

The Scribe

Palmerton Area Historical Society
www.palmertonhistorical.org

December 2025



Palmerton's Pioneer Woman

In October of 1942, Helen Renshaw left her Lehigh Avenue home to begin her 30 year career of military service. Landing in Northern Africa to serve in the Army's motor transport service, Helen would become Palmerton's first member of the Women's Army Air Forces to set foot on foreign soil.

Helen enlisted in the WAC shortly after the outbreak of the war while still a student at Palmerton High School. She received her diploma while in the service. The Renshaw family was familiar with serving their country. Helen joined two of her brothers who were already serving: Corporal John Renshaw in Hawaii at Pearl Harbor and Private Paul Renshaw in England.

In addition to Northern Africa, Helen's other assignments included duty in Italy, Germany and Japan, as well as two stateside tours at Fort Dix and Fort

Monmouth. Helen was decorated with the Good Conduct Medal twice: once in Northern Africa and once stateside. Also, Helen was part of a contingent of armed forces members honored with a flag at the Palmerton Slovak Lutheran Church here in Palmerton.



Private Helen Renshaw

While serving in the motor corp in Northern Africa, Helen was beloved by many community members. Perhaps one of her greatest honors came when a local Arab family named their child "Renshawlah" in her honor. Helen's weekly candy ration from her PX was routinely given to her namesake.

We are very fortunate to have Helen Renshaw's military uniform, which is currently on display at The Heritage Center. Stop in during our regular open hours to view and honor one of Palmerton's decorated veterans.

Palmerton Area Historical Society

PO Box 267, Palmerton, PA 18071
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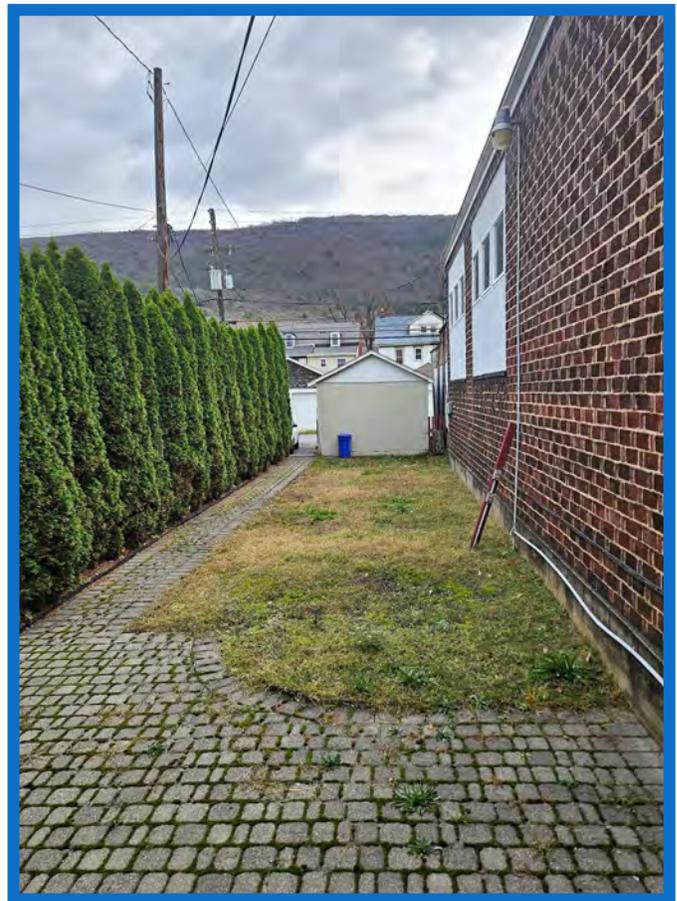
On June 9, 2025, Leon George of Leon George School Buses was our program speaker for the month. Davey Bowers, pictured above, was our most enthusiastic attendee and enjoyed touring the buses upon the conclusion.

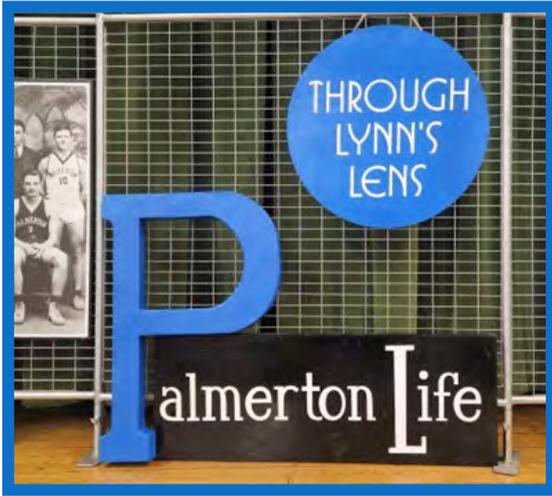


Think Spring in our Backyard

There is a new project on the horizon. We are planning a transformation by re-vamping our backyard into an open-air gathering spot to hold meetings, programs, concerts and other small artisan events that will bring a new and renewed interest into Palmerton. Our project includes beautifying the existing tree-lined space by installing pavers throughout the yard, inviting a local artist to paint a themed mural on an existing wall, and updating the landscaping to include seasonal planters. Ample seating will provide an inviting atmosphere for individuals and groups alike. The space will be accessible both through the Heritage Center by replacing and upgrading the current steps, as well as handicap accessible from the rear driveway.

To accomplish this goal, we have received 2 grants to be used towards funding this project. We are grateful to The Main Street Lehigh Valley group for awarding us a \$2000.00 matching grant and the Homer Foundation for awarding us a \$5000.00 grant. This money will fund about 60 percent of the project. Since one is a matching grant, we need your help to make this project a reality. If you would like to make a donation towards our goal, kindly mark "backyard project" on the memo line of your check. We appreciate each of our members and hope to build you a beautiful backyard space to enjoy.





The Concourse Club of Palmerton holds their annual Art & Photography Show in conjunction with the Palmerton Community Festival. Each year, a section of the show is dedicated to an artist, a group or a fundraising opportunity. This year a collaborative photographic tribute illustrating life in Palmerton, past and present, was the feature event of the show.

Art & History

Many of the historical society volunteers have similar interests, the most common of which are a love for the arts and a love for history. Many are native to Palmerton, but several of us are transplants to the area; but we bond over our love for this town. It was a natural fit to team up with the Concourse Club to build a tribute to the “Life in Palmerton” that we have grown to love. The Historical Society contributed archived photographs depicting the “Palmer-ton” way of life from the town’s inception up to the turn of the 21st century. Members and residents also provided photographs of relatives, including wedding portraits.

To compliment these photos, Lynn Shupp was asked to photograph events around town of present day

life. Many of the photographs were ‘then and now’ in nature, including photos of the Kunkletown Grove, the Palmerton Pool when first opened and its current state today. Lynn’s photos, which presented in vibrant color, portrayed events like high school graduation, Prom in the Park, the annual car show, and local fire department drills to just name a few. “I was honored to be asked to be the feature artist,” said Lynn Shupp. “I love the Palmerton area, its views, buildings, people and sense of community. This was an opportunity to show off Palmerton as the gem that it is!”

If you missed viewing the exhibit at the Concourse Club Art Show, it is going to be recreated this spring in the feature room of the Heritage Center.



When designing the Borough of Palmerton, it was Stephen Palmer's intention to create a space where the residents took pride in their homes and lived with a sense of community. Palmer believed that a thriving workforce needs more than jobs. His approach to town design reflected his vision of combining innovation, social responsibility and civic pride.

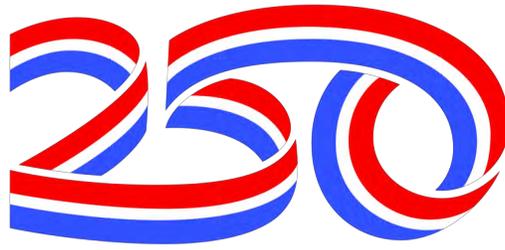
To achieve his goal, Palmer brought in some of the best minds in science,

medicine, education and community advocacy to ensure development of a town that included both physical and social infrastructure.

Even as time has passed and the zinc industry has declined and the factories have closed or downsized, the strong sense of community has endured. Neighbors look out for one another, traditions continue, and Palmer's original vision of belonging remains at the heart of the community's identity.



AMERICA



Celebrating our Nation's Birth

Happy 250th to the United States of America! Plans have been ongoing to celebrate this milestone. Locally, there have been a couple of celebrations with more planned for the upcoming year. The Palmerton Area Historical Society is actively planning, including a few programs scheduled for 2026 (see program schedule on page7). Below, please see a list of some of the celebrations. Stay tuned for further details on our Facebook page.

Calendar of Events

- **Sunday, June 14th –**
Palmerton's Celebration in
Borough Park
 - **Friday, July 3rd -**
Philadelphia's 4th of July
Parade (encouraging partici-
pation from all counties)
 - **Saturday, July 4th -**
Weissport's 4th of July
Parade
 - **Saturday, July 4th -**
Lehighon's Fireworks
exhibit
- **Carbon County Historical
Passport -**
travel and learn about the
county



Carbon County unveiled their "Carbon in a Snapshot" Bell in Weissport Park. Carbon participated in the "Bells Across PA" celebration.

2026 Monthly Program Schedule

All programs held at 6:30pm in the Knight's Gallery of the Palmerton Library unless otherwise noted
Venues are handicap accessible

March 9

"WWII War Dogs"
Mrs. Susan Bulanda

April 13

"Carbon County"
Kathy Long

May 11

"Martha & George Washington"
Aquashicola Fire Company

June 8

**"Palmerton's Legacy 250 years of
American Contribution"**
Steven Semmel

July 13

"Bells"

Rory Koons

August 16

Annual Summer Picnic
Heritage Center

September 11,12,13

Join us at the Festival!

September 14

"Coca Cola Company"
Frank Vlossak
Aquashicola Fire Company

October 12

**"PA Colonial Frontier Forts and
the American Revolutionary
War"**
David Semmel

November 9

**"Keeper of our Heroes'
Memories"**
Chris Rehatchek

December 6

Ecumenical Service (3pm)
Little White Church
Annual Banquet (4:30)
Bert's Steakhouse

Contact Us

We value your interest in the Palmerton Area Historical Society! To better serve you, we have updated some of our contact information. If you would like to reach us by email, kindly utilize the following:

palmertonhistorical1@ptd.net

We have also added additional hours for the Heritage Center to be open. Starting in January 2026, the center will be open the last Friday of each month from 5-7pm.

Heritage Center Hours:

Thursday and Saturday 10am—1pm

Last Friday of month 5-7pm



P O Box 267
Palmerton, PA 18071

**Palmerton Area
Historical Society
Heritage Center**

410 Delaware Avenue
(610) 824-6954

**Thursdays & Saturdays
10am-1pm
1st Friday of Month
5-7pm
Starting January 2026**

