The Precursors To The Somerset-Cambria Chapter, SAR

THE JOHNSTOWN CHAPTER

On 05 April, 1923 an application for a charter to form a new chapter of the Pennsylvania Society Sons of the American Revolution was received by the PASSAR Board of Management. The application approving and authorizing the new chapter to be formed was granted on 03 May, 1923.

The new chapter was instituted on 04 December, 1923 and would be known as the Johnstown Chapter. It was named for the city in Cambria County in which the founding members resided. A.Dix Tittle was elected to be the chapter's first president. George K. Kline was elected to the position of senior vice-president. The remaining positions were filled by A.N. Wakefield, junior vice-president; Berton A. Fisher, Chaplain; J. Morley Kline, registrar; George F. Moore, secretary-treasurer; and John W. Tittle, historian.

The Charter of the Johnstown Chapter was granted on 05 June, 1924 and included the names:

Albert L. Baumer, Herman E. Baumer, James W. Cook, Cloyd J. Delaney, Rev. Berton A. Fisher, Charles C. Greer, Earl D. Hupp, S. Stewart Kinkead, George K. Kline, J. Morley Kline, John B. Lehman, Donald H. Matthews, William A. McGuire, Clarence B. Millhoff, George F. Moore, Boynton A. Nevling, William E. Nevling, John Fairchild Osgood, Dr. Daniel Pattee Ray, Charles Lee Tittle Smith, Herbert J. Stockton, Henry Wilson Storey Jr, J. Swan Taylor, James Thomas Taylor, Olin Perry Thomas, Alexander Dix Tittle, Charles Lee Tittle, Harry Woodruff Tittle, John Warren Tittle, Dr. A.N. Wakefield, Emery E. West and Harry J. West.

The Johnstown Chapter was rather short-lived. In only four years it became inactive and its charter was suspended. On 07 December, 1928 the charter was renewed by the PASSAR Board of Management and Olin P. Thomas was elected as the president. For whatever reasons now long lost to history, the chapter once more fell into inactivity. On 22 February, 1934, less than ten years after it was chartered, the Johnstown Chapter was officially cancelled by the PASSAR.

THE CAMBRIA CHAPTER

The SAR members who resided in Cambria County did not have a local chapter after the Johnstown Chapter's charter was revoked in 1934. Perhaps because of renewed interest and requests by those "orphaned" Compatriots, Charles B. Shaler, the chairman of the Society's New Chapters' Committee, began an effort to establish another chapter in this region. The Quemahoning Chapter of the DAR gave assistance toward the establishment of the new chapter.

A meeting to organize the new chapter was held on 23 January, 1947 at the meeting house of the 40 Hommes et Chevaux organization in Johnstown. During that meeting, Charles G. Speck was elected to the position of temporary president and Charles N. Gould was elected to serve as secretary. On 13 February, 1947 a second

meeting was held at the Johnstown YMCA. It was during that meeting that the name of the Cambria Chapter was agreed upon.

The regular officers of the Cambria Chapter were elected during the 13 February, 1947 meeting. They included the already mentioned Mr, Speck and Mr. Gould (who accepted the additional duties of treasurer) along with: Marlin B. Stephens, first vice-president; George Hay, second vice-president; Richard F. Blough, registrar; William S. Gray, Chaplain; Walter D. Griffith, chancellor; and Mahlon J. Baumgardner, historian.

The Fort Stanwix Hotel in Johnstown was the site of the chapter's Institution Dinner, which was held on 03 March, 1947. The Honorable Allen L. Oliver, president-general of the National Society Sons of the American Revolution, attended the event as



1834-1854

on and Travel

A Publication Commemorating a

Visitation by Members and Friends

of the Blair County Chapter, S. A. R. and the Cambria County Chapter, S. A. R.

Pennsylvania Society
Sons of the American Revolution

to the

Summit Mansion House

Located at the Intersection of the Old Portage Roadbed and the Turnpike on U. S. Route 22, Near Cresson, Penna.

Flag Day, Saturday, June 14, 1952

BANQUET AND MEETING AT THE HOFFMAN HOTEL CRESSON, PENNA.

the speaker. Glenn E. Thompson, a former president of the Pennsylvania Society, installed the new chapter's Board of Officers.

There were sixty charter members of the Cambria Chapter, six of which had been members of the earlier, Johnstown Chapter. The charter members included:

George H. Allport, William H. Allport, Mahlon J. Baumgardner, Harold Belzner, Ambrose Berkebile, Herman Blough, Richard F. Blough, Roger Miles Blough, Charles Butler, Meade Cauffiel, S. Steele Crissman, Grant Dibert, Cyrus F. Fidler, George W. Fockler, Charles N. Gould, Donald B. Gould, J. Wilmot Gould, William S. Gray, Walter Griffith, Emile G. Hamilton, John M. Hamilton, Solomon R. Hammer, Dr. George Hay, George Austin Hay, Henry C. Hinchman, Elmer L. Horner, Jacob F. Kraft, Frank W. Levergood, George G. Lindsay, Harry A. Ling, Dr. Donald H. Matthews (Johnstown Chapter), Dr. Lewis H. Mayer, William S. Mayer, Ivan J. McKenrick, Richard P. Morgan, Boynton A. Nevling (Johnstown Chapter), William E. Nevling (Johnstown Chapter), James E. Parks, Adolphus W. Pringle, Frank M. Pringle, Walter H. Puterbaugh Sr, Walter H. Puterbaugh Jr., Ross K. Sefton, H. Earl Sorber, Dr. Charles G. Speck, Milford A. St. Clair, Marlin B. Stephens, George Arthur Stokes, Ned Harold Stokes, Dr. James T. Taylor (Johnstown Chapter), Andrew R. Thompson, John W. Tittle (Johnstown Chapter), John W. Trimble,

Richard G. Trimble, Earnest F. Walker, Henry Walter Jr, Robert E. Warden, Emery E. West (Johnstown Chapter), Dr. George F. Wright and Emanuel J. Young.

The Cambria Chapter offered its members an active program of events and meetings during its first years. In addition to its quarterly meetings, the Cambria Chapter conducted annual observances of Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day and Constitution Day. Excursions to local sites pertaining to the French and Indian War and the Revolutionary War periods were made by the chapter. Meetings were held jointly with the Blair County Chapter and the General Arthur St. Clair Chapter. One such meeting, held on 14 June, 1952 in commemoration of Flag Day, resulted in the publication of a book on the subject of the Allegheny Old Portage Railroad. The book was co-authored by Mahlon J. Baumgardner of the Cambria Chapter and Floyd G. Hoenstine of the Blair County Chapter.

As is the case with most organizations, a single or a certain few members tend to keep driving the group toward success. The success of the Cambria Chapter was directly associated with the efforts of certain of its members, in particular Mahlon J. Baumgardner. During the 1950s Mr. Baumgardner, the chapter historian, kept the chapter active. Through the 1960s and 1970s the Cambria Chapter began to slip into a decline and was on the verge of collapse when the decision was made to merge with the Somerset County Chapter.

THE SOMERSET COUNTY CHAPTER

The formation of a new chapter was announced at the Pennsylvania Society of the Sons of the American Revolution's Board of Management meeting held on 14 February, 1946. That new chapter was to be established in Somerset County, and would therefore take the name of the Somerset County Chapter.

Eight SAR Compatriots were chosen to form the Board of Officers for the new chapter. Oscar F. Sutliffe was elected to the position of president. Charles I. Shaffer was elected to be the first vice-president. Ralph A. Poorbaugh was elected to be the second vice-president. C.C. Shaffer was elected third vice-president.

Robert L. Miller was elected to the position of fourth vice-president and George S. Speicher, Jr was elected as the fifth vice-president. Howard R. Boose, Jr was chosen to fill the positions of secretary and treasurer, and Henry B. Reiley became the chapter's genealogist.

Charles B. Shaler, then president of the Pennsylvania Society, served as the master of ceremonies at the Institution Dinner held on 28 March, 1946. The dinner meeting was held at the Methodist Church in the city of Somerset. An address was delivered by Eugene C. Bonniwell, a national trustee and the officers were installed by Smith L. Multer, president general of the National

Society, SAR.

The charter members of the Somerset Cambria Chapter included the following:

B. Blaine Barefoot, Emil B. Barnett, Henry F. Barnett, Ralph E. Barnett, Harry F. Berkey, Levy C. Berkey, Howard R. Boose Jr, Robert J. Boyer, William E. Boyer, Charles H. Brallier, S. Cober Braucher, Milton M. Brooks, Richard H. Brugh, George S. Cameron, James R. Cameron Jr, James A. Casey Jr, Eber K. Cockley, Robert B.P. Colvin, Jacob H. Countryman, Richard K. Darr, George W. Davis, Freeman P. Deist, Charles W. Fullman, Donald G. Fullman, Ivan O. Gardner, Sr., Ivan O. Gardner, Jr., John A. Garman, William H. Garman, J. Jacob Glessner, Roger W. Glessner, David L. Grove, R. Royer Grove, Hudson V. Grumbling, George J. Hay, Harold S. Hay, Homer W. Hay, Jay O. Hay, William J. Hay, Charles J. Hemminger, J. Ross Hemminger, Dorsey R. Hoffman, Charles P. Holderbaum, James B. Holderbaum II, John I. Holderbaum, Robert P. Holderbaum, Ernest C. Johnson, Timothy R. Kerrigan, W. R. Wesley King, Ernest O. Kooser, Ivan Lambert, Amaniah J. Lohr, Lester J. Lohr, Robert W. Lohr, Robert W. Lohr, Jr., Fred G. Masters, A. M. Matthews, Charles L. Maust, Earl W. McKee, Ross T. Mickle, Harold E. Miller, Hon. John S. Miller, John Statler Miller, Pierce Miller, Robert L. Miller, Wilfred C. Miller, William J. Miller, John W. Mostoller, Jr., Harold E. Musser, D. Jay Musser, Ralph A. Poorbaugh, D. H. Pore, Frank C. Ream, John O. Ream, Sr., John O. Ream, Jr., Norman B. Ream, Sr., Henry Baker Reiley, Ezra C. Saylor, Francis M. B. Schramm, Jacob B. Schrock, John W. Schrock, Charles G. Sechler, Charles I. Shaffer, Arlington V. Shaver, Chester L. Shaver, Clarence L. Shaver, Louis C. Shaver, G. Stoy Sorber, George F. Speicher, Jr.,

James D. Spencer, John W. Stein, Edward S. Stiteler, W. J. Stiteler, Jr., Frank M. Stoner, Oscar F. Sutliffe, Josiah Swank, Simon V. Swank, Joseph W. Wagner, Stewart H. Wagner, Robert G. Walker, Wilson K. Walker, Henry M. Walter, Jr., Blaine F. Walter, Edward J. Weld, Louis M. Weld, Henry S. Wood, J. Colvin Wright, Albert Zarefoss and Richard P. Zimmerman.

The Somerset County Chapter, like all the other chapters, started out very active as a result of the initial burst of interest. It then succumbed to a period of inactivity during which routine business was handled. but nothing outstanding occurred to distinguish it apart from the other chapters. Apart from a very few references to Annual Meetings held by the Somerset County Chapter that appeared in the *Pennsylvania* Minuteman, the magazine of the Pennsylvania Society, SAR during the 1960s and 1970s, the only special project the Chapter became engaged in was the nation's Bicentennial celebration. The lack of references to the chapter in the Pennsylvania Minuteman is not necessarily an irrefutable gauge to use when assessing the viability of the chapter. On the first of October, 1971 a survey was made of the memberships of the various chapters of the Pennsylvania Society. In that study the Somerset County Chapter (like the Blair County and the Cambria Chapters) was ranked in the "50 or more" category. The chapter's membership was continuing to thrive.

The Somerset County Chapter hosted the Annual Meeting of the Pennsylvania Society, Sons of the American Revolution on the 22d and 23d of September, 1978. The keynote speaker for the event was the NSSAR president general, Calvin E. Chunn, who spoke on the subject of "How One Man Caused Us To Have A Constitution."

The Somerset-Cambria Chapter

THE MERGER OF TWO CHAPTERS

The Somerset~Cambria Chapter officially came into existence in August of 1982 with the merger of the Cambria Chapter and the Somerset County Chapter. The chapter

claims 1976 as the year of its merger, but the union of the two chapters was not recognized by the Pennsylvania Society, SAR until 1982. On 26 September, 1981, at the Board of Management Meeting of the PASSAR held in Monroeville, president Samuel D. Foster reported that he had received notification from the Cambria Chapter that its membership wanted to cease operations and desired to merge with the Somerset County Chapter. The matter

was set aside at that time because the request had not been submitted in writing. New business at the PASSAR Board of Management Meeting held on 07 November, 1981 at Lancaster included a discussion of the Cambria Chapter's request. It was noted at that time that:

"According to the Constitution and By-Laws, if the two chapters want to merge each one must so state in writing and both give up their charters and then form a new chapter and receive a new charter. Another option would be for the Cambria Chapter to give up its charter and have each of its members transfer to some other chapter, not necessarily Somerset if they do not so choose. The Cambria Chapter would then forfeit its charter and all property and funds to the state society."

The matter was tabled at that meeting after some discussion and brought up again at the 06 March, 1982 meeting held at Allentown. At that time president Foster read a letter from the Cambria Chapter which stated the results of a survey of its members. Of the chapter's membership of twenty-eight, sixteen members desired to merge with the Somerset County Chapter, four chose to transfer to "State-at-large" status, and the remaining eight had not responded to the survey. A letter was also read by president Foster from the Somerset County Chapter which stated that the chapter had, at a meeting held on 11 November. 1981, voted to approve the merger with the Cambria Chapter. The letter suggested that the name of the newly merged chapter be the Somerset~Cambria Chapter.

The fact that members of any particular chapter cannot be forced to join another chapter was pointed out by president Foster. Also, he noted, the vote was not unanimous, and because of that, the only legal action that could be taken would be for the Cambria Chapter to be disbanded.

Compatriot Carl E. Black (of the Erie Chapter) made a motion that the Cambria Chapter be disbanded and Compatriot Grafton Duvall, Jr (of the Pitssburgh Chapter) seconded the motion, but with the stipulation that Compatriot Black add a sentence noteing that the chapter's properties be turned over to the state society. The discussion of the motion engendered a number of suggestions on how the procedure of merging the two chapters could be most easily accomplished. Compatriot Henry B. Reiley, Jr, the only member of either chapters involved attending that meeting, moved that the motion be tabled until the two chapters could work out a compromise.

The subject of the merger was once more brought up during the PASSAR Board of Management Meeting held at Plymouth Meeting on 08 May, 1982. During that meeting, which was attended by Henry B. Reiley, Jr, of the Somerset County Chapter and Charles K. Bantley of the Cambria Chapter, the following action was taken on the matter:

"After considerable discussion, Compatriot Reiley made a motion that the merger be allowed by transferring all Cambria members to the Somerset County Chapter effective June 1, 1982. Compatriot (Donald E.) Lathrop seconded the motion which passed unanimously by division of the house. This now clears the way to transfer all the Cambria Chapter members to the Somerset County Chapter and then have those that want to be Members-at-Large to transfer out again."

By 21 August, 1982, when the PASSAR Board of Management Meeting was held at

Washington, it was reported that all but two of the former Cambria Chapter members had transferred their memberships to the Somerset County Chapter. Those two transfers were soon thereafter taken care of and the name of the Somerset County Chapter was changed to the Somerset~Cambria Chapter. The merger was complete.

The merger was both beneficial and logical. It was beneficial to both chapters in terms of combining their memberships. It was logical in regard to the scope of the area covered in view of the fact that Cambria had, for the most part, been part of Somerset since its erection out of Bedford County in 1795. In the same way that

Bedford was the *mother* county of Somerset, Somerset was the *mother* county of the greater portion of Cambria. The remaining portion, the northeastern third, was taken from Huntingdon County when Cambria County was erected in 1804. Despite the jurisdictional link between that northeastern part and Huntingdon County, there would have always been stronger ties between the residents of Cambria and Somerset because of their existence atop the Allegheny Mountain range. In any case, the merger of the two chapters would prove to be a sound and sensible one in the years that followed.

THE SOMERSET~CAMBRIA CHAPTER BECOMES ACTIVE

With the merger came a new resurgence of vitality. The Somerset-Cambria Chapter, largely through the efforts of Clark Brocht, embarked on a series of grave dedication programs in the 1980s and 1990s. On 17 July, 1988 the Somerset~Cambria Chapter, in conjunction with the Forbes Road Chapter, DAR and the Great Crossings Chapter, DAR, dedicated the gravesite of Dewalt Schneider in the Schneider Homestead Cemetery, on the Jim Brocht Farm in Upper Turkeyfoot Township. The event was attended by more than one hundred members of the SAR and the DAR and their families.

On 04 June, 1989 the Somerset-Cambria Chapter gathered at the Younkin Cemetery to dedicate the gravesites of three Patriots, James McMillan, Alexander McClintock and John McClintock. Two weeks later, on 17 June, the gravesite of John Deeter, in the Deeter Homestead Cemetery along Route 31 in Deeter Gap, was dedicated.

The gravesite of Patriot Benjamin Zerfoss was dedicated on 26 May, 1990 in a ceremony held at the Zerfoss Cemetery in Stonycreek Township, Somerset County. Despite the rainy weather that day, nearly one hundred persons attended the ceremony.

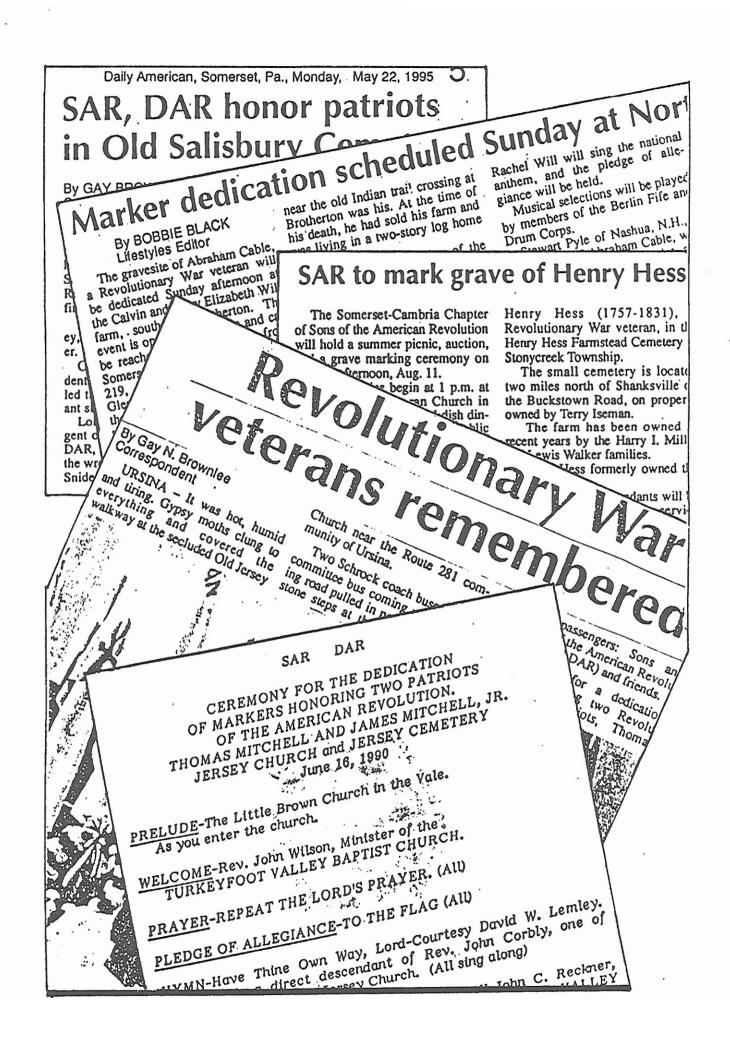
The gravesites of James Mitchell, Jr and Thomas Mitchell were dedicated in a ceremony held on 16 June, 1990 at the Old Jersey Cemetery in Lower Turkeyfoot Township. Later, on the 1st of July, 1990 the gravesite of Patriot Henry Ash Jr in

the Ash Homestead Cemetery, near the town of Edie, in Jefferson Township, Somerset County was dedicated.

The gravesites of three Patriots were dedicated in a single ceremony held on 19 May, 1991 at the Messiah Church Cemetery in Bedford Township, Bedford County. The Patriots honored in this ceremony were George Adam Earnest and Michael Dibert (along with Conrad Imler, son of Patriot, George Michael Imler.) The dedication was sponsored by the Bedford Chapter, DAR.

Between 1991 and 1995 a number of gravesites of Patriots were dedicated in ceremonies through the Somerset, Cambria and Bedford Counties region. On 26 May, 1991 the gravesite of Patriot Adam Snyder was dedicated. On 01 June, 1991 the gravesite of Patriot Abraham Brant, on the Jay Walker Farm in Stony Creek Township, was dedicated in conjunction with the Bedford, Forbes Road and the Great Crossings Chapters, DAR. On 27 June, 1991 the gravesite of Patriot Jacob Burkhart, at the Burkhart Cemetery in Fairhope Township, was dedicated. On 11 August, 1991 the gravesite of Henry Hess was dedicated. The Patriot's gravesite is located in the Hess Homestead Cemetery in Stony Creek Township. On 14 June, 1992 the gravesite of Lieutenant Colonel Abraham Cable, in the Schrock Cemetery on the Calvin Will Farm near Berlin, was dedicated.

A dedication ceremony was held on 11 July, 1992 at the Mossholder Homestead Cemetery on the Croner Farm near Beech-



dale for Patriot John Mossholder. The gravesites of Patriots, Peter and John Gary were dedicated in a ceremony held at the Gary Homestead Cemetery in Middle Creek Township, Somerset County on 29 May, 1993. The Union Cemetery at New Centerville was the site of a dedication ceremony held on 31 May, 1993 for two Patriots, Peter Putman and Jacob Heimbaugh. In June of that same year, the gravesite of Peter Lenhart was dedicated in the New Berry Cemetery in Addison Township.

On the 3rd of July, 1994 the Somerset-Cambria Chapter dedicated the gravesites of Andrew Ream, Benjamin Jennings and Heinrich Hertzel at the Ream Cemetery at Ursina. The chapter also particiated in the dedication of Phillip Wagerman's gravesite in the Carpenter Cemetery at Hyndman in Bedford County, which was sponsored by the Bedford Chapter DAR.

On 22 July, 1995 the Cross Roads Cemetery in Lower Turkeyfoot Township was the site of a dedication ceremony in which the gravesites of David Ream and Jacob Younkin were dedicated. Three Patriot gravesites were dedicated on 21 May, 1995

at the Union Cemetery at Salisbury. Those Patriots included Christian Shockey, Martin Weimer and David Kreider.

The Somerset~Cambria Chapter hosted the Fall Board of Management Meeting of the PASSAR on the 3d and 4th of November, 1989. During the Saturday evening diner, a program was presented by Compatriot Brocht which detailed the history of Revolutionary War period flags. The chapter has an outstanding collection of over twenty flags and proudly displays them during events such as grave dedications.

The Somerset~Cambria Chapter played host to the Pennsylvania Society two more times. The PASSAR's Summer, 1992 Quarterly Board of Management Meeting was hosted by the Somerset~Cambria Chapter on 01 August of that year. Dr. William Doncaster, a noted historian from the area, presented a discussion on the sons of Abraham Lincoln after the luncheon. Then, on 02 November, 1996 the PASSAR's Fall, 1996 Quarterly Board of Management Meeting was held at Somerset. The speaker at the luncheon was Mr. Douglas Bell, who spoke about the Whiskey Rebellion.

PRESIDENTS OF THE SOMERSET COUNTY CHAPTER, THE CAMBRIA CHAPTER, AND SUBSEQUENTLY, THE SOMERSET~CAMBRIA CHAPTER

The following Compatriot members of the Somerset County Chapter, the Cambria Chapter, and subsequently, the Somerset~ Cambria Chapter served as the Presidents of those Chapters during the years noted.

SOMERSET COUNTY CHAPTER

1946-47	Oscar F. Sutliffe	1967	Henry Baker Reiley, Jr
1948	Ernest O. Kooser	1968	William H. Ringler
1949	Ralph E. Barnett	1969	Dwane E. Ringer
1950-51	Charles I. Shaffer	1970	Eber K. Cockley
1952	Ralph E. Barnett	1971	Albert L. Cage, Jr
	& Charles I Shaffer	1972	Edward S. Stiteler
1953	Ralph E. Barnett	1973	Calvin M. Will
1954	Louis M. Weld	1974	Donald E. Meese
1955	John W. Stein	1975	James O. Courtney, Jr
1956-59	W. John Stiteler, Jr	1976	Henry K. Fluck
1960	Ernest C. Johnson	1977	Wilfred C. Miller
1961-62	W. John Stiteler, Jr	1978	J. Merle Brallier
1963	John W. Schrock	1979	Earl B. Miller
1964	Archibald M. Matthews	1980	Henry K. Fluck
1965	Ross T. Mickle	1981	John W. Stoner, Sr
1966	G. Edward Friedline	1982	James Kermit Will

CAMBRIA CHAPTER

1947-49	Charles G. Speck	1964-65	Henry M. Walter
1950-51	Emanuel J. Young	1966-67	Donald H. Matthews
1951-52	Ernest F. Walker	1968	James T. Taylor
1953-54	Richard F. Blough	1969-70	Richard Barefoot
1955	Meade Cauffiel	1971-72	Mervin L. Whitaker
1956-60	(not known)	1973-74	William Clair Vickroy
1961-62	Harry A. Ling	1975-82	Charles K. Bantley
1963	George Hay		•

SOMERSET~CAMBRIA CHAPTER

1982-83	James Kermit Will	1989	John W. Stoner, Jr
1984	Donald H. Bruner	1990	Carl C. Lincoln, Jr
1985	Amos D. Snyder, Sr	1991-92	Clark R. Brocht
1986	John W. Stoner, Jr	1993-94	Everett W. Sechler
1987	S. Richard Hillegas	1995-96	Clark R. Brocht
1988	Leonard A. Pyle	1997-98	Harvey P. Meyers

NOTE: The inconveniences occasioned by the distance separating the author from the Berlin Historical Society (where the Somerset~Cambria Chapter's registrar records are stored and maintained) and that Society's available hours of operation prevented the inclusion of detailed lineages for the Compatriot members of the Somerset~Cambria Chapter. No offense to the Compatriot members of the Somerset~Cambria Chapter was intended.