

NANTICOKE LEGACY



A PUBLICATION OF THE NANTICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SAMANTHA MILL HOUSE – 495 EAST MAIN STREET, NANTICOKE, PA – 570-258-1367

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Nanticoke Historical Society Vice President, Chet Zaremba presents inaugural 2024 Society scholarship to GNA senior Mackenzie Hall



THESE STORIES AND MORE IN THIS ISSUE OF NANTICOKE LEGACY:

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- WNEP NEWS ANCHOR JON MEYER UTILIZES HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARCHIVES
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MISSION STATEMENT - The object of this society is for educational, charitable, and literary purposes with a primary focus to research, preserve, develop and disseminate the history of Nanticoke, Pennsylvania. To collect artifacts, memorabilia and historical documents and fact Nanticoke, Pennsylvania and to store such items in a central location or specific area where these articles may be preserved, appreciated and used by the citizens of Nanticoke to enhance their heritage.

OUR WEBSITE

www.nanticokehistoryonline.org

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OFFICERS and STAFF

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Nanticoke Legacy Editor News and Stories : Judith L. Minsavage

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Individual \$35

Family \$40

RESEARCH

The Nanticoke Historical Society provides research services. Our dedicated volunteer researchers are ready to assist you. We have an extensive archive of books, photographs (i.e. cemeteries, churches, businesses, buildings, homes, schools, sports, and coal mines and more) correspondence and news clippings related to the City of Nanticoke and the immediate area to draw on when answering your questions. We can provide, if available, a copy of a photograph of a person, place or thing, or an interesting anecdote that adds meaning to your family history. Please go to our website to get a copy of our two-page research application or call our office to obtain a form.

Welcome New Members

MARY LEWCAN AND MARY AND JIM CARR

ROSEMARY (CINTALA) DZIEWA

Thank You for Your Donation

to the following individuals who have given so generously to support the Nanticoke Historical Society.

We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your donations are tax-deductible.

MARY LOUISE HILL

REBECCA NADOLNY

JUDITH GARDNER

ROSEMARY DZIEWA

Your donation helps our Society to continue gathering and documenting the history of Nanticoke and its people. We are here to serve you.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE MILL MEMORIAL LIBRARY ON A WONDERFUL EVENT

The Nanticoke Historical Society was one of the many sponsors of the Mill Memorial Library –“Love Literacy for Life” event held on Saturday, September 7, 2024. The event included, Hors d’oeuvres, wine sampling, beer tasting by Susquehanna Brewing Co. Music by DJ Linda, raffle and silent auction.

NEWS:

THE SOCIETY PRESENTS THE JOHN STEPHEN TOMKO (NHS'37) SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

The 2024 Greater Nanticoke Area High School Senior Awards Day program was held in May. The Nanticoke Historical Society award presentation was made possible through a \$500 sponsorship provided by



Nanticoke Historical Society Vice President, Chet Zaremba addresses GNA seniors at the 2024 Senior Awards Day Ceremony

a deeper understanding and appreciation for the community in which they live.

If anyone would like to contribute to our 2025 scholarship award, either personally or in memory of a friend or loved one, please let us know by emailing NHS63@comcast.net or by calling our office 570-258-1367.



Society member John Tomko in honor of his father, John Stephen Tomko. The initiative challenged Greater Nanticoke Area seniors to write an essay on the impact of Nanticoke's rich heritage. The winning essay written by senior, Mackenzie Hall serves as a testament to the profound influence a town's history can have on its inhabitants in shaping their identities and aspirations. This scholarship not only honors the memory of Tomko, a distinguished alumnus but also ignites a passion for local history among the youth, ensuring that the legacy of Nanticoke and its residents continue to be celebrated by future generations. In this and future efforts, The Society hopes to foster in our student population



2024 Greater Nanticoke Area High School Senior Awards Day program.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARD HONORS SACRIFICE AND CULTURAL RICHNESS

BY JOHN TOMKO

The John Stephen Tomko (NHS' 37) Scholarship Award is not merely a sponsorship for me, but a profound and heartfelt commitment. As the son of an immigrant from Czechoslovakia, I am intricately woven into the narrative of John Stephen Tomko and his generation. Their resilience and fortitude, mirrored in my father's life, from his birth on November 29, 1919, to his passing at the age of ninety-three, on March 29, 2013, is a testament to their character.

This personal connection and profound admiration for his generation is the very essence that propelled me to sponsor the essay scholarship.

The story of Jan Fabian and his mother, Anna Veronica Fabian, is a testament to the immigrant experience. In 1921, they left behind their home in Presov, Czechoslovakia, and embarked on a journey through Le Harve, France, to Ellis Island, New York. There, they were warmly welcomed by Stephen ("Steve") George Tomko, a widower who would soon become family. Stephen and Anna married in New York and settled in Nanticoke, Pennsylvania, at 410 East Union Street, where they raised a family, including thirteen children. Jan was adopted by Steve and changed his name to John Stephen Tomko. John's life in Nanticoke during the 1920s and 30s was a microcosm of the era. Coal reigned supreme, with every family having a member involved in mining or related work. The archives of the Nanticoke Historical Society reveal a bustling community, with a grocery store or butcher shop in nearly every neighborhood and a tavern on every corner. More significantly, it was a vibrant, patriotic community that John was a part of. John attended Lincoln School, Saint Joseph's Catholic school, and graduated from Nanticoke High School in 1937.

In 1940, John enlisted in the U.S. Navy. In December 1940, the twenty-one-year-old spent his first Christmas away from home in the Atlantic aboard the USS *Nashville* (CL-43), a Brooklyn Class Light Cruiser, a ship that would be his home away from home until 1946. In February 1941, the *Nashville* and three other cruisers carried US Marines to Wake Island. John's brother Aloysius would be on the Island in December 1941 as a civilian contractor when the Japanese captured Wake. Aloysius, one of the lucky ones, would be a Japanese prisoner of war for the duration and be repatriated in September 1945. The *Nashville* escorted the aircraft carrier USS *Hornet* (CV-8) to its jump-off point for the Doolittle Raid on the Japanese homeland in April 1942. The *Nashville* participated in numerous combat



Chief J.S. Tomko leaving USS *Hornet* (CVS-12) upon his retirement, April 12, 1960. Official Photograph U.S. Navy.



The USS *Nashville* (CL-43) in the 1940s

actions throughout the Pacific Theater, receiving ten Battle Stars. The *Nashville* served as a flagship on multiple occasions during the war and as U.S. Army General Douglas MacArthur's flagship on four occasions, including the Leyte landings. In December 1944, near Negros Island, the *Nashville* was hit by a Kamikaze, a bomber with two five-hundred-pound bombs making her midship area an inferno. One hundred thirty-three sailors and Marines were killed in the attack, and one hundred ninety were wounded.

As a combat veteran myself, it is hard to imagine the carnage of that day. It explains why my father never spoke about his experience. John is the recipient of the Bronze Star with Combat "V." His younger brother Victor was a paratrooper with the E Company 507th Parachute Infantry Regiment attached to the 82nd Division (Airborne). He jumped into Normandy on D-Day, was wounded, and captured. After medical treatment in Rennes, France, he was transported to POW Camp VIIA, Moosburg, Germany. He was repatriated in September 1945. John had four other brothers who also served in World War II.



The Bronze Star with Combat "V"

Why the sponsorship? First and foremost, such sponsorship allows us to pay homage to the enduring legacy of the Greatest Generation. Their sacrifices and contributions during adverse times have not just shaped our world today but have left an indelible mark on our collective history. Naming the scholarship after an immigrant from this generation celebrates their resilience, determination, and the invaluable cultural richness they brought to their new home country.

Moreover, by sponsoring this scholarship, we are not just honoring the past, but also investing in the future. It encourages high school students to explore and preserve local history, unearthing hidden treasures of historical significance waiting to be discovered through research and storytelling. This initiative fosters a deeper appreciation for local heritage and inspires future generations to become stewards of their community's history.

Furthermore, supporting a writing scholarship like this is not just about preserving history, but also about promoting education. It encourages critical thinking, research skills, and effective communication among students, nurturing a sense of civic responsibility and encouraging them to reflect on how the past shapes the present. This aligns perfectly with my educational goals, and I believe it's a cause worth investing in.

On a broader level, sponsoring such initiatives strengthens community bonds and demonstrates a commitment to education and cultural enrichment. It underscores a dedication to nurturing talent and fostering a passion for history, crucial elements in shaping well-rounded individuals who are prepared to meet future challenges.

Sponsoring The John Stephen Tomko (NHS' 37) Scholarship Award, named in honor of an immigrant of the Greatest Generation, is a meaningful investment in education, heritage, and community spirit. It not only honors the past but also empowers the present and cultivates the leaders and historians of the future. I hope that the Nanticoke Historical Society continues supporting the scholarship award and that Society members and others provide monetary support for the effort, recognizing the crucial role they play in shaping the future through this scholarship. 🇺🇸

IN FUTURE PUBLICATIONS AND ON OUR WEBSITE WE WILL PROVIDE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR 2025 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.

THE WINNING ESSAY

By Mackenzie Hall —

In the words of Charlie Munger, “There is no better teacher than history in determining the future. There are answers worth billions of dollars in a \$30 history book.” This is a fact most notably exemplified by the quintessential foundations that the history and culture of any one region possess the power to develop. Much like the aspects of over-branching trees, roots are capable not only of maintaining traditions but also the very grounding and framework of a community. Such truths are especially evident in Nanticoke, Pennsylvania – an area in the Northeastern United States with a boundless, rich, and beautiful past laced with the hardworking passion becoming of a blossoming group of interconnected people.



GNA senior Mackenzie Hall steps up to receive the Nanticoke Historical Society Scholarship Award

First incorporated as a village by the Pennsylvania Legislature in 1874 and initially settled over 70 years prior. Nanticoke holds sites that date back to the earliest moments of the 19th century. Although, the region’s solidification can be traced even further through its namesake: Nentego, the Algonquian word for “tidewater people” that was given by Native Americans who had resided here for many years before.

In 1926, after a long withstanding period of an increase in population, Nanticoke was eligible to be qualified as a third-class city, further prompting the very first elections that resulted in Mayor Dan Sakowski. However, one of the most highly remembered characteristics of the city began to be developed in 1827 by a man named Jameson Harvey. It was in this year that he took an unknown shelter under a rocky ledge along the river near his home during a momentous rainstorm. Harmlessly, he turned rocks in the dirt, the very rocks that would later turn over a new leaf for the entire community – he had discovered anthracite coal – and would later spark continuous findings by farmers around the area. Soon, coal mining became a serious industry as colliers began being created along what is now Route 11.

Expansive mines would be explored, coal would be shipped down the Susquehanna River, and a new wave of immigration would begin. New arrivals from European nations would lead to Nanticoke’s peak number of inhabitants in the 1930s at 27,000. With the influx of people, locally owned, small businesses would arise from the many families seeking a fresh start and fruitful possibilities. This would lead to the eventual formation of businesses such as A&P Supermarket and S.H. Kress & Co. both of which hold memorable impacts today.

Even the aforementioned Jameson Harvey did not cease in the making of history, as he was involved in a case in the early 1850s where he served as the first defendant involving the Fugitive Slave Act due to his

refusal to hand over a runaway slave from Virginia: Jesse Whiten, who he had previously employed and protected.

Even after the collapse of the coal mining industry, which led to many aspects of community history being abandoned, such as mines, breakers, and Concrete City and the unanimous vote for Nanticoke to apply for Act 47 in efforts to combat its economically distressed status, that habit of history making never ended. Rather, it had already been instilled within its residents to be passed down from generation to generation, as well as to inspire any new Nanticoke inhabitants in the fostering of community pride.

Now in 2024, one could argue that the impact of Nanticoke's past is more prominent than ever, particularly in its very own Greater Nanticoke Area High School. It goes without saying that a beaming and overwhelming sense of gratification is unavoidable when passing through the school halls, as rows of groundbreakers adorn the walls in plaques and trophies. Whether admiring the accomplishments of the very first sports players for the Trojans, appreciating the resounding 1990 basketball State Championship win of GNA's Trojanettes, or even reminiscing on the achievements of recognizable names from a few years past, there are reminders everywhere. Many hopes for the continuation of never forgetting the stories of the city are held through each grade of this school district. Spirit Games, Trojan football, semi-formals, prom, and many more events would be nothing without the support of the community – parents, grandparents, siblings, family friends, teachers, faculty – the list goes on.

If anything can be declared as overtly evident thus far, it is that bonds between individuals, often regardless of personal situations, can be extremely influential over the lives of hundreds, even thousands of people, especially the upcoming generation – our communities' youth. However, these bonds are given more opportunity to flourish under the strengthening of community impact organizations spread throughout the region. One such collection of individuals, the Lions Club, are anticipating their 90th anniversary next year in 2025. Since its establishment in 1935, the Lions Club has repeatedly and passionately served the city of Nanticoke in a collection of memorable deeds marked down throughout history, including their seemingly simple, yet tremendously thoughtful and life-changing donation of weather gear for the GNA safety patrol in 1953 and the Lioness' giving of gifts to members of a nursing home in 1986. Individual influences such as these ultimately culminate in a united splendor that allows for the importance of finding joy in the smallest aspects of life.

Such actions undoubtedly prove that without interconnectivity, loyalty, faith, and above all, pride in one's community, seemingly all will be lost, and the ethereal memories of historical events would be forever locked away in a shroud of forgetful ignorance amidst an inability to value the mesmerizing nature of preservation. Now connecting back to GNA High School students, whether they are aspiring to continue their journey locally or to venture outside of city or even state lines, it is arguable that one's connection to where they come from, especially in such a historically bountiful region such as Nanticoke, cannot fade, and may always continue to serve as a reminder of the truest values of the natural world set for enabling success.



On the Pennsylvania Road with WNEP Anchorman Jon Meyer

By Judy Minsavage

The Nanticoke Historical Society had the privilege of meeting with WNEP news anchorman, Jon Meyer, and cameraman Paul Kielbasa to discuss the history of Concrete City for Meyer's "On the

Pennsylvania Road" segment which aired in May. Society Vice President, Chet Zaremba and I were pleased to be able to present the extensive records and photos in the society's archives to tell the story of the city considered innovative at the time.

Meyer became interested in the project after hearing stories over the years of the abandoned neighborhood and how the interest in the site continues to this day. Upon visiting the now graffiti-scarred city, Meyer and Kielbasa used a drone to take videos of the compound, giving viewers a bird's eye view of the buildings that once housed families employed by the Truesdale Mine.

A Little History

In 1910, The DL&W Coal Company razed deteriorating company homes close to the Truesdale Colliery. In 1911, It was announced the Company intended to build Concrete City. Forty families rented the units for \$8 a month, the new homes had no central heating system or electricity. Each unit had a coal bin,

cold running water, a four-foot-wide sidewalk in front, and in the back of the unit, a walkway leading to an outhouse. In its early days Concrete City was a beautiful place to live with cut lawns, flower and vegetable gardens, a swimming pool and play area for children.

By 1924, when the Glen Alden Coal Company took over the Truesdale Colliery, Concrete City closed. The company opted not to install sewer lines at an initial cost of \$20,000. According to the US Inflation Calculator that figure would total \$367,332.16



WNEP News Anchorman Jon Meyer and Cameraman Paul Kielbasa meet with Society Vice President, Chet Zaremba



Circa 1918, The women of Concrete City



1911 - Breaking ground for construction of Concrete City

today. In December of that year, Glen Alden attempted to tear down the buildings. The concrete was so strong, even the use of one hundred sticks of dynamite could not level the structures. The attempt was halted after it was discovered that vibrations from the blasts were being felt in the mine shafts below.

Concrete City stands as a significant historical landmark, reflecting the rich industrial heritage of Nanticoke. The dedicated efforts of the Nanticoke Conservation Club members and volunteers in preserving this site are commendable. Their tireless work in refuse and debris removal ensures that visitors can experience the historical

essence of the area.

To view Meyer's segment of On the Pennsylvania Road log on to our website www.nanticokehistoryonline.org and click the Photos/Video page

Meyer and Zaremba pour over the many newspaper articles written about Concrete City in the Society archives



Meyer reads newspaper article announcing plans to dynamite Concrete City



Society participates in Luzerne County Community College event

The Nanticoke Historical Society participated in the 2024 Luzerne County Community College Flea Market and Collectible Show in May. Those who visited were treated to several vendors offering crafts, antiques and collectibles. The event also included a basket raffle, and a classic car showcase presented by the Hi Lites Motor Club. For Society President, Julianna Zarzycki, Society Board Member, John Telencho and Society Member, Sally Gorgas, the event served as a wonderful platform to share stories and historical treasures, to meet new people and greet old friends. Those visiting the table enjoyed the challenge of answering a select Mystery Question to win a Society t-shirt.

The Nanticoke Historical Society is dedicated to making its resources available not only to local residents but also to a global audience. It plays a crucial role in keeping the city's heritage alive. This commitment ensures that the stories and achievements of past generations will continue to inspire and educate future generations. The anticipation for next year's event reflects the community's engagement and enthusiasm for its history, promising a vibrant and enriching experience for all who participate.



Society President, Julianna Zarzycki, and Society Board Member, John Telencho, set up for the LCCC Flea Market and Collectible Show



The day brought many who enjoyed going through Society memorabilia and engaging in conversation



These ladies won a Society T-shirt by answering our mystery question



It was a beautiful day as many attended the LCCC event

Making new friends

By Judy Minsavage

The Luzerne County Community College 2024 Flea Market and Collectible Show was a great event that attracted visitors from various locations highlighting the community's vibrant culture and passion for crafts and antiques. During the event, we met quite a number of people that traveled into the city for the event. One such traveler was Ms. Stephanie Panny, assignment editor, WFMZ-TV in Allentown, PA.



Stephanie Panny, assignment editor, WFMZ-TV in Allentown

A few years ago, Panny, a student at Luzerne County Community College, was planning to make a documentary about a battle fought between the Connecticut Yankees and William Penn's Pennamite militia famously known as the Battle of Rampart Rocks.

One of her first contacts was the Nanticoke Historical Society, where she spoke with archivist John Sherrick. Panny and Sherrick discussed the accounts of the battle to pinpoint the location of the encroaching Pennamite forces in what is now West Nanticoke. This partnership not only aids in educational endeavors, such as Panny's documentary project, but also enriches the historical significance of Nanticoke and the surrounding areas.

The following account details Panny's journey to bringing this important piece of local history to the forefront.

Nanticoke Historical Society puts Yankee-Pennamite battle into a new perspective

By Stephanie Panny

NANTICOKE—I stood on the rocky ledge and looked down over where the Susquehanna River met the end of Harvey's Creek. The water was still sparkling in blue-green and brown hues in the late afternoon October sun, yet I could imagine Pennsylvania enlisted men quietly docking boats on the banks in the snow on a cold Christmas Eve in 1775 and creeping up toward the big rock ledge in the distance—the one still looming over West Nanticoke—to push Connecticut farmers out of Pennsylvania.





Harvey's Creek drains into the Susquehanna River in West Nanticoke

The Pennsylvanians lost the battle, known as the Battle of Rampart Rocks, during the Yankee-Pennamite Wars. If these series of wars were not happening in the same time period as the Revolutionary War then Keystone State residents would have been calling themselves “Connecticuters.”

I was born, raised and cultivated most of my professional journalistic career in Pennsylvania, and I did not know about this. And, if it were not for Kevin Jones’ class at Luzerne County Community College, I would have never known that Pennsylvania—much less

the Nanticoke / Wilkes-Barre area—played such a major role in the Revolutionary War Era.

And if it were not for the help of the Nanticoke Historical Society, I would neither have gotten some much-needed context nor found the most likely location for the 10-minute video documentary project.

The longest and most time-consuming part of this project was the research. While the Yankee-Pennamite Wars were so important in grand historical retrospective, there was very little recorded about them. When looking for more information on the Battle of Rampart Rocks, the internet was a good resource up to a point. I put together contextual geographic clues and scoured old maps of the area and went out to a couple of locations to find what could be the site of the battle.

In the end, I realized I needed to enlist the help of historians to give more background and confirm

my suspicions. Luckily for me, Judy Minsavage and John Sherrick were quick to jump into the ring.



The Pennamites moved cautiously toward what is now Honey-Pot hoping to surprise the Yankees

Judy responded to my email not even a day or so after I sent it, and I found myself walking into the NHS home base at 495 E Main St. to meet with Mr. Sherrick and discuss my findings. John and I went over the topographical map of the area and compared it to the limited accounts that were available online and we both came to the same conclusion: the nondescript hill – capped by a rocky outcrop – that dominates the West Nanticoke skyline

was the probable site of a Revolutionary War-era battle that few know about.

Having my suspicions about the site confirmed by a member of NHS was my “green light” to go scout the location.



On Christmas Eve 1775 The Pennamite soldiers crawled across the rocky ledge not knowing the Yankees were ready for battle

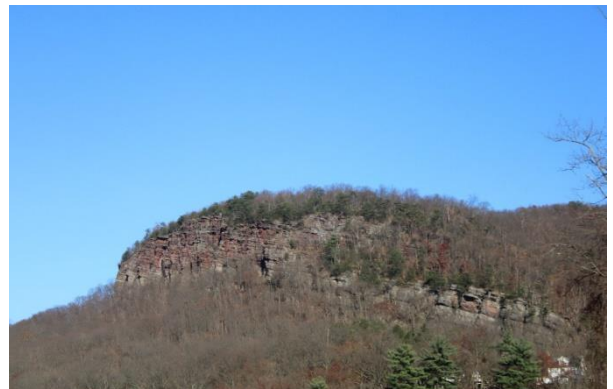
The afternoon I left the meeting with Mr. Sherrick, I took the Canon EOS 2000D camera I had received as a Christmas present in 2020 and drove my new Toyota past Mike's Service Center on Broadway Street across the West Nanticoke Bridge. I made a left at the light and traveled down the windy road toward Historical Canal Park. I drove behind the Sunoco gas station, parked the car on the curve, and ventured toward the river's edge.

Later on, I drove all the way up the hill and hiked on foot

somewhat deep into the woody hills of the mountain ledge. I wanted to get a feel for the struggles of the Pennamite soldiers, against whom the odds were stacked. They climbed up a steep hill through winter elements while a group of seven hundred Connecticut soldiers positioned at the top of the hill waited for the Pennamites to get in range.

I met with Mr. Sherrick once more before officially putting together my video project. We stared at the pictures I had taken on his monitor, and as we compared the terrain on the photos to accounts of the battle, a warm feeling crept up my spine as we grew confident in our assessment.

Finally, when I put together my 10-minute documentary project, I realized just how much having location video of the probable battle site helped enhance my project. As a journalist, I know how important providing visuals is when telling a story. To tell a story like this, visuals of the probable battle site help put the challenges and terrain into context. Without the help of Mr. Sherrick and the Nanticoke Historical Society, I know I wouldn't have that visual element to tie the whole project together and localize the battle for current residents and I wouldn't have received an A on the project.



The rock ledge in West Nanticoke stands as a reminder of our storied history

Shining a light on a piece of local history was an exciting journey for me. I hope to work with Nanticoke Historical Society in the future to assist in uncovering and preserving more local stories and history.

To View Panny's documentary - log on to www.nanticokehistoryonline.org and click on the Photos/Video page.

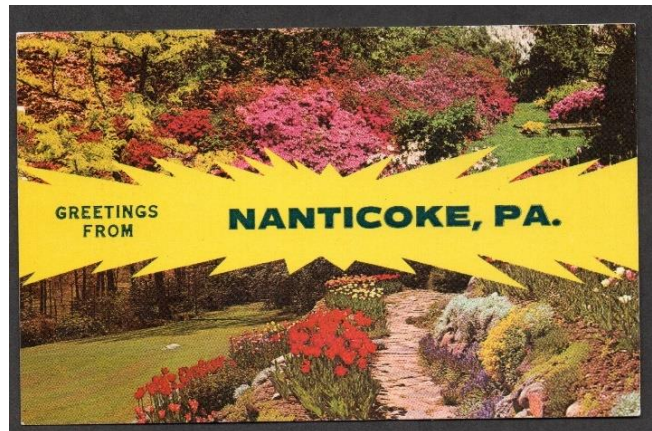
COLLECTING POST CARDS – THE FIRST OF A FOUR-PART SERIES

The Nanticoke Historical Society recently hosted a fascinating program by member Ron Breznay on the art of postcard collecting. His detailed PowerPoint presentation delved into the rich history and the various benefits of this engaging hobby. Recognizing the value of this knowledge, the society has requested Ron divide his talk into a four-part series for Legacy. This series aims to educate and inspire readers by exploring the many facets of postcard collecting, from its origins to its role in preserving historical narratives and fostering a sense of community among collectors. Each installment will cover different aspects, such as the evolution of design, the significance of postmarks, or the thrill of uncovering rare finds, making it a must-read for enthusiasts and novices alike.

Part 1 below delves into the steps to begin a collection, where to find desirable postcards. Learn more about these treasures from this four-part series.

Greetings From Nanticoke - Wish you were here – Part 1

BY RON BREZNAY



Collecting postcards is a great hobby and is easy to get into. Unlike many other collectibles, they are relatively inexpensive and not hard to find. Postcards are small and easy to store, making them a great option for those who have limited space.

The first step in collecting postcards is deciding what kind you want to collect. That gives your collection a focus and keeps you from becoming overwhelmed. You can collect postcards from the area where you live, or from places you have visited or would like to visit.

You can collect postcards showing a specific topic, such as cats. There are countless other categories: historic, humorous, advertising, political, holiday, novelty, and many others. You can always add more areas or topics later on. The formal name of postcard collecting is deltiology. You will find that collecting postcards is an enjoyable hobby because they allow you to travel around the country or around the world.


Vintage postcards offer a glimpse into the past, allowing us to see what life was like at different times. Foreign postcards are a great way to learn about different cultures and countries.

Where do you find postcards for your collection? You can get them from friends and family on their travels, or you can pick up extras when you travel. Be sure to let family and friends know that you collect them. Then they may send you some or pick up extras for you when they travel, or they may have a stash of postcards at home that they would be willing to share with you.

You can buy postcards at dedicated shows. There's an annual show in Albany, New York, called the Northeast Postal History & Ephemera Show, which also features postcards. You can also look for them in flea markets, rummage sales, and antique shops.

A good way to buy postcards is online, such as from eBay or HipPostcard. There are also dealers on the internet.

And now for a little history. The oldest known picture postcard was mailed on July 14, 1840, to the Fulham district in London, as shown in Figure 2. It was addressed to the writer and practical joker Theodore Hook, who was probably also its sender and artist. It is franked with the then-brand-new Penny Black, (upper right hand corner) issued by Great Britain in 1840. It is the first stamp in the world. The hand-painted design, shown in Figure 3, has an image of post office clerks sitting around a giant ink well.

For United States postcards, there are several eras generally accepted by collectors. They are the Pioneer Era, Private Mailing Card Era, The Golden Age of Postcards, Real Photo Postcards, Undivided Back Era (a/k/a Post Card Era), Divided Back Era, White Border Era, Linen Era, and Photochrom Era. These eras will be discussed starting with Part 2. 

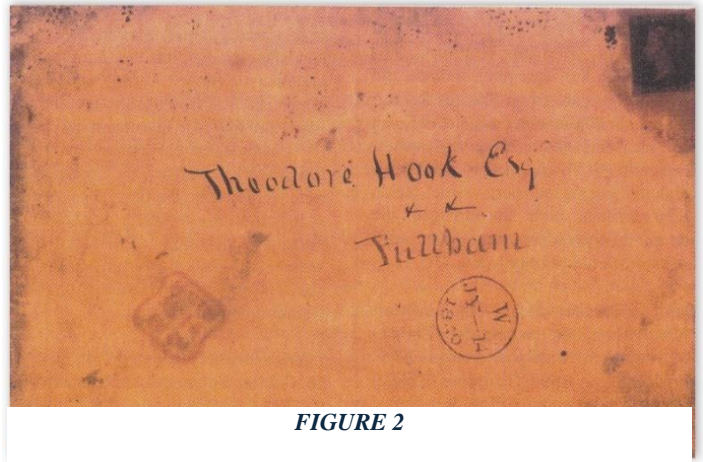


FIGURE 2

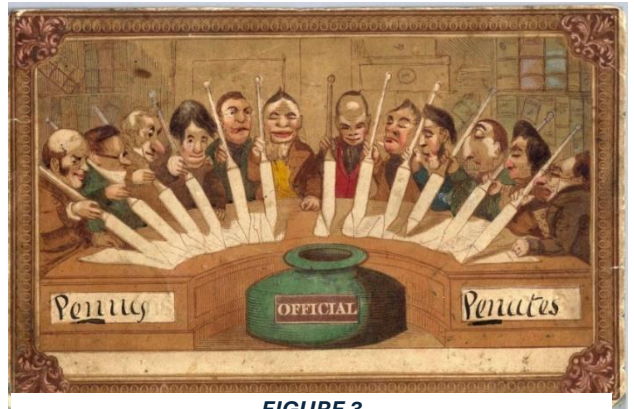


FIGURE 3

BECOME A MEMBER

We will be celebrating our 30th year in 2025. This is a great time to become a member of The Nanticoke Historical Society. By joining us, you will be part of a passionate community dedicated to making available a wide variety of genealogical and historical information pertaining to the city. We have provided pieces of information, connecting families to their past in the U.S. and globally. Our digital and physical library hold countless records, photographs, histories of families, real estate, churches, schools and businesses and public safety agencies, the subjects are endless. Our offices are open daily from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Your support is crucial in helping us achieve our goals and to keep making a meaningful impact in our community. We believe that with your involvement, we can accomplish even more.

To join, please call us at 570-258-1367 or visit our website www.nanticokehistoryonline.org.

LCCC Library Displays Historical Society Memorabilia

The Nanticoke Historical Society's exhibition at the Luzerne County Community College Library was a remarkable event that highlighted the rich commercial history of Nanticoke from the 1800s to the mid-1900s. The selection process for the memorabilia was meticulous, ensuring that the display represented the diverse and dynamic nature of the city's past economic landscape. The exhibition, which ran from May through August, highlighted not only the variety of businesses that flourished in Nanticoke, such as stores, factories, banks, and service companies, but also paid tribute to the dedicated individuals who founded and nurtured these enterprises. The Fairchild



From left, John Telencho, Society board member; Lori Shemanski, LCCC Reference librarian; Judy Minsavage, Legacy editor; Christine Ferrato, LCCC 1st year experience coordinator and assoc. professor of reading

Ice Company's inclusion sparked academic interest, demonstrating the impact these historical artifacts have on current generations.

The Society was extremely honored to have been asked to participate.

We thank First Year Experience Coordinator and Associate Professor of Reading, Christine Ferrato, and LCCC Reference Librarian, Lori Shemanski for making the exhibit



possible. We are looking forward to presenting more displays at the library allowing more opportunities for the students and community to engage in and appreciate their local history. 📖



WONDERING WHAT TO DO WITH OLD PHOTOS AND MEMORABILIA?

Our loved ones have a history. Their life stories are deeply rooted in their community as residents, veterans, business owners, teachers, members of organizations and so much more. The Nanticoke Historical Society realizes and respects how important each person's story is to their relatives and friends as well as the community in which they lived. That is why the Society respectfully asks those who have lost a loved one to consider the historical society when taking stock of memorabilia and photos.

The Society may already have pieces of a family's history in its vast database to which pictures of an old homestead, business, rare family photos or writings can be added completing a genealogical picture in tribute to those who have passed.

We sometimes find ourselves with memorabilia or photos passed down through generations. Some of these photos may contain scenes of old Nanticoke, a street, or building that has been long since razed or changed. Society archivists will scan and, if requested, return items to families. We do reserve the right to deny items that we cannot use, or store, but at the very least, we may be able to take some of the burden off of family members who find themselves undecided as to what to do with countless old photos and/or memorabilia that may contain valuable pieces of the city's history.

For more information or to donate items Contact the Historical Society at 570-258-1367 or email: NHS63@comcast.net.

WE CAN HELP

DO YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR FAMILY, CLUBS, ASSOCIATIONS, BUSINESSES, AND MORE? WE ARE YOUR GO TO PLACE TO RESEARCH NANTICOKE'S PAST.

OUR OFFICE HOURS ARE MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY 9 A.M. TO 2 P.M.

OR CALL US AT 570-258-1367

To obtain a research request form go to www.nanticokehistoryonline.org and find our quick links at the top of our home page.

PLEASE CONSIDER A DONATION TO OUR SOCIETY

At the Nanticoke Historical Society, we believe that our past is the foundation upon which we build our future. Every artifact, story, and piece of history we preserve tells the tale of who we are and where we come from. But maintaining these treasures requires more than just passion; it needs your support.

By donating to our cause, you help us protect and celebrate the rich tapestry of our community's heritage. People from across the globe have taken advantage of our services. We stand ready to accommodate those who want to connect with their past. Your tax-deductible contribution will fund our various restoration projects, the historic Samantha Mill House, exhibitions focusing on the history of Nanticoke. Together, we can ensure that the stories of our past continue to inspire and educate.

Join us in our mission to preserve the legacy of our ancestors. Your generosity today will make history tomorrow.

FOCUS ON

Gary Gronkowski Receives 2024 Person of the Year Award

The Nanticoke Historical Society was recently invited along with other presenters to participate in a program sponsored by Luzerne County Community College Students and faculty focusing on Concrete City. The Nanticoke Conservation Club was represented by its president Gary Gronkowski, who outlined the importance of keeping our city, roadways, parks, waterways and places of historic significance such as Concrete City free of garbage and litter. Gronkowski is passionate about the subject and he and dedicated club members and volunteers target those areas making them unobstructed and available to those living in and visiting the area.



*Gary Gronkowski - Pennsylvania Outdoor News Magazine 2024
Person of the Year*

For his 32 years of dedication to the club and for serving as president since 2004, Gronkowski was awarded Pennsylvania Outdoor News Magazine's, 2024 Person of the Year Award. His efforts were highlighted in the publication's June 21 issue.

According to the article Gronkowski joined the club in 1992 stating, "I like the natural beauty in this area, and I want to keep it clean, so the club seemed like a good fit." The club has 130 regular members and thirty-seven honorary members. They hold ice fishing tournaments, bass tournaments, conduct fish habitat work on local lakes, youth trout fishing day, fishing line recycling and educational events to focus on the importance of conservation. The club participates in PennDOT's Adopt-A-Highway program removing trash from Route 29 and along Harvy's Creek. The article also states the club has partnered with the Pennsylvania Game Commission and Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation to clean State Game Land near Glen Lyon. The effort netted 630 tons of garbage. "Partnerships with like-minded organizations are important," Gronkowski stated.

To explore the club's cleanup projects, the events and fundraisers the club sponsors, volunteer or donate, log on to www.nanticokeconversationclub.com and follow them on Facebook.

The Nanticoke Historical Society congratulates Gronkowski on his award and leadership and also thanks this truly dedicated group of people who keep our city and surrounding areas clean. 🇺🇸



In Honor of Our Military



WORLD WAR I Cont.

Rowland Thomas

William Thomas – Served in France

William A Thomas

William G. Thomas

Edward Thompson

Geanette Thompson – Army Nurse Corps – France

Leonard Thompson

Robert Thompson – Naval Reserve

Benjamin Thorce – U.S. Navy

John Tilletski

John Tilletson

George Tirpak

Anthony Tkaczuk

William Tomkins

Michael Torlinski – U.S. Navy Midshipman

John Trachimowicz

Sidney Traher – Wounded in Action -

Davis Trescott – Wounded in France

John Trojanowski

Peter Trombalzewski

William Troskoskie – 109 Field Artillery - Received the Distinguished Service Cross

Joseph Tyburski – Died in service

Andrew Tucker

John Turley – Battery C 3rd Field Artillery

Lyman Turley – Battery C 3rd Field Artillery

George Turner – U.S. Army Captain – command 303rd Motor Supply Train

William Turner – U.S. Army Pvt.

Ralph Tye - KIA

Alex Urban

Frank Urchin

James Uren - PA Reserves

Samuel Uren – PA Reserves

William Uren – PA Reserves

John Ushinski – Wounded in action

Harold Vandermark – Co. G PA Reserves

Albert Van Horn – Co. G PA Reserves

Fred Varker

Ettor Venarucci – Wounded in France

Wladislaw Vengozen – Died in Service

Melvin Vivian – U.S. Army - Sgt – Aero Construction Squadron

Raymond Vivian

Anna Virtue – Medical Corps – served in France Surgery Base Hospital Unit 36

Joseph Viscvat – Battery C 3rd Field Artillery

Stanley Vitchorek – Pvt. - U.S. Army

Joseph Voytush – Battery C 3rd Field Artillery

Edward Vuranski – Battery C 3rd Field Artillery

NOTE:

The names are as listed in our Historical Society Records. If there are misspellings, we apologize. Please contact our office to correct any discrepancy. Thank you....

NANTICOKE'S **GROCERY** **STORES**

A trip back in time

By Judy Minsavage

The nostalgic era of neighborhood grocery stores in Nanticoke paints a vivid picture of community and simplicity. These stores were more than just places to

buy food; they were social gathering spots where news was exchanged and friendships were formed. The image of children dashing in for a sweet treat and adults strolling in for the day's supplies evokes a sense of warmth and togetherness that modern supermarkets often lack. The small, family-run businesses and larger self-serve stores supported local economies and provided a personal touch. These stores were integral to the fabric of daily life, leaving a legacy of community spirit that continues to inspire. In May, we began a look at the history of the stores that were listed as favorites in a recent Facebook post. Perhaps it will stir a memory of bygone days.

ACME MARKET

The Acme Store was founded in Philadelphia by Samuel Robinson and Robert Crawford in 1891. The men merged Acme with other area stores under the American Stores brand.

In the early 20th century, the American Stores Company was a prominent figure in the retail landscape of the United States. With its expansion into the Bittenbender Building on Nanticoke's Main Street in February 1922, the company marked a significant milestone in its growth. The strategic location next to the Hub Clothing Store was a testament to the company's ambition to increase its presence and cater to the needs of the local community.

With 1,200 stores nationwide, the American Stores Company expanded its product range, adding specialty items like cheeses, coffees, and teas. This diversification of products played a crucial role in the company's success throughout the 1920s and 1930s. In December 1931, coal production slowed due to availability of other heating fuels. Numerous men found themselves out of work or working for very low wages.

Good Cheer Certificates, an American store promotion, enabled customers to spend a few extra dollars to lend a helping hand to those families in need of food for the holidays.

In the early 1940s Zigmund Goldeski and Nicholas Gula opened American Stores Co. in the Hanover Section of Nanticoke. Another American Store, owned by Max Cybulski, opened at 48 East Ridge Street. By 1954, the Ridge Street store was managed by Betty Janora and Carl O'Borski





By the late 1940s, existing stores were modernized and renamed Acme Markets. This 1949 photo shows the Acme Market at 60 E. Main Street.

In 1959, the Acme on Market and E. Main moved to the Dundee shopping Center. There was great concern as businesses were beginning to move out of the city or close.



In 1962 the Acme moved from the E Ridge Street location of 443 W. Main Street. Residents were thrilled to see the business move back into the city limits. Small grocers were not concerned the consensus being that people will still want to walk to the store for their daily needs.

The last functioning Nanticoke Acme Market went out of business in the 1990s. The building was taken over by Delbalso Ford.

There are still 50 Acme locations in Pennsylvania.

BOROWSKI MARKET – Established 1923 – 210 West Church Street - Roman Borowski, proprietor. From 1939 to 1941 Florence Borowski, proprietor. 1957 to 1960 Chester Borowski, proprietor and in 1962 Florentyna Barowski, proprietor.



GEROCH GROCERY - 1941 – 235 West Main Street – Mrs. Gertrude Geroch, proprietor. In the sixties the Geroch family sold their interest in the location. but in the 1970's the family reopened the store operated by Henry, Arlene and Karen Geroch and It was one of the few remaining family stores in operation in 2009. 📷



More Stories in our next issue

ON SALLY'S CORNER

by Sally Gorgas



St. Mary of Czestochowa Polish Catholic Church

I am writing this with a heavy heart. St. Mary's Polish Catholic Church, rectory and school are for sale. I know the church and the rectory have been vacant for a few years. Head Start occupied the school but has recently moved out.



At this time in history, churches of many faiths in Nanticoke have closed and merged their parishes. St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic and St. Joseph's Slovak Churches were torn down. St. Stanislaus Polish Catholic Church is now a

wonderful Cultural Center.

I was born in 1950 and received all my sacraments at St. Mary's Church. I attended school from kindergarten to eighth grade. Many memories are with me at this time in my life. I hope that the church remains standing, and the new owners will love it as I do.

From my home I see the church steeple. The bells of St. Mary's were a welcome sound every day. Even the 6:00 a.m. bells!

As a student at St. Mary's School, I spent many hours in the church. Sunday masses were 6:30 a.m., 8:15 a.m., 9:45 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. The children were required to attend the 9:45 mass. There were masses on first Fridays, holy days and special events. I remember sitting in church after school, praying and reflecting. The doors were always unlocked.



Me with my parents

My first communion was a solemn event. No food after midnight! When I received confirmation, I thought I could feel the Holy Spirit enter my being. We had processions for different occasions, from the school to the church.

When I graduated eighth grade in 1964, the nuns taught us this song:

There's no school anywhere like St Mary's
Farewell to you, we must say.
You'll always be a fond place in memory,
We bid you adieu on this day.
Sure will miss the old school.
Every window, every wall.
Every time we pass you by,
We'll want to shout through the halls
There's no school anywhere like St. Mary's
Farewell to you, we must say.



It was a sad event watching the church bells being removed in August. The doors were open, so I walked into the church. Workers busily moved about, and a woman carefully removed the stations of the cross from the walls. When I approached them, they didn't have much information about the sale.

I miss hearing the Bells of St. Mary's. I hope that whoever has them enjoys the holy sounds.. 📺

Mystery Question

LAST ISSUE'S QUESTION:

In 1938, The Old Civic Legion Club donated \$42.69 to the Nanticoke Kiwanis Club to construct something on Harvey's Creek. What was it?

ANSWER: The Old Civic Legion Club, donated the funds to be used for the construction of a swimming pool at Harvey's Creek. The site leased from Spring Brook Water Service Company would have picnic grounds and bath houses. In July of 1938 the Kiwanis Club dedicated the pool located one mile beyond the highway bridge alongside Lake Silkworth Highway. The pool was described as rigidly constructed to accommodate hundreds of children. It was reported that a lifeguard and "physical instructor" were on duty and a concession stand was planned. In 1939 a rumor floated that the pool was condemned by health authorities, but the claims were unsubstantiated. The last mention in our records of the pool is a news article released in 1952 reporting nine rattlesnakes were found near the pool. What happened to the site is a mystery. 📺



The "Deep Hole" at Harvey's Creek, possible site of the swimming pool and picnic grounds.

THIS ISSUE'S MYSTERY QUESTION

In July of 1966 Mrs. Dena Simone, president of St. Francis School Guild announced its summer church festival. The festival attractions included games and music. The area band booked to provide “dancing for the young people” went on to achieve fame. Who were they?

St. Francis School Guild To Hold Annual Festival



School Guild of St. Francis Church will hold its annual summer festival Saturday night on the church grounds. Dancing will be enjoyed from 7 to 10 p. m. Refreshments will be served and games will be provided. Pictured are chairmen, first row, left to right, Mrs. Rose McNealis; third row, Mrs. Francis O'Boyle, Mrs. Eleanor Verazin, Mrs. Jean Gronin, and Mrs. Chesterline Bohan. Absent were Mrs. Celia Bohan, Mrs. Minnie Wilde, Mrs. Gera Wasiakowski, and Rev. Robert Caparelli, moderator of The School Guild.

—Pawlowaki

We hope you enjoyed this issue of the Nanticoke Historical Society's publication of Nanticoke Legacy

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