



# Archives

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2024

WILKINSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER  
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**Abraham Lincoln's 215th birthday is Monday, February 12, 2024.**



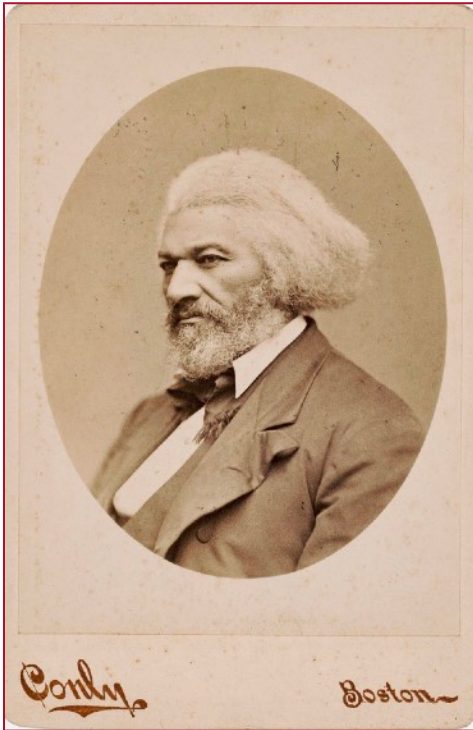
This photograph shows a ceremony at the Lincoln Memorial attended by vice President Harry Truman, celebrating Abraham Lincoln's birthday. This photograph was taken by Abbey Rowe (1905 to 1967) photographer for the National Archives and Records Administration. The date was February 12, 1945.

Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809 in Hodgenville, Kentucky and was murdered on April 14, 1865 in Washington D.C. Lincoln became America's 16th president in 1860, and is widely regarded as America's greatest President for his leadership during the Civil War and the abolition of slavery.

Celebrations of the murdered President's birthday began in 1873 by a Buffalo, New York drug store owner, Julius E. Francis. He was passionate about preserving the legacy of Abraham Lincoln. Francis spent his own money to organize and produce an elaborate annual event commemorating Lincoln's birthday. Additionally, Julius Francis petitioned Congress to institute a national holiday on the date of Lincoln's birthday. Francis died in 1881 without achieving his goal. However, he did establish Buffalo Lincoln's Birthday Association to continue to petition Congress for the holiday. Lincoln's birthday was never approved as a U. S. Federal holiday, but was approved as a legal holiday in many states to commemorate President Abraham Lincoln's birth.

The Wilkinsburg Historical Society annually recognizes Abraham Lincoln's February 12th birthday by placing a wreath at the statue of Lincoln plaza, intersection of the Lincoln Highway and William Penn Highway in Wilkinsburg.

## February is Black History Month!



### **Why was the month of February chosen to be a celebration of Black history in America?**

In the late 19th century celebrations of Abraham Lincoln's birthday were established by African-American communities in the United States. Many African-Americans revered Abraham Lincoln because of his fierce abolitionist stance. He issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863 to abolish slavery in all of the rebellious states. The Civil War became a war for freedom, and the destruction of slavery had begun. This document became one of the most important ever written. The Union won the Civil War and less than a week later President Lincoln was assassinated. Black communities begin to celebrate Lincoln's birthday (February 12) along with celebrating the birthday of former slave and abolitionist Frederick Douglass. Frederick Douglass's birthday was February 14, 1818.

**Carter Godwin Woodson** (December 19, 1875- April 3, 1950) was the “**Father of Negro History Week**”, later to become “**Black History Month**”. Carter Woodson was an American historian, author, journalist and the founder of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH). Woodson was the founder of The Journal of Negro Story in 1916, and has been called the “father of Black history”. In February 1926, he launched the celebration of “Negro History Week” to be the second week of February. He chose that week to coincide with the traditional Black commemorations of both Lincoln’s and Douglass’ birthdays. The idea of a Negro History Week was a popular one, and to honor Negro History Week parades, breakfasts, speeches, lectures, poetry readings, banquets, and exhibits were commonly held. The Black United Students and Black educators at Kent State University expanded this idea to include an entire month beginning on February 1, 1970. Since 1970, “Negro History Week” had become “Black History Month”. Since 1976, every US president has designated February as Black History Month. Black History Month has expanded further to Canada where it is also celebrated in February and to the United Kingdom which celebrates it in October.

Carter Woodson was a brilliant man whose education included degrees from Berea College and the University of Chicago also held a PhD from Harvard University. His resume also includes Dean of Howard University. Woodson devoted the rest of his life to historical research until his death in 1950. He worked to preserve the history of African Americans and accumulated a collection of thousands of artifacts and publications. Woodson noted that African-American contributions “were overlooked, ignored, and even suppressed by the writers of history textbooks and the teachers who use them.” [This information was provided by [foundation.m.wikimedia.org](http://foundation.m.wikimedia.org) ] Their bibliography includes eleven additional sources available about Carter G. Woodson.

## 2024 is the 125th anniversary year for the Wilkinsburg Public Library

A September 14, 2024 celebration of the library is being planned, so please save the date. It's an exciting time learn more about the many roles the library plays in the lives of Wilkinsburg residents. The Borough of Wilkinsburg has recently hired its first archivist/historian, **Cassandra McGinnis**. Cassandra has an important job in identifying available historic materials, creating inventory, and preventing the loss of valuable information. Cassandra has been asked to write a piece about herself, her background, education and her ambitions for her new job with the Wilkinsburg Borough. *Archives* readers will now be able to know her better. Following is Cassandra's personal essay:

Hello everyone, it is my privilege to introduce myself, Cassandra McGinnis, as the new archivist for the Borough of Wilkinsburg. I am so looking forward to assisting in the preservation of Wilkinsburg's history and assisting all of you with your research endeavors. A little about myself, I'm originally from the DC area and I graduated from Northern Virginia Community College in the Spring of 2023 with a C.S.C in Public History and Historic Conservation. In that program, I studied archives management under the Archives Manager for the Historic Courthouse Archives in the Fairfax County Courthouse. It was also while in that program that I interned at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art, within the Department of Visitor Education and Engagement. I spent the entire summer of 2022 assisting the museum's robust docent team research for and craft tours. Since the Fall of 2023, I've been studying at the University of Pittsburgh, working towards a bachelor's in art history, concentrating in ancient to early medieval Celtic Art with a minor in Gaeilge (the Irish language).



Cassandra McGinnis during a recent trip to the Art Institute of Chicago.

I am hopeful for a career where I work to make art and history accessible to everyone because it belongs to everyone. I am so excited to be starting here, in Wilkinsburg. I'm sure we can all agree that the community of Wilkinsburg matters. The history and stories of the people who have made their lives here for more than 150 years deserve to be represented and protected within the archival record. Within the last decade, there has been increased interest across the nation in the stories of underrepresented, small communities. The support behind the Hamnett Historic District, the Train Station Restoration Project, the in-progress National Museum of Broadcasting that will celebrate the work of Wilkinsburg native, Frank Conrad, just to name a few highlights, goes to show the value that Wilkinsburg brings to the historical record. What we in Wilkinsburg are doing now is important to the future. I hope the archives will serve as the place for future researchers to know and understand how the decisions made here and now have impacted Wilkinsburg. I'm looking forward to seeing where our interest in the past will take us in the future!





# Wilkinsburg Public Library Children's Department

## February Schedule

### Wilkinsburg Public Library

605 Ross Ave  
Wilkinsburg, PA 15221  
412 - 244 - 2944

Monday - Friday: 9 am - 6 pm  
Saturday: 10 am - 5 pm  
Sunday: Closed



### Eastridge Branch Library

1900 Graham Blvd,  
Pittsburgh, PA 15221  
412 - 342 - 0056

Sunday - Tuesday: Closed  
Wednesday - Friday: 10 am - 6 pm  
Saturday: 10 am - 5 pm

## Black History Month Activities



Join us all month long at the library in a variety of events to celebrate Black History Month!



### Kahoot Trivia

Thursdays  
Feb. 1st, 15th, & 29th  
3:30 PM to 5:30 PM

Test your knowledge with a Kahoot game.

The winner will receive a small bookbag with goodies.

*Great for ages 10 and up!*

### Self Portrait

Thursday Feb. 8th  
3:30 PM to 5:30 PM

Create your a self portrait using a variety of materials including buttons, string, feathers, and much more!



Wednesday Feb. 14th  
3:00 PM to 6:00 PM

Show some love and celebrate Valentines Day with the library!

Decorate delicious cookies to give to loved ones and yourself!

### World Geography Game

Thursday Feb. 22nd  
3:30 PM to 5:30 PM

Win a small prize for guessing the correct country.

*Great for ages 10 and up!*

### Walk Through History

Feb. 1st - 29th  
All Day

How well do you know your history? Complete a paper trivia to win a small prize!

### Tween & Teen Corner

Monday Feb. 5th  
3:30 PM to 6:00 PM

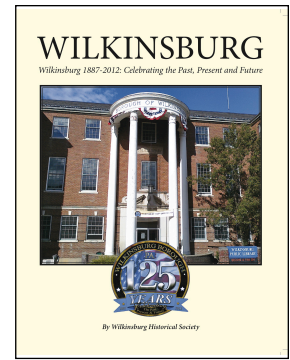
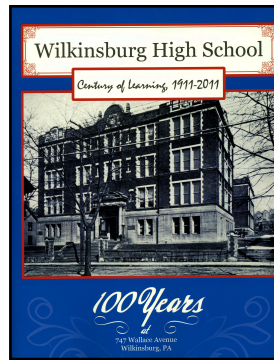
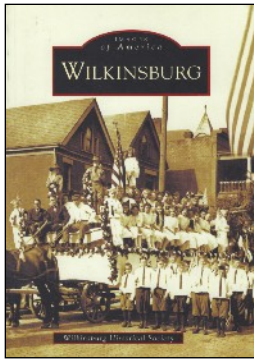
Do you have the skills to complete tasks under 1 minute?! Play and win the games for fun prizes.

*Activities best for ages 10 and up!*



Wilkinsburg Public Library contains a busy Children's Department which hosts a variety of activities each month. The Children's Department is under the direction of librarian Charlene Castronovo. Shown above is the schedule for February and it includes activities for Black History Month.

For over a century the Wilkinsburg Library has featured programming for the neighborhood children. In 1921 Children's Hour was inaugurated with schoolchildren coming from the Borough schools to hear stories read by the librarian. The library was given the use of a large lecture room of the Westinghouse Club to accommodate the crowds of children. Nearly 1000 children attended the first week of Children's Hour in 1921.



These are the three books that the **Wilkinsburg Historical Society** wrote and published during the past twelve years. They help to promote and preserve the history of Wilkinsburg and raise funds for the various projects of the Society. All three books are still available to purchase from the Society. Another way to support the activities of the Historical Society.

On the far left is ***“Images of America - Wilkinsburg”***, a 128 page soft-bound book printed by the Arcadia Publishing Company. It includes over 220 black and white photos depicting the history of our town from the early land patents in the late 1700s up to the 75th celebration of Wilkinsburg in 1962. The book is available from the Wilkinsburg Historical Society for \$20.00, plus \$3.00 for shipping.

The middle book above is ***“Wilkinsburg High School - Century of Learning 1911-2011”***. This book chronicles the history of the local high school from its early start in the late 1880s, the creation of the magnificent structure in 1910, and each decade since with highlights of the events that were important in the lives of the students and the Wilkinsburg community. For over 100 years the Wilkinsburg High School served the Borough of Wilkinsburg students and this book has several hundred photos showing much of this important history. This *Century of Learning* book is available from the Wilkinsburg Historical Society for \$15.00, plus \$3.00 for shipping.

The book on the far right is ***“Wilkinsburg - 1887-2012, Celebrating the Past, Present and Future”***. This book was produced by the Historical Society in 2012 to recognize the 125th anniversary of Wilkinsburg’s incorporation as a Borough. This soft-bound book has 196 pages and includes chapters on the history of Wilkinsburg, the celebrations from the past, information about Wilkinsburg’s government, and all the events that occurred during the 125th celebration. There are several chapters about the clubs and organizations in Wilkinsburg as well as the churches and worship centers in the Borough. The “future of Wilkinsburg” section recognizes advertisers and sponsors who helped to fund the creation and printing of the book. This book, originally \$15.00, is now available for \$10.00, plus \$3.00 for shipping.

Make check or money order payable to: **Wilkinsburg Historical Society**

Orders can be mailed to: Wilkinsburg Historical Society, P.O.Box 17252, Pittsburgh, PA 15235

Images of America - Wilkinsburg (\$20.00 + \$3.00) = \$23.00    Quantity\_\_\_\_\_    Total \_\_\_\_\_

Century of Learning 1911-2011 (\$15.00 + \$3.00) = \$18.00    Quantity\_\_\_\_\_    Total \_\_\_\_\_

Wilkinsburg 1887-2012 (\$10.00 + \$3.00) = \$13.00    Quantity\_\_\_\_\_    Total \_\_\_\_\_

Name\_\_\_\_\_ Address\_\_\_\_\_

City\_\_\_\_\_ State\_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_



Don't miss out on **The Wilkinsburg Sun**, a free monthly community newsletter published by the volunteer Wilkinsburg Community Newsletter Board, with the support of the Wilkinsburg Borough, the Wilkinsburg School District, the Wilkinsburg Chamber of Commerce and the Wilkinsburg Community Development Corporation. The Sun accepts submitted articles provided they are related to Wilkinsburg and are civic-minded. <https://wilkinsburgsun.wordpress.com>  
Sign up to receive The Sun by email at: <http://eepurl.com/v0iBP> and friend The Sun on Facebook.

Wilkinsburg Historical Society has a website, to share more information about the history of Wilkinsburg. [wilkinsburghistory.wordpress.com](http://wilkinsburghistory.wordpress.com)

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

The "Archives" Historical Society newsletter is published monthly, March through November.

We do not usually publish the Archives during the three Winter months of December, January and February.

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 Please keep your membership dues up to date.

Contributions are needed for "Lights for Lincoln", to get improved lighting for the Lincoln Plaza area. Abraham Lincoln stands in the dark after sun-down. Your donation can help us illuminate this outstanding area overlooking the Lincoln Highway.

## Wilkinsburg Historical Society - Membership application

### Help promote the valuable history of Wilkinsburg.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

( ) \$20 Individual membership

( ) \$35 Family membership

( ) \$10 Student or associate membership

( ) \$ Additional donation

Please make check payable to: **Wilkinsburg Historical Society**

**PO Box 17252, Pittsburgh, PA 15235**

Anytime is a good time to pay your dues for the Wilkinsburg Historical Society. We have many preservation projects going on, and providing displays for Wilkinsburg events. Many thanks to those of you who have already sent in your membership dues. Please use the address on the form, our PO box.