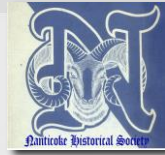


NANTICOKE LEGACY

NANTICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Samantha Mill House, 495 E. Main Street, Nanticoke, PA – 570-258-1367



NEWS:

Society debuts new book entitled “UNDER THE WITNESS TREE”

- **BOOK SIGNING EVENT TO BE HELD
SAT. DECEMBER 10, FROM 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.**
- **Society Membership Coordinator named**
- **New Bookcases help to enhance storage of research materials.**
- **Vietnam Veteran pens new book**

FEATURES:

**RADIO DAYS – WHWL and WNAK years of listening
pleasure for Nanticoke residents.**

MYSTERY QUESTION

UNCOVERING A GEM

NANTICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY 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 To collect artifacts, memorabilia and historical documents and fact Nanticoke, Pennsylvania and to store such items in a central location or specific areawhere these articles may be preserved, appreciated and used by the citizens of Nanticoke to enhance their heritage.

MEETING SCHEDULE

**MEETINGS WILL RESUME IN
MARCH 2023 AT THE
SAMANTHA MILL HOUSE
LOCATED NEXT TO THE MILL
MEMORIAL LIBRARY.
ENTER THE PARKING LOT OFF
KOSCIUSZKO STREET.
TO GET DIRECTIONS CALL THE
SOCIETY OFFICE AT 570-258-
1367.**

**We Encourage All to
Attend**

NANTICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Samantha Mill House
(Next to the Mill Memorial Library)
Off Kosciuszko Street
495 East Main Street Nanticoke, PA 18634
570-258-1367

Our Web Site
www.nanticokehistoryonline.org

Email
Office email - history@nanticokehistoryonline.org
Newsletter email - nanticokehistory@aol.com

OFFICERS

President: Julianna Zarzycki
Vice-President/Treasurer: Chester Zaremba

NEWSLETTER EDITOR, NEWS AND STORIES
Judith L. Minsavage

MEMBERSHIP FEES Individual \$20

Family \$30

Lifetime \$100.00 Individual

Please inform us of any changes in email or home mailing address

RESEARCH

Non-member – research fee \$25 for the first hour – By Appointment.
See our website for more information.

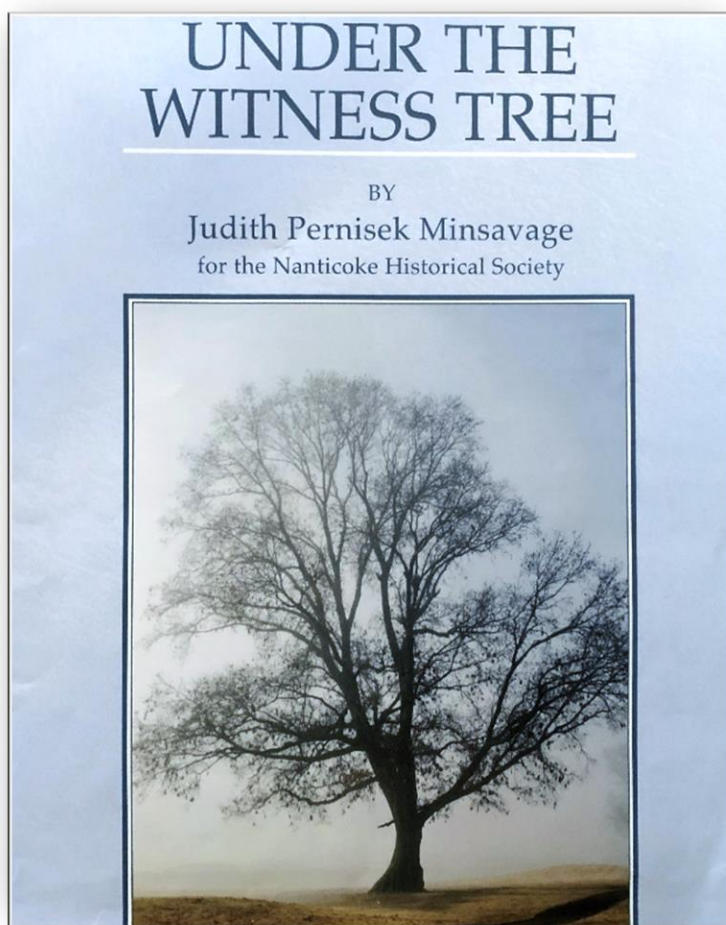
SOCIETY NEWS:

Introducing our new publication “UNDER THE WITNESS TREE”

Chet Zaremba, Vice President Nanticoke Historical Society

It was the Nanticoke Historical Society newsletter story written by editor Judy Minsavage announcing the cutting down of one of the city's oldest maple trees, that brought to mind the idea of a book. One that would include interesting stories that took place over the 250 years the tree was rooted in its place of honor on East Main Street. I asked her to compile all of the stories she had written since she had begun to write the Nanticoke Legacy newsletter in 2013. Thus we are proud to announce the publication of “Under the Witness Tree” The City of Nanticoke in Stories and Photos. Some chronicles focus on the early settlement of Nanticoke and then move into the mid-century. Personal stories that take you to a time and place focusing on the hardships and resilience of those who lived in, built and contributed to the history of the city.

As Judy set about reworking, updating and adding to the stories, she decided one final chapter, Store Stories, needed to be included with pages of photos of some of the smaller retail stores and the many larger businesses that lined the streets of Nanticoke from the 40s to the 70s. A photo array of East Main Street from 1906 to the 1970s gives a final look at how Nanticoke has changed over the years. After months of formatting pages, the book was sent off to Morris Publication for printing and is now available to the public. Proceeds from the sale of the book will benefit the Nanticoke Historical Society.



Book Signing Event – Saturday, December 10, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Come and enjoy a display of memorabilia representative of the stories reflected in “Under the Witness Tree” 📖

Book Signing and Memorabilia Event Planned for Saturday, December 10, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.


The Nanticoke Historical Society will hold a book signing event for the new publication of “Under the Witness Tree” authored by Judith Pernisek Minsavage, on Saturday, December 10 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The book, which is selling for \$25 is for the enjoyment of those who remember Nanticoke in its heyday or would like to learn more about the people places and things that make Nanticoke unique. All proceeds will benefit the Nanticoke Historical Society. It will also make a great Christmas gift for family and friends. We are proud to offer this new publication to the public. Please come and pick up your signed copy of “Under the Witness Tree” and meet our officers and author. See you There!

From the Author:

Many books have been written about the communities that line the Wyoming Valley from Nanticoke to Scranton. Each bring a profound knowledge of the area that many call home. The idea for this book came with the cutting down of Nanticoke's Witness Tree on East Main Street. The maple tree grew from a seedling, and over approximately 250 years, it welcomed Native Americans, settlers, patriots, and immigrants. It witnessed the rise and fall of King Coal and stood fast as the world woke up to innovations in communications, transportation and commerce. These stories were born of the people, places and things that make Nanticoke unique.

My intention in this book is to bring a personal aspect to the formation of Nanticoke as a community through stories of individuals, places, and times not generally known or readily told. We find people who have led interesting, creative, sometimes dangerous lives and through hardship, heartbreak or achievement have left their mark. Some stories keep us on the edge of our seats, some end in mystery, most bring fond memories of days gone by. We find places dear to our hearts that have long been gone or are soon to be.

What were the thoughts and dreams of those who lived decades before? We find they are the same as today. A hope that somehow, even in the smallest way, we've contributed positively to our community and fellow man. This book is for the men and women who made Nanticoke their home, for the people who stood fast in their heritage, worked hard and left a legacy giving us an appreciation of those who came before.

A fraction of Nanticoke's stories are in this book. With the hundreds of thousands of people that have passed under the Witness Tree over decades, there are so many more left to tell. 



JUDY PERNISEK MINSAVAGE, AUTHOR OF
UNDER THE WITNESS TREE, THE CITY OF
NANTICOKE IN STORIES AND PHOTOS

Membership Coordinator Named

Julianna Zarzycki, president of the Nanticoke Historical Society is pleased to announce that Charlotte Dudkowski has been named the Society's membership coordinator. To become a member or renew a membership Charlotte can be reached at the society offices 570-258-1367.

FROM LEFT CHARLOTTE DUDKOWSKI, MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR AND JULIANNA ZARZYCKI, PRESIDENT, NANTICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.



New Bookcases help to enhance storage of Society research materials.



Reference Material

New bookcases and a conference table were recently installed at the Society's offices. Chet Zaremba, vice president, of the society expressed that the more uniform shelving height of the new bookcases allows for filing of all like reference material in one location. New binders and labels replaced older versions giving



members and guests a more pleasing look at some of the wonderful reference material in our archives.


Digital Records Always at the Ready

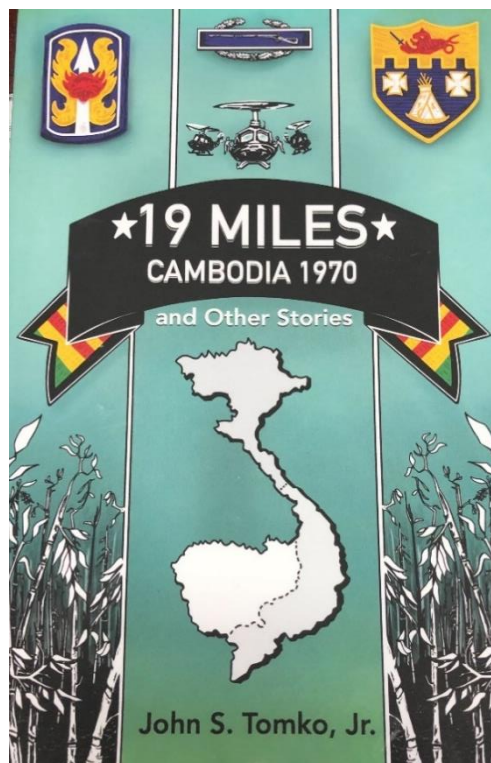
As always, John Sherrick, Our Information Officer is at the helm manning the computer enabling those searching for information on the history of family members or locations in the city. John and Chet have

assisted in genealogy search requests not only from Nanticoke but across the United States and other countries as well. We at the Nanticoke Historical Society are proud of our vibrant staff and supporters.

Vietnam Veteran Pens New Book

A new book written by Vietnam War Army Veteran and Nanticoke Historical Society member, John S. Tomko Jr., is now available at the society offices at 495 East Main Street, next to the Mill Memorial Library. Tomko served as an infantry Platoon Leader in 1970 with Company D 5th Battalion 12th Infantry, 199th Infantry Brigade (Light) and as a Division staff officer with the 23rd Infantry Division (Americal) from September to November 1970 .

Tomko's book, listed as Biography & Autobiography/ Personal Memoir, details the American withdrawal from South Vietnam and increasing concern over North Vietnamese sanctuaries inside Cambodia. The story follows the Sanctuary Offensive which took place between May 1 and June 30, 1970, with efforts to capture the covert COSVN (Central office of South Vietnam). Tomko served 29 years in the Active Army, the U.S. Army Reserve and Army National Guard, and retired as a Lieutenant Colonel. His military awards include the Combat Infantry Badge. Tomko resides in Alexandria, VA. Proceeds from the sale of the book benefit the Nanticoke Historical Society. 



THE NANTICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY THANKS THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR GENEROUS DONATIONS:

Julie Ann Ross
John S. Tomko, Jr.

**A generous donation was made to the Nanticoke Historical Society:
BY LIFETIME MEMBER, ANDY SHERBINE**



IN MEMORY OF CHESTER COBOSKO



In Honor of Our Military



The Nanticoke Historical Society is honored to hold a vast amount of military information in its archives. It is our pledge to focus on those hometown heroes who sacrificed so much for our country's freedom. A new partial list of the names of local veterans of all wars will be listed in our "In Honor of Our Military" Section of each Newsletter. The lists are long, so if a loved one's name has not appeared, please follow upcoming issues. Information obtained from the Nanticoke Historical Society archives.

WORLD WAR I

Charles Kistler,

Henry Kitlowski

Alfred Kivler – Co. G Local Infantry PA Reserve

David Kivler – U.S. Navy

Stanislaus Kizak – American Contingent of the Polish Army

Charles Kline – Wounded in France

Albert Klish – U.S. Army

Stanley Kloch

John Kmietowicz – KIA

Charles Knapp – U.S. Army

Thomas Kniff – Lt. and Acting Captain, Battery C, 109th Field Artillery

Joseph Konapka - Sgt. U.S. Marine Corps

John Kormorowski - Battery C 3rd Field Artillery

Edward Koronkiewicz – Coast Artillery

Frank Koronkiewicz – Enlisted as a pharmacist

Anthony Koscinski

Walter Koshinski

Alex Kosin – U.S. Army KIA

Frank Kosker – U.S. Army KIA

John Kosker – U.S. Army Medical Corps

Charles Koslofski – U.S. Army Hospital Corps

Alex Koslowski

Peter Kowaleski

Peter Kozloski

George Kraft

Dr. F.J. Krajewski

Leon Krauser

John Krystofik

Joseph Kryzwicki – U.S. Army

William Krzyanski

George Kuhlman- 1st Lt. in Dental Reserve Corps

Frank Kuras

Boleslaw Kuronicki or Kurowicki – American Contingent of the Polish Army

Peter Kush

Julius Labenski – Wounded in Action

Alvin Lape – Awarded Distinguished Service Cross

Antonio Lascuzk – Wounded in Action

Arnold Lark - Served in France

John Lastowski

Charles Latonis

John Latsko

Zigmund Layman

Joseph Lebloda

NOTE: These 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....



In Honor of Our Military



WORLD WAR II

Andrew Rakofski

Edward Rasmus – U.S. Army 273rd Infantry

John Rasmus

John Rasmus Jr.

Anthony Raymond

Joseph Raymond

Hoyt Readler

Gordon Reese – POW

Durland Rinehamer

William Rinehamer – MIA

Vernon Rinker

Elwyn Roberts - KIA Europe

Edmund Lawrence Robey

William Robinson –MIA Europe

Clement Rohon

Joseph Rokicki

Joseph Rokosz

Edwin Roman – U.S. Army

Walter Romanofski – POW

Chester Romanowski – U.S. Army

Leonard Rominski - POW

Ed Ronczka

Frank Ronczka

John Roskofski

Michael Rudawski – Cpl. Co C 335th Engineers Rgt.

Chester Ruminski – KIA France

James Rushton

John Rutkowski – MIA

Anthony Rulka

Isidore Rynkiewicz – POW

Peter Rynkiewicz – Pearl Harbor

Michael Sabol – KIA - France

Joseph Sadowski – Signal Corps France

Walter Sadowski – Army Air Corps, England

Peter Sarnowski

Wesley Saville – Pacific Theater

Joseph Scortichini

Paul Sechak – POW

Joseph Sekulski. – KIA- Pacific Theater

William Stemmer – KIA – Pacific Theater

John Sharnick

John Shedlock – KIA – Battle of the Bulge

Albert Shelmerdine – KIA – Okinawa

Albert Shiposki – Shot down - Pacific

SEE WHAT'S IN OUR ARCHIVES

FOR A COMPLETE LISTING OF ALL THE RECORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS THAT ARE IN THE NANTICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARCHIVES, GO TO OUR WEBSITE

www.nanticokehistoryonline.org

you will find a full listing on our Research Page.

RADIO DAYS IN NANTICOKE

WHWL AND WNAK "730 ON YOUR DIAL"

It started in 1946 when Henry W. Lark, decided to start a radio station in the city of Nanticoke. He leased the third floor of The Levi Building at 38-40 East Main Street and set up his radio broadcasting studio under the auspices of Radio Anthracite, Inc. of Shamokin. Lark set up his station with 1000 watts of power using his initials for the call letters WHWL. The station's advertising rate card boasted coverage to more



WHWL TRANSMITTING STATION IN PLYMOUTH TWP.



UNIDENTIFIED ATTENDEES OF THE GRAND OPENING OF WHWL IN 1947

broadcasts, and under any circumstances would whiskey advertising would be accepted. With all that in place the grand opening for WHWL took place 1947.

In 1953, Lark battled the Wilkes-Barre Chapter of the National Association of Broadcasting Employees and Technicians, as the station went dark during a Nanticoke-Meyers football broadcast. The protest by union employees highlighted the station's reluctance to sign a contract.

On the agenda along with the easy listening music of the day, was world, local and regional news, and of course religious

than 1,000,000 persons at the lowest per capita rate. With station personnel listed as Sam Leavitt, general manager and Tom Bigler, program director; Lark set his advertising stipulations which included no foreign language



PROMOTIONAL COOKBOOK OFFERED BY WHWL

programming and political announcements. Children's programming and variety shows performed by the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and various armed forces organizations continued to delight the listening audience. "Laramie" Lee Moran hosted "Jamboree" one of the most popular daily shows. Moran worked at various radio stations in Bloomsburg and Shamokin before coming to WHWL. He was the first disc jockey in Northeastern Pennsylvania to spin the country favorites of the day. Moran passed away in 2010.

In 1958, when Wyoming Radio Inc, purchased WHWL it renamed the station WNAK AM 730 on the dial. In 1950, The station was then located on the 2nd floor of the former Levi Building which had then become the Woolworth Building.

Again the station offered popular and country music, intermingled with religious programming. In 1960 the station again encountered a dispute with the union over a show hosted by William "Little Bill" Phillips. The union contended that Phillips was not a union member, but the station insisted it purchased his show making Phillips an employee of the station.



COUNTRY MUSIC DUO MICKY AND KITTY BACHO

During the 60s, singers and musicians were invited to play live in the studio. It was an opportunity for local performers to showcase their talent.

One such country music duo, Mike and Sophia Bacho, known to locals as Mickey and Kitty, performed country music favorites on the Saturday morning show hosted by Station General Manager, Frank Merman. The couple's son, Jim Bacho, remembers tagging along with his parents and sister Jeannie, to the station. During the show's news break, his parents would alternately read from a ticker tape machine located in another room broadcasting the news and weather.. Some locals also remember as teens visiting the station to watch as the disc jockey hosted their respective shows.

UNIDENTIFIED MUSICIANS PERFORMING LIVE AT WNAK



WNAK STATION DIRECTORS LEFT TO RIGHT MILTON LAUGHLIN, STATION MANAGER; BILL JONES, ANNOUNCER; E.D. McWILLIAMS, PRESIDENT; ATTY. MARTIN PHILLIPS, VICE PRESIDENT AND TREASURER



WNAK DJ HOSTING A MORNING SHOW

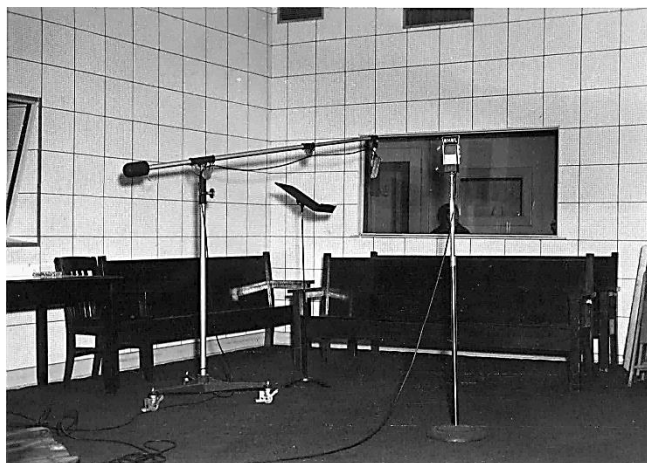




UNDATED PHOTO SHOW WNAK STUDIO SIGNS PROMINENTLY DISPLAYED IN THE WOOLWORTH BUILDING



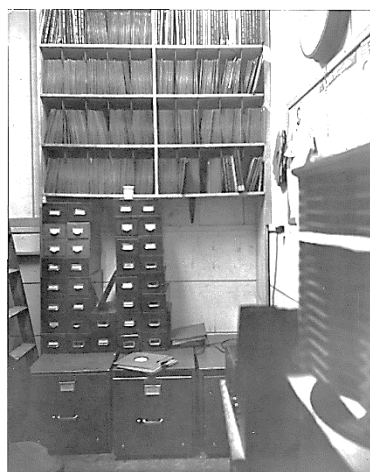
THE WNAK AMPHICAR 770 CIRCA 1960S



SOUNDPROOF STUDIO PROVIDED FOR LIVE PERFORMANCES



PRIOR TO RENOVATION OF THE WOOLWORTH BUILDING
TENSION WIRES KEPT WALLS FROM SEPARATING



SOME OF THE MANY RECORDS IN THE WNAK
ARCHIVE

By 1966, the station was sold to Bob Neilson and Viola Walsh. Joining Neilson were Charmaine Grove as station manager and Bob “Bobby” Baird of the big band fame, as sales manager. The operation moved to 84 South Prospect Street, continuing to offer the music of Nat King Cole, Patsy Cline, the Carpenters and other popular artists of the day. In 1985, the station received the Humanitarian of the Year Award from the Greater Nanticoke Area Chamber of Commerce. Neilson kept the stations rules of no alcohol or cigarette commercials. His weekly editorial comments were sought by other stations for their own programming schedules and his steady place at the helm sent the station ratings into the top five by the consumer research company Arbitron.



BOB NEILSON AND VIOLA WALSH OF WNAK RADIO

By 1994 ,WNAK Radio 730 AM-Stereo was offering the following shows, Bob Neilson Morning Express, 6:30 a.m., Hymn Time 6-12:30 p.m., Classic Interlude 12 p.m., Dream Along with Charmaine 1-2 p.m., Saturday Music of the Big Bands, 9 a.m. and Sunday commercial free music.

By 2000, WNAK was celebrating its 35th year proud of the fact that its format had remained consistent and popular with its customers and that it was one of the few independent stations left in the area. By 2001, a state-of-the-art transmitter and new control room equipment added a better listening experience. Still transmitting 1000 watts, compared to 5,000 of competitors WARM and WILK AM

stations, WNAK found its fan base loyal even when in the early evening hours the station was required to reduce power due to conflicts with Mexican and Canadian airwaves.

In 2003, rumors circulated that WNAK could be purchased by a Philadelphia Broadcast Company. That indeed happened as in 2004 it was announced that Route 81 Broadcast Group was set to acquire WNAK as well as several other stations. A new general manager would be chosen. As the market for small stations grew, larger broadcast groups such as Route 81 and Max Media were gobbling up smaller



WNAK 84 S. PROSPECT STREET LOCATION

independent stations bringing them under one major label. One particular benefit was to add 94.3 FM to the WNAK broadcast signal. But that meant a relocation of the facility to the Pittston area. WNAK’s AM license was in Nanticoke, but FM was licensed in Scranton. The Federal Communications Commission required the facility be moved somewhere between the two locations.

In 2008, the former home of WNAK at 84 S. Prospect Street was demolished wiping out the last remnant of the station that brought so many enjoyable hours of listening



The station has seen many changes over the years, switching to all-talk radio then to Spanish Language programming in 2007. In 2008 it was announced that the station now with call letters WZMF would return to its previous Adult Standards format, again playing the music of Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett and Peggy Lee. The call letters were changed once again in 2018 to WGMF. 📺

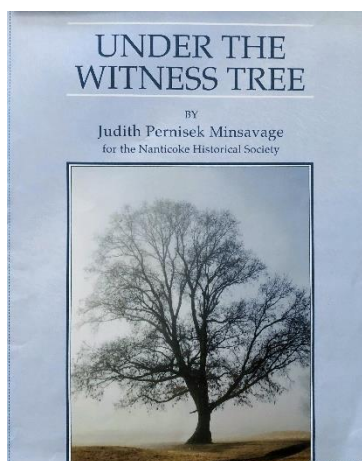


facebook

Follow the Nanticoke Historical Society on Facebook

Uncovering a Gem

The Nanticoke Historical Society was created in 1996 by a very dedicated group of individuals who wanted to make sure that none of the city's history was lost to time. This dedication has led to many surprising and life changing finds for those who have been on the trail to discovering their family history. The society has helped people from all across the United States and the world to find information or discover a final resting place of a long lost relative, or to revisit their own past. We are dedicated to maintaining that initiative and passion to keep the history of the city alive. Thank you to those founding members from left Celia Zedock, Helen Buczkowski, Lynn Maulbeck, Mark Regulski, President Julianna Zarzycki, Martha Price and seated Vice President Chester Zaremba who planted a seed that has grown to be one of the most valuable assests of this city. Over the next several months we'll follow their journey from the early beginnnings to present day and talk about their hopes for the future. 📺



UNDER THE WITNESS TREE

A Great Christmas Gift for Family or Friends who enjoy the stories and photos of the City of Nanticoke – **Book Signing event to be held, Saturday, December 10 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Nanticoke Historical Society offices, 495 East Main Street, next to the Mill Memorial Library. Cost \$25.00 - ALL PROCEEDS WILL BENEFIT THE NANTICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.....**