



# SHARPSVILLE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Newsletter

Your Historical Society has completed a significant archiving project that will be an important resource for years to come. The Mercer County Historical Society has within its collections a large number of microfilmed local newspapers. They have allowed us to use their microfilm scanner to digitize the 667 issues of Sharpshville newspapers they have. Not only is microfilm becoming an outdated technology, but digitization of the papers allows them to be more readily shared and viewed. We have, moreover, applied high-quality Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology to make these scanned newspapers searchable. With that, research using this resource becomes immensely more useable and less a needle-in-the-haystack attempt.

These searchable scans have been, of course, shared with the Mercer County Historical Society, as well as with the Mercer County Genealogical Society.

The newspapers covered include 486 issues of the original *Sharpshville Advertiser*, from 1874 to 1918, as well as 202 issues of the *Sharpshville Advertiser* when it was revived in 1959. Also included is one issue of the *Sharpshville Times* (from 1887) during the brief period when we were a two-newspaper town.

There are about another 150-200 physical copies of the original issues *Sharpshville Advertiser* in our collection. (They have not all been catalogued.) It will be, further, a challenge to scan them since the pages were so large (about two and a half times larger than the current *Herald*). Eventually this project will be done. In the meantime, as remodeling at our headquarters progresses, we plan that ultimately a station can be set up to access these and other digitized photos and documents—or, if funds become available, to make them accessible on the internet.

### Collections Update

Significant donations were received from

**Ralph & Carol Mehler**

and the **Estate of Robert Rannard**

allowing us to continue the restoration of our historic headquarters

### Upcoming Events

#### GAMBLING SPREE BUS TRIPS

MGM Casino, Northfield, OH, May 13<sup>th</sup>

Mountaineer Casino Resort, June 17<sup>th</sup>

Two-night Getaway to Bally's Atlantic City Casino, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>

Call 724-813-9199 for details

### Open House

As a reminder the Historical Society is open the first and third Saturday of the month from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Come see the unique architecture—both interior and exterior—of our historic building, and a large display of our artifacts, documents, and photos of Sharpshville history

*We will be closed during the month of May for restoration of our flooring*

### Contact Us

website: [www.sharpsvillehistorical.org](http://www.sharpsvillehistorical.org)

email: [sharpsvillehistorical@hotmail.com](mailto:sharpsvillehistorical@hotmail.com)

see our website for officers' names and contacts

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

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

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

**Because of Memorial Day, May's meeting will be held Tuesday the 26<sup>th</sup>**

## A Look Back

### Hungarian Society

Farrell is noted for its number of ethnic clubs—at least fifteen: Saxon, Italian, Slovak, two Croatian, German, Serbian, Greek, Carpo-Russ, Bulgarian-Macedonian, two Polish, French, Twin City Elks, and the New Deal (which was originally an Italian club). Sharpsville, on the other hand, while ethnically diverse, only had one: the Italian Home, or officially *Societa Italiana di Maria Santa Generale Gustavo Fara*. Or did we have a second club? In batch of glass plate negatives we received from the Youngstown Historical Center of Industry & Labor, were a handful of that indicate some sort of Hungarian Society existed here. These photographic negatives all date from 1912-1915 and were taken by William H. Snyder. He was a blast furnace clerk, then shopkeeper. This latter career may have prompted him to expand what was initially a shutter-bug hobby (most of the photos are of family members), to a sideline where he could sell his was photographs (e.g., of posed groups or funerals). He was no relation to the Snyders who owned the Shenango Furnace; though, his son, also William H., was a partner in the Snyder-Freeman Chevrolet dealership here. The photo below shows a group in front of St. Bartholomew's Church.



One clue to its identification is that one of the flags flanking the center entrance clearly has the Hungarian coat of arms. The girls in the center—perhaps in their Communion dresses—who are mostly wearing sashes, which can be imagined, are a black-and-white rendition of the Hungarian national colors of red, white, and green. Various ribbons and insignia are worn by some of the adults. In one of the furled flags at the top of the step, are the letters “EGY.” The Hungarian word for association or society is *egyesulet*. In another flag, the date “1913 Nov. 28” can be discerned. This suggests that a Hungarian ethnic club was formed here on that date. The men and boys in front wear military-style uniforms and are holding sabers. Along with various ribboned badges, the men in the back are wearing a kepi-type hats, with an insignia that isn't discernable. (They are, though, similar to a kepi of the First Catholic Slovak Union in the Society's collection.) On the next page is another photo of a funeral at St. Bartholomew's, that shows a similar grouping. (For the photos, zoom in to see detail.)

## Hungarian Society, cont'd.



While the flags of the Hungarian Society and the martial accompaniment are absent, we can identify the deceased as Hungarian by two photos of him (from the same collection) laid in a coffin a private home, with the same principal mourners. Those include a banner laid over the coffin with the words “Emlekul fiatalok/Sharpsville, Pa.” (which translates from the Hungarian as “Remembering youth”). There is also a funeral wreath from the employees of the Valley Mould & Iron. (He may be the Nicholas Ivanhoff who was struck in the head and killed in a work accident at the Valley Mould on August 28, 1915.) Of those in front of St. Bartholomew’s, some have badges where “Sharpsville, Pa.” is barely discernable. One, presumably a club official, wears a sash with the word “Ellenor” which is Hungarian for supervisor.

At that time, a sizeable population of “Hungarians” lived in Sharpsville. The 1920 census enumerated 263 as having been born in Hungary, the largest non-native group after Italian. Even more listed a father or mother as born there (539 and 653, respectively). There are some problems, though, with separating ethnic Hungarians from other eastern Europeans. While present-day Hungary is largely uniform ethnically and linguistically (and one of the few non-Indo-European languages in Europe), the reach of the Austro-Hungarian Empire during the era of peak immigration to the United States introduces some ambiguity. The Empire consisted of two sovereign states, ruled by a single monarch, styled as the Emperor of Austria and the Apostolic King of Hungary. The Hungarian Kingdom then encompassed modern-day Hungary and Slovakia, much of modern-day Romania and Croatia, and portions of today’s Slovenia, Serbia, and western Ukraine. So, a Slovak living here—of which there were plenty—would likely report himself as being born in Hungary. How many ethnic Hungarians (or Magyars as they generally refer to themselves) lived in Sharpsville at the time of the photographs thus remains a difficult question to answer. The Empire was broken up in the aftermath of the First World War.

In addition to these group photos in front of St. Bartholomew’s, there are others of a parade. Note the Italian Home had a parade too around this time, on September 8, 1914. Photos from their parade, likewise, show young girls in white dresses and plenty of flags. But there are no military uniforms or swords and differing miens among those assembled. While the Italians had a car, the Hungarians had horses.



Here is a photo of three furnace workers—all very self-assured—on a break to pose for William H. Snyder who was taking various shots at the Shenango Furnace Company. They are identified as “Cain, Grandy, and Tennant at Shenango Furnace No. 4, taken 17 June 1914.”

### Items for Sale

## Traces of Old Sharpsville

A thoroughly researched history of Sharpsville with short, readable articles grouped into themed chapters and many photos — \$40

## Charcuterie Boards

Engraved with images of Pierce Mansion, First Universalist Church, or the Jonas Pierce House — \$40

## Santa Collection

Featuring images of Sharpsville’s beloved Santa visits

Mugs — \$15

Ornaments — \$15

T-Shirts — \$20

## Bookmarks

Engraved with the 150th Anniversary Logo — \$5

To purchase, call 724-877-9958 or visit [sharpvillehistorical.org](http://sharpvillehistorical.org)

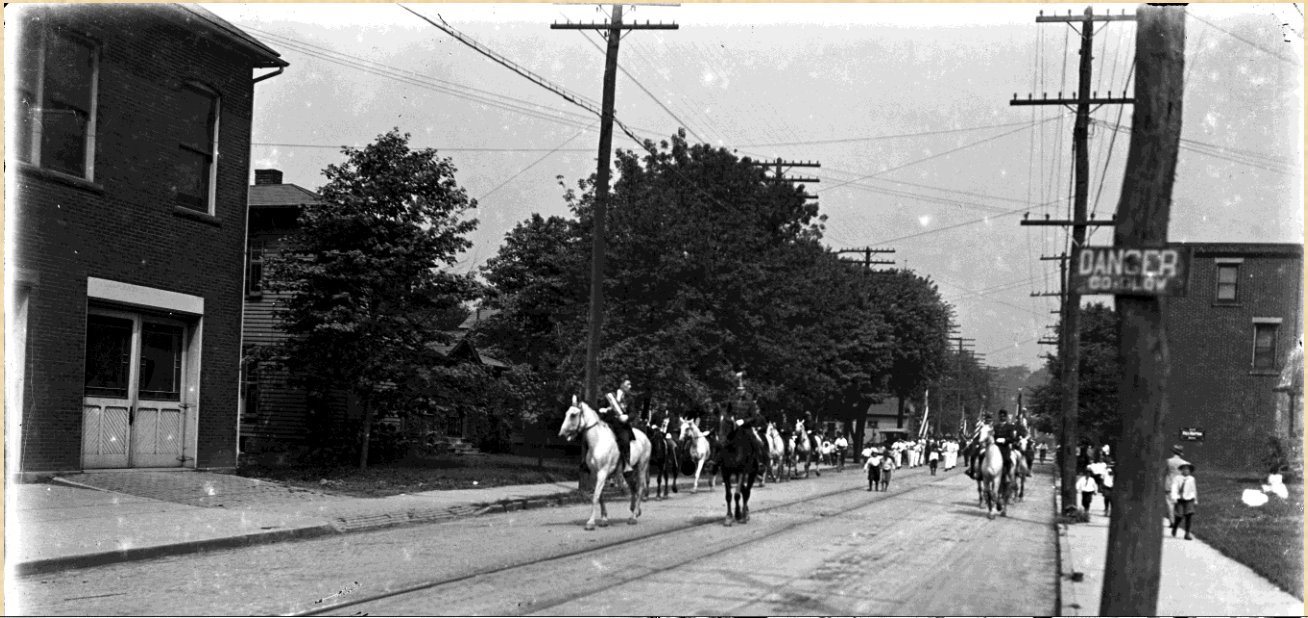
We still have limited quantities of:

**Natural Stone Drink Coasters** featuring lithographed scenes of Old Sharpsville — \$5

**CAT’S MEOW** art portraits of the First Universalist church or Pierce Mansion — \$10

**T-Shirts with the Historical Society Logo** M-L — \$12; XL and above — \$15

## Hungarian Society, cont'd.



The first photo shows a procession down Main Street, with the old Borough building (now Sharpville Floral) to the left. The other two are of the horsemen up High Street

No other record of a Sharpville Hungarian Society has yet been found. (As far as the newspaper sources most likely to mention such a club, nothing has been found in the Greenville papers which have been digitized and are searchable. The Society has recently digitized and made searchable a tranche of Sharpville papers, again with no success. No luck with the Sharon papers which are microfilmed; the weeks before and after the possible founding date in 1913 were reviewed, nor with mentions encountered in other years by chance. A 1941 commemorative book, *Hungarians in America*, lists a First Hungarian Sick Benefit Society of Farrell and a Magyar House in Sharon. It also has biographical sketches of distinguished Hungarians in the Shenango Valley—listing eight from Farrell, nine from Sharon, and two from Sharpville. (Interestingly, the names of those profiled are given in their Anglicized version and the original Hungarian, which reverses the surname and given name—so Stephen Vamosi, who had a 105-acre farm in Sharpville, likely South Pymatuning, is also listed as Vámosi István.) The book includes no mention of a Hungarian Society in Sharpville.

So, while the photos provide evidence of a Hungarian Society here, much remains that we don't know: details of its organization, where the club met, descriptions of their parade as well as other events, and when it disbanded. There is no mention in seemingly complete coverage of the societies and clubs in newspaper supplements and a booklet commemorating Sharpville's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 1924. What will be greatly appreciated is any input from readers to answer these questions or in help translating some hard-to-read Hungarian banners or identifying Austro-Hungarian military uniforms.