Boro Fire Bell... cast about 1893

Dedication Stone

Butler House built 1901

LIBERTY BOROUGH
50 YEARS
1912 - 1962
"LIBERTY BOROUGH
50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION"

Program

Sunday, July 29
JOINT RELIGIOUS SERVICE
The Rev. Russell Bragg—Church of the Good Samaritan
The Rev. William Darsie—Liberty Presbyterian Church
Father Rowan—St. Eugene's Roman Catholic Church

All events, unless otherwise noted, will be held on the grounds of the new Liberty Borough Fire Hall.
Old pictures and records will be on display in the Borough Building during the entire week.
50th Anniversary Celebration

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION COMMEMORATING
LIBERTY BOROUGH'S
50TH ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION

1912 TO 1962
LIBERTY BOROUGH, PENNSYLVANIA
Borough of Liberty

50th Anniversary Celebration

50 Years of Progress

July 22 to July 28, 1962

In compiling and preparing this book, the History Brochure Committee, as well as organizations and others not on the "50th anniversary" committee, have tried to do their best to give you the best and most authentic highlights of the Borough of Liberty, the old Borough of Port Vue, and the Borough of Liberty.

The aim was to get facts and figures, but we in no way want to give you a history of the Borough of Liberty, the old Borough of Port Vue, and the Borough of Liberty.

We doubt no one will be interested in this book and perhaps will even be surprised at how much their interest will be awakened.

No doubt errors have crept in, and perhaps certain omissions of facts, names, events or important events; but our aim was to set forth as clearly as possible the facts gathered and words the historical highlights of our Borough of Liberty.

We hope you—your children—and future generations may enjoy this book.

Historic Brochure Committee
Mrs. Earl Hitchens, Chairman
James Earnest
Kenneth V. Glasson
Robert Madden
Carl Murray
Stewart E. Ovens
William G. Wunderly

GENERAL HISTORY OF THE AREA PRIOR TO 1912

Introduction

History is the crystallization of past events. The best and most authentic works are those wherein the author can make history of the past by selecting facts gathered from reliable sources and writing in the simplest language.

Do not manufacture history since all history is completed from records or statements of others who have gone before us.

From a wilderness, the old Borough of Port Vue and Liberty has been converted into a highly cultured and flourishing community which contains all the luxuries of civilization, industry, education and refinements which go to make the sum total of human progress and happiness.

Page Two
first and would jump fences with ease. They were the most valuable animals on the farm for transportation purposes.

One day Caleb Edmundson and another gentleman were walking in the woods when they noticed a large drove of hogs operated by Caleb Edmundson and later by wolf was alarmed and immediately jumped among the settler's dogs. This was to warn the settlers to feed these animals occasionally when they considered it necessary to keep them within shooting distance. They were considered as common property like all other wild game.

The early settlers in Liberty and Port Vue had their own ways of transportation. They used flat boats to the grist mill, and the coal boats pulled by large dogs. There was a small railroad down Hamilton Crossing to the river where it was hauled in the United States. Considered a major step forward in transportation in this area.

The coal from our vicinity was known as some of the best coal exceeded down the area of Loretta and Youghiogheny rivers from sunrise to sunset. All residents were interested in these sites for bathing suits with swimming in the river.

Early History of Schools—Prior to 1912

In 1991, the population of the present Borough of Liberty and Port Vue totaled approximately 500. These early settlers decided it was time to create a new Borough and separate from Lincoln Township. They met in the old Penny School House on the Edmundson Farm and decided on the name of Port Vue. They then agreed on the name of Port Vue due to the beautiful view of the river. These settlers lived in the Youghiogheny River between First Street and Seventh Street.

Charles Weissert appointed to circulate a petition among the residents and present this petition to the Court of Quarter Sessions of Allegheny County. The petition was completed and taken to the courthouse on May 6, 1892. The petition requested the incorporation of the Borough of Port Vue of 1,240 acres. Their petition was granted and approved on March 20, 1895. This was a significant step for the area. The first school to be established was the Kelsey Hayes School. This school was later consigned by John B. Edmundson, John Heib, and Frank Downey. Their Mrs. Trich and the Phillie Heed.

The second church of record in the joint Borough of Liberty and Port Vue was the Presbyterian Church. The first pastor was the Rev. James M. Mason. Another church was the Pilgrim Holiness Church located on the farm of William Crouch. The pastor was Richard Paxson.

Early History of Volunteer Fire Co. Prior to 1912

The first fire company in the old joint Borough of Port Vue was organized on July 15, 1868 with 36 charter members. Some of the original members were Arthur Davis, William Slim, Fred Peterson, John Klotz, Joshua Campbell, Gusto Gustafson, Joseph Stearns, Geo. King, D. L. Lick, C. Michael, John Shaffer, Charles Slim, John Pearson, William Wilcoxen, Emil Kurz, Robert Jackson, Fred Ulm, Philip Hilger, Pete McCaffery, Samuel Wilkes and Clifford Gustafson. Caleb Gustafson was the first chief, Leo Stearns, assistant chief, Arthur Edmundson and Luke Frank and Matthew Lewis, vice president. The first fire equipment consisted of a hand-drawn hose reel which was purchased in that year by a $500 bank loan and hand-drawn hose reel was originally built in 1886 for the Sharpsburg Fire Company and later sold in 1908 to our fire company.

Sports

Basketball was a popular sport in our area in the early 1900's. William C. Hitchcock brought fame to our community since he was the tri-state quizzing champion for 13 years. His present age is 95 and he is residing at 2200 Harrison Street, McKeesport.

Ice skating and horse drawn sleigh riding were other popular sports around 1900.

Horses and men rode on skis as rides walks in the early days to prevent mud from being tracked into their homes. During the winter months some of these wooden planks would disappear since the boys would use them for sled riding down the hills in our area.

Sledding and shooting were also popular sports some sixty years ago. Contests were held on the farms of William and John Edmundson. Prize of turkeys, chickens, ducks and geese were given to the winners. Mr. J. F. Calhoun was usually the champion in these contests. Mr. Edmundson was appointed the first solicitor in the old joint Borough of Liberty and Port Vue in the year 1891.

Early Residents During Period 1900-1912

Some of the early residents of Liberty Borough prior to its legal formation (1900-1912) were as follows:

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History of Liberty Borough

Incorporation of Liberty Borough
September 7, 1912.

Because Port Vue Borough was not sharing improvements for which tax money was paid, the residents in the present Borough of Liberty petitioned the Quarter Sessions, Court of Allegheny County in 1912 to be separated from Port Vue and form a new borough. The major item of disagreement was the financing of new water lines in Port Vue Borough from real estate taxes paid by all residents. These water lines were not extended into this section of the borough and therefore our residents complained of paying for this improvement and at the same time were not receiving the benefits of it. They obtained their water from their own wells. The name of Liberty Borough was decided upon by these residents since they were attempting to obtain their liberty from the Borough of Port Vue. Charles Weinert and John McClure were two of the many residents that led the request for separation from Port Vue Borough.

On September 7, 1912, Quarter Sessions, Court of Allegheny County approved the petition of the residents and Liberty Borough was legally incorporated. The council appointed the following officials until the date of the first election in the fall of 1912:

- **Burgess**: Charles Weinert
- **Council**: John McClure, President; David Dannenhauer, Richard Miller, Robert Snyder, Callie Thompson, John Owens
- **School Board**: Harty L. Kier, George L. Sien, Robert R. Kizer, John W. Minar and William A. Wunderley

When Liberty was first incorporated in 1912, it was considered the smallest borough in the state since it contained only 100 residents.

At the time of separation from Port Vue in 1912, the School District of Liberty Borough was also created and consisted only of the legal limits of the Borough of Liberty.

**General History of the Borough**

Of general interest to the early residents will be the memory of a picnic grove called Dale Grove. This grove was located on a plot of ground bordering the Youghin-gheys River near where Heath's Run empties into the river. This grove was named for the Dale Brothers who owned the land. This shaded grove was the scene of quiet family picnics and Sunday School outings. The McKeesport Tin Plate Company later erected their plant on this site.

Many early residents will also remember the Sunday School picnics on Siena's Farm as well as the old German church park area which was located near Owens Avenue and "E" Street.

The entrance to Liberty Borough, through Port Vue was once known as "Merry England" because of its predominately English populace. It was also and still is known as the "slip". Many people who call this area the "slip" may not know how the name originated. The McKeesport Tin Plate Company was in need of railroad sidings and began to excavate the dirt from the hillside that extended out close to where the railroad tracks are now located. As this work progressed, the hillside began to slide. There were a number of homes up on the hill above and many who remember, say that those homes could be seen gradually slipping down over the hill. Approximately five or six houses slipped over the hill at that time. A stone wall was built along Liberty Way where it joins Port Vue Avenue in order to prevent further slipping of this hillside and it still stands as a silent reminder of this past occurrence. Hence, the name "slip" was originated.

CAMP WALDHAM
GERMAN CHURCH OF McKESPORT

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The first motorized police ambulance was placed into operation on July 2, 1954 and as a result improved police protection was made available to the residents.

Another important event was the paving of Washington Boulevard in the year 1956. This project included the widening of this road and the elimination of many dangerous curves, and greatly improved the traveling conditions between the Borough of Liberty and Glensport.

The old frame Number 4 Schoolhouse located on Liberty Way also served as the Borough Building during most of the past fifty years. However, in the year 1968 this old building was torn down and was replaced by our present modern Borough Building. On December 8, 1958, the first council meeting was held in this new building.

The Glenn Avenue Project was completed in 1961 and the traffic bottle-neck at the entrance to our community was eliminated as a result of one-way streets expediting traffic in this formerly congested area. This was the second major improvement to the main entrance to Liberty Borough with the previously noted Stone Bridge Project being the first improvement.

One of the hardest blows suffered by our community was the moving of the Kelsey Hayes Plant to Michigan in 1961. Many of our friends, relations and officials were forced to move with the company in order to maintain their jobs.

The sanitary sewer system was extended to include virtually all of the houses in the borough during 1961 and 1962 and on July 1, 1962 the sewer trunk lines were connected with the McKeesport Sewage Disposal System. The original sanitary sewers in our borough were installed by the W.P.A. during the depression years of the 1930’s and resulted in a substantial savings to the future taxpayers as the borough developed during the inflationary period of the 1940’s and 1950’s.

The original school building was the old Number 4 School House better known to present day residents as the School House. The state, however, would allow only the addition of 4 rooms and an all-purpose room. This annex was dedicated on October 22, 1954. Due to the rapid growth in the number of students, an additional grade school was required and on February 17, 1958 students moved into the new 6 room Manor School. The high school students during those years attended the McKeesport High Schools on a tuition basis.

In the year 1968, there was a jointure of the Liberty and Port Vue School Districts which is now named the Port Vue-Liberty Joint School District. This jointure was brought about by pressure from the County and the State to consolidate school districts. This joint school district is currently erecting a modern senior high school at a cost in excess of $3,000,000 in Liberty Borough on part of the old Firestone Farm near Washington Boulevard. It is anticipated that this school will be completed in the fall of 1962 and within two years there will be none of our students attending McKeesport High School. Once again the residents of our community have had a heavy tax burden placed upon them to finance the cost of our school system.
The need for an expanded school system can best be explained by the following growth in school students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Students</th>
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<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>914</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The present school directors are as follows:

- William G. Wunderley - Secretary
- Robert Butler - President
- Adolph Dominick - Treasurer
- Cecill Feens

**HISTORY OF ORGANIZATIONS, CHURCHES**

**Liberty Presbyterian Church**

Liberty Borough was part of Port Vue on July 2, 1889 when the local Port Vue Union Sunday School was organized with 57 charter members. Mr. Thomas Hichens was the first Sunday School superintendent and Miss Helen Phillips, now Mrs. James Martin, was elected the first organist.

The Sunday School met in an old school building, located on the site of the present borough building. The original Sunday School was independent of all denominations. On September 24, 1898 a survey of all of the homes of the community was authorized to ascertain the denominational background of the residents.

The first reference to "Presbyterian" was on October 3, 1900 when a committee was appointed to wait on Presbyterian people to see "what could be raised for a church on the site of a church building and these were deeded to William Reddy, life-long residents of Liberty Borough were contacted by a committee and arrangements were made to procure use and ownership at the direction of the Rev. Albert Johnson, Vice President

**ST. EUGENE'S CHURCH**

On November 9, 1964 a group of Catholics met for the first time to start a ways and means of forming a parish in Liberty Borough. About this time Mr. and Mrs. Robert Butler volunteered to provide 2 lots in Section A of the Kolar Plan for the site of a church building, and these were deeded to the Board of Trustees to be held in trust for the First Presbyterian Church of Port Vue.

The site proved to be the center of the community. As a result, the Sunday School voted on October 31, 1900 to build the church at once. This church was to become the First Presbyterian Church of Redstone Presbytery. At this meeting the first Board of Trustees was elected, and these constituted the building committee, namely, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Butte, Mr. Kaler, Mr. Phillips, and Mr. McClure.

The congregation was organized May 11, 1902, as the First Presbyterian Church of Port Vue by the Presbytery of Redstone of the Synod of Pennsylvania. The Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., with the following original elders: T. A. Hibben, William M. Roberts, and William J. Hoffman. Rev. M. S. Naug was the first pastor and served until November 1, 1905.

The name of the church was authorized to be changed from the First Presbyterian Church of Port Vue Borough, to the Liberty Presbyterian Church of Liberty Borough, on June 25, 1916. Liberty had become a separate borough in 1912.

Due to the need for additional space, a new Educational Building was erected at the corner of Elizabeth and Valley streets. Work was begun on April 8, 1960 and the first church service was held in the new building in November of 1960. The Building Committee was appointed by Bishop Wright on January 20, 1957. The present pastor is Rev. William W. Daniel.

The first School of Religion was organized and classes were held in the Mother's Club, V.F.W. Hall and private homes.

On Palm Sunday, 1959, the Catholic Social Group went to Duquesne University to meet Bishop Wright. Whether this meeting with the Bishop had any effect, is a matter of conjecture, but by three months later we were made a Parish on June 2, 1959.

The present pastor, Rev. E. F. Rowan, took over his official duties on June 10th. A home on Overbrook Drive was purchased as a temporary rectory on July 1, 1959.

In August of the same year the first meeting with Bishop Wright was held to discuss the building of a church for the Parish. Ground breaking took place June 18, 1959 and the first Mass in the new Church was offered August 15, 1961.

May 6, 1962 was the official Dedication Day with the blessing of the Church and a Solemn High Mass celebrated by Bishop Wright followed by dinner in the Church hall. The dinner was attended by clergy, borough officials, friends and parishioners.

St. Eugene's R. C. Church

Church of the Good Samaritan

The history of the Episcopal Church of the Good Samaritan is short due to the fact that it only began in the early fall of 1968. At that time some members of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in McKeesport conceived the idea of starting a Mission Church in the old Presbyterian Church at the corner of Liberty and Southern Avenue which had been vacated by the Presbyterians due to the fact that they had constructed a new Church in the Borough. The owner of the property, Misses May and Della Butler, life-long residents of Liberty Borough were contacted by a committee and arrangements were made to procure use and ownership at the direction of the Rev. Perry Porter, Rector at St. Stephen's.

In October of 1968, the Rt. Rev. William S. Thomas, D.D., Suffragan Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh, called a meeting of all interested people at the Liberty Borough School. At this meeting an Executive Committee of eight was appointed by the Bishop to pursue plans for renovating the Church building. Renovation work was started in November 1969 and after many many hours of work by members of the Congregation this new Mission Church called the Church of the Good Samaritan due to the fact they put it in, was opened for the first time on Palm Sunday, March 22, 1969.

This Mission Church has been served by various Clergy: The Rev. David Dillman from Trinity Church in Monessen, the Rev. William Lewis from St. George's in Jefferson Borough and the Rev. William Leggett from the Allison Park Mission. As of January 1, 1967 the Rev. W. Russell Bragg was appointed by Bishop Thomas as Priest-in-Charge on a part time basis. The Rev. Mr. Bragg is also Priest-in-Charge of the Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration in Clarion.

As the Rev. Mr. Bragg and friends have approximately 50 or more families, (79 Communicants and 157 Baptized members).

The Church of the Good Samaritan owes much to St. Stephen's, McKeesport, to St. Eugene's, McKeesport, to Mr. and Mrs. John M. Wunderley, Rector at St. Eugene in 1967. On June 16th the Church was opened with a special Dedication Service with the Bishop present. The Rt. Rev. William S. Thomas, Suffragan Bishop of the Diocese of Pittsburgh was held to discuss the building of a church for the Parish. Ground breaking took place June 18, 1959 and the first Mass in the new Church was offered August 15, 1961.

On June 28, 1916 Liberty had become a separate borough due to the great personal effort put in to it, was opened for the first time to start a ways and means of forming a parish in Liberty Borough.

Robert Butler, life-long residents of Liberty Borough were contacted by a committee and arrangements were made to procure use and ownership at the direction of the Rev. Albert Johnson, Vice President. William G. Wunderley - President

**St. Eugene Church**

Erected 1961

On November 9, 1954 a group of Catholics met for the first time to start a ways and means of forming a parish in Liberty Borough. The Catholic Social Group was formed on December 3rd of the same year.

In February, 1955 the group received encouragement when it was learned that the Diocese of Pittsburgh purchased four acres of ground at the corner of Liberty Way and Scene Ridge Road.

Liberty and Lincoln were made a Mission of St. Peter's under the title of St. Eugene in 1967. On June 16th the first Mass was offered at the Mother's Club. In September the first School of Religion was organized and classes were held in the Mother's Club, V.F.W. Hall and private homes.

**ST. EUGENE CHURCH**

Erected 1961

The firemen have purchased three other fire trucks up to the present time. The first piece of fire equipment was a hose reel purchased from the Fire Department on June 1, 1959.

**FIREMEN**

Liberty Borough Volunteer Firemen's Association

The organization meeting of the Volunteer Firemen's Association of Liberty Borough was held on September 24, 1957.

- President - William G. Wunderley
- Vice President - William Sinn
- Secretary - Gunard Barhan
- Treasurer - Frank Moon
- Financial Secretary - Lloyd Griffiths
- Chief - Mike Melan
- Asst. Chief - George Austin
- Captain - Frank Chmielecki
- First Lieutenant - John Lamp
- Second Lieutenant - John Lickert
- Third Lieutenant - John Lickert

The old fire hall which is now placed on the roof of the new fire hall was the first fire signal in Liberty Borough.

The first piece of fire equipment was a hose reel purchased from the Fire Department on September 24, 1957. The new fire hall was opened for the first time on Palm Sunday, March 22, 1969.

The firemen have purchased three other fire trucks up to the present time.

Firemen's Association of Liberty Borough
The present officers are as follows:

President—Robert Forney
Vice President—Barbara Chainadski
Recording Secretary—Mary Fritz
Financial Secretary—Virginia Byard
Treasurer—Bush Zimmermann
Chaplain—Mary Douglass

The Auxiliary was organized on April 14, 1948.

Asst. Chief—Loui Wunderley, Jr.
President—Robert Forney
Chief—Forrest Forney
Captain—Robert Forney

Recording Secretary—Leroy Storch
Second Lieutenant—Robert Wunderley
First Lieutenant—Harry Marth

Financial Secretary—John F. Hailstones
Chaplain—Mary Douglass

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

The Mothers Club

The Mothers Club was organized in 1917 by Mrs. I. Hubbard with five women present. The five original members were: Mrs. William Wunderley, Sr., Mrs. Ella Lickert, Mrs. Anna Hansen, Mrs. I. Hynd, and Mrs. Edward Elliot.

In 1952, Mrs. J. C. Smith donated the ground that the Lions Club purchased to the Mothers Club. The former structure was removed and a new building erected in its place. The new building was dedicated in 1961.

This year the club has been honored by the Federation by selecting one of its members, Mrs. Robert Hoffman, as 7th District Vice President.

Liberty Borough Lions Club

The President of the Liberty Borough Lions Club is Mrs. Robert Hoffman, as 7th District Vice President.

Liberty Woman’s Club

The Liberty Woman’s Club was organized January 30, 1953 as a Federated Club. Mrs. Ennery Starks, one of the founders, was the Club’s first President. The club has always looked forward to Community Betterment and Development for the residents of Liberty Borough.
The organization meeting of the Liberty Veteran’s Drill Team was held at the home of Joseph Benyak on August 2, 1960. Officers were elected from a group of 24 members.

**Officers**

- Commander: James Anglum
- President: Carl Lamp
- Vice President: Sam Gilullo
- Secretary: Jay Dombros
- Treasurer: Steve Pribish
- Drill Master: Joseph Benyak

In March of 1948 they received their State Charter. The members, using their talents, completed the Vet’s Hall, 2701 “C” Street, in 1950.

Their present membership includes 135 members and 85 social members.

Members:

- Advertising and Publicity: Home Kemp

The Drill Team participates in Firemen’s Parades and in holiday parades.

**Honor Roll—World War 2**

Do You Remember?
It's Nice To Be A Neighbor...

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JEAN KOLANKOS' DAIRY STORE
Dairy Delite — Groceries — Lunches
LIBERTY WAY, LINCOLN BORO

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325 Gumbert St.
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LIBERTY WAY - LIBERTY BORO

Happy Birthday To Our Home Town...

FRANK SHAWS' LIBERTY DAIRY STORE
Groceries — Delicatessen
LIBERTY WAY, LIBERTY BORO
Phone OR 8-9814

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MARK MANNING
General Repairs — Parts
2805 LIBERTY WAY, LIBERTY BORO
Phone OR 8-9311

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Orchard 8-1233

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613 Owens Ave.
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LIBERTY WAY, LIBERTY BORO

Phone OR 2-0863

Page Sixteen

Page Seventeen
CONGRATULATIONS TO THE
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Sincerely,
Peoples Union Bank and Trust Company

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OR 3-5529

Your REXALL Druggist

Compliments of
MOTIVE PARTS CO.
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OR 8-0125

"AL" NEILSON
Manager

Compliments of
ALBERT E. JOHNSON
BUILDER
3616 LIBERTY WAY—LIBERTY BORO
OR 2-6879

Congratulations from
THE
DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE
of Liberty Borough

ADOLPH DOMINICK, CHAIRMAN
GEORGINE WASKOWITZ
ANN BANICK
BERTHA CHMIELESKI
ROBERT ASHTON
WILLIAM BEVIL

Sincerely,
Peoples Union Bank and Trust Company

Thank you to all persons who contributed pictures and historical facts for this brochure.

History Brochure Committee
CONGRATULATIONS
TO THE CITIZENS OF LIBERTY BORO
ON THEIR
50TH ANNIVERSARY

Sincerely
NATIONAL BANK
OF McKEESPORT

MARY & STANS' BARBER & BEAUTY SHOP
WISH TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR 15 YEARS OF PATRONAGE OF STYLES AND CUTS
3112 LIBERTY WAY
LIBERTY BORO

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THE

REPUBLICAN COMMITTEE

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AL NEILSON, CHAIRMAN
IRENE MEHARRA
LAURETTA ARTHURS
JOHN BERTOK
DORIS PHILLIPS
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HOURS

9 A.M. TO 10 P.M. MONDAY—THURSDAY—SATURDAY
Congratulations to Liberty Borough on their 50th Anniversary