

Military Room

(Video 8)

In this room you will see artifacts and memorabilia from the Civil War, WWI and World War II.

Point out the Civil War Officers Shadow Boxes.

- Local Civil War officers whose names may sound familiar to you include: Buckingham, Upson, DeForest and Wooster (grandfather of Katharine Matties). Hiram Upsom- previously owned a house on this very property.
- Grand Army of the Republic ribbons are displayed in the other shadow box.

Move to the Civil War Display Case filled with war memorabilia.

- During the presidency of Abraham Lincoln and after decades of tensions between the northern and southern states over slavery, states' rights, and westward expansion, the Civil War began in 1861. The War Between the States, as the Civil War was also known, ended in Confederate surrender in 1865. Photography was relatively new at this period. The Civil War was the first war to be so well documented photographically. We are lucky to have quite a few pieces of photographic treasures.

Civil War Rifle Replicas

- These are replicas of weapons used during the Civil War period. They were displayed at the Civil War Monument at French Park. The Monument was erected in 1904. Years ago, the monument was vandalized and the rifles were stolen. Eventually, Seymour Public Works recovered them from the basement of the "stone house" in the park and they were given to the SHS.

Uniform Corner

- Members of the Army, Navy and Air Force are represented here including Sgt. Stephen Kobasa (Air Force) and Sgt. Frank Genio (Army)
- Table display is a uniform worn by Corporal George Hummel.

Move to the WWI case.

- World War I, also known as the Great War, began in 1914 after the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand of Austria and set off a chain of events.
- While most European countries thought it was going to be a short war, less than six months, it lasted 4 years. The United States doesn't officially enter the war until after the sinking of the passenger liner the Lusitania and the Zimmerman telegram wherein the Germans attempted to persuade the Mexican government to engage the US in war in order to keep them out of the European conflict with the promise that when all was said and done Mexico would reacquire Texas, Arizona and New Mexico for their troubles.
- Once the Zimmerman telegram was intercepted and published in the newspapers, President Woodrow Wilson went to Congress to request a declaration of war against Germany in November 1917. The US involvement in World War I helped to significantly turn the tide in the Allies favor and armistice was agreed upon on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, a truce to the fighting, Armistice Day, November 11th, 1918. The actual peace process that would culminate with the Treaty of Versailles

would take another year and while President Woodrow Wilson was an integral part of that process the United States Congress would not accept that treaty and would negotiate a separate peace with Germany even later.

- Memorabilia in this case includes a Purple Heart Medal given to a soldier who was shot or severely injured during battle.
- The mannequin is dressed in World War I uniform that belonged to Herman Sonnenstuhl who wore it in the oval shaped framed photo on the wall. He served with the 301st Field Artillery Medical Detachment as a motorcycle dispatch rider. The postcard shows the type of motorcycle he rode with a stretcher sidecar. He was honorably discharged from service in 1919.

Move to John Bakeless Display Case

John Bakeless was a reporter, lecturer, soldier, editor, college professor and author. He was born in PA and grew up in an Indian environment. He published his first book in 1921. Books he authored were Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness, Lewis & Clark: Partners in Discovery and Turncoats, Traitors, & Heroes (Revolutionary War). A Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve, he served in both WWI and WWII as an officer in the Intelligence Corps. He graduated from Williams College and received his M.A. and Ph.D. from Harvard. He and his wife moved from New York City to Seymour in 1940 and lived on Great Hill Road in an estate called, "Elbow Room" until their deaths.

Move to WWII Display Case

- WWII was a global conflict that lasted from 1939 until 1945. While there is much discussion over the causes for World War II as well as when it started, Germany invaded Poland on September 1st, 1939 and France and Great Britain declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939 from then on lines of alliances were drawn and war officially began.
- The US maintained an isolationist position as long as it could until December 7, 1941, when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. On December 8, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt asked Congress for a declaration of war against the Axis Powers and the US entered World War II. This war would be unlike any other fought previously, the US would have troops in Europe, Africa and Asia and it would culminate in the detonation of the two atomic bombs on Japan beginning a new age of warfare.
- Above the case is a flag with 48 stars that flew on a battleship during WWII and the newspaper articles on either side are headlines that declare war and signal the beginning of the end of the war.
- On top of the case are Air Raid Warden Helmet
 - The warden's job was to check his neighborhood to make sure the air raid siren was blown, everyone had their windows covered and lights turned off. Even car head lights had covers.
 - Also a scrapbook with photos and newspaper articles of local soldiers.

In the case you can see:

- Welcome Home Booklet printed in 1946 by the Town of Seymour which included photos of those from Seymour who lost their lives.
- Ration Stamps which were issued during the war because there was not enough oil, gas rubber and many staple type foods for everyone to buy. Many of these items were needed for the war effort and soldier's needs. These items were rationed out by a certain number stamps per month issued to individuals and families.

Move to Women in the Military Display Area

- Women's roles began to change during this era. Before this, women were expected to stay home and raise a family and take care of the household. Never would a woman hold a job outside of the household. Because so many of the men were being called for military duty, women had to enter the workforce to do many of the jobs previously held by men. Jobs such as welders, riveters, factory assembly lines, and even join the Army and Navy and become secretaries, nurses, truck drivers, mechanics and even pilots.
- WASP Uniform – WASP stands for Women's Air Force Service Pilots. These women had to have been pilots before the war and trained to fly fighters and bombers. They did not fly in combat. They also trained men to be pilots, towed target planes for target practice and had to test by flying those planes that had been repaired.
- WAC: Women's Army Corp-many women served in a variety of duties, many of them nurses often in dangerous areas, nearly 200 Army nurses lost their lives in WWII.
- WAVES: Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service-Naval Section intended to release men from shore duty so that they could go to sea. Some Waves were also nurses that served overseas as well. For example in the Pacific Theater WAVE nurses alongside WAC nurses risked their lives and some were captured by the Japanese on Corregidor in 1942.

Allow time to look around and ask questions.