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# NANTICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Winter 2014

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## Society Acquires State-of-the-Art Software

Chester Zaremba, vice president of the Nanticoke Historical Society, colorfully likens the society's newly acquired software, PastPerfect, to a high performance race car, but in more formal terms, he qualifies it an industry standard. With thousands of pieces of archival documents, photos, objects and books, in the possession of the society, Zaremba found it increasingly difficult to cross reference and standardize material location using Excel spreadsheets. After many years of research, assistance from Tony Brooks, formerly of the Luzerne County Historical Society and funding benefits through the Luzerne Foundation, Zaremba succeeded in obtaining PastPerfect for Nanticoke's Historical Society. In order to keep the cost affordable, the software was obtained through a group acquisition, enabling five other societies to

SEE /SOFTWARE

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## Five and Dime turns to Millions

Samuel H. Kress felt sure he had a great idea. Supply consumers with a good product for a few pennies, nickels and dimes.

He also knew his idea might not be well received in the metropolitan areas, but it would most certainly be welcomed in small towns with, hard-working families who would then be able treat themselves to affordable treasures and necessities for their homes.

Kress was born to John Franklin Kress and Margaret Dodson Kress in Cherryville, near Allentown, Pennsylvania. The second of seven children, Kress earned a living in the stone quarries. By the age of 17 he began work as a schoolteacher. How Samuel came to be in Nanticoke is not clear, but by 1886 Samuel and brother, Claude, established the New York Stationery Company specializing in retail stationery, blank books, toys, etc. Sam Kress subsidized his store by working as a steamship and passenger agent.

Samuel Kress asked **Dr. J. Grant Harter**, a Nanticoke dentist, if he would be interested in partnering with him on the endeavor, each putting up an initial investment of \$500. Dr. Harter agreed and so in 1887 Kress opened his first store in Nanticoke. Kress's first clerk was **Sarah Jane Thomas**, to which he sent annual Christmas checks even after he expanded his store into a national chain and had become a multi-millionaire.

*The following accounts are taken from various mentions of Kress in the Wilkes-Barre Record:*

SEE/MILLIONS

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receive copies of the software. Zaremba, who has a penchant for organization, admits he enjoys every minute of entering each book, photo, document, and object in the society's collection. He is amazed at the maneuverability of the software and the many ways all items pertaining to a subject, family or event can be retrieved through keywords, categorizing and grouping.

With over 8,500 clients, PastPerfect, originally created for museums, is now used by myriad of organizations and historical societies around the world because of its tools to streamline maintenance of archival information and objects. The program includes numerous list management, research, and report features providing full access to data. There is a membership and contacts database that generates reports, and creates mail merge letters. PastPerfect contains the features needed to track acquisitions. When a collection of materials is donated to the society, PastPerfect produces documents for the transaction including a Deed of Gift form and thank you letter. PastPerfect includes a contacts database that will eventually serve to handle bulk mailings, produce letters, envelopes, and labels, as well as send email newsletters and membership renewal reminders through the use of contact lists. Interestingly, PastPerfect Software, Inc. and The Nanticoke Historical Society were both founded in 1996.

With the input of information into this upgradable state of the art software, information officers will be able to locate all items linked to a subject, name or other criteria that visitors include on their Request for Information Form. Entering the immense amount of data, Zaremba admits, will take some time but added he and dedicated fellow officers are up to the challenge. If anyone is interested in volunteering time to help on this project, contact Zaremba at the society.

## Casimir Charles Ciesla

of Mountain Top and a lifetime member of the Nanticoke Historical Society passed away on December 7, 2013 leaving a legacy to several local municipalities from which future generations will benefit.

As a young man, the Buttonwood native assisted in the management of the family hardware store and construction business. Charles served on a destroyer with the U. S. Navy during the Korean War. In 1959 he and his wife Eleanor moved to Yardley, Pa. then to Mt. Holly, N.J. Upon retiring in 1987, he returned to Luzerne County.

An avid hunter and fisherman, Ciesla also had a passion for history. He not only belonged to the Nanticoke Historical society, from its early beginnings, but four other societies as well. It was then he began compiling information detailing the histories of Hanover Township, Ashley, Sugar Notch, Warrior Run, Nanticoke, Newport Township, Slocum Township, Mountain Top veterans, Plymouth Cemetery and Sans Souci Park. The later book is being offered for sale at Joe Nardone's Gallery Of Sound on Mundy Street, the Laurel Mall in Hazleton and Dickson city locations for \$19.95. The book, containing stories and treasured memories, also has numerous photos of the park, dance pavilion, swimming pool, rides and San Souci Lake.

Mr. Ciesla not only documented historical facts regarding his subjects but made sure to exemplify the flavor of each era. Every undertaking included thousands of hours of research as well as

### DID YOU KNOW

"Sans Souci Park contained a picturesque lake which mysteriously dried up around 1914."

The History of Sans Souci Park, by C. Charles Ciesla

NANTICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**HUBER BREAKER  
PRESENTATION**

**7 P.M. MARCH 20**

CULTURAL CENTRE OF ST. FAUSTINA,  
(FORMERLY ST. STANISLAUS CHURCH)

38 W. CHURCH STREET, NANTICOKE

A SHOWING OF THE PICTURES OF THE  
INSIDE & WORKINGS OF THE HUBER  
BREAKER, ASHLEY, NARRATED BY BILL BEST

**OPEN HOUSE**

**7 P.M. MARCH 27**

SAMANTHA MILL HOUSE, (NEXT TO MILL  
MEMORIAL LIBRARY)

495 EAST MAIN STREET, NANTICOKE

VISIT OUR OFFICE AND SUBMIT AN  
HISTORICAL OR GENEALOGICAL QUERY TO  
MEMBERS OF THE STAFF.

STAFF MEMBERS WILL ACCESS OUR VAST  
DATABASE AND PROVIDE WHATEVER  
INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE AT NO COST.  
ANYONE WITH AN INTEREST IN NANTICOKE  
HISTORY OR A NANTICOKE CONNECTION TO  
THEIR FAMILY HISTORY IS WELCOME TO TAKE  
ADVANTAGE OF THIS OPPORTUNITY.

**"AN INTRODUCTION TO  
GENEALOGY"**

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

**7 P.M. APRIL 24**

SAMANTHA MILL HOUSE, (NEXT TO MILL  
MEMORIAL LIBRARY)

495 EAST MAIN STREET, NANTICOKE

**NEXT MONTHLY MEETING**

**7 P.M. FEBRUARY 27**

SAMANTHA MILL HOUSE, (NEXT TO MILL  
MEMORIAL LIBRARY)

495 EAST MAIN STREET, NANTICOKE

**MILLIONS**

**continued from page 1**

**1889**

*Samuel Kress boarded at the Broadway Hotel.*

**1891**

*Kress still at 8 N. Market Street, Nanticoke.  
(Borough officials ordered all Nanticoke buildings  
numbered. It is probable that 8 N. Market became  
14 N. Market at that time.)*

**1893**

*S.H. Kress, head of the Kress Stationery Store,  
who came to Wilkes-Barre from Nanticoke three or  
four years ago, is constructing a large building at  
194 E. Market Street. He is currently at 184 E.  
Market Street,*

**1894**

*Nanticoke business at 14 N. Market, also sold toys  
and notions.*

**1896**

*Claude Kress was a resident of the Broadway  
Hotel when it was destroyed by fire in January  
1896.*

**1898**

*The windows of the Kress Stationery Company  
are attracting a great deal of attention this week.  
SH Kress and Company has on exhibition in their  
display window, the monster flag which is to be  
raised on Labor Day in the Public Park by the  
various societies of the town. It was manufactured  
by the New York Flag Company and is 20x30 feet,  
its weight being 50 pounds.*

With the success of his store Kress decided  
to expand to other markets, but wanted to give Dr.  
Harter a chance to recoup his initial \$500 and  
optout of the partnership. Harter left the partnership  
stating "I'd rather have the money, Sam; I don't  
think there's much of a future in that sort of  
business." Contrary to Harter's belief,  
Kress' business prospered using his profits to open  
additional stores, naming his chain "S. H. Kress &  
Co.

**SEE/MILLIONS**

**continued on page 4**

**TICKETS FOR THE EASTER DRAWING  
HAVE BEEN MAILED TO MEMBERS.**

## From the Editor...

I was thrilled to be asked to write the Nanticoke Historical Society newsletter. Writing about local history is something I truly enjoy and happily what I do every day, writing a column for the Pittston Sunday Dispatch. Researching subjects, pouring over mounds of old newspaper and photos, finding that one piece of information that tells a story, in my estimation is gold. You can be sure if Nanticoke had a newspaper, I'd be knocking on the door, resume in hand.

I always tell my husband, Jack, how lucky he is to live in the town in which he was born. To be able to see street corners he played on, homes of friends and family and though some buildings have sadly been razed, still has the benefit of a location visual. I grew up in a transient area. My hometown just outside of Pittsburgh is six hours away. So trips back are rare and spent trying to remember how to get from place to place, maneuvering through what seems like an endless tangle of four-lane expressways.

I took a virtual tour of downtown Pittsburgh recently and found a few things hadn't changed since I left in 1980. Some of the old stores are still there, Point State Park and of course the numerous bridges. I even walked, or glided with the help of an arrow, across the bridge to PNC Field; stood at the entrance... technology is wonderful. However, for me, no amount of going back can compare to the assets residents of Nanticoke have. Some family names and businesses remain, churches, buildings...you can actually see your history, touch it, and talk with people who remember along with you. It's truly a gift. That's why the work that the Nanticoke Historical Society is so important. Their dedication is amazing. Over the next few issues of the newsletter, I will be focusing on just what this group of people aspire to

do for their beloved city, the things that will forever hold the community together. Therefore, I place before you, a challenge. If you ever felt that you would like to be more involved with preserving this great gift, now is the time. There's much work to do, and exciting ideas are being discussed for the future. We're in our new offices; it's a new year, why not volunteer. If you want to hear more about a subject, or piece of history that's near and dear to your heart, would like us to focus on a particular year, or have a memory you'd like to share, let me know. I'll do my best to follow it through. After all, it's all gold!

Judy Minsavage

## MILLIONS

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### 1900

*Advertised as Kress' 5&10 Store and still managed by EJ Lewis. The store was sending all its goods to Birmingham, Alabama, and would be vacant by 1 April.*

By the mid-1920s, Kress was a millionaire living in a penthouse, across the street from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. He donated 375 Italian paintings and 18 sculptures, when the museum opened in March 1941. Later Samuel's brother Rush and the Kress Foundation opened the Kress Collection at the National Gallery in Washington D.C. the majority of artwork came to the Gallery in the 1950s and 1960s.

In 1964, ownership of the Kress Empire was acquired by Genesco, Inc. The company abandoned its center-city stores and moved to shopping malls. Genesco began liquidating and closing down the Kress stores nationally in 1980.

**Johnny Grodzicki** was born on **Monday, February 26, 1917**, in Nanticoke, Pennsylvania. Grodzicki was 24 years old when he broke into the big leagues on April 18, 1941, with the St. Louis Cardinals.

# Historical Society participates in Festival of Trees at LCCC

Kathy and Bill Sweeney, long-time members of the Nanticoke Historical Society love Christmas, but they also love talking about local history. So it's no wonder that for the past three years the couple has volunteered their time to decorate the Society's entry to the Luzerne County Community College sponsored Festival of Trees.

Last year's entry contained photos of buildings familiar to Nanticoke residents, and according to one spectator garnered a lot of visitor interest. The numerous photos used for 2013's tree were assembled with the help of another active member, John Sherrick. Photos were then colorized by the Sweeney's over the summer. So between planning and execution it's no wonder they are already considering several options for this year's tree design.

"It's important to promote the existence of the Nanticoke Historical Society," Kathy Sweeney said in a recent interview. "People should know the society is available to those who would like to know more about the community in which they live, and is a great source for research for students and residents." In 2011, visitors to the Festival chose the couple's authentically decorated 1940's and 50's era tree which earned the society a first place prize. Kathy and Bill congratulate Classic Properties and Sanitary Bakery for their respective first and second place wins, but Kathy adds, "It's not about the winning; it's about bringing history to life." The Nanticoke Historical Society thanks Kathy and Bill for doing such a great job.

## DID YOU KNOW

**January 1, 1776** – During the American Revolution, George Washington unveiled the Grand Union Flag, the first national flag in America.

## MEMBERS SEARCHING FOR INFORMATION ON THE FOLLOWING SURNAMES:

### Leatha Buff

Surnames: **Borman/Burman/ Bormann, Brush/Brosch. Ksionzek/Schonsek, Quoss/Quoos, Kemrite/Kemerite, Englehart/Engelhardt, Stivers, Buff**

[leatha18707@yahoo.com](mailto:leatha18707@yahoo.com)

### Dr. Daria M. Brezinski

Surnames: **Brezinski, Brzezinski, Karpinski, Guiliani, Jiuliani, Volpicelli, Volpe, Alby, Dutkiewicz, Lukasczewski, Lukashefski, Lukaszewski, Lukaszecwski, DiTullio, Tullio, Sinibaldi, Baiocchi, Bajocchi, Biaocchi, Baicchi, Cerbara, Collacchi, Giambalvo, Magnosi, Margalski, Gayeski, Rishkofski, Rishkowski, Symborski**

[Daria@DocDarB.com](mailto:Daria@DocDarB.com)

Phone: 434-286-2989

### Leo Garvey

Surname: **Lucy Burns**  
[leoegarvey@yahoo.com](mailto:leoegarvey@yahoo.com)

### Mike Geiger

Surnames: **Tolan, Gildea**  
[ironmike47@comcast.net](mailto:ironmike47@comcast.net)

### Cinda Lee Hartman

Surnames: **Hartman, Connolly, Englehart, Quoss/Quoos**  
[cinda\\_hartman@yahoo.com](mailto:cinda_hartman@yahoo.com)

### John Hickey

Surnames: **Fallon, Flaherty, Burke, Pugh, Martin, Endler, Walsh (Welch), Kennedy, Stapleton, Clarke.**  
[jfhicke@q.com](mailto:jfhicke@q.com)

### Ted Knoll

Surnames: **Knoll, Morgan**  
[tedknoll@mac.com](mailto:tedknoll@mac.com)

SEE/SURNAMES

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**Leni Lunski**

Surnames: Nogic, Lunski, Jezorek, Nogisheski,  
Birosek, Jablonski/Yablonski  
[Glinda52@mail.com](mailto:Glinda52@mail.com)

**Darlene Matzer**

Surnames: Stewart, Turley, Womelsdorf,  
Roberts, Kline  
[darmatz@aol.com](mailto:darmatz@aol.com)

**Mark Regulski**

Surnames: Regulski, Sadakierski, Lewicki,  
Gizenski, Grodzinski, Yefko / Jewko, Gross /  
Grosz, Cannon, Connelly, Burns, Tracey, Hogan,  
Conway, Connell, Shea, Shymansky, Eckell,  
Kossman / Cossman.  
[mreg77@aol.com](mailto:mreg77@aol.com)

**Julie Ann Ross**

Surnames: Dillon, Burk, Collins, Connors, Hopko,  
(Hopkovic,) Chintala, (Cintala,) Ulanoski,  
( Ulanowski) Ann Dillon, Now known as Julie  
Ann Ross  
[julieannross@att.net](mailto:julieannross@att.net)

**Judith Scully**

Surnames: Sherbine, Judy; Zalewski (Julia)  
[Judithscully@aol.com](mailto:Judithscully@aol.com)

**Betsy Shusta**

Surnames: Harris, Rees, Marsh  
[Betsy5269@msn.com](mailto:Betsy5269@msn.com)

**Barbara A (Edmunds) Stolz**

Surnames: Edmunds, Davis, Seeley  
[spring2621@yahoo.com](mailto:spring2621@yahoo.com)

**Lindsey Temarantz**

Surnames: Temarantz, Temarazzo, Wicht, Line,  
Fisher  
[Toki\\_2424@yahoo.com](mailto:Toki_2424@yahoo.com)

**Albert Yarasavage**

Surnames: Yarasavage, Kafchinski  
[ayarasavage@epix.net](mailto:ayarasavage@epix.net)

**Julianna Zarzycki**

Surnames: Zarzycki/Zazycki, Juhas/ Yuhas,  
Sopko, Czapracki, Sabolchik, Kenski,  
Czajka, Owsianko, Savinski, Ziolkowski,  
Kwiatkowski, Hudachko/Hudacko  
[julmarie58@yahoo.com](mailto:julmarie58@yahoo.com)

**Debbie Zderko Freeland**

Surnames would be : Zderko, Grozio, Novak,  
Novakowski, Stegura, Szczgura, Galazin,  
Golumbeski, Sabol, Knapp.  
Email: [zderko@aol.com](mailto:zderko@aol.com)

## Thank You to Our Members...

We would like to take this opportunity, at the beginning of the eighteenth year of operation of the Nanticoke Historical Society, to thank all the members who have contributed their time and treasure over the years. It is only with the aid and assistance of the dedicated members and friends of the Society that we are able to fulfill the mission of preserving the history and memories of the City of Nanticoke.

We look forward to many more years of bringing those great memories back to life.

***Founding Members,******Julianna Zarzycki, President******Chester Zaremba, Vice-President*****NANTICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Samantha Mill House

(Next to the Mill Memorial Library)

495 East Main Street

Nanticoke, PA 18634

570-258-1367

Web Site - [www.nanticokehistoryonline.org](http://www.nanticokehistoryonline.org)Email - [nanticokehistorical@yahoo.com](mailto:nanticokehistorical@yahoo.com)[history@nanticokehistoryonline.org](mailto:history@nanticokehistoryonline.org)**OFFICERS****President: Julianna Zarzycki****Vice President/Corresponding Secretary/Treasurer:  
Chester Zaremba****NEWSLETTER EDITOR****Judith L. Minsavage**

# *Nanticoke Historical Society*

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL

**E mail :** [nanticokehistory@yahoo.com](mailto:nanticokehistory@yahoo.com)

**Website** [www.nanticokehistoryonline.org](http://www.nanticokehistoryonline.org)

**570-258-1367**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

New \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Type:

Individual (\$15.00) \_\_\_\_\_

Family (\$20.00) \_\_\_\_\_

Life Time (\$100.00) \_\_\_\_\_

Surnames \_\_\_\_\_

Phone 570-258-1367

Please make checks payable to:

Nanticoke Historical Society

And mail to : Nanticoke Historical Society, Membership Chairman

Samantha Mill House

495 E. Main St.

Nanticoke, Pa. 18634

*We'd like to welcome anyone interested in joining the Nanticoke Historical Society. Please complete this form and return it to us at your convenience. Thank You.*