



*Robert Kschinka, 1905*

Jan. 13, 2016

## **TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S MUSEUM . . . while dusting**

For our article appearing in the Dec. 2 edition of the Sullivan Review, we shared with you the photo we'd obtained concerning a Civil War reunion of the "G.A.R., Sullivan Post No. 388, Dushore". We had said at that time that the seller on e-Bay had thought one of the individuals depicted was Col. Ricketts. Not so. Last week we heard from Ricketts historian Charles Petrillo his expanded explanation. He points out that Col. Ricketts did not have a long flowing beard, but rather kept a goatee. He further states that the Col. held reunions at Ganoga Lake or in Wilkes-Barre. That point leads us to believe that the dating we gave the photo may be right because it marked the dedication of the monument erected on East Cemetery Hill for the battery's actions, held July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1894.

Mr. Petrillo also provided us with a copy of a news article from the Wilkes-Barre Record of May 1933 in which it states that Civil War veterans were to be

honored at Memorial Day services. And that at that time there were 11 of a Wyoming Valley company left from the close of that war 68 years earlier. "C.R.C. Kaschinka\* of Dushore, former Sullivan County judge, past commander of Sullivan Post, G.A.R., and Dushore's sole surviving Civil War veteran." Mr. Kschinka\* died at the age of 92 on Feb. 26, 1936. He was a charter member of Sullivan Post No. 388 of which he was a standing member until its disbandment in March of 1917.

From a 1905 article when Mr. Kschinka\* ran for associate judge on the Republican party ticket we find that he was the youngest son of Mathias and Wilhelmine Kschinka\* who had come to this country from Prussia over fifty years before, to settle in Cherry Twp. Robert's father had fled his homeland abroad following the revolutionary movement there rather than give up his freedoms and ideals. Our subject, Robert, was born in Prussia in 1844 and came with his family in 1851 at the age of 7. At the age of 19 Robert enlisted in "the Fiftieth N. Y. Engineers, brigaded under the command of General Warren, and in that regiment he served until the end of the war". He returned home to Hunsinger's Corners at the close of the war to resume his profession of blacksmithing and shoeing of horses. The article goes on to state that "When Sullivan Post, No. 388, was organized he was one of the charter member". He did win the election and served one term.

This writer's husband often uses a phrase in church "Oh, that's a coincidence!" This comes to mind because while researching this article we came across an old ledger book for Sullivan Post No. 388, G.A.R. of H.C. Healey, Adjutant. It is a Roll Book given by the Kschinka family listing names, birth places, residence, occupation, entry dates of service and final discharge, regiments, length of service, cause of discharge, date of muster into G.A.R. and some death detail. It has 48 names listed for 1883, and 32 for 1896. There is also a published Ritual booklet for the Grand Army of the Republic, headquartered in Rutland, Vt. from 1890 which describes floor plan, music, office duties and ceremony procedures. Robert Kschinka's name is the first entry in both sections.

\* The spelling of this family's name has appeared in various forms, not unlike many names and their pronunciations. The obituary of Feb. 26, 1936 shows "Robert C.R. Kschinka" and although we assume that that is correct, very often in order to research a name is it best to be aware of those varieties of spelling as well.