Phillips-Jones VFW Post No. 1349

7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Phillips-Jones Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1349 is significant under **National Register Criterion A for its association with Social History related to fraternal organizations**, and more specifically, the local Lewistown, Pennsylvania post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and their affiliated Ladies Auxiliary, whose advocacy for veterans of "all" foreign wars and campaigns distinguished them from earlier veterans organizations, and whose Americanization programs, loyalty to country and support for local community affairs and events, including sports teams, voter registration, affordable housing, the disabled, dances, films, floor shows, and the like, made a significant contribution to the social life, habits and customs of borough veterans and civilians alike during the postwar years of 1945 to 1962 when the nation's communitarian values and "social capital" were at their peak; and

for National Register Criterion C for Architecture as a good example of post WW2 vernacular style architecture designed by the Harrisburg office of William Lynch Murray that reflects the architect's transition from Art Deco to Streamline Moderne architecture while rehabilitating a circa 1910 former pool hall, bowling alley and lodge as a "modern" clubhouse for the veterans of VFW Post 1349, and the veterans, architect and general contractor's combined efforts to "adjust" to post bellum conditions of supply chain shortages compounded by record high inflation while the veterans participated in a two year-long scientifically conducted *Survey of Resources and Opportunities of Mifflin County, Pennsylvania* led by the ad hoc Mifflin County Development Committee (MCDC) whose "*ultimate purpose"* was *"to make whatever adjustments in the local economy as, under proper investigation, are deemed necessary for the prosperous postwar development of Mifflin County."*[1]

Hence, the property's **Period of Significance** begins in 1945 when the veteran's advocacy organization purchased the early 20th century commercial property while serving on the MCDC's *Veterans Subcommittee* with the intent of repurposing it as a modern clubhouse for veterans returning from combat overseas, and ends in 1962, when the veterans and the post's affiliated Ladies Auxiliary finally vacated the property.

Origins of Voluntary Associations, Secret Societies, and Veterans Organizations in the United States

The French nobleman Alexis de Tocqueville noted in his journal recounting his travels about America a few decades before the Civil War, first published in 1835 under the title, **Democracy in America**, that *"In no country in the world has the principle of associations been more successfully used, or applied in a greater multitude of objects, than in America."*[2]

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[1] *A Survey of the Resources and Opportunities of Mifflin County, Pennsylvania: The Mifflin County Development Committee*. (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, United States of America: Archives Publishing Company of Pennsylvania, Inc., 1947).

[2] Heffner, Richard D., ed. *Democracy in America: Specially Edited and Abridged for the Modern Reader*. (Mentor. New York, New York, United States of America: Penguin Putnam Inc., 1956), 95.

Tocqueville of course fully understood the impact this peculiarly American social institution was having on the evolution of American democracy:

> *"An association consists simply in the public assent which a number of individuals give to certain doctrines; and in the engagement which they contract to promote in a certain manner the spread of those doctrines. … When an opinion is represented by a society, it necessarily assumes a more exact and explicit form. It numbers its partisans, and compromises them in its cause: they, on the other hand, become acquainted with each other, and their zeal is increased by their number. An association unites into one channel the efforts of diverging minds, and urges them vigorously towards the one end which it clearly points out."* [3]

The added power that comes from meeting, and especially so when having a physical place to meet, also was not lost on Tocqueville:

> *"The second degree in the exercise of the right of association is the power of meeting. When an association is allowed to establish centers of action at certain important points in the country, its activity is increased, and its influence extended. Men have the opportunity of seeing each other; means of execution are combined; and opinions are maintained with a warmth and energy which written language can never attain."* [4]

By the end of the 19th century, **The Cyclopedia of Fraternities** listed more than 600 such voluntary associations operating in the United States, also by then commonly referred to as "secret societies" because of their use of secret rituals and initiation rites to attract new members, exclude others, and retain the interest of those who already had joined. Like Tocqueville six decades before him, **The Cyclopedia of Fraternities'** author Albert Stevens understood the impact these *"American secret fraternities and sisterhoods*" were having on the development of the social norms and customs of the times, observing that, *"When it is known that more than 200,000 candidates for membership are initiated every year, … of whom, as a rule, 60 per cent. become more or less active members, the need for a comprehensive work which will present the important facts concerning all secret societies from a universal point of view becomes apparent."* [5]

Stevens organized his compilation, published in 1899, into a dozen categories, starting with Masonic Bodies, which he identified as *"directly or indirectly the parent organization of all modern secret societies, good, bad, and indifferent;"* [6] followed by *Military Orders and Societies*, which he identified as taking *"their inspiration from the Society of the Cincinnati, founded in 1783 by prominent American officers of the War of the Revolution, nearly if not all of whom were Freemasons."* [7]

In addition to the *Society of the Cincinnati,* Stevens listed 12 additional *Military Orders and Societies*, including the *Military Order of the Loyal Legion, the Grand Army of the Republic, the Sons of Veterans, Union Veterans Legion, Women's Relief Corp, Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), Aid Society*

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[3] Ibid. 95-96

[4] Ibid. 96.

[5] Stevens, Albert Clark. Ed. *The Cyclopedia of Fraternities: A Compilation of Existing Authentic Information and the Results of Original Investigation as to ... More Than Six Hundred Secret Societies in the United States*. (New York, New York: Hamilton Printing and Publishing Company, 1899), xv.

[6] Ibid. xvi.

[7] Ibid. xvi-xvii.

of the Sons of Veterans, Auxiliary to the Union Veteran Legion, Loyal Ladies League, Soldiers and Sailors League, Advance Guard of America, or Grand Army of Progress, and United Confederate Veterans. [8]

Mark C. Carnes, author of **Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America,** noted that what distinguished many of the veteran's organizations formed by Union and Confederate soldiers after the Civil War from veterans' organizations established before and since was their emphasis on ritual. *"Of these organizations,'* Carnes notes, "*the GAR, with 400,000 members in the 1880's, was the most important."* [9]

The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR)

The Grand Army of the Republic, commonly referred to by its initials, GAR, was established in 1866, a year after Lee's surrender at Appomattox, on the "watch-words" of "Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty." Membership in the GAR was strictly limited to honorably discharged veterans of the United States Army, Navy, Marines and Revenue Cutter Service who served in the Civil War. The GAR was assisted in its efforts by numerous Allied Orders, several of them led and populated by women, including most notably the *Women's Relief Corp,* founded in 1879 as a "secret society" and recognized in 1883 as the official women's auxiliary to the GAR, and the *Loyal Ladies League*, established in 1881 as an auxiliary to the GAR and, after changing its name in 1886 to *Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic,* was also officially recognized as one of the GAR's Allied Orders. [10]

Social Historian Stuart McConnell's book, ***Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900,*** chronicles the GAR's influence on public life and policy in the years between the end of the Civil War and 1900 as the GAR *"built the political muscle to make itself heard. With a membership larger than that of all other Union veterans' groups combined, with a post in almost every Northern town, with the aura of the Union victory still glowing behind it, the GAR was perhaps the single most powerful political lobby of the age. By 1900 the electorate had chosen only one postwar president who was not a GAR member, and Union Army pensions were consuming one federal tax dollar of every three. "* [11]

Lewistown's Hulings Post No. 176 was the first GAR post to be established in the Juniata Valley, named for Thomas M. Hulings, colonel of the Forty-ninth Pennsylvania Regiment, killed at Spotsylvania on May 10, 1864. The post was organized in the hall of the *Apprentices' Literary Society* at Lewistown on the evening of December 10, 1868, and held its last meeting on August 31, 1871, but was reorganized in April of 1880 with a number of new members and continued to hold regular meetings at least through 1913, [12] when Lewistown's city directory listed over two dozen *"Secret Societies"* still active in the Borough at that time.

As one of the borough's oldest and most distinguished secret societies, Lewistown's *"Col. Hulings Post, No. 179, Grand Army of the Republic"* topped the list, meeting at 7:30 o'clock P.M. in the G.A.R. Hall

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[8] Ibid. xviii.

[9] Carnes, Mark Christopher. *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 8.

[10] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Army_of_the_Republic; accessed 12 Dec 2022.

[11] McConnell, Stuart. *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900 (Civil War America)*. First Edition. (The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 15.

[12] Jordan, John W. ed. *A History of the Juniata Valley and its People,* Vol. 1. (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1913), p. 383.

above the borough's offices at the corner of Third and Main Streets the first and third Tuesdays of each month. The directory also listed the *"Jennie Wade Tent, No. 6, Daughters of Veterans, Instituted May 28, 1912."* The women's organization met in the *G.A.R*. Hall at 7:30 o'clock P.M. the third Thursday of each month, and more than likely served as the ladies Auxiliary of Lewistown's GAR.[13]

The Lewistown post's lapse in membership during the 1870's coincides with the period of time the GAR shifted its membership requirements to a system of *"grades*" modeled after the Masonic fraternity's three *Blue Lodge* degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason. Social Historian Stuart McConnell noted that, *"In the GAR scheme, the degrees were to be Recruit, Soldier, and Veteran. [14]*

> *"Despite its similarity to the successful plans of other orders, however, the GAR grade system was an unmitigated disaster. Instead of pruning the disinterested, the order ended up slashing its membership wholesale, as the veterans either declined to be remustered under the new forms or ignored them entirely. In Pennsylvania, at least fifty posts disbanded for failure to comply." [15]*

Although the GAR was destined by its charter to expire when its last living member died, the organization would nonetheless have a lasting impact on how veterans viewed themselves, and how the country came to view veterans in postbellum times, as McConnell summarizes below:

> *"Between the order's birth in 1866 and its apogee in the 1890s, its members developed a cosmology with something to say about the most mundane details of everyday life: what a veteran wore, what he drank (or did not drink), with whom he associated (and with whom he did not), which holidays he celebrated, whose hardware store he patronized. It was also a cosmology of nation, of Union, and it prescribed duties for nonveterans as well: liberal pensions, "loyal" textbooks, reverence for the flag. The various strands of the GAR worldview illuminate its concept of "nation" during a period in which the meaning of that term was still in lively dispute.*
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> *The implication is by no means that the GAR's version of the nation was the only one propounded during the Gilded Age or that everyone subscribed to it. By the 1890s many civilians and more than a few veterans viewed it as dated, distasteful, exclusionary, or even dangerous. " [16]*

According to McConnell,

> "*The legendary version of the founding of the Grand Army of the Republic goes something like this: In 1866 a gentle former Union Army surgeon, Dr. Benjamin Stephenson, and several of his former comrades in arms were pining for the camaraderie of camp. Envisioning a broad brotherhood of veterans, Stephenson created the GAR as a fraternal organization suffused with brotherly love and dedicated to the relief of fellow veterans. [17]*
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> *The real story is more complicated, and much more interesting…whatever Stephenson may have said about it publicly, he undoubtedly envisioned his new veterans' group as a tool to*

[13] City Directory, Lewistown, Pennsylvania, 1913.

[14] McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 31
[15] Ibid..32.
[16] Ibid. 15.
[17] Ibid. 24.

further the political ambitions of two Illinois Republicans, General John A. Logan and Governor Richard Oglesby. These two men, firmly on the Radical side of the gathering storm over Reconstruction policy, were the political movers behind an organization to which Stephenson's professions of benevolence and charity lent a nonpolitical veneer. Actually, it seems likely that Stephenson conceived of the GAR as both a charitable and a political organization, there being no necessary incompatibility between the two, but the political side of the order was not proclaimed publicly." [18]

Beyond politics, *"… the GAR's relatively homogenous membership was becoming increasingly unrepresentative of the American population at large."* [19] Four groups that did not fit the GAR's cosmology, according to McConnell, included immigrants, industrial workers, blacks, and women.

> *"As the massive Southern and Eastern European influx began in the 1890's…some members of the GAR began to worry. … The underrepresentation of industrial workers in the GAR was even greater than that of immigrants (and given the large number of industrial workers who were immigrants, probably not unrelated to it).* [20]

> *"Black American posed a much starker challenge to the GAR worldview than did new immigrants or industrial workers. … For the most part, Grand Army members took the stock position of the Victorian Northern middle class, arguing that blacks were entitled to equality before the law, though not necessarily to anything more. Although a few northern posts had a black member or two, separate black and white posts were the rule where the back population was large, just as they were in civilian fraternal orders such as the Masons."* [21]

> *"Like blacks, women were not so much excluded from the GAR worldview as they were relegated to secondary positions within it. … Instead they were expected to strike the standard Victorian pose as 'angels of the home,' making curtains…; arranging flowers…; sewing flags for post halls; preparing food for post social functions; raising charity funds—and then turning them over to the veterans for disbursement."* [22]

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) of the United States

Excluded from joining the GAR, veterans of military campaigns and skirmishes fought between the Civil War and the last days of the 19th century initially formed organizations of their own that, like the GAR, restricted membership to the specific engagement they participated in. As time wore on, however, they amalgamated into a single organization representing veterans of all foreign conflicts, so that between 1914 and the close of the first World War, the *Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)* became the largest and most powerful veteran organization in the United States.

Like the GAR before them, the VFW 's local chapters were called posts, each assigned a number and charter by the state, and its "*objects of association"* were an elaboration of the GAR's watch-words of Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty:

[18] Ibid. 25.
[19] Ibid. 208.
[20] Ibid. 209-210.
[21] Ibid. 213.
[22] Ibid. 218.

"fraternal, patriotic, historical and educational; to preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members; to assist worthy comrades; to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their widows and orphans; to maintain true allegiance to the government of the United States of America, and fidelity to its constitution and laws; to foster true patriotism; to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom; and to preserve and defend the United States from all her enemies, whomsoever." [23]

Unlike the GAR however, which, according to McConnell, functioned as an unofficial arm of the Republican party for most of its life, the VFW avoided politicization that unnecessarily restricted its membership to less than half the nation's population. The VFW's position toward immigrants, on the other hand was quite similar to the GAR's. The VFW's Department of Americanism was an active supporter of the *Americanization Movement* designed to assimilate immigrants into the country through English language and civics classes. The movement gained momentum in 1919 after a government funded study recommended *"a centralizing federal agency with power to direct and co-ordinate the work of the different agencies engaged in Americanization."* [24]

Americanization became a signature program of the VFW at a time when the nation was grappling with labor unrest and fears about a growing threat of Soviet style communism. Like the GAR before them, the VFW associated immigrants with labor unrest and communism, and would also eventually find itself out of step with those who questioned such generalizations and began to reexamine the very concept of Americanization.

> *"The idea of the melting pot and the early belief that all foreigners should be transformed into typical Americans began to appear naive. Who is the typical American? Are American cultural habits (as defined in any particular curriculum) necessarily better than the way of life with which the foreign resident is familiar? The United States having been built by people who came from many backgrounds, is not the effort to impose conformity itself un-American? These and other questions proved hard to answer in the 1920s. So deeply did the disillusionment penetrate that within less than a decade after the Armistice, "Americanization" became a term to be shunned, not used."* [25]

Nevertheless, the VFW's views toward immigrants remained unchanged through the 2nd World War. During the last day of the VFW's Pennsylvania Convention in 1947, the *"delegates endorsed a resolution calling upon the National VFW to appoint a committee embracing 'representative veterans" to investigate the soundness of President Truman's request for legislation authorizing immigration of 850,000 displaced Europeans into the United States."* [26]

The VFW's view toward women initially was more progressive than the GAR's, with membership granted to women after the first World War but withdrawn again in 1944 and not reinstated until 1978. [27] Like

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[23] "Post of V.F.W. is Organized," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 11 Apr 1925, p.3.

[24] Hill, Howard C. "The Americanization Movement." *The American Journal of Sociology* Volume XXIV Number 6, (May 1919): 642.

[25] https://www.britannica.com/topic/Americanization; Accessed 12 Dec 2022.

[26] "Convention of Penna. VFW Will Conclude Today," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 19 Jul 1947, p.4.

[27] Mason, Herbert. *VFW: Our First Century 1899-1999*. First Edition. (Taylor Trade Publishing, 1999), 65, 149.

the GAR, the VFW Ladies Auxiliary was established early on, in the VFW's case, in 1914, and functioned in the interwar and postbellum years after WW II as the only way for women veterans, including those who served overseas in combat zones, overseas wives of VFW members, mothers, widows, sisters, half-sisters, daughters, grandmothers, and granddaughters to support the activities and programs of the VFW.

Despite its regressive attitude toward women, Herbert Molloy Mason, Jr., a VFW lifetime member and author of VFW**, Our First Century, 1899-1999**, a highly varnished centennial tribute to the veterans' organization, readily acknowledged the Ladies Auxiliary's contribution to the organization:

> *"Few VFW wartime-related endeavors were undertaken without the assistance of the Ladies Auxiliary. No group worked harder on the home front than the Ladies. By the beginning of 1942, there were 2,510 local auxiliaries with 96,000 members. These women opened canteens for servicemen, worked on blood drives, operated booths to sell war bonds, collected pots and pans for scrap metal drives and contributed heavily to fill the greatest needs of fighting men overseas—mail and chow from home. …*
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> *The Ladies learned to drive trucks for the Transportation Corps, too. Some taught the basics of first aid; nurses among them instructed others in medicine. Many put on white World War I helmets of the Civil Defense organization and dutifully served as air raid wardens."* [28]

It is unclear if Black veterans of foreign wars were welcome at Lewistown's VFW or, like most GAR posts and Masonic lodges in those days, expected to form veteran organizations of their own. There is no roster of the club's membership after it was decommissioned, nor any mention of who was or wasn't welcome at the clubhouse in newspaper stories from the times. It is also unclear if any African American secret societies even existed in Lewistown, although the absence of their inclusion in any of the local historical records is certainly not proof that they did not.[29]

Phillips-Jones Post 1349, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)

Lewistown's *Phillips-Jones Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1349* was established on April 12, 1925, by 50 charter members at a meeting held at Lewistown's Brooklyn Fire House. [30] Like many GAR posts, Lewistown's VFW was named in honor of two servicemen killed in the line of duty. According to an account given in Lewistown's local paper, the Sentinel,

> "*Private James S. Jones, son of Mr. and Mrs. J.W. Jones, was a member of Company M., the 16th Infantry and enlisted April 28, 1917, at Columbus Barracks, aged less than 16 years. He was killed in action near Carpender in France September 29, 1918, and was buried near where he*

[28] Ibid. 102.

[29] One of the as yet unsolved mysteries of this statement of significance are the initials assigned by both the 1910 and 1928 Sanborn map maker to the lodge that once occupied the second floor of the building purchased in 1945 by the members of VFW Post 1349, identified simply as a "P.O.O.M. Lodge." Those initials do not correspond to any of the secret societies identified in any of the local histories or papers, nor in W.E.B Du Bois' voluminous list of Negro secret societies published in his 1907 Social Studies Report**, *Economic Co-Operation Among Negro Americans.***

[30] "Phillips-Jones Post VFW In New Home on S. Brown Today," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 23 Apr 1948, p. 1.

fell. One year later his body was removed to the American cemetery where it now lies. At the time of the Argonne engagement, he was temporarily detached from his company and was attached to the battalion scout platoon. During the time he was with his own company he was an excellent soldier and deserving of high praise for the excellent work which he did at Soissons, Foul, Picardy, St. Mihiel, Pont a Monson and the Argonne Woods." [31]

Articles that ran in the Sentinel after Jones death described him as the youngest and one of the earliest soldiers from Mifflin County to die in the war.

George R. Phillips also died while serving his country, although not overseas or in combat. The same day the *Sentinel* reported that Private Jones had been killed in action, the paper also reported that, "*George R. Phillips of Lewistown has been awarded the distinguished service cross by the commander in chief in the name of the President. The official report of it has just been received, and is as follows:*

"First Lieutenant George R. Phillips, (Pilot) USA 50 Aero Squadron. For extraordinary heroism in action near Bieffu at La Monthome, France, October 23, 1918. Lieutenant Phillips, (pilot) accompanied by Lieutenant M.B. Brown (observer) while on a reconnaissance for the 78th Division, attacked an enemy balloon and forced it to descend and was in turn attacked by three enemy planes (Fokker-type). The incendiary bullets from the enemy's machine set the signal rockets in the observer's cock pit afire. Disregarding the possibility of going down in flames, Lieutenant Phillips maneuvered his plane so that his observer was able to fire on and destroy one enemy plane and [after a fierce battle] drive the others away. He then handed his fire extinguisher to Lieutenant Brown, who



G. R. PHILLIPS



50th Aero Squadron pilot Lt. George R. Phillips receiving the Distinguished Service Cross *(photo: Floyd M. Pickrell via Steve Ruffin)*

[31] "Post of V.F.W. Is Organized," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 11 Apr 1925, p. 3.

extinguished the flames. They completed their mission and secured other valuable information." [32]

The 1st World War ended on November 11, 1918, and Lieutenant Phillips was discharged and returned home to a hero's welcome the following February. *"Despite rain and disagreeable weather, the entire town turned out to do him honor,"* reported the February 17, 1919, issue of the *Altoona Mirror*. [33] Lewistown's *Sentinel* reported the story the same day on its front page beneath the headline, *Great Crowd Turns Out to Welcome Lt. Phillips Home from Overseas.*

> *"At the station Lieutenant Phillips was picked up as soon as he stepped down from the train platform. Two strong men carried him to his waiting automobile amidst the plaudits of the large crowd which had assembled, and the deafening noise made by the fire apparatus. The procession came up Chestnut street and went out Market to Grand street and then returned to the court house where addresses were delivered…."* [34]

After the speakers "*in an eloquent manner"* recalled Phillips *"heroic record as an airship man,"* including his award of the *Distinguished Service Cross* in the name of the President of the United States and the French brevet honor, Phillips spoke about his experiences in war and his training under Lieutenant Quentin Roosevelt, the youngest son of Theodore and Eleanor Roosevelt, killed in aerial combat over France on Bastille Day, July 14, 1918. Lt. Phillips praised Roosevelt, the only child of a U.S. President to die in the service of his country, "*as a brave, beloved boy and combatant instructor for the Third Field division*." [35] He then spoke of his own experience as an airman, remarking that *"It was my privilege to sail in the air five miles above land where the temperature fell to twenty-two degrees below zero in summer time. I just thought of how large the world around me was and how small I was, and the remote possibility of my being hit by one of them."* [36]

Lt. Phillips logged 19 combat missions and 31 flight hours, was one of only 6 of the 46 pilots assigned to the 50 Aero Squadron to receive the Distinguished Service Cross and the reconnaissance squadron's only pilot confirmed to shoot down an enemy aircraft during the war. [37] Within weeks of being discharged, Lt. Phillips reenlisted and was sent to San Antonio where the United States Army Air Service was

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[32] "High Honors Are Won By Local Man," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 3 Dec 1918, p. 3.

[33] "Returned Hero Honored," *Altoona Mirror,* (Altoona, Pennsylvania), 17 Feb. 1919, p. 16.

[34] "Great Crowd Turns Out to Welcome Lt. Philips [sp] Home from Overseas," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 17 Feb. 1919, p. 1.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid. The 50th Aero Squadron's airmen and their observers flew in American made Sopwith Camel 2-seater 12-cylinder Liberty planes wearing aviator goggles and insulated jumpsuits in open cockpits in planes fabricated of light weight spruce wood frames covered in canvas sewn by women in domestic factories converted to the production of arms and armature for the war effort. Pilots did not have parachutes, and many didn't even have seat belts. The "machines" they flew, as they were called, typically had a pair of machine guns in the front synchronized with the propeller for the pilot and a pair in the back for the observer, whose job was to photograph and record troop movement on the ground and report their findings to ground forces. Although fighter pilots engaged in dog fights received the most press during the war, most military historians agree it was the reconnaissance pilots and their observers who saved the lives of thousands of the dough boys on the ground and made the more significant contribution to the war effort.

[37] Ruffin, Steve, "'Dutch Girl' Over the Argonne, The 50th Aero Squadron in WWI" *Over the Front, Vol. 25 No. 2 Summer 2010,* p. 135.

establishing a new base near McAllen, Texas. On June 19, Centre Hall's *Centre Reporter* noted under its *Pennsylvania Briefs* column that, *"Word has reached Lewistown that Lieutenant George Phillips, son of Mr. and Mrs. George W. Phillips, of West Market street, who has been on secret work for the government at San Antonio, had been injured by a fall from his plane."* [38]

The paper offered no details of the cause of the fall or the extent of the decorated lieutenant's injuries, but he apparently recovered and was in temporary command of the 95th aero squadron headquartered at the Kelly Aviation Field near McAllen Texas when his father received the following telegraph from the base at 1:12 pm Jan. 18, 1920; *—"Your son, Lt. Geo. R. Phillips, seriously burned in a crash here, probably fatal,"* followed by a second terse telegram at 8 AM the next day, reporting that*, "Lt. Phillips died here at 7:40 o'clock last night. Reply by telegram whether or not remains are to be shipped home at government expense and name person body is to be consigned to."* [39]

Lt. Phillips commanding officer, Captain Arthur R. Brooks, also a recipient of the military's coveted *Distinguished Service Cross* and a WW 1 ace [40] who would go on to establish the company that became *Eastern Airlines*, quickly wired the following tribute to Lieutenant Phillips' father:

> *"Late last evening I received the unnerving news of Lieutenant Phillips' death at the McAllen, Texas aerodrome. Such a loss to us, his comrades, is this departure of a well-loved 'Phil' that each one of us feel, to a very far degree, with and for his family.*
>
> *As Phil's commanding officer I would like to tell you that he has been my mainstay since I came to the squadron. His efficiency and ability were uncommon. I placed him in charge of the hangars with the multitude of details and constant application of tact and judgement in the handling of 19 aeroplanes, half a hundred men, and hundreds of thousands of dollars in equipment involved. He erected and treated all of our planes (English S.E.5's);*[41] *soon gained the admiration and respect of every one of his men, and gave me absolute confidence in himself. He was 100 precent an officer and a gentleman, and a better man the Air Service could not have. If I wanted a particular work done and done right I gave it to him to do. He produced results. When I left the squadron in his charge while I was on leave of absence, I came back to find everything perfect."* [42]

It would be several days before the details of Lt. Phillips' death and *"the many feats of daring that stamped Lt. Phillips as being an officer of unusual courage and resourcefulness"* would be reported in papers as far away as Philadelphia. The commanding officer at Kelly Field wired a few details of the

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[38] "Pennsylvania Briefs," *Centre Reporter,* (Centre Hall, Pennsylvania), 19 Jun 1919, p. 2.

[39] "Death from Fall of Lt. George R. Phillips," *The Sentinel,* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 20 Jan 1920, p.1.

[40] To be considered an "ace" a pilot must shoot down a minimum of five enemy aircraft, and the "kill" must be confirmed by at least two sources. According to a report published after the war by the 50th Aero Squadron's leader, many of Phillip's comrades considered him an ace, even though he only had one confirmed kill, the only one in fact by the entire squadron during the war

[41] The S.E.5 (Scout Experimental) aircraft was one of the fastest aircraft of the war, while being both stable and relatively maneuverable. According to aviation author Robert Jackson, the S.E.5 was: "the nimble fighter that has since been described as the 'Spitfire of World War One.'" https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal Aircraft_Factory_S.E.5

[42] "Lt. Phillips' Body Arrives at 5 O'clock," *The Sentinel,* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 24 Jan 1920, p.1.

crash on January 21, reporting that "*the accident occurred when Lt. Phillips plane fell a distance of 75 feet after taking off at the McAllen airdrome on a test flight. The wrecked plane broke into flames and although very badly hurt Lt. Phillips managed to extricate himself, dying several hours later from his injuries."* [43]

"As his body was being carried from the McAllen chapel three aeroplanes hovering low, just above the funeral, dropped floral tributes about the casket, and as the train left McAllen for Lewistown the planes again showered flowers upon and around the train which bore the corpse." [44]

Lieutenant J.C. Haizlip, who accompanied Phillips' body to Lewistown, finally revealed the awful details of Lieutenant Phillips' death:

> *"While making a flight in his aeroplane Lieutenant Phillips encountered some trouble with the 'left lung motor' of his ship which fell a distance of only seventy-five feet. When the plane struck the earth its gasoline tank exploded, causing the machine to become ignited. The flames enveloped the flier and leaped high into the air. The Lieutenant succeeded in releasing himself from the burning machine but not until he was fatally burned about his head and upper parts of his body. He lived nine hours after the occurrence of the tragedy, remaining conscience almost to his last moment. Aeroplane experts declare he would have had a chance to save his life if his plane would have been higher in the air when the left motor became disabled. At such a low height he had only slight chances to readjust his machine before it landed."* [45]

The funeral was held at St. Mark's Episcopal Church on Main Street in Lewistown, a block south of the main square where the monument to veterans of the Civil War stood watch, and a block west and within eyesight of the veteran's post that soon would bear his name. The banner beneath the headline announcing Phillips' funeral noted that, *"St. Mark's Not Large Enough to Seat the Many People That Assembled Sunday Afternoon to Attend the Last Sad Rites for Aerial Hero."* [46] The Sentinel story reported that Lt. Phillips*, "badly burned face and body were in such a condition that the casket was not opened in St. Marks church here, only a few of the nearest relatives and friends viewing the remains in the Lieutenant's parental home, here."* [47]

During the service, more details emerged of Phillips' many exploits, including "*being shot down by enemy anti-airship guns over No Man's Land while he was in the act of dropping food to the famous Lost Battalion in the Chateau Thierry battle. After disentangling himself from his wrecked aeroplane the Lewistown officer crawled upon his hands and knees to a shell hole where he managed to elude details of Boches [German soldiers] sent to bring him in until night fell when he succeeded in finding his way back to the American lines."* [48]

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[43] "Few Details Received of Lt. Phillips' Fatal Fall," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 21 Jan 1920, p. 1.
[44] "Impressive and Fitting Tribute Paid to Lieut. George R. Phillips," *The Sentinel,* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 26 Jan 1920, p.1.
[45] Ibid. p.4.
[46] Ibid. p.1.
[47] Ibid. p.4.
[48] Lt. Phillips' was one the first pilots to attempt to air drop food and ammunition to ground troops in WWI and the pilot of the first of several planes shot down over No Man's Land in an attempt to drop supplies to the so called "lost battalion" (there actually were several battalions, not one) trapped in a steep wooded ravine surrounded by German troops in the Argonne. Many articles and books were written, and movies made, about the incident,

"But his heroism did not end with the war months," according to the Sentinel, finally adding the missing details of the fall they reported the previous year. "*His iron nerve not only saved his own life but the life of another when his machine fell 2,000 feet at Kelley Field. Lt. Phillips was instructing a recruit in the art of flying when high above the clouds this man fainted jamming the control of the air ship which immediately began its downward plunge. By one of the most magnificent exhibitions of maneuvering ever seen Lt. Phillips managed to make his machine light upon its wing. Had it fallen on its motor the fate of both men would have been sealed."*[49]

The Sentinel noted that*, "Among his other decorations one that he prized most highly was a medal of honor presented to him by the Aero Club of America for valor and bravery in action."* [50] The *Aero Club of America*, a voluntary association formed in 1905 to promote the fledgling aviation industry with air shows and competitions, including the competition and prize awarded to Charles Lindbergh for flying around the world in 1927, awarded its Aviation Medal of Merit to just 33 of the hundreds of military aviators who served in Britain and France during WWI.[51]

Members of the Logan Post No. 90, American Legion,[52] Lewistown, attended the services in a body serving as a military escort as the funeral party moved from the parental home to the church and back to the home after the services. Lt. Phillips was buried in Woodlawn Cemetery, Elmira, N.Y., the home of his fiancé, Miss Pauline Holliday. [53]

VFW Post 1349 Looks for a Home

"When the Phillips-Jones Post 1349 of Veterans of Foreign Wars was originally organized June 25, 1925, the 45 charter members conducted their first meetings in automobiles and private homes," [54] but perhaps instinctively sensing the *"increased activity"* and *"extended influence"* Tocqueville alluded to, "*when an association is allowed to establish centers of action at certain important points in the country,"* [55] *t*he veterans of Post 1349 immediately set about looking for a permanent home after their first organizational meeting at the Brooklyn Hose Company.

They were still in borrowed quarters two years later, however, when they threw a banquet for 108 veterans at the Y.M.C.A on a Saturday night in November of 1927, inviting 87-year-old William "Billy"

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including a fascinating account that describes Lt. Phillips role in the conflict in the *League of World War One Aviation Historian's* Summer 2010 quarterly issue of *Over the Front*, "'Dutch Girl' Over the Argonne, the 50th Aero Squadron in WWI," pgs. 100-135, written by retired Air Force pilot Colonel (Dr.) Steve Ruffin.

[49] "Impressive and Fitting Tribute …", p.4.

[50] "Death from Fall Fate of…" p.1.

[51] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aero_Club_of_America, Accessed 12 Dec 2022.

[52] The `American Legion was established by 20 citizen-officers serving in the American Expeditionary Force in France who gathered in January 1919 at the behest of Theodore A. Roosevelt, Jr. Unlike the VFW, it was open to all veterans regardless of whether they served overseas or on the home front, which gave the organization twice the potential membership of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. (from **The History of the Pennsylvania American Legion**, by Terry Radtke, 1993, Stackpole Books, pgs. 1 and 9)

[53] "Impressive and Fitting Tribute…", p.4.

[54] "Phillips-Jones Post VFW In New Home On S. Brown Today," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 23 Apr 1948, pg. 1.

[55] Heffner, p.96.

Hall, *"the only living marine in Mifflin county who saw service in the Civil war"* [56]as their guest of honor. "Billy" regaled them with stories of *"the battle between the Monitor and the Merrimac, then took his hearers to the Sunny-south-lands and told of blockades and battles on water, that he said, are too frequently submerged by those on land."* [57]

And they were still without a home in April of the following year when the *Lewisburg Journal* published a sternly worded letter chastising Congressional candidate Benjamin K. Focht of Lewisburg for including the contents of a letter from Post 1349 conferring honorary membership status on the World War vet in a political ad, stating that,

> *"The officers and members of Phillips-Jones Post, No. 1349, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, deeply deplores the fact that a letter from this Post to B.K. Focht, of Lewisburg, has been used for political advertising,"* advising him that, "*Edward M. Beers, also an honorary member of Post No. 1349, has equal rights to political consideration with those of Mr. Focht and all other candidates and the Post deeply deplores the stigma of political partizanship* [sp] *implied by the unwarranted publication of an official communication."* [58]

A month later, the Commandant of Post 1349 attended a memorial service led by the Philadelphia post and head of the VFW's Americanization Bureau held at the grave of Christy Mathewson, [59] famed New York Giants pitcher who led the Giants to their championship in the 1905 World Series by pitching a single World Series record three shutouts. Mathewson, a devout Christian whose athletic prowess, intellectual hobbies and refusal to play ball on Sundays earned him the nickname, "The Christian Gentleman," further burnished his reputation by providing information to the journalist who exposed gambling in the 1919 World Series scandal.[60] As a veteran of World War 1, Mathewson's squeaky-clean image perfectly reflected the ideals of the VFW's Americanization Bureau.

As the year came to a close, the Phillips-Jones Post, No. 1349, Veterans of Foreign Wars announced that it would be leasing the Archie L. Grove home at 209 West Market street*, "located near the bridge across the Juniata River and known as the 'Blue Lantern Tea Room.' The veterans will take charge December 1 with new furniture and equipment. The former equipment of the tea room will be used for banquets and suppers."* [61] The December 7, 1928, issue of the Altoona Tribune announced that 40 members of Altoona's James l. Noble Post No. 3 would attend the December 8th House Warming of the Mifflin Unit, and "*planned to take the uniformed band to furnish music for the parade, which will feature the celebration. The membership will also turn out in uniform."* [62]

Lewistown's Sentinel reported the following day that a large assemblage of veterans attended the ceremonies and dinner, "*where wit, mirth, music and comradeship prevailed throughout the evening."* [63]

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[56] "Civil War Marine is Banquet Guest," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 15 Nov 1927, pg. 14.
[57] Ibid.
[58] "Post Deplores Action," *Lewisburg Journal* (Lewisburg, Pennsylvania), p.1.
[59] "V.F.W. Honor Matty's Memory," *Miltonian* (Milton, Pennsylvania), 31 May 1928, p.1.
[60] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christy_Mathewson#College_career; Accessed 12 Dec 2022

[61] "Veterans of Foreign Wars Lease Home," *The Evening News* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania), 17 Nov 1928, p.6.
[62] "V.F.W. to Visit Lewistown Post," *Altoona Tribune* (Altoona, Pennsylvania), 7 Dec 1928, p.3.
[63] "New Home of V.F.W. Opened; Commander of Dept. Speaks," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 10 Dec 1928, p.1.

The Noble Post's merriment most likely was provided by the posts' *Lone Wolf Pup Tent of Military Order of Cooties,* formally known as *"a national honor degree membership association separately constituted as a subordinate and as an auxiliary order chartered by the VFW",* [64] but more commonly known and referred to as "*the Cooties."* Named for the headlice that infested troops in the trenches during WW 1, the membership association was formed to bring humor and add levity to the activities and programs of the parent organization, especially hospitalized veterans and residents of the VFW's National Home.

Two years later, the post moved from the tearoom on Market Street to 7 North Wayne Street. Although the post was established during the Prohibition period, it lost little time securing a liquor license after passage of the 21st Amendment repealing Prohibition on December 5, 1933, receiving its liquor license from the State Liquor Control Board a week and a half later. [65] When the post finally moved to its new home on South Brown Street, the architect's drawings noted that the bar and backbar in the post's new club room would be provided by the owner, relocated from the VFW's previous home on North Wayne Street.

Four years later, eighteen members of the Phillips-Jones Post 1349 formed their own Lone Wolf Pup Tent of Military Order of Cooties. [66] In addition to its Cooties Auxiliary, Lewistown's VFW also relied heavily on the support of Post 1349's Ladies Auxiliary, which was in full force in October of 1939 when they entertained members of auxiliaries from 35 cities in Central Pennsylvania at the Elks Club on West Market Street,[67] and *"served more than 500 of them "a tasty meal prepared by the men with the women as waitresses." [68]*

The post held its annual banquet at the Brooklyn Hose House ballroom in April of 1940, again unable to accommodate the 250 members, guests and their wives attending the affair at its home on North Wayne Street. *"Defense of American shores, homes, and ideals formed to a large degree the main points of several addresses made at the annual banquet and meeting"* of Post 1349 which ended with *"several vocal numbers from the famous Negro opera, 'Porgy and Bess.'" [69]*

Yet despite the obvious need for larger quarters, members of Post 1349 voted 9 days after the United States declared war on Japan *"to forego renovations to their home and instead invest a $10,000 reserve fund in United States Defense Bonds." [70]* The Sentinel noted that, "*The building plans will be revived following the war." [71]*

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERION C FOR ARCHITECTURE

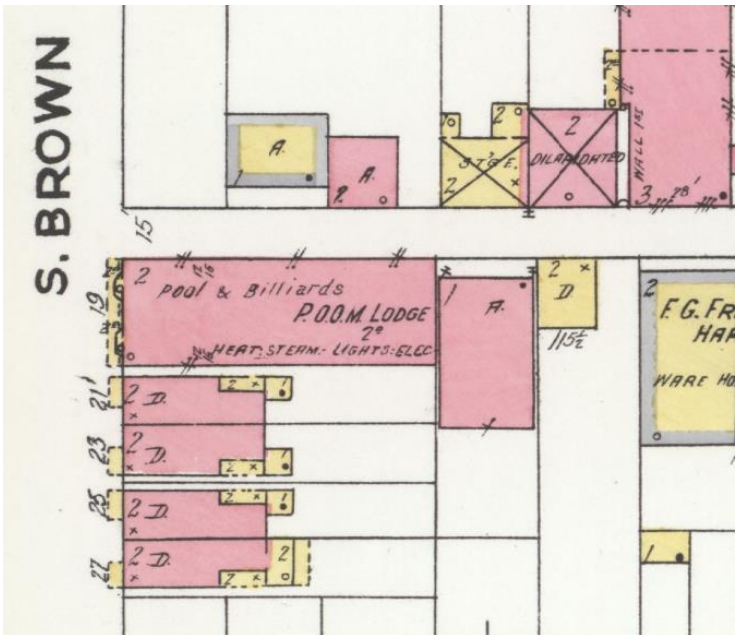
Lewistown's VFW Builds a Modern Club House at 19 S. Brown Street

Although the Second World War did not officially end until September of 1945, the post had already set its sights on and purchased the 2-story brick building at 19 S. Brown Street and one-story concrete block

[64] https://www.lotcs.org/history.html; Accessed 13 Dec 2022.
[65] "Liquor License Issued," *The Evening News* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania), 14 Dec 1933, p.9.
[66] "Society Is Formed by Veterans' Post," *Harrisburg Telegraph* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania), 26 Jul 1937, p.3.
[67] "National Commander Will Be Guest of Honor at Banquet on Hill," *Harrisburg Telegraph* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania), 14 Oct 1939, p.19.
[68] "Auxiliary of VFW Hostess to Many," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 10 Oct 1939, p.9.
[69] "Urge Defense Before VFW," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 24 Apr 1940, p.4.
[70] "Veterans Buy Bonds," *The Daily Item* (Sunbury, Pennsylvania), 22 Dec 1941, p.4.
[71] Ibid.

garage on the lot behind it for $1 on July 31st of that year from S. Will Shunkwiler, [72] owner of the Shunkwiler Candy Company, a confectionary wholesaler, highly successful local businessman, former County Treasurer, and "*member of the Masonic order, Knights of the Golden Eagle, Modern Woodmen of America and the Royal Arcanum"* fraternities. [73]

Both 1910 and 1923 Sanborn Insurance maps identified the 2-story brick building at 19 S. Brown Street as having a "Pool and Billiards" room on the ground floor and a fraternal organization identified as a "P.O.O.M. Lodge" on the 2nd floor, with a one-story auto garage on the lot behind it. As noted earlier, there is no mention of a lodge that conforms to the initials "P.O.O.M." in the "Secret Society" listings of the Lewistown *City Directories* for either of those years, nor in the 1913 **History of Juniata Valley's** chapter on *Charities and Fraternities*, Steven's 1899 **Cyclopedia of Fraternities,** or W.E.B. Dubois's 1907 list of African American "Secret Societies" in **Economic Co-Operation Among Negro Americans.**



1923 Sanborn Insurance Map of Lewistown, Pennsylvania

The building's prior use as a lodge may nevertheless have been one of the features that first attracted the VFW's interest in the building, despite the fact that the former pool hall and lodge had already been converted to a "storeroom and apartment building," according to the August 19, 1926 deed of sale between Shunkwiler and Margaret Strunk (presumably his former business partner's widow).

The post's members might also have been aware that, "*One of the first shuffleboards in use in this area was in 1908 when John Henderson operated a pool room and bowling alleys on South Brown Street at the site where the VFW is now erecting their new post home."* [74] Although shuffleboard, pool and billiards were standard amenities in most fraternal clubs and lodges, a bowling alley would have been an especially attractive feature for veterans returning from posts overseas, where hundreds of lanes were installed on U.S. military bases during WW 2.[75]

In his 2001 book, **Bowling Alone**, **The Collapse and Revival of American Community,** Social Scientist Robert D. Putnam cited membership in bowling leagues, veterans and fraternal organizations and other such voluntary associations as a measure of a community's "social capital," much as Tocqueville cited voluntary associations as a measure of American democracy a century earlier in his journal, **Democracy in America**. The fact that the VFW's new home on South Brown Street would be located within a short

[72] Deed dated 31 July 1945 between S. Will Shunkwiler and wife to Phillips-Jones Post V.F.W. Home Association
[73] Jordan, John W. ed. *A History of the Juniata Valley and its People,* Vol. 1. (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1913), p.414.
[74] "Untitled" *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 11 Jul 1947, p.14.
[75] https://www.britannica.com/sports/bowling; Accessed 12 Dec 2022.

walk of most of the civic organizations that comprised the core of the borough's "social capital," -- which according to the published biographies and obituaries of citizens of those times, many of whom, like Shunkwiler, belonged to not just one but many voluntary associations— would also have made the former pool hall, bowling alley and lodge an attractive option for the post's new home.

Lodges, clubhouses and civic buildings identified on the 1910 and 1923 Sanborn Maps of Lewistown, many of which still stand today, included the **Knights of Malta** clubhouse constructed circa 1926 a half block south at the corner of S. Brown and E. Water Streets and later repurposed as a library before being demolished for a municipal parking lot in the 1970's; the **Knights of Columbus** on the 2nd floor of a storefront on the corner of E. Market and N. Brown Streets a block north of the VFW, also demolished in the 1970's; the **Eagles** and **Odd Fellows (IOOF)** lodges one block north on E. Market Street, both also demolished in the 1970's; the **Elks (BPOE)** clubhouse 2 blocks to the west at the corner of West Market and South Wayne Streets, presently vacant and threatened with demolition by order of the borough; the **Owls Nest**, a lesser known fraternal organization that frequently served as a venue for many of the VFW's larger events prior to the 1940's, whose clubhouse is presently located three blocks west of the VFW on West Water Street, its active status unknown; and the still active **Brooklyn Hose Company** on S. Main Street, where the VFW veterans held their first organizational meeting one block west and another block south of 19 South Brown Street.

The **Apprentices Literary Society** on Third Street midway between Main and Brown Streets three blocks north of Post 1349's new home is one of the borough's oldest voluntary associations, presently occupied by the Mifflin County United Way. The **GAR** was established at the **Apprentices Literary Society** before moving to the 2nd floor of the Borough Building at 3rd and Main Streets, torn down and replaced in 1936 by the WPA funded Art Deco Borough Hall, by which time Mifflin County's last GAR veteran may well have died. [76] The **Masonic Temple and Temple Theatre** complex located at the southeast corner of Market and Main Streets one block west of Post 1349's home is unquestionably the largest and possibly the oldest voluntary association in the borough, and has since been repurposed for offices and retail uses, its activity unknown. The **American Legion's Logan Guard Post,** located a few blocks east of the VFW on the corner of Valley and Marble Streets, and **VFW Post 7011,** at 12 Chestnut Street, one block east of and successor to Post 1349, are the only veteran organizations in the borough still active in the community.

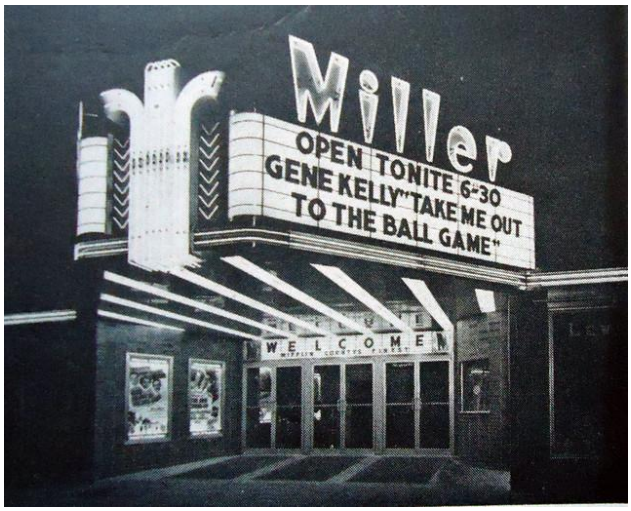
Lewistown's VFW Hires a Moderne Architect

Lewistown's VFW hired Harrisburg architect William Lynch Murray to prepare architectural drawings to again repurpose the circa 1910 former "pool and billiards hall, bowling alley and POOM lodge," but this time as a "modern clubhouse" for the vets. Murray's office was already well known for designing modern style buildings during the mid-war years when the style originally inspired by the 1925 "Decorative Arts" Exposition in Paris that half a century later would be commonly referred to as "Art Deco" flourished.

[76] The GAR organization was officially decommissioned two decades later in 1956, when its last living member died.







William Lynch Murray's 12 story State Street office building (left, image: Murray Architects.net) and Paxton Fire House (upper right, image by author) in Harrisburg, and Lewistown's Miller Theater on opening night (lower right, photo http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/28148)

In 1935, Murray's office won the commission to design the twelve-story Art Deco office building that still anchors the corner of State and Third Streets across from the Pennsylvania State Capital Complex. Two year later Murray's office designed the Art Deco Paxton Fire House, his 363rd project since opening his office a decade earlier in 1925.[77]

By the end of the 1940's, Murray's work began to incorporate the more fluid lines and modern materials characteristic of the *Streamline Moderne* style popularized in the post war years by industrial designers like Raymond Loewy, whose influence on everything from kitchen appliances to automobiles to Greyhound buses and stations was so great he was featured on the October 31, 1949, cover of *Time* magazine.[78] Murray's office designed at least four movie houses with *Streamline Moderne* marquees, including Lewistown's Miller Theater on West Market Street two blocks west of Post 1349. Murray's 1,242 seat Lewistown theatre opened April 1, 1949, with Gene Kelly in "Take Me Out to the Ball Game"

[77] https://www.murrayarchitects.net/; Accessed 12 Dec 2022.
[78] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raymond_Loewy; Accessed 12 Dec 2022.

one year after Post 1349 marked the 1st anniversary of its opening and is the only movie house designed by Murray's office still existing and still in use as a theatre. [79]

Post 1349's interest in a modern style clubhouse may have been inspired by a variety of factors, not the least of which might have been America's sequel to the 1925 Paris Expo-- the 1933 Chicago World's Fair celebrating the city's centennial, promoted as the "*Century of Progress International Exposition."* The fair's theme, *"Science Finds, Industry Applies, Man Adapts,"* [80] was reflected in many of the buildings and pavilions constructed to house displays of the century's latest products and technological innovations.

Organized to lift the country out of the malaise of the Great Depression as much as it was to celebrate the city's centennial, the fair's architecture and architectural products quickly found expression in buildings throughout the country, like Lewistown's WPA funded Borough Offices, constructed in 1936 on the site of the former borough office and 2nd floor GAR Hall at the corner of 3rd and Main streets, and Huntingdon hotelier Harry W. Wagner's vernacular Art Deco style Hotel Lewistown, at the corner of South Main and West Water Streets, opened in 1937 with great fanfare as a testament to hotelier Wagner's bullish outlook on the future while most of his competitors were still languishing in receivership.

The veterans of Mifflin County were not the only VFW post to embrace Modern architecture as an expression of their faith in the future. York County's White Rose VFW Post No. 556 announced plans to construct an attractive new home at the site of its present home at 617 West Market Street in York, Pennsylvania in January of 1938, and were able to occupy the building on the 10th of December that same year. [81]

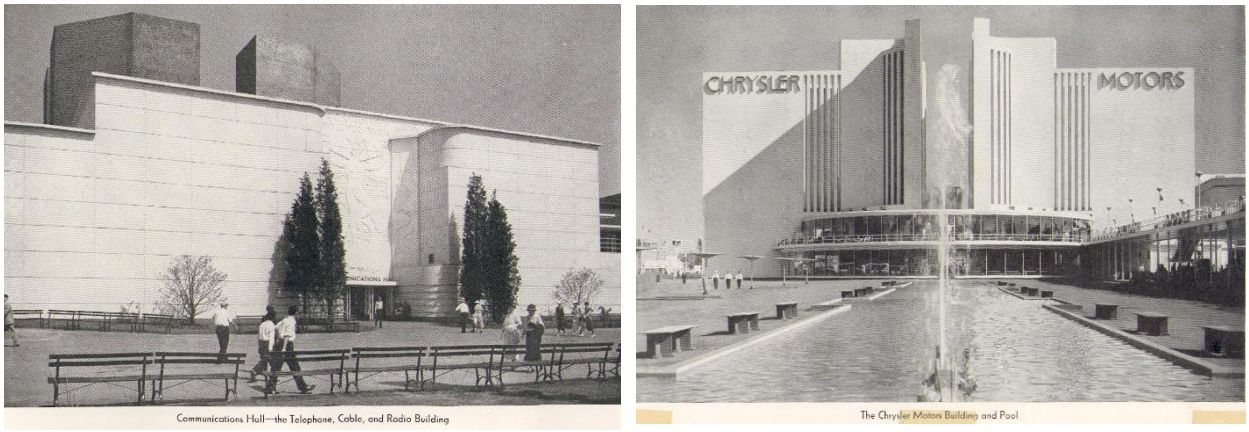


York County While Rose Post No. 556 (Photo by author)

The 50-foot wide by 120-foot-long clubhouse contained a meeting room, separate rest rooms for post members and the ladies' auxiliary, kitchen and storage rooms, a grill located on the basement floor, and an auditorium that comfortably seated 400 persons equipped with a modern stage and moveable seats that served as the club's center for all social and public activities.

Designed by York architects H.E. and R.B. Yessler and constructed and equipped by J. Earl Garrett of York at an estimated cost of $47,000, the 2-story building's austere limestone façade contrasted dramatically with its architecturally traditional neighbors, echoing the large smooth and geometrically stylized

[79] http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/28148; Accessed 13 Dec 2022.
[80] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Century_of_Progress
[81] " Parade Today Will Climax Dedication of V.F.W Home," *The Gazette and Daily* (York, Pennsylvania), 10 Dec 1938, p.1.



Communications Hall (left) and Chrysler Motors Building (right) at the Chicago World's Fair (Photos by Kaufmann & Fabry Co., Official Photographers, "A Century of Progress Exposition," 1933.)

surfaces with rounded corners and repetitive machine made parts reflected in the architecture of buildings at the Chicago World's Fair, such as the *Chrysler Building* and *Communications Hall*.

The Chicago World's Fair theme, *"Science Finds, Industry Applies, Man Adapts,"* surfaced again in Lewistown, about a month before Post 1349 bought the Shunkwiler building, when the VFW was invited to participate in a county wide *"survey of the physical and economic resources of the community in order to provide a factual basis for postwar adjustment."* [82] The scientific exercise was inspired by a study conducted in the fall of 1942 by the Pennsylvania State College Research Committee on the Economic Development of Pennsylvania, which also briefly analyzed the Lewistown economy while testing some of its research techniques.

The borough formed the Mifflin County Development Committee (MCDC) to lead the effort and established an executive committee and nine subcommittees representing various facets of the local economy, including a Historical Sub-Committee, Agricultural Sub-Committee, Living Conditions Sub-Committee, Retailing Sub-Committee, Labor Management Sub-Committee, Finance Sub-Committee, Industrial Sub-Committee, Public Services Sub-Committee, and Veterans Sub-Committee, and defined its "*Ultimate Purpose*" as *"to make whatever adjustments in the local economy as, under proper investigation, are deemed necessary for the prosperous postwar development of Mifflin County. To this end it is proposed that certain technical studies be made of the economic assets and liabilities of the area. With these data the Mifflin County Development Committee, in conjunction with affected or interested groups, can devise and carry through to completion a program which in their judgement will accomplish the desired ends."* [83]

Asked why the County should indulge in such strenuous self-searching, the MCDC answered, "*because no community can stand still. Either it adapts to new and changing conditions or it deteriorates."* [84]

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[82] *A Survey of the Resources and Opportunities of Mifflin County, Pennsylvania: The Mifflin County Development Committee*. (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, United States of America: Archives Publishing Company of Pennsylvania, Inc., 1947, p.5.
[83] Ibid. p.11.
[84] Ibid. p.12.

Faced with a shortage of affordable housing exacerbated by a shortage of building materials as manufacturing shifted its production from domestic products to war time armaments and the physical and psychological wounds and disabilities suffered by returning veterans left little doubt that the County's veteran organizations participation in the exercise would be key. The Chairman of the Mifflin County Advisory Committee and member of the Logan Guard Post of the American Legion and the Phillips-Jones Post of the VFW was appointed to represent the veteran's subcommittee, along with several other veteran organizations in the county. [85]

Two years later, the MCDC issued its final report, noting in Chapter 14, *Adjustment of Local Veterans,* that *"a total of 4,261 Mifflin County men had been inducted into the armed services during World War II. ...* [creating] … *"One of the greatest opportunities now before the local people … to help each one of these men find economic self-sufficiency on his return to civilian life."* [86] *A*mong its many recommendations addressing issues related to returning veterans was the creation of jobs that utilized skills veterans acquired while in the service, including those disabled by loss of sight and limbs, noting Army officials identified 600 military skills which can be adapted to 17,500 peacetime jobs in 130 different industries. [87]

Chapter 7, *Local Living Conditions* opened with *"The Importance of Living Well,"* [88] and the need to offer *"competitive living conditions"* for returning veterans as well as the 13,017 people who already lived in the county, of which 12,682 were "native white," 227 foreign born, 105 negro, and 3 it categorized as "others." [89] The chapter cited its housing shortage as a primary deficit, along with the need for improved recreational and cultural facilities, and identified its primary assets being a *"well developed religious life,*" with 23 churches in Lewistown alone, *"each of which is more or less active in secular as well as ecclesiastical affairs,"* [90] and 31 community organizations that **Bowling Alone** author Richard Putnam would describe today as the County's "social capital," including 12 business & professional organizations, 17 civic groups, 18 fraternal groups, 6 juvenile groups, 4 political groups, 12 veterans groups, 3 labor unions, and 10 recreational groups comprised of 6 sports clubs, a softball league and 35 bowling leagues.[91]

Post 1349 Adapts to Postwar Construction Challenges

Murray's office issued its first set of drawings for Project No. 627 on November 1, 1945, a mere three months and a day after the post purchased the building, but it took another year and a half before the May 21, 1947, issue of the Lewistown Sentinel reported a *"Splurge of New Building Here",* noting that *"the largest individual permit calls for an expenditure of $25,000 for a new club by the VFW at 19 South Brown Street. Work on this building, the former Shunkwiler Candy Company site, has been underway for the past few weeks."* [92] A variety of factors more than likely contributed to that year and a half delay.

[85] Ibid.p.9.
[86] Ibid.p.162.
[87] Ibid.p.164.
[88] Ibid.p.100.
[89] Ibid.p.117.
[90] Ibid.p.115.
[91] Ibid.p.116.
[92] "Splurge of New Building Here," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 21 May 1947, p.8.

Post 1349 paid a high price for its patriotic decision to invest $10,000 in war bonds at the start of the war, when inflation was 5%, and defer construction until 2 years after the war, when inflation peaked at 14.36 %,[93] recording its highest level since the 1st World War ended in 1918, when it hit 17.97%. [94] The Post's expenditure of $25,000 for a 16,720 square foot project constructed in 1947 equated to a construction cost of $1.50 per square foot compared to the $2.60 per square foot the York vets spent for their entirely new 18,000 gross square foot $47,000 clubhouse nine years earlier. At an average annual inflation rate of 5.23% [95] over that 9-year period, $47,000 spent in 1938 was equivalent to slightly over $74,000 in 1947, meaning the money the York vets spent for their new nominally larger (9.3%) clubhouse, when adjusted for inflation, was about 3 times the money the Lewistown vets had on hand for their project.

Unfortunately, as interest rates continued to climb, the Lewistown vets had no chance to change course once they decided to defer their project until after the war. The Supply Priorities and Production Board created before the war when the US, through its Lend Lease program, became known as the "arsenal of democracy" for the Allies, and its successor, the War Production Board established after the US declared war on Japan, essentially prohibited construction unrelated to the war effort, and called for the retooling of factories to the manufacture of war time goods during the war, causing massive disruption in the supply of materials after the war as factories scrambled to retool their production lines once again for domestic goods.

To make matters worse, the VFW had lobbied hard for the passage of the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, commonly known as the GI Bill, which, among other benefits, included aid to help veterans purchase homes, a priority the Mifflin County Development Company had also identified. Unfortunately for the vets at Post 1349, the sudden demand for housing, compounded by the high rate of inflation, pushed all construction related material and labor costs to record highs.

The Lewistown vets might have expected some savings from renovating an existing building instead of constructing new, but the extent of change required to remake the early 20th century hipped roof lodge into a modern, flat roofed clubhouse for the vets negated much of that potential. Murray's "General Notes" on Sheet 1 of Project No. 627 called for the complete removal of *the "present porch, store front, exterior stairs to basement, 2nd floor balcony, bay windows, etc."* and installation of an entirely new front *"as detailed on the west façade"* drawing. Another General Note called for the complete "*removal of all interior partitions, stairs, plumbing, heating, and electrical work in the basement, first and second floors of the present building*."

Notes on the north and south elevations called for the removal and blocking in of all existing windows and areaways with material to match existing and installation of new larger openings in the existing 12" thick masonry wall, all infilled with steel lintels, precast concrete sills and glass block. By the time the demo work was done, the vets were left with little more than an empty shell.

A few of Murray's "General Notes" certainly hinted at cost saving measures, including requiring the general contractor to provide recesses and wood subbase for the bowling alleys but maintaining an allowance for *"finished bowling alley installation*." The bar and backbar in the Club Room also would be

[93] https://www.in2013dollars.com/us/inflation/; Accessed 13 Dec 2022.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid.

furnished by the owner from its existing home on North Wayne Street and the General Contractor's work limited to installing new knotty pine on the face of the bar. The back bar in the café also was noted in the drawings as *"not in general contract."*

Post 1349's Architect Issues Revised Drawings

On May 12, 1947, just nine days before the Sentinel reported that work on the post's new home on South Brown Street had already been underway for several weeks, Murray issued Sheet 7, comprised of an entire *"Sheet of Revisions*" calling for the use of *"Vinylite"* as manufactured by the Bakelite Corporation of New York City where "leather" had been indicated on Sheet 1's *Schedule of Materials* for wainscot in the Grill and Café and replacement of knotty pine paneling with "Standard Glazed Tile" in the Club Room and Card Room.

The plan for the first floor also called for a "Lounge" area carved out of the west end of the Grill by an accordion style *"Modernfold Door"* manufactured by New Castle Products of New Castle, Indiana.



1950's ad for Bakelite "Vinylite" Resins, advertised as *"better coatings for really tough surfaces."*

Murray's use of mass produced, scientifically engineered materials-- concrete block walls and open web steel joists for the addition, asphalt and quarry tile floors, acoustical tile ceilings, Rock wool insulation, kalamein (zinc wrapped wood) fire doors, cork lined refrigeration rooms, Formica countertops, extruded aluminum edged marquee, glass block windows, Flexwood wainscot, recessed cold cathode cove lights—all reflected the construction industry's interwar evolution from a craft based economy to a manufacturing economy steered by big business and large corporations capable of meeting the wartime demand for materials that could be assembled quickly and economically.

According to Michael A. Tomlan, contributing author of *Building Modern America* in the book, **Twentieth Century Building Materials,** *"Faith in science and technology paralleled America's belief in capitalism. The idea that large corporations could be more efficient producers than small businesses was widely accepted in manufacturing and set the tone for the building industry. …Perhaps the best-known pacemaker in modern research and development was the Dupont Company, whose leadership in munitions depended on a laboratory that employed hundreds of people who had earned doctorates in chemistry."* [96]

With construction now well underway, the VFW's building committee also may have looked to the contractor for suggestions. *Building Modern America's* Tomlan noted that, *"The scarcity of labor and the low cost of materials in the United States continually tempted builders to try the latest, most efficient technological developments. Because a new material was often presented as a substitute for a*

[96] Jester, Thomas. Twentieth-Century Building Materials: History and Conservation. Getty Conservation Institute, 2014. p..34.

traditional one, almost every experimental substance was given at least a trial installation. Substitution was so commonplace and change orders were so frequent that they were seen as characteristic of the American building industry." [97]

On June 13, Murray issued a revision to "*Sheet 2, Second Floor Third Floor & Roof Plans"* revising "Stage, Storage, Windows," and on June 24th and 25th, with construction now well underway, Murray issued revisions to Sheet 1, "Basement & First Floor Plans," Sheet 3, "Elevations" and Sheet 5, "Sections & Details," calling for the total removal of the existing hip roof and wooden cornice, the addition of a storage room and air conditioning room on the third floor, and the extension of the facade and Stair C to the third floor at the west end of the original building, finally achieving the post's vision for a total makeover of the exterior of the circa 1910 former pool hall and lodge as a totally modern clubhouse for the members of Post 1349. Achieving that same makeover for the clubhouse interiors would require the assistance of Post 1349's Ladies Auxiliary.

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERION A FOR SOCIAL HISTORY RELATED TO VETERANS' ORGANIZATIONS

With many of Mifflin County's young men fighting overseas, Post 1349 established a *"girls' softball team composed of girls between the ages of 16 and 25"* and won their league's Central Pennsylvania championship in 1943, [98] the same year chewing gum magnate and Chicago Cubs owner Phillip Wrigley's formed his All-American Girls Professional Baseball League,[99] popularized again in the 1992 American sports comedy-drama film, *A League of Their Own*.

Like Wrigley's league, the Pennsylvania Girls Softball league was so popular they continued playing long after the war ended. Although the Lewistown VFW Girls Softball team lost to the Bethlehem Armorettes in the final game of the state championship in 1946, [100] they brought the title home again in 1947, [101] just as the vets were getting ready to partially occupy their new clubhouse on South Brown Street.

Post 1349's Ladies Auxiliary

Like the women of the GAR, Post 1349's Ladies Auxiliary also played a major role in raising money for its regular programs and activities, like the VFW's signature project, the annual sale of "*Buddy Poppies*," the bright red paper flowers with wire stems worn in buttonholes and lapels inspired by the opening lines of poet John McCrae's ode to soldiers killed in the 1st World War, *In Flanders Fields:*

> *"In Flanders fields the poppies blow, Between the crosses row on row…"*

Buddy Poppies were assembled by disabled and needy veterans at the VFW's Buddy Poppy factory in Pittsburgh, and the proceeds earmarked, *"for the aid and relief of disabled and needy veterans and their dependents, maintaining the VFW National Home for Orphans of Veterans at Eaton Rapids Mich., furthering rehabilitation and liaison between veterans far removed from Veterans Administration agencies, and augmenting expenses incidental to hospitalization of non compensated veterans."* In the

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[97] Ibid.
[98] "Girls Want Game," *York Daily Record* (York, Pennsylvania), 27 Apr 1946, p.21.
[99] https://www.history.com/news/womens-baseball-league-world-war-ii; Accessed 13 Dec 2022.

[100] "Bethlehem Armorettes Win State Title for Second Year in Row," *The Morning Call* (Allentown, Pennsylvania), 25 Aug 1946, p.13.
[101] "Vikings Lose to Reading, 2-1," *The Gazette and Daily* (York, Pennsylvania), 28 Jun 1947, p.20.

event of national disasters, the proceeds of Buddy Poppy sales were also used for the relief and aid of victims of those disasters. [102]

In addition to making final arrangements for the group's participation in the annual poppy sale at its May 22, 1947 annual meeting, the Lewistown Sentinel reported that the Ladies Auxiliary also voted to sponsor a dance with the proceeds used to help build stages at the VFW orphan's home at Eaton Rapids, and to sponsor a carnival in the near future, the proceeds of that event used to pay the auxiliary's subscription to the United Hospital Fund, Scotland Orphans School and other obligations. The Sentinel's report noted that after the meeting, *"a delicious tureen lunch was served in the dining room."* [103]

With work on the posts new home still underway a month later, Post 1349 hosted the 17th District's biennial encampment at the Owl's Club in Lewistown, with 250 delegates representing 32 VFW posts in Bedford, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Mifflin, Perry, Snyder and Union counties all in attendance, while their Ladies Auxiliaries met in the Elks Club, with *"a dinner … served at the Owl's Club to visiting delegates and other post and auxiliary members."* [104] Two local people from Post 1349 were elected to head the 8-county district with its 29 posts and 5,800 members, including Commander of VFW District 17 and President of VFW District 17's Ladies Auxiliary. [105]

Delegates from the post would attend the State Encampment in July, where the important business of the VFW's state organization would be conducted, with one delegate representing every 50 members. Lewistown's Post 1349 would be sending 40 members as delegates, while neighboring Earl F. Childs Post 1567 would be sending five delegates. [106] Although more than a year would pass before Lewistown's Post 1349 was able to fully occupy its new home, the important business of the VFW would also continue at the local, district and state levels during the interim.

VFW's Posts Challenged to Play Bigger Role in their Communities

As the year turned a corner, the Pennsylvania Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars urged its 800 posts in the state to shoulder greater responsibility in community service projects. *"We feel that the time has come for our posts and members to help shoulder some of the activities in our communities,"* sponsoring *"programs of direct benefit to the locality, including educational and recreational projects; improvements of government, safety and health; encouragement of stronger public interest in Americanism and better citizenship."* [107]

Later that month, a front-page story in the January 29th 1948 issue of the Sentinel reported that, *"Work is progressing nicely on the new home of Phillips-Jones Post 1349, Veterans of Foreign Wars, at 19 South Brown Street under the general supervision of the building committee and the direct supervision of John M. Mothersbaugh of the C & M Construction Company. The plan is to finish the ground floor first and as soon as that is completed, to move from the present building on North Wayne Street. Contracts and orders have been placed for the various items of work, equipment and fixtures. The present estimate is to*

[102] https://www.vfw.org/community/community-initiatives/buddy-poppy; Accessed 13 Dec 2022.
[103] "Buddy Poppy Sale Planned," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 22 May 1947, p.24.
[104] "District VFW and Auxiliary Meet Here Sun." *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 21 Jun 1947, p. 1.
[105] "Local People to Head District VFW, Auxiliary Organizations," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 23 Jun 1947, p.1.
[106] Ibid.
[107] "Calls on VFW for More Community Service Projects," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 28 Jan 1948, p.9.

open the first floor about March 15. It is expected that the new building when completed will rank among the outstanding club buildings in the state." [108]

Hinting at the financial challenges the building committee was facing, the Sentinel added that, *"For the past several years, the post has paid the dues of active members, but in view of the building program it voted recently to have both active and associate members pay dues for 1948."* [109]

A few weeks later, the Sentinel published a large ad on page 4 announcing an:

Extra Special
PARTY
Phillips Jones Post Auxiliary
No. 1349, VFW
Wednesday February 18, 1948, 7:30 P.M.
Scatter Rug Party in the Social Room
(Second Floor)
Bring Potato Salad or Baked Beans
Good Turn-Out Desired [110]

The Sentinel reported on the scatter rug party [111] the following day, noting that, *"Following the regular meeting of the Phillips-Jones Post 1349, VFW, and a scatter rug party of the post auxiliary Wednesday evening, the two groups joined for a luncheon served by the auxiliary women."* [112] During the luncheon, the officers of Post 1349's women's auxiliary and District 17's auxiliary *"presented the men's organization with two large checks,* [113] presumably from the proceeds of the scatter rug party, and discussed plans for a joint membership drive, also presumably meant to raise funds for the post's building program. The Sentinel noted that the new class of candidates to the ladies' auxiliary would be *"inducted in the beautiful ritual at the March meeting in the new post home. The men's group has no induction ritual."* [114]

Mark C. Carnes, author of ***Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America,*** wrote that Gilded Age *"Fraternal societies competed to attract the 'better' members of the community, and potential initiates were always obliged to attest to their physical and mental fitness. Yet this Knights degree, and many other rituals were predicated on the assumption that the candidate would fail his trials. Often he was*

[108] "Set Date for VFW Opening," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 29 Jan 1948, p.1.
[109] Ibid. p.20
[110] "Extra Special Party," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 17 Feb 1948, p.4.
[111] A "scatter rug party" presumably was the mid-century equivalent of a modern-day Tupperware or Longaberger Basket party. The first known use of the noun "scatter rug," according to Merriam Webster's online dictionary, was in 1926, defined as *"another term for throw rug."* An article on "*Home Decorations"* on page 13 of the October 1, 1946, issue of the *Harrisburg Telegraph* promoted scatter rugs as *"Softness Underfoot,"* noting that, *"A guest walking into an orderly room where the floor is highly polished and the scatter rugs are placed in an orderly fashion, instinctively knows that the hostess is an excellent housekeeper."*

[112] "VFW 1349 Opens Member Drive," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 19 Feb 1948, p.7.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid.

depicted as an assassin (Scottish Rite rituals). Intruder (Red Men, Ancient Order of Foresters), spy (Grand Army of the Republic), or coward. Occasionally he was tricked into violating his oath." [115]

Unlike the "*beautiful induction ritual*" contemplated by the women's auxiliary of Post 1349, the men of Post 1349, many of whom had risked their lives fighting overseas, saw no need to credential themselves for membership in the VFW beyond the requirement that they had served overseas, much like the men of the GAR rebelled in the 1870's against that organization's disastrous decision to adopt a "graded" membership system modeled after the Mason's three Blue Lodge degrees, where officers who may have been mere infantrymen now weighing in on whether candidates who had actually served as officers met the requirements to advance through the ranks of recruit, soldier and veteran.

Post 1349 Occupies Its New Home

Two days after the post opened its membership drive, the Sentinel published an ad requesting sealed bids for Post 1349's old clubhouse at 7 North Wayne Street, due by March 15. *"The building is a three-story brick, ideally constructed for apartments or office building, in a good state of repair. Possession and occupancy can be had on or about April 1, 1948."* [116] With the pressure on now on for the vets of Post 1349 to occupy their new clubhouse by April 1, the directors of Phillips-Jones Post 1349 voted a month and a half later to partially occupy their new home at 19 South Brown Street.

> *"The ground floor is so near completion that at a special meeting of the board of directors … it was decided to move into the new building … and have the ground floor only available for service to members … [but] defer inspection by the public and formal dedication until the basement and second floor are completed, which, it is now estimated, will not be for several months, based on present promises on materials which are still needed."* [117]

On April 23, 1948, Post 1349 made front page news beneath the headline, *Phillips-Jones Post VFW In New Home on S. Brown Today.* The Sentinel walked readers through the post's new home, beginning at the front door:

> *"Entrance to the Phillips-Jones Post on South Brown Street, location of the former Shunkwiler Candy Company, is covered with a marquee of stainless steel and its doorways flanked by huge slabs of Virginia blue stone. The name of the post is in large letters of cast aluminum on the face of the building. Inside, an ample cloak room lies to the left of the entrance. A phone booth, done in knotty pine, is at the right. Steps leading to the second floor and to the basement, where several bowling alleys are being planned, are also at the right of the entrance."*
>
> *The grill room occupies the main floor and has a seating capacity of 277 persons. The booths that line the sides of the 30 by 80-foot grill room are heavily upholstered in red and green. The booths are done with a modernistic touch and built-in half-moon effect. Drapes on the massive block glass windows match the appointments.*
>
> *Colored, indirect lighting comes from embedded panels in the ceiling. The floors throughout the building are of green asphalt tile and add to the grace and beauty of the interior.*

[115] Carnes, Mark Christopher. *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 53-54.
[116] "Sale of Valuable Central City Real Estate," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 21 Feb 1948, p.12.
[117] "Phillips-Jones VFW to Move," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 19 Apr 1948, p.1.

The bar occupies the recently constructed base of the L shaped building which lies to then back of the grill room. The red and blue indirect lighting blends to cast a soft light on a profusion of stainless steel, prima-vera natural wood and red fermica (sp).

The large office with its built-in safe is at the right of the bar and directly under the 18 by 31 foot kitchen on the second floor.

A large walk-in cooler with entries at each end, as well as a dummy waiter with service to all three floors, complete the first floor of the building.

The meeting and ballroom occupies the second floor with a stage and private dressing rooms for show personnel. Glass blocks with blue, green and gold lights at their back support the front of the stage. Huge scrolls roll back to form the wings of the stage. Red curtains at the front and rear of the stage are in deep contrast to the pure white walls.

Many hued plastic tile and modern lighting appointments make the ladies lounge, dressing rooms and rest rooms the equal of any in this section of the State. [118]

The Sentinel noted that, in 1935 when the post moved to North Wayne Street, its membership had grown to 80 veterans, but *"the membership now totals 1,434 of whom 935 are active members, veterans who served overseas, 383 associate members, or those servicemen who did not leave American shores and persons who did not serve in the armed forces and 114 members in the Ladies Auxiliary."*

The Sentinel added that, "*Since its inception the Post has been widely known for its charitable and relief work throughout the county."* [119]

A few days later, the Sentinel reported that, *"capacity crowds flowed in and out of the modern building over the week-end. Visitors were profuse in their admiration of the modern appointments and the way in which they were blended into the entire decorative scheme."* [120] The caption beneath a photo of the post's board of directors noted that they had voted to sell their home on North Wayne Street at public auction, apparently unsuccessful at receiving bids by the previously advertised March 15 deadline. Proceeds from the sale of the property more than likely would be needed to finish the club's interior spaces.

Post 1349 Engages with Its Community

Post 1349 lost little time honoring its obligation to engage with their community, especially when it involved "*encouragement of stronger public interest in Americanism and better citizenship*." On April 30, 1948, just a week after its grand opening, the post invited the public to a pair of *"special movies"* to be shown at their new home, sponsored by the local U.S. Army and Air Force Recruiting Station. The movies to be shown: *"Attack on Pearl harbor and Tale of Two Cities, the latter film showing results of atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki."* [121] The VFW had always taken a strong position on issues like military readiness and atomic energy, urging Congress to form a special committee to enact legislation on four resolutions passed at the VFW's 48th annual encampment in Cleveland in September of 1947:

1. *Adoption of universal military training.*

[118] "Phillips-Jones Post VFW In New Home on S. Brown Today," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 23 Apr 1948, p.1., 18.
[119] Ibid. p.18.
[120] "Hundreds at VFW Opening," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 26 Apr 1948, p.14.
[121] "Army to Show Films at VFW Post," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 30 Apr 1948, p.18.

2. *Setting up a plan for the mobilization of manpower, industry and finance to function in case of national emergency.*
3. *Return of the control of atomic energy to the military with the prohibition against sharing information with any other nation whatsoever.*
4. *Immediate implementation of the National Science Research Foundation.* [122]

Not every event hosted at the post was infused with patriotic overtones--the following Monday evening, the post's Auxiliary sponsored its *"first social activity"* [123] in the post's new clubhouse, a card party with 18 tables of players in the ballroom—but it was back to military themed films again the following month, with the Naval Reserve Recruiting team from Altoona on hand for a showing of the Bikini Atomic Bomb Test and *"Silent Services,"* a film dealing with submarine service during the war. The Lewistown paper noted that, *"Motion pictures will also be shown tomorrow night at 9 o'clock. These films will be different than those listed above."* [124]

The VFW Unanimously Votes "NO" to Women Members, "YES" to Affordable Housing

"VFW Will Not Admit Women," was the headline on the front page of the July 10, 1948, issue of the Lewistown Sentinel reporting on the 29th annual Pennsylvania Convention of the veterans of Foreign Wars.

> *"Some two-score resolutions were passed Friday, most without discussion and many without a full reading. However, delegates vigorously protested a resolution proposing woman membership in the VFW. It was killed almost unanimously. Another resolution criticized the 80th Congress for failure to act on housing. It called for a reconvening of Congress and also of the State Legislature for the purpose of acting on low-rent housing, veterans' housing and urban redevelopment bills."* [125]

In a separate front-page article published on page 1 of the Sentinel that same day, the VFW's State Commander criticized Congress for failure to pass public housing legislation, lashing out at the housing situation after the Pittsburgh Real Estate Board termed the legislation a *"socialistic sponsored rental housing bill."* The VFW Commander *"told delegates to the 29th state convention that housing conditions are 'deplorable', and that except for some sort of Government subsidy, the housing problem cannot be settled."* [126]

Although we have no record of how Lewistown's delegates voted at the convention, the lack of discussion or in some cases even a reading of some resolutions and the near unanimous consent on voting "No" to women membership suggest the likelihood they voted with the majority. We do know however that the lack of affordable housing was a concern of the post, based on their participation on the MCDC planning study on post war adjustment, and therefore can be reasonably certain they supported that resolution, as well as a resolution urging *"a World War II bonus of $3 a day with a*

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[122] "Militant Note in VFW Session," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 8 Sep 1947, p.1.
[123] "VFW Auxiliary Holds Card Party at Home, *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 5 May 1948, p.3.
[124] "To Show Service Films at VFW Home Thurs, and Friday, *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 23 Jun 1948, p.12.
[125] "VFW Will Not Admit Women," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 10 Jul 1948, p.1.
[126] "VFW Is Critical of Housing Act," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 10 Jul 1948, p.1.

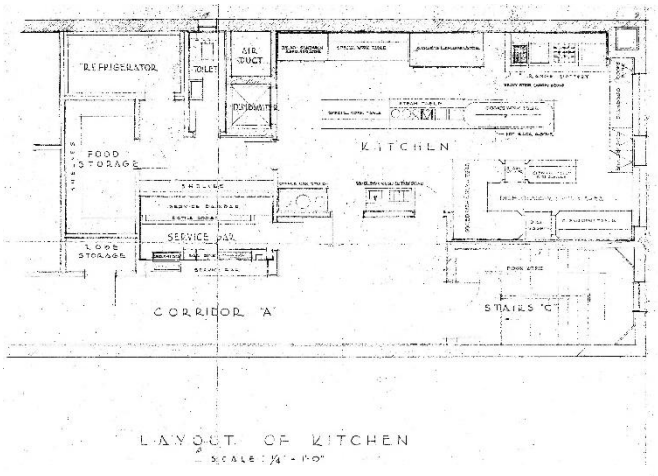
maximum of $3,500, and a $4 a day overseas service bonus with a maximum of $4,500, plus $500 for combat wounds." [127]

Later that month the post awarded service medals to eligible ex-army men in a presentation ceremony and, after the presentation, *"motion -pictures of The Zale-Graziano championship fight were shown by men from the local Army and Air Force recruiting station."* [128]

Post 1349's Ladies Auxiliary Gets the Job Done and the Post Formally Opens with a Floor Show

In the meantime, the VFW women were planning *"a kitchen shower to equip the kitchen in the new VFW Post Home."* The paper noted that, *"A tureen was held at the same time."* [129]

A *"kitchen shower*" presumably was the equivalent of a baby or bridal shower, although it's unclear if the purpose of the shower was to raise funds for pots and pans, glassware, dishes and other such "smallware," or to raise funds to actually purchase kitchen equipment identified in architect Murray's sketch for the "Kitchen Layout."—stoves, fryers, ovens, work counters, etc.



William Lynch Murray's Kitchen Layout for Post 1349

Murray's drawing for the layout of the kitchen—a noticeably loose sketch of the room floating in the center of an otherwise empty sheet with no additional notes or details-- suggests the likelihood that it was prepared as an Addendum to the original set of drawings and the possibility that the Ladies Auxiliary assisted with funding the latter rather than the former effort.

Post 1349's name was conspicuously absent on the list of Mifflin County veterans' groups mentioned in the September 4, 1948, front page announcement that an association of veterans' and civic groups approved a rostrum for a veteran memorial at Victory Park. *"It was mentioned that the original intention of the Association was to build a memorial hall in honor of the veterans, but that the building costs had gotten beyond the ability of the veterans and the community to support,"* which may explain why Lewistown's Post 1349--still struggling to fund and finish their own project--was not in attendance at the public meeting to discuss the project. The paper noted that*, "Those who favored a memorial auditorium generally agreed that it was out of the question now."* [130]

A few weeks later, a front-page of the September 24, 1948, edition of The Sentinel announced that Post 1349 would *"Formally Open Veteran Home."* The *"Two-Day Program at Phillips-Jones' Handsome New Building,"* was scheduled to begin at 9:30 that evening, where *"A special program has been arranged and it is expected that thousands will visit the premises, many for the first time, although the building*

[127] "VFW Will Not Admit Women," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 10 Jul 1948, p.1.
[128] "To Give Medals to Army Veterans at VFW Home Thurs." *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 22 Jul 1948, p.3.
[129] "VFW Women to Hold a Shower," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 5 Aug 1948, p.7.
[130] "Move to Push Vets Memorial," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 4 Sep 1948, p.1.

which was begun in April 1947, was completed a year later and has been in use since that time. Following the program there will be floor shows, one starting at 10 P.M., the other at midnight. There will be dancing from 9 P.M. to 1 A.M. to the strains of music by Stump's Rhythmaires Orchestra, with an F.M. broadcast from the stage from 10:30 to 11." [131]

Post 1349's Mrs. William A. Kessinger Reappointed VFW District 17 President

The October 5th edition of the Sentinel reported that *"Mrs. William A. Kessinger was reappointed for the third consecutive year as president of the 17th District which includes Mifflin, Huntingdon, Blair, Bedford, Fulton, Juniata, Snyder, Perry and Un ion Counties. Approximately 500 guests attended including state and national officers of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and auxiliaries. "* [132]

Despite the significance of Mrs. Kessinger's achievement, it was the custom of the times that a woman's identity be tied to her husband, in this case, Mr. William A. Kessinger, a jeweler in Lewistown. Although we don't even know Mrs. Kessinger's first name, she was in fact an accomplished merchant as well. According to the April 7, 1927 issue of the Selinsgrove Times-Tribune, *"Mrs. William A. Kessinger, who recently purchased a shoe store in Lewistown, passed the week-end here with Mr. Kessinger in South Market Street."* [133] The couple clearly had close ties with the military, attending a funeral in June of 1927 for *"a comrade of Mr. Kessinger during the Great War…* [whose] *… death was due to the effects of being gassed while in the army."* [134]

Mrs. Kessinger apparently had a flair for promotion, according to the Selinsgrove Times-Tribune, which published the following story a year later,

"Cleverness in advertising has been utilized at the Kessinger Boot Shop in Lewistown, conducted by Mrs. William A. Kessinger, wife of local jeweler. Orrie Smith, of that Mifflin county section, captured a 6-foot blacksnake the other day. Mrs. Kessinger had a cage built in the display window of her shop, where the snake has been exhibited before thousands of persons, surrounded by women's footwear in the present vogue of reptile skins." [135]

Like the men of her times, Mrs. Kessinger served in a variety of veterans' organizations, including as president of the ladies auxiliary of Lewistown's Logan Guard Post 90 of the American Legion, where in June of 1943 she presided over a meeting to welcome the "*first member of the WAVES to join the auxiliary*." [136] She was also a member of the Lieut. E. W. F. Childs Auxiliary of Post 1667, [137]secretary of the 4-County Council of the American Legion's auxiliary [138] and secretary of Lewistown's Phillips-Jones Post 1349.[139]

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[131] "Formally Open Veteran Home," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 24 Sep 1948, p.1.
[132] "Mrs. Kessinger Is Reappointed," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 5 Oct 1948, p.5.
[133] "Folks of Town as They Come and Go," *Selinsgrove Times-Tribune* (Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania), 7 Apr 1927, p.1.
[134] "Snapshots of the Town," *Selinsgrove Times-Tribune* (Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania), 16 Jun 1927, p.5.
[135] "Snake Advertises Shoes," *Selinsgrove Times-Tribune* (Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania), 7 Jun 1928, p.1.
[136] "WAVE is honored," *The Evening News* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania), 16 Jun 1943, p.9.
[137] "Mrs. Kessinger is Reappointed," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 5 Oct 1948, p.5.
[138] "4-County Council Legion Auxiliary Meets Recently," *The Daily News* (Huntingdon, Pennsylvania), 27 Oct 1945, p.6.
[139] "VFW Auxiliary Names Officers at Lewistown," *The Evening News* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania), 29 Mar 1946, p.4.

At the regular meeting of Post 1349's Ladies Auxiliary held at the post home 2 weeks after Kessinger's reappointment as president of VFW District 17, ten new members were accepted into the auxiliary that month, which *"put the local auxiliary 'over the top' in its membership quota. A contribution of $20 was sent to the Coatesville Hospital Sweater Fund and a donation voted to the Mifflin County Community Fund. The rehabilitation chairman…was appointed by the president to represent the Phillips-Jones Auxiliary in plans of the Juniata Foundation for the Blind's annual sale of hand-made merchandise. Many plans were discussed for the coming months … a card party in November and a rummage sale and a pie sale during the last week of October were planned*. " [140]

The Ways and Means committee *"gave a splendid report on the proceeds of the Goose Day dinner and was given a rousing vote of thanks."* [141]The committee also reported on the cookie sales held during the month and noted that *"the proceeds from the kitchen were gratifying."* [142]The chairman of the Christmas Day card committee reported orders for a large number of cards were being sold by the auxiliary.

Post 1349 Promotes "OPERATION BALLOT" for "FUN FOR YOU" Floor Show "for Underprivileged Children"

Post 1349 continued its community outreach that month, placing a small ad in the Sentinel announcing: *"Everybody welcome to our special party every Tuesday night. 8 o'clock. V.F.W., 19 S. Brown St,"* [143]and hosting a radio program at 10:00 PM Saturday evenings on local station WMRF.[144] Radio was a popular format for spreading the VFW's Americanization program when communism was viewed as a serious threat to democracy in the post war years leading up to McCarthy's anti-communism campaign. Post 1349 was put on notice when Lewistown's Sentinel reported that, *"The Veteran of Foreign Wars sounded a warning for membership committees to be alert for subversive groups determined to split the organization 'by simultaneous infiltrations at post, state and national levels."* [145]

Later that month, as funds for the veteran's memorial at Victory Park mounted, including a $50 contribution by Post 1349, one of the largest to date, [146] the October 25. 1948 issue of the Sentinel reported that *"The Pennsylvania Veterans of Foreign Wars announced it will sponsor "operation ballot" to get voters to the polls election day. Transportation for voters will be provided, but the VFW regretfully announced that it will be unable to furnish 'baby-sitters' for parents wishing to cast their ballot."* [147]

VFW's State Commander said *"the VFW will swing into action when the polls open and will function throughout the day under the direction of the organization's Statewide registration committee. This committee registered an estimated 40,000 voters in the recent 60-day registration period. 'Operation Ballot' is a VFW-originated movement toward attainment of better citizenship. Transportation will be*

[140] "10 New Members for Auxiliary," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 16 Oct 1948, p.5.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid.
[143] *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 11 Oct 1948, p.1.
[144] "Radio Program WMRF Saturday," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 16 Oct 1948, p.2.
[145] "VFW Warned on Admitting Reds to Membership," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 7 Oct 1948, p.14.
[146] "Funds Mount for Memorial," The Sentinel (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 20 Oct 1948, p.3.
[147] "VFW's 'Operation Ballot' to Get PA. Voters to Polls," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 25 Oct 1948, p.5.

provided in many communities, but no provision has been made for baby-sitters although requests for them have been received." [148]

On November 4, 1948, just days after the election and a week before Veterans Day, the Sentinel announced Post 1349's plans to present the new musical stage show, *'Fun for You,'* at the high school, billed as a "Program for Underprivileged Children".

According to the Sentinel,

> *"The production will be an impersonation of those flight net work shows on the radio. … Local people will impersonate such famous celebrities as D.I.Q., Harry Von Zell, Duke of Paducah, Minnie Pearl, Uncle Ezra and many other favorites.*
> *The barn dance scene will be of variety including old time square dancing, special entertainers and musicians. Prominent business and professional men will burlesque Betty Grable, Lana Turner, Gravel Gertie, Me West and Gypsy Rose Lee—as they impersonate glamorous gals having breakfast in Hollywood.*
> *The 'Breakfast in Hollywood' scene will also follow the pattern of the popular radio show in so much as ladies in the audience will be awarded prizes for the goofiest hats; a wishing ring lady will be chosen; corsages awarded to the eldest lady present, and a Good Good Neighbor of Lewistown will be presented.*
> *Throughout the show there will be specially costumed singing and dancing choruses with impersonations of everything from Frank Sinatra to a singing commercial.*
> *The entire show ends with a big production number which tells the History of the Nation in song and tableau.*
> *The sponsoring organization says that the show has come highly recommended as it has met with outstanding success in other communities where it has been staged. And it is something entirely different in-home talent for in this show the audience has a chance to participate and win awards for correct answers in the quiz program and variety scenes in the show."* [149]

The following week, the Lewistown Sentinel announced that the VFW invited all High School Seniors to participate in a popularity contest in conjunction with its "Fun for You" show. The contest was open to both boys and girls, with a keepsake diamond ring for the girl getting the top number of votes and a campus jacket for the leading boy, both donated by leading merchants in the community. It was stressed that *"every senior can take part in this event which will be fun for all. The winners will be presented on the night of the show."* [150]

Although delayed by a week, the show ran two nights, with *"The proceeds of the affair …used by the sponsoring agency for furthering their charitable work."* [151]

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[148] Ibid.
[149] "VFW to Present 'Fun for You", Phillips-Jones Boosts Program for Underprivileged Children," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 4 Nov 1948, p.1.
[150] "'Fun For You' Contest Open," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 11 Nov 1948, p.3.
[151] Ibid.

Post 1349 Opens It's Grill Room to the Public and Puts On More Floor Shows, a Business Directory, a 21-Gun Salute and a Christmas Party

The day after the VFW's "Fun for You" show ended, the post ran the following ad in the Sentinel announcing the opening of the dining room to the community:

NOONDAY
LUNCHES
We Are Pleased to Announce
the VFW Dining Room is now
open to the general public for
Noonday Luncheons Only
11:30 A.M. to 2 P.M.
"Always an interesting menu for your selection.
Special parties arranged.
Phillip-Jones Post 1349
VFW Home
19 South Brown Street.[152]

A week later they ran another large ad in the Sentinel announcing a magic show at the post:

IT'S MAGIC!
The V.F.W Proudly Presents
MR. JOSEF SMILEY and his All-Magic Show
He Will Saw His Wife in Half!
Birds! Animals! Silks! And Flowers from Nowhere!
The Chinese Guillotine Act!
See A Woman Pierced with a Flaming Sword!
And Many More—All for Your Entertainment at
THE VFW
19 SOUTH BROWN STREET
Friday-Saturday Nights [153]

On December 2, the PA VFW announced it had recovered $1.867,439 in all types of claims for state veterans and their dependents in the five months ended in December. The amount recovered represented a decline of $234,000 compared to the same period the previous year, according to the State Commander, who "warned veterans that 'delay in filing a service or non-service connected claim makes adjustment more difficult." [154]

At the local level, Post 1349 continued its efforts to help local veterans adjust to post war conditions consistent with the recommendations of the recently completed MCDC planning study by announcing its decision to publish a Business Directory in the December 17, 1948 issue of the Sentinel under the large banner headline,

[152] "Noonday Luncheons," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 19 Nov 1948, p.18.
[153] "It's Magic," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 24 Nov 1948, p.2.
[154] "PA VFW Recovers $1.8 Million for State Veterans," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 2 Dec 1948, p.17.

VETERANS

"With the idea of patronizing veterans who are now
in business for themselves, or who are about to do so,
this Post will compile a **BUSINESS DIRECTORY**
of such Veterans!
REGISTER
with us now, either in person, or phone, or by mail.
You do not need to be a member of this or
any other veterans' organization.
PHILLIPPS-JONES POST 1349 V.F.W.
19 South Brown Street Phone 4793 [155]

The Post also continued its tradition of providing military services for honorably discharged veterans at funerals, a GAR practice now performed by all veteran organizations. On December 21, 1948, the Sentinel reported that Post 1349 conducted military services for 27 year old Pfc. James A. Wagner of the M.P. Platoon, 9 Infantry Division, a veteran born in 1917 killed in action in Germany on April 1, 1945, his body recently recovered and reinterred in the William Lind Memorial Cemetery.[156] Personnel from Post 1349 included a firing squad, color bearers, chaplain, commander and squad leader. [157]

As the post's 1st year in their new home came to a close, the members made *"good on a pledge to use the proceeds of their recent home-talent play to expand vastly their usual Christmas welfare activities,"* distributing 30 large baskets, each containing a chicken and a goodly supply of staple groceries." [158]

And on Christmas morning, *"they were hosts at a party attended by several hundred children, each of whom was greeted by Santa Claus and given a treat. Appropriate Christmas music on the Solovox[159] was also rendered during the children's party. The post also donated generously to the Community Fund, the Salvation Army and to veteran-members forced to spend Christmas in hospitals."* [160]

The Sentinel noted that, *"The Post's welfare activities, however, were not restricted to their own members or families."* [161]

PA VFW'S New Commander Advocates for Affordable Housing and European Refugee Doctors

The new year brought a renewed focus on calls for affordable housing, the number one priority of Mifflin County's postwar "adjustment" plan, at the state and Federal levels. On January 3, 1949, the Sentinel reported that the Commander of the Pennsylvania Veterans of Foreign Wars called for a meeting at the State Capital with more than 30 builders, labor leaders, realtors, bankers and state and

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[155] "Veterans," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 17 Dec 1948, p.16.
[156] https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/62591331/james-a-wagner; Accessed 12 Dec 2022.
[157] "Military Services Held for Veteran," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 21 Dec 1948, p.3.
[158] "VFW Distributes Christmas Cheer," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 29 Dec 1948, p.16.
[159] https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_608159 electronic instrument was made by the Hammond Organ Company in Chicago, Illinois. The Solovox consists of two units, a keyboard unit which is readily attached to any style of piano, and a tone cabinet, which when used with a spinet or upright piano usually stands on the floor at one end of the piano.

[160] "VFW Distributes Christmas Cheer," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 29 Dec 1948, p.16.
[161] Ibid.

city officials to air the veterans housing program and publicly financed home building, where *"conferees would discuss housing and rentals within 'the veterans purses.'"* [162]

By the time the group met on January 18th, the list of conferees had grown to nearly 50 banking, building, real estate, housing and labor representatives, including three of the nation's top housing authorities who attended to discuss the Federal Government's plans to solve the shortage of dwellings. At the meeting, then Governor Duff strongly backed rent controls and the State VFW Commander said he "*vigorously endorsed the Governor's stand.* Representatives of the various builders' organizations and business groups presented their own case, which called for dropping controls, while the president of the Pennsylvania Federation of Labor said, *"if private industry can do it—okay, if not, the Government should subsidize vet housing."* [163]

On January 26, 1949, the VFW announced that it backed "in principle" the Governor's proposed low- and middle-income housing program for veterans and other home seekers. *"Thousands of veterans in our organization need homes,"* Pennsylvania's VA Commander said. *"We are looking to the Governor and the Legislature to make it possible for private enterprise and State Government-aided builders to build homes."* [164]

Details of the Governor's $15,000,000 low rent housing program were finally revealed in the February 3 issue of the Sentinel, where the VFW's State Commander said,

> *"Duff's program to subsidize private builders was clear and forceful. The program has the support of the VFW and should have the backing of all Pennsylvanians,"* he declared, and *"It would not be confined to veterans in the low income bracket, …The Governor has translated his promise of a housing program into action and it is a start in the right direction—preserving as it does the system of free enterprise, he said."* [165]

Two days later, after reporting that *"he had just completed a survey of veterans' hospitals and found that 'the five Pennsylvania hospitals for veterans are jammed, have long waiting lists and are understaffed,'* Pennsylvania's VFW Commander called *"the forgotten men of Europe—2,500 displaced doctors—the practical solution to the doctor shortage."* [166]

The Commander noted that,

> *Approximately 2,500 experienced medical and surgical doctors are in Europe's displaced persons' camps waiting for some nation to give them a new start in life,"* he said. *"Only our apparent disinterest and an entry permit separate those displaced doctors and thousands of American war veterans and others who urgently need their skilled medical and surgical services,"* calling on Congress to "*boost the present 100,000 displaced persons' immigration quota and to 'slash through the lengthy immigration procedures and invite hundreds of the 2,500 doctors in Europe's camps to start life anew in the United States."* [167]

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[162] "VFW Calls Parley on Vets' Housing," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 3 Jan 1949, p.3.
[163] "Gov. Duff for Rent Control," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 19 Jan 1949, p.12.
[164] "VFW Backs Duff's Housing Program 'In Principle,'" *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 26 Jan 1949, p.14.
[165] "PA. VFW Praises Duff's Proposed Housing Program," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 3 Feb 1949, p.10.
[166] "Would Bring in D.P. Physicians," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 5 Feb 1949, p.1.
[167] Ibid.

Post 1349 Enjoys Its First Full Year in Its New Home, Adds Air Conditioning & Lots More Floor Shows

The stage in the ballroom of Post 1349 appears to have been in near continual use during the post's first full year in their new home. A large ad placed in the February 11, 1949, issue of the Sentinel announced,

V.F.W.
Phillips-Jones 1349
ANOTHER TOP-NOTCH SHOW
Saturday, 10:30
Nancy Brooks and Her Accordion
Bobbie Raymond—Character Dancer
Bill Sweeney—'A Nut on the Loose' [168]

Two weeks later, the post ran another small ad on page 1 of the Sentinel, advertising a ***"****Gala floor show. Phillips-Jones Post 1349, 10.30 Saturday night, orchestra and dancing Fri.-Sat. Entertainment every night."* [169]

A month later, on April 22, 1949, the Sentinel reported that the post would be celebrating its first anniversary at its new home the next day, and that, "*Since moving one year ago, numerous improvements have been made; the first and second floors have been in constant use but a contract has been awarded for additional air conditioning for the second floor. The basement, which is intended for stag quarters, has not yet been completed."*

The Sentinel reported that the post's "*membership has increased considerably, and the post is currently sponsoring a baseball team, and also generously supporting charitable community projects in its first year's program. The entertainment committee…has engaged a special floor show for tomorrow in celebration of First Anniversary Night. There will be acts on each floor at the same time, to entertain the large attendance expected," [170]* including according to the ad that ran in the Sentinel, acts from NBC TV:

1ST Anniversary
V.F.W.
PHILLIPS-JONES POST
GALA FLOOR SHOW
Radio and Television Big Stars
10:30 Saturday Night
A 2-Hour Show
EDDIE (HORSE COLLAR) SWARTZ, M.C.
4 SOUTHERN BELLES, Beautiful
YO-EDDIE QUARTET, Direct from Chicago, NBC
"HAWK," Country's Most Outstanding Tap Dancer
of NBC and Television
JOLLY REYNOLDS, One-Man Band [171]

[168] "V.F.W.," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 11 Feb 1949, p.16.
[169] "V.F.W.," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 26 Feb 1949, p.1.
[170] "To Mark First Anniversary," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 22 Apr 1949, p.22.
[171] "1st Anniversary," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 22 Apr 1949, p.16.

Post 1349's Ladies Auxiliary Participates in Memorial Services and Receives High Marks at PA VFW Annual Convention

The post's Ladies Auxiliary was also quite active that year. The May 16, 1949, Sentinel reported that, "*Plans for a local hospital campaign dinner, remembrance for departed veterans on Memorial Day, and planning a dance were part of the meeting … at the post home ….* Two new members were welcomed, and cash donations accepted for presenting flags to the Salvation Army at Philadelphia and to the city and Philadelphia County officials at the annual conventions of both the VFW and the auxiliaries to be held in Philadelphia in July. In addition, *"It was decided to dispense this year with decorating the graves of veterans with flowers and instead place a memorial tribute in the newspaper."* [172]

On May 28, the Sentinel ran the following ad for the post's Ladies Auxiliary:

Phillips-Jones
V.F.W. Auxiliary No. 1349

In Memory of Deceased Members
For you the struggle is over,
But the cause for which you died
Is enshrined to the world forever,
By small crosses, side by side.

But for we who remain it's not finished;
We must push forward until
The Stars and Stripes wave proudly
From the crest of the highest hill.

Members, Phillips-Jones Post Auxiliary [173]

Freedom and peace were the themes when members of Post 1349's ladies auxiliary joined the veterans parade on the 31st of May, where the Phillips-Jones Post 1349 and the Sweethearts Drum and Bugle Corps of the American Legion played national and sacred selections, and the pastor emeritus of the Trinity Reformed Church *"asked divine guidance for peace in human lives and in the broader relationships of nations, for a peace that passeth understanding."* [174]

The women of Phillips-Jones Post 1349 Auxiliary were also *"in the column of march"* behind massed colors and firing squad of veterans and National Guard members at the solemn dedication ceremonies for the World War II Memorial at the American Viscose Corporation, as planes roared overhead at significant points of the program. The speaker noted that,

> *"Even as the finest viscose thread is used in the finest cloth, God has taken the thread of life of the idealism of the Puritan, devotion of the Quaker, the ruggedness of the Slav, the song of*

[172] "VFW Auxiliary Plans Dance; to Dispense with Decorating Graves," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 16 May 1949, p.5.
[173] "Phillips-Jones V.F.W. Auxiliary No. 1349," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 28 May 1949, p.3.
[174] "Freedom, Peace Day's Themes," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 31 May 1949, p15.

the Negro, the religion of the Jew, and the Catholic and Protestant to weave the American way of life." [175]

The memorial shaft was unveiled by women veterans of the Viscose plant, and Gold Star Mothers placed wreaths on the monument on behalf of the Textile Workers Union and the corporation.

District 17's auxiliary president and Post 1349's Ladies Auxiliary were both recognized in July at the VFW's annual convention in Philadelphia, where over a thousand delegates and members attended the 4-day event. District 17's auxiliary president, a member of Post 1349, was cited as the only district president to send in reports each month to department headquarters. She also was recognized for leading the group in giving outstanding community service. District 17's auxiliary also topped the list for securing the greatest number of new memberships, while Post 1349's auxiliary placed fourth in securing the greatest number of memberships during the year. [176]

Post 1349 Hosts More Floor Shows, a Bugle Contest, Kicks Off Its Voter Drive and a Semi Pro Football Team

In mid-June, Post 1349 advertised yet another "Gala Floor Show":

Phillips-Jones Post 1349
V.F.W.
Gala Floor Show Saturday Night
June 11,1949, at 10:30 O'clock
Featuring:
"The Pellegring Family"
A Complete Show of Singing, Dancing, Acrobatics,
Comedy, Musical Novelties and Specialties [177]

Post 1349 was also an active supporter of scouting, presenting a silver bugle to a Boy Scout from Huntingdon as an award for placing first in a bugling contest held at the annual Camporee of the Juniata Valley Council, Boy Scouts of America at the Seven Mountains Scout Camp. The Huntingdon Daily News reported that the award was given, *"in the interest of better bugling,"* [178] and that the first, second and third place winners would receive a certificate to serve as camp bugler for two weeks at Seven Mountains Scout Camp.

Phillips-Jones VFW also kicked off its campaign to register veterans and their relatives to vote in July, *"especially on the matter of the Pennsylvania State Bonus,"* [179]a payment promised to veterans for their service in the second World War. It was reported at the VFW's state convention in Philadelphia earlier

[175] "Viscose Memorial Dedicated Amid Solemn Services Sunday," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 13 Jun 1949, p.1.
[176] "Honor Leaders of VFW Posts," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 11 Jul 1949, p.12.
[177] "Phillips-Jones Post 1349," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 10 Jun 1949, p.17.
[178] "To Hold Silver Bugle Contest at Scout Camp," *Huntingdon Daily News* (Huntingdon, Pennsylvania), 15 Jun 1949, p.7.
[179] "Phillips-Jones VFW Starts Campaign to Register Veterans," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 14 Jul 1949, p.22.

that month that only 25% of veterans were registered to vote, and that the State Bonus would only cost each of the states 10 ½ million voters $36.50 to raise the $380 million dollars.

The Sentinel reported that *"One of the leading efforts in this matter is being made by Phillips-Jones Post 1349, Veterans of Foreign Wars,"* and that *"One of the largest recent meetings of veterans in this area was held at the post's house … where upwards of 250 veterans were in attendance, "* [180] and ran the following ad for the Post on July 1, 1949:

VETERANS!
Do You Want Your
BONUS?
If so, REGISTER, so that
you can VOTE for it.

If you have never voted or registered, or if you have not voted within the last two years, or if you have changed your address, then you cannot vote for the bonus unless

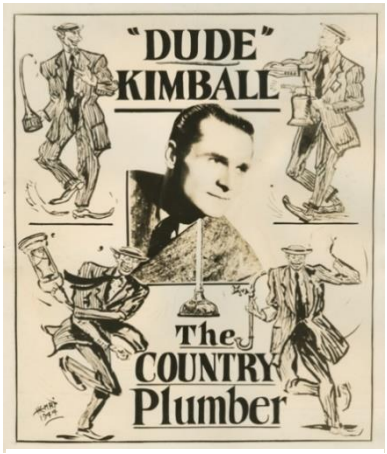
YOU REGISTER NOW

At the Registration Office in the Court House. Registering has no connection with having to pay taxes. Also urge your relatives and friends to register and vote.
THIS AD SPONSORED BY PHILLIPS-JONES POST NO. 1349, VFW [181]

The ad was an attempt to head off concerns well ahead of the elections, emphasizing that, *"Registering has no connection with having to pay taxes,"* and encouraging veterans to *"urge their relatives and friends to register and vote."* [182]

In August, the Sentinel advertised another floor show for Post 1349 hosting an even bigger name entertainer from Hollywood:

Phillips-Jones Post 1349
V.F.W.
Floor Show Saturday Nite
10:30 O'clock
"PATSY LESTER"-- Lovely Gay Nineties dance stylist.
"GLORIA MATES"-- Charming semi-classic song stylist.
"DUDE KIMBALL"-- The "Country Plumber" who just returned from making pictures for Columbia Picture Corporation of Hollywood California as comedy emcee.
Dancing to 'Three Guys and a Gal' [183]



Circa 1950 poster of "Dude Kimball"

[180] Ibid.
[181] "Veterans," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 1 Jul 1949, p.10.
[182] Ibid.
[183] "Phillips-Jones Post 1349," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 12 Aug 1949, p.3.

August also saw the rollout of Lewistown's semi-professional football team, the VFW Steamrollers, sponsored by Post 1349. Huntingdon's Daily News reported in its August 27, 1949, *"Battling It Out"* column that "*the Lewistown Steamrollers, one of the better semi-pro outfits in Central Pennsylvania, invade the Bricktown to play the Pennsylvania Colored All Stars of Harrisburg, another strong club, in a game being sponsored by the Simpson-Hunt American Legion Post of Mount Union*." [184]

The Huntingdon paper noted that, *"Former Bellefonte Academy and Carnegie Tech gridder, Loddie Kozicki, has been coaching the Rollers, who are playing under the sponsorship of the Phillips-Jones V.F.W Post in L'town," and "The Harrisburg All Stars have been playing as a unit for five years and boast some of the best players from previous 11's of John Harris and William Penn High schools of Harrisburg as well as several Pennsylvania colleges." [185]*

As November rolled around, Post 1349 placed an ad in the paper urging voters to:

"Vote YES"
for "Amendment 1-A
Veteran's Adjusted Compensation (Bonus)
Business Men: "Over 1 ½ million dollars would come into Mifflin County
and be spent here
Mark X" on Ballot (Not a check mark)
PHILLIPS-JONES POST NO>1349 (VFW) [186]

Later that month, the Sentinel reported that the planned *"Curtailment of a hospital building program by the Veterans Administration sparked a vigorous protest by the Pennsylvania Veterans of Foreign Wars. … How does the Veterans Administration propose to provide hospitalization in a State where private and State-operated hospital facilities are admittedly inadequate? [187]* they asked, pointing out that the VA must provide facilities for 1,539,000 veterans in the Commonwealth.

Post 1349's Steamrollers closed out the month by losing their first game of the season to the York Knights, maintaining a one point lead through the end of the third quarter until finally losing to the Knight's by a touchdown during a fourth period rally,[188] but ended their first full year of operations and the decade that had witnessed the horrors of the second World War on an upbeat note with a Gala New Year's Eve Party advertised in the December 30, 1949 issue of the Sentinel:

Phillips-Jones Post 1349, V.F.W.
19 South Brown Street
GALA NEW YEARS EVE PARTY
Entertainment and Novelties for All
Regular New Year's Eve Sauerkraut Supper
(For All Members and Guests)
Sunday, January 1, 1950, 4:30 P.M. to 7 P.M.

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[184] "Battling It Out," *Huntingdon Daily News* (Huntingdon, Pennsylvania), 27 Aug 1949, p.4.
[185] Ibid.
[186] "Vote YES," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 4 Nov 1949, p.16.
[187] "PA. VFW Protests Curtailment of Hospital Plan," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 13 Nov 1949, p.15.
[188] "York Knights Defeat Lewistown Foe, 13-7," *The Gazette and Daily* (York, Pennsylvania), 14 Nov 1949, p.18.

Post 1349 Begins & Ends a New Decade at Its Home on South Brown Street

The new decade started out a lot like the previous year for the members of Post 1349. The State VFW Commander visited the post in May of 1951 as part of a *"whirlwind tour in the interest of national security, state civil defense, Americanism and greater community service,"* [189] the four cornerstones of the VFW's mission and purpose, with stops in Huntingdon, Bedford, Fulton Mifflin, Snyder and Union counties, including a buffet dinner at the Phillips-Jones Post at Lewistown.

As the new decade neared its close, *the Monessen Daily Independent*, a Pittsburgh area daily, reported on September 9, 1957, that the State Liquor Control Board announced the suspension of the licenses of several establishments, all—with the exception of one—in the Pittsburgh area, including the Southern Country Club, suspended for 30 days for "*sales to non-members, charging admittance to a portion of the premises, gambling, failure to adhere to bylaws, credit purchases and,"* the rather puzzling charge of *"failure to clean coils regularly."* [190] The Westinghouse Employees Club also lost its license for 15 days for Sunday sales to nonmembers, and a union hall and bar each lost their licenses for 35 and 20 days respectively for gambling.

Pittsburgh had in fact been a hot bed for gambling for quite some time. Nearly a decade earlier, the *Pittsburgh Press* reported on June 25, 1948, that liquor dealers were claiming that there were as many as 250 so called "One-Man Clubs" operating in the county and demanded that the Liquor Control Board and Pittsburgh's mayor take steps to clean up the liquor retailing business. The Pennsylvania Hotel Association also joined the complaint, pleading with the Liquor Control Board to *"do something about the slot machine racket in the clubs,"* arguing that *"the clubs are able to meet rent and incidental expenses through the profits from the slot machines and still have enough left over to stage elaborate floor shows. These shows attract customers from legitimate places of business which cannot afford to stage them, they said."* [191]



"One-Man Clubs" Cartoon, Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph, 20 Mar 1938, p.12

A few months later as the Lewistown vets were staging their own elaborate "Fun For All" floor show, the Lewistown Sentinel reported on November 11, 1948 that the Pennsylvania Veterans of Foreign Wars "State Commander, a native of the Pittsburgh area borough of New Kensington *"announced that the VFW also will seek legislation to require the Liquor Control Board to grant licenses to all 'bona-fide' war veterans posts. Elimination of 'one-man' clubs also would be urged,"* [192] he added.

[189] "State VFW Commander to Visit County on Saturday," *Huntingdon Daily News* (Huntingdon, Pennsylvania), 5 Feb 1951, p.1.
[190] "Liquor Board Cites Taverns In the Area," *Monessen Daily Independent* (Monessen, Pennsylvania), 09 Sep 1957, p.3.
[191] "Liquor Dealers Hit 'One Man Clubs,'" *The Pittsburgh Press* (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania), 25 Jun 1948, p.2.
[192] "PA VFW Legislative Program Planned," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 11 Nov 1948, p.3.

Illegal gambling was not, however, confined to "one-man clubs." A November 12, 1948, story picked up by the Lewistown Sentinel reported that a former member of the East Liberty Post of that city's VFW sent a letter to the Governor asking for an investigation of the Pittsburgh District State Liquor Control Board. The member charged in the telegram that a Liquor Control Board agent was present when his wife criticized alleged gambling in the VFW Trees-Carlisle Post 166. His wife was removed as president of the Ladies Auxiliary of the post as a result of her attack on the post's administration, and the member was court-martialed by the post and suspended from membership for alleged "out-side" discussion of the dispute. [193]

Nor were illegal gambling and Pittsburgh the sole target of such investigations. On March 1, 1948, a month before the Lewistown vets occupied their new home at 19 South Brown Street, news arrived through the Sentinel that three Big Valley Clubs had been raided for beer sales by State Liquor Control Board officers, *"seizing bottled beer as evidence and arresting the 'stewards' in charge for selling intoxicating beverages without licenses."* [194] The arrests were made at the nearby Belleville Veterans of Foreign Wars Post, Reedsville American Legion Home, and the Reedsville Volunteer Fire Company hose house. *"These are the first club violations of the liquor law to be prosecuted in recent years,"* the Sentinel reported, *"but individuals who have run afoul of the law have been receiving the minimum sentences, consisting of $100 and no jail terms, for the first offenses."* [195]

So it is perhaps not entirely surprising that the only liquor license suspended by the Liquor Control Board in September of 1957 was not from the Pittsburgh area and was not limited to charges of illegal gambling. In fact, according to the article that ran in the Monessen Daily Independent, Lewistown's Phillips-Jones Post 1349 received the longest suspension and the greatest number of charges:

> "*—effective September 27—Phillips-Jones Post V.F.W. Home Association of Lewistown, 19 S. Brown St., Lewistown, 50 days, failed to keep complete and truthful records, credit purchases, sales to non-members, failure to adhere to bylaws and collect dues from members; unexplained shortage in cash income, gambling."* [196]

There was little other news to report from Lewistown's post through the end of the decade until Sunbury's *Daily Item* reported on May 20, 1960 that, *"The State Liquor Control Board Wednesday suspended the following licenses, effective June 10, for the reasons cited:*

> *Mifflin County—Phillips-Jones Post V.F.W. Home Association, Lewistown, 40 days; fortified, adulterated and-or contaminated liquor."* [197]

Lewistown's Post 1349 was the only licensee cited that day.

Post 1349's Ladies Auxiliary Carries On (for a While)

On December 22, 1960, the Sentinel reported that, *"The regular December meeting of the Phillips-Jones Auxiliary to Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1349 was held in the Post Home,"* and that *"Many items of*

[193] "Carries Dispute with Pittsburgh VFW to Duff," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 12 Nov 1948, p.21.
[194] "3 Big Valley Clubs Raided for Beer Sales," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 1 Mar 1948, p.1.
[195] Ibid.
[196] "Liquor Board Cites Taverns in the Area," *Monessen Daily Independent* (Monessen, Pennsylvania), 09 Sep 1957, p.3.
[197] "Lewistown VFW Loses License for 40 Days," *The Daily Item* (Sunbury, Pennsylvania), 20 May 1960, p.10.

business were transacted with reports made on sales of wallets and pocketbooks, Christmas cards and poppies. It was decided to remember the veterans in Lebanon Hospital with cigarettes for their Christmas party, "the local auxiliary sending one-half case to be distributed." [198]

On May 2, 1961, the Sentinel reported that *"The Phillips-Jones Auxiliary of Post 1349 will join 6,700 local auxiliary units throughout the country in a project to provide funds for the new American Freedom Center of the Freedoms Foundations at Valley Forge."* [199] The article noted that the announcement was made by the president of the Ladies Auxiliary of Post 1349. A minute of silence was paid for departed past district president, Mrs. Edna Kessinger.

At the following month's regular meeting of the Ladies Auxiliary held at the post's home*, "One new member and five reinstated members were welcomed into the local auxiliary."* The local auxiliary also *"voted to give a cash contribution to the Chapel of Four Chaplains and a contribution to the department for the cancer program,"* [200] more than likely unaware of the irony of that donation and its prior year's donation of cigarettes to bed ridden veterans in Lebanon Hospital.

On May 18 of the following year, the Centre Daily Times of State College and the Huntingdon Daily News ran classified ads for the

PUBLIC SALE
OF VALUABLE REAL ESTATE AND
COMMERCIAL EQUIPMENT
Phillips-Jones Post V.F. W Home Association
of Lewistown, Pennsylvania
TUESDAY, May 22, 1962
at 1:00 o'clock P.M. D.S.T.

After a delay of several months, the post finally sold for $35,000 at sheriff's sale on August 8, 1962 to satisfy a debt held by Russell National Bank, located just across the street from the post. [201] Over the years since then, the "stag floor" of the former VFW was repurposed as a popular diner that operated until 2001 and, more recently, as an evangelical church that has since vacated the space. The former bar on the first floor and kitchen on the kitchen on the second floor were also gutted and repurposed as retail and office space. The building has been vacant for the last 5 years.

Post 1349's "Room Where It Happened"

It's a heartbreaking ending to a story that began with the naming of the clubhouse for a pair of men who gave their lives for their country and ends ignobly with the sale of the post's assets in bankruptcy. The tragedy of course is that the veterans of Mifflin County came together under noble circumstances with noble intentions for a noble cause, donated $10,000 of reserve funds earmarked for improvements to their home to support a war that the VFW, like many Americans, initially opposed, and were then penalized by unprecedented supply chain shortages and record high inflation as a result of the war

[198] "Presents to Veterans Sent by Auxiliary," The Sentinel (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 22 Dec 1960, p.12.
[199] "District VFW Leaders Honor Post Officers at Meeting," *The Sentinel* (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 2 May 1961, p.6.
[200] "VFW Auxiliary To Give Freedom Center Donation," The Sentinel (Lewistown, Pennsylvania), 22 Jun 1961, p.11.
[201] Mifflin County, Pennsylvania Deed Book 149, Page 242.

when they finally were able to begin renovations to their new home at 19 S. Brown Street as they struggled to "adjust" to extraordinary postwar conditions.

Absent that foregoing context, it might be easy to harshly judge the members of the club responsible for the litany of charges leveled at the Lewistown clubhouse by the Liquor Control Board. We can only guess at the reasoning behind the decisions that occurred *"in the room where it happened,"* but it's reasonable to suspect that the Club Room or Card Room in the "stag floor" of Post 1349 was where members came up with the idea to stage elaborate floor shows to raise additional funds to support the club's noble work, a gamble in and of itself, to be sure.

It's hard to say how that spiraled down to charges of "*failure to keep complete and thruthful records, credit purchases, sales to non-members, failure to adhere to bylaws and collect dues from members; unexplained shortage in cash income,"* and "*gambling,'* but military historian, veteran, pilot, and retired Air Force Colonel Steven A. Ruffin's photo history of the first American fighter squadron, ***The Lafayette Escadrille***, offers some possible insight. In the *Epilogue* to the author's ode to the 1st World War's illustrious fighter squadron, Ruffin, who also wrote the history of the 50th Aero Squadron that Post 1349's highly decorated airman Lt. George R. Phillips served in during the 1st World War, writes that,

> *"There is nothing glorious about warfare. Decent young people killing other decent young people—whether on battlefield, the high seas, or in the clear bue sky—is an abomination that defies description. However, if anything good can be said about any war, it is the spirit and courage exhibited by those who accept the responsibility of fighting it. Their wllingness to sacrifice life and limb for a cause in which they believe represents courage and nobility of the highest order. The American volunteers who flew for the Lafayette Escadrille exemplified this unyielding dedication to the principle of right over* wrong." [202]

In the book's final chapter, *Aftermath*, Ruffin described the lives of all 38 men who flew in the Lafayette Escadrille, whose exploits were so well known and highly regarded that, *"in the years following the war, an estimated 4,000 men… fraudulently claimed to have served in the Lafayette Escadrille*." [203] To understand how men of such *"unyielding dedication to the principle of right over wrong"* eventually *do* go wrong, Ruffin offers the following account in the chapter he subtitled, *"swallowed up in the disenchantment of the Lost Generation"*:

> *"On November 11, 1933, a 48-year -old arms peddler was sentenced to two and one-half years in Federal prison. On May 24, 1936, a 41-year-old alcoholic ex-convict died in a Washington, DC, flophouse of acute congestive heart failure. No one claimed his body. On Novembert 9, 1951, a depressed 56-year-old college professor fell, or more lkeliy jumped, from the deck of a New York ferry and drownded. These three men had absolutely nothing in common, except for one thing: they all had flown for the World War 1 fighter squadron known as the Lafayette Escadrille." [204]*

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[202] Ruffin, Steven. *The Lafayette Escadrille: A Photo History of the First American Fighter Squadron*. Illustrated. Casemate, 2016.p.

[203] Ibid. p.

[204] Ibid. p.

Ruffin eventually goes on to describe the postbellum experiences of the other men of the illustrious fighter squadron, noting that,

"Most of the Lafayette Escadrille survivors successfully adapted to the peacetime environment and went on to enjoy happy and productive lives. Even so, all suffered in one way or another from their traumatic experiences. Like most men returning from war, they had seen horrors—as ambulance drivers, soldiers in the trenches, and combat airmen—that no amount of time could let them forget. The nightmarish images etched into their brains were memories that would continue to haunt them for the remainder of their lives." [205]

Veterans Day, November 11, 2022, Phillipsburg Louis Jenkins Post No. 3450

On November 17, 2022, the former home of Post 1349 was purchased by a local developer who has successfully repurposed several historic properties in Lewistown, and is presently exploring the feasibility of repurposing the ground floor of the former post for retail use and the second and attic floors for 4 generously sized apartments in a manner that preserves the property's intact character defining Art Deco and Streamline Moderne features. The developer's hope is that Geisinger's recent purchase of the empty department store a block away for a school of nursing will provide the former VFW post with an ample supply of student nurses and possible related ground floor retail occupancy.

A week before the developer closed on Lewistown's Post 1349 and an hour west of the property, Phillipsburg Pennsylvania's Louis Jenkins Post No. 3450, Veterans of Foreign Wars, was bustling with activity as members and their guests arrived for the annual Veterans Day service honoring veterans who died while serving their country. The two-story buff-colored brick building on the northwest corner of Spruce and Front streets in Phillipsburg stands just beyond the boundary of the borough's historic district and period of significance, but otherwise would be an excellent contribution of an almost entirely intact postwar Streamline Moderne building designed by the Altoona, Pennsylvania architectural firm of Hunter and Caldwell.



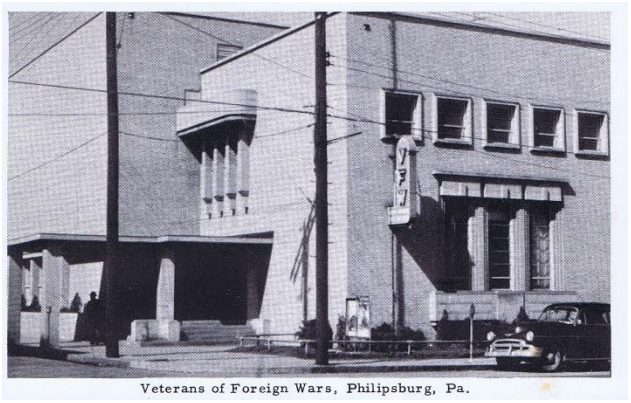
View of Louis Jenkins Post No. 3450 photographed by author, November 2022

The 30,378 gross square foot, 61 foot wide by 166 foot long 2-story building with a shooting range and club room for its Cooties Auxiliary in the basement that doubled as a bomb shelter in the post Hiroshima and Nagasaki years was constructed between April of 1948 and April of 1949 for a cost of $180,000 ($6 per square foot) as war induced inflation was plummeting from its all-time high of nearly 15% the year before to a minus 1.2% the year after it was completed and the Borough's population was at its peak of 3,988, or about a third of Lewistown's peak population of 13,894, based on the 1950 US Census.

[205] Ibid. p.

The description printed in the April 15, 1948, edition of The Progress, the Clearfield paper announcing the Philipsburg VFW's plans to erect its $180,000 home, noted that,

"Excavation for the new foundation will be started shortly," and that *"Plans for the new building include social rooms, lounge and lobby for the first floor and a meeting room and banquet hall with accommodations for 500 persons on the second floor."* [206]


Veterans of Foreign Wars, Philipsburg, Pa.

Circa 1949 View of Louis Jenkins Post No. 3450 furnished by Post historian Andy (Pickles) Myers

The posts' "Home Club" secretary *"pointed out that it will undoubtedly be quite some time before the interior of the new building will be ready for occupancy since much of the needed material has been placed on the government's restricted building list. He stated that the post will gladly wait until all materials are available as they would not want their building plans to interfere in any way with the much needed home construction."*[207] The post estimated membership at that time at 700 and stated that *"prospects for an even greater number are certain with the increasing number of returning veterans."* [208]

By early November, The Progress reported that *"Work on the new VFW post is progressing satisfactorily, …the heating system was being installed and following completion of this project the plastering of the walls will begin. Post members hope to occupy the new home by January 1949."* [209] By April of the new year, The Progress reported that in response to numerous inquiries, they decided to open the home to inspection by the public prior to the licensing of the club the following Monday.

> "*Not all rooms will be open for inspection due to the fact that they are not yet completed. However, the first floor, which has five large rooms, two offices, a large kitchen, wash room, check room and a vestibule, will be open for the inspection.*
>
> *The main entrance to the building leads to a large lobby which is adjoined on the Front street side by a lounge room equipped with a fireplace mantle and furniture of buff leather. Unique folding leather doors separate the lobby from the other rooms.*
>
> *The largest room on the first floor is 55-feet square flanked by red and yellow leather wall booths and tables. The room can be used for dancing and a modern bandstand is located at one end of the room.*
>
> *An adjoining room 40 by 40 feet is equipped with a massive horseshoe bar. A kitchen with all the latest restaurant facilities is available at the rear of the structure."* [210]

Members and guests attending the post's 2022 Veterans Day service would find little changed from The Progress' description of the post's open house almost three quarters of a century earlier. The doors to

[206] "Phillipsburg VFW to Erect $180,000 Home," *The Progress* (Clearfield, Pennsylvania), 15 Apr 1948, p..
[207] Ibid.
[208] Ibid.
[209] "Philipsburg VFW Hears Report on New Building," *The Progress* (Clearfield, Pennsylvania), 2 Nov 1948, p.4.
[210] "Philipsburg VFW Plans Open House," *The Progress* (Clearfield, Pennsylvania), 8 Apr 1949, p.1.

the main lobby were locked and the lobby and adjoining lounge room were both jammed full of furniture, pool tables and miscellaneous fraternal paraphernalia. The upstairs banquet hall was also temporarily closed due to a leaking roof, but the cove-lit, yellow asphalt tiled ground floor vestibule and adjoining coat room between the bar on the left and the grill room on the right were unchanged with the exception of 8 by 10 black and white photos of veterans, American flags, patriotic bunting and other VFW ephemera mounted over the past several decades on a wire grid attached to the smoke stained glass block walls separating the vestibule from the rest of the building.



Post No. 3450's cove lit vestibule with glass block walls flanking the coat room on November 11, 2022



Post No. 3450's horseshoe bar was filled with members and guests on November 11, 2022

A sign stating "SMOKING PERMITTED" mounted on the hollow core wood doors leading to the bar suggest little has changed there as well. With the exception of a few flat panel TV screens mounted on the wall and newish looking stools at the bar, the room probably looks identical to what veterans seated at the horseshoe bar three quarters of a century earlier would have seen when the post and the borough were still in their heyday. The asphalt tile floor, acoustic tile ceiling with streamline inspired diffusers and plaster walls are a bit yellowed from age and decades of use that add a patina of authenticity to the smoke filled room, but the VFW's large Maltese Cross painted on the wall at the end of the bar flanked by a pair of red, white and blue back lit quarter-round glass block wings would have been a familiar and welcome sight to veterans of every campaign since the first Great War who came here to stoke the glory or forget the gore of their time across the seas.



Post No. 3450's fluorescent back lit benches lining the walls of the grill room on November 11, 2022

A pair of hollow core wood doors on the side of the vestibule opposite the bar leads to the large 55 feet square red and while asphalt tiled room (equivalent to the Lewistown post's Grill Room), with its original red and yellow leather upholstered benches backlit by fluorescent lights that replaced the cold cathode tubes up lighting

the glass block filled openings in the wall, all identical to the character defining Streamline Moderne features detailed by Murray on his drawings for Lewistown's VFW Post No. 1349.

As the remembrance ceremony got underway, guests and members purchased Buddy Poppies at the door as bearded men in VFW ball caps filled the back lit benches along the walls while dignitaries sat on the stage at the end of the room and families sat at tables and chairs arranged beneath the cove lit dance floor surrounded by four round columns at the center of the room where couples danced the night away in decades past.



Post No. 3450's cove lit dance floor was filled with tables and chairs on November 11, 2022



Post No. 3450's Patriot Pen winner read her statement of commitment to the post's Americanization ideals with confidence and conviction on November 11, 2022

The ceremony opened with a benediction by the post chaplain, and a greeting and welcome by the post commander, who invited all veterans in attendance to stand. A handful of those gathered stood and were handed camouflage ball caps before the commander asked family members of vets to stand, and a dozen or so people stood. After being applauded by the guests in the room, the newly reelected Democratic state house representative spoke, followed by the winner of the posts' Patriot Pen Americanization award, a young high school girl who read her statement of commitment to honor veterans, her country, her community, and her education with confidence and conviction.

The ceremony ended with a moment of silence for soldiers missing in action led by the president of the Ladies Auxiliary, followed by a 21 gun salute in the yard behind the hall that echoed through the open clubhouse doors, and a solemn and haunting playing of taps on a silver bugle as everyone stood to honor the Veterans of Foreign Wars that day. Afterwards, the Ladies Auxiliary served a meat and potatoes dinner to members, guests and dignitaries on American made plates stamped with the seal of VFW Post 3450.

Postscript- Why People Associate, What that Means for Democracy, and Post 1349's Role in It

Tocqueville's assessment that the strength of America's fledgling democracy lay in part on the uniquely American tendency of its citizens to be joiners, forming voluntary associations for just about any particular cause, oftentimes for the most obscure differences of opinion on such and such a matter, is clearly evident in the story of this post. From the VFW and its affiliated Ladies and Cooties auxiliary's'

advocacy for veterans, to the Hotel and Retail Liquor associations' opposition to "one-man clubs," they each had a particular interest to serve, promote and protect, and the nation's democracy was all the better served because of it during the postbellum years of the 2nd World War.

The following excerpt from Harvard historian Arthur Schlessinger's 1944 ***Biography of a Nation of Joiners*** offers an interesting theory on the ideologically conservative motivations behind citizen involvement in voluntary associations contemporaneous with Post 1349's period of significance when most social scientists agree the nation's joiners were at their highest level:

"At first glance it seems paradoxical that a country famed for being individualistic should provide the world's greatest example of joiners. How this came about is the object of this sketch, but the illusion of paradox may be dispelled at once. To Americans individualism has meant, not the individual's independence of other individuals, but his and their freedom from governmental restraint. Traditionally, the people have tended to minimize collective organization as represented by the state while exercising the largest possible liberty in forming their own voluntary organizations. This conception of a political authority to weak to interfere with men's ordinary pursuits actually created the necessity for self-constituted associations to do things beyond the capacity of a single persons, and by reverse effect the success of such endeavors proved a continuing argument against the growth of stronger government. The tendency was reinforced by the absence of fixed social classes."[211]

Quoting Tocqueville, Schlessinger adds, "men in aristocratic countries do not have the same *reason 'to combine in order to act,'* for *'Every wealthy and powerful citizen constitutes the head of a permanent and voluntary association, composed of all those who are dependent upon him, or whom he makes subservient to the execution of his design.'" The "independent and 'feeble citizens of a democratic nation, lacking theses advantages, must learn voluntarily to help one another.'"* [212]

In his highly acclaimed book, ***Bowling Alone,*** Harvard social scientist Robert Putnam blamed TV, the internet, suburbanization, and the "movement of women into the workforce" for the slump in the nation's willingness to *"voluntarily to help one another"* [213] since its post war mid-century hiatus***,*** which some peers viewed as too simplistic or downright wrong. Putnam, being the scientist that he is, was quick to acknowledge he may not have got everything right the first time and welcomed the criticism in his new book, ***The Upswing****, How America Came Together a Century Ago and How We Can Do It Again.*

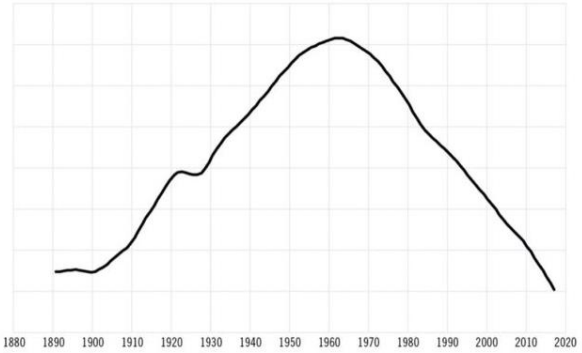
Expanding his original analysis focused on the years between midcentury and 21st century America backwards another half century to the so-called Golden Age of Fraternities—the same era Albert Stevens published his ***Cyclopedia of Fraternities*** list of over 600 "Secret Societies" in the United States with the cautionary footnote that we ought to know what these people are up to since there's so many of them, Putnam identifies a variety of factors that, when charted using the massive amounts of data scientists now have at their disposal, results in a Bell curve of "social capital" that reaches its apex in the 1960's, which Putnam describes as the nation's "communitarian" or "We" phase, and its nadirs in the

[211] "Biography of a Nation of Joiners," *The American Historical Review,* Vol. L, No. 1, October, 1944. P.1.
[212] Ibid. p.2
[213] Putnam, Robert. *Bowling Alone: Revised and Updated: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Revised, Updated ed. Simon & Schuster, 2020.

years before the start of the Progressive Era, and the years after 1960 through today, which Putnam describes as the nation's "I" phases.

Based on new, more expansive data, Putnam attributes the rise and decline in the nation's social capital *"over the past 125 years, since the last Gilded Age,"* to four overarching considerations:

"greater or lesser economic equality,
greater or lesser comity and compromise in politics,
greater or lesser cohesion in social life, and
greater or lesser altruism in cultural values." [214]



Putnam's "I"-"WE-"I" curve, excerpted from *The Upswing,* Figure 1.2: COMMUNITY VS. INDIVIDUALISM IN AMERICA, 1890-2017

Post 1349's position in Putnam's hypothetical "social capital" Bell Curve begins at its "upswing" in 1925 when the post was formed and the "WE" phase gains momentum as it emerges from two decades of Progressive era policies, approaches its zenith in 1945 when Post 1349 purchases the former pool hall and lodge and struggles to adjust to post war conditions, and then begins its slow descent until 1962, when it's sold at Sheriff's sale as the nation continues its descent toward another "I" phase.

Although Post 1349's premature demise clearly had more to do with bad timing and poor choices than the gradual decline in American democracy, veteran's organization and its Ladies Auxiliary nevertheless contributed immensely to the welfare of veterans and the life and times of its community during the period it occupied the building at 19 South Brown Street. Post 1349's and especially its Ladies Auxiliary's participation in District 17 proceedings and state conventions also contributed to the policies that shaped the life of all Pennsylvanians.

As Theda Skocpol, another Harvard social scientist and sometimes critic of Putnam's work explains in her book, **Civic Engagement in American Democracy**, people joined voluntary associations for a variety of social, recreational, civic and economic reasons,

> "*Yet the reasons people participated and cared so much went beyond the local and the familial. Membership in local units of translocal federations offered connections to and organizational routes into broader social and political movements. People loved being part of larger 'brotherhoods' and 'sisterhoods' and often were inspired to join endeavors to which they knew thousands of others across their state and nation were also committed. Much excitement accompanied the sending of delegations from each local club or lodge or union or grange to attend district meetings, or annual state conventions, or annual national conventions. Internal newsletters and magazines covered the buildup to such meetings for months in advance. And*

[214] Putnam, Robert. *The Upswing: How America Came Together a Century Ago and How We Can Do It Again*. Simon & Schuster, 2021. P.9.

after they were over, the officers and delegates from one's unit came back to tell everyone what happened at the big meeting—and about the sights in whatever city had hosted the meeting."[215]

Membership federations certainly helped to create a democratic civil society in which large numbers of ordinary people could participate, forge recurrent ties to one another, and engage in two-way relationships with powerful leaders. They institutionalized remarkable balances between intimate face-to face activities and leverage in state, regional, and national affairs."[216]

As such, Lewistown's Post 1349 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars deserves consideration for listing on the **National Register under Criterion A for Social History** as an excellent example of two voluntary associations, the members of Post 1349 and its affiliated Ladies Auxiliary, who working hand in hand with each other and their counterparts at the district and state levels, made a brief but significant contribution to the life of their community, their district and the Commonwealth between 1945, when the post purchased the former pool hall and lodge at 19 South Brown Street, and 1962, when they finally vacated the building and were no more.

[215] Skocpol, Theda, Editor, *"Chapter 2, How Americans Became Civic,"* **Civic Engagement in American Democracy**, Brookings Institution Press, Washington DC, 1999, pg. 68
[216] Ibid., pg. 70