



HISTORY BYTES

A Lackawanna Historical Society Publication

Vol. 3 No. 3

May – June 2020

Rick Sedlisky, Editor

Hello LHS Members,

I hope everyone is doing well. I wanted to check in and provide some brief updates about our activities and projects.

We continue to promote our Dine Lackawanna partners and encourage anyone who can to order delivery or takeout to support local businesses. Please see the list of participating restaurants on Page 4.

We are still collecting data about how our community is reacting to the quarantine and as of today have received more than 400 responses. We are also starting to work with a few local partners to determine how best to share this data in the future, possibly a region-wide collaboration with exhibits and publications. More details will be announced as the plan develops. If you are interested in sharing your story, please go to [LHS Covid-19 Archive Data Collection](#) link on our website.

For students working from home and adults who just want to learn more, our [Local History Curriculum](#) is also still available on the website. Plus we have updated the link for all previous LHS newsletters and posted a link for [Newsletter & History Bytes](#) on our homepage. We will also be posting the full schedule of upcoming *Lackawanna Past Times* programs on our website calendar found here: [Click for Calendar of Events!!](#)

Before the shutdown, LHS was also busy working on its Strategic Plan for the next five years. In order to represent you, our members, we have developed a short survey which is found using the [Tell us how we're doing](#) on our website. Please take a moment to share your thoughts.

This week, we created a brand new web page [A Ghostly Gallery: Voices from Across Time](#) which offers users an opportunity to meet some of our county's founders. Please check it out to learn more about the amazing people who contributed so much to our history in a unique and entertaining way.

As you can see we are staying very busy and working hard to keep you engaged and informed. We appreciate your continued interest and support and look forward to the future when we can welcome you back to the Catlin House.

Mary Ann, Sarah and Olivia

lackawannahistory@gmail.com

LHS Zoom Meetings

Lackawanna Past Times Fridays at 2 pm

To request invitation with program link please email lackawannahistory@gmail.com

May 22: Sylvester Poli: A discussion presented by Stephanie Longo

May 29: A History of Wedding Dresses by Maureen Hart

You Live Here, You Should Know This! "Virtual Edition"

The "virtual edition" of the Lackawanna Historical Society's popular local history game show, "You Live Here, You Should Know This!" arrives THIS WEEKEND!!

Our hardworking students from Riverside and Valley View are excited to bring the show right to your homes as many familiar contestants will play for the title of "Local History Legends of Lore".

Teams of two will answer Jeopardy-style questions about Lackawanna County history, from the commonplace to the obscure. Rather than gathering together, this year you can cheer on our teams or play along yourself by going to **YouTube/ECTV**.

The game schedule is as follows:

Friday, May 22 @ 7 pm

Riverside 1 (Denis Yanashot and Paul Brennan) vs **The Scranton Times** (Brian Fulton and Owen Worozbyt)

Friday, May 22 @ 7:45 pm

Albright Library (Martina Soden and Gerard Hetman) vs. the **UpValley** (Bruce Smallacombe and S. Robert Powell)

Saturday, May 23 @ 7 pm

County Fair (Mike Taluto and Matt Pritchky) vs. **Riverside 2** (Joe Moceyunas and Dave Walsh)

Saturday, May 23 @ 7:45 pm

Riverside Wives (Loni Loiselle and Sarah Walsh) vs. **Legislators** (Sen. John Blake and Rep. Bridget Kosierowski)

lackawannahistory@gmail.com

Friday, May 29 @ 7 and 7:45 pm
Semifinal Rounds (teams to be announced)

Saturday, May 30 @ 7 pm
Championship game!

Good luck to all our players. We hope to "see" you on **YouTube/ECTV!**

LHS 2020 Membership Information

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 complete for membership payment if you chose to use it.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSep8tRxXJUut7McTh4g4StczVjC4HRJAXMDE-ztxEDCzLncvA/viewform>

Dine Lackawanna

Numerous restaurants support LHS through participation in Dine Lackawanna. Until we return for an evening out at their establishments, we don't have to miss the aromas and tastes of the cuisine each offers. Give your taste buds a treat by supporting the chefs and staffs through requests for delivery or purchases of gift cards.

lackawannahistory@gmail.com

Abingtons

Clarks Summit

Camelot
Formosa
The New Cafe

The Nyx
State Street Grill

Chinchilla

Armetta's

Upvalley

Carbondale

Kol at Hotel Anthracite

Jermyn

JW's Pub

Eynon

Pasquale's
Tiffany's

Simpson

Frank's Place

Mid Valley

Dickson City

NOSH
Texas Roundhouse

Olyphant

John Pierre's

Jessup

Café Colarusso

Scranton

Ale Mary's
AV Scranton
Back Yard Ale House
Cafe Classico
Carmen's
La Cucina
Mansour's

Market Street Grill
Pizza by Pappas
Posh at the Scranton Club
Sidel's
Stirna's
Terra Preta Prime
Trax

Downvalley

Moosic

Marzoni's

Old Forge

Dooley's

Dunmore/North Pocono

Dunmore

3 Jacks Burgers

Moscow

Van Brunt Grill

Springbrook Twp.

Olde Brook Inn

No Respect



Avondale Mine Site Flagpole and American Flag Remains
Photos courtesy of Steve Kondrad

Earlier in May, Steve Kondrad, president of the Plymouth Historical Society, visited the Avondale Mine Site in Plymouth Twp. to check on lawn conditions. What he found was extremely upsetting to say the least.

A kiosk that contained photographs of the colliery during its operating life and details about the 1869 disaster was broken. The kiosk plexiglass had been smashed. Remains of documents stored inside the kiosk were on the ground, burned. A guest book containing the signatures of more than 600 visitors to the site, a list containing the names of the 110 men and boys who died in the disaster, and two American flags, one of which was still on the flagpole, had also been burned. Steve said, "Someone just lit it up, right on the pole."



Information Kiosk and Destroyed Documents
Photos courtesy of Steve Kondrad

The security camera had been stolen, leaving no indication of who was involved. The act of vandalism received media coverage on WNEP-TV news, as well as in the Times-Leader and Citizens Voice newspapers.

A posting on the Plymouth Historical Society's Facebook page resulted in an outpouring of words of support and offers of assistance, including replacement of the two American flags and repairs. Steve added, "If there's a silver lining in this cloud, it's the overwhelming support we have received."

In an update, Steve said that Terry Ostrowski, CEO of Earth Conservancy, offered to fund a reward up to \$1,000 for information leading to the identification, arrest and conviction of the person / persons involved in the vandalism. The offer was accepted with reward information submitted to local newspapers. Reward posters are also being placed throughout the area. Steve added, "Even if no one responds, the reward shows that we are serious about stopping vandalism at our historic sites."

To offer support and any assistance, please visit the Plymouth Historical Society's Facebook page. To see a report on what happened, please click on the link below.

www.wnep.com/article/news/local/luzerne-county/avondale-mine-disasters-plymouth-historical-society-vandalism/523-7ffd2dc7-e056-45d1-b04f-f9d6b4256782

REWARD

**OF UP TO \$1,000 FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO THE
IDENTIFICATION, ARREST AND**

**CONVICTION OF THE PERSON/PERSONS WHO RECENTLY
VANDALIZED THE**

AVONDALE MINE DISASTER SITE IN PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP

**Vandalism and burning of two American flags most likely took place
on Sunday, May 4, 2020**

Contact the Plymouth Historical Society at

570-779-5840 or on Facebook at

Plymouth Historical Society-Luzerne County

Reward sponsored by Earth Conservancy Inc. and friends of the PHS

lackawannahistory@gmail.com

And Then There Were Two



Delaware River
americanrivers.org

Earlier this year, the Lackawanna River was named 2020 Pennsylvania River of the Year. In April, the Delaware Highlands Conservancy announced that the Delaware River received national recognition as River of the Year by American Rivers, a not-for-profit organization based in Washington, DC.

Just as the Lackawanna experienced decades of abuse by numerous types of polluters, the Delaware, home to one of the largest fresh water ports in the world, was so bad that according the Delaware River Basin Commission, paint on ships' hulls turned brown if docked for a prolonged period. And, similar to the Lackawanna, 75 years ago the Delaware was sewage infested with zones unable to support fish or other aquatic life.

Today, the Delaware River annually contributes billions of dollars to the regional economy through tourism, recreation and clean water supply. It provides drinking water to roughly 15 million people in Northeast Pennsylvania, New York State's Southern Tier, New York City, Philadelphia, Trenton, NJ, and Wilmington, DE.

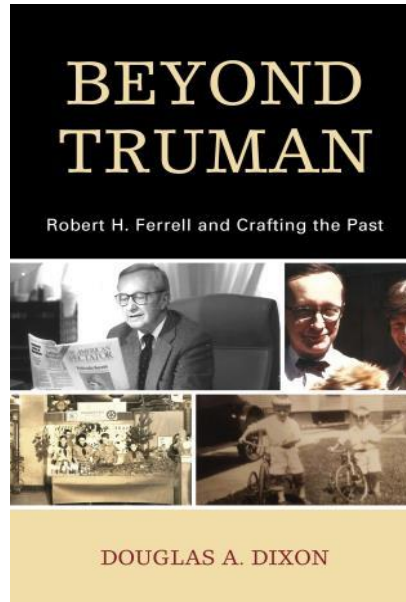
Headquartered in Hawley, PA, the Delaware Highlands Conservancy grew from an all-volunteer group in 1994 to a fully accredited land trust with offices in Pennsylvania and New York. The conservancy's website states its mission as the conservation of forests, farmland, clean waters and wildlife habitat of the Upper Delaware River region.

For information about the Delaware Highlands Conservancy, including news and events, please visit <https://delawarehighlands.org/>



lackawannahistory@gmail.com

Douglas A. Dixon



In the Winter 2000-2001 issue of the Society's quarterly print newsletter, *The Journal*, a segment called, the Volunteer Corner... New Faces at the Catlin House, introduced Douglas A. Dixon to LHS members.

The welcome note said that Doug "provides research services and plans to take a more active role in curriculum development". In the issue he wrote *The Lackawanna Historical Society in the New Millennium: Benefits for Patrons at Home and Abroad*. The piece is a review that serves as a useful and informative guide to the Society's trustees and staff.

A native of Indiana now living in Austin, TX, Doug was an Assistant Professor of Education at the University of Scranton who had recently arrived from New York City where he taught at CUNY-Queens College. He subsequently spent several years at Western Illinois University and received his PhD in Social Science Education (primarily political science) from the University of Georgia. He went on to teach high school Spanish and then U.S. History/Government on the college level in Texas.

Doug currently works as a free-lance writer of books and articles. Two projects in the works are on Midwest golf and machine politics during President Truman's early years.

His latest book is entitled, *Beyond Truman: Robert H. Ferrell and Crafting the Past*, Rowman & Littlefield, publishers. The link below provides a short synopsis, two recommendations by historians from Elizabethtown College (Elizabethtown, PA) and Indiana University (Bloomington, IN), as well as online order information.

<https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781793627810/Beyond-Truman-Robert-H-Ferrell-and-Crafting-the-Past>

lackawannahistory@gmail.com

In The Mines
The Daily Diaries of Thomas J. Goblick
Anthracite Coal Mine Motorman

By Carl Orechovsky

Thomas J. Goblick worked in the mines as a motorman. A motorman operates an electric or battery-powered mine motorcar to haul trips (trains) of cars, loaded with timbers, rails, explosives and other supplies, into a mine.

Mr. Goblick lived in the Austin Heights section of Old Forge. A friend was removing items from Mr. Goblick's house and came upon his work diaries that cover six years, extending from 1938 to 1944. The owner of the house didn't want the diaries.

As one who documents Old Forge history, I accepted the diaries that are smaller sized, spiral bound notebooks. After enlarging the notebooks through scanning, they were re-typed. The correct spellings of names included in the entries can now be confirmed by descendants of the miners who live in Austin Heights.

The enlargements were assembled into standard sized notebooks. The originals and standard sized notebooks were subsequently donated to the Old Forge Historical Society. Most entries pertain to Old Forge and I have permission to share the contents.

Following are Mr. Goblick's entries for October, November and December 1938.

October 1938

The Volpe Coal Co., Sibley Colliery, Old Forge, 1938, Barrier Section.

October 1. No entry, worked 7-hour shift.

October 2. Sunday.

October 3. Francis not in, Leo.

October 4. No entry, worked 7-hour shift.

October 5. Mayes motor broke down.

October 6. No entry, worked 7-hour shift.

October 7. Joker not in. worked a double. 14 hours.

October 8. Hair Cut, worked 7-hour shift.

October 9. Sunday.

October 10. Bill Price off. Joker footman.

October 11 - 14. No entry worked 7 and 8-hour shifts.
October 15. Chicken supper, Julia's, \$.50.
October 16. Sunday, warm day.
October 17. No entry worked 7-hour shift.
October 18. Warm day, shaker off.
October 19. No entry, worked 7-hour shift
October 20. Rain, worked 7-hour shift
October 21. F.T.D. Motor off.
October 22. Francis double. Worked 7-hour shift.
October 23. Sunday.
October 24. Bought hard toe shoes \$3.90. Worked 7 ½-hour shift.
October 25. Squeeze in No 8.
October 26. No 8 day shift. Worked 7-hour shift.
October 27. Strict orders "No overtime".
October 28. No entry worked 7 hrs.
October 29. Mitchell Day. Colliery Idle.
October 30. Sunday.
October 31, Axel broke on engine.

Notes

October 28: Squeeze in No. 8. See *Mining Terms* below for definitions of a squeeze.

October 29: Mitchell Day. John Mitchell joined the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) in 1890 and became the union's president in 1898. In 1900 he began assisting anthracite miners in the Scranton area and brought 48,000 men into the UMWA's anthracite division. He subsequently issued a strike order due to miners earning low wages and working in harsh conditions.

After six weeks, the companies relinquished to union pressure and the strike was settled. October 29 was the day miners returned to work and was declared John Mitchell Day, a day that is still observed in the anthracite region.

November 1938

The Volpe Coal Co., Sibley Colliery, Old Forge, 1938: Barrier Section.

November 1. All Saints Day. Colliery idle.

November 2 Engine broke. No Work.

November 3 - 4. No entry. Worked 7-hour shifts.

November 5. Angelo off. Worked a double shift 14 hours.

November 6. Sunday. Jack put 2 pinion on motor.

November 7. New cable 500 feet. Worked 7-hour shift.

November 8 - 10. No entry Worked 7-hour shifts.

November 11. Armistice Day. Colliery idle.

November 12. Francis off. Smithy Married. Worked 7-hour shift.

November 13. Sunday.

November 14. First snow fell. Worked 7-hour shift.

November 15. Pay Day. Worked a double shift. 14 hours.

November 16. Paul in Lefty's. Payed Rudy \$.50 for Bingo ticket. 7-hours.

November 17. No 8 off. Shrimpe my Brakeman. 7 hours.

November 18. No 5, No 8, day shift. 7 hours.

November 19. No entry. 7 hours.

November 20. Sunday.

November 21. Transferred to Jermyn Barrier. 7 hours (Robbing Barrier between Sibley and Jermyn No 1).

November 22. No entry. 7 hours.

November 23. No 19 miner and laborer laid off. 7 hours.

November 24. Thanksgiving Snowstorm. Colliery idle.

November 25. Heavy Snowstorm. 7 hours.

November 27. Sunday.

November 28. Joe P. shot a buck. Worked in Jokers place. 7 hours.

November 29. No entry. 7 hours.

November 30. Pay Day. 7 hours.

Notes

November 11: Armistice Day. Now known as Veterans Day.

December 1938

The Volpe Coal Co., Sibley Colliery, Old Forge, 1938: Barrier Section.

December 1. Pout off. We moved No. 23 shaker. Mayes shot a button buck.

December 2. Sammers and Angelo went to No. 4.

December 3. Gave a .50 cent donation.

December 4. Sunday.

December 5. Heavy rain.

December 6. Plenty of water in the mines.

December 7. Buddy L Trnak from Sears. (????)

December 8. Rain.

December 9. Joker off. First Car Coal at Russell's.

December 10. Joker off. Nellie in town.

December 11. Sunday. Nell and Helen to the movies.

December 12. To Weinberg's for Boiler. S. Znudlo finger off.

December 13. Boiler in Sections.

December 14. Boiler put up.

December 15. Pipes and radiators put in. Pay Day. Worked 7 hours all last 2 weeks.

December 16. Boiler up Steam Heat in house. .50 cent for cripkle. (????)

December 17. Wolfe busted to Clark. Elliot Gray Killed. No. 2 Shaft.

December 18. Sunday.

December 19 – 20. "44 hour lay must be respected" (Orders December 17, 1938).

December 21. Snow.

December 22 - 23 Cold Days.

December 24. Steve Burner broke ankle by the church.

December 25. Sunday. Christmas Day off.

December 26. Paid Steve Cichy \$1.10. Colliery Idle.

December 27. Pa hurt broken ankle in roof fall.

December 28. Peter off. Worked a double. Joker paid me \$5.46.

December 29. Reel on fire in No. 7 place.

December 30. Joker off. Charlie Mayes working.

December 31: Worked 7 hours.

Notes

December 1: Mayes shot a button buck.

A button buck is a male fawn six months of age or younger. The animal is called a button buck because although his antlers haven't yet grown, two bumps or "buttons" have emerged on top of his head.

Mining Terms

Squeeze: A squeeze, weight or pinching was settling of the strata over a worked out area, resulting in lowering of the roof.

A squeeze also pertains to the Ribs (side walls) which can push out into either the gangway or chamber with explosive force. – Carl Orechovsky



Sibley No. 3 Colliery Out Buildings North Side
Bunnell photos, Steamtown National Historic Site Archives.Group 1
Photo courtesy of Carl Orechovsky

Carl Orechovsky, in addition to being treasurer of the Old Forge Historical Society, scans information for the Society's archives and conducted video interviews for the "Old Forge, Our Town Project".

During the winter season, Mr. Orechovsky works with the No. 9 Coal Mine Tour in Landsford, PA as a track man. Mr. Orechovsky is also the building and grounds manager for the Eagle McClure Hose Co., Old Forge, and is responsible for maintaining the Tri-Boro Soccer Association's playing field.

Buttermilk Falls

In his 1938 diary entries, Thomas Goblick wrote that because the Sibley Colliery was idle on July 4 – 5, he took a trip to Buttermilk Falls. Considering the proximity of Delaware Water Gap, it seemed safe to assume that Mr. Goblick went to Buttermilk Falls in Layton, NJ, located in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.

Subsequent to publication of the entries, in an email, Richard Fitzsimmons offered a different thought. Considering the year was 1938, Prof. Fitzsimmons said, "Given the fact that the coal industry paid low wages to miners, car ownership was limited and major highways were few--with no interstates--I am wondering if Mr. Goblick might not have gone to Buttermilk Falls, located in the village of Falls, Falls Township, Wyoming County, about 12 miles from Old Forge? It was a popular summer recreational spot, serviced by the Lehigh Valley Railroad's passenger service at the nearby Falls railroad station, mid-way between Pittston and Tunkhannock, along the Susquehanna River."



Buttermilk Creek and Falls, Falls. Twp., PA

He added, "Buttermilk Creek is a clear, pure and sparkling stream, and cascades over 4-5 outstanding waterfalls, up to about 35 feet high---"Buttermilk Falls"-- into excellent and safe swimming pools. The falls are surrounded by verdant vegetation and shaded picnic and play sites. As kids in the 1930s through the 1950s, my brothers and I, along with our parents and friends frequented Buttermilk Falls, especially when the Susquehanna River,

where we were fortunate to have a riverfront cottage, was muddied-up for days by heavy summer storms---Buttermilk Creek ran much more clearly in a day, or so, after heavy rainfall, than did the river."

Research of Lehigh Valley Railroad timetables for 1938 available on the Pennsylvania's Northern Anthracite Coal Field website confirmed that the railroad carried passengers along its Susquehanna River route via Falls Twp., northbound to Buffalo with connections to Toronto, Detroit and Chicago. Considering the time period and related factors, Prof. Fitzsimmons' suggestion is much more realistic.

NEPA Basketball History

By William Speare

The rich baseball history in Northeastern Pennsylvania has been well chronicled. The great achievements of past baseball stars from the area like Christy Mathewson, Hughie Jennings, Ed Walsh, Steve O'Neill, and the O'Neill brothers and others are well known to local residents.

Many, however, might not be aware that there is also a rich basketball history in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Much of NEPA's glorious basketball history occurred during the time of the Pennsylvania State League, which was in existence from 1914 until 1921. Several players who ended up in the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts played in this league.

The Pennsylvania State League began play in 1914. According to basketball historian and writer Murray Nelson, the league was founded by coal barons of the anthracite region. The inaugural 1914-15 season of the PSL saw franchises in Pittston, Wilkes-Barre, Hazleton, Freeland, Nanticoke, and Tamaqua. Pittston easily won the first league Championship, with an amazing record of 18 wins against only 2 losses. According to the Pro Basketball Encyclopedia, by mid-season, the Pittston franchise was drawing capacity crowds to its home games at the 2,000 seat Pittston Armory.

For the 1915-16 season the PSL expanded by adding three new teams; Scranton, Carbondale, and Plymouth. Tamaqua was the only franchise from the inaugural season that did not return. The Wilkes-Barre franchise known as the Barons won the second league championship with a record of 29 wins and 13 losses. The Barons played their home games at the Ninth Infantry Regiment Armory which seated 3,000.



Scranton Republican 1916

During the 1916-17 season the Carbondale Pioneers franchise became a dominant team. Carbondale started the season with 27 wins and only 2 losses, and ended up with a 33 and 7 record, and the league championship. The Pioneers played their home games at the Carbondale Armory which seated 2,200. The Freeland team, struggling with only 4 wins against 26 losses, dropped out of the league February, 11, 1917.

By the time the 1917-18 PSL season was set to begin the United States was fully engaged in the Great War. During the era the PSL was in operation with three other similar pro basketball leagues, all located in the northeastern part of the country, were also playing. These other leagues were the Eastern League, New York State League, and Interstate League. The PSL was the only league to make it through the entire 1917-18 season, as the other leagues were depleted due to the draft and war mobilization. One advantage the PSL had over the other leagues was that all teams were joined by trolley service, and were at a relatively close distance to each other which kept expenses down to a manageable level.

The PSL had a split season format for the 1917-18 season, meaning there would be a first-half champion and a second-half champion. The league also added a new team from the Providence section of Scranton. The addition of Providence gave the city of Scranton two franchises in the PSL. Providence played its home games at the Providence Auditorium which seated 1,700 people. The Providence team had an excellent first-half with 19 wins against only 8 losses to capture second-place, but struggled at the box office and dropped out of the league before the start of the second-half. Pittston won the first-half, and went on to defeat second-half champion Hazleton three games to one in a best of five series for the all season championship.

A number of players from the PSL went on to join one of the greatest professional basketball teams that ever played, the New York Celtics. The Celtics became a dominant pro basketball team in the 1920s when they barnstormed the country for most of that period and drew large crowds wherever they played. The Celtics truly gave basketball national attention for the first time. The team often drew record crowds when they played in a new city for the first time. Between 1920 and 1928 the Celtics had a winning percentage over .900; a record which has never been surpassed. Basketball historians consider the Celtics the greatest team to play before WWII. The entire Celtics team was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 1959.

From 1920-21 to 1926-27 at least half the players on the Celtics roster were former PSL players, including Johnny Beckman, Nat Holman, Henry "Dutch" Dehnert, Chris



John Beckman

Leonard, George "Horse" Haggerty, Ernie Reich, Elmer Ripley, Oscar "Swede" Grimstead, and Eddie Burke.

Beckman, Dehnert, and Holman were each inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame as individuals. Beckman had excellent speed and was a great driver to the basket. He was also one of the greatest shooters ever. He led the PSL in scoring during the 1919-20 season, and the next year led the league in scoring by over 100 points.

Sportswriters of the day referred to him as "the Babe Ruth of basketball" because of his

lackawannahistory@gmail.com

great scoring ability. Dehnert excelled at passing, defense, and ball-handling. Dehnert's former teammate George "Horse" Haggerty called him "the best all-around player of all time." He also had a major role in the development of the "give and go pivot play" which the Celtics made almost unstoppable. Holman was a great passer and a very smart player. Former Celtics star and St. John's head coach, Joe Lapchick, described Holman as a great ball-handler who was very fast. Holman would go on to have a great career coaching college basketball at CCNY for 37 years where he retired with a record of 422 wins and 188 losses. Holman was often referred to as "Mr. Basketball."

Two future hall of famers who did not play for the New York Celtics played in Northeastern Pennsylvania during the era of the PSL. The players were Marty Friedman and Barney Sedran who were known as the "Heavenly Twins." Sedran was only five-foot-three inches tall, but was a very smart player and a great ball-handler. He was also an excellent inside and outside shooter. The Pro Basketball Encyclopedia describes Sedran as a player who was always in motion setting up plays that led to baskets. Friedman was a defensive star who redefined the way the guard position was played.

Sedran and Friedman who were long-time friends teamed up to play for Carbondale of the InterCounty League during the 1914-15 season. The InterCounty League was formed the same year as the PSL, but according to the Pro Basketball Encyclopedia, it was considered a minor league. However, with Sedran and Friedman playing, Carbondale won 35 straight games with many wins coming against professional teams in the Eastern League and PSL. This great winning streak ended only when Sedran needed to miss a game to attend his mother's funeral. The Carbondale team went on to defeat PSL champion Pittston in three straight games in a post-season championship at the end of the 1914-15 season.



Marty Friedman

By the time the 1918-19 PSL season was set to begin WWI was over; however, all pro basketball leagues suspended play for the entire season because of the great flu epidemic that hit the U.S. in the fall of 1918.

The PSL resumed play for 1919-20 with only five teams: Scranton, Nanticoke, Pittston, Wilkes-Barre, and Plymouth, and had a split season format like in 1917-18. Scranton won the first-half and Nanticoke the second-half. Nanticoke defeated Scranton three games to one in a best of five series that determined the all-season champion. Nanticoke benefited from having both Beckman and Dehnert on their team. Beckman led the entire PSL in scoring by a large margin, and Dehnert provided great defensive play. The Nanticoke franchise was nicknamed the Nans, and played their home games at Kirmar Park which seated 1,700.



Barney Sedran

The Scranton Miners won the 1920-21 PSL championship with a very powerful team that included future Celtics Holman, Dehnert, Ripley, and Grimstead. Scranton won the second half of a split season, and then easily defeated first-half champion Pittston in two straight games to win a best of three series for the all-season title. The Miners

played their home games at the Scranton Armory in 1915-16 and after at Town Hall.

The Pennsylvania State League folded after the 1920-21 season. A big reason why the league failed was not having players signed to exclusive contracts that committed them to one franchise. The lack of exclusive contracts allowed PSL players to sign-on with teams in the Eastern League, New York State League, or Interstate League. Players could sell their services to the highest bidder every few days. This situation drove the players' salaries much higher than the owners in the leagues could afford without losing money. The fact that all the leagues were closely connected by railroads only re-enforced this situation.

After winning the 1920-21 PSL championship Scranton faced off against Albany, champions of the New York State League, in a best of five series for what was being called the world's championship. Scranton won the fifth and deciding game at home 29 to 19 against an Albany team that featured former Carbondale stars Sedran and Friedman. This was the final game for the PSL.

Ed. Note: NEPA Basketball History by William Speare originally appeared in the Winter 2020 issue of *The Journal*, the LHS quarterly print publication.

Scranton's Unknown Superstar

Hugh Jennings

Major League Player, Manager Member of Baseball's Hall of Fame

By Nicholas Petula

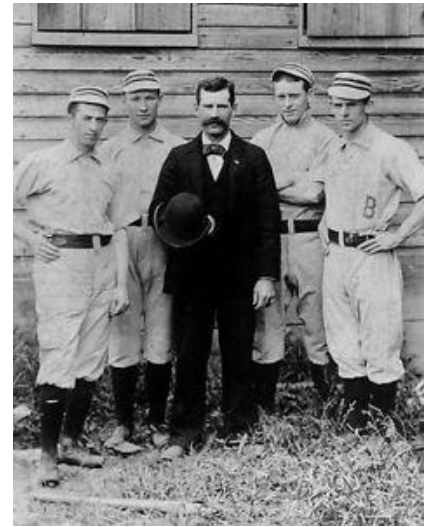


DEAD! Hugh Jennings dies at home after long illness, screamed the headline of the February 1, 1928 edition of the Scranton Times. On that date, Hugh Ambrose Jennings, one of baseball's greatest shortstops at the turn of the century and manager of the Detroit Tigers for fourteen seasons, died quietly at his home at 530 Vine Street in Scranton. At the time of his passing, he was one of the best-loved and well respected figures in major league baseball. He would be elected to Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y. in 1945. Yet today most fans have never heard of him and fewer still could recount his numerous accomplishments.

He was born in Pittston, Pa. in 1869 and soon after moved to Moosic. There he worked as a breaker boy in the mines. Even as a youngster he was renowned for his baseball skills and known throughout the region as a powerful hitter. In the late 1880's he played on many area teams, including one called the Anthracites that drew large crowds from Moosic and neighboring towns. Many of these games featured

Hugh behind the plate and his brother Jimmy as the pitcher. Their skills caught the attention of a professional team at Leighton and in 1890 and both were offered positions on that team. Hugh accepted and was soon playing for \$50 a month, plus board.

In 1891 he joined the Harrisburg team. He was so impressive during an exhibition game with the then major league Louisville Colonels that the big league team purchased him from Harrisburg. In 1892 the American Association joined with the National League and shortly thereafter, Jennings was traded to the Baltimore Orioles. The Orioles team was loaded with talent and included baseball legends John McGraw and "Wee Willie" Keeler (In 1897, Keeler would hit in forty-four straight games setting a record that stood for years). Jennings blossomed in such company and in the next five years in Baltimore, he would never hit under .325 and in 1896 batted .393. He was captain of the team in 1894, 1895 and 1896 and was one of the league's most brilliant fielding shortstops and exciting base runners.



Right photo: Circa. 1894. Orioles, Willie Keeler, Hugh Jennings, John McGraw, Joe Kelley

In 1898, Jennings injured his throwing arm and was traded to Brooklyn where he played first base for the championship teams in 1899 and 1900. In 1901 he became the captain and manager of the Philadelphia Athletics. In 1903 he returned to the Baltimore Orioles as manager, a position he retained until 1906 when he joined the Detroit Tigers. Jennings astounded the baseball world by winning the American League pennant in his first season at the helm. The team repeated as champs in 1908 and 1909, though each time they came up short in the World Series, losing to the Chicago Cubs and the Pittsburgh Pirates.

The star of the Detroit squad was Ty Cobb. Cobb was a feisty individual and often a thorn in the side of management. Because of his extremely independent and aggressive style of play, Cobb had had numerous problems with managers before the arrival of Jennings. Jennings later stated that Cobb needed a great deal of leeway and that the best way to handle him was to let him think he was having his own way. The two men developed a mutual respect for each other and Cobb, upon learning of Jennings' death stated, "Baseball has lost one of its most constructive forces... he introduced a most attractive and wonderful spirit to inspire all the players under him. He was a liberal with me in all my career, never reprimanding me for a play, and goodness knows I deserved plenty of them. It is with the deepest regret that I learn of his passing."

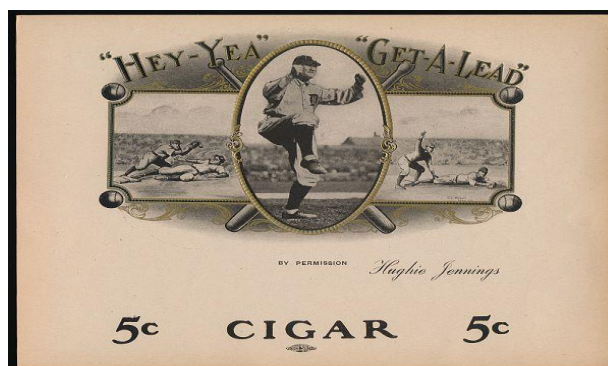
Jennings resigned as manager of the Detroit Tigers on October 15, 1920 to join his old friend John McGraw's New York Giants. McGraw, owner and manager of the club, desired to step down from full time managing and turned to his longtime friend for assistance. Jennings' official title was assistant manager and head coach. His skill and knowledge were considered dominant factors in the Giants' success in the 1921 and

1922 series that resulted in World Series championships over the New York Yankees. The Giants also won pennants in 1923 and 1924, but lost in the Series to the Yankees and the Senators. Coincidentally, the 1924 Senators were coached by Stanley Harris, a resident of Pittston. Soon after the Series ended, a huge welcome home dinner was given in honor of Harris at the Pittston Armory. Harris credited Jennings with helping him break into baseball and achieve success. He often referred to him as “Daddy” Jennings during the course of his talk.

With the Giants, Jennings usually coached third base and was known for his nervous habit of picking and throwing grass while on the baseline. His trademark, however, was his enthusiastic arm waving and yelling, “E-Yah” as his players raced past him on the way to home plate. In his early playing days, he often used this yell when running the bases himself or encouraging his teammates. At the beginning of the 1925 season, McGraw’s illness forced him to step aside and Jennings managed the team for the rest of the season. Not well himself, he guided the team through a season long pennant race with the Pirates that fell short in the last days of the campaign. He returned to Scranton suffering from complete exhaustion and severe case of influenza. He sat out the 1926 season, attending to his business and social commitments in the Electric City.

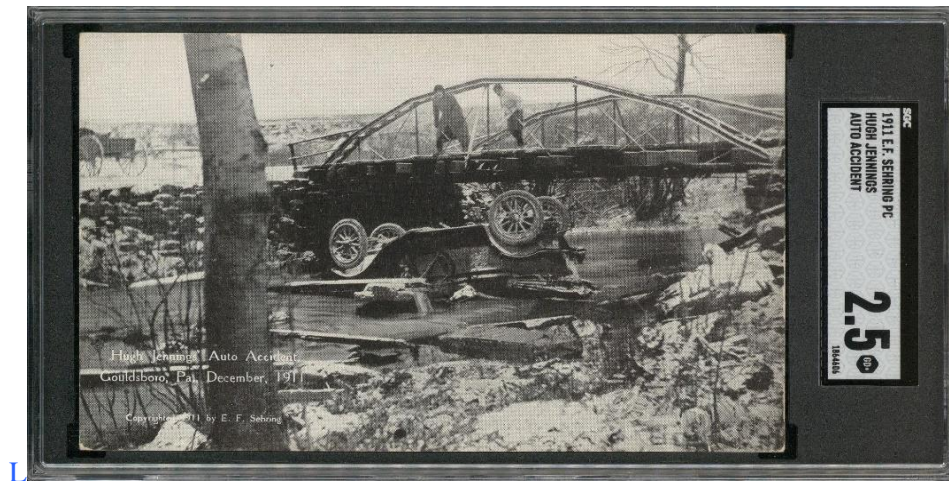
While still playing, Jennings attended college in the offseason, earning a degree from St. Bonaventure and a law degree from Cornell in 1904. He was admitted to the Maryland Bar in 1905 and the Pennsylvania Bar in 1907. He established a law practice with his brother, William, and maintained offices in the Mears Building in downtown Scranton. He was married to Elizabeth Dixon of Scranton who died shortly thereafter. On January 10, 1911, he married Nora O’Boyle of Vine Street in St. Peter’s Cathedral.

At the height of his career, Hugh made several nationwide Vaudeville tours. On one of these tours he appeared in a play called, “The New Mascot” that drew huge crowds to the Poli Theater on Wyoming Ave. A cigar company also named a brand of cigars after him using his portrait on the boxes and the labels. They are very valuable collectors’ items today. He also appeared on a variety of tobacco product baseball cards, including one with Ty Cobb that is valued at hundreds of dollars.



Circa. 1910 Hugh Jennings Cigar Box Label
Love of the Game Auctions

Another odd collectible associate with Jennings is a 1911 picture postcard of an auto accident. On December 11 that year, Jennings and Reverend John P. J. Lynott were driving near Gouldsboro when their car skidded on a bridge and plunged into a creek. Hugh was seriously injured and for a time his recovery was doubtful. An enterprising photographer took a photo at the scene, which was made into a postcard that was widely distributed throughout the county.



Goldin Auctions

At the time of his death, Jennings was a member of the Lackawanna County Bar Association, a director of the Traders National Bank, the Scranton Elks, the Knights of Columbus, the Kiwanis and Equity Clubs and the Fox Hill Country Club. The funeral was held on Friday, February 3, 1928, in St. Peter's Cathedral, with many of baseball's notables in attendance. Burial was in St. Catherine's Cemetery in Moscow.

The Scranton Times reported that Hugh Jennings had died with a "prayer for clean sport on his lips". According to Dr. Martin T. O'Malley, the attending physician, Hugh's last words were, "I owe baseball more than the game owes me; keep it clean and honest."



thehallball.sportspalooza.com

lackawannahistory@gmail.com

Scranton Baseball Early Days

May 6, 1865- "Wyoming Baseball Club of Scranton" organized.

First Game- September 1, 1865

July 11, 1866- Name changed to Scranton Baseball Club

New playing field on the banks of the Lackawanna River; later moved to

Tripp's Race Course for games

By late 1860's, team was very successful; strictly amateur basis

1875- Team began hiring "professional" players

1876-86- Lean years for professional baseball in Scranton

1886- : "Real" professional baseball in the city.

Scranton plays in Pennsylvania State League

1880's-90's- 1894- First class ballpark constructed along Providence Rd.

"Athletic Park" would be used after baseball by various groups

1906- Scranton (now named The Miners) captures the 1st league pennant after 40 years of organized play. Off and on success through the WWI years under the ownership of Ed Coleman

Glory Days 1923-53

1920's - 30's- The Miners drew well

1935- N.Y. – Penn League formed; became a Class A league

1938- Name of league changed to the Eastern League

1939- Scranton Miners affiliate with the Boston Red Sox

Begin many promotions, "Nationality Night", "Booster Night", "Polish Night", etc. A

Banner year for attendance (317,249 paying customers)

Scranton wins championship

1940- 1st class "Scranton Stadium" opens off Monroe Ave. in Dunmore (seats 13,500);

Opening day attracts 17,500 paying customers

Scranton team overpowers other teams; wins championship. Team includes many future major league players: M. McDermott, Mel Parnell, Sam Mele, etc.

1948- Banner year. Boston team, including Ted Williams, Dom DiMaggio, Bobby Doerr, play exhibition game against Scranton team that includes 18-year old Jimmy Pearsol. Boston team stays at Hotel Casey

Last season of good attendance' slow decline begins

1951- Boston Red Sox end affiliation with Scranton

1952- St. Louis Browns affiliate with Scranton; club struggles all season

lackawannahistory@gmail.com

1953- Scranton team plays to almost empty stands. After 80 years, Scranton professional baseball ends
Scranton Stadium sold, dismantled, moved to Richmond, Va.

Scranton-related Notables

Christy Mathewson
Hugh Jennings
“Honest” Eddie Murphy

O’Neill Brothers
Joe Collins
Jimmy Pearsol



Babe Ruth
Getty Images

Babe Ruth played exhibition games at Athletic Field with Lou Gehrig and other Yankee stars. Frequent visitor to Scranton for business and “pleasure”

Nicholas E. Petula was born and raised Scranton’s Park Place in the city’s Providence section. He taught history for 35 years at West Scranton High School and has written several books on Scranton including: *Brewed In Scranton: A History of the Brewing Industry in Scranton, PA; A History of Scranton Baseball, 1865-1953; Pioneer Neighborhood, A History of Park Place and Bull’s Head and Scranton Once Upon A Time; Forgotten Hero: The Life, Letters & Diaries of Lt. Ezra S. Griffin.*

Clambakes: A Summer Tradition Up and Down the Line

Clambakes have long been a summer tradition in many parts of North America where people add a local touch to the annual gatherings that take place along beaches, in parks, at lakes, picnic groves, and in backyards.

We recently asked two History Bytes contributing authors their thoughts about clambakes that took place (and still do) “up and down the line”.

Torry Watkins and Bob Wolensky share their thoughts about the summer gastronomic festivities known as clambakes.

From Up the Line

By Torry Watkins

Many thanks for the nostalgia-producing query re: clambakes. Boy, do I remember a few! And before I weigh in, does anyone remember the good old Rogers and Hammerstein song from "Carousel", "This Was A Real Nice Clambake"?

Yes, in general clambakes had a fairly standard format, and yes, they were more like picnics. In my day in NEPA clambakes were a very big deal indeed. They received advance publicity in the papers, and were sometimes visited by a reporter and photographer from the paper. And they were occasions for politicians to strut their stuff as well.

The NEPA area was dotted with things called picnic groves, usually owned by a farmer or similar landholder, and they were rented by the day for clambakes, picnics, and similar outings. Organizations that held clambakes were typically fraternal societies and lodges, veterans' organizations, and some churches (although certain clambakes were associated with rowdiness, so not very many churches dabbled).

Oftentimes, companies held their annual employee picnics in the form of a clambake. Some clambakes were for members and their families only, and some sold tickets and invited the general public. Some were stag affairs, some were for the entire family, but in response to your question, I don't recall affairs that were for women only.

You mention bars: some bars sold clams on certain days of the week, and some featured them as a regular menu item. Some still do. But those bars aren't as easy to find as they once were. A few bars would close for a day every summer and hold a clambake for their regulars at some grove out in the country. Clambakes nearly always involved sports and games, softball in particular in addition to the usual girls' and boys' games. There may have been such a thing as a "dry" clambake, but I never heard of such a thing. Kegs and bottles were a standard feature of the traditional clambake.

Clams were steamed in one of two ways. They were wrapped in wet burlap along with everything else that was being steamed (sweet corn, mussels, shrimp and lobsters for the rich, oysters) and placed over a wood or charcoal grill; or they were steamed in a large double boiler that was perforated at the bottom to allow the wonderful clam juice to drain back into the boiling water. There was a faucet on the lower vessel to drain off the broth for drinking. It was absolutely delicious (Judy and I have had a steamer for about 57 years. It's about the size of 1.5 5 gallon buckets). For consumption, seafood was typically dipped in melted butter, although I suppose any kind of sauce was available.

I have to stop now. My shirt front is getting soaked just thinking about all that deliciousness. Hope this was helpful.

From Down the Line

By Bob Wolensky

Torry did a great job describing many of the local customs surrounding the tradition, and I concur fully with his remarks

I well recall going to clambakes as a younger adult, which were usually held on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon and were really picnics (or "pitniks" as we say in NePa!). Of course, there was always plenty of clams as well as other foods such as potato salad, coleslaw, baked beans, and corn on the cob. Some events would serve hot dogs and even ethnic-related foods such as sausage and peppers.

The preferred "condiments" were always butter, as Torry described, and also lots of beer! Games followed the first feeding, to be then followed by more clams and beer.

However, "clambake" really became a generic term after a while. In fact, I recall one "clambake" that didn't have clams at all--it was just a picnic catered by a local Polish family's food service and it included pierogis, pigs-in-the blanket, potato pancakes, and even ziti, as I recall. In this case the term became a generic for a summer picnic. Of course, it was a "guys only" affair. However, I recall another one before I was married when a number of us took our girlfriends (in my case it was my wife-to-be). In Swoyersville, it was the bars that had the clambakes.

Here is a good case study: When I participated in the dart league at Alba's bar in Swoyersville in 1982 and again in 2002, every shooter contributed a dollar per week to the "clambake fund." We played once a week on a Tuesday or a Wednesday evening. Then, after we had gone through the two halves of the league's schedule (fall and spring), we'd look forward to the summer clambake at a local grove. Of course, it was "free" because of the large fund that we had built up.

One of the biggest and grandest clambakes in NePa was the annual affair convened by John Kehoe, the coal operator and political boss of Pittston. A legal pauper, the millionaire Kehoe had a mansion on the Susquehanna at Harding and his annual affair (which featured clams but also steaks, lobster, etc., from what I've heard) was one of the biggest events of the year. Anybody who was anybody was there--and if you weren't invited, you were considered nobody! I never attended, but I've heard many stories about it. It had major political overtones because the area's main politicians would be there.

Also, Swoyersville High School had an annual "all-class reunion" that was referred to as a clambake. Again, this reinforces the generic idea of the term. The person who convened the event at his Harvey's Lake home died, so they haven't done it for the last 5-6 years. So the term was still in use in this case.

One more point: NePa was always blessed by an abundance of East Coast seafood, particularly clams and lobster. Bars throughout the Wyoming Valley still serve these two treats; for example, Dukies in Wilkes-Barre (one of my regular places) has a Tuesday night lobster special and a Wednesday night clam special--and they pack people in. Dukies has had this tradition for over 50 years--and it was always a working-class establishment, which means that working class members were the ones mainly involved with clambakes and related culinary traditions.

I hope this helps. It does indeed bring back fond memories of good times and good food. Now I'm hungry for seafood. . . .



quoteswishesmsg.com

Subscribe to History Bytes

A subscription to History Bytes is free. If you would like to receive future issues of our bi-monthly e-newsletter in your inbox, please contact the Lackawanna Historical Society at lackawannahistory@gmail.com and place History Bytes in the subject matter.

Share Your NEPA Stories with History Bytes

If you have any Northeast Pennsylvania-related stories to include in History Bytes, please contact the Society at the above email address. Please include your name, email address and a brief description of your story.

lackawannahistory@gmail.com

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/](#)

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](#)

The Lackawanna Historical Society 2020

Officers

Michael Gilmartin, President
Donald Frederickson, Jr., Esq., 1st Vice President/Solicitor
Laurie Cadden, 2nd Vice President
Douglas Forrer, CPA, Treasurer
Dalida Walton, Assistant Treasurer
William Cologue, Secretary

Trustees

Joseph F. Cimini, Esq.	Mary Jane Memolo
Thomas J. Cipriano	Leni Plasky
John A. Farkas, PhD	Christine Posly
Elizabeth Boeth	Ella S. Rayburn
Jeffrey R. Kiefer, Assoc. AIA	William J. Rinaldi, Esq.
Richard Leonori, AIA	Elaine Shepard
Linda Lynett	Trustee Emeritus: Richard Bovard

Staff

Mary Ann Moran Savakinus, Executive Director
Sarah Piccini, Assistant Director Olivia Bernardi, Creative Director
James and Gay Clifford, Caretakers

Business Hours

Tuesday – Friday, 10am – 5pm Saturday, 12pm – 3pm
Address: The Catlin House, 232 Monroe Ave., Scranton, PA 18510
Phone: 570-344-3841 e-mail: lackawannahistory@gmail.com

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

lackawannahistory@gmail.com