



# LHS

## The Lackawanna Historical Society Journal

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## Obadiah Gore and the Anthracite 250th Anniversary

by Sarah Piccini

This year marks the 250th anniversary of the application of anthracite coal as a fuel source. Anthracite is more than just a source of heat; it's an identity. Scott Herring, chair of the Anthracite 250th Anniversary, notes, "Anthracite is the only coal which evolved beyond geology. Here in Northeastern Pennsylvania it became the symbol and identity of a unique and historic region and cultural heritage. We, the people of the Black Diamond, are the only people on Earth to take our cultural name from coal mining, iron making and railroad-ing."

Although reports of "black stones" or "stone coal" appeared in early colonial correspondence, it took some time for settlers to discover a practical way to burn it. Obadiah Gore, a blacksmith living in the Wyoming Valley, is credited as the first to successfully burn anthracite in his forge in 1768. Gore and his brother Daniel spread the word about their discoveries, but others found anthracite too difficult to burn. The

use of anthracite would not become widespread for nearly forty years. In 1808, a prominent Wilkes-Barre businessman named Jesse Fell developed an open-air grate that made igniting anthracite more convenient for household use. Local coal operators Abijah and John Smith capitalized on Fell's discovery to market anthracite coal. The coal boom that would lend its name to the region had begun.

Obadiah Gore is important for his role in the practical application of anthracite, but his identity as a blacksmith is only the beginning of his story. Gore was born in Connecticut in 1744 and married Anna Avery in 1764; the couple had five children. He came to the Wyoming Valley at the age of 24 with his younger

brother Daniel and other members of the Susquehanna Company in 1768. Obadiah and Daniel set up a blacksmith shop for the needs of the settlers, and learned about nearby "black stones" from Indians in the area.



OBADIAH GORE, JR.



*Cont. on pg. 6*

## *A Spectacular Word from the President...*

*Hello Everyone,*

*Welcome to Fall, a favorite time of year for me. The garden is mature and still colorful, and I am sure that the upcoming display of fall foliage will be spectacular as well. Speaking of spectacular, I am reminded of several recent LHS happenings that were just that! Last spring "An Evening of Wine & Whimsy" focused on an LHS member's spectacular collection of antique dollhouses and the Society's 14th annual Civil War Ball hosted many handsome couples in spectacular period costume. Spectacular also describes the reuniting of the portraits of James and Sarah Archbald in May. How nice it is to see these portraits now hanging in the Catlin House, offering visitors an opportunity to see the in-laws of our benefactor George Catlin.*

*To continue, I want to acknowledge the spectacular LHS volunteers who keep so many things happening. Among them are the spectacular tour guides who provided five different walking tours this summer. Thanks also to LHS member Rick Sedlisky for editing our spectacular new digital newsletter, "History Bytes". I want to also point out the spectacular work of our LHS staff who do so many things from daily operations and production of this newsletter to public engagements, programs and exhibits. Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention the spectacular plan for this year's annual dinner marking the 250th anniversary of anthracite! Details can be found on pages 4 & 5. I am sure you will agree that the Society's continuing effort to preserve, interpret and promote our local history in the coming season will be nothing less than SPECTACULAR!*

*Respectfully,  
Michael Gilmartin*

### ***Invite someone you know to join us!***

**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 and the quarterly newsletter. Attached is a membership form you can use to renew your membership or give to a friend or neighbor who is interested in joining. Please return it to:*

*The Lackawanna Historical Society at 232 Monroe Avenue, Scranton, PA 18510*

#### **LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM**

<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$10	NAME	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$35		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$45	ADDRESS	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing	\$75		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining	\$150		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Silver Corporate	\$250	TELEPHONE	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Gold Corporate	\$500	EMAIL	_____

### ***The Lackawanna Historical Society 2018***

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The Lackawanna Historical Society is a 501(C) (3) non-profit organization which is dedicated to keeping vital the history of Lackawanna County. It is supported in part by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the Catlin Memorial Trust, Lackawanna County, and membership dues.

Regular hours are Tuesday through Friday 10 am to 5 pm and Saturdays noon to 3 pm.

The Lackawanna Historical Society Journal is published by the Lackawanna Historical Society, 232 Monroe Avenue, Scranton, PA 18510 Tel. (570) 344-3841. Address questions to lackawannahistory@gmail.com

Members of the Society receive this publication. Membership contributions are \$35 and up for Individuals, \$45 for Families, and \$125 for Organizations. Special Silver and Gold Corporate memberships are available.

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# At the Catlin House...

## Haunted Happenings

The Society will once again provide our "Spooky Strolls" when *Scranton After Dark* haunted walking tours of Downtown Scranton return! These guided walking tours include tales of mayhem and mystery at some of Scranton's favorite locations, like the Scranton Cultural Center and AV Restaurant. The tours will be begin at **6:30 p.m.** at the Catlin House, and tickets are \$10 for members, \$15 for non-members. Tours will be offered on the following **Fridays: September 28, & October 5, 12, 19, 26.** Reservations are required, and can be made by calling the Society at 570-344-3841. Join us to learn more about Scranton's perfidious past!



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

### Individual

Sandy Longo, Clarks Summit

### Family

Cliff & Ruth Melberger, West Pittston

### Contributing

James Clark & Robert Grindle, Clarks Green

## A New Addition



*Eleanor Whitman, UGI retiree and Ann Blaskiewicz, UGI Community Relations Manager, with LHS Curator Ella Rayburn and Assistant Director Sarah Piccini*

The Society recently received a donation from UGI of a cornerstone from the Cliff Street gas-processing plant. The plant was originally built in 1891 by the Scranton Gas & Water Company, founded by Joseph Hand Scranton and later managed by his son W.W. Scranton. Special thanks to Eleanor Whitman, a UGI staffer who was determined to preserve the stone and spearheaded the process to donate this (large, heavy) piece of history! The stone has been placed along the border of the Catlin House, beside the Scranton Steel stone also bearing W.W. Scranton's name.



## A Very Special Thank You

We are grateful to both **The Mulberry Bush** and **The Greenhouse Project at Nay Aug Park** for donating



flowers to spruce up the grounds around the Catlin House, and to Chris Ewasho for her work planting and weeding. Thanks for all you do to help keep the Catlin House beautiful!



## Performance of “Anthracite Fields” will Mark the Anthracite 250th Anniversary

To celebrate the 250th anniversary of anthracite, the Lackawanna Historical Society is planning to present, for the first time in Lackawanna County, a full performance of the 2015 Pulitzer Prize-winning oratorio “Anthracite Fields” at Peoples Security Bank Theater at Lackawanna College on **Saturday, November 10 at 7:30 pm**. The oratorio, composed by Julia Wolfe, draws on oral histories, speeches, geographic descriptions, local rhymes, and a coal advertisement as well as personal interviews Wolfe conducted with former miners and their descendants.

Wolfe will also act as the guest speaker at the Society’s **Annual Dinner on November 8**. We’re excited to offer both as a way to celebrate anthracite heritage.



The performance will be presented by the Bang on a Can All-Stars and choir of Trinity Wall Street, both from the original ensemble who toured with Wolfe when she released the piece. The hour-long concert combines elements of classical and folk music and consists of five movements:

- *Foundation*, honoring those who have died in mining accidents in Pennsylvania from 1869 to 1916
- *Breaker Boys*, a tribute to young boys working in coal breakers, using a cowbell and bicycle pedals to portray the sound of coal falling into the breakers to give the piece a 'rock feel'
- *Speech*, based on a speech by John L. Lewis, who fought for safe working conditions for the miners
- *Flowers*, created and inspired by an interview conducted with Barbara Powell who is the daughter and granddaughter of miners (In an interview, she stated, “We all had gardens” and began listing flower names.)
- *Appliances*, the last movement, using words from a coal-powered railroad ad and focusing on coal as a source to fuel the nation

The program will present Scranton audiences with an opportunity to experience a nationally recognized and awarded oratorio that deals with a local and much discussed topic: the Anthracite Industry. Too often in NEPA, people look back on this history with a negative feeling but by presenting a musical piece that was created out of that same story, local residents can be encouraged to take pride in their past and celebrate our Anthracite legacy.

**For Ticket Information and Sponsorship Opportunities please see next page.**

# LHS Annual Dinner Welcomes Julia Wolfe

Join us for our Annual Dinner  
on **Thursday, November 8 at 6 pm**  
at the Anthracite Center in Carbondale.

We will be celebrating the Anthracite 250th Anniversary and the November 10th Lackawanna County premiere of "Anthracite Fields" with guest speaker Julia Wolfe, the composer. Wolfe will discuss her inspiration for the piece and discuss the reaction of audiences across the country. As always, we will also announce our Volunteer of the Year at the dinner.

Invitations will be mailed soon.  
We look forward to seeing you there!



## ***Anthracite Fields*** **Sponsorship Levels:**

### **Graphite \$500:**

*Patron Listing in program*

### **Lignite \$1500:**

*Business Logo on all printed marketing materials;  
Half page (5" x 3.75") advertisement in program\*;  
Two tickets to dinner & performance*

### **Bituminous \$2500:**

*Business Logo on all printed marketing materials;  
Name & Logo on Program Cover;  
Full page (5" X 8") advertisement in program\*;  
Four tickets to dinner & performance*

### **Anthracite \$5000:**

*Business Logo on all printed marketing materials;  
Name & Logo on Program Cover;  
Full page (5" X 8") advertisement in program\*;  
Eight tickets to dinner & performance;  
Special recognition & display at both events*

## ***Anthracite Fields*** **Reservations:**

Don't want to wait for the invitation?  
LHS is accepting reservations now. Send  
your payment to the Catlin House, using the  
address below and include your meal choice:

- ☐ *Chicken Francaise*
- ☐ *Braised Beef Short Ribs*
- ☐ *Dijon Encrusted Salmon*
- ☐ *Eggplant Parmesan*

**Get  
Tickets  
Now!**

**Dinner & Oratorio: \$75**

**Dinner-Only: \$50**

**Oratorio-Only: \$30**

**Oratorio (Student Discount) : \$20**



Please make payment to:  
**Lackawanna Historical Society**  
232 Monroe Avenue  
Scranton, PA 18510



\*Please email a .jpeg or PDF version of your company logo  
and ad artwork to [lackawannahistory@gmail.org](mailto:lackawannahistory@gmail.org)

**Margaret Briggs  
Foundation**

*Cont. from pg. 1*

Gore, in the words of Horace Hollister, "being withal a hearty and experimenting artisan," succeeded through trial and error to burn the stones in his forge. Obadiah was the first non-native to burn anthracite, and began to spread the practice through the settlement.

However, larger events would intervene. Obadiah Gore, his father, and brothers were prominent members of the Susquehanna Company and active with the Wyoming Committee of Settlers. In 1776, Gore raised a company of 20 men for service in the Continental Army. The company was enlisted in their home state of Connecticut, and Gore received a commission as Lieutenant in the Third Regiment, Connecticut Line from John Hancock. Obadiah's father and five brothers were involved in the Battle of Wyoming; three brothers were killed in action. Obadiah was not in Wyoming at the time of the battle; he was with the army under General Gates at White Plains, New York. He returned to Wyoming as part of his military duty for the winter of 1778-79, and was part of Sullivan's expedition in the summer of 1779. He left military service in 1781.

Obadiah remained in public service. He was appointed Justice of the Peace of Wilkes-Barre in 1782, and Treasurer of the County of Westmoreland. Gore settled in what is now Sheshequin in Bradford County. Gore's house, built in Sheshequin in 1787, was the

first frame house erected there; he also operated the first distillery and store. He resumed work he had begun before the Revolution, surveying land to form Ulster Township. He was also instrumental in settling the boundary disputes that resolved the long-running Pennamite Wars, obtaining a lease from the Seneca and Cayuga tribes for land on the Susquehanna and Tioga rivers in 1787 and acting for the Boundary Commission to set the boundaries of New York and Pennsylvania in 1788. He later served in the Pennsylvania Legislature from 1788 until 1790, when he was appointed a Judge of Common Pleas.

Because of his Revolutionary War service, Gore was a member of the Society of the Cincinnati, founded in 1783 to preserve the ideals and fellowship of officers in the Continental Army and reflect their ethic of selfless service. Fellow members include George Washington, John Paul Jones, Zebulon Butler, Aaron Burr, "Lighthorse" Henry Lee, and the Marquis de Lafayette.

Davis Craft's "History of Bradford County" calls Gore "a man of superior mind and benevolent in the fullest sense of the word," and Mrs. George Perkins noted that Gore was "a man of dignity of character." Obadiah Gore died in Sheshequin in 1821.

*Amazing what a little spark  
of anthracite can ignite!*

## Convention of States

Revolutionary spirit is still alive in the Wyoming Valley! The Convention of States Project, a grassroots organization with no political party affiliation, will host a presentation at the Catlin House on **Sunday, October 14 at 2 pm**. There will be a presentation on Article 5 of the Constitution and a discussion of peaceful application to the government to solve problems of term limits, state sovereignty, and federal debt.



**CONVENTION of STATES**  
A PROJECT OF CITIZENS FOR SELF-GOVERNANCE

Saturday, September 29, 2-5 p.m.  
Weinberg Memorial Library, University of Scranton  
\$25 per person (\$30 for nonmembers)

## Civil War Roundtable Continues



# MEMORIALS

In Memory of Nancy Hiddlestone  
*Robert & Mary Ann Savakinus*

In Memory of Katherine Castelli  
*Robert & Mary Ann Savakinus*

In Memory of Nancy Farkas  
*Michael & Nada Gilmartin*

*Contributions to the Lackawanna Historical Society in the name of individuals are placed in a Memorial Fund and are not used for general operations. To contribute in the name of an individual, please send check payable to the Society with the name and address of person(s) for whom memorial is made. All contributions to the Lackawanna Historical Society are tax deductible to the fullest extent that the law provides.*



## Ongoing projects...

### “But You're Black: The Overlooked Community of Scranton”



Professor Glynis M. Johns, a 24-year-old native Scrantonian, has begun a Local Heritage Initiative to recognize the history of the African-American community in Scranton. She is working to create an archive dedicated to the connection of the

African-American diaspora to Scranton, and nominate historical markers honoring early prominent African-American residents. The archive will become part of the Society's collection housed at the Catlin House, and digitized by the Albright Memorial Library as part of the Lackawanna Valley Digital Archives. The archive will consist of photos, documents, objects, oral histories, maps, census data, newspapers, and any other items that are relevant to African-American heritage in the region. The roots of African-Americans reach back to the 1880s, and Johns' research over the past several years has uncovered black entrepreneurs, intellectuals, businesses, activists, and organizations. Her project will give a voice to a historically marginalized and underrepresented community in Scranton's history.

Glynis Johns is a sociologist who earned her B.A. and M.A. from St. John's University in Queens. Her project is also supported by Scranton City Council, Mayor Courtright, and the Architectural Heritage Association.

### “Labelling Lackawanna: The Stories Behind Lackawanna County Place Names”

Do you know where Big Shiny Mountain is? What about Frogtown, or Sickler's Pond?

This summer, high school senior and LHS volunteer Abby Walsh had the opportunity to complete an internship with the Historical Society, with the help of Publications Committee Chair and Secretary, Bill Conlogue. Her task was to prepare for publication Dr. Willis Conover's book on Lackawanna County



Place-Names. The book represents more than 20 years of work, documenting neighborhoods, towns, and geological features across Lackawanna County. Over the course of the project, Abby learned how to use Microsoft Publisher to format, edit, and add pictures to create a book. She has found the experience to be an excellent one, and although she has completed her required hours, is committed to seeing the project through to the end. Abby is currently in the process of finding and formatting images for the work, and is, with the help of others, designing a front cover. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2018. The finished book will be available through the Lackawanna Historical Society's bookstore. Stay tuned for more information!



# DINE LACKAWANNA



**Want to take a night off from cooking,  
and support the Lackawanna Historical Society?**

*Dine out each month at select restaurants  
and the Society receives a portion of the proceeds!*

## NEXT UP:

*Please note date change for September!*

**September 26: *Dooley's Pub and Eatery***  
120 Oak St, Old Forge, PA 18518 (570) 585-5590

**October 17: *Frank's Place***  
57 Jefferson St., Simpson PA 18407 (570) 282-0159

**November 21: *AV***  
320 Penn Ave, Scranton, PA 18503 (570) 457-5800

*Special thanks to our media sponsor*



*\*Like us on Facebook or check our website for future dates.  
Have a favorite restaurant? Let us know where you'd like to go next!*

## Mark Your Calendars!

### Tours of the Watres Armory are Coming!



The Society is pleased to announce a partnership with Neo-Expressionist artist Hunt Slonem, one of Scranton's newest residents and patron of preservation. Slonem is leasing the Watres Armory, and, in the words of *Architectural Digest*, has created a "colorful castle," a personal

museum of his paintings and collections of antique furniture and other

goods, with bright colors and unique wall treatments.

The Society will be offering tours of the armory quarterly in 2019, beginning **January 6 at 2 pm**. A tour fee of \$20 per person will benefit the Society.

Space is limited and registration is required.

To register, please call 570-344-3841



## Society Happenings...

### “A Scarcity of Caskets:” Spanish Flu in Scranton, 1918

Society Assistant Director Sarah Piccini will present *A Scarcity of Caskets* on **Wednesday, October 24 at 7 pm** to mark the 100th anniversary of the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic and its effects in Scranton. The flu, which killed an estimated 50 million people worldwide, reached Scranton in October 1918, shutting down schools, theaters, and churches. The October 17, 1918 *Scranton Times* clipping to the right offers a glimpse of the flu's toll on local residents. The program will give an overview of the pandemic and focus on the response in Scranton and the surrounding towns.

#### Influenza Deaths

Miss Margaret McDonnell, Elm street, Dunmore.  
Percy Seamans, of Scranton, at Philadelphia.  
Mrs. John M. Wills, formerly Miss Edith E. Klzer, of Scranton, at East Orange, N. J.  
Floyd Oliver, 625 Delaware street, at West Side hospital.  
Walter Williams, 311 Hampton street.  
Joseph M. Driesbaugh, near Dalton.  
Mrs. Walter Pisarski, 305 North Main avenue.  
Mrs. Robert T. Harding, formerly Miss May Reed, of Dunmore, at Coatesville, Pa.  
Joseph Andrews, 814 North Washington avenue.  
Ralph E. Friant, 1737 Madison avenue.  
Private Alex. Hapchak, of Mayfield, at Camp Dix, N. J.

### Route 11 Information Wanted!

The Society was approached by author Mike McCray, who is writing a book about the history of Route 11. McCray has been researching and visiting sites along the 1,800 miles of Route 11, but is looking for historic images and stories to provide context and local color. To help, he has created a survey to help him focus on stories and characteristics that make each location unique. If you have a story to share, please complete the online survey at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Z9THT9D>

## Christmas is Coming to the Catlin House!



Get a jump on your holiday decorating with two maker sessions at the Catlin House: join us on **Sunday, November 25 at noon** for a free Victorian ornament-making workshop led by Arlene O'Malley, or join Easter favorite Tammy Budnovitch for a holiday pysanky workshop on **Sunday, December 9 at 2 p.m.** (The pysanky workshop fee is \$25 to cover supplies.)

Be sure to come see the Catlin House decorated for Christmas at our Members-Only Holiday Open House on **Thursday, December 6 at 7 p.m.** Enjoy food, wine and live music, and the traditional holiday decorations at the Catlin House. We will also elect the Society's Trustee Class of 2021. On **Friday, December 7**, the Catlin House will be open to the public at **7 p.m.** for more Christmas festivities. Wassail and sweet treats, stories and games will be part of this old-fashioned Christmas celebration. We hope to see you there!

*The LHS Holiday Decorators are seeking an interesting holiday-themed collection to display at the Catlin House. If you are interested, please call us at 570-344-3841.*

# We Did It!

## The *Let's Get Wired* Capital Campaign is Closed!!

*On September 8th, the Lackawanna Historical Society received word from the Farkas family that they had established a planned gift by naming the Society as the primary beneficiary in an insurance policy valued at \$30,000. This gift covers the remaining balance of the LHS Capital Campaign to support the recent Electrical and HVAC upgrades at our headquarters, the Catlin House. We are most grateful to Dr. John Farkas and his son John Anthony for their support and will be planning a naming of a Society collection in appreciation for this gift. Details will be announced in the next newsletter.*

Thanks to everyone who has supported this campaign  
including the following recent contributors:

*Michael Bufalino*

*Roy & Vee Pauli*

### -In Appreciation-

Thanks to Meegan Possemato of On&On Marketplace and John Lettieri's Auction & Appraisal for donating the proceeds from the September 8th Charity Auction to the Lackawanna Historical Society. The event, which was held in cooperation with , was part of On&On's 3rd Anniversary celebration and raised slightly less than \$2000 for the LHS. Thanks also to everyone who donated items for the auction and to those who attended and placed bids. It was a great evening and we look forward to working with Meegan and her team again.

## Piano Free to a Good Home

Recently, the LHS Collections Committee determined that the Shoeninger Upright Piano displayed on the first floor of the Catlin House does not contribute to Society's mission and is not part of the museum collection. Therefore, we need to find it a new home. The piano is functional but it does not have a market value so the LHS is offering it free to anyone who wishes. The recipient must move it.

### About the Shoeninger Upright Piano

Size: H: 55", W: 56", D: 26"

Front lifts up exposing the strikers and sounding board. The finish is original.

Two keys do not strike:

- F below middle C
- E flat in a lower register

Labelled *Shoeninger / New York / New Haven*.

Firm established by Bernard Shoninger in 1847

soon after his arrival in Connecticut from Germany.

After his death in 1910, his son and grandson

operated the business. They opened two headquarters in 1926: New York and New Haven.

We place this piano between 1926 and before its arrival at LHS in 1947.



LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
232 MONROE AVENUE  
SCRANTON, PA 18510

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## UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

- WED., SEPT. 26** *DINE LACKAWANNA* at Dooley's Pub in Old Forge (see page 9)
- FRI., SEPT. 28, 6:30 PM** *SCRANTON AFTER DARK* Friday evening walking tours begin! (see page 3)
- SAT., SEPT. 29, 2 PM** *UNCOVERING YOUR ANTHRACITE ANCESTORS* genealogy workshop (see page 7)
- WED., OCT. 17** *DINE LACKAWANNA* at Frank's Place in Simpson (see page 9)
- WED., OCT. 24, 7 PM** *A SCARCITY OF CASKETS*  
1918 Spanish Flu program at the Catlin House (see page 10)
- THURS., NOV. 8, 6 PM** *LHS ANNUAL DINNER* making the 250th Anniversary of Anthracite  
at the Anthracite Center with guest speaker Composer Julia Wolfe (see page 4/5)
- SAT., NOV. 10, 7:30 PM** *ANTHRACITE FIELDS* Oratorio performance at Lackawanna College (see page 4/5)
- WED., NOV. 21** *DINE LACKAWANNA* at AV in Scranton (see page 9)
- SUN., NOV. 25, NOON** *VICTORIAN ORNAMENT-MAKING WORKSHOP* at the Catlin House (see page 10)
- SUN., DEC. 9, NOON** *HOLIDAY PYSANKY WORKSHOP* at the Catlin House (see page 10)
- THURS., DEC. 6, 7 PM** *MEMBERS-ONLY HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE* (see page 10)
- FRI., DEC. 7, 7 PM** *PUBLIC HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE* (see page 10)
- SUN., JAN. 6, 2 PM** *WATRES ARMORY TOUR* (see page 9)

*See page 7 and visit our Facebook page or website for upcoming Civil War Roundtable topics!*  
*Visit [www.lackawannahistory.org](http://www.lackawannahistory.org) and like us on Facebook for up-to-date listings of all activities!*

## Are you receiving History *BYTES*?

Please send your email address to [lackawannahistory@gmail.com](mailto:lackawannahistory@gmail.com) to make sure you are on the list.