

# NANTICOKE LEGACY

## NANTICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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

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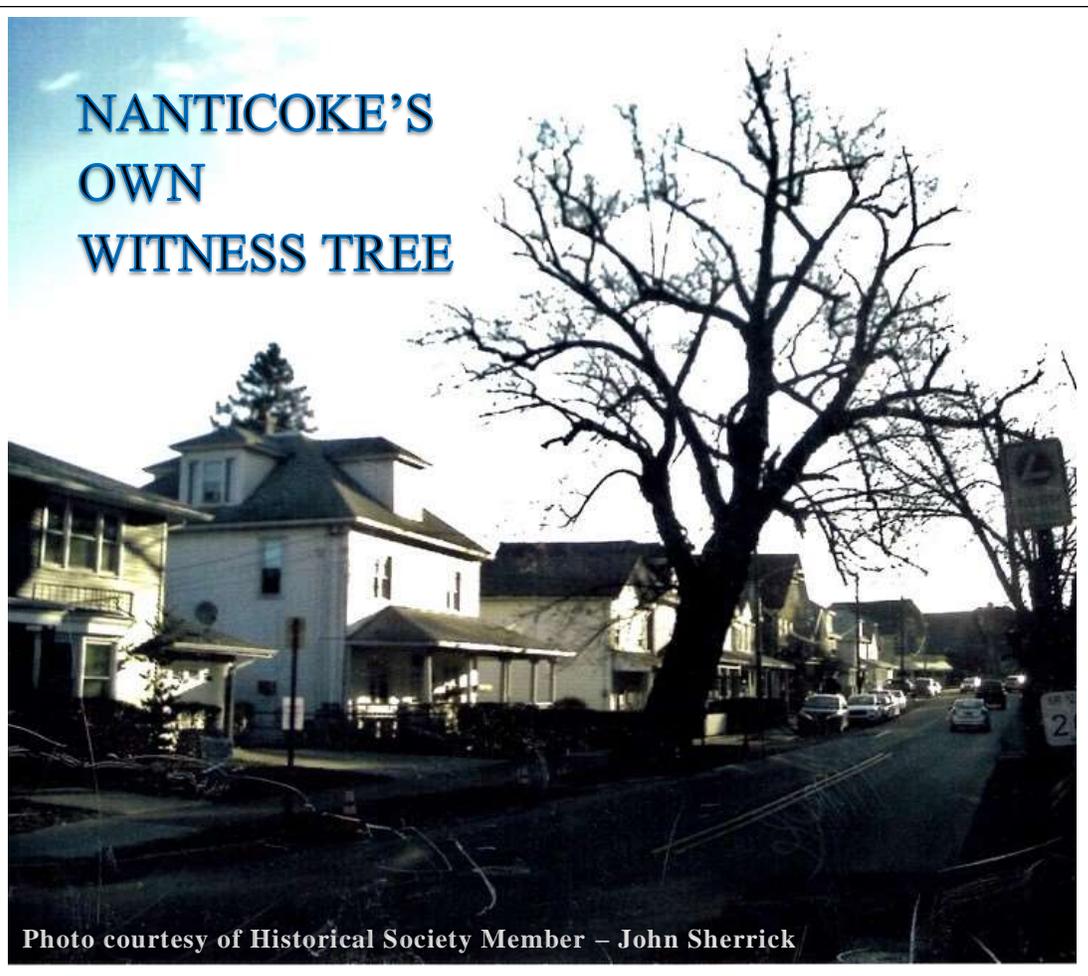
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#### MYSTERY QUESTION

YEARBOOKS AVAILABLE

SHOP AMAZON AND GERRITY'S AND HELP THE SOCIETY



**OUR TOWN NANTICOKE DVDS ARE AVAILABLE**

**DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS FABULOUS DOCUMENTARY  
CALL THE SOCIETY OFFICE TODAY AT 570-258-1367**

**MAKES A GREAT GIFT !**



**Volume 2, Issue 20**

**AUGUST 2019**

**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 To collect artifacts, memorabilia and historical documents and facts of Nanticoke, Pennsylvania and to store such items in a central location or specific area where these articles may be preserved, appreciated and used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*

**Upcoming meeting  
schedule**

**Thursday - August 29**

**Thursday – September 26**

**Thursday – October 31**

All meetings take place at 7 p.m. 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](http://www.nanticokehistoryonline.org)

Email

[history@nanticokehistoryonline.org](mailto:history@nanticokehistoryonline.org)

**OFFICERS**

**President: Julianna Zarzycki**

**Vice President/Corresponding Secretary/Treasurer:**

**Chester Zaremba**

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR, STORIES AND NEWS**

**Judith L. Minsavage**

**MEMBERSHIP FEES**

Individual \$20

Family \$30

Lifetime \$100.00 Individual

Please advise 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.**

# The Nanticoke Historical Society Welcomes New Members:

## **Individual Membership:**

Judy Thompson, Carpinteria, CA  
Lou Gianuzzi, Nanticoke

## **Family Membership:**

Mike and Cheryl Hischak, Larksville  
Robert Keber, Savannah, GA  
John and Theresa McDermitt, Nanticoke  
John and Christine Ferrato, Nanticoke  
Kristina Brodginiski Family, Wanamie

## **Lifetime Membership:**

Sharon Warren, Nanticoke  
Mary Jane Uhing, Nanticoke  
Linda Grevera, San Jose, CA  
Kevin Coughlin, Nanticoke  
Ann Marie Coughlin, Nanticoke  
Sarah Shales, Arlington VA  
David Sherrick, Queensbury, NY  
Jack Minsavage, Nanticoke

## Thank you for your generous donations:

Leon and Crystal Bogdon, Jr.  
Graham Van Slyke, in memory of Leatha Buff

**We also thank the many members of the Nanticoke Historical Society who have made monetary or in-kind donations, have requested not be acknowledged, but know that their actions have benefitted our organization.**

# NEWS:

## Annual Open House enjoyed by all ages



It was all about Nanticoke and its long history as the Historical Society held its Our Town Nanticoke Open House on Saturday, July 6. There was food, great conversation, and camaraderie as residents and out-of-towners alike were invited to peruse the many artifacts, library books, photos and reading materials in its collection. The event was planned around the completion and receipt of the Our Town Nanticoke DVDs a documentary produced by WVIA which premiered on April 25. Many who attended purchased a DVD, some admitting they had missed the televised version due to other commitments. Visitors also were able to purchase the latest design of the Society T-shirt. Member volunteers helped serve lunch and answered questions of those touring the society offices at the Samantha Mill House at 495 East Main Street.



**A visitor to the Nanticoke Historical Society Open House finds information of interest**

“One of our biggest initiatives is to instill in our youth that local history is an important part of the learning process.” It was great to see youngsters accompanying parents and grandparents to this event,” stated Vice-President of the Society, Chet Zaremba. “We have so many opportunities available for those interested in sustaining this location and the history it holds for future generations.” Zaremba added, “The Nanticoke Historical Society will continue to be an integral part of the community for years to come.”

The Society was formed in 1996, and over the years has sponsored walking tours, speakers on various subjects including mining and genealogy and various pictorial programs that take residents back in time. “We are always looking for programs to present that will be of interest to those who not only grew up in and still live in Nanticoke, but also to those have moved to the city over the years,” said Society President, Julianna Zarzycki. “It enables us all to appreciate our heritage.”



**In June of 1996, the first meeting of those interested in the formation of a historical society met shortly after the demolition of the Kosciuszko Junior High School and the State Theater. Several residents expressed an interest. Original members of the planning committee were, standing from left, Celia Zeedock, Helen Buczkowski, Lynn Maulbeck, Mark Regulski, Julianna Zarzycki, Martha Price. Seated Chester Zaremba. Zarzycki and Zaremba at present, respectively serve as president and vice-president of the society,**

**Planning initiated for Nanticoke Historical Society**



Planning committee – Nanticoke Historical Society Open House – left to right – John Sherrick, Janine Whittaker Julianna Zarzycki, Sally Gorgas, Chet Zaremba



A young man looks over some photos of the city while many others talked with Society information officers

Society members are given access to the reference materials in the Society's library to research family or city history. To apply for membership, or to purchase an Our Town Nanticoke DVD, call our office at 570-258-1367

A membership form is also available on our website [www.nanticokehistoryonline.org](http://www.nanticokehistoryonline.org). Just click on the link provided on our **Get Involved page**. Upcoming events and news can be found on our **Home** and **Calendar Pages**. Also, follow us on **Facebook** where we announce our latest issue of our newsletter, **Nanticoke Legacy**.

If visiting our city and planning a trip to our office, we suggest a call first, but please plan to stop in and say hello, our office is usually open from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Saturday. The office closes for lunch each day. 📍



Visitors look through photos that remain unidentified in Historical Society Records.



There were things of interest for all ages at the Nanticoke Historical Society's Open House.

## NOTE:

A great deal of the society's information is digitized. Call our office at 570-258-1367 for more information on how to obtain a research form or go online at [www.nanticokehistoryonline.org](http://www.nanticokehistoryonline.org) and click on the Research Page.

**NEWS:****Inaugural Designer Purse Bingo - Success**

Planning a fundraiser can be a daunting task even for those who are seasoned event planners. Organizing a first-time event requires strong will, patience and endurance. Janine Whittaker and Sally Gorgas, Nanticoke Historical Society Members and co-chairs of the society's first annual Designer Purse Bingo and Basket and Gift Card Raffle were up to the challenge. Those who attended were treated to an enjoyable afternoon of fun, food and the chance to win some great prizes, among them the highly sought-after purses designed by Coach, Michael Kors, Kate Spade, Dooney and Bourke and Stone Mountain.

Players were treated to some entertainment as society member Stanley Gorgas modeled the designer bags before each special game. Exhibiting the bag as a fashion statement, Gorgas sashayed as he carried the purse to the winner. It brought a round of laughter every time. Those who were present at the event, most of whom regularly attend purse bingos, commented on the organization and smoothness with which the event progressed. "We have many people to thank for that," Whittaker said, listing those who helped with setting up, supplying food, donations, gift cards and baskets and baked goods. "It was a combined effort." She added. Whittaker and Gorgas and the Nanticoke Historical Society would also like to thank the Warrior Run Fire Hall for the use of their facility and bingo apparatus, Sean Casey, for calling the Bingo, the City of Nanticoke officials for their support, Pepsi, for their soda donation, Nanticoke Historical Society members and those who are non-members that helped in any way in making the event a success.



**Stanley Gorgas entertains the crowd with each new purse as it came up for grabs.**



**Planners and volunteers for the Inaugural Design Purse Bingo –From left first row, Karen Houlihan, Sharon Warren, Joe Makuch, Shelly Jones, Julianna Zarzycki, Janine Whittaker, Sally Gorgas, Stan Gorgas. Second row, Dave Whittaker, Chet Zaremba, Tom Wall, Sean Casey, John Sherrick, Donna Wall.**

Proceeds from the event will be used for projects in progress and maintaining society offices where the storing of records for those who are continually contacting the society for information is job number one. With the growing popularity of Ancestry.com, Genealogy, TV Shows such as WVIA, PBS series Finding Your Roots, and TLC's Who Do You Think You Are, historical societies such as Nanticoke's are more valuable than ever before. Each new piece of information gathered by the society is gold to someone who may be looking to piece together a family history, what may have happened to relatives, see where they lived, or where they may be buried. The society receives requests from all-across the country as well as abroad. Each time, our research reveals valuable information for those seeking knowledge of their ancestry, and our information officers enjoy the task.

Those who have engaged in genealogical searches know how expensive it can become. The Nanticoke Historical Society offers a more economical way to perhaps make a connection that is not listed on the larger sites. The society data base has in excess of 15,000 individual obituaries from newspapers covering the entire history of the city. For a complete list of what is in our archives log on to [www.nanticokehistoryonline.org](http://www.nanticokehistoryonline.org) scroll down the home page to **What's In Our Archives?** And click on the link.



Attendee Joann Mavus took home two baskets full of goodies.

Whittaker and Gorgas are presently planning next year's Variety Bingo event. Their plan is to add items that would be of interest to our gentlemen friends, as well as continuing to offer the designer purses, gift cards and baskets. They're keeping their ideas under wraps for the moment, but, are promising that the event will be fun and enjoyable for everyone.



Those who attended the first annual Designer Purse Bingo enjoyed the well-organized event.

## CHECK YOUR ATTICS AND YOUR BASEMENTS

You may have memorabilia or photos that could have some historical significance to the city of Nanticoke. You may not realize it, but an old family photo may contain some long-forgotten location in the city, or perhaps one of the many businesses that flourished here at one time. We're adding to our archives daily. Before you throw away those long-forgotten items, let the Historical Society check them for any historical value. Thank you for your consideration.

## Advertise in the Nanticoke Historical Society Newsletter - Legacy

Our newsletter is on our website and  
Facebook Page - 24- 7  
And is sent across the country  
Great for online businesses as well

\$25 - Business card size

\$50 - Quarter page

\$75 - One-half page

\$125 - full-page

Contact 570-258-1367 for more  
information



# 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 many 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

*John Bohan*, Killed a railroad accident in France  
*Wodeslaw Bolney*,  
*Leon Bonnach*, Wounded in action  
*Arthur Bonowitz*, US. Navy  
*Charles Bowicz*  
*Daniel J. Boyce*  
*Frank Boyek*,  
*Atherton Brader*, Killed in an airplane training accident  
*G.A. Brader*, Battery C, 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Artillery  
*G.E. Brader*, Possibly G.A.Brader – Died in service  
*Thomas Brady*, Coast Artillery  
*Frank Breysus*, Battery C 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Artillery  
*Clement Brodzinski*  
*Ray G. Brown*  
*Stanley Brozienski*, Wounded in action

**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....**

## WORLD WAR II

*Frank Brojakowski*, Missing in action in Germany  
*Raymond Bronson*, , Missing in action in Germany  
*William S. Brown*, Missing in action in France  
*Michael K. Buczkowski*, Killed in action  
*Edward Burke*, Prisoner of War  
*Henry J. Butkiewicz*, Killed in action South Pacific  
*Philip Butz*, Killed in action North Africa  
*Michael K. Buzkowski*  
*Dr. Alfred M. Camp*,  
*Michael Checklinski*, Missing in action  
*Walter Chernel*, Killed in action,

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

**On our Home Page: CLICK ON THE "WHAT'S IN OUR ARCHIVES LINK."**

## KOREAN WAR

*Frank Krynik Jr.*, 27<sup>th</sup> Fighter Escort Wing  
*Guy W. Leiby*  
*Thomas Leiby*  
*Michael J. Lewandowski*, US Air Force  
*Frank J. Machowski*  
*Leonard W. Marger*, US Army and Air Force  
*Leonard Markiewicz*, US Air Force  
*Henry P. Matulewski*, 967<sup>th</sup> Armored Field Artillery Battalion  
*Francis Meshinski*, U.S. Marine Corps  
*Richard Meyers*, US Army  
*Edward R. Moore*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division  
*Jack Morgan*  
*John J. Moss (Moskva)*, M/Sgt. First Marine Air Wing USMC  
*Vincent H. Nork*

# NANTICOKE'S OWN WITNESS TREE



*The Smithsonian Institute defines a Witness Tree as one that, "Begins its life like any other tree. It sprouts. It grows. And then it's thrust into the spotlight, playing an involuntary part in an historic event." That event might be devastating such as a battle, or it may be one of celebration. Regardless, a witness tree remains a biologically powerful symbol of the past."*

The sprawling maple towering over East Main Street had to be cut down this past spring. Unfortunately, the gigantic tree was rotting on the inside and becoming a safety hazard. Maple trees have been known to survive up to 300 years. One wonders, since the tree was estimated to be about 250 years old, what events occurred in Nanticoke as well as the world while the tree remained rooted to its place of honor on East Main Street. If the estimate is correct the tree would have sprouted in 1769 and would have witnessed the settlements of the Six Nations of Iroquois. When Yankee settlers began arriving from Connecticut, they found the land occupied by other settlers from the colony of Pennsylvania, "Pennamites." England's King Charles II mistakenly granted charters to both. The Connecticut Charter was granted in 1662, while the Pennsylvania Charter was not granted until 1681. The year the tree was likely born, the First Yankee-Pennamite War was fought, and the tree became the property of the state of Connecticut.



**Connecticut and Pennsylvania laid claim to the Wyoming Valley**

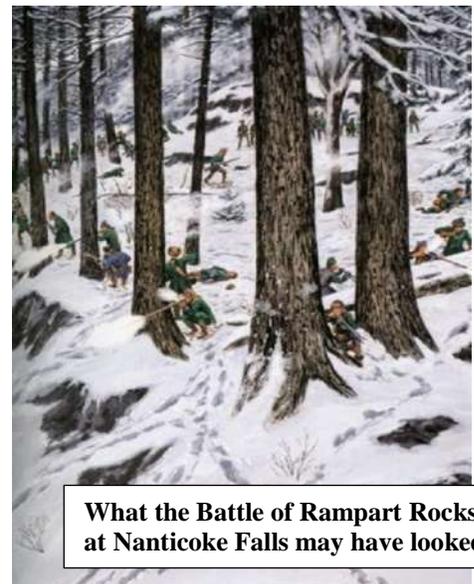


**Colonel Zebulon Butler**

By 1771, Captain Lazarus Stewart and William Stewart were given lots in what is now Nanticoke for their assistance in securing the lands for the Connecticut based Susquehanna Company. The Yankee-Pennamite land dispute continued and on Christmas Day 1775, in the "Battle of Rampart Rocks" at Nanticoke Falls, a Yankee regiment of 400 soldiers under the command of Colonel Zebulon Butler, defeated an attack of 500-700 Pennamites led by

Colonel Plunkett. The tree, just 6 years old, may have felt the shockwaves as guns and cannons fired while the Pennamites retreated in defeat.

In 1799, Pennsylvania and Connecticut peacefully resolved the dispute, Connecticut lost all state claims to the region and the dispute was finally settled. The tree now belonged to Pennsylvania.

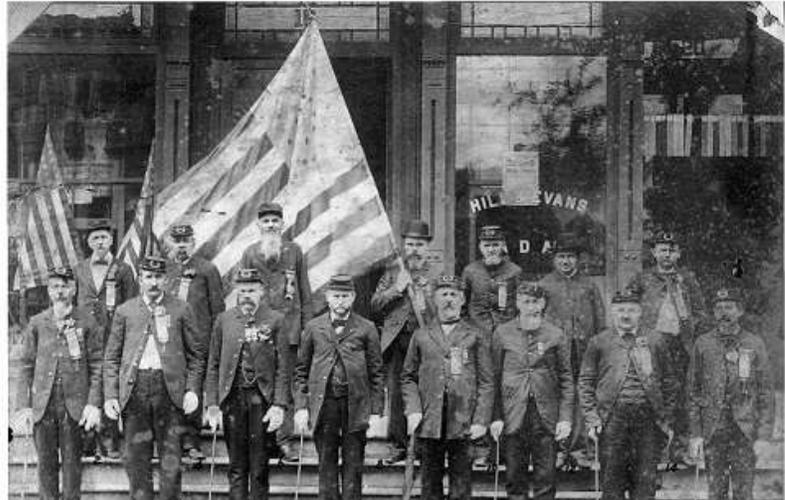


**What the Battle of Rampart Rocks at Nanticoke Falls may have looked**

The tree stood watch over the many soldiers that left Nanticoke to fight in various battles and wars. It shared in the sadness when the bodies of fallen soldiers were returned home to be buried and it shared in the celebration as parades on Main Street welcomed soldiers who returned home to rejoin their family and friends.



In 1919, WWI veterans were heralded back to the city as city residents lined the streets to welcome them home. The parade likely passed by the tree as they marched into the city



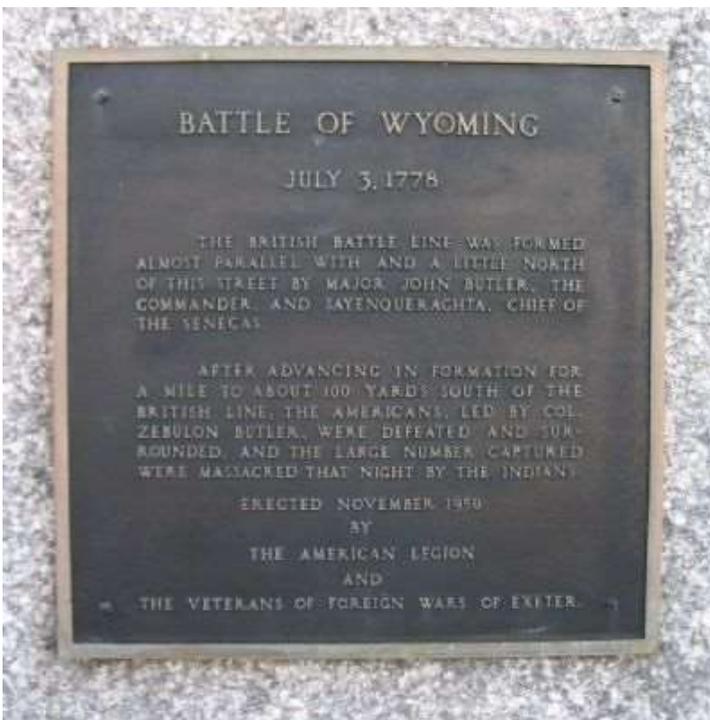
Civil War Vets pose in front of the Hill & Evans Hardware Store at 18-20 E. Main Street, Nanticoke



WWI Vets returning home in 1919

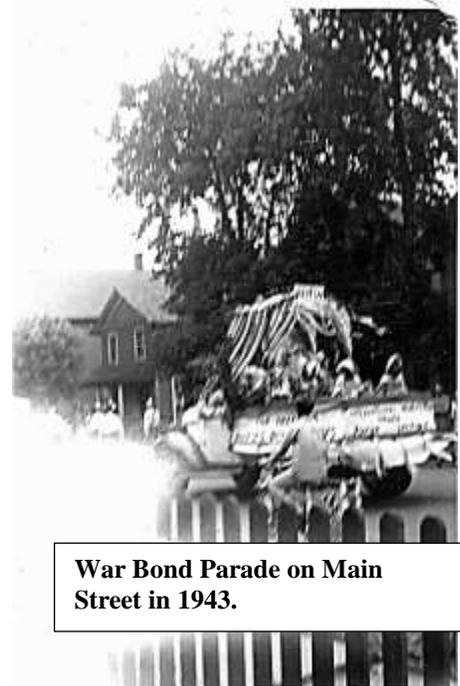
**BATTLES AND WARS**

- 1776 Battle of Wyoming.
- 1861 -1865 Civil War
- 1898 Spanish American War
- 1914 - 1918 World War I
- 1939 - 1945 World War II.
- 1950 - 1953 Korean War
- 1965 - 1975 Vietnam War
- 1990 - 1991 Gulf War
- 2003- 2011 Iraq War





Vets return home after WWII.



War Bond Parade on Main Street in 1943.

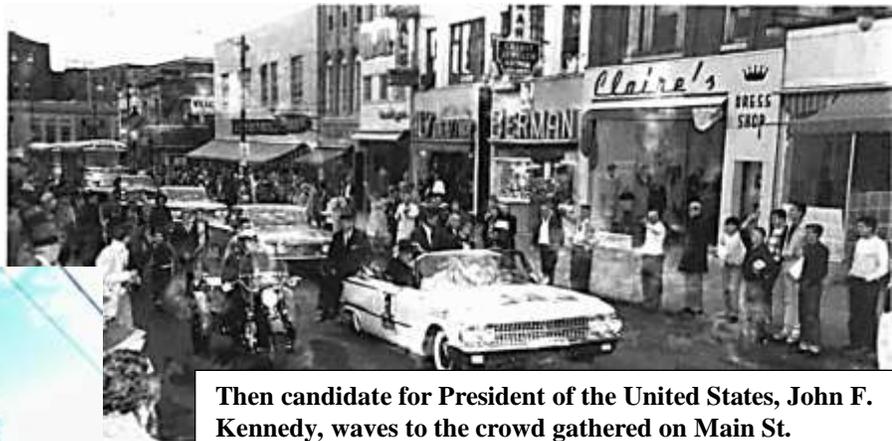
On January 31, 1874, when the tree was 105, the city of Nanticoke was incorporated as a borough.

The branches of the tree bent further with the weight of each and every emergency siren that rang out in the city from 1847 to 1959 announcing a new mine accident or disaster resulting in an ever increasing number of miners who went to work their shift, but didn't return home.

In 1960, when the tree was 191 years old, the future President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, while riding in a convertible, likely passed under the stately giant.



Loomis Shaft



Then candidate for President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, waves to the crowd gathered on Main St.



It may have been just a tree, like any other, but over its 250 or so years it witnessed horses, trolleys, trains, an endless amount of automobiles from the Model A to today's SUVs and generations of family members passing under its branches for the first time and then again for the last time. It was a witness to our lives as we passed it every day not really giving it a second thought and although it may not have stood over an event written in the annals of history, it did stand for our strength, our endurance, our history.

# OTHER IMPORTANT TREES

## Did You Know:

In the fall of 1682, the Lenni Lenape along with the Susquehannock, Shawnee and Iroquois signed a peace treaty of friendship with William Penn under a mighty elm tree that grew along the Delaware River. The Lenni Lenape were made up of three groups. In the north, were the Munsee or “the people of the stony country.” In the central area there was the Unami or the “people down river.” The Nanticoke, people of the ocean” were located South of Unami.

The Great Elm known as the Treaty Tree stood at Shackamaxon, a sacred gathering place which was a symbol

of hope for peace among the tribes. On March 5, 1810 it was announced in national newspapers that the Treaty Tree had fallen during a storm. In March of 2010, the Penn Treaty Museum, in partnership with the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribal Nation and members of the Religious Society of Friends met in Philadelphia to commemorate the principles of fairness, peace and social justice symbolized by the Treaty Tree.

Along the Delaware in the location of the giant Elm, it was considered a neutral ground where the tribes gathered to fish, hunt and set up council. It is the reason William Penn chose the location for his treaty.



This lithograph by Nathaniel Currier shows William Penn engaging the Indian tribes under the Treaty Tree at Shackamaxon in 1682

## MEMORIAL TREES PLANTED IN PATRIOT PARK

In 2003, the Nanticoke Civic Pride committee and members of the 109<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Battery 8: Veterans of the Vietnam War and Members of the Nanticoke Chamber of Commerce attended the dedication of memorial trees planted to honor veterans. The planting was included in the first phase of the refurbishing of

Nanticoke’s Patriot Park. Pictured, from left, Staff Sgt. Steven Stempien, James Gallagher, Ken Miller, National Guard; Jim Bombay, Vietnam War Vets; Julianna Zarzycki, chamber of commerce, (currently president of the Nanticoke Historical Society); Amelia Brown, Civic Pride; Jerry Hudak, coordinator; Yvonne Bozinski, John Bushko, Civic Pride; Jared Kennedy, Aron Wright and Bob Ohl, National Guard.



# WITNESS TO HISTORY:

In 1901, at the young age of 21, Mabel Hawke must have been excited to be traveling from Nanticoke with five of her young teacher friends to the Pan-American Exposition a World's Fair held in Buffalo, NY. Mabel, who graduated from State Street High School and Bloomsburg Normal School, now Bloomsburg University, became a teacher in 1898 at the Washington Street School in Nanticoke. At the fair, the young ladies would have viewed the educational exhibits that showed the latest technological advances of the day. They would have been treated to attractions on the midway such as "House Upside Down," "Cleopatra's Temple," and "Foreign Villages." As they most likely hurried to the site where the 25th President of the United States, William McKinley was expected to appear, Mabel and her friends had no idea they would be witnessing an appalling historical event.

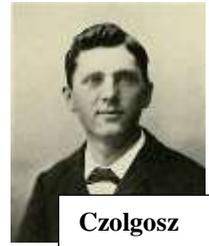


**High School graduation photo, 1897 (State Street School); Mabel Hawke is identified as fourth from the left in the bottom row**



**McKinley's last photo as he climbs the steps to the Temple of Music Exposition moments before being shot.**

President McKinley and his wife Ida were on a whirlwind working vacation, and McKinley's last stop was to be the fair in Buffalo. Ida was not accompanying him, as she had fallen during the journey and was recovering in their hotel room. As the president climbed the stairs to the Temple of Music Exposition, Leon Frank Czolgosz pushed his way through the crowd, moved in closer to the approaching president and fired a gun hitting McKinley twice in the abdomen. Chaos ensued and as Mabel returned to Nanticoke, she likely told her family and perhaps even her students, of the details of the horrific event. It was reported that Mabel gave an interview to a newspaper detailing



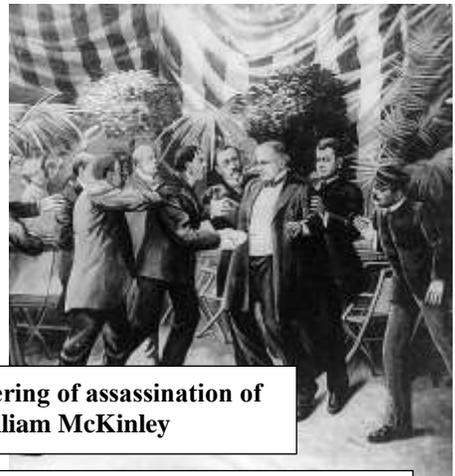
**Czolgosz**

her experience. McKinley managed to hang on for a few days, but at 2:15 a.m. on September 14, the president died of gangrene poisoning. Theodore Roosevelt took the oath of office as president. Czolgosz, was put on trial for murder nine days after McKinley's death, was found guilty, and died in the electric chair on October 29, 1901.

McKinley's funeral train arrived in Washington, D.C., on the evening of Monday, September 16, 1901. His body was taken to the East Room of the White House where, surrounded by an Honor Guard, it lay in state. McKinley was buried in Canton, Ohio. His coffin was carried to his final resting place in a coach that was described as a "horse drawn hearse of handsome design, covered with hand carved roses, with deep black fancy curtains."



**Coach that carried President Williams McKinley's body to its resting place in Canton, Ohio**



**Artist's rendering of assassination of President William McKinley**

## Fast forward to 1906

Mary (Jones) Williams, wife of Nanticoke Susquehanna Coal Co. mine boss, Thomas Williams, passed away. It was decided by her family members, that the same funeral coach that transported President McKinley would transport Mrs. Williams to her final resting place in Nanticoke Cemetery. The coach was owned by Mrs. Williams' brother D.J. Jones of Scranton. While in Nanticoke, the coach was displayed for a time in front of Wolfe's Livery where crowds of people came to see it. The location is now the former Moose Hall on Spring Street.



Site of Wolfe's Livery now the former Moose Hall – where McKinley's funeral coach was once displayed.



The McKinley coach on display in this undated photo, location unknown.

As for Mabel Hawke, she went on to marry William R. Anthony, had three children, William Jr, Charles and Ruth and most likely related the tale to them of the day she witnessed history. Mabel and her husband owned and operated W.R. Anthony News Dealers, at 53 E. Main Street. Daughter Ruth married Thomas L. Ralph and moved to Philadelphia. William Jr. and brother Charles owned and operated Scureman's Drug Store at 42 E. Main St. After a devastating fire they re-opened as Anthony Drug Co. William Sr. died in 1924. Mabel retired, in 1970 and the business became McDonald's Newsstand. Mable lived at the Oplinger Towers on Main Street until her death at the age of 96 on March 2, 1977. With her went the story of the day of innocence lost. 🇺🇸

## BACK IN ACTION: State Theatre Popcorn Machine

The beautiful State Theatre and its history was detailed in our last newsletter. While researching the article, we were lucky enough to stumble upon the fact the State Theatre popcorn machine, was in the possession of Engine Co. #4 on Espy Street in the Hanover Section of Nanticoke. Damaged by fire, and after extensive refurbishing by firefighters Charlie Alles and Justin Gildea, the machine was set to bring that same delicious enjoyment to those who attended the Fire Company's Burger Burn Event in May. Bags of "State Theatre Popcorn" were available for sale to those who wished to relive the days when theatres were among the many businesses in the city and brought hours of enjoyment to residents.



We thank Engine Co. #4 for allowing us to tell the story of the machine and their journey in bringing it back to life, and we thank them also for salvaging a part of Nanticoke's history. Our city has many stories to tell and with the help of those like the firefighters at Engine Co #4 we at the Nanticoke Historical Society are eager to tell them. If you know of an item that links us to Nanticoke's past, please let us know by calling the society at 570-258-1367.



This photo shows the Bags of State Theatre popcorn that were sold at the Hanover Engine Co. #4's Burger Burn event. The station is located on Espy Street in the Hanover Section of Nanticoke



Engine Co. #4 Firefighter, John Opachinski, left, looks on as, fellow firefighter, Charles Alles scoops out popcorn for patrons.

## Of Polkas and Potato Pancakes

Ahh the "lazy hazy crazy days of summer," we all remember that song, right? Well along with those wonderful memories many recall the numerous city festivals and church bazaars that occurred in Nanticoke over the



In 2000, Tony Litchkowski of Nanticoke and Helen Brdaric of Luzerne enjoyed a polka as they danced together at the Nanticoke Music Fest.

decades, many remember when polka music filled the air and people traveled from all over to sample the delicious foods. If you have a photo of you or family members at one of the various city or church festivals please send in or bring a copy of the photo to our offices at the Samantha Mill House, 495 East Main Street, Nanticoke, PA 18634. We'll scan it and return it to you. You can also email a copy to us at [nanticokehistory@aol.com](mailto:nanticokehistory@aol.com). We'd love to publish them in our newsletter. Please

include the name of the church or organization festival, approximate year and who is in the photo. Also provide contact information. If you need additional information email us at [nanticokehistory@aol.com](mailto:nanticokehistory@aol.com)

## MYSTERY QUESTION: Did you have the answer?

Prior to John F. Kennedy's memorable campaign stop in Nanticoke, what former U.S. President visited Nanticoke. And what caused the former chief executive to cut short his speech to residents who gathered to greet him?

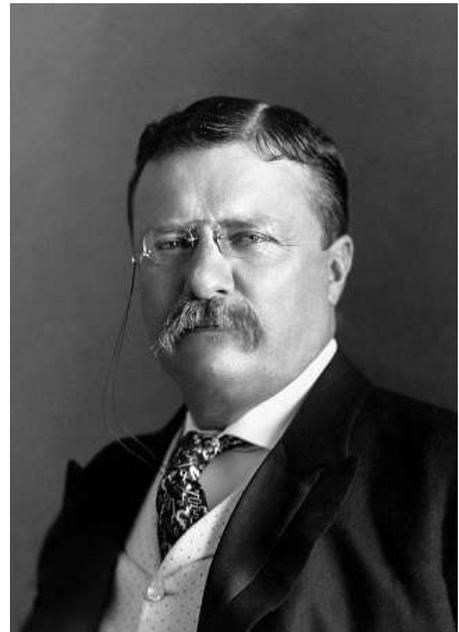
### **ANSWER:**

#### **THEODORE ROOSEVELT - 26<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES:**

John F. Kennedy's visit to Nanticoke during his 1961 presidential campaign is still talked about by those who lined the streets to get a quick glimpse of him. Kennedy's motorcade didn't stop along the route to enable him to speak to the crowd.

In 1914, on a whistle stop campaign tour, Pennsylvania Governor Gifford Pinchot, did stop long enough to say a few words to the crowd. On hand to stump for Pinchot, was former President of the United States Theodore Roosevelt. When the chief executive emerged from the train to address the crowd, he was greeted by what some called a "drunken city resident" spewing some harsh rhetoric. All who had excitedly gathered to see Roosevelt in person were disgusted by the man's comments, but nothing was done to stop him. Disgusted, Roosevelt immediately returned to the train car and shortly thereafter the train pulled out.

In 1901, Roosevelt was sworn in as President after the assassination of William McKinley. Roosevelt was vacationing in Vermont, he traveled to Buffalo to visit McKinley in the hospital. At the time doctors were confident of McKinley's recovery, so Roosevelt resumed his vacation in the Adirondacks. McKinley died on September 14, and Roosevelt was informed while he was in North Creek; he returned to Buffalo and was sworn in as the nation's 26th president at the Ansley Wilcox House. 



## Can You Answer This Issue's Mystery Question?

In 1914, Evan J. Williams, president of the Nanticoke School Board, removed the first ceremonial shovel-full of dirt for the planned new high school located at Main and Kosciuszko Street. As excavation began, in June of 1914, and only down three feet, workers came across an exceptionally strange find. What was buried under the site of Nanticoke High School?

**The answer will be found on our website [www.nanticokehistoryonline.org](http://www.nanticokehistoryonline.org) on our Stories page, after publication of this issue, as well as in our next issue of Legacy.**



## Underground Nanticoke:

### Not just any rock

It is a fact that what is now Pennsylvania was inhabited by Native Americans for 12,000 to 18,000 years. Known as hunter-gatherers, they were part of the Archaic and Paleoindian Period. By the Transitional Period 2,800 to 4,850 BP, Native Americans farmed and settled in camps along rivers and streams. By the 17th century the Iroquois Confederacy saturated the Northeast and tribes in Pennsylvania were the Shawnee, Conoy, Piscataway

and Susquehannock. In the 1700s when the Nanticoke traveled from the Delmarva Peninsula, to settle in the valley, they grew corn, barley, squash and beans. It is for that reason the subject of this issue's Underground Nanticoke is so important.

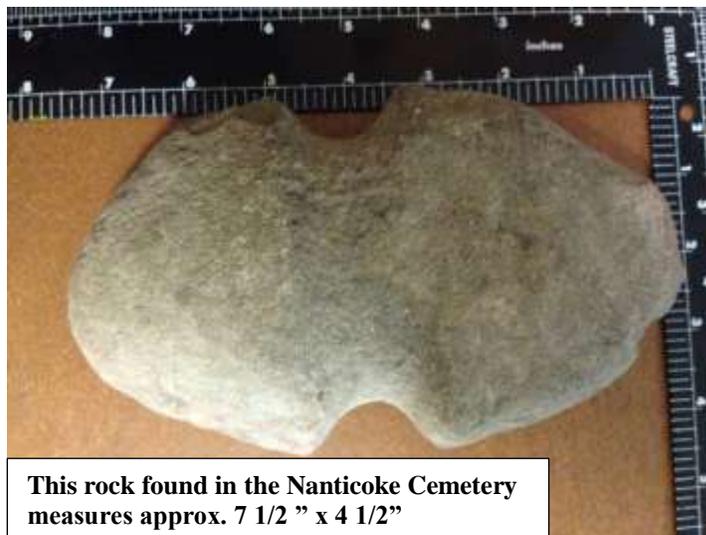


It looked like just any other rock, resting against the base of a tree in the Nanticoke Cemetery. How it managed to get there was the question. The person who found it perched under the tree, thought the shape quite unusual, molded, carved, resembling a tool or weapon. How did it get to its place under the tree? Did it work its way up through the soil, was it uncovered when a grave was being prepared

and perhaps placed in that spot so the finder could retrieve it later? No one really knows. A mystery to be sure. Thankfully the stone was brought to the Nanticoke Historical Society taking it out of the cemetery where it had been for perhaps centuries and thrusting it into the limelight and our story.

We were told, through good authority, that the rock, which is sandstone, is a hoe that would have been fastened with rawhide to a long-handled tree branch and then used as a digging tool. Sandstone is defined by Merriam-Webster as “a sedimentary rock consisting usually of quartz sand united by some cement (such as silica or calcium carbonate)” The age of it is quite evident says our expert, because the notched-out area near the center is crystalized and shows a great deal of wear reflecting the fact it had been used in that capacity for a long period of time.

Measuring 7 inches long and 4 inches wide, the rock was most likely used for planting crops. Thus, the evidence it was from the Transitional Period. The Iroquois used hoes to till soil in preparation for planting crops, which at times covered many acres. They used stone for tools to perform basic tasks like removing bark from trees and clearing areas of land for agriculture.

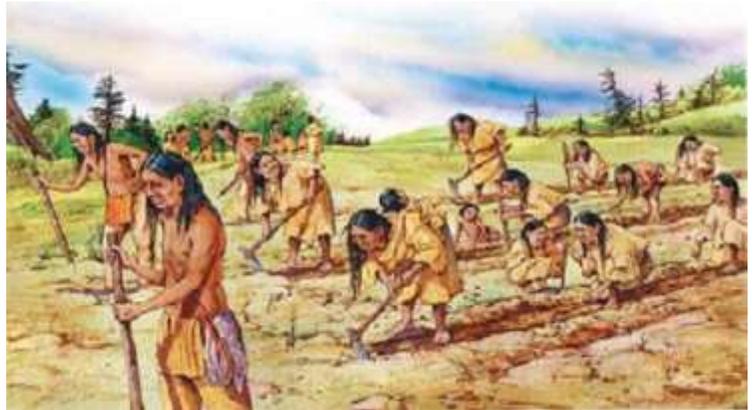


**This rock found in the Nanticoke Cemetery measures approx. 7 1/2 " x 4 1/2"**

According to nanticokeindians.org, “The Nanticoke Indians were proficient farmers. The Eastern Shore Indians planted corn and beans, drying them for later use. Women and children cared for lush gardens of corn, beans, squash, pumpkins, sunflowers, and tobacco. They gathered nuts, berries, birds' eggs, and edible plants in season.”



Chet Zaremba, vice president of the Nanticoke Historical Society, demonstrates how the tool would have looked after assembly.



Tools were mostly formed by pecking and grinding the stone with other rocks fashioned to do the respective processes. The craftsmen worked the tool into a desired shape for use in hunting, farming and cooking. Sadly we can only guess as to what tribe may have used the tool, and when it came to be fashioned as such, but to know that it is now in good hands at the historical society and will be preserved and viewed by those interested in our Native American history is gratifying. If it had not been found, examined and deemed “unusual”, it may have languished under the tree for another hundred years, as just another rock. 🗿



This photo demonstrates how the modeled stone may have been fastened to the handle.

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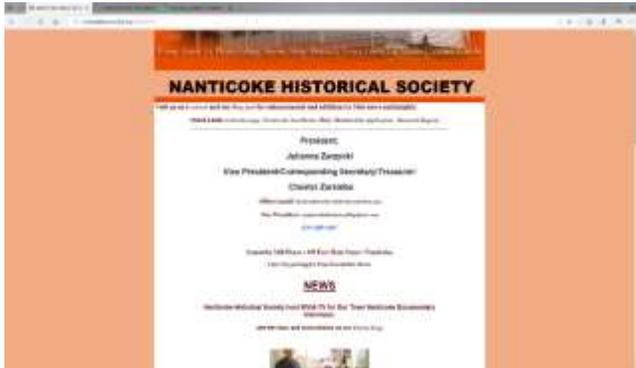
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**For more information call our office at 570-258-1367.**

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