

# NANTICOKE LEGACY

## NANTICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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

IN THIS ISSUE:

SOCIETY NEWS:

\* Society Sponsors  
Premier of Huber  
Breaker Film

\*It started with a  
medal

\*The Nanticoke  
Hospital Clock the  
Saga Continues

IN HONOR OF OUR  
MILITARY

A NANTICOKE  
HERO WILL BE  
MISSED

NANTICOKE'S LINK  
TO MURDER INC.

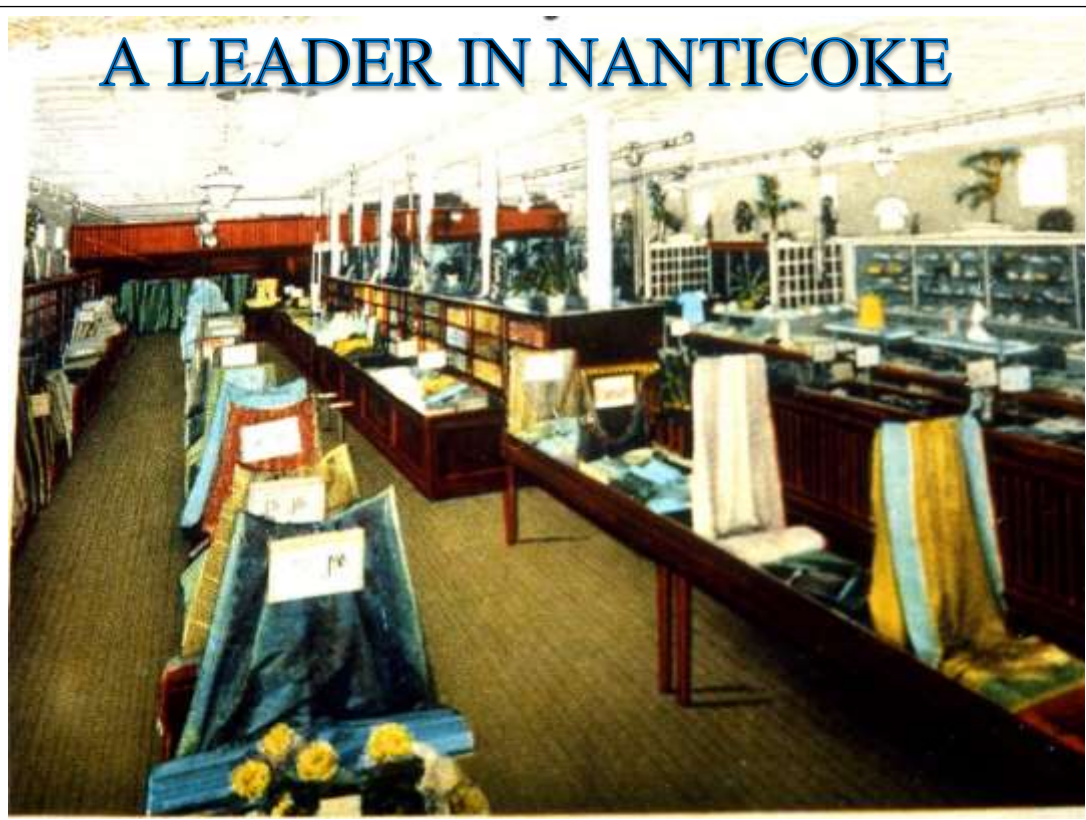
A LEADER IN  
NANTICOKE

MYSTERY  
QUESTION  
LAST ISSUES  
ANSWER - PLUS  
OUR NEW  
QUESTION:

JUST WHAT IS A  
COAL BALL?

A MILLION  
MEMORIES  
....GONE

EDITORS NOTE



**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 22**

**FEBRUARY 2020**

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 To collect artifacts, memorabilia and historical documents and facts of Nanticoke, Pennsylvania and to store such items in a central location or specific area where these articles may be preserved, appreciated and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

**FEBRUARY 27**  
**MARCH 26**  
**APRIL 30**

All meetings take place at 7 p.m. the last Thursday of the month 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

[Office email - history@nanticokehistoryonline.org](mailto:history@nanticokehistoryonline.org)

[Newsletter email - nanticokehistory@aol.com](mailto:nanticokehistory@aol.com)

**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:

**Milton J. Evans – Family Membership  
Michael Hill – Redwood City, CA – Life Membership**

Monetary Donations:

**Alice Pawlowski  
Kominski family  
Barbara Von Dran  
Norma Ushinski  
Andy Sherbine  
Charlotte Peplinski**

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.**

## **WONDERING WHAT TO DO WITH OLD PHOTOS AND MEMORABILIA?**

Our loved ones have a history. Their life stories are deeply rooted in their community as residents, veterans, business owners, teachers, members of organizations and so much more. The Nanticoke Historical Society realizes and respects how important each person's story is to their relatives and friends as well as the community in which they lived.

That is why the society respectfully asks those who have lost a loved one to consider the historical society when taking stock of memorabilia and photos. The society may already have pieces of a family's history in its vast database to which pictures of an old homestead, business, rare family photos or writings may be added completing a genealogical picture in tribute to those who have passed. We sometimes find ourselves with memorabilia or photos passed down through generations. Some of these photos may contain scenes of old Nanticoke, a street, or building that has been long since razed. Society information officers will scan and return items to families if requested.

We do reserve the right to accept or deny items that we can and cannot use, or store ourselves, but at the very least, we may be able to take some of the burden off of family members who find themselves undecided as to what to do with countless old photos and/or memorabilia that may contain valuable pieces of the city's history. For more information or to donate items Contact the Historical Society at 570-258-1367 or Email: [history@nanticokehistoryonline.org](mailto:history@nanticokehistoryonline.org).

## SOCIETY NEWS:

# Society sponsors premier of Huber Breaker film



To say that the documentary filmmakers John Welsh and Alana Mauger are passionate about the subject of their recent documentary is to say the least. What started out as a curiosity ended in a 28-minute film. The coal mining history of this region is so much more than a building, it is what the day to day existence was for so many who headed off to work in the mines but weren't sure of what that day would



**Filmmakers Alana Mauger and John Welsh give some introductory remarks on their film *Beyond the Breaker***

bring. The Huber was the last breaker

standing, and many wished to have it remain as a museum, holding memories and exhibiting the story of the Anthracite region.

Welsh, A freelance photographer, became interested in the Huber in Ashley after coming across the building while working on another project. Knowing very little about the region and the impact of the coal industry on its people, Welsh started his research and found Bill Best and Bob Wolensky of the Anthracite Heritage Foundation and so many others who were willing to contribute. Mauger and Welsh, who are from the Philadelphia area, admitted completing the project was a long process that started in 2012, with many visits to Northeast PA. and beyond to find what part of the story they wanted to tell, and tell it they did. With over 30 interview segments with plenty of emotion they give the viewer a picture of what it was like to live,

work and raise a family in the Anthracite coal region.

The Nanticoke Historical Society was proud to serve as sponsor for the January 14, 2020 premier of the documentary "Beyond the Breaker," the story of the Huber Breaker's history and the impact of its recent demolition on the region and its people. The Cultural Centre of St. Faustina, 38 W. Church St. hosted the event and Nanticoke Historical Society, Vice-President, Chet Zaremba served as emcee. The film's debut was just one of the many programs offered during Anthracite Mining Heritage Month.



**Chet Zaremba, vice-president of the Nanticoke Historical Society, addresses audience at the premier of *Beyond the Breaker***



**Prof. Bob Wolensky, Anthracite Heritage Foundation & Adjunct Professor of history and sociology at King's College gives opening remarks**



**From left, Society member Kathy Sweeney, Society President, Julianna Zarzycki, and society member Sally Gorgas greet those attending the premier.**

The Nanticoke Historical Society officers and members thank Welsh and Mauger for the opportunity to be the first to screen the documentary. With their thoughtful collaboration to create Beyond the Breaker, The filmmakers have given Nanticoke and all of the Anthracite region a constant reminder

of the struggle of our forefathers in the days of King Coal, and the sadness of many in losing the last building that would have stood as a monument to the memory of those who toiled in the mines, the families that struggled daily and those who lost their lives searching for a better life. 🇺🇸



**The movie begins to a standing room only crowd in the Cultural Centre of St. Faustina in Nanticoke**



**BECOME A MEMBER OF THE  
NANTICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND ENJOY OUR  
HOSPITALITY!**

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

Log on to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), you will be prompted to list your charitable organization to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. List the Nanticoke Historical Society. Amazon will remember your selection. From then on log onto at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) to purchase from Amazon - Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to the Nanticoke Historical Society.

## The Nanticoke Historical Society is holding its Spring Raffle

First Prize – \$125

Second Price - \$50

Third Prize - \$25

Tickets are available at the Historical Society offices Samantha Mill House (Next to the Mill Memorial Library) Off of Kosciuszko Street 495 East Main Street Nanticoke, PA 18634 or by calling - 570-258-1367 Donation - \$2 each or 3 for \$5. Drawing will be held at the 7 P.M. regular historical society meeting to be held in May.

Please return tickets by May 9

## SOCIETY NEWS:

### It started with a medal

A story published in the Nanticoke Historical Society newsletter in 2015 entitled “Worth More than its Weight in Gold” detailed how Roger Gilbert contacted the Nanticoke Historical Society through Facebook and said he was in possession of a gold medal once presented to David Price who, in 1926, was a member of the Nanticoke High School State Championship Basketball Team. Society Vice-President, Chet Zaremba was thrilled to receive the medal from Gilbert in exchange for two lifetime memberships to the society. Zaremba then in turn donated



the medal to the GNA School Board Vice President Ken James on behalf of the Nanticoke Historical Society.

At that time Zaremba wished to match the medal up with the trophy the team received for the state championship, but found it was not in any place of honor, but was stored with other school championship trophies and awards in a storage room leaving them dust covered and some damaged. At that, Zaremba, and society members Mike Passetti and Gene Danowski, acted and asked the school to photograph the trophies for their records. But the trio was still unhappy with leaving them stored away and forgotten. With urging from the society, the school officials agreed that trophies and memorabilia should be displayed in a prominent place in the high school for students and faculty to appreciate, thus the formation of the Greater Nanticoke Area Athletic Recognition Committee.



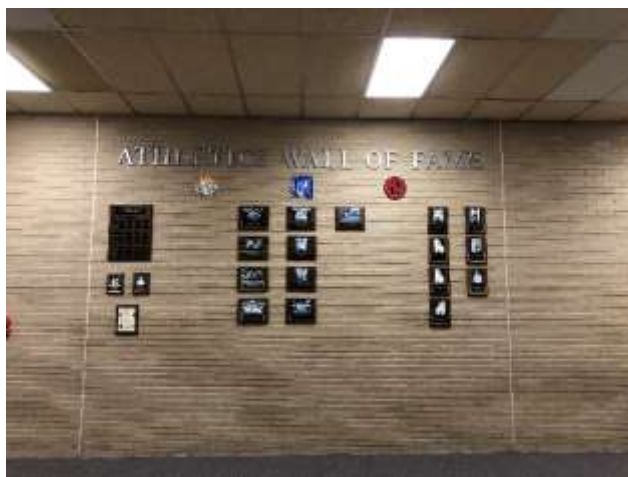
The purpose of the group is to recognize past and present teams and athletes and their accomplishments. It's something that should invoke school spirit," Zaremba said recently. "These trophies and awards will focus on what can be accomplished and that these are a part of a valuable historical record."

The group unveiled a wall of fame in the school's entrance hall on February 4 . It features plaques from all the state basketball teams from 1923 to 1990 as well as plaques presented to athletes who achieved state recognition from 1857 to 1967. The first inductees were Michael Kwak, 1957; Kenneth Legins, 1960 and 61; William James, 1961; Richard Kiewlak, 1961; Joseph Shepela, 1962; Robert Grabinski, 1962; Joseph Grzymiski, 1963 and 64.

Donations have been received which help to build cases constructed by school students will contain plaques for Steve Bilko Sr., and Pete Gray.



"But our work is not done," said Zaremba. "We have so much more to display and donations are necessary to continue building the cases that will hold the valuable items. We owe it to our GNA students to show that the school has a rich history in athletics and that anything can be achieved and perhaps instill a sense of pride in their school and community."



**SEE MORE GREAT PHOTOS OF THE DISPLAY ON OUR WEBSITE**

**[www.nanticokehistoryonline.org](http://www.nanticokehistoryonline.org) click on our photos page**



**If you  
would  
like to  
donate  
to this  
project,**

**or for more information call  
Regina Plodwick at 570—868-6357  
or email [rc63@frontier.com](mailto:rc63@frontier.com).**



## The Nanticoke Hospital Clock—the saga continues



In our last newsletter we told the story of the Nanticoke Hospital Hall Clock and how it came into our possession. We are so proud to have it so that those who remember the hospital can once again enjoy it's beauty. However, unfortunately there are inner workings that need replaced or cleaned in order to get the clock running again. The Nanticoke Historical Society has undertaken that effort.

If you or anyone you know would like to contribute to the fund to get the clock back up and running, please contact our office at 570-258-1367. Any donation will be appreciated. Thank you.

To see the Nanticoke Historical Society's display of memorabilia at the Greater Nanticoke Area High School. Log on to our website at [www.nanticokehistoryonline.org](http://www.nanticokehistoryonline.org).





# 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 M. Culver*

*William L. Davis* – wounded at Gettysburg

*John Dunn* – Captain Co. G 9<sup>th</sup> Regiment

*Barnet Espy* – 41<sup>st</sup> PA Infantry

*Theodore Espy* – 41<sup>st</sup>. PA Infantry

*Daniel Fogerty* – Served under General Sheridan

## WORLD WAR I

*Peter Butkowski*

*Stanley Caban* – Co. B 45<sup>th</sup> Engineers

*John Cabera*

*Berton Cain* – Battery C 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Artillery

*Orval C. Cain* – Battery C 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Artillery

*Angelo Cassone*

*Konstanty Castellian*

*Frank J Catnes* - 109<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery

*Lawrence Chapin*

**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

*Edward Cravitz or Cravietz*

*Michael Cwiklik*, Killed in Action - Belgium

*John Cybulski*

*Edward A. Cyron* – 172<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Reg Co. C and 43<sup>rd</sup> Inf Div

*Benjamin Czarnecki, Jr.*

*Thomas Czerwinski* - Killed in action, Germany

*Eugene Danielowicz* - POW

*Albert Danoff* - POW

*Edward G. Davison* – Killed in action - Germany

*Michael F. Deslick* - KIA

*George A. Detz*, Received bronze star and purple heart

## KOREAN WAR

*Angelo Ricci*, Communications specialist 40<sup>th</sup> Infantry Div

*Larence Robacheski*

*Chester Romanowski* - US Army

*Frederick Sharpe* – Co D. Third Engineer Combat Battalion.

*W.H. Sherman*, Transport Squadron of 5<sup>th</sup> Air Force

*Leonard Shibilskik*

*Michael Shimko* – 306<sup>th</sup> Engineer Dump truck Co.

*Frederick W. Shipman* - 54<sup>th</sup> Infantry Div.

*Daniel Siejak* - US Army

*Ralph J. Smith* – 707<sup>th</sup> Headquarters Battalion

*William H. Smugi*

*John Sopko* - US Army, Wounded in action

*John H. Spotanski* - 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Aircraft Wing

*Joseph Stashik* – U.S. Marines 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division.

## 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."**

# A NANTICOKE HERO WILL BE MISSED



**Dr. Stanley Dudrick standing in front of his boyhood home on West Union Street in 2017.**

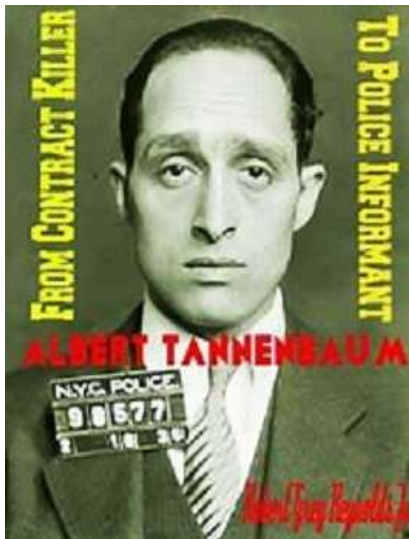
Named one of the 50 most influential physicians in history, former Nanticoke resident, Dr. Stanley Dudrick, known for the development of the central venous feeding technique known as intravenous hyperalimentation or total parenteral nutrition (TPN), passed away in January at the age of 86. The procedure he invented provides patients who are unable to gain nourishment by mouth to obtain nutrients intravenously saving the lives of millions of patients over the years.

Born in Nanticoke in 1935, Dudrick was the son and grandson of coal miners and although local doctors didn't give him much encouragement Dudrick, with the support of his family decided to become a doctor. Dudrick graduated from Nanticoke High School in 1953. He received his bachelor's degree in biology from Franklin & Marshall College and obtained his medical degree at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. Dudrick had planned to come back to Nanticoke to practice medicine, but the lack of teaching hospitals or medical schools in the area would not afford him the opportunity to work on some of the advanced theories he wanted to explore. In 1967, Dudrick developed the TPN method and the world benefitted by his ingenious procedure. By 2011, Dudrick did return to the area and was named the Director of the Physician Assistant Program at Misericordia University and was a professor of surgery at Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine. In 2017,

After a lifetime of achievement, the city of Nanticoke honored Dudrick with a day named in his honor and an historical marker listing his achievements was unveiled at the monthly city council meeting that night. West Union Street was officially named Dr. Stanley J. Dudrick Drive in his honor.



On his visit to the city, Dudrick passed on some very meaningful and timely words to live by to students he addressed at Nanticoke High School. "Prudently establish your goals and then focus on achieving them by working as hard, conscientiously and consistently as you can toward achieving them. Never give up. Finally, remember that if you always do good, you will do well." 🇺🇸



## Nanticoke's Link to Murder Inc. The Two Faces of a Killer

By: Judy Minsavage



It's often said that a person is a product of their environment, this would have been the case of little Albert Tannenbaum, who was born in 1906 to Sam and Anna Schwartz Tannenbaum. He lived with his parents in Nanticoke until the age of three. His family moved to Brooklyn where Albert, his brother Solomon and Sister Jenny were thrust into a totally different environment. Albert quit school at the age of 17 and began working in the garment district. Soon he found himself rubbing shoulders with what you might call some questionable characters after getting a job at the Loch Sheldrake Country Club owned by Jewish gangster Jacob "Gurrah" Shapiro. Shapiro took a liking to the young man and soon Tannenbaum was indoctrinated into the seamy underworld. Soon "Allie" "Tick Tock" Tannenbaum was earning \$75 a week as an enforcer, that was raised to \$125 when he became a member of Murder Inc. According to the US Inflation Calculator, that figure would equal \$1,800 today.

Murder Inc. consisted of groups of organized crime figures who during the 1930s and 40s enabled contract killings for the American Mafia and Jewish Mob. The groups were largely Italian Americans and Jewish gangsters from Brooklyn neighborhoods. Louis "Lepke" Bulchalter and Albert "The Mad Hatter" Anastasia headed the enforcers, and both were believed to be responsible for between 400 and 1000 contract killings.

Tannenbaum's entrance into a world that was burgeoning with illegal ways to make money was easy for a young man who longed for the trappings of crime syndicate bosses he often encountered at the country club. The tentacles of organized crime used the economic opportunities of the "roaring twenties" and prohibition to control bootlegging, loansharking, gambling and narcotics. Crime bosses like Shapiro groomed young men plying them with money and the promise of power. According to "Albert Tannenbaum: From Contract Killer to Police Informant, published by Robert Grey Reynolds Jr., Tannenbaum's rise to favor was quick and before his arrest in 1940, was involved in" 7 murders, 50 slugging's, and 100 bombings."



Booked : Left - Jacob "Gurrah" Shapiro  
Right - Albert "Tick Tock" Tannenbaum

Tannenbaum was contracted to murder Harry "Big Greenie" Greenberg in Los Angeles. Mob boss, Buchalter, ordered the hit as Greenberg was a potential witness in an upcoming case against the gangster and whose testimony New York District Attorney Thomas E. Dewey, hoped would put Buchalter behind bars for the murder of Joseph Rosen. Tannenbaum first followed Greenberg to Montreal then to Detroit. He finally caught up with Greenberg in Los Angeles where on November 22, 1939, he was shot to death in his driveway with the "assistance of" Bugsy Siegal one of the most feared underworld chieftains of the day.

Siegel was instrumental in the development of Las Vegas. He and Meyer Lansky were extremely influential in the inner workings of the American Mafia and the Italian-Jewish National Crime Syndicate. Tannenbaum however turned state's evidence in 1941 when Bugsy Siegel was arrested along with Frankie Carbo for ordering Greenberg's murder. At the time Tannenbaum claimed his only involvement was that he provided the weapons used for the execution. In 1942, Siegel and Carbo were acquitted of the murder charges due to insufficient evidence.



**At Trial: Left Albert Tannenbaum and center Charles "The Bug" Workman**

In 1940 Tannenbaum testified against "Lepke" Bulchalter, the man responsible for his induction into the underworld. Bulchalter, was convicted of murder and executed in the electric chair at Sing Sing Prison in 1944.

Had Tannenbaum's family stayed in Nanticoke, his life, most likely would have been very different. Without the influence of Buchalter and the like, he may not have quit school, maybe gone on to own his own business, married a "hometown girl" and had a family, we'll never know. In 1941 Tannenbaum was working as a bodyguard for Charles "The Bug" Workman

and was subsequently arrested for the murder of mob front man, Hyman "Herman" Yuran. Workman was arrested for the 1935 murder of Dutch Shultz in a New Jersey restaurant. As both men sat in prison, Tannenbaum decided to give authorities the evidence they needed to convict Workman and provided testimony on several contract killings in Brooklyn, the Bronx, Newark, New Jersey and Los Angeles leading to numerous convictions.




**Looking Confident: Left Albert Tannenbaum and Abe "Kid Twist"**

Albert Tannenbaum and Abe "Kid Twist" Reles, another member of Murder Inc. testified before the Bronx Grand Jury about the murder of Irving Penn, a music publisher that was mistaken for a union man and was killed by mobster associates of Tannenbaum and Reles. Tannenbaum and Reles were two of the most feared hitmen in the "Murder, Inc." mob group, but in 1940 they both faced trial on several murders and chose to become government informants to avoid trial and execution. Reles allegedly jumped to his death from a rooming house window at the Half Moon Hotel in Staten Island, New York shortly before he was scheduled to appear in court.

By October 1942, Tannenbaum was given a suspended sentence for his testimonies but kept in custody for his own safety. In 1950, he testified in the murder trial of Jack Parisi, a known associate of crime boss Russell Buffalino and member of Murder Inc. even with a preponderance of evidence Parisi walked free.

Some newspapers reported Tannenbaum dropped out of sight, and was never seen again, others said someone saw him selling lampshades in Atlanta, GA. While others had him married, although there's no indication he had a wife. What is known, is Tannenbaum died in Pinellas, Florida on November 24, 1976. Robert Grey Reynolds in his short bio of Tannenbaum entitled "From Contract Killer to Police Informant" described the hit man as he laid in his casket "The primary suspect in at least seven murders, his thin, sad face belied his criminal demeanor. He appeared almost shy and ready to burst out crying."

Perhaps Tannenbaum's last thoughts were of a lifetime lost. 

**In his final days as a hit man Tannenbaum shied away from the cameras.**



## Known members of Murder Inc.

Louis "Lepke" Buchalter – original head of Murder, Inc.

Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel – a founder and leading member

Albert "The Lord High Executioner" Anastasia – Succeeded Buchalter until he became boss of the Gambino crime family

Frank "The Dasher" Abbandando

Frankie Carbo

Louis Cohen

Aniello Dellacroce

Martin "Bugsy" Goldstein

Hyman "Curly" Holtz

Louis "Shadow" Kravitz

Philip "Little Farvel" Kovolick

Samuel "Red" Levine

Seymour Magoon

Harry Maione

Abe "Kid Twist" Reles

Jacob "Gurrah" Shapiro

Harry "Pittsburgh Phil" Strauss

Allie "Tick Tock" Tannenbaum

Emanuel "Mendy" Weiss

## Back in Nanticoke they got the wrong man!



We're not sure how Al Teitelbaum, a Wilkes-Barre Pharmacist, heard the disturbing news. It must have been a shock to his Nanticoke family and friends, as well as his pharmacy customers finding out he'd been a gangster all along. A news report initiated on January 18, 1953 by The Nanticoke Rotary and picked up by the Sunday Independent claimed Teitlebaum, "a native of Nanticoke, one of the leading members of Murder, Inc. a gang of hoodlums." The accounts claimed he was named in a book entitled "Murder, Inc." written by New York District Attorney Burton Turkus.

There must have been much talk and confusion following such a claim and we're sure Teitlebaum and his family suffered a great deal of ridicule. On January 25, 1953, however, an article in the Sunday Independent stated, "Nanticoke rotary and this newspaper regret and apologize for unintentionally using the name Al Teitelbaum in an item about the book, "Murder, Inc." last week. The book referred to the late Al Tannenbaum, not Al Teitelbaum, who happens to be a prominent druggist. The family is well-known in Nanticoke. His father owned the Temple of Music store on South Market Street for approximately 20 years." There is no record as to how Teitelbaum responded to the controversy. Perhaps he just chuckled and said, they got the wrong man! 🗨️

# A LEADER IN NANTICOKE



## Question:

When anyone makes mention of the Leader Store on Main Street in Nanticoke, what is the first thing that pops into your mind?

## Answer:

No doubt the answer would be the “ceiling track” system with dangling containers that transported a bill for merchandise purchased and the patron’s money from the front of the store to the office located on a balcony at the back of the store. A receipt and change would be returned by the same means to the clerk to present to the waiting consumer. At the time the technology was mesmerizing as customers watched the conveyor like system encircling the ceiling fulfill its purpose.

In the early 1900s William D. Jenkins cut his teeth in retail by managing the Boston Store in Wilkes-Barre. But his entrepreneurial spirit led him to establish the Leader Store in the Shea Building on Main Street in Nanticoke in 1917. Jenkins began by purchasing the stock of the Boston Store in Wilkes-Barre, which had gone out of business. Jenkins’ store was so successful that in a few short years, he was in search of a better location and purchased property on East Main Street. Construction of the new Leader Store was completed in 1921.



Work on Main Street is underway in front of the Leader Store in this undated photo

Upon the sale of the Challenger Building in 1923, Jenkins purchased stocked items belonging to, the Colonial Department Store the building's tenant. In 1924, Jenkins found himself again in the need of additional space and purchased the former Belmont Restaurant Building next to his popular store. While the first floor was chock full of top brand items, and fashions, Jenkins wanted to create a larger area to offer discounted items. In 1924, he advertised the Opening of the "Bigger Bargain Basement" which featured odd lots, remnants and odd sizes.



Elegant window displays were important to Leader Store owner William Jenkins



William D. Jenkins

### Some Difficulties

By 1928, however, Jenkins was apologizing to his customers in store advertisements, the reason for which was not described in any printed material. It may have been for pricing, quality of items, or customer service, but his resolve was to win back any customer that was unhappy. Upon the store's 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1930, Jenkins was still apologizing to his customers in a Wilkes-Barre Record article saying, "Its (referring to the city of Nanticoke) latent qualities are just awakening and its potential possibilities and values are untold, to me with the initial success in business that the people of this community have accorded me, and regardless of my commission of errors, for which we ask pardon, it would be folly, ridiculous and a disgrace, if I could not boost this community." Jenkins

most certainly did that as he modeled the Leader Store into any establishment befitting a New York City address. William D. Jenkins



Interior photo of the Leader Store shows the intricate cash track system used to transport money to a back office.

died on 22 February 1962, leaving a widow, Elizabeth and two children, David F. and Ann. David F. Jenkins, assumed control of the store.

**The Year 1928**

In retrospect, we instinctively remember the obstacles we had to surmount and the difficulties we had to overcome in Business Transactions.

**We Made Mistakes**

"Which is human"—but for the commission and omission of our errors we ask your pardon.

**Forward--Progress--1929**

The Dawn of a New Year Confronts Us With our Problems of Service, Satisfaction, Quality and Value which we must reconcile with and for the Loyalty, Good Will and Support of our Patrons.

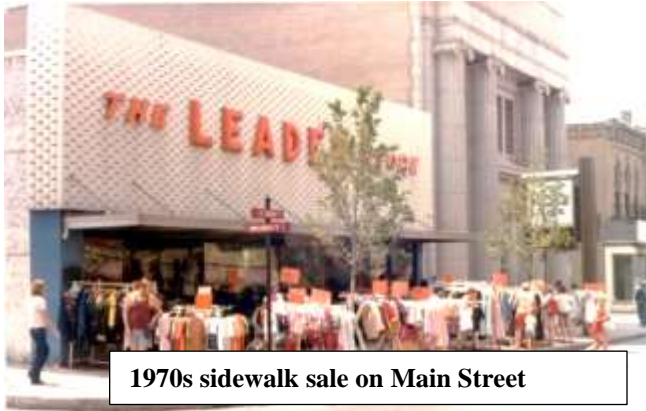
Our Intent and purpose for Community Service

Thanking you for your support these many years we wish

**A Happy New Year**  
and a prosperous one to you from

**The Leader Store**  
Nanticoke

WB Record, Tuesday, 1/1/1929



1970s sidewalk sale on Main Street

Jenkin's store celebrated many more anniversaries and is still held in high regard by Nanticoke residents who remember being treated to the meticulous displays and quality merchandise on the first floor, and the great bargains to be had in the basement. 📍

## Short History of the Cash Track Railway System

According to the website [atlasobscura.com](http://atlasobscura.com) The Rise and Fall of the Cash Railway, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century shop owners were plagued by theft at the sales counters. Some stores employed children to take a sales slips and money to a cashier's station and return with change. However, complaints about long hours and poor working conditions brought that to an end. In 1882, William Stickney Lamson decided a better way was needed and after a few attempts landed on the idea of placing the money in a hollow ball and rolling it on a gravity system of rails to a cash office. This became tricky with having to install the series of inclined tracks throughout an entire store. By the late 1800s Lamson decided on a gondola-like wire line design and by the mid-1890s was supplying his cash railway system to stores in Great Britain, Canada and across America. The cash railway systems eventually became outmoded as cash registers were introduced.



Stout's Shoe Store in Indianapolis, Indiana still maintains its cash railway delivery system.

There are still a few stores that have maintained their systems simply for the fact that they are a curiosity to those who have never experienced them. One 117-year-old business, Stout's Shoes in Indianapolis, Indiana contracts for custom-made replacement parts to maintain their system. 📍



## **NANTICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY WEBSITE:**

We are committed to making your future visits to our website 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 the stories published in our past 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.

### **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**

### **WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT - BECOME A MEMBER**

**Individual \$20**

**Family \$30**

**Lifetime \$100 Individual**

**Please advise us of any changes in email or home  
mailing address**

## MYSTERY QUESTION: Did you have the answer?

### WHAT GAL, WHOSE FATHER WAS FROM NANTICOKE, RODE OFF INTO THE SUNSET WITH ONE OF HOLLYWOOD'S MOST FAMOUS COWBOYS?



Dorothy Dunstan

It was December 1940 and Edmund Richard Gibson, better known as the famous cowboy actor, Hoot Gibson, traveled to the area to appear as a featured artist at the annual Food Show at the South Main Street Armory. Gibson, who had gained fame as a movie star in many western films, was looking for someone who could entertain the audience during the show and Dorothy Dunstan, daughter of a former Nanticoke resident William Dunstan. Gibson was so impressed with Dunstan's singing and yodeling talent that he offered her a contract to tour the country with his show. On July 3, 1942, the aging film star married the 22-year-old Dunstan in Las Vegas. This was the fourth marriage for Gibson but it lasted 20 years until he passed away of cancer in 1962. Dunstan remained with Gibson's show.

As is often the case in genealogical searches there are some confusing facts about Dunstan. There is information stating that Dunstan's name was Dorthea, and that she had a role in 1948 movie



Dorthea Dunstan, on right, in 1948 movie production of Red Sky at Morning

production of Red Sky at Morning. Although some information points to the fact Dorthea and Dorothy were the same person, some facts do not. It may have been that Dorthea Dunstan was used as a stage name by Gibson's wife as evidenced in searches on Ancestry.com as well as other reference material. It's hard to determine because both Dorthea and Dorothy are listed as Gibson's wife but Dorthea has no other history. There's information stating that after her marriage, Dorothy was known only as Dorothy Gibson.

Gibson rose from bronco busting to stardom in the 1920s as a popular children's matinee hero. Some of his many movies included Cheyenne's Pal, Straight Shooting, The Secret Man, and A Marked Man all debuting



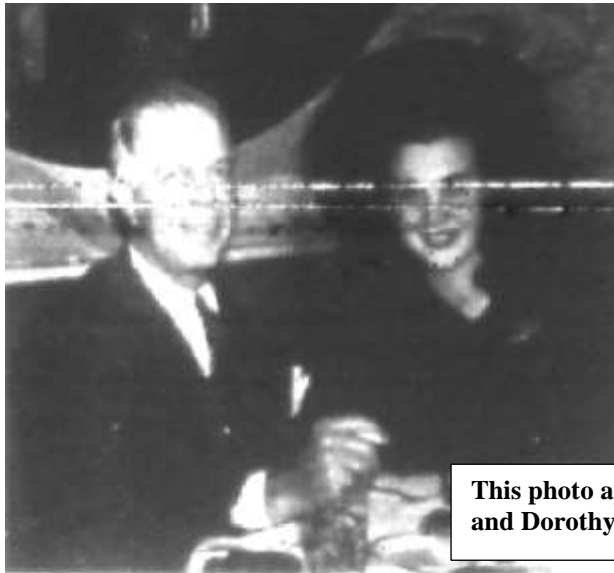
Hoot Gibson in his heyday

in 1917. By 1925, Gibson was making approximately 14,500 a week which according to the US Inflation Calculator equates to \$213,229 today. By the 1930s, singing cowboy stars such as Gene Autry and Roy Rogers were on the rise and Gibson's career began to tumble. In the mid-40s Gibson had a short comeback partnering with fellow actor Bob Steele. After marrying Dunstan, in 1948, it was reported in

the Daily Oklahoman, that Gibson and his wife purchased a dude ranch near Las Vegas called D-4-C (obviously a play on words) and registered the brand in Nevada. The couple also owned a portion of a cleaning equipment manufacturing firm called E.L. Christman Co. By the end of his life, Gibson worked as

a greeter at a Las Vegas Casino and for a time worked carnivals. he received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and, in 1979, was inducted into the Western Performers Hall of Fame at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum.

As to what happened to Dorothy or Dorthea Dunstan Gibson, little is known, only that she died on January 5, 1978 in Los Angeles, California. Her father, William, died in 1954. His death certificate, listed him as a Houseman, working in a local hotel. 🇺🇸



This photo appeared in the paper shortly after Gibson and Dorothy Dunstan married in Las Vegas

## CAN YOU ANSWER THIS ISSUES NEW MYSTERY QUESTION?

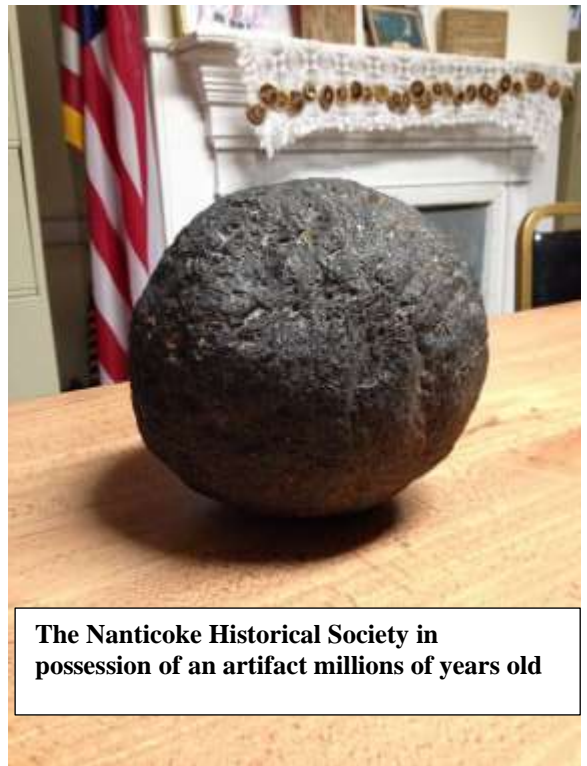
**A beautiful part of the Luzerne County Courthouse is attributed to what Nanticoke artist?**

**Look for the answer on our website  
[www.nanticokehistoryonline](http://www.nanticokehistoryonline) in a few weeks.**

# JUST WHAT IS A COAL BALL?

At first glance it looks like a bowling ball that's had a tough life. It's pitted, grooved and misshapen. But that's where the similarities end. The black sphere initially looked like coal modeled by nature into a ball. Curious. After closer examination, however, Nanticoke Historical Society member Mike Passetti and Chet Zaremba, society vice-

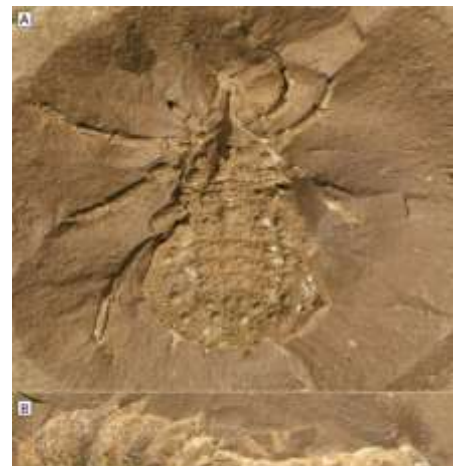
president realized although jet black in color, the weight of the object was heavier than any coal they had shoveled, and both had shoveled lots of it in their time. They were right. There is something more to this ball of coal, than meets the eye. The object in question was dropped off at the society by a family that had possession of it for many years and did not have any connection to it other than it had been somehow fell into ownership of a family member. In a note left at the society, they stated "that On Jan 22, 1955, the Susquehanna River broke through mine walls and flooded the mine. Large pieces of coal were carried through the mine. These pieces of coal were swirled around by the river and were formed into balls." It's possible the family is right on one thing. it may have come from the Knox Mine, but the ball likely has a much broader history and is older than the mining accident that ended deep coal mining in Northeastern PA.



The Nanticoke Historical Society in possession of an artifact millions of years old

## Not what it seems

Even though it has been aptly named Coal Ball due to its appearance, it's not coal, but described in simple terms as "A type of concretion, varying in shape from imperfect to flat. Coals balls were formed in the Carboniferous Period swamps and mire, when peat was prevented from turning into coal by the high amounts of calcite surrounding the peat. The calcite caused it to be turned into stone instead." According to the Encyclopedia Britannica **Carboniferous Period** is "The fifth interval of the Paleozoic Era, succeeding the Devonian Period and preceding the Permian Period. In terms of absolute time, the Carboniferous Period began approximately 358.9 million years ago and ended 298.9 million years ago. Its duration of approximately 60 million years makes it the longest period of the Paleozoic Era and the second longest period of the Phanerozoic Eon."

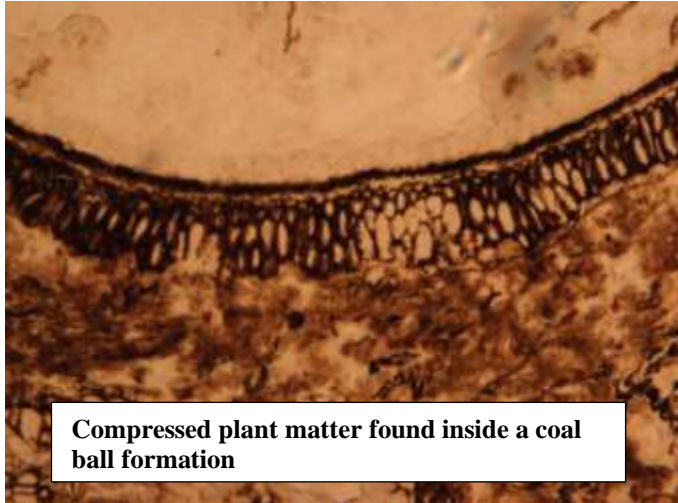


Some Coal Balls will produce ancient fossils



**Coal Balls at the Washington University in St. Louis**

Hooker and Edward William Binney made the first scientific description of coal balls in 1955. The balls are more abundant in Europe but are found more widespread in North America and were first discovered in Iowa in 1894. They are not coal but are



**Compressed plant matter found inside a coal ball formation**

seams in areas where peat was not compressed enough to make coal.

Much of what is known about coal-swamp plants comes from researching the formation of coal balls. According to the websites Paleontology Online, "Coal balls form in acidic peats when seawater permeates compressed plant matter. The carbonate forms a hardened ball that resists compression and preserves the plant remains in detail. To find detailed fossils, the ball is cut with a high-powered saw, the cut surface is dipped in hydrofluoric acid dissolving the silica and carbonate surrounding a fossil. Acetone is then poured onto the surface and a sheet of acetate is laid on top and peeled away to reveal cross sections of plant and cellular fossils."

What is inside our coal ball is a mystery and will most likely remain so. But for now, thanks to the Nanticoke family that donated the carbon rock formation, the society is in possession of a truly unique creation dating back millions of years. 🌱

The rocks that were formed or deposited during the period constitute the Carboniferous System. The name Carboniferous refers to coal-bearing strata that characterize the upper portion of the series throughout the world." So, the coal ball has made quite a journey to our offices.

Two English scientists Joseph Dalton



**Several Coal Balls discovered in Lancashire, England**

what is described as permineralized life forms mostly containing calcium, magnesium carbonates, pyrite and quartz and occasionally gypsum, illite, kaolinite and lepidocrocite. They also vary in size, from some as small as a thimble to ones 3 feet in diameter. The oldest coal balls were discovered in Germany and the former Czechoslovakia and are believed to be formed 326 to 313 million years ago.

When coal balls are found in coal seams, they are scattered throughout the seam or in isolated groups and are found in bituminous and anthracite

# A million memories.....Gone

In the February 2019 issue of the Nanticoke Historical Newsletter, Legacy, we highlighted Philip Strauss and his Million Dollar Store located at 105-107 E. Main St. The building that held many businesses over the years was razed in February. We felt it a good time to list those businesses that were once located in the building starting in the 1880s. The building was originally listed as 49 E. Main until borough council members ordered a re-organization of postal addresses in 1891. At that time, the sectioned building became 101 - 107 E. Main Street.



**John Bache, tinsmith (1889)**

**Samuel J. Williams, tinsmith (1889)**

**Michael Schone, tinsmith (1889)**

**Central Hotel, Edward Wernet, proprietor (1889)**

**House, painter (1889)**

**Harvey, James, Tighlman and William A. Moharter, painters (1889)**

**Central Hotel, Josiah K. Croop, proprietor (1891)**

**William Crawshaw Restaurant (1891)**

**Anthony Golembiewski, painter, paperhanger (1891-1894)**

**Henry Oplinger business (1893)**

**John H. Lecher Hardware (1893-1899)**

**Charles Hesser Saloon (1894)**

**Thomas Kozak Saloon (to 1894)**

**Anthony J. O'Borski Meat Market (1894)**

**George W. Flack rented the Smoulter Building, including the former Kozak Saloon and Smoulter Hall to establish a first-class restaurant (1896)**

**Sylvester Bomboy Hotel (1897-1899)**

**Louis Becker Butcher Shop (1898-1900)**

**Charles Monday Saloon (1899)**

**John Tod Walsh Saloon (1899-1907)**

**James Boyle Barber Shop (1899)**

**Building seriously damaged by fire (1899)**

**Herbert Lock Barber Shop (1900)**

**J.M. Houston Cash Market (1900); displaced by fire (1902); building torn down and brick building constructed (1902)**

**Jacob A. Morgan hotel/saloon, (1901); Sold to Samuel Powell (1906)**

**Hill & Evans Plumbing (1901-1909)**

**Harry Gottlieb Modern Furniture Emporium (1903-1910)**

**Joseph West Hosiery Mill (1910)**

**Samuel Powell Hotel, Restaurant (1906)**

**John Todd Walsh Saloon (1914)**

**William Janowicz Hotel, former John Todd Saloon rooms (1914)**

**Samuel Weisberger's Leader Store (1911-1912)**

**Nanticoke Stemming Company (1917)**

**Arthur Davis, residence (1918)**

**Strauss Million Dollar Store (1919)**

**Strauss Million Dollar Store scheduled to move into Locke Barber Shop room (1921)**

**Locke barber shop at 101 E. Main gutted by fire; Strauss Store heavily damaged (1921)**

**Strauss Million Dollar Store expanded into three buildings, 103-107 E. Main (1921)**

**Serious fire in Strauss Million Dollar Store (1935)**

**Fire in Strauss Million Dollar Store (1936)**

**Strauss Million Dollar Store went out of business (1938)**

**Millard Glowacki purchased the building from the John Smoulter Estate (1945)**

**Gem Furniture Store (1950- 1962)**

**Joseph's Furniture Store (1962-1979)**

**Beneficial Loans (1979)**

**Geri's Draperies (1983-1999)**

**Mario Cipriani, attorney (1984)**

**Stanley Schmidt Printing (2000)**

**John Delaney sold the building (circa 2003)**

**Privately Owned- Sales, Storage 2003 to 2019**

## **Editor's Note:**

**We hope you enjoyed this issue of the Nanticoke Historical Society's newsletter, Legacy. We are committed to bringing you all the news of the society, its good works and its dedication to the stewardship of all historical data pertaining to the city. Please let us know that you are happy with our efforts by becoming a member or retaining your membership this helps to defray the cost of printing and distribution. We want you to hear the stories and we want to tell your stories. If you'd like to comment, please email us at our newsletter email.... [nanticokehistory@aol.com](mailto:nanticokehistory@aol.com). We at the Nanticoke Historical Society thank you for your support.**

**Judy Minsavage**

**Legacy Editor/ Stories and News**



**Follow us on Facebook**