



"Not to live in the past, but to have the past live through us"

West Pittston Historical Society Newsletter

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Garden Village Memories

As I sit at my computer at the edge of a new day the thoughts of almost a century run through my age eighty years plus brain. I was not a native of West Pittston but as a child lived close to the river high above in Pittston. I looked upon the west side as a city in a fairytale. In those days, I did not have many reasons to travel across the bridge to West Pittston. Occasionally though I did make a visit with my mother to the beach on Susquehanna Ave. between the bridges. It was always a enjoyable place to spend a hot afternoon. Many of the bathers would visit the small candy store at the end of the Water Street Bridge to pick up a snack.

The many stores which today are long gone were a great attraction for kids in those days. I remember Eitel's Drug Store, which later became Obrzut's, on the corner of Luzerne and Wyoming Avenues. It was a drug store with a soda fountain making it a great hangout for teenagers after school. The lot where the Newhart Insurance Agency is presently located, across from the Montgomery Ave. School, was once the home of Rutledge's Roller Skating Rink and later on, an Acme Market. The high school kids who had enough money to buy an enjoyable snack would visit there each afternoon.

Audrey's Card Shop was another neat place. It was located in a small store on Wyoming Ave. across from the Jenkins Harding Cemetery. Audrey's place also housed the local post office since her father was the postmaster. It was one stop shopping for all your greeting card needs. Pee Wee Harris ran the Garden Inn, a small restaurant near the West Side Bank. One of the most fascinating busi-

nesses in town was Greenwalds, a store on Luzerne Ave. It was like an old fashioned 5 and 10 cents store and if my daughter is any example, was heaven to kids. They sold anything from basic clothing to pots and pans. And for the kids, penny candy and craft supplies. I was not aware that my daughter, who was about 10 years old at the time, actually had a charge account there until she told me about it recently.

However the business that I remember most is Grablick's Milk Bar. This business was my father's dream, built in 1951, and all of my family worked there. I recall working in the kitchen with my older kids while a younger one was coloring at a table. Many couples did their courting there, so they say. I remember the crowds that rushed in after the high school football games a few blocks away. I remember training the new help, adjusting the schedule for a prom and helping the kids decide which college they should choose or how to compose a theme for school the next day. I also remember the small ice cream store on that same lot that was our first store. I worked there during my high school and college years.

I have many memories about West Pittston in the late thirties and early forties. It always was and still is a great town for young people and even little kids. I hope these memories are as precious to you as they are to me. Share them with your children so that they may become part of our community history.

Lorraine G. Portelli

If you would like to contribute your own Garden Village memories to this column please email
MLP101@comcast.net

Our Next Program

The Susquehanna River: A Wartime History

Sunday June 26, 2005 - 2:00 PM

West Pittston Historical Society presents "The Susquehanna River: A Wartime History"

The West Pittston Historical Society will be presenting a program on Sunday, June 26th at 2:00 PM at the First Presbyterian Church, Exeter Avenue, West Pittston.

The program features **commonwealth** speaker, historical author and newspaper columnist, Jack Brubaker who will be speaking about the military history of the

Susquehanna River from the French and Indian War to the Civil War, exploring the river's significant wartime importance. Jack Brubaker is author of "Down the Susquehanna to the Chesapeake" one of the six best books on nature and the environment in 2002.

Mr. Brubaker's program is provided to the historical society by the Pennsylvania Humanities Council.

This program is free and open to the public.



Bathers enjoy the popular "beach" on the Susquehanna.

Jenkins Harding Cemetery Receives Donation

One of the major projects of WPHS over the past two years has been the historic Jenkins Harding Cemetery at the intersection of Wyoming Ave. and Linden St. The West Pittston Historical Society has been instrumental in getting the cemetery association board reorganized. WPHS has also been assisting with the maintenance and upkeep of the cemetery grounds.

We are pleased to announce that the Jenkins Harding Cemetery recently received a donation of \$500 from Marcia C. Hron of Grand Rapids, Minnesota. Mrs. Hron is descended from George Jenkins who was born in our area in 1828. She has been researching her family genealogy since 1977 and recently contacted Sandra Panzitta of the Jenkins Harding Cemetery Association regarding genealogy information. Sandra has been researching the Harding and Jenkins families for the cemetery with the intent to eventually apply for a state historic marker. Marcia was thrilled to find a fellow Jenkins researcher in West Pittston and the hope is that their joint researching efforts will be a benefit to both parties.

Marcia Hron's donation has been earmarked solely for the Jenkins Harding Cemetery upkeep and maintenance.

Sesquicentennial

The historical society has been busy planning for the upcoming West Pittston Sesquicentennial Celebration in 2007. Many ideas have been discussed and the society is busy planning a series of community events to celebrate this milestone in our borough's history. Both the Golden Jubilee in 1907 and the Centennial in 1957 were grand events for our town and WPHS is dedicated to making the 2007 celebration a major celebration involving the entire community. If you missed our last meeting and would like to be involved, please email MLP101@comcast.net or phone Sandra at 603 - 0615.

MEMBERSHIP

Our membership year runs from January through December. If you need to renew or take out a new WPHS membership, please use the enclosed membership form. Not sure of your membership status? Please contact our membership chairman, Bev at 654-7361



The Intersection of Wyoming and Exeter Aves. around 1907. This is where the trolley line ended and returned back down Wyoming Ave.