

HISTORY BYTES

A Lackawanna Historical Society Publication

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Rick Sedlisky, Editor



**Merry Christmas
circa. 1930s**

lackawannahistory@gmail.com

“Historical” Holiday Happenings

Saturday and Sunday, December 4 & 5, 11am – 1pm: Holiday Emporium Marketplace. The Holiday Emporium Marketplace returns this year in partnership with “Christmas at the Circle” at the Circle Drive-In. The Circle will have fresh-cut Christmas trees available, so stop by for one-stop holiday shopping.



Image source: clipart.me

Local authors Barbara Taylor, Joe Klapatch, Nick Petula, Tony Bernardi, Gary Ryman, Jay Luke, Philip Mosley, Tara Lynn Marta and Beatriz Rivera-Barnes will be on hand with copies of their books; pick up art prints from Austin Burke, local history documentaries from Bob Savakinus, handmade items from Juliana Piccini (December 4 only) or make your own ornaments with Arlene O'Malley. Sunday will also include Flea Fair vendors.

Thursday, December 16, 5pm – 6pm: Downtown Scranton Horse Drawn Wagon Tours. We will team up with Brookvalley Farms to offer horse-drawn wagon tours of Downtown Scranton. The tours offer a chance to see holiday decorations at night and learn about Scranton's architecture as well as historical details about holiday traditions and Christmases past in Scranton. Holiday refreshments will be offered. Tickets are \$25 per person. Space is limited to 12 people per tour. For reservations, please call the Society at 570-344-3841.

If you're looking for holiday gift ideas for the local historian in your family, visit our bookstore at the Catlin House. The house is open Tuesday through Friday, 11am - 5pm. For more information, contact the Society at 570-344-3841 or by email at lackawannahistory@gmail.com.

Rather stay home? If so, check out LHS Annual Dinners Retrospective! Since we did not have an annual dinner this year, we thought it would be fun to revisit some of our favorites. Go to <http://www.lackawannahistory.org/AnnualDinner2021.html> to watch videos of five of our favorites.

Mayors Turned Maestros: Don't miss the NEPA Philharmonic Holiday concerts and a special addition. The mayors of Scranton and Wilkes Barre will conduct one song during the concert in their respective cities. Mayor Paige Cagnetti conducts on **Friday, December 10 at 7pm** at the Scranton Cultural Center. Go to nepaphil.org for details.



Image source: gallery.yopriceville.com

Ride the Rails to mark the 80th Anniversary of Pearl Harbor: Cece Otto was the LHS Annual Dinner presenter in 2019 for the program "Singing for Suffrage". She will return to NEPA on **December 7**, this time to Honesdale to help mark the 80th anniversary of Pearl Harbor as one of the performers on a special Stourbridge Train excursion. The program begins at the Honesdale Station **at 11am** with WWII reenactors, living historians portraying "General MacArthur and General Lemnitzer", and 1940s songs by Cece. There will be a special tour of Presidential Car #97 used by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt while he was in office.

Visit www.thestourbridgeline.net or call 570-470-2697 for tickets and more information. Tickets to ride the train are \$20.00 for adults and \$10.00 for children under age 12. Veterans and active-duty service personnel ride for free.



clipart.library.com

***Lackawanna Valley:
It's Always Good to Look Around
By Joseph M. Klapatch***

It's always good to look around. It has been about a year since the Carbondale Public Library and the Carbondale Historical Society had microfilm holdings added to Newspapers.com. The collection dates to the 1820s, a time when Carbondale was much larger than Scranton and many other Pennsylvania communities. Those newspapers give us a unique peek into the past.

lackawannahistory@gmail.com

Recently, while doing some research for the Jermyn Historical Society, I happened upon "a goldmine of information", after looking around. I was searching for older articles on Jermyn and remembered that I needed to look under the borough's previous names of Gibsonburg and Baconville.

In doing that, I found the fourth of a five-part installment of a descriptive tour of the area around the Lackawanna River in 1839 and 1840. I searched out the other four parts in the issues of the Carbondale Journal and contacted Rick, advising that this would be interesting to share with the readers of this publication.

In this issue and continuing in the next, join Rick and me as we turn back time, travel on a raft with the author, who was only known as "J", and continue our trip up the Lackawanna River from where it meets the Susquehanna to Ragged Island, or Carbondale and take a look around.

Ed. Note: The article has been transcribed to appear as it did in the Carbondale Journal approximately 180 years ago. The reader will notice spellings (a few may be typos), words not capitalized, sentence structure, and punctuation that look incorrect, but were acceptable when the article was written.

For the Carbondale Journal

Lackawanna Valley—No. IV.

Our present inquiries will be confined to that part of the Valley, between Watres's Mills and the "ragged Islands," three miles below the village of Carbondale. This section lies within Blakely, a name given to this township in honor of the memory of Captain Johnston Blakely, who commanded the United States Sloop of War, *Wasp*, and who signalized himself in an engagement with the British Sloop of War, *Avon*.

As Anthracite is the great staple and attraction in the Lackawanna Valley, we will give it our first attention. And here again, as if prodigal of her gifts to this favored region, Nature bestowed that valuable mineral in wanton profusion; and wherever search has been made, Coal has been discovered in great abundance and of characteristic purity. It is proper however to remark, that is the opinion of some gentlemen, conversant with Coal formations; that there is a slight rupture in the Coal strata, denominated by miners, a *fault*, somewhere in the middle of this section.

This may be true as it regards a short space; but we are inclined more to the belief, that the opinion has been formed on such casual observation, without actual experience, as not to entitle it to full credit. We cannot see any good reason for this opinion. The river here flows near the hills upon the East of the Valley; the superincumbent earth and rock are there; it cannot therefore been denuded or washed away by flood—and we should not be surprised, if upon of a thorough examination, so far from being a dearth of Coal at this particular spot; it should prove to contain the whole mine strata found in the most favored portion of the Valley; but upon this point we give no opinion.

Iron Ore likely exists here, but of what quantity the slight searches that have been made, do not enable us to determine, but in all probability, ere the time shall arrive, for embarking profitability on the business, it may develop itself in great abundance.

Lumber hitherto has so far been the only article of export from this section of the Valley. That article here has been manufactured in vast quantities and hauled to Carbondale, where it is put on board the Company's cars and carried to Honesdale, a distance of 16 miles where whence it is either sent to the New-York Market by the Delaware & Hudson Canal, or, to Philadelphia via the Lackawaxen or Delaware Rivers,—There is still in this part of the Valley an immense quantity of valuable timber consisting of white and yellow Pine, Cherry, Poplar, or white wood, Beech, Maple, Oak, Ash, Hickory, Chestnut and Hemlock; all commanding a price in market, and particularly valuable in a market such as this, for building purposes—for construction of Railroad—Cars, machinery, &c.

Within the space embraced in this article, besides several mills designed for a small business, there are two extensive lumbering establishments. The first belonging to J. & C. W. Benjamin, of Carbondale, is 2 miles above the Mt. Vernon Mills and 6 miles below the village of Carbondale, propelled by the waters of the Lackawanna. The Messrs. Benjamin use Hotchkiss's Cast Iron Water Wheel, which enables them to run their mill constantly and to manufacture a million and a-half feet of lumber annually.

This lumber at Carbondale costs them about 8 dollars, including the cost of timber—it then costs them about three dollars per thousand to get it to market, where the average price is sixteen dollars per thousand. Taking then one million as the average quantity manufactured annually at their mill, the yearly profits at the establishment are five thousand dollars. We are thus particular, to only show the capacity of the water power upon the Lackawanna and facilities for enterprise.

The other belongs to Captain Daniel Bacon, a gentleman of extraordinary enterprise and a practical lumberman. This mill, also upon the Lackawanna, is situated at the upper forks of the Carbondale and Blakely turnpike and the township road we have before mentioned, as following the river. Baconville, also at this point, is a small village, consisting chiefly of the Captain's residence and of those in his employ, and is five miles below Carbondale and two below MEREDITH COTTAGE. It contains a school-house, the only public edifice which answers also as a place of worship. The Captain, or Pa Bill, as he is familiarly called, from his uniform hospitality; does not approve of driving his business by *steam*, his villa is not therefore disfigured by the sign of a grogshop, of if it more agreeable, *a house of public entertainment*.

This is one of the most extensive lumbering establishments along the River; there are two mills rigged with the Hotchkiss Cast Iron Water Wheels. The pond is formed by damming the River at a narrow point, the bed of the stream expanding immediately above it, forming a beautiful and capacious basin covering several acres, into which logs may be cast to almost any amount, and thence by machinery, drawn with great facility upon the carriage ways ready for the saws. Capt. Bacon has manufactured and sent to market many millions of feet of excellent lumber from this establishment and is still prosecuting the business with his wonted energy and skill; and if we do not very much miscalculate, he will realize from it, a handsome fortune.

Let it be known also, that while lumbermen in this Valley, more than quadruple cost of their lands by the profits on their lumber; they still have valuable Coal mines beneath the surface, which as soon as a market is open, will yield them a handsome revenue. And this is not all. —The surface of the ground with beautiful cultivations produces excellent crops of grain and grass.

From Baconville there is a road leading across the mountain to the Wilkesbarre and Clifford turnpike in Greenfield and thence to the Philadelphia and Great Bend turnpike at Abington 4 Corners. —The Ragged Islands are a short distance above Bacons mills and consist of numerous small Islands formed by the River at this place and forcing itself through the flat by a great number of different channels.—This section generally is not so thickly settled as elsewhere.

Below the hill, over which the turnpike passes, it is fast becoming settled and cleared up, by a hardy and industrious population of Welchmen; most of whom have been and some still are in the employ of the Delaware & Hudson Canal Co. as miners. As soon as they are able to lay aside money enough from their earnings, to pay for a piece of land, they immediately invest; build a snug house and put their families into it. Their wives, daughters, and sons assist in clearing up and cultivating the soil; while they continue to labor in the mines at Carbondale for the purpose of enabling them to purchase more land.

In this manner some of them have become possessed of several hundred acres of land containing a valuable Coal bed, which with their industry and prudent habits, will doubtless someday or other give a rank—and stand in the land of their adoption, as proud and far more desirable than any of their oppressors in the old world. These people make valuable citizens and true republicans. They never shrink from toil, nor are they afraid of a ragged country. They seek at once to bestow upon their children, generally numerous, the blessings of education which in a great measure they have been themselves deprived. —Hence school-houses are erected in their neighborhoods, and schools frequently better sustained than among our native-born citizens. Their preachers are, and among themselves. They toil hard during the week and preach, generally to full congregations on Sunday. We have sometimes attended their meetings, chiefly to their singing, which is charming. Their service is in the Welch tongue, and not being acquainted with the language, of course it is “all Greek: to us.

In our next paper on this subject, we shall give a view so much of the Valley so far as lies between the Ragged Islands and the turnpike bridge a mile below the village of Carbondale, the termination of a late survey of the Valley, made by Mr. Morgan under the Canal Commissioners—pursuant to a resolution passed by the Legislature at its last session.

LHS 2022 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.

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

LHS Zoom Meetings

Lackawanna Past Times, Fridays at 2 pm

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

January 28, 2022, 2pm: Scranton Lace

To view past programs, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/user/lackawannahistory/videos>

Ghostly Gallery Link:

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

Dine Lackawanna

Numerous restaurants support LHS through participation in Dine Lackawanna. Have an evening away from the kitchen and help support these establishments and LHS.

January 19: Stirna's, 120 West Market St., Scranton. 570-343-5742

lackawannahistory@gmail.com

Abingtons

Clarks Summit

Camelot The New Cafe
Formosa State Street Grill

Chinchilla

Armetta's Restaurant & Pizza

Upvalley

Carbondale

KOL Steakhouse
Pat's Pizza & Hoagies

Jermyn

JW's Bar & Gtill

Eynon

Pasquale's Pizzeria and Family Restaurant
Tiffany's Tap & Grill

Simpson

Frank's Place

Mid Valley

Dickson City

Texas Roundhouse
Colarusso's Coal Fired Pizza

Jessup

Café Colarusso

Scranton

Ale Mary's at the Bittenbender
AV Scranton
Back Yard Ale House
Cafe Classico
Carmen's 2.0 Restaurant
Mansour's Market Café & Eatery
POSH at the Scranton Club

Market Street Bar & Grill
Pizza by Pappas
Sidel's Restaurant
Stirna's Restaueant
La Cucina
Villa Maria Lola's Cabana

Downvalley

Old Forge

Dooley's Pub & Eatery

Dunmore/North Pocono

Dunmore

3 Jacks Burgers

Springbrook Twp.

Olde Brook Inn

Genealogy Forum

Local genealogists are invited to share ideas, research tips, and local resources. To register, please email lackawannahistory@gmail.com or call 570-344-3841. New meeting dates will be released in January 2022.

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Frank O'Brien
The Final Days of a Life Well-Lived
By Monica Tapper



Frank O'Brien

Portrait courtesy of Monica Tapper

In the first three installments of Frank O'Brien's life, we saw a man who never slowed down. He had been on the move since 1848, when the four-year-old boy and his family emigrated to America to escape the Irish Potato Famine. Among his many accomplishments, Frank worked as a fresco painter, newspaper owner and editor, opera house owner, and father of four daughters. He was also a "daredevil" Confederate soldier and hero of the 1873 cholera epidemic in Birmingham, Alabama. But Frank was not done yet. After all his other accomplishments, Frank entered politics.

Frank was elected to the Alabama House of Representatives in 1892, where he served two terms. He also served as town alderman and sheriff, but by far his biggest political achievement came in 1909, when he was elected mayor. Frank was by no means the first mayor of Birmingham, but in early 1910, large areas of land were annexed to the city, which made him the first mayor of "Greater" Birmingham, the way the city looks today. This year of 1910 would test Frank's resilience and seemingly boundless energy. The man who had witnessed epidemics on two continents, the starvation of his own countrymen, the bloody carnage of countless battlefields, and his own brushes with death both from wounds in battle and from infectious disease, had finally met his match: civil service.

As the first mayor of Greater Birmingham, Frank had his hands full. The population almost doubled when the new territory was added, and in the early part of 1910, Birmingham was struck with a number of smallpox cases. With so many residents, the city could have found itself in crisis before it even found its footing. However, at the

beginning of March 1910, Mayor Frank O'Brien encouraged all citizens to get vaccinated against smallpox within nine days to prevent an epidemic. Within two weeks the city vaccinated 40,000 citizens, effectively putting an end to the problem. By the end of April, there were only twelve cases left and life was back to normal.

In addition to preventing a smallpox epidemic, Mayor O'Brien approached governing the city like he approached everything else: he got a lot done in a short amount of time. He joined the newly established Sanitary Officers Institute, which was to meet once a month to discuss any health conditions affecting the expanded population. He passed laws prohibiting large animals from roaming about the city, which meant no more horses or cows wandering down main street. Funds for paved roads and railroads were badly needed, and on April 9, 1910, Frank issued a request for \$400,000 in bonds for infrastructure. A vote was held on April 12, and Mayor O'Brien visited every polling place in the city. He won by a landslide. Everything seemed to be going Frank's way.

In addition to all his work as mayor, Frank remained an active member of the community. He was still a member of the Elks Association, a charter member of the new Oratorio Society, and attended the annual dinner for the True Blues, his Confederate Veterans group. He also gave a speech at the St. Patrick's Day Celebration given by the Ancient Order of Hibernians, another group with which he was actively involved. Although he had not actually served a full term as Mayor of Birmingham, a new election was to be held, which would include all the new citizens added to Birmingham from the annexation of new territory. Frank was expected to win the election, even though there were some quarters in the new part of the city who raised opposition to him. It's unlikely this small group of opposition led to what happened next, but it probably did not help.

On May 4, 1910, Frank O'Brien announced he would not run for a new term as mayor. Perhaps it was a lifetime of achievement or the stress of the previous few months, but whatever the reason, the man with boundless energy could no longer sleep. He checked himself into a hospital in Pass Christian, Mississippi for two weeks to recover. He returned to Birmingham improved, but he was still not back to his old self, and still not inclined to rerun for office. Frank declared, "It is better to be a live private citizen than a dead mayor." Frank was not going to surrender – if the first treatment in Mississippi did not work, he would try other remedies. In June, he left office for a week for electric shock therapy. Shortly afterwards, on July 7, Frank left City Hall and never returned. On August 13 he checked into Burn Brae Sanitarium in Clifton Heights, near Philadelphia. This was just two hours away from his childhood home in Scranton.



Image source: Wikipedia

Burn-Brae Sanitarium was established in 1859 by Dr. Robert Given, who was in charge until his death in 1888. The asylum was advertised as, "a private hospital for mental and nervous disease." Mental illness was definitely not an acceptable problem for a mayor

to have in 1910, but Dr. Given and Frank had been similar men, which is probably why Frank agreed to check himself into a sanitarium. Dr. Given was also an Irish immigrant, and a progressive man for the era.

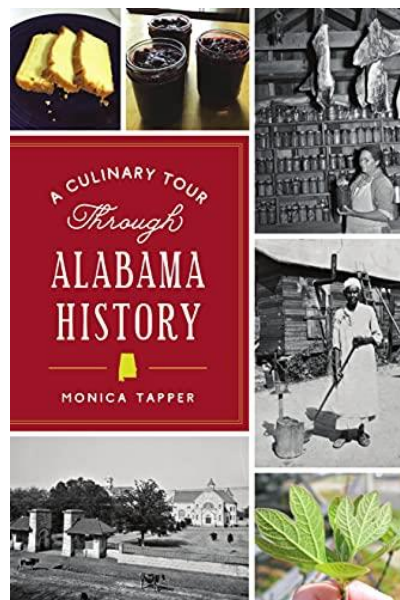
His ideas of treatment were very different than those of his contemporaries. Today, his asylum might be considered a resort, and even in 1910, only the wealthy could afford to be patients at Burn Brae. The number of patients was limited to forty – twenty men and twenty women, which was done to create an atmosphere of intimacy and family. There were no bars or cells, but instead there were private apartments and amenities like orchards, greenhouses, tennis courts, and even a bowling alley. For Dr. Given, personal comforts were important for recovery.

According to the *Philadelphia Medical Times*, printed in 1872: "Were a stranger, not knowing beforehand the nature of the establishment, to visit the Burn Brae and be shown through it and traverse its corridors and look in on the neatly-furnished parlors and chambers, he would believe himself to be in a boarding-house of the first class, and wish that he and his family could procure for themselves such accommodations as those now before him."

Initially, it seemed as if the relaxation and comforts of Burn Brae were working, and Frank began to show signs of recovery. But on September 9, 1910, Frank had a stroke and passed away. His body was returned to Birmingham, and it was buried in Oak Hill Cemetery. The obituaries flooded the newspapers, and people came from all corners to grieve for Frank O'Brien. And rightly so. If there has ever been an example of a life well-lived, and well-loved, it was Frank O'Brien: Irish born, Pennsylvania raised, and Alabama lived.

Next time, the final installment: Bossie O'Brien Hundley. She was Frank's youngest daughter and well-known Alabama suffragist.

Monica Tapper is an MA in history with a She teaches American College in Selma and Mitchell Mansion in Culinary Tour through Amazon.com or the



historian from Alabama. She has concentration in Public History. History at Wallace Community gives history tours at the Bragg-Mobile. Her new book, A Alabama History, is available at publisher's website, which is www.arcadiapublishing.com

Cover Art courtesy of Monica Tapper

Person of Interest
Stephen Karam
By Rick Sedlisky



Image source: Marywood University News

Stephen Karam is one of those Scranton-born people who moved away, but never really left. In interviews, he often talks about how being a son of the city has influenced his writing and allows him to incorporate his Scranton life experiences into his works.

Stephen is a graduate of Scranton High School and Brown University, Providence, RI, 2002, with a BA degree in Theatre Arts Literature and Culture in English. He also spent what he calls a formative summer at the Pennsylvania Governor's School for the Arts, a free program that for him he said, "Was life changing."

Stephen is quick to talk about his public school education and the teachers who encouraged his voracious reading habit, taught him that a life in the arts is in fact as noble as any other, and worked with him in speech and debate classes.

He wrote his first story while in the 5th grade, which he said was pretentiously called, *The Amazing Story*. It was an 8th grade English class assignment that enabled him to write and shoot his first film.

In a few short years, Stephen Karam has accumulated an impressive list of accomplishments in live theatre and on the movie screen. He is, to date, best known

both nationally and internationally for his Tony-Award winning play, *The Humans*. The film adaptation was directed by Stephen.



Image source: IMDbPro

The plot centers on the Blake family who travels from Scranton to spend Thanksgiving in New York with their daughter in her rather dilapidated and by non-New York City standards, almost horrific and grungy-looking apartment. With stained ceilings, peeling paint, a worrisome spiral staircase and a view of a miserable looking courtyard squeezed in between adjoining buildings, the apartment in effect becomes another character in the story as so much time is spent there.

The apartment is a perfect example of Stephen's ability to weave reality with imagination. In a recent interview with Kelsey Snell of *Movie Interviews*, he said the apartment is essentially the apartment he lived in for seven years, a basement of a ground floor basement duplex.

People from different parts of the world have said they identify with the characters in *The Humans*. Comments such as, "This Pennsylvania family is my family, you're telling our stories, that's my dad, that's my mom", are the norm. Why so?

Stephen explained while talking about his Scranton roots at the University of Scranton 2016 Royden B. Davis, S.J. Distinguished Author Award of which he was the recipient. "It's real people with strengths and weaknesses, luck good and bad, behavior good and bad, moods sad and good... what might be working is the things I'm talking about are some of the things that are on their minds."

He added, "What makes us all Scrantonians isn't that we're all exactly alike, it's that we're a close-knit community made up of people from different backgrounds; it is our diversity of experiences that makes our community so strong. I'm proud to call Scranton home. I hope I can continue to write stories to show not just what makes us singular as Scrantonians, but stories that reveal how connected we are to the rest of the world."

Stephen's plays can be found at The Drama Book Shop, <http://dramabookshop.com/> and Amazon.com. *The Humans* is currently in theatres and on Showtime. To see a preview, please copy and paste the below link in your browser.

The Humans | Official Trailer HD | A24
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dp3Whb77eXc>

Stephen Karam

Plays

Emma (2000)
Girl on Girl (2005)
columbinus (2005)
Speech & Debate (2006)

Dark Sisters (2011)
Sons of the Prophet (2011)
The Humans (2014)
The Cherry Orchard
adapted (2016)

Filmography

Side by Side by Susan Blackwell 2011 *Speech & Debate* (2017, screenwriter)
The Seagull (2018, screenwriter) *The Humans* (2021, screenwriter, director)

Awards and Honors

2012

New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for *Sons of the Prophet*
Outer Critics' Circle Award for *Sons of the Prophet*
Drama Desk Award for *Sons of the Prophet*
Sam Norkin Off-Broadway Drama Desk Award *Sons of the Prophet*
Lucille Lortel Awards for *Sons of the Prophet*
Pulitzer Prize Finalist for *Sons of the Prophet*

2015

Berwin Lee Playwrights Award

2016

New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for
The Humans
Drama Desk Award for *The Humans*
Drama League Award for *The Humans*
Obie Award for *The Humans*
Pulitzer Prize Finalist for *The Humans*
Tony Award for Best Play for *The Humans*



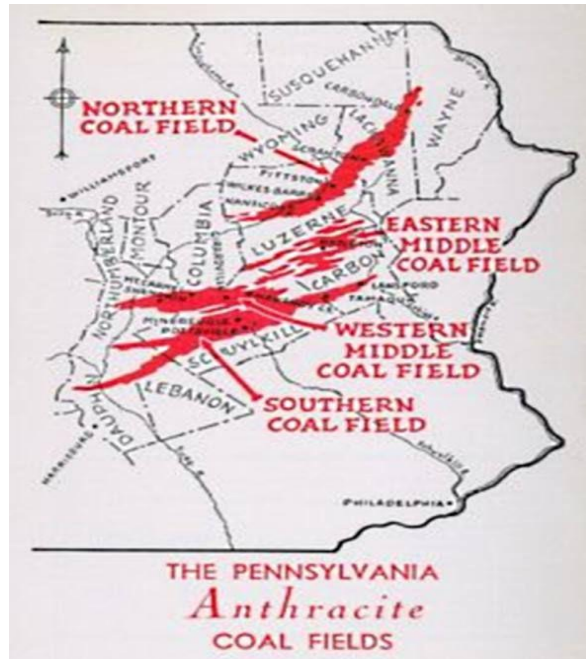
Image source: IMDbPro

Anthracite Ancestry

Anthracite Ancestry covers various aspects of Northeast Pennsylvania's coal legacy, including coal companies, coal barons, labor and labor unions, individuals, families, immigrant groups, disasters, subsidence, and coal haulers.

How does anthracite tie into your family history? Did one or more of your ancestors "work the mines" as they used to say? If your ancestors left behind anthracite stories of any kind, we want to hear from you. Please contact us at lackawannahistory@gmail.com and insert *Anthracite* in the subject matter.

As a writer once said, "Don't let your story die with you."



Pinterest

The Morgan Family: From Wales to Washburn and Beyond By Tom Morgan

The Morgan Family came to the United States from Wales via Liverpool, England, arriving in New York in 1857. The ship's manifest shows the family listed as William B. and Margaret (nee Jones) Morgan and their children, Benjamin, Edward and Mary. Mary is listed "dead". It is the only record and the only mention I found about her, so we do not know what happened to the body, but we presume she was buried at sea.

William B. Morgan is my great-great grandfather. He, his wife and family settled into what was called Bellevue Heights in what was Lackawanna Twp. and is today the 1000 block of Snyder Avenue in Scranton. Following their arrival in America, they had two additional sons, Reese and David. William B. lived until 1870. I have not been able to find his obituary in my newspaper research, so I don't know the cause of death. However, his year of death is confirmed by a long story carved into his tombstone.

All four of his sons were anthracite miners. Edward never married and left no children. David married Mary Ann Morgan (yes, the same surname). They had one son who became a Scranton policeman. Reese married Gwen (Samuel) and had four daughters and one son, all who grew into adulthood. They lost three other infant children. The family eventually moved to Renton, WA.

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William's fourth son, Benjamin Sr., is my great-grandfather. He and his wife, Catherine (Jones), had four sons, William, Edward, Benjamin, Jr. and James, as well as four daughters, Margaret, Diana, May and Jane (Jennie).

My great-grandfather and his son, Edward, worked in the mines. While working at the Bellevue Mine, Edward broke his foot, but eventually returned to work. Unfortunately, on August 22, 1905, he was killed when the roof of the mine collapsed. Benjamin, Jr. worked for the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad (DL&W) at the company's downtown Scranton facilities. He had permission to ride the railroad's switcher on the Bloomsburg Branch that would allow him to hop off near his Bellevue home. One day he did so and was hit by an oncoming train near the Eynon St. viaduct, fracturing his skull. He died a few days later at Moses Taylor hospital at age 19. The youngest brother, James Morgan, worked in the Dodge Mine until he retired.

Benjamin Sr.'s son, William B. Morgan Sr., is my grandfather. He married Anna (Harris) who was a resident of Taylor. They had three sons, William Jr., Edwin, Benjamin (my dad), and one daughter, Hannah. Two other children died at birth.

My grandfather worked as a fireman on the DL&W before becoming a Scranton police officer. Sons Edwin and Benjamin fought in World War II; Edwin made the Army his career. Edwin had one daughter; his three sons all became military career men. Hannah was employed by the Scranton Republican newspaper, which later became the Scranton Tribune; she had one son. William Jr., who also worked for the DL&W, had three sons and a daughter.

My father, Benjamin J. Morgan, married Mary (Mae) (nee Fleming). They had three children. My brother, James, became a research chemist and had two sons and a daughter. His sons died leaving no children. My sister, Linda, became a food buyer and did not marry. Both are deceased. I am married with one son. I was a Scranton firefighter for 30 years.

As for my dad, he worked for Fowler and Williams Trucking in Scranton where he began as a dock worker and subsequently became a truck driver. Fowler and Williams had a few terminals in the PA/NJ/NY service area. After his Army service during World War II, he returned to Fowler and Williams, retiring in 1977 with 33 years of service, as well as the Number 1 man in seniority system-wide, which was an accomplishment my dad was proud of. He was also active in the Teamsters Union and the VFW post in Hyde Park.

Public service careers run in the Morgan family. In addition to family members listed above, my grandfather (a city policeman) had a first cousin who was also named William Morgan (the son of David) and was also a Scranton police officer. Although they had different middle names, the force called my grandfather, "Big Bill" and his cousin, "Baby Bill". In addition to them, my first cousin, Kenneth (son of my dad's brother, William), was also a city policeman. Kenneth's brother, Edwin, had a son named Edwin who was a Scranton firefighter.

Participation by family members includes three generations of membership in the Hyde Park Lodge #339 Free and Accepted Masons. Seven Morgan men held memberships, including my grandfather, my dad and me.

I mentioned that my dad served in the Army during WWII. Military careers also run in the family. My brother and all my first cousins served in the military, covering the Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard. Another first cousin married a Marine. While I was strictly a civil service person, I am proud of my family's service to our country.

As with a lot of Welsh immigrants and their American descendants, many of my family members are laid to rest at what was called the Welsh Cemetery, better known as the Washburn Street Cemetery in Hyde Park. They include my great-great-grandparents, great-grandparents, four of their eight children and three grandchildren, as well as two of my great-grandfather's brothers. All carry the Morgan surname except for women who were laid to rest under their married surnames, Davis and Thomas.

The Morgan name continues albeit in smaller numbers. My niece, Jenna Hamilton, her husband, Hunter, and their children, Hannah and Ian, live in Alexandria, VA. Although there are a few branches of the Morgan family left in the country, my son, Tommy, and I as of this writing are the last of my direct line in Lackawanna County.

Tom Morgan is a native and resident of West Scranton. He attended Scranton Public Schools and is a 1982 graduate of West Scranton High School. Tom began working at age 12 as a grocery delivery boy for Galdieri's Market. His public service career began in 1980 working for Scranton-based Donahue Ambulance. In 1989, he was appointed to the Scranton Fire Department and in 1993 was promoted to Lieutenant. Tom served in that capacity until his retirement in 2020.

In the early 2000s, Tom became interested in the history of the Scranton public schools, how many existed, continue to exist, as well as their locations, among other things. He contacted his high school history teacher, Nicholas E. Petula (author of several books on Scranton), and together they wrote The History of the Scranton PA Public Schools in 2008. Volume 2, which covers a decade of additions and changes to the city's schools, was released in 2018. Volume 3 is in the planning stages.

Tom is married to the former Sheri Davis. They have one son, Thomas Jr., who was born in 2000.

Anthracite Mining Heritage Month ***By Bob Wolensky***

The annual Anthracite Mining Heritage Month series returns in January 2022. As of this writing, three major events have been booked.

As part of the annual Knox Mine Disaster commemoration, Sue Hand will speak about her exhibit on Lackawanna County breakers. The presentation is scheduled to take place on January 22 at the Anthracite Heritage Museum, Scranton.

Kings College, Wilkes-Barre, is the venue for the annual Msgr. Curran Lecture. This year, Prof. Philip Jenkins of Penn State University and Baylor University will speak

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about the Ku Klux Klan in Northeast Pennsylvania. Prof. Jenkins is the author of *Hoods and Shirts*, which covers Klan activity in Pennsylvania.

The Lackawanna Historical Society will host a one-act play about the life of Msgr. John J. Curran. He was known as the “labor priest” and friend of President Theodore Roosevelt who helped settle the 1902 miners’ strike, as well as other labor-management confrontations in Northeast Pennsylvania.

A complete list of confirmed programs and venues, including dates and times, will appear in the January – February 2022 issue of *History Bytes*.

Anthracite Reading

The holiday season is upon us. Remember when a lump of coal was sometimes placed in a Christmas stocking? Rather than a lump of coal this year, how about a book about coal instead? Following is a sampling of the many available books related to various facets of the anthracite industry and its effects.

Mining Disasters of the Wyoming Valley – Bryan Glahn

Tragedy at Avondale: The Causes, Consequences and Legacy: Joseph M. Keating and Robert P. Wolensky

Anthracite Labor Wars: Tenancy, Italians and Organized Crime in the Northern Coal Field of Pennsylvania – 1895 – 1959 – Robert P. Wolensky and William A. Hastie, Sr.

The Kelayres: Massacre: Politics & Murder in Pennsylvania’s Anthracite Coal Country – Stephanie Hoover

The Anthracite Region’s Slavic Community (Images of America) – Brian Ardan

Anthracite Aristocracy: Leadership and Social Change in the Hard Coal Regions of Northeastern Pennsylvania, 1800–1930 – Edward J. Davies II

Death in the Mines: Disasters and Rescues in the Anthracite Coal Fields of Pennsylvania – J. Stuart Richards

Remembering Lattimer: Labor, Migration, and Race in Pennsylvania Anthracite Country – Paul A. Shackel

In The Mines The Daily Diaries of Thomas J. Goblick 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, which are smaller sized, spiral bound notebooks. They were scanned and enlarged, and subsequently donated to the Old Forge Historical Society. Most entries pertain to Old Forge, and I have permission to share the contents.

January 1941

Volpe Coal Co, No. 6 Colliery, No 11 Shaft, Babylon Section.

January 1. Snowing, New Year's Day, Colliery Idle. Stayed home.

January 2. Snowing, Changed rear spring. 39 cars. Was in Taylor for glass door.

January 3 Snow. Short of empties. Done 4:30AM.

January 4. Very cold. Car Inspected.

January 5. Sunday. Very cold day.

January 6. Cold. Swampy weather. Done 2 PM.

January 7. Cold. Was to Old Forge shopping. Done 1:30 pm.

January 8. Cold. Was for a ride up the mountain. Was at Puzias. Done 2 pm.

January 9. Was to Dr. Sal with Edna's baby.

January 10. Warmer. Tommy had two teeth pulled.

January 11. Cold. Colliery Idle. To Old Forge with Sonny.

January 12. Cold. Sunday. Stayed home evening.

January 13. Cold. Brakeman Killed Outside. Done 10 pm.

January 14. Cold. Russian New Year. Done 9:30 pm.

January 15. Cold. Pay Day. Charlie paid back \$3. 77 Hrs, \$60.08

January 16. Sleet. Was to Old Forge with Nell for money order. Worked double in Charlie Gobs place.

January 17. Warm. Vic, Charlie and Me had 13 beers in Joes.

January 18. Snowing. Stuck by the school. Charlie Gob off. 37 cars.

January 19. Cold. Sunday. Stayed home. Was to Healey Gas Station for chains.

January 20 Cold. Was to No. 6 in the morning. 11 Coal 7 Rock 3 places, done 4 pm.

January 21. Warm. Car started with battery. 4 places.

January 22 Rain. 111 laborer off. 30 coal, 2 rock. Done 4:30 am.

January 23. Cool. Crew went home, done 4:30 am. 22 coal, 3 rock.

January 24. Blizzard. Working No 110. 1place 15 coal. 111 laborer off. 12 in. snow. STEVE CICHY DIED.

January 25. Cold. Done 5 am. 5 places full of coal, 35 cars. Seen C. Tetlock. Walked home with C. Affelt.

January 26. Snowing. Sunday. Home evening was to the Wake for Steve.

January 27. Blizzard. 40 coal, 7 rock. 6 places. Charlie Tetlock not in. Done 1pm.

January 28. Warmer. 47 coal, 6 rock. STEVE CHICHY BURRIED.

January 29. Cold. 44 coal, 6 rock. Done 2pm. Everything OK.

January 30. Snowing. 44 coal, 5 rock. Done 2:30.

January 31. Cold. 47 coal, 7 rock. Done 2 pm. Charlie paid me \$3.

92 hrs, deductions \$3.55, \$71.79

February 1941

Volpe Coal Co, No 6 Colliery, No 11 Shaft, Babylon, Red Ash Section.

February 1. [SIBLEY MINE FLNLS TO DA (or PA)????] Cool. Full coal, 45 coal, 6 rock everybody working.

February 2. Cloudy. Sunday, Ground Hog Day. Was to the movies, 3 Faces West.

February 3 Cold. 37 coal, 5 rock. Smithy, Scheser, Boots, Joe not in. Everything OK.

February 4. Cold. Dom 111 laborer off. 44 coal, 7 rock. Smithy, Boots, Charlie. Everything OK.

February 5. Cool. Coal delivered. Smithy, Boots, Charley. Everything OK.

February 6. Warm. Done 9pm. Smithy, Boots, Charlie. Everything OK.

February 7. Rain. Full Coal. Done 10pm. Fixed shaker mts. Smithy, Charlie, Boots.

February 8. Cold. Full coal. Done 10 pm. Smithy, Boots, Chaz. Everybody ok.

February 9. Cold. Sunday, Stayed home.

February 10. Cold. Full coal. Left Joe S. at No 6. Joe, Boots.

February 11. Cold. Done 5:30pm. Flat tire. Joe, Boots.

February 12. Warm. Lincoln Birthday. Full coal. Smithy, Leonard.

February 13. Rain. Done 4am. Everybody OK. Smithy, Leonard.

February 14. Rain. Full coal. Due bills. ½ Tetlock went home. Smithy, Leonard.

February 15. Snowing. Pay Day. 5 cars coal 1 place. Mayes, Smithy, Boots not in. 94 hrs, 73.89. Riders: Boots \$1.50, Smithy \$2. May \$2.80.

February 16. Cloudy. Sunday. Paid Andy \$1.07. Francis paid my bill. Paid Francis \$1.80.

February 17. Snowing. Full coal. Surveyors on my road. Tabone my brakeman. S=B=C. (Smithy, Boots, Charlie)

February 18. Warmer. Full coal. Lost my pliers. Everything ok. Letter from A.B. S=B=C.

February 19. Cold. All OK on time books. Sore throat. Joe off, took too much time. S=B=C.

February 20. Cold. Stepped on nail in plank road. Inspector. Sonny haircut. S=B=C.

February 21. Snowing. Inspector in Marey. Joe the brakeman to No9. J. Straight not in. S=B=C.

February 22. Warmer. Washington's Birthday. S=B=C.

February 23. Cold. Sunday. Was to see Francis, had a good time.

February 24. Cold. Jack Marley not working. Full coal. Aleck stayed on. S=B=O=C.

February 25. Damn cold. Jack not in, Dommick our boss. Bednar brakeman. 18-day shift 106 on 3 o'clock. S=B=C.

February 26. Cold. Took 112 laborer home to Parsons W.B. Jack was out. Libly off. S=B=C.

February 27. Cold. 111 miner not in. Full coal. Done 9pm waited for Sam. S=B=C.

February 28. Blizzard. Heavy snowstorm, done 9:30. Empties were slow. S=B=C.

Riders: Smithy \$ 3, Boots \$1.50, Charley \$3. Paid Evy \$1.20 80hrs, \$62.42

March 1941

Volpe Coal Co, No 6 Colliery, No 11 Shaft, Babylon Section.

March 1. Snow Blizzard. Battery run down. Colliery Idle.

March 2. Warm. Sunday. Stayed home. (Riders, Miners S=B=C: Smithy, Boots, Charlie)

March 3. Rain. 2 toppers off, 118 & 123. Full coal. Slippery roads. Tony my laborer. S=B=C.

March 4. Cold. 123 topper not in, 112 laborer gone home. Done 5am. S=B=C.

March 5. Cold. 118 laborer not in. Coil bad in motor. Done 4:30. S=B=C.

March 6. Cool. Charlie got off for the week. Charlie new brakeman. Full coal. S=B=C.

March 7. Snowstorm 12 in. Motor off, flange broke. Tough night. Done 5:45. S=B=C.

March 8. Snow. 111, 112 crews off. Full coal. Used the browed motor. Flat tire. S=B=C.

March 9. Snowing. Sunday. Stayed home.

March 10. Warm. Snow rapid melt. Full Coal. S=B=C.

March 11. Cold, snowstorm. Full Coal. Done late. S=B=C.

March 12. Warm. Branch inside by John. 29-6, 21-12, Done late. S=B=C.

March 13. Warm. Nice day at work. Done late. S=B=C.

March 14. Warm. Full coal. Alek measuring today. Due bill. Done 2:30. S=B=C.

March 15. Frosty. Full coal. Used a small motor. Tough work. Done 2pm. S=B=C. 84 hrs.
\$62.42

March 16. Cold. Sunday. Stayed home.

March 17. Very cold. Tough night. Off the road. Barry motor. Riders rode bus.

March 18. Very cold. Good night at work. Miners late. Started loading. S=B=C.

March 19. Cold. Bad road. S=B=C.

March 20. Cold. Darn Tough. Cars off. Boots at funeral. Motor reel burned. S=C.

March 21. Cold. Easy night no cars off. Coal Yesterday. Dominick in Draft. S=B=C.

March 22. Cold. Wire put up. 33 coal. S=B=C=C.

March 23. Sunday. Up to see Francis. To movies to see Buck Private. Art to pay.

March 24. Damp. Full coal. Done 6am. S=B=C.

March 25. Snowing. 118 Miner & Laborer Not in. Done 4:30. Car stalled in Pittston. S=B=C.

March 26. Frost. 4 cars props. Short of empties. Motor off. Done 5:30 am. S=B=C.

March 27. Frost. Broken down cars. Fair night. Done 5:30am. S=B=C.

March 28. Cold. Pay in Russel's. Plenty of cars. Done 5am. Made new fire in box. B=C.

March 29. Frosty, Snowing. Done 4:30. Waited for Smithy. Nell, Sonny in Town. B=C.

March 30. Sunday. Sonny Birthday, 6 yrs. old. Nelly & Helen to Movies.

March 31. Pay Day. Worked double. Billy to pay me shift. 91 hrs (4 hrs short paid for 87) \$ 67.89.

Notes

February 17 S=B=C: (Riders, Miners S=B=C: Smithy, Boots, Charlie)

March 23 Buck Privates:



Buck Privates is a 1941 musical military comedy film that turned Bud Abbott and Lou Costello into bona fide movie stars. It was the first service comedy based on the peacetime draft of 1940. The comedy team made two more service comedies before the United States entered the war (*In the Navy* and *Keep 'Em Flying*). A sequel to this movie, *Buck Privates Come Home*, was released in 1947. *Buck Privates* is one of three Abbott and Costello films featuring The Andrews Sisters, who were also under contract to Universal Pictures at the time.

Abbott and Costello performed a one-hour radio adaptation of the film on the *Lux Radio Theatre* on October 13, 1941.

Source: Wikipedia

A Preview of 2022

- In the Spring, trustees will work with our friends at POSH at the Scranton Club to reboot the *Dinner by Design* program to create a unique fundraiser centered on dining.
- In June we plan to bring back the very popular *Historic House Tour* once again joining our friends at the Greenhouse Project to include gardens, which were successful in 2019.
- In Fall and Winter, we hope to return to more in-person activities, including the Annual Dinner and Holiday Open House. Until then we'll continue to offer virtual programming, including a sampling of some of our previous annual dinners.

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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.

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](#)

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](#)

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

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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. The society is supported in part by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the Catlin House Memorial Trust, Lackawanna County and membership dues.