



**HISTORY BYTES**  
***A Lackawanna Historical Society Publication***

Vol. 7 No. 6

November – December 2024

Rick Sedlisky, Editor

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*Image source: Pixabay*

***11<sup>th</sup> Hour of the 11<sup>th</sup> Day of the 11<sup>th</sup> Month***  
***11:00 a.m. 11 November 1918***

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**[lackawannahistory@gmail.com](mailto:lackawannahistory@gmail.com)**

# *For a World at War, Peace at Last*

*By Jack Smiles*

*(Editor's Note: For a World at War, Please at Last, by Jack Smiles, originally appeared in a 2018 issue of Citizens Voice. It was subsequently published in the November – December 2018 issue of History Bytes.)*

- Each day, the headlines grew more hopeful.
- Monday, Nov. 4 — “Austria Quits War, Germany’s Last Ally” and “Enemy Flees On Both Sides Of The Meuse.”
- Tuesday, Nov. 5 — “Yanks Sweep Towards Sedan” and “Allies Take Vast Slice Of Austria.”
- Thursday, Nov. 7 — “Parley With Foe At Dawn” and “Americans Achieve Peak Of Glory At Meuse Battle.”
- Friday, Nov. 8 — “Enemy Routed.”
- Saturday, Nov. 9 — “Germany Between Two Fires.”
- Sunday, Nov. 10 — “Yank Motors Chase Beaten Enemy” and “Smash Across German Lines.”

So it was, two years before the first commercial radio broadcast, Americans followed the wind down of World War I the only way they could — through newspapers.

Finally on Sunday, Nov. 11, 100 years ago today — “State Department Announces

## **Glorious News — GREAT WAR ENDS.”**

The armistice was signed at 2:45 a.m. EST. The Associated Press had the news on the wires within 60 seconds. It reached Wilkes-Barre newspaper offices at 2:46. The news spread by word of mouth from morning newspaper workers to beat cops, watchmen and taxi drivers.

The Ashley collieries and shops of the Central Railroad of New Jersey manufacturing plants were the first to tie down their whistles to blow nonstop. Within 15 minutes, night firemen and engineers at collieries and factories all over the Greater Wilkes-Barre area did the same. Pastors were roused from their beds and ordered their sextons to ring the bells.

Though there were only 7,000 phones in Wilkes-Barre — with a population of 70,000 — and 2,500 in Kingston, every operator was either called to work or reported voluntarily after hearing the whistles and sirens. They handled 85,000 phone calls, answering each with four words: “The war is over.”

Between 3 and 5 a.m., people were roused from their beds. They lit their homes, scrambled to find flags and ran out to the streets, many still in their night wear. Impromptu parades formed in every neighborhood. Revelers on foot or riding in mule and horse drawn wagons, open automobiles and trucks banged drums, cymbals and noisemakers improvised from pots, pans, pails and lunch buckets creating an all-encompassing cacophony. Bonfires were set, but only a few random Roman candles flew, as fireworks manufacturing had been curtailed for the war effort.

News of the war's end came soon after the lifting of the influenza ban on public gatherings. Saloons were allowed to reopen but soon closed for fear of being overwhelmed and damaged by revelers.

Wilkes-Barre Mayor Babcock declared a legal holiday and announced in the morning paper the city would partner with the Chamber of Commerce to organize an official peace parade to form on South River Street at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Factories, collieries and schools closed.

Parade Marshal Colonel Sterling Eyer rode at the head of the line escorted by mounted City and State Police. The lead marchers were men who served in WWI and were home on furlough. Spanish-American and Civil War veterans held places of honor. City, county and township officials of communities from which boys were "over there" marched in the first division.

Along came the Women's National Council of Defense, the Pennsylvania Reserve Militia, the Knights Templar in dress uniforms, the "sun glinting on their swords and armament was a glorious sight," according to a newspaper account. Fifty city firemen in uniform marched in step. From Forty Fort, Girl Pioneers of America wore khaki uniforms, bright red ties and service hats. The Red Cross column in white uniforms wore red veils for the surgical department and blue for canteen workers.

Women of a new organization carried a banner: "Mothers of Enlisted Men." Women of the YWCA donned blue tri-cornered hats. The girls of Serve-Your-City marched in a triangle formation wearing red, white and blue paper hats.

Factories, collieries and railroaders were in their own division. Hazard Wire Rope Works ran a truck filled with workers and decorated with bunting. Miners carried lanterns. The Boys' Working Reserve — a volunteer group of young men between 16 and 21, organized under the U.S. Department of Labor to work farms — rode on tractors.

Nurses in uniform and cooks from the emergency hospital established at the armory during the flu epidemic marched in line. One of the largest and most colorful delegations was from the Holy Rosary Italian Church on Park Avenue. Several drum corps and bands were interspersed among the divisions.

The bell from the old courthouse on Public Square, which was demolished in 1909, was a crowd favorite. Famous for its beautiful tone, it was towed on a float. The War Charities committee carried a large flag horizontally and people threw money into it.

The Sugar Notch fife and drum corps and most of the borough's citizens marched while dragging an image of German Kaiser Wilhelm and his son. The Lehigh and Wilkes-Barre Coal Company's ambulance was drawn by two jet black horses and bore a banner reading: "To Berlin to Bury the Kaiser."

Bringing up the rear of the official parade were paraders who had been touring the city since 3 a.m. with pianos on trucks playing ragtime and "chickens on the radiators of cars," according to the Wilkes-Barre Evening News. All this under a deluge of paper streamers.

Wrath at the Kaiser was a popular theme in the Scranton parade. Six Eagles carried a coffin of the Kaiser and performed a war dance around it. An African-American chapter of the Knights of Pythias also bore a coffin of the Kaiser. One float depicted the Kaiser being burned at the stake. The devil sat on a float with this banner: "I don't want the Kaiser." The Carbondale hearse, drawn by a team of mules, held a coffin in plain view with the banner "Bill's Last Sad Rites, etc."

As happened in Wilkes-Barre, in Scranton, an impromptu parade broke out and from 5 to 9 a.m. and made several trips around town, through Green Ridge, North Scranton, Lackawanna Avenue, Bellevue, West Scranton and Dunmore with people jumping in with musical instruments, drums and cymbals. Italians joined the line with cornets, banjos, mandolins, guitars and hand organs. Those without musical instruments banged lunch pails, pie plates and tapped broom sticks on the roads. Flour was thrown by parade watchers. When they ran out of confetti, they tore up newspapers.

The official Scranton parade was led by World War I soldiers carrying the flags of American allies: P. Nealon, who had been wounded in France, carrying a British flag; John Bone with the Belgian flag, Patrick Ferguson with the French flag and John Hughes, Italian.

The city's bankers marched with a banner reading "If a boy is born on Nov. 12, name him Victor, a girl name her Victoria."

The LDS Band of West Scranton led the singing of "Hail, Hail the Gang's all Here". "The Old Gray Mare", "Keep the Home Fires Burning" and "Over There".

Similar happenings were seen in Pittston, though on a smaller scale. The Eagle Hose Company was out at about 3 a.m. with its drum corps banging through the streets. Homes lit up and thousands poured onto the streets. Parades sprang up in every section of the city.

In the official parade, city police carried lanterns, bank presidents walked in line with breaker boys, 50 women of the Red Cross Canteen marched in "natty blue uniforms," as the Pittston Gazette described them, and the Camp Fire Girls carried large American flags. Hughestown, Upper Pittston, Sebastopol and Jenkins Twp. contingents joined the parade. At the end, the West Pittston Hose Company carried a truck full of citizens blowing horns and waving flags.

The Hitchner Bakery declared a paid holiday for its 100 employees who marched with their supervisors.

In the midst of all the joy, grief. On Nov. 11, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Dale of Quincy Avenue, Scranton, learned of the death of their son, Theadore, 25, killed by poison gas in France. The Syracuse University graduate one of the 627 soldiers and sailors from Luzerne and Lackawanna counties who were killed in the "Great War."

*Sources: Digital archives of the Chicago Tribune, Pittston Gazette, Scranton Republican, Wilkes-Barre Evening News, Wilkes-Barre Record.*

*Casualty source: [genealogytrails.com/penn/luzerne/military/ww\\_1.html](http://genealogytrails.com/penn/luzerne/military/ww_1.html)*

Jack Smiles is an award winning writer who specializes in history, baseball and short fiction. Historical pieces by Mr. Smiles have appeared in a number of Northeast Pennsylvania and Southern New York publications. He is the author of biographies of anthracite miners who became Hall of Fame baseball players: *EE-Yah, the Life and Times of Hughie Jennings*; *Big Ed Walsh: The Life and Times of a Spitballing Hall of Famer*; *Bucky Harris: a Biography of Baseball's Boy Wonder*. He also authored *Ninth Wonder of the World*, the story of the effects construction of the Tunkhannock Viaduct (Nicholson Bridge) had on Nicholson, PA.

*Shady Lane Cemetery Resident  
Edwin A. Harris (1899-1965)*



*Scranton Times-Tribune, June 1, 1965  
Image courtesy of Carol Wilkerson*

Edwin Alfred Harris, known throughout the region as the "Blind Bugler," was born on August 10, 1899 in Cambria County, Pennsylvania. He was the first child of George D. Harris and Janet Gunn Harris, who married in 1898. After Edwin, George and Janet had seven more children: Orland (1903), Gail (1905), John (1907), Maitland (1909), Raymond (1911), Woodrow (1913), and Lenore (1916), who was stillborn and was buried at Stratford Cemetery in Taylor.

The Harris family moved from Cambria County to Taylor, and then eventually to Scranton. George supported the family as a coal miner. As he grew up, Edwin demonstrated considerable talent as a musician. He was a student at Central High School when the U.S. entered WW1. At the age of 17, Edwin left school and enlisted in the 103<sup>rd</sup> Engineers, formed in Scranton, serving as a bugler and runner. A farewell party was given for him just prior to his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday as he prepared to leave for training.

In May 1919, Edwin was home on leave just prior to being shipped off to France to join the fighting. By July, the young man found himself in the midst of some of the most brutal battles experienced by American troops during the war. He was involved in the Second Battle of the Marne, Argonne, Verdun, and Varennes. On October 2, 1918, at Chateau-Thierry, Edwin was injured as he moved forward among the trenches when a shell or grenade exploded in his face. He woke up six hours after the explosion in a military hospital. He was completely blind.

Edwin was treated in France until January 1919, when he was shipped back to New York. He received treatment in a hospital there, then was sent to Baltimore to enroll in a vocational program for blind servicemen. He graduated from this program and returned home to Scranton, where his sacrifice had not been forgotten. The 103<sup>rd</sup> Engineers held dances to raise money for Edwin and otherwise involved him in all of their events. Because of his youth at the time of enlistment, he had received the nickname of "The Kid," which was still used by veterans as a sign of affection.

#### **Party For Soldiers.**

A very pleasant farewell surprise party was given in honor of Edwin Harris at his home, 1131 Stratford avenue, on Monday evening. Mr. Harris is a member of Company F. Engineers, and with his companions, John Gulther and Robert Scott, expect to follow shortly in the path of Company A, which left the other night. During the evening games and dancing were enjoyed and refreshments served. The three boys will long remember the good time of the evening. Before parting the guests expressed their best wishes for a safe journey and the return of all the members of Company F.

*Scranton Tribune, August 9, 1917*

#### **Wounded, Degree Undetermined.**

Thomas H. Morris, 306 School street, Scranton.  
Clyde E. Smith, Sunbury.  
William Eilhart, Elmhurst.  
Joseph T. Heenan, Carbondale.  
Doyle E. Hess, Berfick.  
Oscar L. Conrad, Hopbottom.  
Joseph F. Kamor, Wyoming.  
Herbert D. Fritz, Tobyhanna.  
Harry Krapp, Hazleton.  
William Mitchell, Wilkes-Barre.  
Albert J. Smith, Honesdale.  
Edwin A. Harris, 1237 Stratford avenue, Scranton.

*Scranton Times – Tribune, December 17, 1918*



## BLIND BUGLER APPLIES FOR HIS VICTORY MEDAL

The United States army owes Edwin Harris, of 1237 Stratford avenue, this city, one Victory medal with five battle clasps.

Yesterday afternoon Harris made application for the decoration at the Victory medal station, in the post office building. Col. Hugh D. Wise, officer in charge of the station, approved the application.

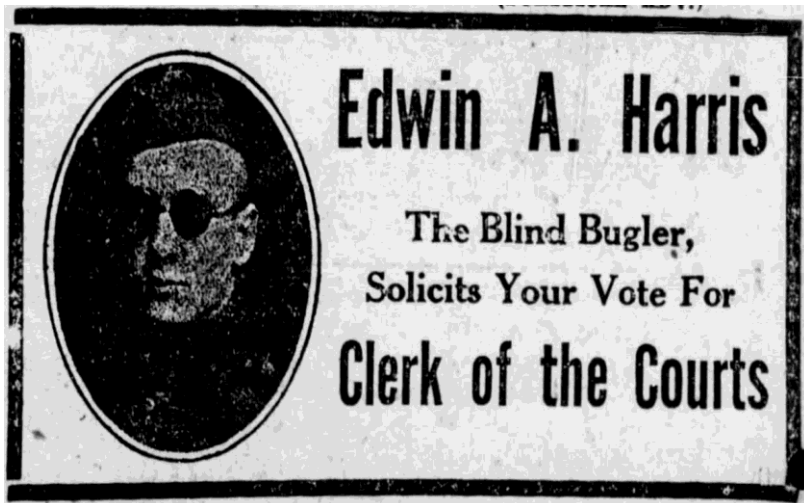
Harris was bugler with Co. F, 103rd Engineers, of the 29th division. He lost his eyesight at a time that retreat wasn't being blown in the Argonne woods. The following battle clasps will be on the Victory medal: Champagne-Marne, Aise-Aisne, Aisne-Marne, Meuse-Argonne and the defensive sector at Chauteau-Thierry.

Though Edwin was considered 100% disabled, he set out to find a way to support himself, despite his disability. In 1920, the Red Cross helped to set him up with a small retail operation. Unfortunately, thieves took advantage of his blindness to steal from him, making this endeavor unworkable.

In 1921, the U.S. Army authorized Victory Medals for soldiers who fought in France. Edwin was able to apply for a medal with five battle clasps, something few American men could do. Perhaps this medal is what inspired Edwin to capitalize on his status as a war hero and go into politics.

*Scranton Tribune, April 1, 1922*

*Left and Above Right: Articles courtesy of Carol Wilkerson*



*Scranton Tribune, September 13, 1921*

*Image and article courtesy of Carol Wilkerson*

## Harris an Easy Winner.

Edwin Harris, of West Scranton, who lost his eyesight in the world war, was an easy winner for clerk of the courts. Tabulated returns from 201 districts show Harris 7,000 in the lead of James Arigoni and 13,000 ahead of Will Leach. Harris, strength surprises even the supposedly wise ones politically. He jumped into the lead in the first districts heard from and never was really in danger.

*Scranton Tribune, September 22, 1922*

Since an election for Clerk of Courts was coming up in 1921, Edwin registered to run as a candidate in both the Democratic and Republican primaries. Though barely of legal age and a novice to politics, he defied the political machines by winning both nominations, making his candidacy uncontested. Edwin became the Clerk of Courts in 1922 and held the office until 1945.

Besides his work for the city, Edwin continued his service as a bugler. In 1919, he first played "Taps" at the Memorial Day observance at Nay Aug Park, a performance he repeated there every year until 1965. He played at military funerals and other events and was active in both the Disabled American Veterans (D.A.V.) and the Veterans of Foreign Wars (V.F.W.), along with other veteran groups.

In 1925, tragedy struck the Harris family when 18-year-old John Harris drowned in a boating accident on Lake Sheridan. This death caused the family to purchase burial plots at Shady Lane Cemetery, where John was laid to rest.



*Scranton Tribune, November 12, 1925  
Image courtesy of Carol Wilkerson*

This family connection to Shady Lane is probably what prompted Edwin to pursue the idea of a burial plot for WW1 veterans at the cemetery. He initially persuaded the cemetery association to donate 100 plots specifically for veterans of the "Great War," with a promise of 100 more to be added. This plan eventually expanded to become the Soldier Section of Shady Lane Cemetery, which was dedicated in 1927 and was open to all veterans.

Also in 1927, Edwin experienced a significant life event. His high school sweetheart, Verna Morris, had promised to wait for him when he headed off to France. Verna had been there when he returned without his eyesight and had helped him to adjust to his new reality. She studied nursing at Hahnemann Hospital, afterwards working for the West Mountain Sanitarium. In April 1927, Edwin and Verna slipped off to Binghamton and were secretly married. The marriage was not announced in Scranton until December probably because of Verna's job.



*Scranton Times – Tribune, December 1, 1927  
Article courtesy of Carol Wilkerson*



Verna became pregnant towards the end of 1928, which certainly brought the couple great joy. It seems that Verna went into labor on July 17, 1929, and was taken to Hahnemann Hospital. Presumably there were problems with the birth, as she underwent a C-Section on the evening of July 18. Edwin Alfred Harris Jr. was successfully delivered, but he had suffered trauma due to extended labor. He lived only nine hours, dying around 4:00 a.m. on July 19.

The death of his newborn son was not the only tragedy Edwin would suffer. After her operation, Verna suffered puerperal peritonitis, a bacterial infection that can attack the uterus after birth.

In 1929, just one year after penicillin had been discovered and many years before it would be purified and available for general use, there were few effective ways to fight such an infection. Verna died in the hospital on July 22.

A devastated Edwin arranged to bury his wife and child in the family plot at Shady Lane. Hundreds of people attended the service at the cemetery, including a group of Verna's fellow Hahnemann graduates who were honorary pallbearers. Edwin moved back in with his parents in the family home at 1237 Rundle Street, where he would live for the rest of his life.

Tragedy struck the family again in 1938, when 24-year-old Woodrow was killed in an automobile accident. In an era prior to seatbelts, six young men were crammed into an open touring car headed from Chinchilla to Lake Sheridan. When the car struck a culvert, Woodrow was thrown from the vehicle and died due to head injuries. Maitland and Raymond, who were also in the car, were only slightly injured. Woodrow was buried at Shady Lane. His mother, Janet Harris, joined him in 1941.

Throughout these years, Edwin continued to be reelected and to work diligently as the Clerk of Courts. Articles were written about how he was able to perform his duties despite his blindness. However, in 1945 he was finally defeated by a Democratic opponent. Edwin took several years away from politics, then ran as the Republican candidate for Tax Collector in 1949. When he was defeated, he retired from politics permanently.



*Scranton Times – Tribune, July 24, 1929*  
*Article courtesy of Carol Wilkerson*

For the remaining years of his life, Edwin focused on his veteran activities, always making himself available when a bugler was needed. He lived on Rundle Street with his father George and his sister Gail, who never married. George Harris finally died in 1960 at the age of 83 and was laid to rest with his wife Janet.

Edwin was not destined to live as long as his father. He became ill in 1965 and died at the age of 66. He was buried with military honors at Shady Lane Cemetery, finally joining his beloved Verna and his infant son. All of his remaining siblings were eventually laid to rest in the double Harris plot, Orland in 1971, Maitland in 1976, Raymond in 1979, and Gail in 1993.

**Former Clerk of Courts**


## **Blind Bugler Edwin A. Harris Dies at 66 on Memorial Day**

Taps sounded Sunday—Memorial Day—for Edwin A. Harris, the blind bugler who for so many years sounded the tribute at veterans' memorial services.

The 66-year-old World War 1 veteran died at 10 P.M. at his home, 1237 Rundle St. He had been in ill health for some time, but his death came unexpectedly.

A bugler with Co. F, 103d Engineers, Mr. Harris was blinded by an enemy grenade on Oct. 2, 1918, just a few weeks before the Armistice.

Returning to civilian life, he set to carving himself a career in politics and served for 24 years as the Lackawanna County Clerk of Courts. He was a popular political figure and well-known for his ability to recognize persons by their voice after only one of two



*Scranton Times-Tribune, June 1, 1965*

*Article courtesy of Carol Wilkerson*

Edwin, Verna, Edwin Jr., George, Janet, John, Woodrow, Orland, Maitland, Raymond, and Gail all now reside at Shady Lane Cemetery—may they rest in peace!

## *Harris Family Members Documentation*

### ***Edwin A "Blind Bugler" Harris Veteran:***

Birth 10 Aug 1899

Death 3 Jun 1965 (aged 66)

Lot: 16 Section: Cedar - Chestnut St. Grave: 1

### ***Father:***

George D. Harris

Birth 1876

Death 18 Apr 1960 (aged 83–84) Lot: 18 Section: Cedar - Chestnut St. Grave: 4

### ***Mother:***

Janet Gunn Harris

Birth 20 May 1875

Death 18 Nov 1941 (aged 66)

Lot: 18 Section: Cedar - Chestnut St. Grave: 3

### ***Siblings:***

Orland "Dick" Harris 1903–1971 Lot 16

Gertrude Gail Harris 1905–1993 Lot 16

John D. Harris 1907–1925 Lot 18

George Maitland Harris 1909–1976 Lot 16

Raymond G Harris 1911–1979 Lot 18

Woodrow Wilson Harris 1913–1938 Lot 18

Infant Girl Harris 1916–1916 Lenore? Stratford Cemetery, Taylor

### ***Spouse:***

Verna Morris Harris

Birth 1898

Death 22 Jul 1929 (aged apx. 30–31)

Lot: 16 Section: Cedar - Chestnut St. Grave: 6

### ***Child:***

Edwin Harris Jr.

Birth 18 Jul 1929

Death 19 Jul 1929 (aged 1 day)

Lot: 16 Section: Cedar - Chestnut St. Grave: 6

Buried with mother

## *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)
- 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](mailto: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)*

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

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**[lackawannahistory@gmail.com](mailto:lackawannahistory@gmail.com)**

## *Ghostly Gallery Link*

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



**Wednesday, November 30: Farr St. Tavern, 1601 Farr St., Scranton 570-866-2188**

*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

#### **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

#### **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

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**[lackawannahistory@gmail.com](mailto:lackawannahistory@gmail.com)**

## Dunmore/North Pocono

**Dunmore**  
3 Jacks Burgers  
La Cucina

**Moscow**  
Delish on Main

**Springbrook Twp.**  
Olde Brook Inn

### *Genealogy Forum*

*November 13, 1 pm, via Zoom:*

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89672716081?pwd=uFVu6qhwMVgrDk5QBPEGU8PT5cDWsJ.1>

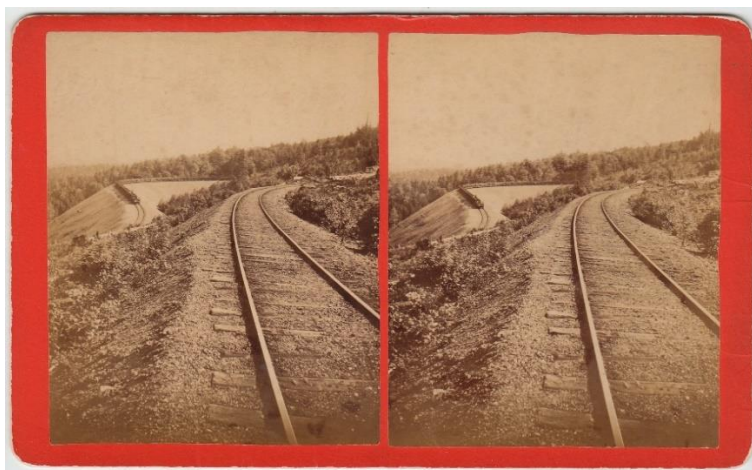
*Nancy Gilbride Casey presents:*

*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 Nancy Gilbride Casey discovered details about the life and death of her second great-grandmother Catherine Ryan Gilbride (1855-1881) and how she sought to restore her to her rightful place in the family.

### *Delaware & Hudson Gravity Railroad Presentation*



*Shepherd's Crook on the Delaware and Hudson Gravity Railroad (photo, 1879, by L. Hensel)*

**GRAVITY RAILROAD PRESENTATION:** On November 11, 2024, at the Archbald Historical Society, Dr. S. Robert Powell will speak on the Delaware and Hudson Gravity Railroad. The presentation, to which the public is invited, will take place on the ground floor of the Archbald borough building, and will begin at 7 PM.

*For information on the Delaware & Hudson Gravity Railroad and the Delaware & Hudson Railway, contact the Carbondale Historical Society at <https://carbondalepahistorical.org/>*

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**[lackawannahistory@gmail.com](mailto:lackawannahistory@gmail.com)**



*Save the Date: LHS Holiday Gathering:*  
*December 18 at Constantino's (Details TBA)*

## *Lose Your Winter Blues*

*Thursday, January 16, 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm at the Catlin House.* Join us for a special mid-winter gathering with a scavenger hunt, mock cocktail contest and other surprises

## *Pysanky Making Workshop*

*Saturday, March 15:* At the Catlin House. *Time:* TBA. \$30 per person Registration required.

## *Anthracite Mining Heritage Month*

Anthracite Mining Heritage Month returns with a variety of programs that will take place across Northeast Pennsylvania during January 2025. The following is a list of confirmed events to date. A full schedule will appear in the January – February 2025 issue of History Bytes.

### *Thursday, January 16*

*Msgr. John J. Curran Lecture (January 16th): Venue:* Burke Auditorium, King's College, Wilkes-Barre; *Speaker:* TBA.

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### *Friday, January 17*

*The Annual Knox Mine Disaster Program: Venue:* The Anthracite Heritage Museum, Scranton; **Topic:** presentations by mining engineers focused on the mining of anthracite coal, past and present (names and details to follow).

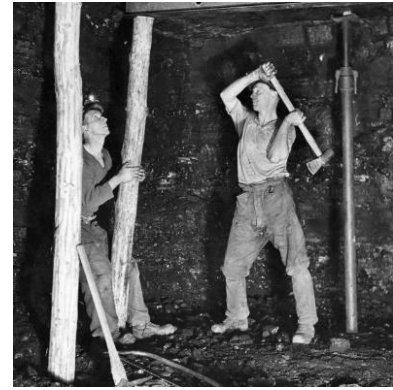
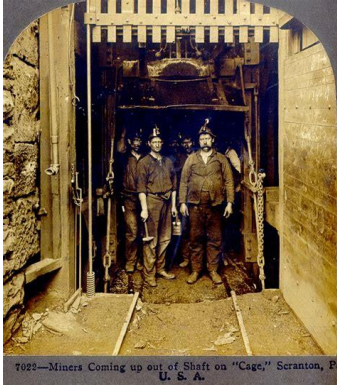
### *Thursday, January 23*

*An Evening with Six Anthracite Regional Personalities (January 23rd): Venue:* Anthracite Heritage Museum, Scranton; *Topics:* Six speakers will provide biographical sketches of the following-- William W. Scranton (mining and manufacturing), Msgr. John J. Curran (the mineworkers' advocate), Rinaldo Cappellin (anthracite labor leader), Min Matheson (ladies' garment union leader), George F. Baer (president of the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad), Christie Mathewson (baseball).

*Sunday, January 26*

*Artistic Expressions in Anthracite: Venue:* Details TBA

Start times as well as a complete list of programs and other information will appear in the January – February 2025 issue of History Bytes.



*Image sources l to r: [exovcafys.blob.core/windows.net](https://exovcafys.blob.core.windows.net/flashback.com/pinterest.com) [flashback.com/pinterest.com](https://flashback.com/pinterest.com)*

## *12<sup>th</sup> Annual Buy Local Holiday Marketplace*



It's the most wonderful time of the year! We're here to help you get a handle on your holiday shopping at our **12th Annual Buy Local Holiday Marketplace!** Featuring the area's

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**[lackawannahistory@gmail.com](mailto:lackawannahistory@gmail.com)**

finest local businesses, artisans and wineries, the Buy Local Holiday Marketplace provides you with the opportunity to explore our building AND shop til you drop! We'll truly have something for EVERYONE, from gourmet food and wine gifts to clothing, jewelry and accessories, to the perfect holiday decor for your home, and even a treat for your furry friends! We have some great new vendors who are participating in our marketplace for the first time! So much to see! The event will feature 95+ local vendors and span FIVE floors of the Scranton Cultural Center at the Masonic Temple.

As an added bonus, a FREE reusable shopping bag will be given to the first 1,000 patrons thanks to our event sponsor, Peoples Security Bank & Trust.

There is a \$4 admission fee. Food and drinks will be available for purchase. The 12th Annual Buy Local Holiday Marketplace is sponsored by Peoples Security Bank & Trust and LT Verrastro. Supported by Lackawanna County and the PA Council on the Arts.

A promotional graphic for NET Credit Union. The background is a gradient of orange, red, and blue with abstract geometric shapes. The main headline is "Unlike Your Bank" in large, bold, white letters. Below it, a sub-headline reads "If you're a member of the Lackawanna Historical Society, then you can Bank on NET!". There are six icons arranged in a 2x3 grid, each with a label below it: a heart icon for "#netcares", a location pin icon for "All Local", a group of people icon for "Not for Profit", a slider icon for "Diverse Products & Services", a house icon for "Personalized Mortgage Services", and a credit card icon with a slash for "No Annual Fee on Credit Cards". At the bottom center is the website "netcreditunion.com". In the bottom right corner is the NET Credit Union logo, which features a stylized "N" with a gear-like pattern and the text "NET CREDIT UNION".

**Unlike Your Bank**

If you're a member of the Lackawanna Historical Society, then you can Bank on NET!

- #netcares
- All Local
- Not for Profit
- Diverse Products & Services
- Personalized Mortgage Services
- No Annual Fee on Credit Cards

netcreditunion.com

**NET**  
CREDIT UNION





This is the fifth 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](mailto:lackawannahistory@gmail.com)

This issue of "History Bytes" recalls the exploratory testing work done in 1950 by Daystrom Instruments bouncing radar impulses off a mountain plateau in the Borough of Archbald, Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania. Four years later, 1954, this preliminary research work led to the establishment of the Daystrom Instruments Archbald plant being designated a prime contractor for the United States Navy.

Daystrom in the 1950s had the foresight to reason that the future world would operate on electronics and its potential, yet unknown, extensions. What began as the "IBM Magic Brain" led to computers and ultimately to the chips of the present day.

UPDATE: Daystrom Instruments became part of the Lockheed Martin family in 1996. In addition to being the home for the Precision Guided Systems and Naval Electronic Systems product line, employees at the Archbald plant manufacture assemblies for many other Lockheed Martin products. The facility specializes in electronics assembly and metal fabrication for programs such as Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System (GMLRS), Apache Fire Control, and Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3).

---Richard Fitzsimmons, Ph.D.



GEORGE J. PARKER, PRESIDENT... DIRECTS NEST OF BRAINS AND SKILL

## **The Mountain Many Blessings**

THIS is the story of a mountain, a plateau and a sick industrial area.

The mountain, because it was where it was, brought prosperity and happiness back to the people who lived in its view. Thanks to electronics.

The Borough of Archbald, once rich in coal mines, contained the mountain and the plateau. But the mines had died out one by one and the mountain and plateau, covered with scrub oak, weren't worth talking about.

But one day in 1950 some strange looking equipment was hauled up onto the plateau and aimed at the mountain. The mountain responded by sending back the proper impulses to the equipment and the Daystrom Instrument Plant was born.

The equipment was radar, the plateau was the proper site, and the mountain was the right target on which to test the bouncing impulse of this marvelous electronic device. The device, indirectly, bounced financial sparks, not only into Archbald itself, but into communities for miles around.

The natives, at first, weren't too interested in this business of radar. They had read about its war time use in detecting enemy planes and ships. They thought it was a bit late to stick a war baby up on that plateau.

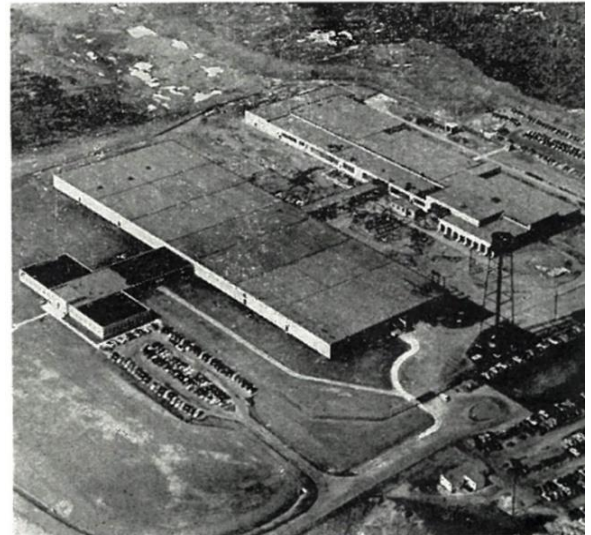
The war baby is still up there, firing away at the mountain of blessing, and beside it are hundreds of other electronic devices, even a nerve center of the IBM magic brain, all parts of the wonderful gadgetry of the infant but booming electronics industry.

But all this grew behind the magic window. The Daystrom engineers first set up Building No.2 which, in turn, was constructed as a frame for the largest plexi glass window ever installed. It is one-half inch thick of laminated plexi glass, covering an area 230 feet long by eight feet high.

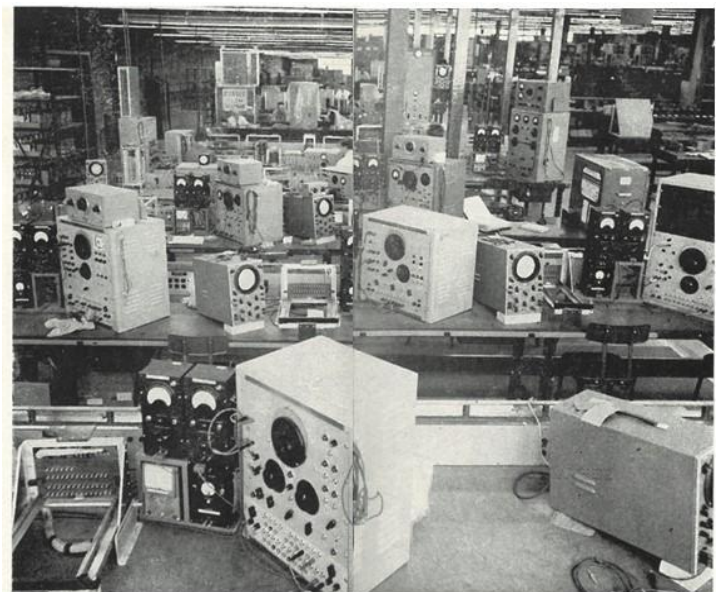
Behind this window sits completed Mark 56 Gunfire Control Systems, Daystrom's first big project for the United States Navy, firing away in tests at the mountain. The nature of this piece of ordinance is secret and beyond the comprehension of the average layman. Briefly, it is the brains of a fighting ship.

This first building, known as the test bay, was like having the tail of the dog first, then getting the dog, because from this relatively small structure grew 350,000 feet of working space in two other connecting one-story buildings.

The physical growth of this Immense structure, however, was not haphazard. It was planned and designed with the exacting care which Daystrom engineers give to the plant's complicated products. F. Clifton Pearce, Scranton architect, planned, with the aid of the Daystrom people, the architecture to meet all the foreseeable building needs of this vast and rapidly expanding industry.



NERVES ARE ASSEMBLED FOR DIVERSIFIED  
ELECTRONIC DEVICES OF ALL TYPES



ARRAY OF ELECTRONIC GADGETS  
WHICH GO INTO FIRE CONTROL UNIT



But to return to Archbald's lucky mountain. The plant was located near it for the initial purpose of manufacturing the radar equipment, but the plant itself was designed for greater and more diversified activity.



**Disabled Miner Operates  
Intricate Machine**

The plant, built at a cost of \$4,000,000, was designed to be as permanent as the mountain for it represents a lot of massive thinking into the future.

This thinking was a cooperative effort on the part of an ample supply of the best brains in the electronic and associated fields. The result – the Archbald plant was to be a gigantic job shop to meet the demands in design and manufacture of the relatively new electronics industry. It was to be, in other words, a place where a company could order the design and manufacture of about everything conceivable, from a small wire assembly for an electronic gadget to the massive and complicated thinking device for a battleship.

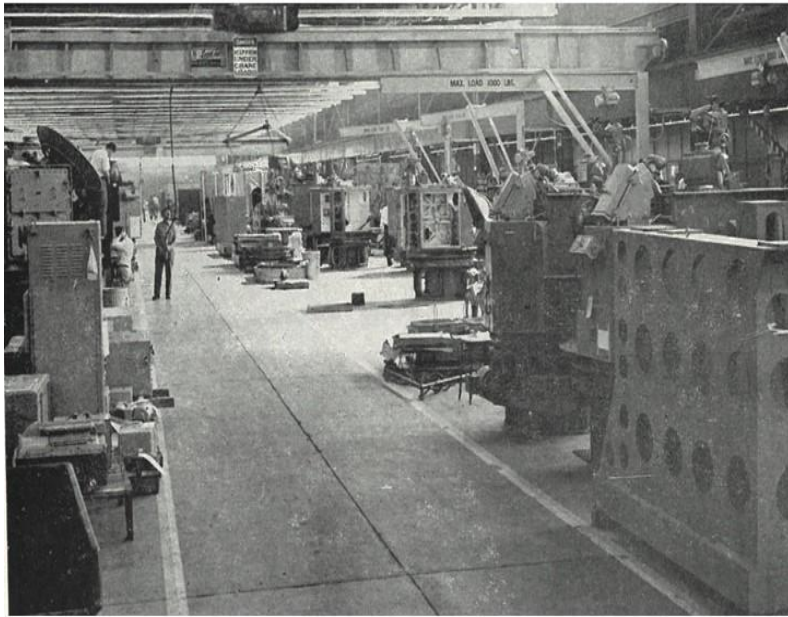
President George J. Parker gathered together a technical organization of carefully selected men whose collective experience virtually covers the field of electronic, nuclear instrumentation, computing and electro-mechanical devices. This deep well of knowledge was made possible by the deliberate choice of scientists and engineers from the various areas of design. Reinforcing this creative skill are specialists in metallurgy, welding, and organic and plated finishes.

This, to the average layman, sounds like a pretty cold proposition to drop down in an area where the only previous skill was the extraction of coal from a pit.

The people of the area, however, learned quickly that big thinkers are big people in every other way. The Daystrom management saw in these eager people a potential skill that needed only development. If they could create marvels in electronics, they could develop with much greater ease the responsive latent ability in the average American Joe or Mary.

They were more than pleased with the results. Approximately 1,500 area residents, mostly men, went into the massive plant as inexperienced as a preacher at a dice game. First, they were eager. A steady job with a substantial paycheck in the region was as rare as a pearl in a clam.

They were a quick and an intelligent people. One doesn't work long in a coal mine if he isn't blessed with both qualities. And they were careful. This quality seemed, as other manufacturers had found, to be inbred. A man isn't careless where the slightest mistake can pull the roof down on his head.



VASTNESS OF PLANT IS ONLY SUGGESTED BY THIS SECTION

These qualifications would recommend them anywhere, but few, if any of them, had the slightest training or skill needed to work on the tolerances and delicacies of electronic or electromechanical devices. But inherently they were the right people if they had the training.

Key personnel had been training while the plant was being constructed and they in turn trained the new workers either in classes or by association. Some skills had to

be imported, but the majority of the workers came from the immediate area. They were not long in learning and with the learning came a pride which few of these people had known before. They developed the pride of the creative workman. They saw their handiwork, combined with the work of others, fashioned into an instrument of beauty.

Beauty is relative and a smoothly working, precision instrument to an engineer can be "a joy forever." And this immense plant, an engineer's dreamland of creative machinery, soon became the workers' pride and joy.

There was more to it than just training these people to perform a function. Parker and his fellow engineers and executives placed a premium on human dignity. The Daystrom workers were more valuable to them than anything else in the plant. Parker works with them on that basis.

This working combination is manifest in every operation in the plant. The old type labor leader, once rampant in this region, visiting Daystrom, would be as far out of his element as if he was doing a repair job on the Mark 56. Entirely beyond his comprehension would be the free exchange between workers and executives of ideas and respect.

It might be considered corny to call Daystrom one big, happy family. But a visitor to the plant can't escape this impression. Even the most doubtful Thomas can't ignore the fact that from humblest worker, who receives equal respect, to Parker, himself, there is the same pride in Daystrom and its accomplishments.

Perhaps, management fostered this plant with pride but nothing healthier and more satisfying has ever been introduced into industry. It is sad that it was not known in the prime era of the coal industry.

The workers have every conceivable right and benefit. For many a man who ate his lunch out of a bucket in the dark and dampness of a mine, it must be a spot of heaven to sit down and have a healthy dinner in an immaculate cafeteria. Greater yet, perhaps, is to use his brains and his hands to create. These things can't be measured, but the satisfaction they bring is in every worker's face.

Daystrom has been otherwise radiant. Its immense payroll has revived an area and its people. Spreading in all directions, this is evident in new homes and renovated homes which were neglected during the industrial sag. Surrounding drab communities are becoming brighter with generous applications of house paint in tones expressive of a gay feeling, long absent.

But greatest of all, perhaps, is the sense of permanency Daystrom gives to its workers. They know that their plant was built to stay and they know it is topped by the lasting assets of brains. They know that these aren't as exhaustible as a coal vein.

The workers know that America is not going to ever stop demanding the services and products which Daystrom has to offer.



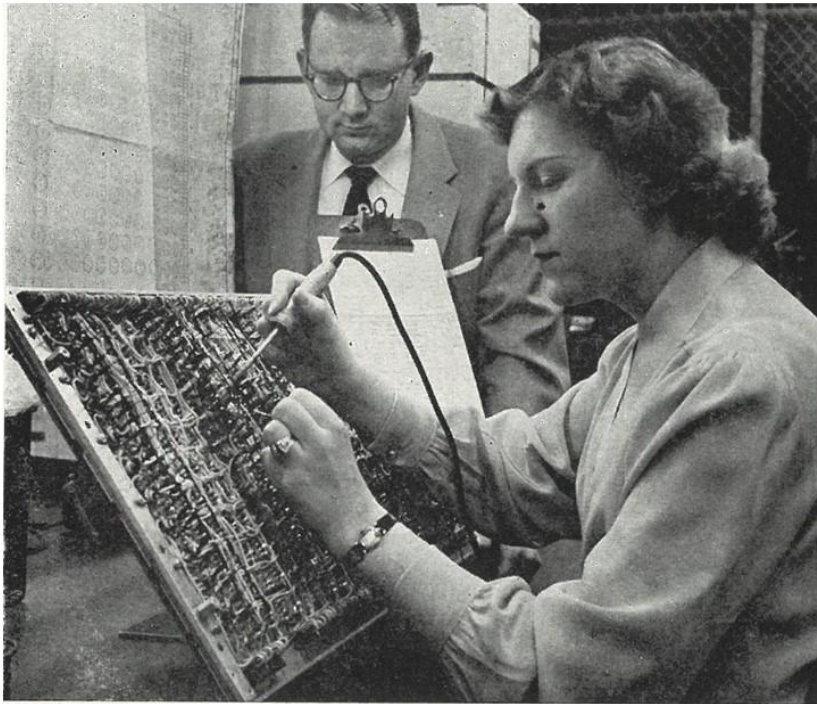
LINE ASSEMBLY USED ON ELECTRONIC UNIT

The future, we have reason to believe, will operate on electronics and its potential extensions. And the future is going to stem out of a place like Daystrom.

So, to shift to the future and the brain department, a brief encounter with its various components will quickly establish Daystrom's stability.

First component in the Daystrom brain department is the research and development organization, composed of specialized and carefully selected engineers and scientists. These fellows are able to analyze requirements for electro-mechanical devices and to convert a specification or an idea into a design from which a prototype can be made or quantity production accomplished.





ASSEMBLY OF UNIT FOR IBM MAGIC BRAIN

This is a mouthful to the uninitiated, but in the language of the ordinary Daystrom workers, "these fellows can take an idea, make it into something and drop a load of it in your lap in no time at all."

More plainly, these engineers and scientists are laboring on specifications and ideas which will turn up later as work to be done on the plant machines. They are at present working to provide future work for Daystrom employees.

If you want to know more about them; they have special skills in mathematics, radar circuitry, electronic computer design, gyro design, nuclear instrumentation and low temperature physics. These skills are a must for the future and where they are located there will be employment.

A material cog amid this mental fertility at Daystrom is a pilot plant within the plant. This pilot plant occupying 8,000 square feet of air-conditioned space, is staffed with engineers, technicians, manufacturing supervisors and skilled workers who can convert development sketches or models into production designs. This group, in short, makes an idea work.

From the pilot plant, the idea now made practical moves into the instrument manufacturing facility, equipped for production of high precision electrical and mechanical assemblies. The unusual feature of the plant is the wide range of work it can handle, from machine castings and weldments weighing tons, as easily as tiny components of an instrument assembly.

Backing all this is an engineering department exactingly skillful in the necessities of precision production.

The tools they have to work with? A summary of the production machine tools and other manufacturing facilities and the electronic test and measuring equipment contained in the Daystrom plant reads like the total list of similar items taken by the Russians out of Germany at the end of the war.

Daystrom is but one member of a large family headed by Mr. Thomas R. Jones, president. Other members are the American Type Founders, the world's largest supplier of printing equipment; Daystrom Furniture Division, the world's largest supplier of

chromed, tubular furniture, and Daystrom Electric Corporation, manufacturers of precision sound recorders and other electronic products. A healthy family, indeed.

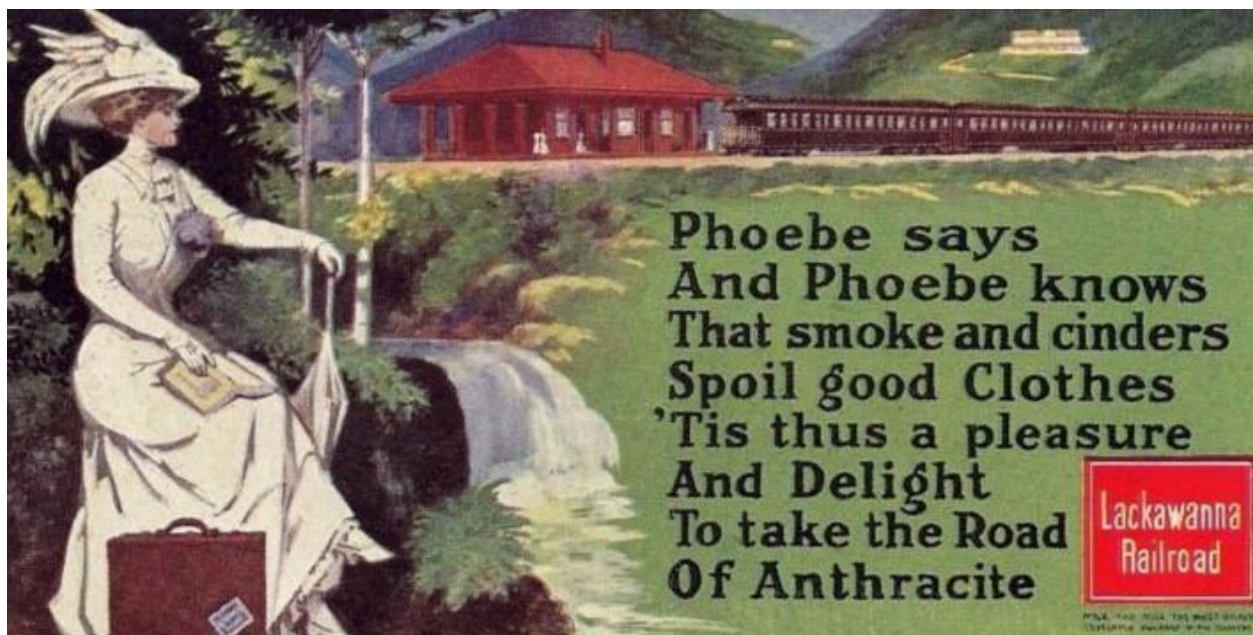
The Daystrom Instrument Division is gathering in civilian work and one item, though small in structure, heralds the future. It is a component of the IBM calculator, better known as the magic brain, which has a big spot reserved for itself in the future.

Meanwhile, Daystrom is carrying on a nation-wide advertising campaign pointing out to manufacturers that their future by design is located in Archbald.

The final test of any industry is its people. The pride and care which the employees put into their work is reflected in their safety record. Accidents are carelessness. Last year not one manhour was lost because of an accident.

This is a perfect record in industry and reveals the care and pride which workers take in the plant below their lucky mountain.

## *How Long Have the Trains Been Gone? Phoebe Snow Finds Love on the Road of Anthracite*



*A Lackawanna Railroad ad from 1912*

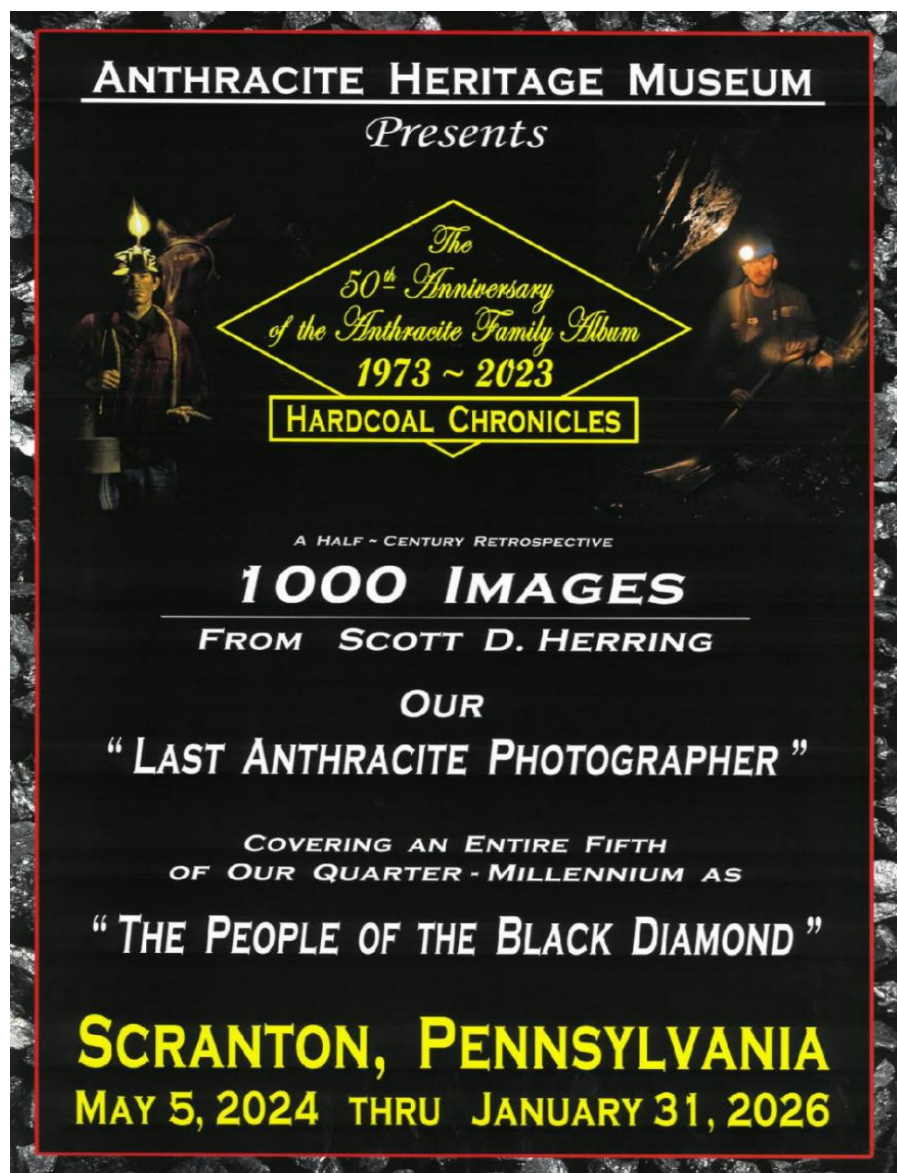
### *Phoebe Snow Ad Campaign 1903*

In 1903, Thomas Edison's newly – formed motion picture company produced a 4 ½-minute short film about Phoebe Snow and her railroad-riding adventures. In the short, called "A Romance of the Rail," Phoebe meets a fellow passenger, falls in love and marries the guy who, like Phoebe, is also dressed in white.

Sometimes advertisements miss the mark in that there is so much going on in the ad that the product or service being offered becomes lost. That is not the case with Edison's short. Time frame 0:15 shows the gentleman's suitcase with advertising on its side. Time frame 0:40 shows a sign on two poles. Both clearly show the words, Lackawanna Railroad, with its well-known logo.

In this issue of History Bytes, we began with a story about the end of World War 1 followed by a piece on Edwin Harris who fought in that war. It's ironic that Phoebe Snow's travelling adventures came to an end in 1917 when the Lackawanna Railroad's anthracite source was diverted to the World War 1 effort.

Please place the following link in your browser to ride the rails with Phoebe 121 years ago. <https://isabellaalden.com/2018/10/31/traveling-america-with-phoebe-snow/> Then scroll down to the black and white image of Phoebe and the gentleman sitting at the end of the train. "A Romance of the Rail" is on the upper left of the image.





## *Recollections Shared*

(Editor's Note: One of the most gratifying experiences is when feedback on a story is received by someone who was literally there when the subjects of the stories were making their histories, publicly and/or personally. Such is the case with History Bytes contributing author, Torry Watkins. In the following email, Torry recounts his memories of the Scranton Fish Company as well as dancing to Willard Schillinger's music. Both stories are part of the Shady Lane Cemetery Residents column. Thank you, Torry, for sharing your recollections.)

*Dear Friends,*

*Once again, I'm in total awe at what all of you do, individually and collectively, to make life a bit better for so many people. The things I personally have to thank you for this time around are starting to pile up, so it's time to stop procrastinating and acknowledge two of the latest ones, namely, two recent issues of History Bytes.*

*Carol and Rick, your joint effort on the Davies Family and the Scranton Fish Company, took me back many years. I have strong memories of the fish market, that stood at 417 N. Main Avenue, just across the street from where the Lackawanna Avenue hill intersects with North Main. As an old Hyde Park boy, I walked past it countless times, and I can tell you this: if you walked blindfolded down North Main, your nose was sure to tell you when you had reached the 400 block, summer or winter.*

*Only about eight blocks from our house, it seemed to be one of my mother's favorite stores. Good Episcopalian that she was, my mom served fish every Friday, and during Lent, we got a double dose every week. Good thing I wasn't one of those kids who was required to eat every last morsel on their plate; otherwise, I might have left home at a much earlier age than I did.*

*Your second Shady Lane article brought back another wonderful memory from the past, namely, Willard Schillinger's Orchestra. In my day, they were probably the "name" dance band throughout the Valley. The swing era was very much alive and well in those days, and while the Dorseys, Harry James, and Russ Morgan (a local boy) were frequently playing gigs in the area, Schillinger's was probably the most popular of the next-tier dance bands available for hire by anyone.*

*I had the pleasure of hearing them quite a few times at school dances and other occasions. I use the term "dance" advisedly. I had a strong dislike for the sport, one that I've carried well into my dotage. I was very much whatever the male equivalent of a wallflower is called - wall thorn? Judy never gets tired of reminding me that the last time I "danced" was at our son's wedding, about 30 years ago.*

*Again, many thanks, everyone. I don't need to urge you to keep up the good work.*

*-Torry*

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**[lackawannahistory@gmail.com](mailto:lackawannahistory@gmail.com)**



*Image source: Pixabay*

*From everyone at the  
Lackawanna Historical Society,  
we wish all a very  
Merry Christmas!*

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**[lackawannahistory@gmail.com](mailto:lackawannahistory@gmail.com)**

## *Subscribe to History Bytes*

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

If you have any Northeast Pennsylvania-related stories to include in History Bytes, please contact the Society at [lackawannahistory@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.plymouthhistoricalsocietyluzernecopa.org)  
Scott Township Historical Society: Contact Robert Vail 570-254-9536  
Susquehanna County Historical Society  
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  
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Lackawanna County Convention and Visitors Bureau  
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Leadership Lackawanna  
Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit

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Address: The Catlin House, 232 Monroe Ave., Scranton, PA 18510

Phone: 570-344-3841

e-mail: [lackawannahistory@gmail.com](mailto:lackawannahistory@gmail.com)

*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.*