

Sayre Historical Society in Sayre's Centennial Celebration

Sayre's centennial celebration involved many months of planning beginning late in 1988. A centennial committee headed by Ellen Collins and Jim Nobles undertook coordinating a full year of events beginning with a birthday party on January 27, 1991, the 100th anniversary of Sayre's incorporation as a borough, and concluding on December 31, 1991, with the sealing of a time capsule, to be opened at 25-year intervals over the next century.

One of the first centennial committees formed, destined to be one of the most active committees, was the History Committee. Its purpose was to bring attention to Sayre's long and varied history. Nobles, with a long-time interest in Sayre's early years, headed this committee. At its first meeting the small group voted to create the Sayre Historical Society, to be a permanent organization, continuing after the centennial ended. That date, March 14, 1989, was the Society's birthday.

Over the course of planning and celebrating Sayre's centennial the Sayre Historical Society successfully undertook a host of projects while also participating with other committees to make the yearlong celebration an unbelievable success.

Among the successes of the Society were:

- Helped raise over \$100,000 for centennial projects and activities.
- Developed very popular historical displays in various storefront windows.
- Displayed photos and artifacts of early Sayre during successful promotions in downtown Sayre.
- Began collecting and safely storing items for a future museum.
- Promoted memberships in the historical society, gaining over 500 dues-paying members.
- Developed the format and began publishing the *Sayre Quarterly* in 1989.
Applied for and received a bulk mailing permit to facilitate its distribution.
- Incorporated the centennial committee in a manner whereby the articles of incorporation would convert to the Sayre Historical Society by name.
- Using the same format received a non-profit 501 C3 status from the Internal Revenue Service.
- Created a set of by-laws for the historical society.
- Wrote monthly articles on Sayre's history, which were featured in the Sayre newspaper.
- Promoted the "Century Homes" project of the Bradford County Historical Society.
- Published a postcard album of 32 vintage views of early Sayre.
- Wrote and published the most definitive history of Sayre – ***A Century of Memories, Sayre, Pennsylvania, 1891 – 1991***, selling 1,000 copies.
- Created and dedicated in an impressive ceremony a historical marker for Rest Cemetery, an early Sayre burial ground and site of Sayre's first one-room schoolhouse.
- Developed a slide program about Sayre's history and presented it to numerous organizations.
- Organized Sayre's first history fair. It was held in the Sayre High School Cafeteria, filling the entire space with displays by dozens of individuals. Attendance was over 500 people. History fairs became an annual event thereafter.
- Developed, funded, and dedicated the School Bell Memorial in front H. Austin Snyder Elementary School on North Keystone Avenue.

- Organized a “Centennial Walk,” a historical, guided walking tour of downtown Sayre and on to Island Pond and the Lockhart Street Bowl.
- Developed, funded, and dedicated the Lehigh Valley Railroad Memorial in Howard Elmer Park with help from the Black Diamond Club.
- Created historical floats for the Valley Memorial Day and Halloween Parades, which were held in Sayre.
- Scheduled a program of public tours of Sayre churches with the architecture and history of each church being highlighted.
- Created a time capsule filled with hundreds of items from Sayre’s past and present, as well as individually created and sealed envelopes addressed to future citizens of Sayre. The time capsule was in four parts with one part to be opened in each year – 2016, 2041, 2066, and 2091.

During the years of centennial preparation and the year of the centennial, the members of the Sayre Historical Society assisted all other centennial committees.