the area. Donations are appreciated. Please send to: Wilkinsburg Historical Society, P.O. Box 17252, Pittsburgh, PA 15235