

# NANTICOKE LEGACY

## NANTICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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



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SHOP AMAZON AND  
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HELP THE SOCIETY

### NANTICOKE HIGH SCHOOL

#### A Legacy of Memories



#### 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 !**



NANTICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY PLANS  
VARIETY/DESIGNER PURSE BINGO

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 To collect artifacts, memorabilia and historical documents and facts of Nanticoke, Pennsylvania and to store such items in a central location or specific area where these articles may be preserved, appreciated and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

**TO BE ANNOUNCED**

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/Treasurer: Chester Zaremba**

**Secretary – Shelly Jones**

**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:**

**Mark Kellar - Life Member  
Anthony Fabian - Individual Member  
The Rose Family - Family Membership**

## **Monetary Donations:**

**Rep. Eddie Day Pashinski  
Mrs. Barbara Von Dran  
Ms. Norma Ushinski  
Mr. Martin Zola  
Ms. Cinda Hartman - In Memory of Lethea Buff  
Mr. Graham Van Slyke – In Memory of Lethea Buff**

## **Property Gifts**

**Grandfather Clock - by Misericordia University  
Display case - by Leslie Tamerantz  
Basketball Jacket - by Leon & Crystal Bogdan**

**The Nanticoke Historical Society would especially like to thank Mrs. Teddi Janosov for the donation of an extensive collection of mining records belonging to her late husband Robert who passed away in 2005. The records will be added to the society archives.**

## **Thank you for your generous donations:**

**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.**

# SOCIETY NEWS:

## Holiday Open House

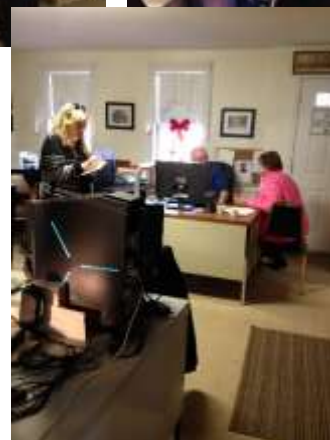
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Those who attended the Nanticoke Historical Society Open House were treated to a down-home Christmas as they strolled through the Samantha Mill House. Hot Chocolate, Christmas candy and treats were served and those who attended got to take their first look at the society's new acquisition the Nanticoke Hospital Grandfather clock as well as a new display case recently donated to the society. Many took



the time to check out the collection of Nanticoke High School yearbooks and talk with members about the times they remember growing up in Nanticoke and how the city bustled during the holiday season. Those attending also took the opportunity to become members or as a gift to a loved one, opened a new or renewed an existing membership while taking advantage of the Our Town Nanticoke DVD buy two get one free offer as gifts for family and friends. We are fortunate to have a venue such as the Mill House to display and store the many records and artifacts received. If you missed this event, we'll be having more in the future.



Until then the officers and members of the Nanticoke Historical Society wish you and yours a very blessed Thanksgiving and a Very Merry Christmas. 🎄

## BECOME A MEMBER AND ENJOY OUR HOSPITALITY

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## SOCIETY NEWS:

### VARIETY/GIFT CARD/DESIGNER PURSE BINGO PLANNED FOR MAY



The Nanticoke Historical Society will be holding their second annual Designer Purse Bingo in May 2020. In addition to the ever-popular purses, this Bingo will also include a variety of items for both men and women added to the list of prizes available to win. Janine Whittaker and



Sally Gorgas, co-chairpersons for the event, promise that this year's event will be as much fun as the inaugural event held in 2019. "We want to make it an enjoyable event that both men and women will enjoy so we're adding some additional prizes" "But we're not giving that information away just yet." Whittaker teased. So, we'll just have to wait to find out what surprises they have in store. The event will also include a basket raffle and food and refreshments will be available. More information will be announced at the

beginning of the year. 📅

### SHELLY JONES NAMED SOCIETY SECRETARY



The Nanticoke Historical Society welcomes society member Shelly Jones who was recently elected by acclamation as Secretary of the Nanticoke Historical Society. Chet Zaremba, vice-president of the society, recently announced Jones' appointment adding that she will be carrying out many of the secretarial duties associated with the society such as answering and initiating all correspondence as directed by society officers, recording and maintaining the minutes of all regular meetings and maintaining a "correspondence" file of all incoming and outgoing correspondence.

Jones who has been a member for a little more than a year, was born and raised in Nanticoke. She grew up in a home built around 1874 and was initially owned by the Fairchild's a prominent Nanticoke family. Her paternal grandparents immigrated from Poland in the early 1900s and located in Nanticoke. She proudly claims that her family has lived in the same neighborhood for over 90 years. "It is a pleasure to serve as secretary to the historical society," Jones said recently, "I am hoping to help get others interested in their roots, Nanticoke was a wonderful place to grow up." 📅

## NANTICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY PARTICIPATES IN NATIONAL NIGHT OUT



It was a beautiful August evening and those who attended the Newport Township National Night Out event at the St. Faustina Grove in Sheatown were given a chance to meet first



responders along with the chance to eat some great food and meet other residents of Newport Township and Nanticoke. It was community comradery at its best. Nanticoke City Police, Fire and Rescue and Ambulance were in attendance. along with members of the Nanticoke Historical Society handing out the organization's information, selling the newly designed Historical Society T-shirts and Our Town Nanticoke DVDs. Friends and neighbors stopped by the society's table to reminisce and get information on becoming a member.

National Night Out began in 1970 in Lower Merion near Philadelphia. A volunteer with their community Crimewatch program started a newsletter that highlighted the groups successes. The volunteer, known only as Matt, reached out into the surrounding communities and found a connection to other groups interested in sharing information. By 1981, a National Town Watch association was founded keeping participating communities informed and motivated. In 1984, National Night Out was introduced reflecting the established network that had been built over the years. According the National Night Out website, "The first annual National Night Out involved 2.5 million neighbors across 400 communities in 23 states. Today the website celebrates 36 years in operation which shows that sixteen thousand communities and 38 million neighbors participate." This confirms the notion that the action of one person can make a difference.

The Nanticoke Historical Society officers and members wish to thank the Nanticoke City Police Department, Fire and Rescue and Ambulance for their service. 🇺🇸



## A PERFECT FIT - WYOMING SEMINARY DAY OF SERVICE

When Dr. Andrea Nerozzi, Associate Director, Maslow Stem School Science teacher at the Wyoming Seminary Upper School in Kingston, came to the Nanticoke Historical Society to do some research on her family, she met John Sherrick, the society's information officer. Nerozzi was impressed with his work and the amount of information that was contained in the society's archives referencing her family. While researching a deed on a family property with Sherrick, she decided to add the historical society as a

beneficiary of the Wyoming Seminary's Day of Service program. "It's a perfect fit. Historical societies are important and a good idea to bring to young people." Things that happened a long time ago are reverberating today." She added, "I did not appreciate that until starting my research."



The school's program, which is in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year, requires students to perform 40 hours of service for the community. Hours can be dedicated in or outside of the school. Several students signed up for the historical society project, nine were selected, four from the US and five from China. According to the school's website "The school has a long history of welcoming students from around the world to study in its academically challenging environment." The motivation of the students



may have been the fact they liked computer projects, research or history as a subject, regardless, they were excited about entering records into society archives. Sherrick, was impressed with the student's get-down-to-business mind-set. "Not much instruction had to be given. After a brief introduction, they were ready to work," adding he hopes they'll return in the future.

Along with Nerozzi, Clark Switzer, Wyoming Seminary history teacher was there to oversee the student's progress. Switzer has adopted innovative ways to interest students in approaching the subject of history by utilizing several techniques such as artifacts, historical role playing, music and field trips. Switzer is also on the board of the Irem Temple Restoration Project and a member of the Greater Pittston Cultural Coalition.

As for the students, Kaiqi (Kevin) Shen of China said, "Yes, I love history that is why I'm here. It's good for me to record situations from back then. Asked if he enjoyed being in the United States, he



answered quickly, "Yes of course." Yiqing (Allen) Cao of China also admitted he enjoys the subject as well adding, "Last year I took World History, I'm enjoying my time at Wyoming Sem." Ashley Dunn of Rhode Island admitted, "I was concerned at first, all the names are interesting, but now I want to get in touch with the historical society in my community at home."

The Historical Society would like to thank Wyoming Seminary, Dr. Nerozzi, Mr. Switzer and the students listed below for helping to document the history of Nanticoke.

Kaiqi (Kevin) Shen, Junior – China; Zirun Wu, Senior – China; Stephen Vanesko, Senior – USA ; Yifei Chen, Senior – China; Stanley Motyka, Junior – USA; Ashley Dunn, Junior – USA; Matthew Kulosewski, Junior – USA; Zherui (Michael) Zhang, Junior – China; Yiqing (Allen) Cao, Junior – China. 🇺🇸

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*On pages 11 and 12 please read "Finding Sergeant John Szumowski." This story submitted by Dr. Andrea Nerozzi chronicles her search for the gravesite of her ancestor, a Civil War Veteran and Nanticoke native. Nerozzi describes her search and discovery of Szumowski's grave marker in Holy Trinity Cemetery as "an Indiana Jones moment." Read and you'll see why.*

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## NHS Receives long forgotten timepiece



The Herschede Tubular Chime Tall-Case Clock that once graced the entrance of the Nanticoke Hospital is now set in a place of honor at the offices of the Nanticoke Historical Society. The clock has a beautiful mahogany case with arch top, turned column sides and is 96 inches high by 25 inches wide and 16 inches deep. A moon phase dial of brass and steel decorates its spectacular clock face.

During the summer the society was contacted by Dr. Donna Snelson, Director of History at Misericordia University asking if the society would like to take ownership of the clock which had been placed at the school some years ago. Society president, Julianna Zarzycki, and vice president, Chet Zaremba eagerly agreed.

Currently, what we do know about the clock is that it was presented to the Nanticoke Hospital in memory of Charles E. Jones after his death in 1920. Jones was born in 1849 in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and moved to Nanticoke in 1877.

In 1883, He established the Jones Boston Store which sold dry good, notions and wallpaper. Early in the





business he encountered financial problems, but by 1894, he worked his way through those difficulties and married Lucy Webster of Ohio. A large reception was held at the Broadway Opera House with over 160 Nanticoke residents in attendance. In 1896, Jones built the new Boston Store building on Main Street. Jones was doing so well he and his wife traveled extensively throughout Europe. On a return trip home, family and friends held their breath as it was reported that Jones and his wife were returning to America on the Titanic. They soon learned that the couple departed from Liverpool a day after the passenger ship sailed into history. Jones retired due to ill health and sold his store inventory to the Leader Store. Jones passed away at his home in 1920, which is now the location of the American Legion on West Broad Street. Perhaps the clock was given to the hospital in gratitude for the care he was given, but at this writing the reason is unknown.

### Herschede Clocks win awards

After working as a watch and clock repairman for many years, Frank Herschede started his Cincinnati, Ohio clock business in 1877 and added a cabinet shop in 1900. Herschede received gold and silver medals over the next few years for excellence and design of his clocks and one medal was received for its distinctive tubular chimes. In keeping with the tradition, in 1913, a new chime melody was composed by pianist Charles Eisen especially for the company. In 1915, At the Panama-Pacific International Exposition held in San Francisco, the company was awarded the grand prize for its chime hall clocks and mantel clocks. "Grand Prize" was then stamped on every clock manufactured after that date.



In this undated photo Nanticoke Hospital Nurses pose in front of the Herschede Clock

### Hospital Fulfills Need in Nanticoke

The plan for Nanticoke Hospital was developed in 1905 as incidents of Typhoid Fever and mining accidents were increasing. Construction of the hospital was completed by 1909 and in 1911 the facility was taken over by the state. In 1915, overcrowding was an issue and construction on a north wing began. But by 1989 the hospital was seeing a decrease in patients and closed briefly reopening shortly after as Mercy Special Care Hospital. In 2011, Community Health Systems purchased the hospital. The doors closed in 2014, and the buildings and grounds were sold in 2015 and then again in 2016.



In this 1970s photo Nanticoke Hospital employees pose for a photo in front of the clock

There isn't a clear record as to what happened to the contents of the building or how the clock came to be at Misericordia University. It remains a mystery to us as well as to those we spoke with at the university. Of course, the society is always searching for clues. Hopefully the resurfacing of the clock will bring about a discussion, of Jones's connection to the hospital, who dedicated the clock in his memory and how Misericordia University obtained it. 📷



## 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.

### CIVIL WAR - cont'd

*John Alexander* – 41st PA Infantry  
*Eugene Alexander* – 41st PA Infantry  
*Levi Arnold* – 41st PA Infantry  
*John Carey* –  
*Jacob Cosler*  
*Peter Culp* – 149<sup>th</sup> Reg. Bucktail Brigade

### WORLD WAR I

*Walter Bruska*  
*Alexander Burkett*  
*George F. Burns*,  
*William F. Busch* – 109th Field Artillery, killed in action  
*John Bush* – 109th Field Artillery, wounded in action  
*Ludwig Butka* – killed in action  
*Zigmund Butkiewicz* – U.S. Navy  
*Thomas Butkiewicz* - received 5 Croix de Guerre medals  
*Edward Butkiewicz*

### WORLD WAR II

*Joseph Cherr*, Killed in action, Belgium  
*Leonard Chesko*, Killed in action, Italy  
*Gilbert Chesney*, Killed in action  
*Albert Chmielewski*, Killed in action  
*Isadore Cimmet*, Prisoner of War  
*Peter Cipriani*, Killed in action, Germany  
*John Chiccy*  
*Clyde E. Clother*, Killed in action, France  
*Albert J. Collepari*  
*William J. Collins*, POW  
*James Conroy*, Paratrooper, 504<sup>th</sup> 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Div.

### KOREAN WAR

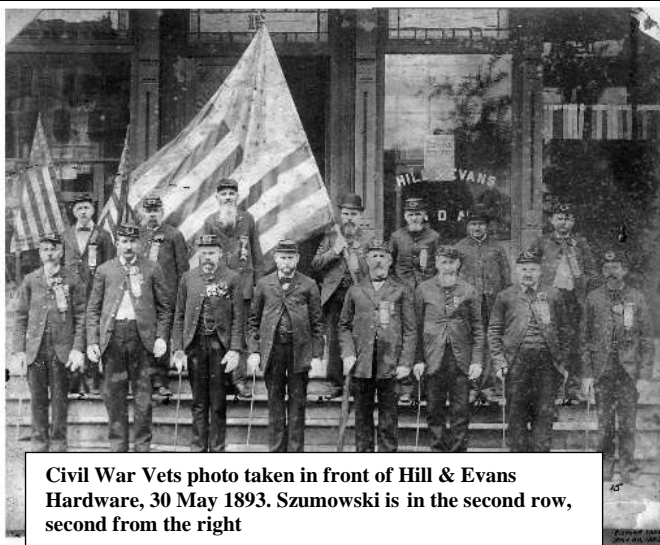
*Edward Novak*, U.S. Air Force,  
*Joseph T. Novak*  
*James Obes*, 570 Ordinance Co.  
*William O'Hern*, 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Div.  
*Norbert S. Olshefski*, U.S. Army  
*Leonard Omolecki*, U.S. Air Force  
*Leonard Olzinski*, 967<sup>th</sup> Armored Field Artillery Battalion  
*William Palmer Jr*, National Guard  
*Ralph Pendlebury*, 68<sup>th</sup> AAA Gun Battalion  
*John Pillar*, U.S. Navy  
*Leonard A. Pitz*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division  
*Fred Radcliff*, U.S. Navy, wounded in action  
*William J. Rasavage*, 2nd Infantry Division  
*Anthony S. Raymond* – U.S. Marines

**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....**

## 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."**



Civil War Vets photo taken in front of Hill & Evans Hardware, 30 May 1893. Szumowski is in the second row, second from the right

## Finding Sergeant John Szumowski

By: Andrea M. Nerozzi

At the start of my genealogical research, I had a clear image in my mind of who I wanted to write about because my grandmother, Louise (Budzinski) Shipkowski, and my mother, Mary (Shipkowski) Nerozzi, loved to tell stories about our family. I remember sitting in the small kitchen on 9 West Church Street, at the old chrome table with the gray marbled top, listening to my grandmother's tales about her mother and father, her grandparents, and life in Nanticoke at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Fortunately, Louise and Mary also retained family documents, including, photographs, postcards, letters, certificates and hand-written notes. Consequently, I thought that further inquiry would be clear-cut.

To learn more about my Great, Great Grandfather, Antoni Klidzio, who worked as a veterinarian for the Susquehanna Coal Company as early as 1871, I visited the Nanticoke Historical Society. John Sherrick quickly referenced files from the digital database on the Klidzio-Budzinski family that were compiled by gathering references from local newspapers. Another family member, Larry Korona, also left resources with the society in 2002. The combined information was an absolute treasure! Among many other things, I learned that Antoni's brother, Szymon, preceded him to the United States. Things were not as simple as I first anticipated.

My quest to find out more about the Klidzio brothers, who were among the first Poles to reside in Luzerne County and Nanticoke, led to the Polish Roots website and an article originally written in 1946, entitled *Polish Miners in Luzerne County*. Sister M Accursia, whose writing style is at once authoritative and personal, confirmed family accounts that Antoni and Szymon left Russ-Poland to avoid persecution. In this same article, Sister includes reference to other notable members of the nascent Polish community, including John Szumowski, who was one of two Poles from Nanticoke to serve in the Civil War.



John Szumowski

As I continued my genealogical research, I learned that Szymon's daughter, Anna Klidzio, married Thomas A. Butkiewicz Sr, who served as Postmaster General for Nanticoke in the late 1800s. I remembered there was connection referenced in Sister Accursia's article between the Butkiewicz family and John Szumowski. Indeed, the account is quite touching:

"According to reports of old settlers, John Szumowski, honored as a Civil War veteran by the Poles of the Valley, came to this region before the Polish Insurrection of 1863. At the age of thirty he enlisted as a volunteer in the famous 58th New York Infantry Battalion, in 1861. He was discharged October 1, 1865 with the rank of sergeant.<sup>4</sup> His whereabouts after the discharge are unknown, but by 1870 we find him with the Nanticoke Poles. For three decades Szumowski was a colorful person in the little colony. His ever-ready wit and sense of humor made him a welcome figure wherever Poles assembled. He endeared himself to his compatriots to such an extent, that when he died in 1902 at the Home for Invalids in Hampton Roads, Virginia, Thomas Butkiewicz and Joseph Twardowski brought the old veteran's body to Nanticoke for interment in the Polish parish cemetery of Holy Trinity. And every year on Decoration Day a pilgrimage is made to his grave as a tribute to his service in the Union Army."



It seemed clear to me that I had to visit John Szumowski's grave to pay my respects, as this is the only individual that connects me, however tangentially, to the Civil War. Unfortunately, despite significant attempts by the NHS, the grave marker of this veteran, who had served in many battles, including Gettysburg, had yet to be located in the Cemetery. Among the problems in locating grave markers is that, assuming they were installed in the first place, they are often damaged, or weathered. Therefore, general searches often leave historians empty-handed.

Following up on the lead from Sister Accursia's article, my husband, Mark Stavish, and I visited the Butkiewicz plot in the hope that Szumowski was buried near his friend's family.

The Butkiewicz family marker, which simply holds the family surname, is quite substantial and located near the top of the central hill, behind some large arborvitae, whose shade made our early morning search for buried markers easier. Alongside the main marker, lies a stone recognizing Thomas A. Butkiewicz Jr, a notable veteran of World War I. While we did locate the buried stone of another family member, Lucy Groblewski, further exploration did not yield reference to John Szumowski and we were very disappointed.



The sun's rays revealed the grave marker of Sgt. John Szumowski

Backing away from the plot, I almost fell over an old marker, located close to the shrubbery, with worn somewhat indistinct lettering. Then, almost miraculously, the sun's rays emerged from an angle around the shrubbery, and, in the relief cast by the shadows, the writing on the marker became clear: the last name started with "Sz". We quickly realized it was a military marker, although it bore no veteran's flag, and the information corresponded with that of John Szumowski, a Sergeant in Company G of the 58<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Volunteer Infantry (the famous "Polish Legion, led by General W. Krzyzanowski)! The spelling on the marker appears to be a bit different than in historical accounts, but that is often the case with Polish immigrants. To say that we were elated, would be an understatement, and the current of emotions brought about from this discovery were rich with both immediacy and nuance. In that moment, the time separating us was unimportant. It felt like a reunion with a long-lost friend. Immediately, we called John Sherrick, who came to the site to take an official NHS photograph, and he shared in the emotional moment.

In that instance, my husband and I transformed from genealogical researchers, to historians. I would never have predicted this at the start of my research. Through this journey, I have developed a heartfelt appreciation

that the present is a reflection to one degree or another of the conscious and unconscious events and associations of the past, even across many generations. Through the unexpected connection with John Szumowski, I have a much deeper appreciation of history and the relationships that weave our lives together into one great tapestry.

To honor John Szumowski, and all those who served in our country, my husband and I intend to reinstate the Memorial Day tribute at his grave near the Butkiewicz plot in Holy Trinity Cemetery, Nanticoke PA. Here's to you, John! 🇺🇸

#### NOTE:

**In 1861, Captain Wlodzimierz Krzyzanowski was tasked with raising a company of militia. He headquartered in New York and appealed to the large immigrant community for his volunteer infantry which was later known as the Polish Legion. John Szumowski was one of many brave men who signed on. As a General, Krzyzanowski led his 58<sup>th</sup> Regiment at Cross Keys and Chancellorsville. He met the Confederate attack in the Battle of Gettysburg sustaining many casualties. His efforts and that of his men were credited for changing the course of the war.**



# Nanticoke High School

## A Legacy of Memories

**By: Judy Minsavage**

For most, remembering high school dances, game days, romances, subjects that were sometimes easy, most times hard, prom nights, graduations, teachers that were inspirational and ones who meted out discipline generate wonderful recollections that last a lifetime. high school is a life-time game changer as evidenced in the many class reunions held and conversations with friends and family that dip back in time sharing memories of all the above. Most relive those stories with a laugh or a tear, but whatever the circumstance our high school days shape our life decisions and outcomes.

Nanticoke High School was an object of respect and honor for students, who in the early years of the school's existence, passed through the separate entrance doors marked boys and girls and remained so up until 1995, when the school, renamed the Nanticoke Middle School, closed for a final time. Simple memories like the muted color of the classroom walls, the blackboards, the locker lined hallways, the gym filled with cheering boys and girls as the basketball sailed through the air dropping into the basket hanging on the railing encircling the court, The frosty bite of bitter cold weather soon forgotten in the excitement of a high energy football game. The sights, the sounds and the smells linger taking us back in time.

### A Little History

A new Nanticoke High School was proposed in 1913, a site at the intersection of East Broad and Christian Streets was deemed a safe place to build. Mine Subsidence at the Centennial- Pulaski school sites caused concern and the proposed site sat on an area that was not mined. By 1914 though, it was decided the site unsuitable and a new location was proposed at the intersection of Main and Kosciuszko Streets on property owned by the Delaware, Lackawanna and Wester Railroad. The plans, drawn up by architect, Austin L. Reilly, included 23 rooms, an auditorium a gymnasium, domestic science and manual training rooms.



**Site first proposed for the Nanticoke High School in 1913**

After the bidding process the contract was awarded to the Nanticoke Construction Company at a proposed cost of \$212,000, which according to the US Inflation Calculator would equal \$5,443,290.80 today. the new high school was expected to be 3 stories high constructed of brick stone and terra cotta, with exterior dimensions of 147x128. The facility would house 900 students and the auditorium would have a seating capacity for 1200. The first floor would house a 63' square auditorium, 6 classrooms, library, superintendent's and director's rooms and girls' rest room. The interior decoration of the auditorium offered a special decorating feature of scroll and paneling. Seven classrooms were planned for the 2nd floor with a study hall and teachers' rest room. the 3rd floor would contain 4 classrooms, a committee room, drawing room, lecture room, physical laboratory and chemical laboratory. The gymnasium with its circular running track balcony provided seating for basketball games. It was reported that the youth of the borough, asked that the new high school gymnasium be completed before work was finished on the rest of



the building. A committee was formed to contact the coal companies about paying for the early completion of the gym. When finished, the gymnasium was expected to be the largest in the county and it was suggested that it be open every night to men of all ages and at specified times to the women and girls of Nanticoke.



maximum lighting of the room.” By December 30, the gymnasium opened to the public from 6 to 10 p.m. and could be utilized at a charge of \$15 per night or \$5 for the afternoon with no charge for rental on Sundays. The Lyman

Work began on the new high school on June 25, 1914 and progressed over the next year. Evan J. Williams, president of the school board removed the first shovel full of dirt. Because of time delays and sewer placement problems all Nanticoke schools opened on August 30, 1915 but the new high school did not. The auditorium was opened on December 16, 1915 and was described as having “buff colored walls trimmed with gold and the letters NHS arranged in blue and gold above the stage. The ceiling was covered with painted glass to allow



Stained glass panels that adorned the Nanticoke High School auditorium



Nanticoke High School First commencement class 1916

Howe Traveling Show performed in the gym to raise funds for the purchase of gym equipment. Dedication for the new school was set for May 30, 1916.

A proposal was issued to re-name the building that housed the previous high school after the late John W. Griffith, but citizens of Polish descent, working through Attorney Thomas Butkiewicz, petitioned to keep the school name. A vote was taken, and the school name remained Pulaski.

The first commencement in the new high school building took place on June 9, 1916. Rev. George Wellburn

of Scranton addressed the graduates. Joseph Burleigh was musical director at the ceremony. President of the School Board, Frank D. Hess, handed out the diplomas.



## 1970 Last Graduating Class Nanticoke High School

The senior class of 1970 attended Nanticoke High School throughout the 69-70 school year. With the merging of Nanticoke and Newport Township into the Greater Nanticoke School District, the exercises for both were scheduled to be held at Lincoln Field. With the threat of inclement weather, graduation ceremonies were moved indoors to the completed 1,100-seat auditorium of the new John S. Fine High School. Construction was still in progress on the rest of the school.



## 1970



## A beginning and an end:

In August of 1970, approximately 15,000 people attended the John S. Fine High School open house and the formal dedication program was held on September 20, 1970. The school was dedicated as a memorial to the former Governor of Pennsylvania John Sydney Fine, who was born in Newport Twp., moved to Nanticoke and graduated from Nanticoke High School. He served as Governor of Pennsylvania from 1950 to 1955.



The class of 1971 was the first to attend the new John S. Fine Senior High School. The old high school became the Middle School housing grades 6 to 8. In 1995, when an engineers' report revealed many safety issues, the school closed. The school never reopened and remained untouched until 1998 when it was announced the building would be razed and that a pharmacy chain was interested in the site.



Although the building is gone, memories remain and thanks to the efforts of the Nanticoke Historical Society, any and all materials received that concern the Nanticoke High School are kept so that

future generations will know that at the corner of Kosciuszko and East Main Street stood a building that shaped lives and created indelible memories for the many students that walked through its doors.



**CHECK YOUR ATTIC - 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.**

## MYSTERY QUESTION:

### Did you have the answer?

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

Answer:

## Human Bones



Evan J. Williams

It was June 25, 1914; Evan J. Williams Sr., President of the Nanticoke School Board, removed the first shovel of earth on the site that would see the construction of the new Nanticoke High School. Now it was up to subcontractors, John A. Schmidt and Son of Wilkes-Barre to excavate the site under the direction of C.C. Rosser, of Nanticoke Construction Company.

The next day, as laborers toiled throughout their workday and oversaw shovels full of topsoil removed, workmen were probably shocked at, what most would say was a disturbing sight. Laying just feet away from the surface were

human bones. One can imagine the flurry of activity that ensued as workers and superintendents gathered to examine the surprising find. What to do, was the question on everyone's mind.

In an article published in the Wilkes-Barre Record, two medical students were summoned to the site to inspect the skull. They speculated that because of the facial structure, the remains were most likely that of a Native American. However, it was brought to light that some years earlier another skeleton was found during an excavation of a basement for a State Street home owned by John Adams. The distance between the two sites, was described as "not great". Some "old-timers" commented that "the remains of a few people had been buried in that section of the borough many years ago, although, there was never a public burial ground in that area." Did the gentlemen mean that remains were uncovered by unsuspecting excavators during the building process, or did they mean they knew of people who simply buried their loved ones in that area without ceremony? That question remains un-answered.

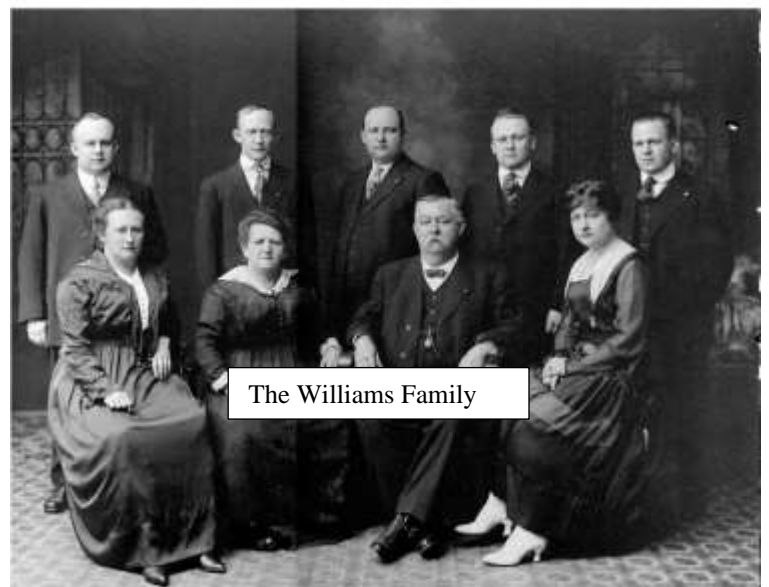
Regardless of the mystery, the finders of the bones made the decision to have them scooped up with the dirt and carted away.



Ceremonial Shovel used by Evans J. Williams on June 25, 1914.



HIGH SCHOOL  
NANTICOKE, PA.



The Williams Family

Today, many states require that contractors follow steps when finding bones on a building site or face criminal charges, imprisonment, or fines. The two main steps when bones are discovered on a site is to preserve what may be a possible crime scene or archeological site and to stop work, call the relevant authorities.

Evan J. Williams Sr., died of pneumonia on March 3, 1927 at the age of 76. Along with serving as president of the Nanticoke School Board he served as a member of Borough Council for 1 term; Vice-President of the Nanticoke National Bank; Vice-President of the Susquehanna Lumber Company; Deacon of the Nebo Baptist Church. He was also, life member of Stickney Fire Company; affiliated with Nanticoke Lodge 541 F&AM; Nanticoke Chapter No 174 OES; Mt, Horeb Council, Dieu le Veut Commandery, Knights Templar; Caldwell Consistory and Irem Temple Shrine.



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

### What Nanticoke gal rode off into the sunset with one of Hollywood's most famous cowboys?

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

### Plates of Plenty

Resident history detective and Nanticoke Historical Society information officer, John Sherrick, came across a tiny newspaper clipping in the historical society archives which piqued his curiosity. The article, which appeared in the April 8, 1950 Times Leader, simply stated "At First Presbyterian Church - Offering plates, in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Brinton Jackson are being presented by Miss Mary Jackson and will be used

for the first time tomorrow." Sherrick of course wondered if the plates were still in existence and being used today. After doing some further research on the Jackson family, Sherrick decided to call the First Presbyterian Church in Nanticoke, to inquire about the plates. He spoke with pastor Robin Williams, who retrieved the plates from their usual place and looked for some marking that would identify them as those donated in the Jacksons' memory.



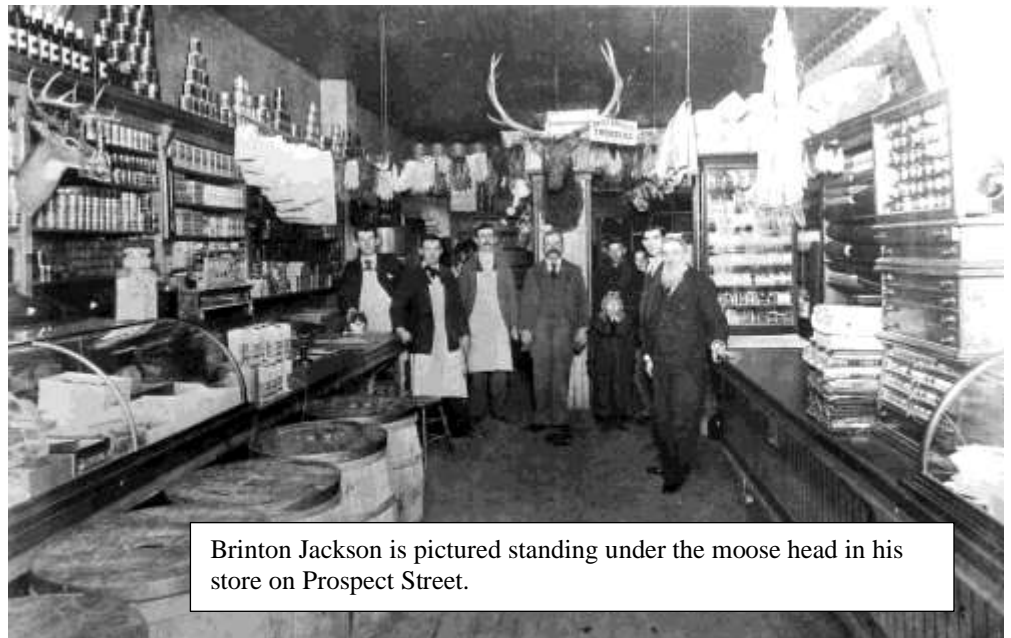
at that time, Pastor Williams did not see any evidence the plates were the ones in question. It was brought to the pastor's attention that perhaps she should look at the rim of each plate. There she found the inscription "In Memory of Mr. and Mrs. Brinton Jackson."



Inscription "In Memory of Mr. and Mrs. Brinton Jackson is barely readable.

## The Jacksons of Nanticoke

Brinton Jackson was born in Kennett Square, PA in 1864. He arrived in Nanticoke in 1872 and went to work in the Samuel George Grocery. By 1875, he established his own general store and eventually went into partnership with Samuel George. Their partnership dissolved four years later. Jackson ran his store at 108 Prospect Street and lived with his wife Maggie and children Laura Cornelia and Mary Letitia at 106 Prospect Street. In 1900



Brinton Jackson is pictured standing under the moose head in his store on Prospect Street.



The Jackson Home still stands at 106 Prospect Street

Jackson stepped into local politics after being selected by the Republican Party to run for prothonotary. He won the election. He was elected as director of the First National Bank in 1903, became vice-president of the bank in 1906 and by 1920 was named president. In 1922, the Jacksons hosted many out of town guests at a wedding at the home for daughter Laura Cornelia replete with palms and pink and white flowers. Laura, who was marrying Isaac Hawkins Moore of Wilkes-Barre, wore a white satin crepe gown trimmed with Chantilly lace and iridescent drops. Her bouquet was of Killarney and Sweetheart roses and orange blossoms. Her veil was "caught" with rare old lace and orange blossoms. Mary Jackson did

not marry but enjoyed traveling and spending summers at a vacation home at Lake Nuangola. Brinton Jackson retired in 1924 and a year later suddenly passed away after a massive heart attack. His wife Maggie passed away in 1934.

In 1926, The old Jackson store was dismantled and moved to E. Church Street by Caradoc Rees. Rees remodeled the home "giving it a coat of stucco, dashed with black and white granite." The whereabouts of the home on East Church Street is a mystery. The Prospect St. property was sold to Bell Telephone, which erected a new office building. It is now occupied by Verizon. The stately Jackson home still stands at 106 Prospect Street that serves as a reminder Nanticoke's grand past.

In 1950, Mary Jackson donated the collection plates to the First Presbyterian Church, in honor of her parents of which her father had been an active board member.

In 1955, Mary Jackson was recovering from an illness at her home and the very last record of Mary in society's was a listing in the 1957 Nanticoke Telephone Directory. 📄



## 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.**

### 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**

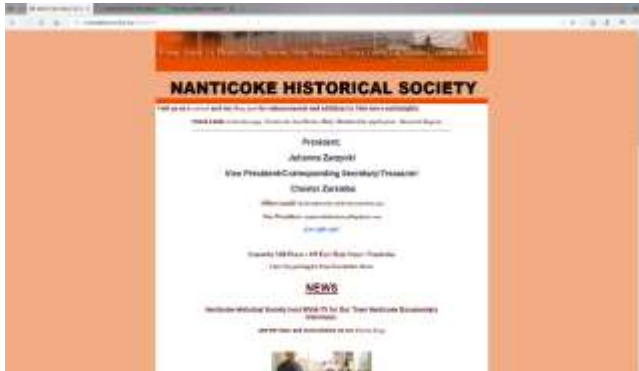
**\$75 - One-half page**

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**Contact 570-258-1367 for more information**

# NANTICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY WEBSITE:

We are committed to making your future visits to our web site a pleasant and an educational experience and are constantly looking for ways to enrich your knowledge of the history of Nanticoke. Please log on to read more regarding the stories published in our newsletters. Follow our fundraising efforts and check our calendar of events for meeting dates and times. We also invite you to keep following us on Facebook.



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Read about Nanticoke Heroes

Captain Andrew Lee –  
Washington's Spy

William McKarrachan –  
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And

Many more stories published in  
our past newsletters

## HERE ARE TWO GREAT WAYS TO SUPPORT THE NANTICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Along with the being a part of the **Amazon Smile Program**, which helps garner donations for the society through ordering online using the Amazon Smile Program, we are now part of the **ShurSave Community Rewards Program**. A program that allows local non-profit groups the opportunity to earn 3 cents for each purchase of the family of STORE BRANDS by Gold Card members. The more you buy the higher the donation.

Simply register your Gold Card today at [shursavemarkets.com](http://shursavemarkets.com)

Then shop often at your local ShurSave Supermarket. You'll get credit for all purchases of participating brands. Here's how to sign up

1. Go online to [shursavemarkets.com](http://shursavemarkets.com)
2. If you do not have an account, click Register and complete the quick registration.
3. Login to your new account and click Show Account
4. Click on the Community/School Rewards tab and select the Nanticoke Historical Society.

It's as easy as that!

The 3 cents IS NOT added onto your purchase.

**THE NANTICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
APPRECIATES YOUR  
PARTICIPATION.....**



## **LOOKING FOR A YEARBOOK?**

**THE FOLLOWING YEARBOOKS ARE LOCATED AT OUR OFFICES:**

**Check our website for availability – UPDATED JANUARY 2019**

**Nanticoke High School**

**John S. Fine or GNA (Greater Nanticoke Area High School)**

**Newport High School, Wanamie,**

**Newport Twp.**

**GAR High School**

**Bloomsburg University**

**Wilkes University**

**Kings College**

**Duplicates from each high school are available for purchase.**

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

## **HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP THE NANTICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY WHILE SHOPPING AMAZON.**

### **What is AmazonSmile?**

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization. You can choose from over one million organizations to support.

### **How do I support the Nanticoke Historical Society when shopping on AmazonSmile?**

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