



LEST WE FORGET

SCHUYLKILL COUNTY IN THE GREAT WAR

1916 - 1919



It's estimated that 13,000 soldiers from Schuylkill County served in the armed forces during World War 1. 351 died serving their country.

The Schuylkill County Historical Society has created a comprehensive exhibit to commemorate the serve of Schuylkill County soldier who served during WWI”.

Visitors to the Historical Society enjoying the WWI exhibit

Anthony DiCello

*First Pottsville WWI Soldier
Killed in Action*

by Kaeleigh DiCello

Born in Italy in 1896, Anthony DiCello immigrated to America as a child. He was living in Pottsville and working at the Phillips-Jones factory at the time the United States went to war in 1917. At 20 years old, he enlisted in the Army and was sent to France under General John Pershing's force. As a corporal in the 28th Infantry of the 1st Division, he was called to fight in the first American battle of World War I, the Battle of Cantigny.

General Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Force, had not wanted to combine American forces with the British and French in



battle, but rather had wanted his troops to fight as exclusively American armies. But when the Germans continued to advance and were approaching Paris, Pershing agreed to loan his five American divisions in France to help halt the Germans from advancing any farther. The American 1st Division was assigned to General Marie-Eugene Debeney of the French army, who on May 15 ordered the re-capture of Cantigny, a small village in northern France that had been seized by the Germans. The 28th was chosen to fight the battle.

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Sch.hist@comcast.net
www.schuylkillhistory.org
305 North Centre Street,
Pottsville, Pennsylvania
(570) 622-7540

Society Hours

Wednesday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Thursday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Friday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Saturday 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

*Tourists, Historical
Researchers, Scholars
and Genealogists are
welcome*

The Purpose of the Schuylkill County Historical Society is to discover, procure, and preserve the records of the history of Schuylkill County and any data or materials which may establish or illustrate that history.

Schuylkill County observes centennial of the Great War

The United States entered World War I 100 years ago - April 6, 1917.

In Schuylkill County, relatives of those who fought in The Great War and local historians are marking the occasion by revisiting memorabilia and artifacts.

J. Stuart "Stu" Richards, Orwigsburg historian and author, has a collection of letters soldiers sent home, including one Sgt. Kenneth Pugh, Pottsville, wrote in France on Aug. 1, 1918:

"I must tell you that I have two Pottsville boys in my hospital, Robert Hughes and Sampson Koch. They are both slightly wounded and are now convalescing. But there is another story I want to tell you. I was with a near Pottsville boy when he met his maker. His name was Sylvester Hoy of Port Carbon. He was badly wounded and on my tour of inspection I noticed he was in bad shape so I stopped and started to talk to him. I asked him his name and he said 'Hoy.' And the next question was as to the town and state. And when he said Port Carbon, Pa., I put out my hand and told him I was from Pottsville. He seemed happy and relieved and we found out that each of us knew the same people. He looked weak and after consulting his chart I knew he would soon leave us. So I made things as pleasant as possible. Rev. Carpenter of Hartford, Conn., was with him also until the last. He fought hard but he was up against odds. He had a very nice burial and now rests in the American cemetery at Tours (France). So you see, it is a small



NICK MEYER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Kaeleigh M. DiCello, 15, of Pottsville, left, and Thomas B. Drogalis, executive director of the Schuylkill County Historical Society, center, look at a map from WWI on March 31, that Deborah Shuman Reed brought from the collection of WWI artifacts kept by her grandfather, Daniel O. Shuman, who served during the war. The Schuylkill County Historical Society is working on a World War I exhibit.

This article was originally published in the Republican Herald newspaper on Stephen Pytak, April 6, 2017

world. No doubt, I have hardened considerably since I have seen so many pass out but I did not want to see Hoy go because he was from my home. All is over and war is still on, so lets go get the Hun."

Richards wasn't sure if young people would be interested by this chapter in history.

"It's a lost subject," he said.

But Kaeleigh M. DiCello, 15, of Pottsville has interest. She believes her great-great uncle, Anthony DiCello, was the first Pottsville soldier killed in action in World War I.

"I knew that the 100th anniversary was coming up for World War I and I was interested in finding out a little bit more. I always knew that he was killed in France. It's a story that's been

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passed down through our family," she said.

History: The War between Britain and Germany erupted in 1914.

Several U.S. ships traveling to Britain were damaged or sunk by German mines. In February 1915, Germany announced unrestricted warfare against all ships, neutral or otherwise, that entered the war zone around Britain.

On May 7, 1915, the German government torpedoed an ocean liner, the British-owned Lusitania, without warning just off the Irish coast. Of 1,959 passengers, 1,198 were killed, including 128 Americans.

Determined to win its war of attrition against the Allies, Germany announced the resumption of unrestricted warfare in war-zone waters in 1917.

On Feb. 3, 1917, a German U-boat sank the USS Housatonic. In March, Germany sank four U.S. merchant ships.

On April 2, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson appeared before Congress and called for a declaration of war against Germany. Four days later, his request was granted and America officially entered World War I.

On April 28, 1917, Pottsville held a patriotic parade and an estimated 20,000 people were in attendance, according to "Schuylkill County Pennsylvania In The World War" by E.L. Clifford, published in 1931. On May 17, 1917, "Mahanoy City held a parade in which 12,000 people participated," Clifford said in his book.

On June 14, 1917, it was reported a War Bond campaign in the county totaled \$1,275,000, according to Clifford's book. In today's dollars, that amounts to about \$27,000,000.

Many soldiers from Pottsville were part of the

103rd Engineers, 28th Division, Richards said.

On May 28, 1918, Anthony DiCello was part of Corps Company E 28th Infantry. He and more than 3,000 other soldiers attacked the German-held village of Cantigny, France.

"Although in respect, the Americans had already won by having taken back the village, the battle was not yet over. A series of counter-attacks by German forces occurred soon after, and on May 29, Anthony was killed in Cantigny surrounded by 12 other victims: 10 Germans and two of his American comrades," Kaeleigh DiCello said in her report.

The date of his death is on his grave marker at St. Joseph's Cemetery, Hillside



A scene typical of the conditions WWI soldiers used to defend their territory is on display, just one of the many displays which are part of the WWI exhibit display.

Road, Pottsville.

The war ended Nov. 11, 1918. According to the online U.S. Department of Defense Casualty Analysis System, 4,734,991 American soldiers served in World War I, and 116,516 lost their lives.

An estimated 13,000 soldiers from Schuylkill County served in the armed forces during World War I, according to Schuylkill County Chronicles, written by Charles M. Savage in December 1997. According to Clifford's book, 351 died in the war. That included six Army officers, 330 Army non-commissioned officers, one Navy officer, 10 Navy non-commissioned officers and four Marines.

Local exhibits

The Schuylkill County Historical Society set up an exhibit of local artifacts from The Great War. It's called "Lest We Forget: Schuylkill County In The Great War."

On March 31, Thomas B. Drogalis, the society's executive director, was at the society's headquarters at 305 N. Centre St. hanging vintage

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Significant Improvements made at the Schuylkill County Historical Society

Improvements continue! - More microfilm converted to digital media, Map Research Area Makeover, and brighter lighting throughout the Museum

Thanks to grants received from the IRM Company and Schuylkill Area Community Foundation, we have been able to make several significant improvements to the Schuylkill County Historical Society.

Researchers will be delighted to hear that our library's digital media collection now includes an additional 250 rolls of newspaper films from the western portion of Schuylkill County: The Pine Grove Herald (1879-1934), The Schuylkill/Pine Grove Press (1937-1976), The Press Herald (1976-2001), The Press & West Schuylkill Herald (2000-2010), the South Schuylkill News (2011-

2014) and the West Schuylkill Press (1877-1931).

Additional microfilm from the Northern portion of the county is also being digitalized and should be available for research later this spring.

Our Map Research Area has recently received a much needed makeover! Thanks to the outstanding efforts of Todd Graybill, Auburn, Pa., our extensive map collection has been re-indexed, organized, and stored. Visitors can now easily identify and locate maps while conducting their research.

The entire museum will receive new light bulbs specifically identified for use in the various areas of the museum. Thanks to a grant

provided by the Schuylkill Area Community Foundation, we hope to have all the lights converted by the end of June.



Significant improvements throughout the Historical Society building will provide for better viewing of the exhibits.

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posters made to inspire people to support the war effort.

The display includes framed biographies of local soldiers who served, like Joseph W. Morrison, Auburn, who died Nov. 2, 1918, in France.

"On Oct. 31, 1918, Joseph was sent to the front lines at Sommerance, France, to assist in the medical aid and evacuation of the wounded soldiers during this offensive. On Nov. 1, 1918, a German artillery shell struck the roof of the advance post where Joseph was stationed. Many of those soldiers who were inside the structure were seriously injured or killed. Joseph was severely wounded by shrapnel with a single large piece entering his side and exiting his stomach," according to his biography on the display.

Of the 81 Auburn residents who served, only Morrison was killed in action.

Deborah Shuman Reed, Orwigsburg, brought artifacts that belonged to her grandfather, Daniel O. Shuman, a private first class, Section 609 Ambulance Corps, American Expeditionary Force, France.

He was a charter member of the United States Army Ambulance Service Association, according to a certificate she saved.

"He was a medic. He was on an ambulance crew," she said.

Born in 1898, he died in 1964 and is interred at Odd Fellows Cemetery, Pottsville.

"He was my dad's dad. He was born in Shepton, but his family moved to Pottsville. I remember him. He died when I was 8. He went on to work for the Reading Railroad. He was a mechanic. He worked on the big train engines, the diesel engines," she said.

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Thanks

Recent Acquisitions

- Photo of Schuylkill Haven High School in 1925 from the estate of Raydell Berger
- Thomas and John Penn land deed dated 1774 donated by George Lord, Pottsville, PA
- Photos of Pottsville Area in the late 1800's donated by the St. Clair Historical Society
- Mary Lascala Aviation mechanical display donated by Karen Dudish Genting, Orwigsburg, Pa
- Post Cards and a Necho Allen Hotel placement donated by Diane Bensinger, Port Carbon, Pa
- Water color painting of a trout caught at Tumbling Run in 1902, photo of Bocam Family at Tumbling Run boat house, photo of Robert Yost working at the Pottsville Republican, coal art piece, donated by Robert Yost, New Cumberland, Pa
- Photo and news article of Johann Christian Stachel of Port Carbon, Pa, donated by Karen (Cross) Measer, Port Carbon, Pa
- Pottsville High School yearbooks, 1937-1939, donated by Doranne B. Polcrack, Pottsville, Pa

- Military helmet, 4 photos of Hummel Furniture Store after fire in 1908, photos of Col. Zaccur Boyer, donated by Marc Ray, Orwigsburg, Pa
- 1939 Pottsville High School Football Programs donated by Doranne B. Polcrack, Pottsville, Pa
- Newspaper album of issues from several sources including: Pottsville Republican, Pottsville Journal, and Historical Headlines donated by Diane Bensinger, Port Carbon, Pa
- Pictures from World War I donated by Arlin A. Kramer, Pine Grove, Pa
- WW I signal flags and a pair of officer leather puttees donated by Spence Pope, Pottsville, Pa

A collection of Spanish American War lapel buttons donated to S.C.H.S

Recently donated from the Dinneen, Delaney, and Krater family's in memory of John F. Krater, Owrigsburg, PA. Mr. Krater, a collector of uniform lapel buttons from each of the (48) forty-eight states that had soldiers serve in the Spanish American War (3/31/1898-8/13,1898)



WELCOME



The Schuylkill County Historical Society welcomes the following new members:

Tom Dudash
 Barbara Seaton
 Dave Kimmel
 Aileen Killen
 John Hirschfeld
 Scott Eisenhuth
 Barbara Manik
 Sharon Trainor-Smith

Joseph Ferris
 Christine Hoffman and Family
 Carolyn Crew
 Cheryl Moser
 Donald Koetsch
 Jeffrey Vilardo
 Dan Kelly

William Greenwald
 Joe Skipper and Family
 Rosanne Chesakis
 Pat and Michael Macchiarolo
 Rosemary McHales
 James McHales
 Wendy Williams
 Margaret Schammert
 Denise Marshall
 Janice Willis

Remembering JFK on the 100th Anniversary of his birth

by J.Robert Zane

May 29, 2017 marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of former President John F. Kennedy. Many believe that he was the only President to have visited Schuylkill County. That is not true, as Harry S. Truman was the only president to have visited Schuylkill County while holding that office. JFK's visit was the first of a presidential candidate to the county on an official campaign stop. In any event, the excitement that Senator John F. Kennedy created in Schuylkill County was unprecedented. It was one of those "*I was there*" moments that many of the fortunate fondly cherish.

Friday October 28, 1960, just days before the national election, an enthusiastic crowd of 12,000 waited upwards of 90 minutes in Garfield Square. To entertain the faithful, music was provided by Schuylkill County's legendary Third Brigade Band as well as the St. Clair High School band. The music created a festive, party-like atmosphere with patriotic tunes as well as Democrat favorites such as "Happy Days Are Here Again" filling the air.

Kennedy's motorcade was a bit late, but the crowd did not care. The candidate's motorcade came into Pottsville from his earlier visit in Allentown. When Kennedy alighted from an open convertible he was first greeted by James V. Ryan, who was head of the county's Democrat Party at the time. Mary Rose and Theresa Jayne Kennedy, twin young women from Girardville, were also there for a photo shoot with their famous namesake. The crowd was filled with many members of the United



400 Kennedy girls jammed Garfield Square to get a chance for a close up view of their candidate, JFK.

Mine Workers, Amalgamated Clothing Workers, and I. L. G. W. U. carrying union placards and political banners. What stood out in the immense crowd were the

400 plastic-hatted "Kennedy girls" that jammed the Square, inching forward to get a better view of their candidate, often yelling out as if he was a rock star. The women in the audience, in general were very vocal with their support and it was obvious that the youthful appearing candidate had a great deal of charisma and magnetism. Kennedy, unlike a rock star, was gentlemanly dressed in a gray suit, white shirt, and a blue and white polka dot tie as he stood on the platform set up in front of the Garfield Diner. Of course in those days people in general were more well-groomed than today.

Many of the county's public schools were closed or had early dismissals to permit students to attend the historic event which gave the crowd more youthful vigor than an ordinary political rally. Ironically, the parochial schools had regular class schedules; perhaps not to appear partial to the only second Catholic to be ever nominated by a major political party. Remember that, in the 1960 election, religion bubbled underneath the surface as an issue. Many parochial students were disappointed to have missed such a once-in-a-lifetime event, but others took an extended lunch break or played "hooky" in order to be there.

The political rally started off officially when County Commissioner Joseph "Socks" Holden, of St. Clair, sang the "*Star Spangled Banner*" prior to the introductory remarks by fellow Commissioner Ben Boltz, Peter McCloskey, Dr. Paul Board, Martin McGuire and others. Pottsville Mayor Michael



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Anthony DiCello continued from page 1



Corporal Anthony DiCello

Anthony and more than 3,000 other men s w i f t l y attacked the village of Cantigny on the 28th of May, 1918. Although in respect, the

Americans had already won by having taken back the village, the battle was not yet over. A series of counter-attacks by German forces occurred soon after, and on May 29, Anthony was killed in Cantigny surrounded by twelve other victims: ten Germans and two of his American comrades. According to a newspaper article printed shortly after his death, "His letters showed confidence to the last and, although he

expressed a desire to come home once more every word bore the stamp of his intention to go down if need be, fighting to the last." Anthony J. Rose recovered Anthony's body and wrote a letter to his own sister about the experience, "Here is one thing you can tell his mother for me. That he got his share of Germans before they got him. About an hour before he was killed he told me that he had killed his 12th square head and when he was found there were ten other dead Germans around the spot."

On Jun 11, 1918, the Wilkes-Barre Times reported that Corporal Anthony DiCello's mother had just received a letter from her son that day, written after he had been severely wounded; stating "I will be home safe and sound next year," at the same time the cablegram had arrived

telling of his death. In the short article printed that day titled, "Death Report Shadows Soldier's Cheer Letter," it was written, "He had recovered from his wounds and gone back to the front, officials assenting to his pleas to be allowed to fight again."

Services were held at St. Joseph's Italian Church in Pottsville for Anthony DiCello and Frank Curcio, who was also killed in battle. M.P. McLaughlin, from Port Carbon, gave an address, which he closed by saying, "Long live Italy. Long live America." Showing unending amounts of bravery and courage, Anthony became the first Pottsville man to be killed in World War I. Fighting to the last for his country, he helped the Americans win their first battle and eventually the war.

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Close was a candidate that year for state senate, trying to replace State Senator Paul Wagner, and he also had a few welcoming remarks in his dual capacity of mayor and candidate. The Massachusetts Senator began to speak at 12:35 and concluded his campaign remarks at 12:48. It was a mere thirteen minutes of campaign oratory, basically on the economy. He then quickly got in his convertible and headed north for his next campaign stop in Hazleton. The rest, as they say, is history....The election held in early November had Kennedy winning Schuylkill County by about 367 votes. More importantly for him was that he carried Pennsylvania and won the razor-thin national election defeating Richard M. Nixon.

Schuylkill County Historical Society works to organize map collection

By Stephen J. Pytak / Originally Published in the Republican Herald: April 27, 2017

POTTSVILLE — There's an extensive collection of maps at the headquarters of the Schuylkill County Historical Society, Thomas B. Drogalis, the society's executive director, said Wednesday.

However, much of it is unorganized and sitting in piles on the third floor of the society's headquarters at 305 N. Centre St.

But a researcher from Auburn, Todd Graybill, recently stepped up to do something about it.

Graybill put together the Schuylkill County Historical Society's Map Archive Project.

"When I had difficulty locating maps I was looking for, that's when I decided to undertake the project," Graybill said.

"The goal is to categorize, inventory and safely store a few hundred historic maps. I believe we have about 500 maps here. We actually have some maps here at the society that are from the 1700s," Graybill said Wednesday.

He and John Bambrick, Pine Grove, a volunteer for the society, worked on the third floor Wednesday afternoon. And they came across artifacts including an 1844 map of Port Carbon.

"At that time, the canal was still active. The value of this map is you can still see the landings in Port Carbon depicted. In 1853, they shut the canal down," Bambrick said.

Also there was an October 1924 map for "Yorkville Pines, formerly Whitney Addition, Pottsville."

"Here's something really, really special. These are all the maps of all the trolley lines and the railroads in the county," Drogalis said as he pulled out a roll of blue poster-sized maps covered with



Todd Graybill, Auburn, volunteers his time Wednesday to organize old maps at the Schuylkill County Historical Society, Pottsville.



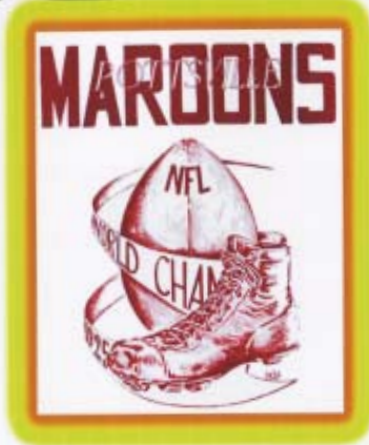
Tom Drogalis, executive director of the Schuylkill County Historical Society, looks over an old trolley map on Wednesday, April 26, 2017.

PHOTOS BY ANDY MATSKO / Republican Herald Staff Photographer

off-white writing.

Among them was a 1917 index outlining the "Eastern Pennsylvania Railways Company and Pottsville Union Traction Company Plan and Profile of Railway Systems."

In 2001, the historical society moved from the former City Hall on 14 N. Third St. to the former Female Grammar School. In February 2014, Drogalis became the society's executive director.



Schuykill County Historical Society
Presents
Hops and History

An Evening in the 20's
The Stolen
Championship of the
Pottsville Maroons

Join author Jason Genovese for an evening reliving the magical 1925 Pottsville Maroons' championship season. Hear stories about the players who made up the team which took the NFL by storm! Experience the controversy that cost our beloved Maroons their championship with a modern day twist!

Date: Wednesday, May 24th
Time: 7-9pm
Location: Roma Pizza (2nd Floor Meeting Room)
Cost: \$25 for society members
\$30 for non-members

Ticket Purchase includes:
Buffet and drink (Pizza, Subs, Pasta, Salad, and Desserts)
Artifacts raffle and trivia!

Call 570-622-7540 to make your reservation today


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Recently, the Orwigsburg Historical Society & Museum put some artifacts from the era on display at its headquarters at 109 E. Mifflin St.

They include a uniform worn by George Lewis Shoener donated by Eleanor Sandherr and Mildred Deibert, and a military woolen blanket and a military bandage donated by Kay Jones, executive director of Schuylkill County's VISION.

Memorials to World War I soldiers in Schuylkill County include one in Auburn adjacent to state Route 895.

Another is the Vice Admiral Joel Thompson Boone Park in Saint Clair. Born in Saint Clair, Aug. 29, 1889, Boone earned a Medal of Honor for service as a lieutenant in the Navy Medical Corps serving with the Marines at Vierzy, France, on July 19, 1918. He died in Washington, D.C., on April 2, 1974, and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery, according to a memorial plaque there.



The Schuylkill County Historical Society gratefully acknowledge the following bequests received from the estates of:

Edward Michael Wade
Doris Spangler
Rebecca Stauffer

And a gift in memory of:
Agnes E. Reilly
given by Richard E. Tomko

The Historical Society
 Of Schuylkill County
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LOOK
 at what's inside

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Or current resident

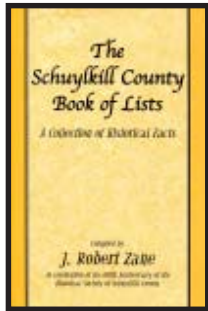
GIFT SHOP specials



Tee Shirts make great gifts for Grads 2017

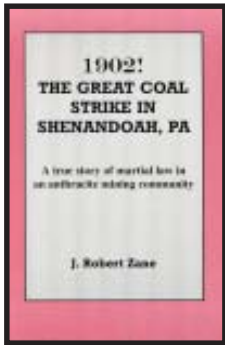
Visit our gift shop at 305 North Centre Street, Pottsville for more great ideas for gifts for the grads and others.

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 Culinary
 Institute



Sch. County
 Book of Lists
 \$10.00

Both books authored
 by J. Robert Zane



1902 Coal
 Strike
 \$ 8.00



Apron - Red or Black
 with white logo
 S900 \$14.00



FireFighters
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S221 \$13.00
 Sm. Med. Lg. XL.



Trout Fever
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 S038 \$13.00 Sm.
 Med. Lg. XL.
 XXL \$14.00

Visit our On-line Gift Shop for Schuylkill County Gifts www.schuylkillhistory.org