



HISTORY BYTES

A Lackawanna Historical Society Publication

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Rick Sedlisky, Editor



History Bytes Celebrates Its First Year

One year ago, the Lackawanna Historical Society introduced History Bytes to readers through the following message from the editor.

Welcome to the first issue of History Bytes, a bi-monthly e-newsletter published by the Lackawanna Historical Society.

History Bytes is a supplement to the Society's "Journal" quarterly print publication. Content includes articles written by contributing authors that are historical, current and from time to time, genealogically-related, as well as stories about those who made Lackawanna County and Northeast Pennsylvania their home. Also included are a list of Lackawanna Historical Society events and other Society information.

History Bytes includes Internet links to sites related to Lackawanna and Northeast Pennsylvania, as well as Editor's Book Review where readers are introduced to books written by authors from or originally from the region. On a periodic basis, a special edition of History Bytes that offers stand-alone, in-depth articles will be presented.

History Bytes not only offers a look at our past, but also a look at Lackawanna and Northeast Pennsylvania in the 21st Century. Who are we now? How do we embrace those who came before us and those who are newly-arrived? Anyone who wishes to offer what you know about Lackawanna and Northeast Pennsylvania, please contact us at lackawannahistory@gmail.com and place History Bytes in the subject matter.

lackawannahistory@gmail.com

During its initial year, History Bytes was well-received because of stories offered by all who contributed to each issue. From research to writing articles to photography to commentary, it's because of you who contributed and continue to offer your time and talent that History Bytes will continue to move forward.

As History Bytes enters its second year, the goal remains the same. From our past to our present to our future visions, we invite all to share your knowledge about Lackawanna and Northeast Pennsylvania.

LHS Membership Information

2019 Membership Reminder

About Membership: Membership privileges include unlimited access to the Society library, 10% discount in our bookstore, advance notice, special discounts and invitations to all Society activities, members-only programs, the quarterly newsletter and the bi-monthly e-newsletter.

Attached is a membership form you can use to renew your membership or give to a friend who is interested in joining. Please return it to:
The Lackawanna Historical Society, 232 Monroe Ave., Scranton, PA 18510.

Lackawanna Historical Society Membership Form

// Student	\$10	Name _____
// Individual	\$35	
// Family	\$45	Address _____
// Contributing	\$75	_____
// Sustaining	\$150	
// Silver Corporate	\$250	Telephone _____
// Gold Corporate	\$500	Email _____

Following is a link to the Society's membership page with link to join on-line if you prefer.

<http://www.lackawannahistory.org/benefits.html>

lackawannahistory@gmail.com

Upcoming LHS Events

Saturday, April 13, 11 am – 2 pm: Vintage Fashion Accessories Bed and Table Covers Sale, Catlin House.

Saturday, April 13, 6 pm: Annual Civil War Ball, Century Club, Scranton, with late buffet supper.

Sunday, April 14, 11 am – 2 pm: Ragtime Brunch at Carmen's 2.0, Radisson Lackawanna Station Hotel, Scranton.

Saturday, May 4, 6 pm: You Live Here; You Should Know This! At Montage.

Wednesday, May 22, 7 pm: Demonstration of Stationary Engine Model from Lackawanna Iron and Coal Company by Mike Piersa, Historian, National Museum of Industrial History, Catlin House.

Sunday, June 2, 1 pm - 4pm: Tea with Jane Austen, in partnership with Abington Community Library, details TBA.

Sunday, June 23: Historic Hill House and Garden Tour, time and details TBA.

Sunday, July 7, 2 pm, Watres Armory Tour, \$20. **Sold Out.**

Saturday, July 27, noon - 3 pm: Children's Day, Catlin House.

Friday - Sunday, Sep. 6 - 8: Avondale Mine Disaster 150th Anniversary Program, times and details TBA.

Saturday, Sep. 14: Tiffany Tour by Dr. Patricia Pongracz, time and details TBA.

Sunday, Sep. 22, 2 pm: Through the Photographer's Lens: A Look at NEPA in the 1800s by John Revak, Catlin House.

Friday - Sunday, Sep. 27-29, TBA Wedding Dress Exhibit and Program at POSH, Scranton, time TBA.

Scranton Veterans Memorial Park and Monument: An Update

By Pat Ahern with Rick Sedlisky

With Phase One completed and costs totaling \$240,000 paid in full, Phase Two of the Scranton Veterans Memorial Park and Monument project is well underway.

When spring weather comes, we will finish remaining landscaping, some small fencing to protect shrubs and some additional lighting. We have received a \$50,000 grant from the Commonwealth towards construction of the monument; \$117,000 is needed to begin final design and construction. The final cost of the project is \$465,000.

More than 900 names will be recognized. Veterans named on the monument should have been either Scranton residents or former Scranton residents and died in one of five wars, WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq/Afghanistan. No death certificate is required, just a statement from a friend or family member verifying information. We also include Merchant Marines and veterans from Minooka.

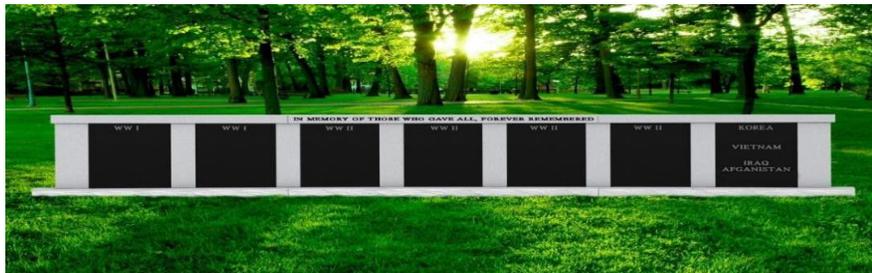
Please submit names or request donation information by contacting us at onestrongamerica@gmail.com. We also welcome community groups to conduct fundraisers on behalf of building the monument.

The idea of a Scranton Veterans Memorial Park was conceived by 14 veterans after reading the inscription on the plaque at the base of the flagpole inside Scranton Veterans Memorial Stadium. The stadium was dedicated:

“IN MEMORY OF ALL FORMER STUDENTS WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES
IN DEFENSE OF FREEDOM”

Upon completion, the inscription on the new monument will read:

“THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR ALL, FOREVER REMEMBERED”



**Artist's rendering of the Scranton Veterans Memorial Park and Monument
Courtesy of Pat Ahern**

Remembering Pancoast

Pancoast, also known as Price-Pancoast was Northeast Pennsylvania's third major anthracite mining disaster in terms of lives lost.

Operations began in 1881. On the day of the disaster, the majority who lost their lives were from Poland. Others were from other parts of Eastern Europe, as well as the United Kingdom and the United States.

The operation was served by the New York, Ontario & Western Railway, the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad and the Delaware & Hudson Railway. All three knew the value of Pancoast and thus extended their lines to the operation.

We offer two feature articles that focus on two aspects of the Pancoast disaster.

Written by Prof. William Conlogue, Department of English and Foreign Languages, Marywood University, entitled *Sorrow and Survival: Rallying Help for Pancoast Widows and Orphans*, offers a detailed look at how those who were left without breadwinners and while for the most part, non-English speakers, navigated though the system in order to survive.

The companion article, written by Joe Rudzinski, tells of 14 immigrant miners, names virtually forgotten, who were laid to rest in a common grave at St. Joseph's Lithuanian Cemetery, Throop. Though Mr. Rudzinski's in-depth research, research that took him as far as he could go, based on available information he feels that he's come a close as possible to finding the names of the 14.

For additional information on Pancoast, please visit Pennsylvania's Northern Anthracite Coal Field website at <http://www.northernfield.info/index.php> and click on the blue "P" for either Pancoast or Price/Pancoast.

Rallying Help for Pancoast Widows and Orphans ***By William Conlogue, Ph.D.***

On April 8, 1911, the day after the Pancoast fire, eleven undertakers crowded a temporary morgue at the colliery. Trading blows over the bodies, they disrupted identification of the dead. Officials removed one funeral director from the scene because he was bribing people to help him to claim corpses.¹ On subsequent days, funerals unfolded in Throop, a few on April 9, most on April 10 and 11.² In some cases, mourners interred victims in close succession, or at the same time. In a service at St. Joseph's Cemetery, with the colliery looming above, the community buried fourteen young men in a trench.³

¹ "Still" 10.

² "Burying."

³ "Throop Is" 1.

Funerals did not end the tragedy. For families of the dead, a scramble for survival ensued. A *Scranton Times* photo depicts a pregnant widow, flanked by four children, sitting with her back to a blank window in the block wall of her basement home.⁴ What draws one is the woman's face: her wide eyes stare straight ahead, her mouth open in surprise. As she lightly grasps her youngest son's fingers, the oldest boy and girl, their eyes level with their mother's, stare at what's to come. If you were this woman, new to the nation, alone with small children, non-English speaking, illiterate, unskilled, and looked at askance, how would you make your way if, suddenly, you lost your sole source of income?⁵

On April 6, her life had been difficult enough, but April 7 shattered her.⁶ Three months behind on rent and caring for a child with diphtheria, she had little food, clothing, and coal.⁷ The young ones slept in a corner on a pile of straw, and when the family upstairs washed floors, water seeped into the cellar.⁸ Although following the fire, a local union had given her a \$20 check, she did not know that she could cash it.⁹ Concerned people soon moved her into a second-floor apartment, found medical care for her child, and enlisted a relative to stay with her until she recovered.¹⁰

The fire left fifty-six women and 123 children searching for help.¹¹ To survive, widows had few options. They could put their children to work, but many over thirteen already had jobs. They could apply for work at local silk mills, but those with small babies would be hard-pressed to provide childcare and hold down a 10-hour, six-day-a-week job. Most were likely boarding newly-arrived immigrants, who often piled into homes already crammed with others.¹² The families of three mine laborers, eleven in all, shared a single house.¹³ Compounding woes, in the Anthracite Region married immigrant women seldom learned English.¹⁴

The legal system was no help. In 1911, Pennsylvania had yet to pass a workers' compensation law, and common law held that neither the dead nor his survivors could sue for wrongful death.¹⁵ Despite this, in April 1912 Mary Ostrosky and eleven other widows filed suits.¹⁶ Three years later they lost on appeal.¹⁷ In a separate case, in 1915

⁴ "Family."

⁵ Newspapers described the family as "The Case of the Boulevard Cellar." The photo, which appeared under the caption "Family Lived in Basement," identified them as the George Lachinski family ("Family"). The *Scranton Republican* identified the woman as Mrs. Zisneski ("Mayor") and Mrs. Joseph Wisnisky ("Tag").

⁶ "The Case."

⁷ "Mayor."

⁸ "Charity."

⁹ "Mayor."

¹⁰ "Charity."

¹¹ "Total" 4.

¹² Maclean 339.

¹³ "Official List."

¹⁴ Maclean 347.

¹⁵ Schaffer 29.

¹⁶ "Ten" 1; "More."

¹⁷ "Three."

a court ruled against Barbara Barbalicz, a mother of seven, ages five to sixteen.¹⁸ Although on June 7 the state governor had signed into effect workers' compensation laws, this effort helped none of these women.¹⁹ Enacted in 1913, a state mothers' pension law also came too late for Pancoast widows.²⁰

Assistance took a variety of forms. An official list of the Pancoast dead recorded the money available (or not) to each family: "Joe Adamovic, Dickson—Age, 30; married; wife, Anna, children, 2; ages, 3 years, 4 months; insurance, 1 society."²¹ Forty-one other widows could also turn to insurance policies and fraternal societies.²² The largest insurance payments were \$3,425 and \$1,000.²³

The Price-Pancoast Company and the colliery keg fund contributed aid. Although the company provided families food and rent-free housing, its help ended on November 8, when a community relief fund began distributing payments.²⁴ Keg funds accumulated through monthly dues and the sale of empty powder kegs.²⁵ Totaling \$1,300, the Pancoast keg fund distributed \$100 to each family to pay burial and immediate living expenses, with the company making up the difference.²⁶ In the immediate aftermath of the disaster, United Mine Workers Local 1004 also supplied food and clothing to widows and orphans.²⁷

With grief gripping the region, widows received the most help from the generosity of the wider community. Three days after the fire, on April 10, a mass meeting in Throop raised \$366.²⁸ Attendees decided to make a door-to-door plea for donations, targeting communities from the northern to the middle anthracite fields, "from Forest City to Hazleton."²⁹ In this fundraising effort, on April 18 and 19, people purchased red tags, which they wore or tied to the doorknob of their homes to signal their support of the grieving families.³⁰ Collecting what people could afford to give, whether pennies, dimes, or dollars, the Red Tag Days raised \$12,000.³¹ To ensure proper distribution of help,

¹⁸ "Barbara" 297. In *Barbara Barbalicz v. Pancoast Coal Company* (1912), Barbalicz contended in the Lackawanna County Court of Common Pleas that the superintendent did not warn the men of danger in sufficient time for them to escape (297).

¹⁹ Schaffer 47.

²⁰ Skocpol 446.

²¹ "Official List."

²² "Total" 4. Thirty-six families each received \$500 from the Modern Woodmen of America; six other families each received \$1000 from the First National Slovak Union ("Total" 4).

²³ "Official List." In 2017 numbers, these insurance payments would have amounted to \$91,475 and \$26,708 (Friedman).

²⁴ "To Distribute"; "Pancoast Relief." The company reported spending \$22,116 on supplies, funerals, and care of widows and orphans between April and November ("Six Pancoast," *Republican*).

²⁵ Roberts 266.

²⁶ "Pancoast Deaths." In 2017 dollars, the keg fund would have totaled \$34,720, with each family receiving \$2,671 (Friedman).

²⁷ "Throop Committee."

²⁸ "Plans."

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ "All Ready."

³¹ "Cherry."

Throop citizens appointed representative Poles, Lithuanians, Slavs, Magyars, and “English-speaking people.”³²

Organized on April 8, the Pancoast Relief Committee pooled the outpouring of community help.³³ The committee raised nearly \$90,000 from individuals, businesses, and regional mining companies.³⁴ To disperse funds, the committee followed the suggestion of industrialist George Baer to use the Cherry Plan, a Red Cross scheme that distributed donations raised after the 1909 Cherry Hill mine disaster in Illinois.³⁵ Modeled on the 1906 English Workmen’s Compensation Act, the Cherry Plan determined pensions by the dead man’s “number of dependents, amount of service, and average weekly salary.”³⁶

The disaster caught many widows in particular need of help. Three were pregnant.³⁷ At least seven others had children under a year old.³⁸ On the day of the fire, one woman and her nine children, none older than fourteen, were on their way to the United States; after their arrival, they led a precarious existence.³⁹ More than a dozen families depended on the oldest son as primary breadwinner,⁴⁰ but until the relief committee amended its rules, it limited its attention to families that had lost a father.⁴¹

Guided by the Cherry Plan, the committee distributed lump sums according to the age of the children and the age of the widow. A widow with children under six received \$300 per child; for children older than five she received \$25 less for each additional year of the child’s age, up to fourteen (e.g. a six-year-old received \$275; a seven-year-old, \$250).⁴² Widows younger than fifty received \$300; widows over fifty, \$500.⁴³ With lump sums, some widows returned to the old country.⁴⁴ After moving to Hungary, Mary Varos came back to the United States to settle in Red Jacket, Mingo County, West Virginia.⁴⁵

Seventeen women took lump sum payments, ranging from \$200 to \$1600.⁴⁶ As many as eight lump sums went to widows in the old country.⁴⁷ Jane Gregson, in England, received \$950.⁴⁸ Her husband had only the previous week contacted her to join him in

³² “Plans.”

³³ “Relief.”

³⁴ Compensation 2; “Mine Horror”; “\$10,000”; “Aid.”

³⁵ “\$10,000”; “Pancoast Mine.”

³⁶ Stout 67.

³⁷ Compensation 23, 29, 35.

³⁸ Compensation 17, 21, 25, 41, 43, 47, 115.

³⁹ “Six Pancoast,” *Truth*.

⁴⁰ For example, see Compensation 127.

⁴¹ “Six Pancoast,” *Truth*.

⁴² Compensation 107, 123, 132.

⁴³ Compensation 9, 111.

⁴⁴ Compensation 119; see inserted note.

⁴⁵ Compensation 49. On May 19, 1920, Mingo County witnessed the Matewan Massacre; the county was also site of the United Mine Workers’ agitation that led to the Battle of Blair Mountain, in late August-early September 1921 (“West Virginia’s”).

⁴⁶ “Pancoast Mine.”

⁴⁷ “Widows.”

⁴⁸ Compensation 123.

the United States.⁴⁹ Barbara Poklemba, who received \$750, and Mary Yuhasz, who received \$1,075, lived in Hungary.⁵⁰ Alvira May, with seven children ranging in age from six to twenty-five, took a \$900 lump sum, but she had to verify her age: a notarized statement from her mother, Catherine Smith, attested that a photo of Alvira was genuine and that she was, at 50, Smith's oldest child.⁵¹ The committee also approved lump sums to a dependent father, a motherless child, and Cora Evans, wife of Joseph Evans, who died during the rescue effort.⁵²

The relief committee planned to distribute monthly payments beginning on November 8, but only one woman showed up.⁵³ An incorrect announcement of the date when payouts would start led the remaining widows to appear the following day, November 9.⁵⁴ Arriving in downtown Scranton, they entered the Anthracite Trust Company dressed in mourning, showed documentation, and accepted their money.⁵⁵ Feeling empowered "to feed and clothe their children," many wept as they received the funds.⁵⁶ Women with one child took away a \$20 pension; each additional child increased the payment by \$5, to a maximum of \$40.⁵⁷ Records reveal other amounts later, likely adjusted for children's ages or family circumstances.

Anthracite Trust Company tracked disbursements in an account ledger. The book includes head shots of 32 women, all but one dressed in full mourning attire. Taken in mid-to late-October, the photos identified each woman when she picked up a check on the eighth of every month.⁵⁸ Officially matching face and photo also meant revisiting the widow's original moment of loss. As if anticipating this memory loop, Sarah Dawes, who would have celebrated her tenth wedding anniversary on April 8, wears in her photo a miniature picture, presumably of her husband, pinned at her throat.⁵⁹

The eyes in the photo of Victoria Grutkoesky hold one's attention. The disaster left Grutkoesky, age 30, with six small children, ranging in age from nine months to eleven years. The ledger records that her seventh child, Peter, a twelve-year-old, died on Mitchell Day, October 29, ten days before relief payments began. As if adhering to accounting practices, the clerk not only entered the year in its own column but also wrote the numbers in red.⁶⁰

⁴⁹ "Total" 4.

⁵⁰ Compensation 129, 131.

⁵¹ Compensation 9.

⁵² Compensation 121, 133, 134; see "Six Pancoast," *Republican*. The committee sent the child's lump sum to an agent of the consul of Austria-Hungary (Compensation 134).

⁵³ "Pancoast Mine"; "Distributing."

⁵⁴ "Distributing"; "Pancoast Fund."

⁵⁵ "Widows."

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ "Six Pancoast," *Republican*.

⁵⁸ "Pancoast Fund"; "Pancoast Mine"; "Widows."

⁵⁹ "Total" 4.

⁶⁰ Compensation 17. Mitchell Day remembers labor leader John Mitchell for his role in settling the Anthracite Strike of 1900, which ended on October 29 (Dublin and Licht 34).

A resident of Smoketown, a Throop neighborhood, Mary Ostrosky shouldered her share of sorrow.⁶¹ As crews recovered the dead, she saw an undertaker steal the body of her son Steve.⁶² Soon after she buried the seventeen-year-old, her invalid husband was killed.⁶³ Not until October 2 did the committee add her to its rolls.⁶⁴ Having come to the United States in 1894 from Russian-occupied Poland, the forty-six-year-old Ostrosky had five other children, ranging in age from fourteen to two: Helen (14), Francis (12), Victoria (8), Bridget (6), and Romaldie (2).⁶⁵

To survive in 1912, a family of six in the Anthracite Region needed a yearly income of at least \$700; in 2017 numbers, just over \$18,000. Although a miner might make annually as much as \$800, a coal car driver, such as Steve Ostrosky, would have made no more than \$650, or \$16,757 in 2017.⁶⁶ Although the Ostroskys received “some insurance”, relief money hardly made up for the loss of Steve’s pay.⁶⁷ As years passed, the family likely felt the pinch of inflation.

Payments to Mary Ostrosky suggest how relief worked over time.⁶⁸ Although she at first received \$40 monthly, in May 1912 the committee reduced her pension to \$35, which would continue until Victoria, then nine, turned fourteen.⁶⁹ The ledger, however, records forty-dollar payments continuing.⁷⁰ In October 1917, her pension increased to \$48.⁷¹

Calling a meeting in Throop in July 1922, the trustees investigated complaints that unauthorized women were receiving payments.⁷² The committee reduced several women’s pensions, including Ostrosky’s, which fell to \$24.⁷³ The keeper of the ledger recorded that Ostrosky had only one child under fourteen, Romaldie, and that Victoria, now nineteen, was “nervous”, perhaps limiting her ability to work. The ledger also notes of the other children that Helen was “married”, Francis was “dead”, and Bridget was “mill”.⁷⁴ Now the primary wage earner, the seventeen-year-old Bridget likely worked in nearby Dickson City at the Bliss Silk Throwing Company.⁷⁵

Nineteen Pancoast widows remarried, six within a year of the disaster. As a “sort of dowry”, each received \$100, plus \$25 per child.⁷⁶ In 1912, three weeks after the New Year’s Day death of her fourteen-month-old daughter, Helen Lucoski received \$315

⁶¹ “Official List.”

⁶² “Still” 10.

⁶³ Compensation 69.

⁶⁴ Compensation 19.

⁶⁵ United States.

⁶⁶ Stepenoff 104-105; Friedman.

⁶⁷ “Official List.”

⁶⁸ Various spellings of her last name appear in documents. The ledger spells the name “Ostrosky.”

⁶⁹ Compensation 69.

⁷⁰ Compensation 19.

⁷¹ Compensation 85.

⁷² “Beneficiaries.”

⁷³ Compensation 86.

⁷⁴ Compensation 19.

⁷⁵ Maclean 339.

⁷⁶ “Six Pancoast,” *Truth*; “Six Pancoast,” *Republican*.

from the fund, just prior to her marriage to Peter Zurowski, a laborer.⁷⁷ Five women remarried in 1915. On January 18, Alexandra Cebulka, anticipating her upcoming marriage, relieved the fund of responsibility for her and her six-year-old.⁷⁸ After serving as witness for the illiterate Cebulka's mark, Kate Hera, mother of two, opted out of the fund on February 10 to marry.⁷⁹

Remarriages did not always go smoothly. On July 8, 1915, Victoria Pasco gave up relief payments because the next day she was to marry Ignatz Voita, but he deserted her before they took their vows.⁸⁰ A mother of two boys, ages six and seven, Pasco formally requested readmission to the pension list on September 8.⁸¹ In December 1911, the relief committee discovered that "the husband-to-be" of one widow "wanted to get hands on the money."⁸² Presumably to guard against "designing men", the committee asked one widow to swear before a notary public in 1913 that she had not remarried since her husband's death.⁸³

The Pancoast Relief Committee assumed early on that its work would end when the youngest child, who was born after the fire, turned fourteen, the age of employability.⁸⁴ Although the ledger's last recorded payments are dated September 8, 1924, the relief committee was still at work in 1929. With the fund totaling \$10,367.83, trustees decided in May to close the account as soon as possible by raising payments.⁸⁵ Among the dozen remaining widows, those receiving \$15 per month saw their pensions rise to \$30; for those receiving \$34, payments rose to \$49.⁸⁶ Five months later, the stock market crashed.

Other men and boys died in other Lackawanna Valley mines on April 7, 1911. A father of four was killed at the Lackawanna colliery in Olyphant, and sixteen-year-old Michael Folan, a driver boy, the primary breadwinner for his mother and several younger siblings, died in an ambulance on the way home after a car crushed him in the Greenwood Mine.⁸⁷ The only difference between the Pancoast families and these families was that the Throop fire caught the public's attention in a way that men dying alone could not. Coping privately with loss, these latter families could turn only to "cold charity".⁸⁸

The Pancoast disaster was caught up in arguments for the creation of workers' compensation laws.⁸⁹ Not until 1915, however, did Pennsylvania pass its Workmen's

⁷⁷ "Zurowski."

⁷⁸ Compensation 71.

⁷⁹ Compensation 34, 71.

⁸⁰ Compensation 40.

⁸¹ See letter attached to Compensation 39.

⁸² "Pancoast Widow."

⁸³ "Pancoast Widow"; Compensation 15.

⁸⁴ "Widows."

⁸⁵ Bunnell; Gerrity.

⁸⁶ "Increase."

⁸⁷ Metters; "Driver."

⁸⁸ Citizen.

⁸⁹ Howard 32.

Compensation Act, which guaranteed injured workers damages despite responsibility and placed a ceiling on payment.⁹⁰ The law excluded domestic servants and agricultural workers and did nothing for Pancoast widows and orphans.⁹¹

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⁹⁰ Schaffer 27.

⁹¹ Ibid. 47.

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William Conlogue, Ph.D, Marywood University, is a native of Northeast Pennsylvania. Bill teaches courses in first-year writing, American literature and environmental literature at Marywood University. He has published two books that explore aspects of the history and literature of the Anthracite Region, *Here and There: Reading Pennsylvania's Working Landscapes and Undermined in Coal Country: On the Measures in a Working Land*.

(Ed. Note: As the author's work states, the Anthracite Trust Company tracked disbursements to Pancoast widows in an account ledger that also included their head shots. Following are photos and related information for Mary Varos, Victoria Grutkoesky and Mary Ostrosky as recorded by the Anthracite Trust Company)

Danta ^{West Virginia} Mary Varos

49
 Danta by Milton
 Superior Conn.
 Austria-Hungary
 Woodman Dr

Widow of Kellerman
 Age 78

Children:-

Frank	7	
Steve	5	just 16
Margaret	3	
Michael	2	



Nov 9 '11	ck 13	35.00	Nov 8 1 st payment	35.00
Dec 5	ck 60	35.00	Nov 9 2 nd	35.00
Jan 9	ck 87	35.00	Jan 8 3 rd	35.00
Feb 8	ck 117	35.00	Feb 8 4 th	35.00
Mar 9	ck 142	35.00	Feb 8 5 th	35.00
Apr 8	ck 165	35.00	Apr 8 6 th	35.00
May 8	ck 189	35.00	May 8 7 th	35.00
June 8	ck 220	35.00	June 8 8 th	35.00
July 8	ck 249	35.00	July 8 9 th	35.00
Aug 8	ck 274	35.00	Aug 8 10 th	35.00
Sept 7	ck 299	35.00	Sept 7 11 th	35.00
Oct 8	ck 323	35.00	Oct 8 12 th	35.00
Nov 8	ck 348	35.00	Nov 8 13 th	35.00
Dec 9	ck 368	35.00	Dec 7 14 th	35.00
Jan 5	ck 389	35.00	Jan 5 15 th	35.00
Feb 10	ck 408	35.00	Feb 5 16 th	35.00
Mar 7	ck 429	35.00	Mar 5 17 th	35.00
Apr 8	ck 450	35.00	Apr 5 18 th	35.00
May 8	ck 470	35.00	May 8 19 th	35.00
June 9	ck 491	35.00	June 7 20 th	35.00
July 8	ck 515	35.00	July 8 21 st	35.00
Aug 6	ck 537	35.00	Aug 6 22 nd	35.00
Sept 5	ck 566	35.00	Sept 5 23 rd	35.00
Oct 5	ck 565	139.00	Oct 5	
Nov 23	ck 736	211.00	Nov 23	211.00

Photo courtesy of the Anthracite Heritage Museum, Scranton

Victoria Gruthkoesky
 Albert Dr Preeburg

Widow of Andrew
 Age 35 yrs

Children

- Peter 17 killed Mitchell Aug 1911
- Viola 11
- Joseph 7yrs
- Helen 7"
- Stanley 6
- John 3
- Florence 9 mos



1911		1911		
Nov 8	ck 23	40 00	Nov 8 1st payment	40 00
Dec 8	ck 44	40 00	Dec 8 2nd "	40 00
Jan 8	ck 93	50 00	Jan 8 3rd "	40 00
Jan 9	ck 71	40 00	Jan 9 Balance of death of son Peter	50 -
Feb 9	ck 102	40 00	Feb 9 4th payment	40 00
Mar 9	ck 129	40 00	Mar 9 5th "	40 00
Apr 9	ck 153	40 00	Apr 9 6th "	40 00
May 8	ck 176	40 00	May 8 7th "	40 00
June 8	ck 208	40 00	June 8 8th "	40 00
		370 00		370 00

Now June 10, 1917 received of Anthracite Trust Co. One hundred dollars for myself and One hundred and Fifty Dollars for my six children (\$25 for each) for the reason of my remarriage to Konstanty Krzyzanowski in consideration of which I do for myself and my children release and forever discharge the Fairmount Relief Commission and the Anthracite Trust Co from all manner of claims which I or my children ever had or may have upon the fund created for the benefit of the survivors of those being killed by Pinesburg disaster

Witness my hand
 John Niesel

Victoria Gruthkoesky
 mark

Photo courtesy of the Anthracite Heritage Museum, Scranton

Mary Ostrofsky

20

Son Steve Killed
by resolution of Committee
of Oct 7, 1911 she was
made a beneficiary
Age 46



Children			
married	Helen	14	25
dead	Francis	12	23
newborn	Victoria	8	19
will	Bridger	6	17
	Ronaldie	2	13

1911				1911			
Nov	8	Ch 21	40.00	Nov	8	1 st payment	40.00
Dec	8	Ch 45	40.00	Dec	8	2 nd "	40.00
Jan	8	Ch 72	40.00	Jan	8	3 rd "	40.00
Feb	8	Ch 103	40.00	Feb	8	4 th "	40.00
Mar	8	Ch 130	40.00	Mar	8	5 th "	40.00
Apr	9	Ch 155	40.00	Apr	8	6 th "	40.00
May	8	Ch 177	40	May	8	7 th "	40.00
June	10	Ch 209	40.00	June	8	8 th "	40.00
July	8	Ch 239	40.00	July	8	9 th "	40.00
Aug	8	Ch 264	40.00	Aug	8	10 th "	40.00
Sept	9	Ch 289	40.00	Sept	7	11 th "	40.00
Oct	9	Ch 313	40.00	Oct	8	12 th "	40.00
Nov	9	Ch 339	40.00	Nov	8	13 th "	40.00
Dec	9	Ch 359	40.00	Dec	8	14 th "	40.00
1912	Jan	Ch 380	40.00	Jan	8	15 th "	40.00
	Feb	Ch 399	40.00	Feb	8	16 th "	40.00
	Mar	Ch 420	40.00	Mar	9	17 th "	40.00
	Apr	Ch 441	40.00	Apr	8	18 th "	40.00
	May	Ch 462	40.00	May	8	19 th "	40.00
	June	Ch 482	40.00	June	8	20 th "	40.00
	July	Ch 503	40.00	July	8	21 st "	40.00
	Aug	Ch 523	40.00	Aug	8	22 nd "	40.00
	Sept	Ch 544	40.00	Sept	8	23 rd "	40.00
	Oct	Ch 571	40.00	Oct	8	24 th "	40.00

Photo courtesy of the Anthracite Heritage Museum, Scranton

Pancoast Mine Fire - Common Grave

By Joe Rudzinski

Growing up in Throop in the 1940's and 50's one would think that we would know all about the Pancoast mine fire of 7 April 1911. My wife Barbara and I had family members who worked at the mine at the time of the tragedy and neither of us can remember our grandparents talking about the event. My Rudzinski and Grabowski grandparents and a great uncle Muzinski and Barbara's Kashmer grandfather all worked at the mine and were probably working the day of the tragedy.

We left the area in 1962 so we did not have the benefit of reading any local historical reporting of the tragedy. It was not until Throop celebrated its centennial in 1994 and we obtained a copy of The Throop Commemorative Centennial paper that featured a multi-page article on the disaster did we learn the full extent of it. After reading this my curiosity was aroused. I grew up a block away from the Pancoast Mine and as kids we played among remains of buildings.

In the late 1990's as the Internet expanded, I learned the full story of the Pancoast tragedy. The full transcription of the newspaper reports of the event was done by Richard Reese in 2001 and made available online. In addition, within a short period of time, the investigative report by the State of Pennsylvania was also available online.

Thanks to Newspapers.com I have been able read all the local and much of the national reporting of the Pancoast tragedy. I was surprised at how long it took to get accurate information as to how many miners died and how long it took for the company to identify who was working in the affected area of the mine. It was a compelling story nonetheless and I have read it many times.

There are many stories that can be told about the Pancoast tragedy and over the years many have been reported in the media. There was one item that caught my eye that never received much attention. It was a report of a mass or common grave for fourteen miners who were buried at St. Joseph's Lithuanian Catholic Cemetery in Throop. The burial is described in the article below:

The Scranton Republican of 11 April 1911

Fourteen in a Trench

The burial of the fourteen took place in the morning. The fourteen were all young men—boarders—living at the homes of foreigners; men too young to feel the necessity of owning a little plot of ground in a graveyard. Their bodies were held at morgues of different undertakers. To bury them, one long trench was dug in the cemetery—the colliery frowning down on it—and in the trench the fourteen bodies were placed.

“If you wanted to see something tough, something that was hard to bear,” said a Pancoast miner coming up from the shaft, “you'd ought to've been here this morning

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when they were burying fourteen men in one grave over there.” and he pointed to St. Joseph’s Cemetery. The cemetery was filled with hundreds of mourners, members of the Pancoast Mine Accidental Fund and townsfolk. The crying of men and women was heard throughout the borough. Four more burials were in the same cemetery in the afternoon. Father Kaupas, of St. Joseph’s Church (now St. Thomas More) of North Scranton, conducted services at the graves.”

I could not find any published follow-ups on the common grave or any information regarding the identity of the miners that were buried there. This aroused my curiosity and prompted me to look at the 73 casualties in greater detail. The first person I contacted was Gerald E. Sherad, author of the collection of Mine Accident reporting and regarded as an expert on mine accidents. He provided several lists of the miners killed at the Pancoast on 7 April 1911. In addition, I was able to obtain the death certificates for all 73 men killed from the Pennsylvania State Archives.

The death certificates provided significant information on the 72 mine employees and the government mine rescue foreman that were killed. Their ages ranged from 16 to 70. Seven were listed under age 20, with two of those shown as 16. Twenty-eight individuals were listed as citizens with the remaining 47 as aliens. The breakdown by ethnicity was:

Polish 39, Slovak 9, English 8, Magyar 6, Lithuanian 3, Irish 2, German 2, Welsh 2, one U.S. born and one unknown.

While reviewing this information I discovered a personal connection; one of the miners killed was my great-great Uncle Joseph Karolewicz. His name along with many others was recorded with several variations in the spelling. They included: Joseph/John Kavalavage/Kasalavage/Karulewicz

The death certificates provided some important information regarding place of burial. A portion of a death certificate below shows that for this individual the burial took place

19. PLACE OF BURIAL OR REMOVAL <i>Throop Lithuanian</i>	DATE OF BURIAL <i>Apr 11 -</i> 1911
20. UNDERTAKER <i>F. E. Blickeus</i>	ADDRESS <i>April 10, 1911.</i>

at the Throop Lithuanian Cemetery. After reviewing all the death certificates, I was able to determine that 38 miners were buried in Throop. The breakdown of where they were buried is: 9 at St. John’s Cemetery, 6 at St. Mary’s Cemetery, 5 at St. Joseph’s Cemetery - This left eighteen individuals with no specific burial place in Throop indicated as in the portion of the death certificate on the next page.

19. PLACE OF BURIAL OR REMOVAL <i>Throop Pa</i>	DATE OF BURIAL <i>April 9</i>191 <i>1</i>
20. UNDERTAKER <i>Frank Kopalinski</i>	ADDRESS <i>Scranton Pa</i>

I now had a lot of information but living in Virginia, I was not able to get any first hand or on-site information. In the past I have communicated with a friend who lives in North Scranton and is very familiar with St. Joseph's Cemetery having family buried there.

Sharing the common grave story with him, he indicated he might have an idea where some of the graves are. He graciously volunteered to visit the cemetery and provided ten photos taken at the cemetery. The picture below shows seven gravestones with the names affixed and they are all individuals killed at the Pancoast. This was two more individuals buried at St. Joseph's than the data I had collected to this point showed.

The gravestones are located on the right-hand side and within 150 feet of the first cemetery entrance off Sanderson St. After reviewing the pictures, several questions came to mind:

1. Why were four of the gravestones so close together?

This photo shows the gravestones of Kostany Zawicky, Kostanty Cebulski, Emil Wasczeniuk, and Adam Pasko.



Typically, gravestones are not placed that close together. There is a gap of more than six feet to the remaining three stones. These markers appear to have normal spacing, however, the stone for Alex Wroblewski is a much newer stone and appears to have been placed much later.

2. What is the emblem on five of the gravestones?

The stones for Dolzik, Hiera (very difficult to see), Pasko, Waszeniuk and Zawicky bear the emblem for Woodmen of the World, a not-for-profit fraternal benefit society, that provides insurance for its members.

Newspaper reporting indicated that a \$500.00 death benefit was paid to survivors of Woodmen members and could be the reason they were able to afford the gravestones.



3. Why there was only one Waszeniuk gravestone?



The newspapers reporting on the tragedy pointed out the gruesome story of the three Wasczeniuk brothers and a cousin all living at the same house in Throop being victims. This portion was taken from the Tribune Republican.

Tribune Republican of 10 April 1911

“Those of Throop that were on the streets were mourners marching in bodies to the funeral of some victim, or crowded outside St. John’s or St. Anthony’s church, where the services were for the dead. Another crowd was massed on the sidewalk in front of a house on Charles Street, where three crepes hung from the door. Four men lay dead in

that house, three brothers and a cousin - the four bodies lying in one small room. The dead in this one house were Emil, John and Victor Wasczeniuk and Lawrence Posava, with one mourner - a little girl of seven, daughter of Emil.”

All four funerals were held on the same day; the bodies were laid out in the same house, it would seem logical they would all be buried together. The only explanation that seems to make sense is that Emil Wasczeniuk as a member of the Woodmen of the World may have had his tombstone provided as part of his Woodman’s death benefit. This might also apply to the other four members of Woodmen of the World.

One other thing gleaned from the pictures was that Kostanty Cebulski’s stone shows the greatest effect of weather and age and it is difficult to read the inscription. Given it’s condition, it could have been the first stone placed.

All online sources of records were now exhausted, and local church death records were the only hope of identifying where the burials occurred. This would mean visiting each church and ask for permission to view the records or provide the names I was interested in and wait until the person had time to search for them. This would have been a cumbersome and time-consuming process at best.

I recently learned that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Genealogical Society (NEPGS) at Wilkes-Barre had all the Scranton Diocese records digitized, but they were not available online. On a recent trip to Northeastern Pennsylvania, I was able to visit the NEPGS facility in Wilkes-Barre. They do indeed have all the records, but the Diocese did place some caveats regarding access, i.e., the records cannot be copied to any digital media, and they cannot be photographed. It is best to bring along some sharp pencils and a lot of paper. Information can be printed locally for a fee, but they must first be redacted.

It was no surprise to find the early church records were handwritten and in Latin. They were recorded in chronological order by date, so it was not difficult to search for the period in April 1911. The only surprise was that there were no records for St. Mary’s Hungarian Catholic Church, however, I was able to find grave markers for two of the individuals buried at that cemetery and I am confident the other four were buried there. After reviewing the records for St Anthony’s, St. John’s and St. Joseph’s, I was able to confirm the burials as listed below:

Burial at St Joseph’s Cemetery, Throop with Gravestones

Surname	Given name	Age	Death Cert #	Nationality
Cebulka/Cubulka/Cebulski	Kontaz/Kostic	23	39199	Lithuanian
Dalzek/Dalzek/Dolczyk	Andrew/Andrzej	38	39225	Polish
Hera/How/Hiera	Albert/Albin	36	39218	Polish
Pasko	Adam	28	39228	Polish
Wasczenink/Wasczenink/Wasczeniuk	Emil	32	39221	Polish
Wroblewsky/Wroblewski	Alex/Alexander	30	39214	Polish
Zawicky/Saivicky	Konstanty/Kostante	36	40021	Polish

**Funeral Mass Conducted at St. Anthony's Church, Burials at
St. Joseph's Cemetery, Throop in Unmarked or Common Graves**

Surname	Given name	Age	Death Cert #	Nationality
Czispak/Czispah/Czpak	Adolf	26	39220	Polish
Dworakosky/Dousisky	Kostic	36	39175	Polish
Grutsky/Guitsky/Grocki	Bolas/Boleslaw	23	39193	Polish
Kavalavage/Kasalavage/Karulewicz	Joseph/John	45	39198	Polish
Klemansky/Klimonski	Joseph	19	39177	Polish
Kurkoviak/Kulkovish/Kurkowiak	Staney/Stanislaw	35	39219	German
Lutwanco/Lutwinco	Charles	20	39235	Polish
Ploplis/Pluplas	John	24	39176	Lithuanian
Posivia/Porynis	Lowen/Leon	19	39224	Polish
Szuak/Surek	Joseph	28	39174	Polish
Wasczenink/Wasczenink/Waszczeniuk	John	25	39222	Polish
Wasczenink/Wasczenink/Waszczeniuk	Vikto/Wicktor	19	39223	Polish
Wisniewski/Wisnilevski/Wesnoky	Joseph	48	39232	Polish
Yanuchefsky/Januszewski	Vousen/Wauzon	36	39217	Polish

Burial at St John's Cemetery, Throop

Surname	Given name	Age	Death Cert #	Nationality
Balog/Balogh/Ballog	George/Juraj	29	39229	Slovak
Batbolics/Bulboties/Barbolish	John	38	39212	Slovak
Bilek/Bilik	John	20	39201	Slovak
Korman	Louis/Lewes	42	39195	Slovak
Poklemba/Poklemta	George	58	39207	Slovak
Stoyak	John	40	39209	Slovak
Sznak/Snak	Jacob/Jakup	40	39200	Slovak
Youhasz/Juhas/Youhas	Joseph	40	39210	Slovak

Burial at St. Mary's Cemetery, Throop

Surname	Given name	Age	Death Cert #	Nationality
Gall/Gal	Mike/Michael	16	39204	Magyar
Gibarsky/Gitarsky/Gibarski	Andrew/Andro	32	39196	Magyar
Molner/Mclnar/Molnar	John	46	39173	Magyar
Nemeth/Nemet	Steaf/Stephen	24	39205	Magyar
Varga/Vargo/Wargo	Julius	42	39211	Magyar
Voros/Vorrs	Keben/Kilemen	32	39208	Magyar

Funeral masses at St Anthony's and St. John's, Burials in Jessup, Olyphant and Holy Family Cemetery, Throop

Surname	Given name	Age	Death Cert #	Nationality
Czevnagusky/Czernagusky/Carnogursky	John	19	39230	Polish
Dzuirsin/Dzuirsin	John	19	39206	Slovak
Reitz/Ritz	Lawrence/Larence	70	39244	German

The death certificates recorded John Carnogursky and John Dzuirsin as being buried in Throop; however, church records show the funeral Mass was conducted in Throop, but the burials were in Jessup and Olyphant. Lawrence Ritz is recorded as living in Throop and census data confirms that and his death certificate lists burial at Throop. The family plot is at Holy Family Cemetery in Throop, co-located with St. John's and St. Mary's. His wife, who died in 1926, is also buried there. Holy Family Catholic Church was located in Scranton; the site is now a parking lot.

The records above show the thirty-eight miners recorded as buried in Throop are accounted for. There were many variants of the surnames and given names and you wonder how the mining companies paid their employees. During all this research I found church records to be the most accurate and reliable. I don't think it is possible to be 100% certain on who was buried in the common grave, but I believe the fourteen individuals I have identified are as close as we can get. My great-great Uncle Joseph Karulewicz was among those probably buried in the common grave.

Sixty percent of the miners killed in the Pancoast fire were Throop residents. In addition to the thirty-eight residents buried in Throop, there were six residents who were buried in cemeteries outside of Throop. They were Isaac Dawe, William Gregson, Edward Heart, Walter Knight, James Lucas and James Wallace. It is difficult to visualize forty-four funerals being conducted in a town the size of Throop in a three-day period.

The thirty-eight miners that were buried in Throop cemeteries were for the most part ignored in the media reporting of the Pancoast tragedy. There were no obituaries or personal recognition except for the Wasczeniuk family as indicated above. All forty-four miners killed should be remembered and documented in the history of Throop.

When I visited St. Joseph's Cemetery, I wanted to get a personal look at the seven gravestones to determine if this could be the location of the common grave. I paced the area off and I believe it could easily accommodate 21 burials. While there, I could not help but notice that the seven gravestones are not in the best condition in terms of their stability. Several are leaning and could easily topple.

These gravestones and the individuals buried there are an important part of Throop history and should be tended to. It would be a great tribute if a marker of some kind could be placed in St. Joseph's Cemetery to acknowledge those men in the common grave. They should be included the Pancoast Mine narrative and Throop's history.

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1911 Annual Report of the Department of Mines of Pennsylvania - Anthracite Part I Library Call No. TN805.04 A29

Pennsylvania State Archives records at Ancestry.com

Northeastern Pennsylvania Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania, Diocese of Scranton church records.

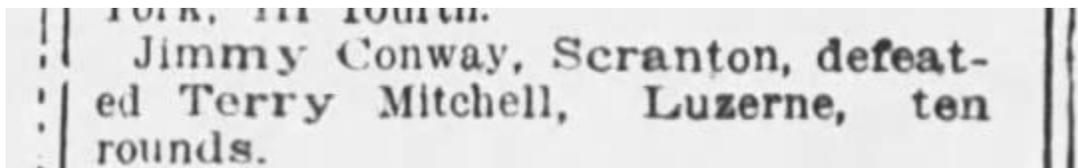
Joe Rudzinski was born and raised in Throop where he attended St. Anthony's Elementary School and Throop High School, graduating in 1957. He then joined the U.S. Navy where he served in the Naval Security Group in Hawaii and Taipei. He subsequently returned to Throop to marry his high school sweetheart, Barbara Kashmer. In 1962, the couple moved to Arlington, VA and for the next 12 years, Joe's work with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) took him on several assignments overseas. Resettling in Sterling, VA in 1973, he continued working at CIA headquarters. After retiring from the CIA in 1989, Joe worked with General Electric, Lockheed and Quest Communications as a Senior Systems Engineer before retiring in 2000. Joe is an avid genealogist and has researched their families for more than 30 years.

Person of Interest

Jimmy Conway

From the Wilkes-Barre Times-Leader, Evening News

March 14, 1916



The first two bouts were worth the price of admission. Terry Mitchell, of Luzerne, "who loads seven every day," fought Jimmy Conway, of Scranton. It was a fast ten-round bout, but the Scrantonian had all the better of it. Mitchell lasted the ten innings with wonder fortitude. He was floored in the fifth, but even this didn't stop him, and he got it with interest from Conway. Conway used everything he had, back-handers, side-swipes, uppercuts and at last the only evidenced thing not used to put his man away was the water bucket. Despite this Terry stood off and at the end of the ten, aside from several cuts on his face, was not hurt.

Not much is known about Jimmy Conway. He was born in 1894 in Atlanta, GA and subsequently made his home in South Scranton for reasons unknown.

According to BoxRec, Boxing's Official Record Keeper, as of January 22, 1912, Jimmy was a welterweight and at age 18 was in the ring. He did well.

While BoxRec called Conway a welterweight, a 1919 article in the Scranton Republican described him as "a popular lightweight who figured in nine scraps since the first of the year and won most of them".

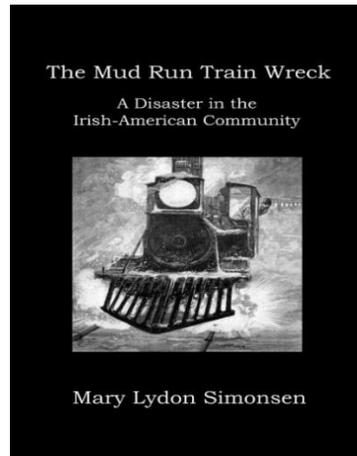
Conway's manager, Charlie Burke, kept him busy travelling "up and down the line" to face opponents such as Kid Coaches, Pittston (won in ten rounds), Leo Lavin, Carbondale (shaded by Lavin in six), Kid Duncan of Williamsport in Wilkes-Barre (won in six), a brother of Peck Miller in Hazleton, a win described as ten of the fastest rounds ever seen in that city, and Leo "Kid" Duncan, Dunmore (won in three by knockout).

Weighing in at 133 pounds, Jimmy Conway was described as steadily improving his work. He was noted for his ability to mix things along the rough and tumble lines whenever the other fellow was ready to follow such a course.

BoxingRec states that Conway was in the ring from 1912 to 1927, after which he was "inactive". What he did afterwards and whether or not he remained in South Scranton is unknown. If any boxing historians can add to the story of Jimmy Conway, please contact us at lackawannahistory@gmail.com

Editor's Book Review
By Rick Sedlisky

The Mud Run Train Wreck
A Disaster in the Irish-American Community
By Mary Lydon Simonsen



**Art: Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly
"Torpedo on the Tracks"
VOL XIV – No 2, August 1882**

It is commonly known that "way back when" in Northeast Pennsylvania and other parts of the United States, the only major source of information, other than word of mouth, was newspapers. The newspapers reported, but was all they reported accurate?

On October 10, 1888, one of the worst train wrecks in American history took place in Northeast Pennsylvania. Sixty four lives were lost when on the return north from Hazleton to Wilkes-Barre and Scranton, the seventh section of an eight-section Lehigh Valley Railroad train "telescoped" the rear end of Section Six that led to the loss of life and permanent injury to many at a place in Carbon County known as Mud Run.

A train section is a train consisting of multiple sections for reasons such as an abundance of passengers requiring the use of more than one train. The sections are known as "first section, second section, etc.", for dispatching purposes.

What is "telescoping"? A telescope is made of parts that collapse on each other to make the telescope a condensed unit. In the 19th Century, railroad passenger cars were made of wood and vulnerable to being "telescoped" if hit from behind by a steam engine. The engine would hit the last car of the passenger train and "telescope" it into the car ahead. The second last car of Section Six was the victim of "telescoping".

Author Mary Lydon Simonsen, through in-depth newspaper research, combined all she found that enabled her to document the tragedy that affected many Irish-Americans in the communities of Wilkes-Barre, Scranton, Minooka, now a part of Scranton, and Pleasant Valley, now known as Avoca.

In the late 19th Century, people formed societies that were opposed to the consumption of alcohol. They were known as “Temperance Societies” and were very popular with many. According to the author, based on the words of Fr. Mathew Theobald from Ireland, many Irish people followed and remained true to his words.

Ms. Lydon Simonsen details the words of Fr. Theobald and how Irish immigrants carried his words to their new home in Northeast Pennsylvania. She effectively builds from his words about how the societies were formed and how every year in Northeast Pennsylvania there would be a “convention” or a “gathering” of temperance people in one city. All would come together to support their movement and carry it forward.

The October 1888 gathering, which was arranged by the Total Catholic Abstinence Union, was held at Hazleton where 10,000 people arrived via the Lehigh Valley Railroad. A total of 87 passenger cars were provided by the Lehigh Valley Railroad and the Central Railroad of New Jersey. The passenger cars were divided into eight sections of roughly 10 or so cars each.

The event at Hazleton went well, but as the author describes, some smelled of liquor on the return north. While the observation is a minor footnote, it’s an important footnote; not everyone was in Hazleton for abstinence purposes.

Ms. Lydon-Simonsen states that what is also important are the recollections of those in charge of the train sections and whether or not they did their jobs as expected.

The author shares that Lehigh Valley management issued special orders to crew members, the most important of which was, “to protect your rear”. Lehigh Valley orders were in place and all men were expected to get home safely. Each section of the train ran 10 minutes apart. There was no room for error on the part of anyone.

According to what Ms. Lydon Simonsen found, some Lehigh Valley men did their jobs correctly and some didn’t. For one engineer, it was his first time to be in charge of a passenger train, which may not have been the best decision on the part of Lehigh Valley management. Most of the author’s findings are from newspaper reports. The newspaper reports and reports from the scene don’t necessarily agree.

Many times a story ends with what happened and does not follow through with reports of the aftermath. One example is Lehigh Valley management accusing the Central Railroad of New Jersey of providing inferior passenger equipment.

Author Lydon Simonsen takes us to the courts, the testimony of Lehigh Valley employees, survivors and how at that time, employees often worked with very little

sleep. In the case of the Lehigh Valley men, they had no choice other than to be on the job, well-rested or not.

While a good portion of court testimonies is conflicting at best and based on newspaper reports, Ms. Lydon Simonsen doesn't decide for the reader. She leaves it to the reader to decide who told the truth and who didn't.

For those interested in Northeast Pennsylvania history, railroads, labor laws that did not favor the worker, and a time in our history when some were opposed to the consumption of alcohol, *The Mud Run Train Wreck: A Disaster in the Irish-American Community* is an excellent read.

The Mud Run Train Wreck: A Disaster in the Irish-American Community is available at <http://www.amazon.com/The-Mud-Train-Wreck-Irish-American/dp/0692348085>

Internet Links

Historical Attractions

- [Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority](#)
- [Steamtown National Historic Site](#)
- [Anthracite Museum and Iron Furnaces](#)
- [Electric City Trolley Museum](#)
- [Lackawanna Coal Mine Tour](#)
- G.A.R. Memorial Association Museum: Contact Joseph Long, Jr. 570-457-8438

Cultural Partners

- [Albright Memorial Library](#) and the Lackawanna County Library System
- [The Everhart Museum](#)
- [Scranton Cultural Center](#) at the Masonic Temple
- Scranton's Annual [Civil War Weekend](#) Events
- Scranton Times-Tribune's [Pages from the Past](#)
- [Pocono Arts: Where Culture Builds Community](#)

Anthracite Research

- [Pennsylvania's Northern Anthracite Coal Field](http://www.northernfield.info/) <http://www.northernfield.info/>

Historical Societies

- [Carbondale Historical Society](#)
- [Dunmore Historical Society](#)
- [Luzerne County Historical Society](#)
- [Wayne County Historical Society](#)
- [Susquehanna County Historical Society](#)
- [Monroe County Historical Society](#)
- [Wyoming County Historical Society](#)
- Archbald Historical Society: Contact Ed Casey (570) 614-3628
- Scott Township Historical Society: Contact Robert Vail (570) 254-9536
- Taylor Historical Society: Contact Christine Schaefer (570) 562-1225

County and Educational Partners

- [Lackawanna County](#)
- [Lackawanna County Convention and Visitors Bureau](#)
- [Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit](#)

