



HISTORY BYTES

A Lackawanna Historical Society Publication

Vol. 7 No. 5

September – October 2024

Rick Sedlisky, Editor

Editor's Note- The following article originally appeared on the Carbondale Historical Society website. We sincerely thank Dr. S. Robert Powell for granting the Lackawanna Historical Society permission to reprint the article.

Delaware and Hudson Books of Minutes Surface in California

By S. Robert Powell



*Three Volumes of Delaware and Hudson Books of Minutes
Photo courtesy of S. Robert Powell*

"AN ACT to Incorporate the President, Managers and Company of the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company" was passed by a two-thirds vote of the New York State legislature, with the approval of the Governor, and became law on April 23, 1823. One hundred and fifty or more years later, the final residue of "America's oldest continuously operated transportation company" (the D&H), ended up in the holdings of the International House of Pancakes in the Los Angeles area in California. The precise path by which those D&H corporate remains ended up in the holdings of companies acquired by IHOP Corporation is not known, and, for our purposes, knowing that path is not really important.

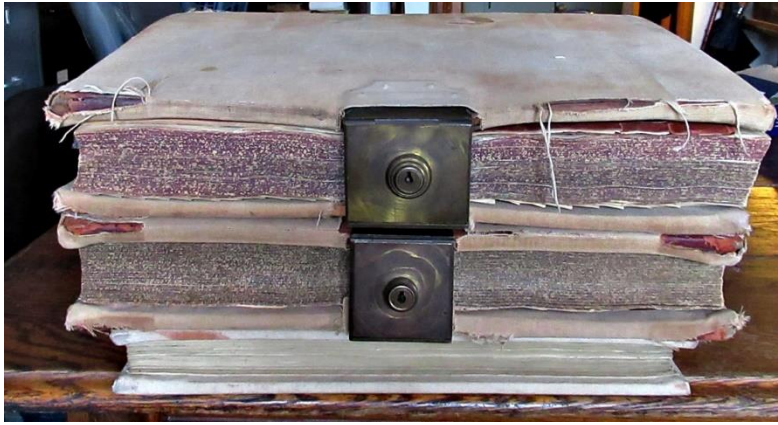
What is important, for our purposes, is that James Stamm was working for IHOP Corporation at the time, and that he was charged with clearing out/getting rid of items acquired by IHOP Corporation from companies acquired by IHOP Corporation in previous years that IHOP no longer wanted. In doing so, James Stamm (whose father was a railroad inspector in Kansas) came across and acquired three volumes of Delaware and Hudson Company minutes. He recognized, immediately, the historical importance of these three volumes and gave it his best to find a home for them but was not successful in doing so. In December 2021, he passed away.

In May 2023, his wife, Nancy Stamm, contacted Barbara Bachorz at the Bridge Line Historical Society, and told her about the three volumes of D&H corporate minutes, and said that she was hoping to find a permanent home for them. Barbara and Jim recognized immediately the historical importance of these volumes and contacted the present writer and told him about them. "Such wonderful news," said he, "We must get these volumes."

The present writer contacted Nancy Stamm and told her that the Carbondale Historical Society would be very pleased to add these three volumes to its D&H archives and would be happy to pay to have them shipped to Pennsylvania. ("They're quite heavy," said Nancy. The books were shipped. The weight of three volumes is such that it cost—no complaints on our part, to be sure--\$150 have them shipped, UPS Ground, from California.). Photographs of these three remarkable volumes, 11" x 16 x 3"--two of which have locks on them (the locks are now open) -- are shown here.

The three volumes: (1) "Minutes. Volume No. 6: January 5, 1894—December 30, 1903, Inc. Delaware and Hudson Canal Company, 498 pages"; (2) "Minutes. Volume No. 7: January 27, 1904—January 2, 1907, Inc. The Delaware and Hudson Company, 312 pages; and (3) "Minutes. No. 1: December 4, 1928—December 30, 1936, The Delaware and Hudson Railroad Corporation, 478 pages."

The three volumes contain 1,288 pages of minutes of the meetings of the D&H Board of Directors for 22 years! What an unbelievable resource. I will begin at once to read these three remarkable volumes. Newly learned facts and revelations about the D&H will be reported in the pages of this publication in the months ahead! Stay tuned.



For more information about the Carbondale Historical Society, please visit
<https://carbondalepahistorical.org/>



This is the fourth in a series of edited reprints from "The Laurel Northeastern Pennsylvania's Magazine." It is planned to republish this and subsequent articles in their entirety as a special feature of History Bytes. All reprints will center on economic development, local history, culture, social programs and initiatives, and recreation in the Greater Scranton region.

As best as can be determined, "The Laurel" magazine had a short life. Four (4) issues, thought to be the total production, are in a private collection (Volume 1, Numbers 1-3, and Volume 2, Number 1). If anyone can supply additional issues, please contact the Lackawanna Historical Society at lackawannahistory@gmail.com

Oh! DOO-DAH-DAY!

Stephen Collins Foster (1826 – 1864), Pittsburgh native, was a noted American composer of over 200 songs. His most popular songs are: "Camptown Races", "Oh! Susanna", "Old Folks at Home", "My Old Kentucky Home", "Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair", "Old Black Joe" and "Beautiful Dreamer".

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Foster, regarded as the "Father of American Music", is considered the first American full-time songwriter, primarily known for parlour and minstrel music.

For several years, beginning in 1839, Foster lived in Towanda, Pennsylvania, and was a student at the nearby Athens Academy, about 15 miles from Camptown, Pennsylvania, all of which are in Bradford County. --Richard Fitzsimmons, PhD, Transcriber

OLD JOB CAMP, a veteran of the Revolutionary War, never hummed this chorus as he felled great hemlocks along Wyalusing Creek to clear land for his home and the town that was to bear his name in the year 1793.

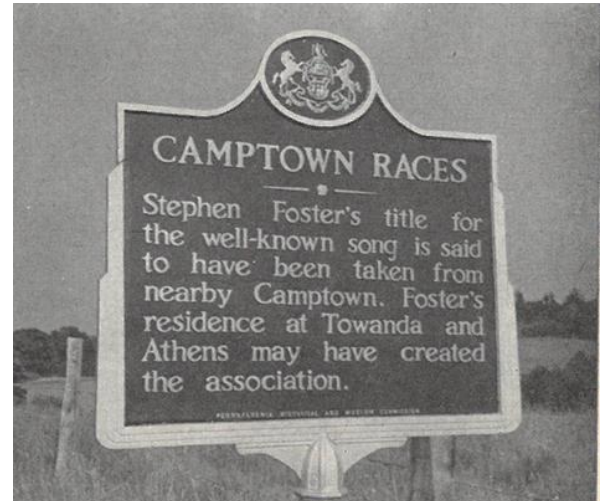
But pioneers for a hundred years and people all over the earth have sung:

**"De Camp-town la-dies sing dis song,
Doo-dah! doo-dah! De Camp-town race-track five miles
long,
Oh! doo-dah-day!
I come down dah wid my hat caved in, Doo-dah!
doo-dah!
I go back home wid a pocket full of tin, Oh!
doo-dah-day!
Gwine to run all night! Gwine to run all day!
I'll bet my money on de bob-tail nag, Somebody
bet on de bay."**

Old Job's town may pass away, but people will always sing "Camptown Races" because it is a gay and happy tune.

The connection between the song and old Job Camp's town is vague. The only direct relation is a worn catalogue of the Athens Academy, year 1841, which lists the name Stephen Collins Foster of Pittsburgh. The Academy was near Towanda, only fifteen miles from Camptown. The joyous songs of Stephen Foster were the ones which were inspired by the memories of his boyhood. Stephen was 13 years old when his brother, William, chief engineer of Public Works for Pennsylvania, enrolled him at the academy. William had his headquarters at Towanda and persuaded his parents to allow him to take Stephen to there where he could watch over the youth.

It was Winter and William took Stephen all the way from Pittsburgh to Towanda in his own sleigh, drawn by two horses. The distance was over three hundred miles, but the sleighing was good and William Foster was a man of great personal popularity who had many friends along the road. The journey was a joyous adventure to Stephen and remained with him all his life as a beautiful memory to which he often referred with delight. There is no reason to believe, as often reported, that Stephen was unhappy at the academy. Instead, from the memories written by his fellow students, Stephen seemed to have enjoyed one of the happiest periods of his life at Athens. His fellow students recalled him as a gay, inquisitive fellow who enjoyed excursions and hikes into the neighboring countryside. His great talent had not yet blossomed.



Nearby Camptown at that time was almost fifty years old. Other settlers had joined Job Camp and the little community had prospered. The surrounding mountains were heavy with timber. The settlers cut it, milled it and floated it down the creek on the Spring floods to the Susquehanna from whence it was taken down the river to Harrisburg which then was the lumbering capital of the nation.

Camptown was a rugged place. The social life was limited and the lumberjacks, farmers and trappers found their recreation in racing horses; not the civilized way of running horses around a track, but distance races over rural country roads. They raced their horses over a five mile stretch from Camptown to Wyalusing, over hill and dale and through mudholes and creeks.

People came from surrounding settlements to witness the races and bet on the favorite. It is possible that William Foster was attracted to the races and brought the boy, Stephen, with him. The impressionable and imaginative lad would never have forgotten these rugged frontier people and there is much in the song that could have been taken from the boy's visit to Camptown.

**"De long tail fil-ly and de big black hoss,
Doo-dah! doo-dah!
Dey fly de track and dey both cut across,
Oh! doo-dah-day!
De blind hoss stick-en in a big mud hole,
Doo-dah! doo-dah!
Can't touch bot-tom wid a ten foot pole,
Oh! doo-dah-day!"**

The road from Camptown to Wyalusing was well pocketed with mud holes and legend has it that many a favorite bogged down in a mud hole. Another place



The Baptist Church was organized in 1834, a few years before Stephen Foster may have visited Camptown. Later the Baptists built this church, now abandoned.

in the song he mentions **"Old Muley cow come on-to de track ... De bob tail fling her over his back."** The road in those days ran through open pastures and often the racers had to circle stubborn cows.

Ten years after he left the Academy, Stephen Foster was famous. A form of theatrical entertainment, known as the Negro minstrel show, developed in the 1830's. An actor, named Thomas D. (Daddy) Rice, is credited with starting this type show and it grew out of his singing, in costume and character, a Negro song, "Jump Jim Crow." The idea spread and soon traveling minstrel shows began to appear all over the country. Primarily, they entertained with Negro songs.

Stephen Foster, after an undistinguished period in school and in business, began to write music and the minstrel shows were the best method of popularizing a song. He started slowly, not knowing the commercial value of his songs, but between 1847 and 1850 his songs caught on and were sung by the leading minstrel men. He had written "O Susanna," "Uncle Ned," "Away Down South," and numerous other pieces which had caught the voice of the nation.

Although victimized by music publishers, Foster prospered from his creations. Contrary to popular belief, his life was not one of poverty. His family was well to do, his father had been a prosperous business man and had been the mayor of Pittsburgh; his brother, William, later became president of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

The music publishers and the minstrel people were always pressing him for new songs and in 1850, at the peak of his career, he wrote "De Camptown Races."

Did his mind go back to Towanda and Athens, and, perhaps, to Camptown? Or did he remember the stories told to him by other boys at the academy about the races at Camptown? Did he see again or from a story visualize the little town nestled in a valley with the shallow Wyalusing Creek running alongside its main street? Did he see again the rugged lumberjacks thunder down the road in the race to Wyalusing? Remember he drew his gay songs from the happy days of his boyhood.

He began to write ... **"De Camp-town la-dies sing dis song ... "**

And the nation sang it and the people in the little town of Camptown sang it. And today, wherever people are happy, they may hum, "Oh! Doo-dah-day!"

He wrote the song in the Negro dialect because that was what the minstrel men wanted but he was not dreaming of the south, which he visited only once; more likely, he was remembering his happy school days at Athens.

Songs poured from his pen, some good, most of them routine; occasionally one of his songs would strike a simplicity, like "My Old Kentucky Home," which gave it life as long as men shall sing.

Foster died in his 37th year. The last few years of his life were tragic. He was an alcoholic, selling his songs for a night's lodging, and he died from the effects of a fall down the steps of a Bowery boarding house in 1864.

He had written more than 200 songs. The best of these songs, perhaps ten or twelve, have outlived all exigency of time and have joined those other ageless examples of art which only genius can produce.

"De Camptown Races" may be one of these for even, after a century, it is a merry tune which starts feet tapping and voices humming.

High above the Susquehanna, on the way to Towanda, an historical marker stands, telling the legend of nearby Camptown. The people of the little community become indignant at the term legend. It is a fact, they declare.

And they hum, **"Gwine to run all night! Gwine to run all day!**

I'll bet my mo-ney on de bob-tail nag! Somebody bet on de bay!



Stephen Foster, as a boy, may have walked by this home, facing Wyalusing Creek, built in 1821 by William Camp, the oldest son of Job Camp. The house, which is 35 by 65 feet, has nine fireplaces, including one in the cellar. On the outside of the house, under the eaves, there is a wooden rope moulding, running the entire length of the building, which was made by Dan Wright, an early woodcarver, of Tunkhannock, and is one of the most unusual examples of hand wood carving in Pennsylvania.

Update

The 2024 re-enactment of the historic Camptown Races, memorialized by Stephen Collins Foster's melody in 1850, was held Saturday, September 7th in Camptown, Pennsylvania 18853.

This year was the 57th commemorative running of the original race from Foster's time in Bradford County. The 10k race commenced at 10:10 A.M., with a 5k version at 10:00 A.M. The course began at 5051 PA Route 706, in Camptown.

The historic Camptown Race offers a challenge like no other. It covers both road and trail. The trail section is approximately 2.8 miles long and is 'technical'—tree roots, rocks and a creek crossing!--R.F.

LHS 2024 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 to renew your membership or give to a friend who is interested in joining. Please return it to: 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 for membership payment:

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

2025 Membership Dues Changes

At its June 19, 2024 meeting LHS trustees unanimously approved the following changes to three categories of membership dues effective in 2025.

- *Individual \$40 (previously \$35)*
- *Family \$60 (previously \$45)*

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- *Contributing \$100 (previously \$75)*

Membership dues for other categories remain unchanged.

Lackawanna Past Times, Upcoming Events & Meetings

Our monthly Zoom and In-Person lecture series features famous local people and early regional history. Email us at lackawannahistory@gmail.com to receive the Zoom link. Catch up on past episodes on our YouTube channel.

On Zoom (All events take place on Fridays)

September 27, 2pm: The Archbald Pothole: Environmental Educational Specialist, Tony DeSantis discusses the Archbald Pothole and local DCNR parks.

October 25, 2pm: Family History Month: LHS member, Nancy Gilbride Casey, shares some history about her ancestor, Catherine Gilbride Casey, and discusses how she used Pennsylvania records to uncover her story.

November 22, 2pm: Electric Trolley Station and Museum Turns 25! Dan Perry discusses the 1994 opening of the Electric City Trolley Station and Museum.

Genealogy Forum Sessions and Workshop

The Lackawanna Historical Society's Genealogy Forum continues to offer guidance on using local and online resources to trace your family history.

The forum is an opportunity to learn more about specific topics in family history research and discuss particular research tactics to uncover your family story.

Please call the Society at 570-344-3841 or email lackawannahistory@gmail.com to register.

You can also register via Google form here: <http://tiny.cc/t0zkzz>

**Wed., September 18 at 10am
at the Abington Community library**
Searching German family history records
Hosted by Tom Price

**Fall Beginner's Genealogy Workshop
Saturdays Oct. 5, 12, 19, and 26 from 9:30am-noon
Albright Memorial Library**

Just getting started? Learn about basic resources and research tips!

Must commit to all four sessions.

\$25.00 for LHS Members or \$35.00 for Non-Members (non-refundable). Registration closes Friday, September 27, 2024

**Wed., November 13 at 1 pm
Virtual session via Zoom**

The Lady in the Asylum: Bringing a Hidden Ancestor into the Light
What can we learn from the shocking discovery that an ancestor was institutionalized? What records can shed light on their fate? Learn how I discovered details about the life and death of my second great-grandmother Catherine Ryan Gilbride (1855-1881) and how I sought to restore her to her rightful place in our family.

Hosted by Nancy Gilbride Casey

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3 R D A N N U A L

Local History Fair

LEARN MORE ABOUT
COLLECTIONS-PROGRAMS-EVENTS

PARTICIPANTS

HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

ABINGTON - ARCHBALD - CARBONDALE - CARBONDALE TWP
DICKSON CITY - FOREST CITY - GREENFIELD TWP - JERMYN
LACKAWANNA & WYOMING VALLEY RAILWAY - OLD FORGE - WAYMART
LACKAWANNA COUNTY - SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY - WAYNE COUNTY

ADDITIONAL HISTORY-DOERS

BREWERIANA AFICIONADO - DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION
DUNMORE CEMETERY TOUR - EVERHART MUSEUM
CHERYL KAISER, FAMILY ARCHIVE PRESERVATIONIST
ELECTRIC CITY TROLLEY MUSEUM - JOHN FITZGERALD, AUTHOR
FRANCES DORRANCE CHAPTER SOC. FOR PA ARCHAEOLOGY
LACKAWANNA COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM - LHVA - NICK PETULA, AUTHOR
MONTROSE FIRE MUSEUM - PENNSYLVANIA AMERICAN LEGION
RAIL-TRAIL COUNCIL OF NEPA - WAVERLY COMMUNITY HOUSE

AND SWEET TREATS FROM EVIL SWEETS BY LULU!

VIEWMONT MALL
DICKSON CITY

SHOP FOR LOCAL BOOKS
AND SOUVENIRS!

SAT., SEPT. 28 | 11AM-4PM

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Scranton After Dark

Tour ticket sales open on Friday Sept 13 via our website at www.lackawannahistory.org
Cost is \$15. Tours will take place Fridays from September 27 through October 25 at 7 pm.

Sunday, September 29, 2pm: Story Tellers' Author's Panel, Albright Memorial Library, Scranton: Do you have family or local history stories to tell, but you're not sure where to start? On Sunday, September 29, our "Storytellers' author panel will focus on how to research and tell these stories. Join us at the Scranton Public Library at 2pm in the Henkleman Room to sit in with authors Bill Conlogue, Susan Campbell Bartoletti, and Debra Rose Brillati as they discuss crafting a narrative and how to bring your stories to life.

Night of Amusements at Sidel's October 13, 5:30pm – 8:30pm

Join us at Sidel's on Sunday, October 13, to find your fortune, enjoy carnival's themed menu, and grab a photo with a mythical beast! The evening includes games of chance, fortune tellers, and other surprises. Additional details and tickets coming soon.

Save the Date: LHS Annual Dinner at Scranton Lace Village Details TBA

Ghostly Gallery Link

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



Wednesday, September 18: State Street Grill, 114 S. State St., Clarks Summit 570-585-5590

Wednesday, October 16: Noir Dark Spirits, 222 Wyoming Ave., Scranton 570-871-4387

Wednesday, November 30: Batari, 101 Adams Ave., Scranton 570-800-7109

Thanks to Lamar Advertising for its ongoing support of Dine Lackawanna

Abingtons

Clarks Summit
Camelot The New Cafe
Formosa State Street Grill

Dalton
B&B

Chinchilla
Armetta's Restaurant & Pizza

Upvalley

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Carbondale

KOL Steakhouse
Pat's Pizza & Hoagies

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

Olyphant

OTown Bar & Grill

Jessup

Café Colarusso

Scranton

Ale Mary's at the Bittenbender
AV Scranton
Back Yard Ale House
Cafe Classico
Carmen's 2.0 Restaurant
Chef Von & Mom
POSH at the Scranton Club

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

Downvalley**Old Forge**

Cusumano Dooley's Pub & Eatery

Dunmore/North Pocono**Dunmore**

3 Jacks Burgers

Moscow

Delish on Main

Springbrook Twp.

Olde Brook InnLa Cucina

Carbondalien Festival

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61556159555879>

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In 1974 a UFO reportedly fell from the sky in Carbondale, PA into the Silt Pond. While several explanations have been offered, the mystery of this sighting has become a key part of Carbondale's Culture. LHS is excited to work with the Carbondale Arts Festival to mark the 50th anniversary of the event. *Join us on November 9th 11 am-5 pm to celebrate this piece of Carbondale History.*

<https://carbondalienfestival.com/>



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Lackawanna Historical Society
The Society for the Preservation of the Tripp Family Homestead
and
The Society for Mayflower Descendants in the Commonwealth of
Pennsylvania
Present

Plimoth Patuxet Pilgrim Re-enactor
Hallyann Gifford
as
Mayflower Passenger Susanna Winslow



Colonial First Families: Life in Early Plymouth

Wednesday, October 30, 2024

Reception: 6:30 pm Program 7:00 pm

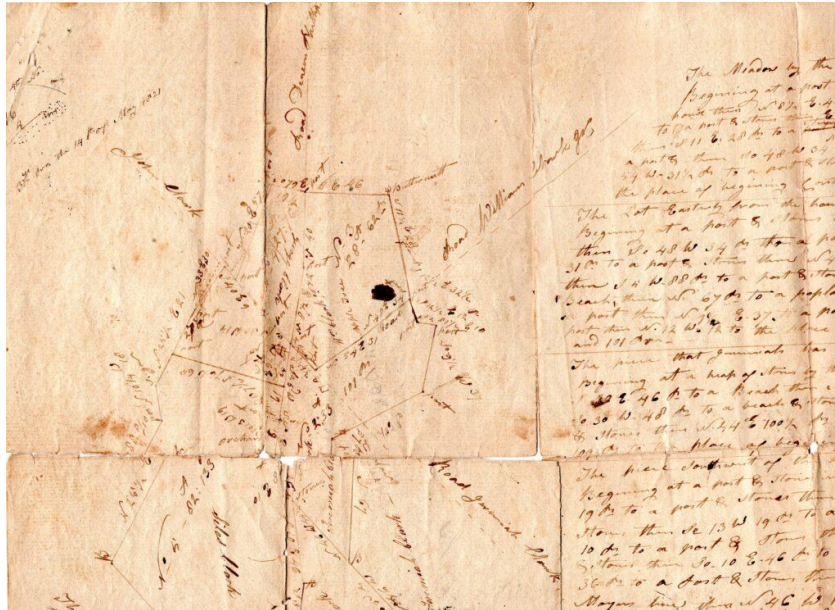
The Tripp House

1011 North Main Ave

Scranton, PA 18508

lackawannahistory@gmail.com

*The Wright Center's Historic Liberty Tree to Be Planted in a
Dickson City Park for U.S. Semi quinentennial*



These historical documents from May 14, 1827, are from the collection of the Lackawanna Historical Society 2023.14.46 A/B and detail the 800-acre land grant awarded in 1797 by the state of Connecticut to New England native Deacon William A. Clark, the founder of Clarks Green and Clarks Summit boroughs, in recognition of his heroic service during the Revolutionary War. VFW Park in Dickson City, which sits on part of this original land, has been chosen by The Wright Center for Community Health as the site to plant its certified Liberty Tree from America250PA and the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, also called the Pennsylvania Freemasons, because of the park's deep historical ties to the American Revolution.

The Wright Center for Community Health will receive a certified Liberty Tree, a living symbol of American independence, from America250PA and the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, also called the Pennsylvania Freemasons, that will be planted at VFW Park in Dickson City. In celebration of the United States' upcoming 250th anniversary, this historic tulip poplar will be the only Liberty Tree to take root in Lackawanna County as part of a statewide effort to honor the nation's founding.

The public is invited to attend a dedication ceremony for the Liberty Tree at 6 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 26, rain or shine, at the park, located at Jermyn and Walker streets.

The tree, sponsored by the Pennsylvania Freemasons, is part of a larger initiative that began in the fall of 2021 to plant 67 Liberty Trees — one in each of Pennsylvania’s counties — by 2026, as part of America250PA, a program coordinating statewide events in observance of the United States Semi quincentennial. Each tree will have a Liberty Tree Project plaque beside it, inscribed with the names of the Liberty Tree recipient, America250PA, and the Pennsylvania Freemasons.

The saplings are propagated from a scion of a historic 400-year-old tulip poplar, the last known surviving Liberty Tree, that once stood at St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland. The original Liberty Tree, an iconic elm in Boston, served as a gathering place for the Sons of Liberty, who convened beneath its branches to plan their resistance to British rule in the years leading up to the American Revolution. In 1775, British soldiers and Loyalists cut down and burned the Boston Liberty Tree, hoping to quell the growing rebellion. Undeterred, patriots across the 13 colonies designated new Liberty Trees, each one symbolizing hope and freedom.

The last of these original Liberty Trees, the towering 120-foot tulip poplar at St. John's College, stood during pivotal moments in American history. Under its branches, revolutionaries gathered during the Stamp Act of 1765 to advocate for independence from Great Britain. Samuel Chase and William Paca, members of the Annapolis chapter of the Sons of Liberty and signers of the Declaration of Independence, gathered for meetings under the tree. George Washington's resignation as commander of the Continental Army on Dec. 23, 1783, was near the tree at the Maryland State House.

Hurricane Floyd destroyed the tree in 1999, but its legacy lives on through the saplings being planted across Pennsylvania.

To receive the Liberty Tree, The Wright Center needed to locate publicly accessible land in Lackawanna County that has historical ties to the American Revolution where the tulip poplar could be planted, explained Gina Lettieri, The Wright Center's archivist. After extensive research, Lettieri determined that Dickson City's VFW Park was an ideal location.

New England native Deacon William A. Clark, founder of Clarks Green and Clarks Summit boroughs and a hero at the Battle of Bunker Hill during the Revolutionary War, was awarded 800 acres of land in Pennsylvania by Connecticut in 1797 as a token of gratitude for his service. Lettieri's research uncovered that the VFW Park in Dickson City sits on those original 800 acres. After securing support from Dickson City officials, Lettieri submitted The Wright Center's application for the Liberty Tree.

"By planting our Liberty Tree at VFW Park in Dickson City, we are not only commemorating American history but also reinforcing The Wright Center's commitment to improving the health and welfare of our communities," said Lettieri. "This historic tree will stand for the next 250 years and beyond as a symbol of The Wright Center's noble mission to improve the health and welfare of our communities through inclusive and responsive health services and the sustainable renewal of an inspired, competent workforce that is privileged to serve."

The Pennsylvania Freemasons, the oldest and largest fraternal organization in the world with more than 3.5 million members, including 86,000 in the commonwealth, have planted five certified Liberty Trees locally, one each in Carbon, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, and Wayne counties.

Northeastern Pennsylvania Volunteer Firemen's Federation

By Joseph M. Klapatch

On September 13, 1930, over 100 firefighters representing just about every fire company in Lackawanna County, gathered at Eagle Hose Company in Dickson City, to organize a federation where they would be able to share information.

Joseph Hall, a former Scranton volunteer and paid firefighter and the person who started the Clarks Summit Fire Company, spearheaded the meeting and was unanimously elected as the group's president. At the time, Hall was the oldest firefighter in Lackawanna County. He would hold that title for many years and add the title of oldest in the state. Four vice-presidents were elected, including Sam Vail of Carbondale, Tom McLaughlin of Olyphant, James Oakey of Dickson City and Stanley Topau of Old Forge. Two Dickson City firefighters rounded out the officers, Frank Kelly as secretary and David Hall as treasurer. The group took the name, Lackawanna County Volunteer Firemen's Federation. Monthly meetings were planned to continue building the organization with the next one scheduled to be held in Dunmore.



Image source: duckduckgo.com

The group decided that an annual convention would be held where meetings and elections of officers would be held. The first of these conventions would be held over a three-day period, a year later in Jermyn over the Labor Day weekend. Firefighter contests, a memorial service and a parade were among activities that would take place at the conventions.

Firefighters from surrounding counties took an interest in the new organization and the first convention held outside of Lackawanna County occurred in 1937 in New Milford in Susquehanna County. Because of the expansion, the group changed its name to the Northeastern Pennsylvania Volunteer Firemen's Federation (NEPVFF) and had members throughout nine counties.

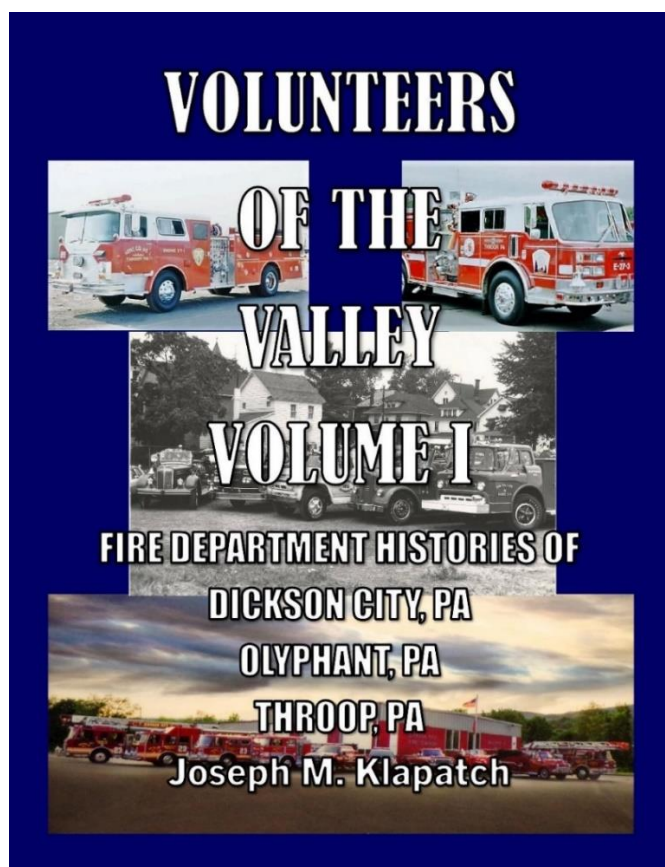
Expansion continued and at a meeting on November 12, 1953, in Browndale, the question of whether New York State companies could become members. The question was tabled, but was brought up at the January 14, 1954, meeting when Lumberland, NY applied for membership. The company, which provided coverage for two Pennsylvania townships, was accepted at the February 11, 1954, meeting in Nanticoke. The first federation meeting was held out of state on June 11, 1955, at the Lumberland Fire Company in Glen Spey, NY. The 1963 convention was held in Hancock, NY.

After running the convention over Labor Day weekend for several years at the beginning of its existence, the convention settled into the weekend after Labor Day and has

generally been held at that time with a few exceptions where it returned to Labor Day weekend or moved to the third weekend in September.

This year's convention is being held September 6 and 7 in Montrose. Meetings will be held on both days and the annual Booster Night will be held on Friday evening. Booster night can be traced back to the 1950s. Firefighters, along with the general public, can purchase a button and enjoy refreshments and fellowship for the evening. A parade will be held on Saturday afternoon at 2pm where fire companies will compete for trophies. Many winners will take the trophies back home and parade through the streets of their town with sirens wailing and the trophies displayed as a source of pride.

New Book Release



Cover art courtesy of Joseph M. Klapatch

The latest in his multi-volume series about fire companies in Lackawanna County, author Joseph M. Klapatch's "Volunteers of the Valley Volume 1" was released on August 28.

The 400-page book covers fire companies from Dickson City, Olyphant and Throop and is the fourth in the series. The previous three releases are "History of the Carbondale, PA Fire Departments 1824 – 2015", "The Scranton Fire Department 1854 – Present

Including Minooka Hose Co.” and “The Boys of Bucktown”, which is the story of the fire companies of Dunmore.

“Volunteers of the Valley Volume I” sells for \$60 and is expected to be available at several upcoming events including the Northeastern Pennsylvania Volunteer Fire Fighters Convention in Montrose on September 6 and 7 and the Northeastern Pennsylvania Local History Fair at the Viewmont Mall, Dickson City, Saturday, September 28 from 10am to 4pm.

The fifth in author Klapatch’s series is “Volunteers of the Valley Volume II.” The book will cover the fire companies of Archbald/Eynon/Sturges, Blakely/Peckville and Jessup/Winton.

Dunmore Cemetery Tour 2024



Dearly Departed Player Laura Doyle plays a “resident” waiting for guests to arrive
Image source <https://www.visitnepa.org/events/major-events-festivals/dunmore-cemetery-tour/>

The Dearly Departed Players return to the Dunmore Cemetery with an all-new tour Sunday, September 29 and Sunday, October 6, 2024, at 2:00 pm. “Residents” of the cemetery, return to tell their sides of stories about their lives and things that occurred during their lifetimes.



Tour Director Julie Esty as a "resident" candidly telling her story
 Image source: <https://discovernepa.com/.../the-dunmore.../2024-09-29/>

Tour Director, Julie Esty, reported that the Players have been rehearsing since mid-July. Tour 2024 will feature eleven all new "stops" on a two-hour journey through the cemetery. One of the stops will address the first burial at Dunmore Cemetery and take the Players further back in time than they have gone in their many years. Also featured this year will be a Dunmore hotelkeeper, a vaudeville performer as well as a woman who shares the secret to living to the advanced age of 106.



Visitors on the way to visit another Dunmore Cemetery "resident"
 Source: <https://www.visitnepa.org/events/major-events-festivals/dunmore-cemetery-tour/>

As in the past, the cemetery will be decorated in a harvest theme courtesy of Space Time Mead and Cider, Scranton Films, Lackawanna Historical Society, the Ritz Theater and Carlucci, Golden, DeSantis Funeral Home.

The Dunmore Cemetery Tour is a recipient of a Lackawanna County Arts and Culture grant that helps to bring the production to the public, as well as to maintain its free admission policy. Reservations are not necessary. Because there isn't much seating available, comfortable walking shoes are suggested.

The annual tour celebrates the history and heritage of the Lackawanna Valley. The tour has been an annual event for more than two decades, attracting visitors from Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey. For information, contact Julie Esty at 570-344-3819.



Above right: Autumn decorations at the resting place of Dunmore music teacher/director Martha Matthews Owens. Photo courtesy of Julie Esty.

Dunmore Cemetery Tour Images Past and Present

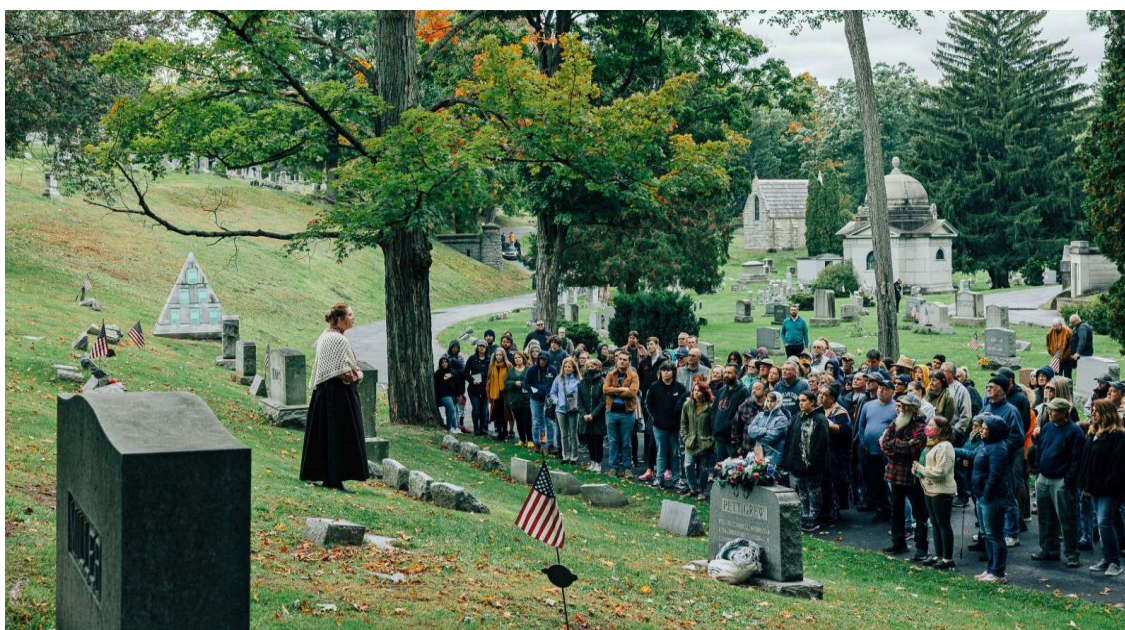


Dearly Departed Player Nelson Wood
<https://www.visitnepa.org/events/major-events-festivals/dunmore-cemetery-tour/>

lackawannahistory@gmail.com



*Dearly Departed Player Roger Mattes
Photo courtesy of Julie Esty*



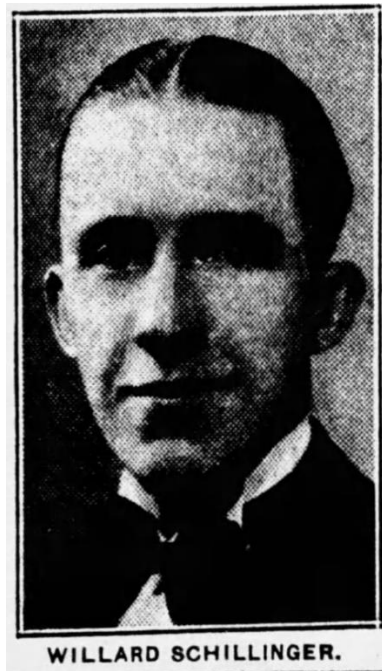
*A "resident" returns to share her story
Image source <https://www.visitnepa.org/events/major-events-festivals/dunmore-cemetery-tour/>*

*Follow the Dunmore Cemetery on Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/TheDunmoreCemeteryTour/>*

lackawannahistory@gmail.com

*Shady Lane Cemetery Resident
Willard E. Schillinger (1909 -1985)*

By Carol Wilkerson



*Scranton Times – Tribune
October 16, 1931*

Willard Edward Schillinger was born on June 20, 1909, in Scranton. His parents were Otto Schillinger and Amalia “Mollie” Ledger Schillinger. Otto had been born in Baden-Wurttemberg, Germany, but immigrated to the U.S. with his family in the 1890s. Otto had three siblings, brothers Christian Jr. and Frederick, and sister Anna. The four young people worked hard to establish themselves in their new country.

Around 1899, Otto’s father, Christian Schillinger Sr., disappeared from home after suffering from a number of financial difficulties. This left the four children to support their mother, Barbara Worley Schillinger. These pressures probably explain why Otto worked during a strike in 1902, which resulted in other workers taunting him as a “scab.” Not one to take abuse lightly, Otto had the three men arrested on misdemeanor charges.

In 1903, the Schillinger family suffered the glare of unwanted publicity. Barbara’s brother, Jacob Worley, who lived next door to the Schillingers, loudly and publicly accused his sister and her children of murdering Christian Sr. and burying him behind the outhouse. The police investigated and found no grounds for the accusation, whereupon Barbara swore out a warrant against her brother for making false accusations. After a lengthy hearing, Worley was found guilty of a breach of the peace and fined \$10.

Besides working, the Schillinger siblings were an active and social family. In 1905, Otto attended a dance given by the Electric City Wheelmen Club. A young woman named Mollie Ledger also attended the dance. We don't know if this is when the young people first met, but the two were married in 1907.

Willard Schillinger was the oldest child of Otto and Mollie. They had at least six other children: Bertha Anna (1911), Carl Otto (1913), Elmer Frederick (1916), Paul R. (1918), Ruth Theresa (1926), and Robert C. (1930). Otto supported the family by working at various jobs over the years, first as a coal inspector for the railroad, then as foreman of a road crew, then as a supervisor in a boiler factory.

The extended Schillinger family was also very musical. In 1908, the Schillinger quartet entertained at a party given by Otto's sister Anna. The quartet consisted of Anna, Otto, Fred, and Fred's wife. This musical involvement undoubtedly explains how Willard grew up with a passion for music. By 1929, he had formed the Willard Schillinger Orchestra, a group that played for dances, parties, and weddings in the Scranton area.



Willard Schillinger and his Orchestra posed for this picture on June 9, 1929. Shown, first row from left: William Hennigan, Thomas Allison and Edward Reap; second row: Irving Miller, A. O. Schillinger, Chester Thomas, Gordon Floyd, Ralph Stevens and Willard Schillinger.

*Jun 9, 1929 Photograph
Scrantonian Tribune
October 3, 1982*

In 1931, Willard married Jane Evans, daughter of William Evans and Jessie Rumbold Evans of Clarks Green. After returning from their honeymoon, they settled down at the Nay Aug Apartments. Willard continued his fulltime employment at an electric company, where he spent around 20 years of his career. However, his true passion was playing music with his orchestra at professional venues. His group was extremely popular in Scranton for many years.

Willard and Jane had only one child, Donald William Schillinger, who was born in 1933. Since he had no siblings, Donald probably looked up to Fred Schillinger Jr. (Frederick's son and Willard's cousin) who was born in 1924. These two grew up in Scranton surrounded by music and family. Frederick Sr. had started a successful business, Schillinger Tile and Marble, which he probably hoped to pass along to his son.

Donald was too young to serve in WW2, but Fred Jr. turned 18 in 1942 and enlisted shortly after his birthday. He entered the Army Air Forces, training as a radio operator and gunner for heavy bombers. In March 1944, Fred was reported as missing in the skies over Germany. The Schillinger family was left to agonize over his possible fate.



Staff Sgt. Fred C. Schillinger Jr.
... presumed dead

Per War Department policy, Fred Jr. was declared dead a year and a day after his plane was lost. Two other crew members had similarly disappeared, while seven had survived.

Scranton Tribune
April 7, 1945

In 1946, the Schillinger family learned the circumstances of Fred's death when he was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. During a mission on March 6, 1944, Fred's B-17 was attacked by enemy fighters. The tail gunner was seriously wounded and Fred immediately went to his aid. When the pilot was killed, the rest of the crew evacuated, but Fred remained behind to care for the wounded gunner.

After the war, Willard's orchestra continued playing around Scranton, but he eventually made a strategic change in his employment. Since Fred Jr. had been the only child of Fred Sr., there was no one to take over the tile and marble business. By around 1949, Willard had left behind his electric company employment to work with his uncle. Fred Sr. died in 1952, leaving his assets to his sister Anna. It seems that Willard continued to work at the tile business for several years, but the company was closed by 1960.

Willard continued playing music with his orchestra throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and into the 1970s. His wife Jane died in 1978 and was laid to rest in the Oak Section at Shady Lane Cemetery. Willard joined her there in 1985. Their son Donald died in Florida in 1997.

Willard and Jane reside together at Shady Lane Cemetery—may they rest in peace!

All articles and photos courtesy of Carol Wickerson

Willard Schillinger's Orchestra Had Widespread Appeal

Willard Schillinger's orchestra was popular in the Scranton region. The following are some articles and ads from the 1930s and 1940s showing a variety of events at which his orchestra appeared. Judging from the ads and articles, it appears that the orchestra had several name incarnations.

**Junior Women
To Have Dance
In Legion Hall**

Schillinger's Band
To Play for Yuletide
Frolic Christmas Night

The Winter will reach its zenith of the social season Christmas night when members of the Junior Branch, Abington Women's Club will have their annual Yuletide Frolic in the American Legion Ballroom, this city. Mrs. Gerald Young is general chairman for the affair and Mrs. Thomas Hailstone, chairman of the orchestra committee, has secured Willard Schillinger and his Buck Hill Falls band to play for dancing from 10 to 2 o'clock.

*Scranton Tribune
December 5, 1937*

Penn - Lehi
—AND—
Hermits Clubs
OF LAKE SHERIDAN
Present
Willard Schillinger
AND HIS
PENN BARONS
—At—
CASTLE GARDENS
(Formerly Dundee Ballroom)
411 Adams Avenue
TONIGHT
Dancing 8:30 Till 12:00
Admission 50c
Coming Nov. 10th
Oreon Williams and His
Virginia Nite Hawks
Featuring
Nora Murphy
Formerly With Jan Garber

*Scranton Times – Tribune
October 3, 1931*

PENN-BARONS TO BROADCAST

Willard Schillinger and his Penn-Barons orchestra, who play this evening at the dance at the Century club, the proceeds of which go to the Community Chest, will offer the first part of the evening's entertainment from The Scranton Times radio station, WQAN, beginning at 8 o'clock. This program of dance music will feature popular tunes of the day and should please many of the radio fans.

At 8:30 o'clock the first of a new series of educational topics will be presented under the auspices of the Scranton City council of Parent-Teacher associations. Among those who will be heard in this program are Mrs. Arthur Wilson, president of the local council, and Harold A. Wooster, librarian of the Scranton public library.

Tony Morelli and his Recording Bohemians, whose programs are one of the regular features of this station, will take care of the concluding part of the evening broadcast, furnishing a program of dance music and entertainment with Ben Hunter acting as guest announcer.

Scranton Times - Tribune
November 11, 1932

Varsity Boys'

★ DANCE ★

Sun. Nite, Oct. 13

HOLLAND'S

New Ballroom, Old Forge

WILLARD

SCHILLINGER

and His Hotel Casey Orchestra with **BILLY WHITE,**
the 3 **CHEERS** and
ESTHER PRYOR

35c

8:30 P. M. Till 7

35c

We Pay Tax

Varsity Boys'

Scranton Times - Tribune
October 12, 1940

Schillinger Wins As Police Vote on Orchestra for Ball

Willard Schillinger's orchestra was selected yesterday to play the dance music at the 32nd annual benefit ball of the Scranton Police Department at Col. L. A. Watres Armory Tuesday evening, April 22. Schillinger's won out in a field of 15 local orchestras. The police officers balloted on the selection. Schillinger received 59 votes.

Scranton Tribune
March 25, 1941

University Prom To Be Tonight

The Junior Prom of the University of Scranton will be held tonight in the Arabian Ballroom of the Hotel Jermyn. Music will be furnished by Willard Schillinger and his orchestra. Frank X. Walsh is general chairman of the dance.

Scranton Tribune
August 14, 1942

Band Is Retained For Armory Dance

Willard Schillinger and his 20-piece band will furnish music for the military benefit dance to be conducted by the United Service Organizations and Companies B and C, Pennsylvania Reserve Defense Corps, in Col. L. A. Watres Armory, May 4.

Proceeds of the affair will go to the USO and the State Guardsmen. Mobile equipment from Tobyhanna, the Red Cross and the USO will be exhibited. Servicemen will be admitted free and officers and enlisted men from Tobyhanna will be among the guests.

A feature of the affair will be a dress parade by members of the 1st Battalion, 2nd Regiment, and regimental band. Two war bonds will be awarded as prizes. Col. Stanley F. Corr is honorary chairman and Lt. Col. E. S. Eckhardt and John VanWie are cochairmen.

The Scrantonian
April 18, 1943

*During World War II
Scranton's Hotel Casey
Was Also an Air Raid Shelter*

HOTEL CASEY is Scranton's first-class hotel nearest to all main Railroad Lines and Bus Terminals. Within easy walking distance of theatres, churches, many schools and the University of Scranton.

**HOTEL CASEY IS AN APPROVED AIR RAID
SHELTER**

Steel and concrete construction, absolutely fire-proof, combine for the maximum of safety, and inspire our guests with a feeling of definite security.

SATURDAY NIGHT DANCING TO BE RESUMED

**EFFECTIVE SATURDAY EVENING
SEPTEMBER 19TH.**

MAIN DINING ROOM, HOTEL CASEY

This will be welcome news to dance lovers, especially in view of the fact that

**WILLARD SCHILLINGER'S NEW STYLE MUSIC
WILL BE FEATURED**

The "Jitterbug" style of the past will be eliminated. In place of "din" we will have Music—beautiful music, which real dancers enjoy dancing to, and those not dancing enjoy listening to.

MINIMUM CHARGE \$1 PER PERSON

*Scranton Times – Tribune
September 17, 1942*

Town Newspaper Research: Boom, Bust or Somewhere in Between?

Part 2

By Rick Sedlisky

Boom, bust or somewhere in between. Where to begin your research? Whether it be newspaper research or genealogy research, there are several websites that are good at pointing the new researcher in the right direction.

The digitalization of historical newspapers is a welcome time-saver. There are thousands of newspapers that have been digitized and still many more that are still offline. LDS Genealogy, for example, is one of the sites that offers a few methods that will point the researcher in the right direction.

One method LDS Genealogy suggests is to begin searching for newspapers that have been digitized. The site has a U.S. records directory through which can be found the state and county in which the paper was published.

A second is the tried but true public library where the paper was located. Public libraries often have copies of newspapers and/or microfilm that can be used when at the library or through interlibrary loan. Another way is to do an online search using the state, county and town prefaced with "public library."

The Library of Congress (LOC) offers information on all historical newspapers published in the United States. You can search by a particular location. That will show papers that were published in that area. LOC's directory also offers information on where copies can be located. The following are links to a few sites that are good starting points.

LDS Genealogy: <https://ldsgenealogy.com/Locating-Offline-Newspapers.htm>

Library of Congress: <https://www.loc.gov>

Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers:
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026356/holdings/>

Newspapers.com: [newspapers.com](https://www.newspapers.com) This site has a free introductory period. Following that, a subscription is needed.

<https://ldsgenealogy.com/PA/Lackawanna-County-Newspapers-and-Obituaries.htm>

When using this site, it's easy to expand your search by replacing the state and county with the ones of your choice. In this case for example, just replace Lackawanna with Luzerne or any other county within Pennsylvania.

Remembering Avondale September 6, 1869



Commonwealth Road Marker, Plymouth

Washburn Cemetery Marker, Scranton

Anthracite's worst mining tragedy occurred on September 6, 1869, at the Avondale Colliery in Plymouth Township where 110 men and boys lost their lives to asphyxiation following a below-ground fire. An investigative committee called the disaster an "accident", but many contemporary observers and subsequent historians have pointed to the suspicious nature of the blaze. Whatever the cause, 105 years later, Avondale still stands as the deadliest mining disaster in anthracite history.



Avondale Victims' Grave Markers, Washburn Cemetery, Scranton

Honor Roll Marker List of Avondale Victims Interred at Washburn Cemetery, Scranton



Image source: hmdb.org

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 railroads. If your ancestors left behind anthracite stories of any kind, please contact us at lackawannahistory@gmail.com and include *Anthracite* in the subject matter.



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ANTHRACITE HERITAGE MUSEUM

Presents

*The
50th Anniversary
of the Anthracite Family Album
1973 ~ 2023*

HARDCOAL CHRONICLES

A HALF - CENTURY RETROSPECTIVE

1000 IMAGES

FROM SCOTT D. HERRING

OUR

"LAST ANTHRACITE PHOTOGRAPHER"

COVERING AN ENTIRE FIFTH
OF OUR QUARTER - MILLENNIUM AS

"THE PEOPLE OF THE BLACK DIAMOND"

SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA

MAY 5, 2024 THRU JANUARY 31, 2026

lackawannahistory@gmail.com

Brooks Mine Still Open for Visitors



Image source: <https://undergroundminers.com/brooks-mine-nay-aug-park/>

The Brooks Drift Mine is open to visitors on Saturdays from 10am to 5pm through November 2, 2024

After having been closed and ignored for nearly 50 years, the Brooks Drift Mine, located in Nay Aug Park, Scranton, reopened in August 2023. The non-profit volunteer Underground Miners were responsible for rehabilitating the former tourist attraction.

Opened in 1902 by Greenwood Mine operator, Reese Brooks, the mine was part of the Scranton School of Mines program that educated the public about anthracite mining. It was built to be a teaching museum, affiliated with the nearby Everhart Museum.

Founded in 2002, Underground Miners is a 501©3 nonprofit organization, dedicated to preserving Pennsylvania's anthracite coal mining heritage through an historical online archive, equipment restoration and educational public events.

Subscribe to History Bytes

History Bytes offers a look at our past, as well as a look at Lackawanna and Northeast Pennsylvania in the 21st century. Who are we now? How do we embrace those who came before us and those who have newly arrived?

lackawannahistory@gmail.com

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

Internet Links

Historical Attractions

Anthracite Museum and Iron Furnaces
Brooks Mine
Electric City Trolley Museum
Lackawanna Coal Mine Tour
Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority
Steamtown National Historic Site
Waverly Community House and Destination Freedom

Cultural Partners

Albright Memorial Library and the Lackawanna County Library System
Black Scranton
Century Club
Circle Drive In
Everhart Museum
Garden of Cedar
Ritz Theatre
Scranton Cultural Center at the Masonic Temple
Scranton's Annual Civil War Weekend Events
Scranton Times-Tribune's Pages from the Past
United Neighborhoods Centers
Valley In Motion

Anthracite Research

Pennsylvania's Northern Anthracite Coal Field <http://www.northernfield.info/>
The North-East United States Historical Geographical Information System (NEHGIS)
<http://www.nehgis.org>

Historical Societies

Archbald Historical Society: Contact Ed Casey 570-614-3628
Carbondale Historical Society
Luzerne County Historical Society
Monroe County Historical Society
Plymouth Historical Society www.plymouthhistoricalsocietyluzernecopa.org
Scott Township Historical Society: Contact Robert Vail 570-254-9536
Susquehanna County Historical Society

lackawannahistory@gmail.com

Taylor Historical Society: Contact Christine Schaefer 570-562-1225
Wayne County Historical Society
Wyoming County Historical Society

County and Educational Partners

Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce
Lackawanna County
Lackawanna County Convention and Visitors Bureau
Lackawanna River Conservation Association
Leadership Lackawanna
Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit

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Founded in 1886 as the Lackawanna Institute of History and Science, the Lackawanna Historical Society provides the community with a record of local history through its museum and library collections, exhibits and programs. In 1942, at the bequest of George H. Catlin, the Society established its permanent home at Catlin's 1912 residence, located at 232 Monroe Avenue in Scranton, Pennsylvania. In 1965, it was designated as the official county historical society by Lackawanna County and continues to serve the county as a center for local history resources. The Society, a 501 ©3 nonprofit organization, is supported in part by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Catlin Memorial Trust, Lackawanna County and memberships.