



# SCHUYLKILL HERITAGE

*A Newsletter of the Schuylkill County Historical Society*



Volume 16, Issue 4

*"To discover, procure and preserve ..."*

July-August 2021

## Mark your calendar! We have big plans

The Covid Pandemic is now fading away. It will remain only as a bad memory.

Before the shutdown, the Society was gaining momentum. Membership was up, and we were holding programs routinely. 2020 was to be the year for us to celebrate 100 years of Woman Suffrage ... but then the virus arrived, and the world shut down.

Now, programs are once again being scheduled. The Prohibition exhibit remains open.

Several programs were tested in May and June, including pysanky egg classes, "The Shepp-ton Mine Disaster" and "Spies of the Revolution."

Now, with COVID mandates being lifted, our summer calendar is getting filled up. Take a look!

**Sunday, July 11** - Get some exercise by helping to clean up the historic Oheb Zedeck Cemetery, 1000 Peach Mountain Road, Pottsville. We will start at 9 a.m. and end no later than noon. Bring your gloves, clippers and rakes!

*This is an ongoing project for the Society, so let us know if you would like to recommend a cemetery for cleanup.*

**Tuesday, July 13** - Tune into WPPA 1360's Step up to the Mic radio show. Our assistant director, Jim Haluska, will be there with Dr. David Chanoff, co-author of Gen. George Joulwan's memoir, *Watchman at the Gates*.

**Wednesday, July 21** - The Pottsville Business Association's "Music In the Streets" festival is scheduled for the early evening. The Society will be open for music, shopping and tours from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

**Thursday, July 22** - Pioneer Day at Pioneer Tunnel at 19th and Oak Streets, Ashland, will be a fun day with a history lesson on coal. It will start at 10 a.m. and finish at 3 p.m. There will be a



train ride, a trip into the mine and a picnic lunch where you can exchange many great stories of coal mining history along with a interesting program on the discovery of coal in Schuylkill County. The cost for members is \$30 for adults and \$20 for children aged 2 to 11. The nonmember fee is \$35 for adults and \$25 for children. Bring a jacket as it is cold down in the mine!

**Wednesday, July 28** - Historian Wes Schenk will tell you about the pirates, thieves and robbers who made the Schuylkill River their home during the 19th century. Our "Pirates of the Canal" program will start at 6:30 p.m. at the Society. Admission is \$5 for nonmembers and free to members.

**Friday, July 30** - The grand reopening of our second-floor Civil War Room is from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. It was originally scheduled for June 2020. The exhibit is ready for you to view and to hear the tour guide point out the significant contributions of the county during the bloody war.

Our Civil War room is definitely Schuylkill County-focused! You won't see this at other museums. Light refreshments will be served. The cost for nonmembers is \$5.

***Continued on page 2***

## Schuylkill County Historical Society

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Pottsville, PA 17901

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### Society Hours

Wednesday-Friday 10-4

Saturdays 10-2 (except January  
and February)

*Our purpose is to discover,  
procure and preserve the  
historical records, data and  
other relevant materials of  
Schuylkill County.*



One of several displays in our Civil War Room

### *Continued from page 1*

**Tuesday, August 3** - For National Night Out, the Pottsville Business Association is welcoming everyone to visit downtown Pottsville for music, food and family-friendly events. The Society will remain open from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. for shopping in the gift shop as well as tours.

**Tuesday, August 10** - The Society will take to the airwaves at 10 a.m. on WPPA 1360's Step Up to the Mic program. We'll feature Meredith Domalakes speaking on "Lithuanian Days." You can hear the program online by visiting WPPA's website.

**Saturday, August 14** - Check out the the Pottsville Cruise on Laurel Boulevard and Jerry's Classic Car Museum. The Society will remain open until 4 p.m. and have auto memorabilia on display.

**Wednesday, August 25** - Our monthly After Hours program will feature "Porcupine" Pat McKinney on "Schuylkill County Firsts." Learn who had the first paved road or the first automobile. Cost for nonmembers is \$5 and free for members.

**Saturday, August 28** - Another cemetery cleanup is scheduled for 9 a.m. at Mount Laurel Cemetery, Bulls' Head Road, Norwegian Township. Again, bring your gloves and favorite tools!

More may be added! We are attempting to schedule a day at Muhammad Ali's old training camp in Deer Lake and genealogy classes for September. Please check for additions or changes to our schedule by watching our website or Facebook page, or by calling the Society.

Remember that the Society is a great place to visit for class or family reunions, and our gift shop has numerous Schuylkill County-themed items available for purchase.



# Lori Quinn makes art from local architecture



It took 15 months for Pottsville artist Lori Quinn to appear at the Society to show her artwork based on the details of her city’s architecture. But the audience on June 30 made it clear that her “Look Up: Faces of Pottsville” collection was well worth waiting for.

At the “After Hours” program, Lori showed photos of local landmarks that included St. Patrick’s Church, Trinity Lutheran Church and the Yuengling Mansion - and her depictions of the ornamentation that captured her interest.

Not all of the structures were well-known. The enhanced photographs shown at the right, for example, were inspired by the doorknob and



lock on the building at 119 Mahantongo Street, which is pictured below them.

Lori urged the audience members to “look up” to fully appreciate our area’s architecture.

The program, which was originally scheduled for March 2020, was delayed by the pandemic.



# Make sure to make time for Lithuanian Days

Paul and Melanie Domalakes presented a well-received “After Hours” program on May 26 about how Lithuanian immigrants preserved their culture in their new land. They also discussed how they celebrated Lithuanian Day on August 14 at Lakewood Park until it closed. They then moved their festival to the Schuylkill Mall until its closure and then to Annunciation BVM School in Frackville. This year they are returning to their original home, the site of Lakewood Park, now Catalpa Grove. Don’t miss this chance to learn all about Lithuanian food, traditions, dance and dress at this year’s celebration on August 14 and 15.



## A NEW LOCAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Anyone interested in preserving the history of **WAYNE TOWNSHIP** is invited to join this new organization, which will meet at the township building on Municipal Road, a half-mile south of the intersection of Routes 183 and 443, on the second Thursday of each month. For more information, leave a message for the township secretary at 570-739-2629.

# Remembering the county's 'Y' camps

By J.R. Zane

From the 1920s until the late '60s, summer camps operated by the YMCA and YWCA provided scenic settings and adult supervision for young Schuylkill Countians.

Our local Y camps were part of a 20th-century trend resulting from the enactment of child labor laws and more children residing in towns and cities, rather than farms.

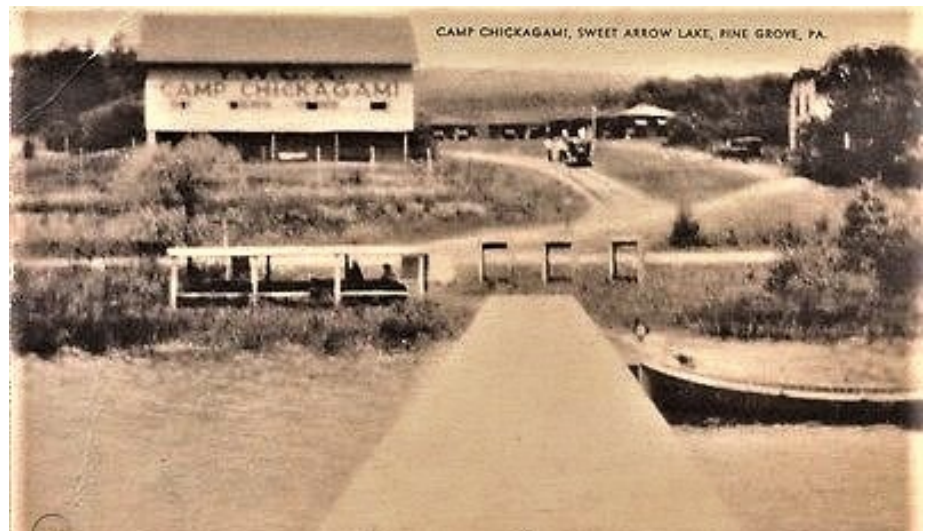
One of the founders of the YMCA's Camp Teddy Roosevelt was young Francis K. Moll, who later graduated from Jefferson Medical College with top honors and opened an office at 309 Mahantongo Street in Pottsville.

Named for the president who best promoted physical fitness, the camp opened in 1921. It was originally located at Rausch's Station in East Brunswick Township.

Then in 1925, John Schaefer sold the Y a nearby 23-acre property for the camp. Campers soon planted more than 20,000 trees on what had been farmland. Tents were set along the creek but later moved to higher ground.

The days would begin at 7 a.m. with a bugle sounding, sometimes followed by an early morning "polar bear" swim. Hikes, athletics, crafts, and games such as "capture the flag" filled the day. The boys also learned target shooting at a large Army field artillery range loaned to the camp in the early 1920s.

Albert J. Zimmerman of



Pottsville was the longest-serving camp director, from 1923 through 1943, and Jack Houser was the last director. In 1970, the camp was sold to Harry Leiby and Richard Ross, who operated it for public recreational purposes.

The YWCA's first summer camp was Camp Swatara, near Buck Run and then outside of Orwigsburg.

Camp Chickagami, the county's official YWCA camp, overlooked Sweet Arrow Lake (formerly known as both Lake Hall and Swatara Lake) and was surrounded by hills and mountains on land acquired from East Penn Electric Co.

The name is derived from a Chippewa tribe's word for "on the lake." The camp started in 1927 as the pet project of YWCA President Elizabeth Thompson Parsons, the daughter of Pottsville hardware store owner Lewis Thompson.

Widowed without children, she also was instrumental in establishing the free kindergar-

ten, the Pottsville Mission, the Children's Home, the Pottsville Hospital Auxiliary, the Community Chest and the Girl Scouts.

The focal point of the camp was a large barn used for indoor recreation. Each of the six spacious cabins held 10 girls and a counselor.

A typical day began at 7 a.m., with breakfast at 8, followed by a clean-up time before a general assembly that included singing and games. Crafts, dramatics, swimming or athletic games were the pre-lunch activities.

Mid-afternoon activities included swimming and boating. An evening program, which was often a campfire, occurred after a 5:30 dinner and free time. Bedtime was 9 p.m.

Religious services were held each Sunday at both the boys' and girls' camps.

In 1966, the charge for a one week stay at Camp Chickagami was \$30. Ellen Hildreth of Pottsville was the last camp director before it closed.



# Shenandoah's Odd Fellows Cemetery

By Deb Reed

Odd Fellows lodges still run nine cemeteries in Pennsylvania. Five of these are in Schuylkill County. Let's explore the one in Shenandoah.

Established in 1872, it is actually north of the borough, on land in Shenandoah Heights that the Girard Estate donated to the Shenandoah I.O.O.F. (The Estate considered this land "marginal" due to its lack of coal deposits.)

Since its inception, the Lodge has paid a \$10 yearly lease fee to the Estate, which technically "owns" the land. The cemetery must therefore seek the Estate's approval for any major changes.

A fire in the 1950s destroyed the burial documents that the Lodge had kept, but it does have maps of the cemetery.

This Lodge also oversees the Odd Fellows Cemetery in Frackville, so any burial data is combined. Together, the two cemeteries encompass 46.83 acres, of which 30.83 are developed and cleared. There are a total of 2,842 plots between the two, and 1,624 are used.

The cemetery in Shenandoah has a superintendent and two part-time groundskeepers.

The cemetery is the final resting place of many veterans from the Civil War through World War II. Among them is a soldier who served in the Indian Wars and several from the Spanish American War.

Numerous Civil War soldiers' graves are scattered throughout the cemetery. In the lower section, there is an impressive Civil War monument featuring the statue of an armed soldier at ease. Graves of about 20 soldiers, many of them killed at Gettysburg, are clustered around the monument.

Notable markers include two World War II cenotaphs, which are markers with no physical burial. One is for a sailor buried at sea. The other



The Shenandoah Odd Fellows Cemetery's chapel and gates (left) and the statue overlooking the graves of about 20 Civil War soldiers.

is for an Army doctor killed in the Pacific and buried in Hawaii.

A unique non-military marker, written entirely in Welsh, is near the chapel.

Many of those interred here lived and worked in the Shenandoah area. Included among these are J.W. Cooper, for whom the former high school was named.

There also is a winner of the Carnegie Medal for bravery. In 1951, Henry W. Eckley of Shaft escaped a mine cave-in but went back in and pulled several other miners to safety. Eckley, age 60, was killed when the mine collapsed.

For many years the cemetery was the site of Memorial Day ceremonies and festivities, complete with picnics and a band.

The Lodge recently received money from the Methodist Church in Shenandoah to refurbish the cemetery chapel, which was formerly used for funerals. The Lodge plans to move here from its current location outside the gates in the double-block building it shares with the cemetery office.

The Lodge has maintained a paved road around this well-cared-for cemetery. The many older trees provide cool shade. Check it out!



## The Society enjoys a memorable weekend with General Joulwan

The Society had an unforgettable Memorial Day weekend, thanks to retired four-star General and former NATO commander George Joulwan, who was visiting his hometown of Pottsville.

On May 29, throngs of people converged on the Society to meet him and have him autograph copies of his memoir, *Watchman at the Gates*. It took him more than four hours to fulfill all the requests.

*See the next page for more about our fantastic "Joulwan Weekend."*

**Clockwise from top left: The crowd waits in line to meet the general. Karen Joulwan watches her husband sign a copy of his book. Society volunteer Dora Santarelli takes book buyers' requests for autographs from the general. Society board member Dave Derbes (left) and volunteer Bill Webber relax during the book signing.**







The general next appeared the following evening as the keynote speaker and guest of honor at the Society's fundraising banquet at the historic Fountain Springs Country Inn, nestled in the Gordon Mountain.

He received a hearty round of applause when he started his speech at the banquet with the heartfelt words: "It's good to be home." While he mentioned world and national events, he focused on his love of Schuylkill County and the important role of the Society. He expanded on the statement of humanitarian Elie Wiesel that "without memory, there is no culture and without memory there would be no civilization, no future." He urged everyone to join and support the Society.

Speaking on Memorial Day at Garfield Square during Pottsville's traditional observance, the general called for Americans to settle their political differences by remembering that we are all on "one team" and by showing respect and love for one another.

He was followed by Navy Commander Michael T. O'Reilly, another Pottsville native, who discussed how the ships where he served were named for those killed while on active duty. However, he also touched on the values instilled in him by his Schuylkill County family, teachers, and friends.

With the sun shining, the flags flapping in the breeze, and the Third Brigade Band playing patriotic songs, it was a glorious conclusion to a three-day historic event organized by the Society under the direction of our executive director, Diana Prosymchak, and assistant director, James Haluska. Copies of the General's memoir are available for purchase at our gift shop. Check it out!

**Clockwise from top left: Gen. Joulwan chats with a veteran at Pottsville's Memorial Day program in Garfield Square. He addresses guests at our fundraising dinner. He poses for a picture with Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board Chairman and former U.S. Rep. Tim Holden and his wife, Gwen.**

## 10 Questions/ 10 Answers



For this issue, board member **Dave Williams** answers the 10 questions.

**Q. Where and when did you grow up?**

**A.** In Tremont during the 1960s and 1970s. It was a time when you could feel safe playing anywhere in town.

**Q. Name a significant event that occurred during your childhood.**

**A.** It was on July 20, 1969, when American astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin became the first humans to land on the moon. We had a lot of pride for our country after that and were encouraged that America would be capable of doing more great things.

**Q. Who inspired your interest in local history?**

**A.** Harold Richards, a local scoutmaster, sparked my interest in family genealogy. He helped me join a national genealogy society and encouraged me to visit the SCHS when it

was located on Second Street in Pottsville. I became a regular visitor there as a youngster and was fascinated by the interesting exhibits on Schuylkill County history.

**Q. Name a teacher who was a positive influence.**

**A.** My favorite teacher was Miss Agnes McGrath in sixth grade at Tremont Elementary. She encouraged me to learn more about the world. She taught for over 36 years and died in 2009 at the age of 96.

**Q. What organized groups did you enjoy as a youth?**

**A.** I belonged to the Boy Scouts of America, Tremont Troop 185. I enjoyed earning merit badges that gave me an opportunity to learn more about things I was interested in. I eventually earned the double bronze palm Eagle Scout Award and the God & Country Award.

**Q. What is your earliest memory of participating in a local historical event?**

**A.** As a Cub Scout, I enjoyed marching in Tremont's annual Memorial Day parade because I was glad to show my respect to my grandfather, Charles Reedy, who had served in World War I.

**Q: What is your occupation? Why did you choose it?**

**A.** I am a professional anthracite mining engineer. My great-aunt, Helen Klinger (nee Williams), told me many mining stories about my forefathers on the paternal side of my family. Apparently my great-great grandfather came from Wales

as an experienced anthracite miner and brought his skills to Schuylkill County. I also spent a day with Harry Hale, who was the chief engineer of Reading Anthracite. It was set up by a program that Al Boscov sponsored that was similar to job shadowing today. You had to become an Eagle Scout to qualify for the program.

**Q. Who was the most influential person in your professional career?**

**A.** I learned anthracite mining engineering from Alfred Riedel from Mount Carmel. He taught with a hands-on approach. No colleges or universities teach anthracite coal mining anymore. I eventually took over his mining engineering consultant business.

**Q. What other organizations do you belong to?**

**A.** I am president of the Valley View Park, which is over 100 years old and was left in a state of disrepair. Through a large community effort, we have refurbished it. The improvements by volunteers have led to a lot of well-deserved pride in the community.

**Q. Why do you volunteer at the Society?**

**A.** I enjoy sharing my knowledge of anthracite coal mining history through presentations on topics such as the Sheppton mine disaster and Col. Henry Pleasants. The coal industry was the backbone of the county at one time but is now fading away. I believe it is important to remember our region's "hard coal" heritage.



# How much do you know about the county fair?

- 1) The first county fair was held when the U.S. president was...  
**A) Franklin Roosevelt B) Millard Fillmore C) Abraham Lincoln D) Ronald Reagan**
- 2) For many years the fair was held here:  
**A) West Penn Township B) Ringtown C) Orwigsburg D) Pine Grove**
- 3) In 1938 the Great Wilno performed this feat at the fair:  
**A) Dove off a tower B) Got shot out of a cannon C) Ate funnel cakes D) Wrestled a bull**
- 4) When the Cressona Fairgrounds closed, it was replaced by ...  
**A) Trail Garden Center B) Alcoa C) Beckville Gun Club D) Cressona Mall**



- 5) In 1941 this event caused the fair to cease:  
**A) World War I B) C) Stock market crash C) World War II D) Hoof and mouth epidemic**
- 6) In 1983 the fair was held near...  
**A) Penn State Schuylkill B) Lake Wynonah C) Panther Valley D) Tuscarora Park**

- 7) The fair is now held at the site of the former ...  
**A) Lakewood Park B) Happy Holiday Complex C) Angela Park D) Willow Lake**
  - 8) The previous owner of the current fairgrounds was ...  
**A) Guinan family B) Tom Smith C) Jim Lessig D) George and Jean Sutcavage**
  - 9) This nationally known figure gave a speech at the 1857 fair:  
**A) Carrie Nation B) Horace Greeley C) Abigail Adams D) Will Rogers**
  - 10) This name is associated with the county fair:  
**A) Patrick O'Hara B) Maude Boltz C) Bill Dimmerling D) Craig Morgan**
- Answers are on page 10.**

## Our first cemetery cleanup



**Volunteers from the Society, as well as Pottsville's United Presbyterian Church and Charles Baber Cemetery, helped remove fallen branches and dead leaves and fix damaged tombstones at the Presbyterian Cemetery in Pottsville on May 8. Thanks to all who assisted!**



## Make us your friend and shop 'til you drop!

Pick up a \$5 shopping pass at the Society for Bosco's popular Friends Helping Friends promotion. You'll get up to 25% off on your purchases on Oct. 20, and the Society gets to keep the cost of your shopping pass!

# **Explore Our Nation's Founding with The Schuylkill County Historical Society**

**Join us on a bus trip to the Museum of the American  
Revolution and National Constitution Center on  
August 21st, 2021**

**Price: \$75.00 for General Public  
\$70.00 for SCHS Members**

**Schedule: 7:00 A.M. Departure from Giant Cressona Parking  
Lot (On the side towards Aldi's)  
10:00 to 1:00 P.M. Museum of the American Revolution  
1:00 to 2:00 P.M. Boxed Lunch (Subs from Charlie's)  
2:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. National Constitution Center  
8:00 P.M. Return to Giant Lot**

**To Make Reservations, Call 570-622-7540  
Reservations and Money Due by August 13th, 2021**





# The Society thanks our generous donors

**Brad Hummel** in memory of Allen and Alma Hummel - Photos of William Herrington and Ethel Wilson, 1909 Pottsville High School certificate.

**Schuylkill County Prison** - Jail cell key and prisoner register from 1909 to 1917.

**Kayla Shypski** - Baseball signed by people connected with St. Clair and nearby towns.

**Paul Straka** - Framed set of military records.

**Michael Emanuel** - 1924 Pottsville Maroons football charm; 1924 pocket watch presented to Vic Emanuel.

**R. Leland Wesner Jr.** - 1880s photograph of Third Brigade Band.

**Paula Joulwan Keating** in memory of Paul and Doris Joulwan - American and POW flags, certificates, newspaper clippings, photos, military medals, Eagle pen.

**Kristopher J. Ziegler** in memory of the Schirner family - July 4, 1899 souvenir pin celebrating Tamaqua's 125th anniversary.

**James Whitaker** -1956 Pottsville High School football team photo, scrapbook, two 1955 Pottsville High football programs.

**Diana Prosymchak** - Framed picture of breaker boys, Minersville Area 1976 Bicentennial ribbons, Liberty Bell picture.

**Carol Yeich** in memory of Rachel Yeich -



An anthracite carving donated by Tamara Amato

125th anniversary book of the Battle of Gettysburg.

**Tamara Amato** in memory of Paul Bedway Sr. - 51 carved pieces made of anthracite.

**Alice E. Lopez** in memory of Howard Fernsler - Official collection plates issued by Historical Society of Schuylkill County.

**Esther Breslin** in memory of Michael and Irene Barkus - Parts 1-3 and appendix of the 1881 Congressional Register, signed by James Breslin; book on Williamstown.

**Allen G. Reading** in memory of Allen T. Reading - 1944 birth papers and 1945 car invoice.

**Tedd S. Glasser** in memory of Millard Glasser Sr. - Reading Railroad information photos, manuals and schedules.

## Help the Society with a 'Smile'; stay up to date on Facebook



If you shop on Amazon, you can donate to us by buying on Amazon Smile. You just have to go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and designate the Historical Society of Schuylkill County as your charity of choice. We'll receive 0.05% of the purchase price. And don't forget to like us on Facebook so you can stay informed about our news and upcoming events!

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Allison DiCello  
Gerald Matalonas  
Nancy F. Lystash  
Elizabeth Cerullo  
Susanna Frantz  
Eric Roden  
Blair & Ted Cooper  
Michael Szilagy

Margaret Burroughs  
Thomas Derfler  
Jerry R. Farro  
Joyce & James Johnson  
Maris Kilgus  
Mary Libner  
Elizabeth Monaghan

Sherrie Zimmerman  
Michael Zimmerman  
Georgine Borchick  
Kristopher Zieller  
Millie Broughton  
Carl Heller  
Robert Mathers

Barbara, Dennis and  
Eric Lord  
Ann Dalke  
Seth Dubin  
Peggy Smith  
Diane Bergenhuff  
Nancy Everhart  
Roberta Coyle

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**OR CURRENT RESIDENT**

# Show your coal region pride



Wear your Schuylkill County heart on these T-shirts, which are available in our gift shop. \$15 for sizes S-M-L-XL and \$17 for XXL. Order today!



Visit our online store for Schuylkill County gifts

[www.schuylkillhistory.org](http://www.schuylkillhistory.org)