

Rebecca Lukens posthumously honored as Outstanding Woman in American History

The Chester County Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) presented the National DAR Recognition for an Outstanding Woman in American History to Rebecca Pennock Lukens, of the noted Lukens Steel Corporation, on Aug. 20.

Kyle Gibson, the chair of Women in American History Committee, said the DAR's intent is to honor notable women, past or present, from the community. Rebecca Lukens was selected based on her many accomplishments and contributions to not only the Chester County community, but also on a national and international level. Born in 1794, Lukens was a Quaker who learned mill operations from her father Isaac Pennock. She married Charles Lukens in 1813, and he eventually ran the family-owned business. After her husband's death,

Rebecca took over as manager. In 1890, the mill was incorporated as Lukens Iron and Steel Company. The company was a major steel producer and a large employer for decades.

Lukens was sold to Bethlehem Steel in 1998. In 1994, *Fortune* Magazine crowned Lukens "America's First Female CEO of



Rebecca Lukens, 1794-1854.

an Industrial Company" and inducted her into the American Business Hall of Fame. The Pennsylvania State Legislature and City of Coatesville declared her "America's First Woman Industrialist." A World War II Liberty Ship was named in her honor.

Scott Huston, president of the National Iron and Steel Heritage Museum and direct descendant of Rebecca Lukens, received the recognition on her behalf. He provided a summary of the founding of Lukens Steel from its days making nails and wagon wheels to the expansion into production of boiler plates, highlighting Rebecca's commitment to constant improvements which ensured the operation's future success. The Rebecca Lukens Award is bestowed annually by the museum to a woman who exhibits Rebecca's leader-

ship qualities.

The ceremony was held in the Lukens Executive Office Building located in the Lukens National Register Historic District. The award, a framed National DAR Certificate and medal, will be on permanent display in the Lukens complex. Rebecca Lukens' name will be placed in the DAR national database as one of the outstanding women in American History. She joins a diverse and remarkable group that includes author Pearl S. Buck, Sacagawea from the Lewis and Clark expedition, and opera singer Marian Anderson.

The National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution is headquartered in Washington, D.C. and is a non-profit, non-political service organization that honors both men and women whose sacrifices made our country free. Members are

direct descendants of a patriot who furthered the cause of American independence. They may have fought, swore an oath to the new nation or provided supplies/financial support.

The organization promotes patriotism, education and historic preservation within our communities.

Visit www.dar.org to learn more about the Daughters of the American Revolution.



Kyle Gibson presents certificate to Scott Huston.