

History of John P. Eaton American Legion Post 746

Veterans returning from Europe after World War I recognized the need to form an organization where servicemen and women could share their common interests and provide service to their communities.

Corning native Lt. Col W.H. Curtiss, who would become a Corning Glass Works Secretary and Vice Presidents in 1929, was one of the group of servicemen who had met in Paris in **March 1919**, for the first caucus of the American Legion. Mr. Curtiss was a member of the Subcommittee of Three who wrote the Preamble to the Legion's preliminary constitution.

The first post of the American Legion, General John Joseph Pershing Post Number 1 in Washington, D.C., was organized on **March 7, 1919**.

A second caucus at St. Louis in **May 1919**, had established the organization, and was later chartered under Title 36 of the United States Code. The St. Louis caucus decided that Legion posts should not be named after living persons, and the first post changed its name to George Washington Post 1. This post completed the constitution and made plans for a permanent organization. It set up temporary headquarters in New York City and began its relief, employment, and Americanism programs.

In **November 1919**, a charter was granted to Post 746 of Corning, NY and given the name John Patchill Eaton the first Corning native killed in action near Chateau Thierry, France, in July 1918.

By **1924**, the American Legion assumed much of the responsibility the Memorial Day parade and ceremony. Later that year the 86th and 161st Regiments of the Grand Army of the Republic combined with Post 746.

In the **1925** Corning directory the John P. Eaton American Legion was listed for meeting at the Heermans & Lawrence Building at 126 – 130 Pine Street, located on the Southeast corner of Pine and Denison Parkway. The 1944 city directory had the Post 746 at listed on the 3rd floor of City Hall on 1st Street.

On **June 27, 1926**, a funeral service was held for John P. Eaton.

In **1927** the last 10 members of the GAR held their final reunion at the John P. Eaton Post. That same year, the Corning American Legion presented variety show at the State Theatre on October 26. The show was called "*Burley Q's of 1927*". During that same

By Mid-summer **1942**, the American Legion had assumed responsibility for setting up Aircraft Observation Posts. In the Corning-Painted Post area, 200 volunteers were needed for two-hour shifts to staff posts on a twenty-four basis. The observers forwarded information concerning every passing aircraft, whether it was single or multi-motored, its height and direction of flight, to the Flight Center of the Buffalo division of the First Fighter Command. The program was phased out in June 1944, after the fear of air attack had passed, but meanwhile hundreds of lonely hours had been devoted to the project by dedicated volunteers

After WWII, returning servicemen and women were searching for a new location for their American Legion. In **1947** they acquired the former Carpenter residence at 145 Walnut Street. The Post grew to become very active in veterans affairs. The Post also supported many community and athletic programs.

In 1954, Post members organized and participated in the John P. Eaton Drum and Bugle Corps, also known as the Glassmen.

The Post prospered and remained very active for many years but like similar organizations began to decline in membership and support in the early '70's. The Post continued to decline until **1995** when a group of concerned members made a conscious decision to change the direction and future of the Post. Over the next 10 years the Post slowly began to regain its financial and membership foundation in order to sustain its future.

Though the Post was getting stronger the building was old, created physical barriers for older members and was not appealing to younger returning veterans. In **2003**, the membership began a search for a newer facility within the city. After a non-productive search, the group expanded its search and found a piece of land in South Corning.

Planning for a new building began in 2007 and in **May 2010** the new John P. Eaton American Legion Post 746 opened the doors for business.