

News & Calendar

This feature appears on the Website and is updated frequently.

July 18, 2004 - Thirty-two visitors visit the Museum - Attendance at 467.
July 15, 2004 - Courthouse display changed. Display reflects the history of the Courthouse. Board of Directors Met. Dave Greene of the Lumber Heritage Region was a guest.
July 14, 2004 - Twenty-five people visit the Museum in spite of severe storm!
July 10, 2004 - Genealogy Club Met.
July 7, 2004 - Kids from the Sterling Run Playground visited the Museum today making the total attendance for the day of 19 people!
July 6, 2004 - A bull Elk was spotted in the playground behind the Museum!
July 4, 2004 - Forty people visited The Little Museum this holiday weekend bringing the YTD total to 367!
June 26, 2004 - Cameron County MSN Group, the Cameron County Fair Association and the Historical Society host a Community Day on the Museum grounds. Thirty-four people tour the Museum breaking the 300 mark for attendance.
June 25, 2004 - A collection of kitchen items placed on display at the Library.
June 13, 2004 - Thirty visitors at the Museum today. So far this year 243 people have visited The Little Museum!
June 5, 2004 - Genealogy Club Met 1:00 PM at the Library - Rained. Couple from Buffalo brought over 100 photos of Emporium taken from about 1900-1908. What a treat! Also watched The History of St. Marks Church video.
June 1, 2004 - Two Hundred one visitors so far this year!
May 29, 2004 - Museum season begins. Museum opened Saturday and Sunday 1-4 PM. Seventy Two visitors this weekend!
May 29, 2004 - Historical Society has display of school items and photos at the Alumni Banquet.
May 25, 2004 - Society has display of school items in High School display cases.
May 24, 2004 - WWII Display featured at the Court House display case.
May 23, 2004 - So far this year 131 people have visited The Little Museum!
May 15, 2004 - Bucktail Memorial Service- Bucktail Monument, Driftwood, PA 11:30 AM. Little Museum open afterwards.
May 13, 2004 - Society Board of Directors held an open monthly Board Meeting at the Courthouse. Twelve members and guests attend.
May 1, 2004 - The Genealogy Club of the Historical Society met.
April 30, 2004 - The entire third grade visited The Little Museum - Photos - Photos will also be on display at the Museum.
April 21, 2004 - Historical Society Spring Dinner - One Hundred members and guest attend!
April 10, 2004 - The Website was launched
April 7, 2004 - Society acquires Dick Baldo's Shoe Repair Shop
March 25, 2004 - Society Board of Directors hold an open monthly Board Meeting at the Courthouse. Over 30 members and guests attend.
March 17th - Spring Issue of The Voice newsletter mailed out.



One of the most important things the Society did so far this year was to arrange for the Third Grade Students to come to the Museum! This single event will impact the Community in ways we do not even know yet. Several months later, some of these students are still talking about their visit and the "cool" things they saw. Some have returned with their parents and siblings. Some recommended a visit to their friends. These students are the future of our Community and the future of the Historical Society. We have whetted their appetite with a look into the past and trust that this will spark an interest in their Heritage. This event is already scheduled for next year's Third Grade Class. If your children and/or grandchildren have not yet been to the Museum, give them the opportunity for that spark, and bring them down!



Update!

Since writing the feature article about Leon Swartwood, contact has been made with the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission. They will be sending the Society a parchment certificate that will certify the Award and copies of the case worker's notes that will include a drawing of the plant's layout and the routes Leon took to save the men. This information will be added to the display at the Little Museum.

The Voice!

Cameron County Historical Society, Inc.

No. 3

Serving Cameron County Since 1921

Summer 2004

Museum Attendance Reaches 500!

By the time you read this, attendance at the Little Museum will be past 500 visitors for the year! Our goal is 1000. When Mike Wennin mentioned the goal of 1000 visitors at the Spring Dinner, folks were skeptical. Now the goal looks reachable. You may have thought he was kidding when he told you and the other 100 members and guests that you could help reach that goal by putting five people in your car and drive them down to the Museum - he wasn't kidding! You really need to put five people in your car and bring them down to the Little Museum for a visit. There are lots of people to pick from, as some 5,523 County residents have not been to the Museum this year! About 5,000 of them have never been to the Museum! Can't find five? Bring two. Bring yourself!

President John Kautz supports this goal for several reasons. Next year we will be presented with several opportunities to apply for grant moneys. Grantors will not be interested in giving the Society money to put into a Museum that is not attracting a significant number of visitors. We did not hear back from the folks we applied to for a grant this year. We are sure our 135 members and 167 visitors at the Museum the previous year are the reasons why we did not hear from them.

Secondly, he feels that the Museum is an important attraction in the County. Many of the visitors are from out of town. Getting the word out, by word of mouth from visitors, can make an impact on our local economy - a small one, but an impact still. We have already seen several repeat visitors from out of town, bringing other family and friends back to see the Museum.

Lastly and most important, the Little Museum is a huge gift to the people of Cameron County. Thirty years ago the entire County turned out to make the Little Museum happen. Every organization in the County had some part in making it happen. Hundreds of people contributed time and money so that the County would have a place to preserve and share her History and Heritage. What a shame it is that as many as 5000 of the County's current residents have never been to see this unique gift and enjoy the fruits of the labor of those who worked so hard to make it happen and of those who kept it open for thirty years.

Several members have been working real hard for the past few months sprucing the place up, decorating the outside, keeping the lawns mowed, cleaning and rearranging displays and creating new ones, so that you will have a place you would be proud to share with your friends and family. Nothing would make them happier than to have hundreds of people come see what they are up to.

In addition to the regular hours on Wednesdays and Sundays from 1-4 PM, Mike Wennin has offered to open the Museum by appointment and has done so for even one person. Mike has taken this goal personally and is willing to do what it takes to make it happen, even if it is one person at a time! Please help the Society reach this goal and bring your friends and family down for a visit they will not soon forget.!

Opportunity!

The Board of Directors would like to invite you to participate in the Society. What does that mean? There are many opportunities available within the Society. One of the main interests of the Board is to share what we have with the Community. As you have seen and heard, information and displays about the History and Heritage of the County are appearing through-out the County. Speakers from the Society are addressing local groups. Ask for speakers for your group. Become the expert on some facet of our History. The Little Museum is being promoted through-out the area. Visitors are coming in numbers not seen in years. In addition to volunteering for a day, there are opportunities to help clean, re-arrange and create new displays. Assistance is needed with the sorting and cataloguing of artifacts. Members are also asked to keep an eye and ear out for possible donations of artifacts. Think of the Society and Museum when you are planning family and club events. Most of all, please talk up what is going on. More members and more visitors can only lead to a bigger and better Society. There is no reason that the Cameron County Historical Society cannot be the busiest organization in the County doing the important work of preserving and sharing the History and Heritage of our great County and her People! Contact one of the Board Members and let them know how you want to participate!

Visit the Museum Website!
<http://www.thelittlemuseum.org>

Notes from the Editor

WOW! What a year so far! By the time you read this, over 500 people will have visited the Little Museum this year! Membership in the Historical Society will be approaching 300 members - a new record!. One hundred members and guests attended the Spring dinner- another record! While sales of the 1940 video have peaked they are still being sought after as are the Royally Rugged books. Donations of artifacts to the Museum are on the rise and have included many rare items. Members are eagerly volunteering at the Museum and are having fun interacting with the visitors - some days as many as 30 or 40 people stop by. Our new website has had over 2400 "hits" since it was launched in April and your Board of Directors are meeting monthly to keep up with volume of activity.

At the Museum, Sandra Hornung, Glenda Card and I have been working hard sorting through stacks and stacks of records, papers, and photographs, cataloging them and filing them away so that they can be accessed easier. The existing numbering system has been figured out and items not cataloged in several years are now being entered in the system. Some existing displays are being rearranged and re-labeled and new ones are being created in a manner that will tell a story or better explain what people are looking at. The History of Photography and Sylvania displays are examples of that work. Other work and plans include carpeting the shelves in the display cases to give them a more professional look, storing textiles, uniforms and other cloth items in waterproof storage bags, sorting through storage boxes for items that can be filed or rotated out into the displays, painting and rearranging the entry, repairing light fixtures, recreating the Memorial Book, installing a three-camera surveillance system and a sound system for ambient music, cleaning out the basement to make it a more usable space and much more.

Children have been a big part of this year with the entire 3rd grade visiting in April, the "playground kids" from Sterling Run and others visiting with their families. We have selected a few items that they cannot hurt and allow them to interact with them, making their visit more memorable. We find them to be especially respectful of the artifacts in the Museum and eager to learn how things worked a long time ago. You have to stop down and read the thank you notes from the Third-graders! They are priceless.

The Genealogy Club continues to attract as many as 20-25 people each month with folks making significant strides in their genealogy research through the contacts they make at the meetings and on the Genealogy Website. Club Members were recently treated to a look at over 100 photographs of Emporium taken from 1900 - 1910. These were brought by guests from Buffalo who plan to donate the collection to the Little Museum in the future. What a treat it was to see all of those rare photos!

Speakers have been requested and supplied to the Rotary Club on two occasions, the Men's Club, the Antique Seekers and the Elementary School. Revolving displays of artifacts from the Museum are on display at the Courthouse and the Library. Articles have been appearing in the local papers and historical nuggets on Channel 9. Our full color brochures can be found throughout the area.

We trust the work being done will make you proud to be a member of the Historical Society to the point you will want to share the organization and the Little Museum with your family and friends and will want to get involved with the work.

We extend an invitation to come play with us! We are having a ball. There are lots of opportunities to participate. We can use those of you with expertise in areas of history, or have an artistic flair, or the energy to work. There are hundreds of projects available...some we have not even thought of yet. So contact John Kautz or myself and let us know what you would like to do. We promise you a good time!

The Voice!

Cameron County Historical Society

Published by the Cameron County Historical Society - Serving Cameron County since 1921

To be issued quarterly. The members of the Society receive subscriptions as part of their membership (one issue per household). Membership to the Society is \$5.00 per year and may be sent to Suzie Murray at 311 Howard Circle, Emporium, PA 15834.

Officers

President	John Kautz
Vice-President	Erwin Murray Jr.
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Newsletter Staff

Mike Wennin and others yet to step forward - 814-486-6355

The 1940 Tour of Emporium video is still available at the Library - \$19.95!

Cameron County's Carnegie Hero

From newspaper accounts and obituaries transcribed by Sandra Hornung

"FIRE! FIRE!," the alarm went through the Grasselli Powder works at Wyside! "Fire started in a building of a plant at which dynamite was manufactured. The building contained a large quantity of dynamite, and the three men employed in the building ran for their lives. One of them warned Leon Swartwood, and Swartwood ran some distance from the fire. Learning that the men in other buildings had not been warned, he ran 1,300 feet to the buildings, passing within 100 feet of the building on fire. He saw flames and realized the building would be blown up at any time. He ran past two of the buildings, which were within 400 feet of the fire, not seeing the men in them and supposing they had left. He then warned three of the men who were about 550 feet from the fire. He learned from them that the men in the other two buildings had not escaped and returned to within 340 feet of the fire and shouted a warning to them. All the men fled, and Swartwood had got 800 feet farther away when the explosion occurred. No one was injured. The buildings in which the men had been working collapsed."¹

The case house and three storage buildings were also destroyed and two of the hand packing-houses were damaged when some fifteen thousand pounds of dynamite exploded with such force that it was felt at Driftwood! Many windows were shattered in the vicinity and great excitement was aroused until it was determined that all employees had escaped injury.

The September 25th, 1919 front page article in the *Cameron County Press* proclaimed that it was the general opinion that Mr. Swartwood deserved a hero's medal for his prompt action in warning his fellow workmen and saving their lives. He is credited for saving the lives of seven men - James J. Russell, 40; Milford L. Krebs, 38; Clyde L. Krebs, 35; Lawrence E. Krebs, 41; Herman O. Berfield, 40; Clifford Pfoutz, 35; and Frank Verbeck, 41.

Well, someone must have followed up on that opinion as three years later, Leon was among twenty-seven recipients that year of the prestigious Carnegie Hero Award. Leon received a silver medal (there were also bronze and gold medals) and one thousand dollars for his heroism. The silver medal is one of only 617 silver medals awarded by the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission in the last 100 years!

Carnegie Hero Fund Commission was established by Andrew Carnegie in 1904. Carnegie had long held the idea that ordinary citizens who perform extraordinary acts of heroism should be recognized for their deeds. A massive explosion on January 25, 1904, in a coal mine at Harwick, Pa., near Pittsburgh, claiming 181 lives, inspired him to act...two of the victims had entered the mine after the

explosion in ill-fated rescue attempts. Within three months of the disaster, Carnegie had set aside \$5 million under the care of a commission to recognize "civilization's heroes" ...and to provide financial assistance for those disabled and the dependents of those killed helping others. Over the 100 years of its existence, the Fund has awarded 8,823 medals and \$27.1 million in accompanying grants, including scholarship aid and continuing assistance.

The Carnegie Medal is a medallion three inches in diameter and is awarded to civilians who risk their lives to an extraordinary degree saving or attempting to save the lives of others.

Andrew Carnegie's profile in relief dominates the obverse of the medal. The reverse carries as background, in low relief, the outline of the United States and Canada, the

Commission's field of operation. The seals of the two countries appear in high relief on the reverse, as does the seal of Newfoundland, which was a colony in 1904. The reverse of the medal centers on the cartouche, or inscription plate, which carries an embossed statement naming the rescuer, the rescued, and the place and date of the heroic act. The cartouche is adorned with laurel, ivy, oak, and thistle, respectively signifying glory, friendship, strength, and persistence-the attributes of a hero. A verse from the New Testament encircles the outer edge: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

Early medals awarded by the Commission were struck in bronze, silver, and gold, with distinction of medal grade contingent on the Commission's assessment of the heroic act being recognized.

Mr. Swartwood's harrowing experience did not keep him away from the dynamite business. He continued to work at the Grasselli Plant until it closed and then he went on to work in other dynamite plants in New Castle, Uniontown and finally at the National Powder Company in Eldred. Leon passed away peacefully in the Bradford Hospital in September of 1940 of Leukemia. His obituary in the *Press Independent* claimed he lived 20 years on borrowed time. It recounted his heroism and recognition by the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission.

Leon was born in Sinnamahoning on December 27th, 1887, the son of Amos and Isabelle Swartwood. He apparently did not marry as he was only survived by a sister, Mrs. Joseph Shafer of Jamestown, NY and a brother William Swartwood of Sinnamahoning. Leon is buried in the Crum Cemetery. His medal is on display at the Little Museum. More information about the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission can be found online at <http://www.carnegiehero.org>.

¹This information comes directly from the Carnegie Hero Commission Report



The Medal is on Display at the Little Museum