



SCHUYLKILL HERITAGE

A Newsletter of the Historical Society of Schuylkill County



Volume 6, Issue 2

“to discover, procure, and preserve...”

March - April 2011

Schuylkill County Bicentennial

Let the festivities begin.

On the morning of March 1st, 2011 at 9:00 AM, Michael McCord, Register of Wills and the Bicentennial Steering Committee Co-Chairperson officially welcomed the sparse gathering of 300 people in front of the Court House and opened the Schuylkill County Bicentennial celebration.

It was a bitter cold morning but the sun was shining and provided a



A typical scene from Schuylkill County's past

little warmth. Young Reiley Lonergan opened the celebration by singing the National Anthem followed by remarks by Commissioner Chair Mantura M. Gallagher and Commissioner Frank Staudenmeir, Judge William Baldwin and Senator David Argall.

Patriotic music filled the air with the Pine Grove Area Cardinals and the Shenandoah Blue Devils Marching Bands. Doreen Fesko from the county treasurer's office sang "Schuylkill County, We're Coming Back To You" which was a song written by Dr. Robert Braun in 1934 to honor Mr. & Mrs. Zerby of the Pottsville Republican and provided by our own Dr. Pete Yasenchak.

Shortly after the Pottsville High School Marching Band played as the Pine Grove Area Junior ROTC Hometown Guard Unit, smartly dressed in their olive uniforms, came forward.

Then at 9:55 AM the Court House bell along with several of the church bells in town started to toll.

The highlight of the ceremony was the unfurling of the five national flags at 10:00 AM. The flags came from the National Flag Exhibit in Halifax, Massachusetts by Marc Valentine. According to Valentine these five flags have never been used together.

Each flag measured 45 feet by 90 feet and took at least 40 to 50 people to carry. At first it didn't appear that there would be enough people to carry the flags but as each flag was unfurled spectators stepped forward and took a

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From the Executive Directors Desk ...

As I write to all of you, our very devoted members of the "Society", I am sitting here at my desk viewing a very interesting scene. Directly in front of me across the room is a very, very historical scene of hundreds of rolls of microfilm dating back to 1790. Included in these rolls are census records from 1790-1930, Pottsville Miners Journal from 1825-1955 (276 rolls), Pottsville Republican 1884 to present (840 rolls), naturalization records 1811-1885 (140 rolls), marriage records 1885-1950 (140 rolls) and about 150 rolls of different newspapers.

Now why all of this inventory regarding the microfilm? To my right alongside my desk sits "Old Jasper" (forgive the name) our one and only microfilm reading machine. Jasper is more than 40 years old ... can't get parts anymore and if Jasper, as we say in the "coal region", "ups and dies" we are in BIG trouble ... and no way to read the thousands of microfilm rolls.

To all this, it is the first time I am asking, requesting, imploring or begging you to help me to secure a new microfilm reader. A new microfilm reader with the technology or computer link-up is somewhere in the \$7,000 - \$8,000 category.

Enough said, any gift of any size would be greatly appreciated. As always, historically yours.
Dr. Pete Yasenchak

General Joulwan Exhibit To Be Completed By May

The General George A. Joulwan Exhibit is coming together very well and will be complete by May. The exhibit cases are completed and inhouse at the moment.

Narrative panels are being made that will lead the student or visitor through the General's 40 year military career. Starting from his student days in Pottsville High School we go through each phase of his career from Vietnam to his days in the White House serving President Nixon and Ford all the way up to his final assignment as the Supreme Allied Commander of Europe.

President William Clinton said of General Joulwan at his retirement that "His efforts have built a foundation for a Europe that is safe, secure and democratic well into the 21st century."

This exhibit will certainly be an attraction for the Society and will complement our existing exhibits.



General George Joulwan

Recent Acquisitions to the Historical Societies Collections

Photo and newspaper article of comrades of the Gowen GAR Post 23 attending funeral of Michael Fritz at the last surviving veteran of the War of 1812. Donated by the Friedensburg Fire Co. # 1 (Dick Hartzell).

World War II and Korean War Books and photographs from John Buleza, Auburn.

Complete W.W. II Navy Uniform from John Corcoran, Pottsville.

Tuxedo circa 1810 - 1860 worn by Jim Corcoran's great grandfather.

Volunteer Opportunities

We have several volunteer opportunities at the Society. Without volunteers we would not be able to function. Our volunteers provide a valuable service for all of us. Our volunteers enjoy free membership, gift shop discounts and free admission to our museum and events. We will provide training where necessary.



We are converting our photo collection to digital images and are looking for someone with computer skills that can help us scan and catalog the photos for us. Flexible hours.

We also need someone to do light housekeeping chores once a week. Dusting, sweeping and dry mopping mainly. No heavy work. Flexible hours as well.

Upon completion of the General Joulwan Exhibit and the new Schuylkill Gallery, we will have enough with our exhibits to attract tourists and school classes. We will need the assistance

of a docent or tour guide. We will provide training. The person should have good communication skills. Regular hours will be fixed to accommodate tours.

Finally we could use a volunteer to help us develop and upgrade our web site. Work on your own schedule.

Please call Dave Derbes at 622-7540 to discuss any of the above volunteer opportunities.

Please Help Us Save Money

Help us save the cost of printing and postage occurred when we mail you our newsletters by letting us e-mail them to you.

Anyone wanting to have their newsletter sent to them via e-mail please let us know.

Also if your e-mail address has changed please let us know so we can update our addresses.

New Exhibits

We will have our new Schuylkill Gallery Exhibit completed by the end of March.

This exhibit entails many items that were used in the typical coal region household during the early part of the 20th century. From an authentic coal stove and a Hoosier cabinet that was used in the typical kitchen to the hand tools coal miners used.

You will see photographs of the huge collieries or breakers that were scattered throughout the county. The immense motorized shovels and equipment that could handle tons of coal in one scoop.

This exhibit is the brainchild of members Marty and Ann Hupka who both grew up in the county. They generously provided portable walls that will break up the expanse of the room and facilitate displaying items as well.

This exhibit will tell the story of the anthracite coal miners and the courageous men who went underground to mine the coal that fed the Industrial Revolution.

Upcoming Programs

Wednesday, March 30th at 7:00 PM

Dave Ravegum will talk about the Union Canal and its operations between Pine Grove and Lebanon. The program is free and the public is invited.

Wednesday, April 27th at 7:00 PM

Dave Lucas, retired coal miner from Hegins, will talk about his life mining coal for 50 years underground.

The program is free and the public is invited.

150th Anniversary of Civil War ... Remembering the First Defenders

Saturday, April 16th 7:00 PM

Historical Society of Schuylkill County.

Join the Historical Society as we kick off the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War. Living historians and musicians Tommy Symons and Stu Richards will present a program of Civil War music and poetry composed by Schuylkill Citizens and soldiers during the Civil War.

Monday, April 18th 7:00 PM

Sovereign Majestic Theater

We will be celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War starting on Monday, April 18th. Stu Richards and his crew of re-enactors will perform at the Sovereign Majestic Theater at 7 PM.

During the morning of April 12th, 1861 the cannonading of Fort Sumter and its garrison of 60 men commenced. This event was recognized as the start of the Civil War.

Three days later on April 15th, President Lincoln appealed to the states to send their militia to Washington, D.C. to defend the capitol.

Among the first to respond were the Ringgold Light Artillery, Captain McKnight of Reading; Logan Guards, Captain Selheimer of Lewistown; Washington Artillery, Captain Wren of Pottsville; National Light Infantry, Captain McDonald of Pottsville; and Allen Rifles, Captain Yeager of Allentown.

The officers of the National Light Infantry of Pottsville had, as early as the 11th of April, by a resolution of the company, tendered its services to the Secretary of War, and were notified on the 13th of their acceptance. The Washington Artillery, also of Pottsville, with like patriotic ardor, anticipating the wants of the government, had, on the 13th of April tendered their services to and been accepted by the Government. The two companies, under marching orders, left Pottsville on the 17th, and arrived in

Harrisburg at eight o'clock in the evening. Simultaneously with these came the Allen Guard from Allentown, a company efficiently organized and well drilled, under Captain Yeager.

They arrived in Washington on April 18th having gone through Baltimore where an angry crowd of Confederate sympathizers hurled stones and bricks at them as they marched from one train station to the other.

These men were to become known as the First Defenders.

The performance will look back at their plight through the eyes of the veterans who responded to that first call.

Block of Art

April 8th, 9th and 10th

2011 Brings the 5th Annual Block of Art! This exciting three day Arts Event will be held the weekend of April 8th, 9th, 10th, 2011 in Downtown Pottsville. The Block of Art will include multiple art and music venues kicking off with "Opening Night" Friday, April 8th at 6pm and continue through the weekend!

The Historical Society of Schuylkill County will again showcase artist Frank Wyso with the exhibit "The Merry Monks of Centre Street School". We will also be featuring ICON Art by Artists Jennie Atty Gelles and Peter Pearson. Mark your calendar for an exciting weekend!

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Bicentennial

hold of each flag carrying them up Laurel Boulevard until they were all lined up in front of the Court House. It was a moving experience for those who participated albeit rather cold.

The county will continue to have other events throughout the year. In May, they will dedicate the Courthouse Commons which will be a park space that will be built in front of the Court House. Bricks are being sold that may be inscribed with family names. On July 9th there will be fireworks and a picnic held at Sweet Arrow Lake County Park outside of Pine Grove.

For more information on the county bicentennial go to www.schuylkill200.com

Who Came Up With That One?

Bite The Bullet

The phrase today means to just accept whatever situation you are in and push through it the best you can. I believe the kids today say to just “suck it up.” Well, the phrase originates from the days of the Civil War in which battlefield doctors had little pain killers or alcohol. Sometimes, all they could do was to offer a soldier a bullet to bite on while they did what they had to do (often painful) to deal with his injuries.

Spill the Beans

In ancient Greece, voting for membership into some of their organizations was done via beans. White beans were dropped into a container who favored the candidate and brown or black beans if you didn't. Apparently the jar was not clear and (I assume) when you went to vote you kept your hands folded so no one knew if you dropped a white or black bean. Only the officials knew the actual vote results of black vs. white beans. However ... on a few occasions a clumsy voter would knock over the jar and revealed all the beans! This is how the phrase got to refer to someone who reveals the truth or hidden secrets.

Putting on the Dog

After the Civil War, lap dogs were a social status among the wealthy. Even today, look at how Paris Hilton goes around with *Tinkerbell* all dressed up. Back then French Poodles were the symbol of wealth, so anyone who was being flashy was jokingly said to be “putting on the dog.”

Through the Grapevine

Information that is received as unconfirmed and more like gossip is said to have come through the grapevine. The phrase simply goes back to all the wires that were strung between poles for Morse Code messages. During the Civil War many messages were received either erroneously (due to transmission) or on purpose to spread false gossip and thus unreliable no matter how you looked at it.

To Show Your True Colors

Warships often carried flags from many countries in order to elude or fool their enemies. The rules of warfare stated that ships were to hoist their true national ensigns before firing. Someone who “shows his true colors” is acting like a warship that hailed another ship by falsely flying one flag; but as soon as they got within firing range, hoisted their real flag!

In this issue of the newsletter Eva Lopes and Pat Hoffman, who are our Administrative Gurus in the Library, interject their favorite recipes and a little trivia.

Diane's Colcannon

INGREDIENTS:

2 1/2 pounds potatoes, peeled and cubed
4 slices bacon
1/2 small head cabbage, chopped
1 large onion, chopped
1/2 cup milk
salt and pepper to taste
1/4 cup butter, melted

DIRECTIONS:

1. Place potatoes in a saucepan with enough water to cover. Bring to a boil, and cook for 15 to 20 minutes, until tender.
2. Place bacon in a large, deep skillet. Cook over medium high heat until evenly brown. Drain, reserving drippings, crumble and set aside. In the reserved drippings, saute the cabbage and onion until soft and translucent. Putting a lid on the pan helps the vegetables cook faster.
3. Drain the cooked potatoes, mash with milk and season with salt and pepper. Fold in the bacon, cabbage, and onions, then transfer the mixture to a large serving bowl. Make a well in the center, and pour in the melted butter. Serve immediately.

Baked Potato Casserole

8 medium potatoes (about 2 1/2 to 3 lb. total), peeled and cut into 1-inch chunks
1 cup NESTLE® CARNATION® Evaporated Lowfat 2% Milk
1/2 cup light sour cream
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
2 cups (8 ounce package) shredded 2% cheddar cheese - divided use
6 slices turkey bacon, cooked and crumbled - divided use
Sliced green onions (optional)

1. Place potatoes in large saucepan. Cover with water; bring to a boil. Cook over medium-high heat for 15 to 20 minutes or until tender; drain.

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Annual Appeal Fundraiser

We want to thank all the individuals, businesses and foundations that have donated to our Annual Appeal.

This year we raised a total of \$12,185 which is a little less than what we did last in 2009. Under the

current economic circumstances we believe we did very well.

Thank you for your generous financial support. Without your donations we would have a difficult time maintaining our operations.

Abdo's Furniture	Gerald Fowler	John H. Lishman	James Sabol
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		Gary Roberts	

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Baked Potato Casserole

2. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C). Grease 2 1/2- to 3-quart casserole dish.

3. Return potatoes to saucepan; add evaporated milk, sour cream, salt and pepper. Beat with hand-held mixer until smooth. Stir in 1 1/2 cups cheese and half of bacon.

Spoon mixture into prepared casserole dish.

4. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until heated through. Top with remaining 1/2 cup cheese, remaining bacon and green onions. Bake for an additional 3 minutes or until cheese is melted.

Makes 18 servings.

The Historical Society
Of Schuylkill County
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Historical Society of Schuylkill County



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

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www.schuylkillhistory.org

Society Hours

Wednesday 1:30 - 6 p.m.
Thursday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Friday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Saturday 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

The Purpose of the Historical Society of Schuylkill County 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.