WHEN WORLD WAR II veterans gathered in 1946 to start a Last Man’s Club in Etna, the men were in their 20s, just back from war. Last Man Clubs don’t accept new members — the roll call declines until the “last man” is left.

The Etna group held its annual dinners at Elks Lodge No. 932, housed in the former Spang, Chalfant Co. rolling mill employees club. Dinners in the early years were spent reminiscing, and with revelry lasting into the night, many members would take the next day off work.

In recent years, most dinners ended before 10 p.m., so the 50th anniversary meeting in 1996 was decided to be the last. Nine of the fellows gathered, and wives were finally invited. The ancient bottle of Old Crow was opened (though the cork had been repaired over the years), and a toast was made to fallen comrades ... and to each other.

— by Brian Butko; photo and additional materials are held at the HSWP Library & Archives