



HISTORY BYTES

A Lackawanna Historical Society Publication

Vol. 3 No. 6

Year-End 2020

Rick Sedlisky, Editor

Dear Friends,

As the year comes to an end I wanted to take a moment to thank you again for your continued interest and support, especially during this most unusual time. In 2020, the Society, as well as everyone else, was faced with uncertainty and social isolation. We worked hard to keep our members informed and engaged, and continued to plan events and programs.

In May, we succeeded in presenting our annual local history game show "You Live Here; You Should Know This!" which was live-streamed on Electric City Television. During the Spring, we increased our online presence to provide new opportunities to assist educators, interpret the past, and document the present. In addition to our "Daily Diversions" Facebook posts, our website now offers a local history curriculum, collects individuals' stories of living through the pandemic, and presents the "Ghostly Gallery" where visitors can view animated portraits of local founders from our collection. Our "Lackawanna Past Times" program attracts a dedicated audience twice a month via Zoom; the Society's YouTube page features videos of past programs on a variety of local history topics from Streetcars to Suffrage and have had more than 1300 views. In August, we introduced our Genealogy Forum, virtually, with monthly Zoom meetings to explore local resources and discuss useful research methods for tracing family history. The Catlin House reopened, by appointment-only, in September to assist researchers and offer visitors a chance to tour our exhibits in a safe, socially distanced environment.

We also managed to provide some in-person activities through our downtown walking tours, offered on weekends throughout the summer, and as haunted evening tours on Fridays in October. In October we introduced the Valley Quest, Scranton Safari, a scavenger hunt which invited people to explore our many architectural treasures. 49 people registered for the hunt and we look forward to continuing it. In November we opted to stay virtual for our annual dinner program offering a video tour of the Watres Armory featuring the amazing collection of Artist Hunt Slonem, in addition to encouraging everyone to take-out a meal from one of our favorite Dine Lackawanna venues.

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As we engaged our members and the public, we also continued to work hard to raise much needed funds to keep our organization moving. This included our success in raising more than \$5000 during NEPA Gives Day back in June and more than \$3000 at our summer Circle Drive-in events. We continued to receive support from local and state funders like the Brigg's Foundation who funded our Every Picture Tells a Story project and the Scranton Area Community Foundation who provided a grant for this year's game show. Lackawanna County continued to support our programming and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission offered general operating support.

Of course our members and friends have also stepped up this year, already donating more than \$7000 to the Fund for the Future annual drive. And the Society completed and produce our 2020-2024 strategic plan, "Looking Back & Moving Forward", to provide direction for our future. I know that that future is going to bring more exciting events for our organization and encourage everyone to stay tuned for what's next.

Thanks again for your continued interest and support,

Mary Ann

Veterans Day 2020

Veterans Day 2020 marks 102 years since an armistice was signed with Germany, ending World War I. Originally known as Armistice Day, the day was renamed Veterans Day in 1954.

The day recognizes when World War I hostilities ended on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918. Veterans Day is not to be confused with Memorial Day, a day in May that recognizes those who died while serving our country. Veterans Day should also not be confused with Armed Forces Day. That day in May honors those currently in military service.

Veterans Day recognizes all who served in the United States Armed Forces. It's a day when we thank all who served and continue to serve so that we remain free people.



Lt. Col. Frank J. Duffy

By Janice M. Gavern



Lt. Col. Frank J. Duffy

The Pittston Gazette, 9 September 1918, said it best. "Scranton has been stirred to its depths." Lt Col Frank J. Duffy had been killed on duty on the front lines in France, and folks all over the area were mourning him. His relatives received word the previous day.

The well liked and popular man had been killed, with his driver, Pvt. Frank G. Fiore, on the front lines near Courville, Departement de la Marne, Champagne-Ardenne, France. Pvt. Fiore was also from Scranton and was a graduate of Scranton Technical High School. The two men had just left the headquarters building intending to inspect the front lines. As they got on the motorcycle and in the sidecar, a German shell landed next to them and exploded.

Capt. Dolph and Lt. Hartman ran out of the building. They picked up Lt. Col. Duffy and carried him inside. He never regained consciousness and died shortly thereafter. Pvt. Fiore, 23, was killed instantly from the percussion and the shrapnel. His family, who lived on North Main Avenue, was not notified of his death until 22 September 1918.

Who was this man who was well known, and considered one of the most popular men in the city of Scranton? This was a man whose death was mourned by hundreds in the region, including employees, colleagues, and friends. He seemed larger than life, so the news of his death came as a great shock.

He was born in Scranton August 27, 1884. By 1904 he was employed by the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad and was stationed in Buffalo. He became chief of the Electrical Department in 1908, and was considered an expert in his field. He kept busy

as a member of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, The Scranton Engineers Club, the Scranton Club, and the Buffalo Canoe Club.

In January 1914, he became engaged to Miss Bertha Hessenbruch who was “well known in Philadelphia social circles”. By February 1914 he was married, and Mrs. M.E. McDonald of Myrtle Street held a reception for the new Mrs. Duffy.

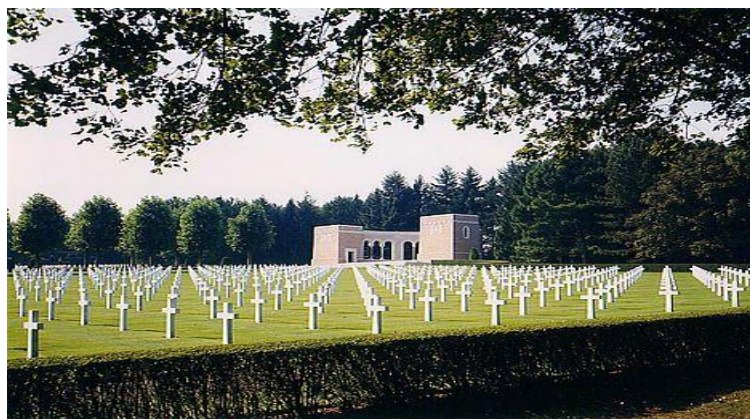
When the war started, he got involved in recruiting men for the 2nd Battalion of the 103rd Engineers – part of the 28th Infantry. After filling all the slots for the Battalion, he decided that he would become one of their officers. He was commissioned a Major and became Commanding Officer of the 2nd Battalion, First Pennsylvania Engineers. He was honored with a reception held on the Elks roof garden, with 100 members and guests. The officers wore their uniforms. Major Duffy was presented with an officer’s tent outfit as a going away gift.

In honor of his August 27th birthday, a cartoon was published in the local paper. Major Duffy is shown pointing and telling his men, “Boys, build a bridge across the Atlantic.” He was recognized as a natural born leader, and, it was said, he understands them.

In the fall of 1917, Major Duffy and the other troops went to Camp Hancock, Georgia, where the 28th Division was mobilized. That spring, he was promoted to Lt. Colonel and became second in command of the regiment.

When he was killed on August 19, 1918, he had only held the position for a few months. Lt. Hartman reported that Lt. Col. Duffy was called “the Fighting Colonel” since he chose so often to be out in front of his soldiers. He was utterly fearless when leading his men into action. It was reported that his superiors considered him worth 500 soldiers.

He was buried in Olse-Ansi American Cemetery and Memorial near Fere-en-Tardenois, Departement de l’Aisne, Picardie, France. The cemetery is located about 70 miles east of Paris. To see a short YouTube video about the cemetery, please go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3jGYHRQleY>



Olse-Ansi American Cemetery and Memorial
Image from Wikipedia

He wasn't only well thought of by his soldiers. Back home, the employees of the Electrical Department of the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad were given time off as a mark of tribute to their supervisor.

The Fighting Colonel continued to be remembered. The following year, a welcome-home-to-our-soldiers parade took place. Lt. Col. Duffy was remembered with a riderless horse who was led on the parade route. His name was listed on the World War I Memorial in Nay Aug Park with other Scranton men and women who gave their lives during the war.

The day after the dedication of the memorial, Delaware, Lackawanna & Western electrical workers, who were members of the Army and Navy Club, placed a wreath near the memorial in his memory.



Later on, the "doughboy" statue was erected in his honor at Duffy Park (named for Lt. Col. Duffy) next to the old Harrison Ave. Bridge. When the bridge was replaced with a new structure and opened in November 2017, the statue was removed and stored at the roundhouse at the Steamtown National Historic Site for protection from weather due to its condition. On November 11, 2018, a bronze replica of the statue was dedicated at the refurbished Duffy Park near the new Harrison Ave. Bridge.

Lt. Col. Frank J. Duffy was truly a renaissance man. The Fighting Colonel was a leader of men and a patriot. On Veterans Day in particular, we honor his memory.

For information and photographs of Lt. Col. Duffy, please visit Find-A-Grave at <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/56636944/frank-j-duffy>

Janice Gavern is originally from South Scranton and is a graduate of South Scranton Central Catholic High School. Ms. Gavern earned a BS in Psychology with emphasis on Engineering from Wright State University, Dayton, OH, and an MS in Military Logistics Management, Air Force Institute of Technology, Wright Patterson AFB, OH.

Enlisted service includes Personnel Clerk; Aircraft Mechanic (C130s); and Reciprocating Engine Mechanic (C123s). Commissioned service Includes Aircraft Maintenance Officer; Explosives Safety Officer for an F-4 unit; and Logistics Officer. Air Force Civil Service includes Engineering Psychologist; Manpower, Personnel and Training Analyst; and Logistics Analyst.

Ms. Gavern currently serves as a Vice Chairwoman, Women Veterans Committee at the state level of the American Legion; 15th District Deputy Commander, Women Veterans Issues; and Historian at Gardner Warner American Legion Post 154.

In Memoriam

William A. Hastie, Sr.

William A. Hastie, Sr., better known as Bill to his friends and colleagues, passed away on Saturday, November 7, 2020. He was 101 years old.

Born in West Pittston, PA, Bill graduated from West Pittston High School and subsequently joined the U.S. Army. During his time with the Army, he participated in many of the World War II theatres, including the North African, Sicilian and Italian campaigns, as well as the Anzio beachhead.

From 1952 to 1959, Bill worked as a laborer with the Knox Coal Company at the main slope in Exeter and later at the River Slope Mine, Port Griffin. During the Knox Mine Disaster in January 1959, Bill was an off-shift worker and first responder in rescue efforts, after which he worked to construct the coffer dam as part of the effort to secure the disaster site.

In subsequent years, Bill was employed by the Wyoming Historical Society (now the Luzerne County Historical Society) in Wilkes-Barre where he held, among others, the position of Acting Curator.

Although his formal education ended with high school graduation, Bill continued to self-educate and conduct research throughout his adult life. He was a highly sought after public speaker through which he educated many on the various aspects of anthracite coal mining, as well as Northeast Pennsylvania's ethnic and regional history. With Bob Wolensky, Bill co-authored *Anthracite Labor Wars: Tenancy, Italians and Organized Crime in the Northern Coalfield of Northeastern Pennsylvania 1897 – 1959* (2013).

For those who knew Bill and participated with him in many events, such as the Avondale Mine Disaster remembrances and the annual Knox Mine Disaster remembrances, it was not uncommon to be invited to his home where post-event refreshments and socializing became informal lectures on many aspects of our region's storied history, including his Welsh ancestry of which he was extremely proud.

William A. Hastie, Sr., through lectures, audiotape, film and video documentaries, left us a wealth of knowledge about our cultural, municipal and regional histories. Without his lectures, extensive archive and his willingness to document and share, much of our region's legacy would not have survived.

LHS 2020 Membership Information

About Membership: Membership privileges include unlimited access to the Society library, 10% discount in our bookstore, advance notice, special discounts and invitations to all Society activities, members-only programs, the quarterly newsletter and the bi-monthly e-newsletter.

Attached is a membership form you can use to renew your membership or give to a friend who is interested in joining. Please return it to:

The Lackawanna Historical Society, 232 Monroe Ave., Scranton, PA 18510.

Lackawanna Historical Society Membership Form

// Student	\$10	Name _____
// Individual	\$35	
// Family	\$45	Address _____
// Contributing	\$75	_____
// Sustaining	\$150	
// Silver Corporate	\$250	Telephone _____
// Gold Corporate	\$500	Email _____

Following is a link to complete for membership payment if you choose to use it.

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

Upcoming LHS Events

On **December 16**, we will team up with Brookvalley Farms to offer horse-drawn carriage tours of Downtown Scranton. Two tours, scheduled to start at **7 pm and 8 pm**, will offer a chance to see the holiday decorations at night, and learn a bit about Scranton's architecture, as well as historical details about holiday traditions and Christmases past in Scranton.

Cookies and hot cocoa will be offered on the porch at the Catlin House as well as a fire pit on the front lawn so we can keep warm while waiting for the tours! Tickets are \$25 per person. In order to maintain social distancing, space is limited to six people per tour. Face masks are required for all tour participants. For reservations please call the Society at 570-344-3841.

In lieu of our annual Open House and Holiday Emporium, we're bringing some of our favorite local vendors to you! We've created a Holiday Emporium Raffle, with prize baskets from local hotels and restaurants, as well as partners like the Circle Drive-in, Montage Mountain Ski Resort, Electric City Trolley Museum, the Scranton Wilkes-Barre RailRiders, and the Everhart Museum. Tickets are \$2 each, with a FREE ticket if you purchase five. The raffle will be open until December 16, and winners will be drawn during our horse-drawn holiday tours.

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Visit our online raffle at <http://lackawannahistory.org/HolidayEmporiumRaffle.html> Special thanks to our friends at the Lackawanna County Visitors' Bureau who assisted us in securing raffle packages.

Lackawanna Past Times Zoom Meetings Bi-Monthly Presentations, Fridays at 2 pm

December 4: “What’s New at the Everhart Museum” with Curator Francesa Saldan features a virtual tour of new exhibits at the Everhart Museum

December 18: “The Delaware & Hudson Company” with S. Robert Powell, Director of the Carbondale Historical Society. Dr. Powell will present his most recent research into America’s first million-dollar corporation.

January 15: “Black Scranton” with Glynis Johns. Join the founder of the Black Scranton movement to learn more about the often-overlooked history of Scranton’s Black community.

January 29: “Roaring Brook Township” with North Pocono Boy Scout Corey Kowalski. Corey will present what he learned while working on his Citizenship in Community merit badge in the Society library.

For an invitation with program link, please email lackawannahistory@gmail.com
If you miss any of our lectures, or want to see previous programs, videos can be found on our YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/lackawannahistory/videos>.

The Catlin House continues to be open by appointment only, Tuesday - Friday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Stop by for a tour of our historic house, to do research on family genealogy and local history, or check some things off your holiday gift list in our Bookstore!

Genealogy Forum Monthly, Wednesdays at 1 pm via Zoom

Local genealogists are invited to share ideas, research tips, and local resources. Please call or email to register.

January 1, Barbara Spellman Shuta /Tom Price: Researching Civil Birth & Death Records in Lackawanna County & Pennsylvania

February 10, Evie Rafalko McNulty: What and How to Research Records at the Lackawanna County Recorder of Deeds Office

March 10, Barbara Spellman Shuta/Tom Price: The U.S. Census: What to Know & What to Look For

To register, please email lackawannahistory@gmail.com or call 570-344-3841.

Ghostly Gallery Links: <http://www.lackawannahistory.org/aghostlygallery.html>

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Dine Lackawanna

Numerous restaurants support LHS through participation in Dine Lackawanna. Please continue to support the chefs and staffs through requests for delivery or purchases of gift cards, and be sure to call ahead for any changes in business hours or practices.

Abingtons

Clarks Summit

Camelot
Formosa
The New Cafe

The Nyx
State Street Grill

Chinchilla

Armetta's

Upvalley

Carbondale

Kol at Hotel Anthracite

Jermyn

JW's Pub

Eynon

Pasquale's
Tiffany's

Simpson

Frank's Place'

Mid Valley

Dickson City

NOSH
Texas Roundhouse

Olyphant

John Pierre's

Jessup

Café Colarusso

Scranton

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

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

Downvalley

Moosic

Marzoni's

Old Forge

Dooley's

Dunmore/North Pocono

Dunmore

3 Jacks Burgers

Moscow

Van Brunt Grill

Springbrook

Olde Brook Inn

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Corrections

Two spelling errors were found in the article, *Lizabeth Scott, Scranton's Film Noir Femme Fatale*, that appeared in the November – December 2020 issue of History Bytes. Actress Miriam Hopkins' first name was spelled, Mariam. Hollywood producer Hall Wallis' surname was spelled, Willis. We thank New York City actor, Alan Abrams, for calling our attention to the misspellings.

The previous issue of History Bytes was published as November – December 2020. It should have been September – October 2020. To avoid the confusion of having two November – December 2020 issues, the current edition was renamed Year-End 2020. The editor takes full responsibility for the error.

Frank P. O'Brien **By Monica Tapper**

On September 9, 1910, the mayor of Birmingham, Alabama, Frank Patrick O'Brien, died from a stroke in the Burn-Brae Sanitarium in Clifton Heights, Pennsylvania. The mayor had developed a severe case of insomnia over the summer, and as his sleepless nights became worse and worse, O'Brien, who had run away from home at the age of fifteen, finally came home to Pennsylvania. Clifton Heights was only two hours from his childhood home in Scranton, where most of his family and childhood friends still lived.

O'Brien was born in Dublin, Ireland on February 29, 1844, the year before phytophthora infestans (also known as blight), descended on Ireland's soil and 2.5 million acres of potatoes rotted in the ground. O'Brien's formative years were marked by the horrors of the Irish Potato Famine that followed, which killed one-eighth of the Irish population. In 1847, also known as "Black '47," the death toll was up to at least 400,000, but starvation was only part of the problem. Starvation led to joblessness, evictions, poor hygiene, and finally, disease. In Black '47, fever killed almost 60,000 Irish, followed closely by dysentery, consumption, and measles. Three-year-old Frank O'Brien witnessed the worst year of the famine, and the remembrance of this lasted into adulthood.

In 1848, when O'Brien was four, his family joined the 2.1 million Irish who fled Ireland between 1845 and 1855 to escape the famine. O'Brien's father, Michael Andrew O'Brien (1818 – c1870), had studied to be a priest, taught school, and had also worked for the *Nation*, a nationalist Irish newspaper based in Dublin. Michael married Mary Ellen Cochran (c1822 – 1899), and the couple had at least seven children.

In 1906, four years before his death, O'Brien wrote a letter to the editor of the Scranton Times. As you can see in the original letter below, he remembers a Scranton which no longer exists. He writes of his schooldays in Hyde Park, the Irish War of 1850, as well as his immense pride in Scranton.

After O'Brien ran away from home, he roamed the country working as an assistant to Peter Schmidt, the famous fresco painter whom he met in Philadelphia. Then, after

fighting for the Confederacy in the Civil War, he finally settled down in Alabama. He married Indiana (Dannie) McBride in 1865 and raised a family of four daughters. Always proud of his Irish-Catholic heritage, he sent them all to St. Mary's College in Loretto, Kentucky. Back in Alabama, he was active in his Catholic Church, built the first theater in Birmingham, owned and edited a newspaper, and he was always the first to try the new technology and industry that developed so quickly during the Gilded Age. Eventually he was elected sheriff, and finally, mayor.

In 2021, there will be a series of at least three articles about Frank O'Brien, exploring his family and youth in Scranton, his early business life in Alabama, and finally his political career. It is hoped that there might be some long-lost relatives of the O'Brien Family out there reading this. O'Brien had a number of brothers and sisters that remained in the area, and they should know that O'Brien's descendants went on to do amazing things, some of which will be included in a fourth article. Who were these brothers and sisters? Stay tuned!

Ed. Note: The following letter, which was written by Frank P. O'Brien to E. J. Lynett, Editor of the Scranton Times, and published on November 20, 1906, was transcribed from the original article by Titania Collette. Our sincere thanks to Ms. Collette for her contribution to the story of Frank P. O'Brien.

From an Old Scrantonian

E. J. Lynett,
Editor Scranton Times —

Permit an old Hyde Park boy to congratulate you and your co-workers on the spirit of enterprise which enables you to get out such a magnificent edition as that of October 10.

Through the courtesy of an old Scranton boy, (a protégé of mine). Fred L. Grambs, the great pleasure of a thorough perusal of the issue was afforded me, and I can say truthfully that the time spent in going over its many pages was more willingly given and more enjoyably spent than any I have "put in" for many years.

The faces of old friends and schoolmates, references to incidents of fifty years ago, and views of the old places in and around Slocum Hollow, Hyde Park, "Razorville" and "Buck-town," awaken and bring to mind as plainly as of yesterday, memories long since forgotten.

To me, the most interesting account of scenes and incidents of the past, is the story of Edward Merrifield, esq. How well do I remember him. One day when in his father's store he asked me to do an errand for him. Being of an obliging turn I readily consented. He gave me a note to Mr. John Lanning, whose boot and shoe shop was on the corner next to his own residence, to send the bearer a bottle of "strap oil." It is not necessary to mention that the material given to me was not of a fluid nature.

His reference to Elder Mott and the little brick church on the hill in Hyde Park, carries me back to the day my boyhood friend—his brother George—was buried in the little cemetery at the foot of the hill, upon which the Brick church was built. His reference to the election of burgess and selectmen, held at the “Red Tavern” brings to mind the division which arose between the residents of opposite sides of the village, and the strenuous efforts put forth by residents on the lower side of the same, headed by “Bill” Shoemaker—proprietor of the “White Tavern”—who wanted the election held at his hostelry, which was as strenuously resisted by the Merrifields, the Deckers, Barrowman, John and Tom Connolly, Cornelius Ward, Hugh Quinnan, and my own father.

My school days were divided between the Old Village school immediately opposite Ed. Merrifield’s house, a school kept by Reese Jones in the basement of the Barrowman residence in Hyde Park; the Odd Fellows’ Hall school beyond the company store in Scranton, and Kingston High school, opposite Wilkes-Barre. I recognize many old companions and schoolmates in the splendid galaxy of “Captains of industry,” reproduced in the magnificent issue before me.

In the careful reading, my attention was especially attracted to the subhead—“Irish War in 1850,” which appears in the story, “Scranton from the days of the Indians until the present.” I remember the incident, as it was indelibly impressed on my memory never to be effaced. My father was negotiating with the general contractor for a sub-contract and his business called him to a place then known as Lanesborough, where he was to meet the parties with whom he was corresponding. I frequently accompanied my father on his business trips and happened to be with him on this one.

After having completed his business arrangements with the general contractors and as a part of the sub-contract into which he had entered was to be in the vicinity of Leggett’s Gap, on our way home the party went by way of the Gap, reaching there just about the time the “battle royal” has commenced. To my dying day I will never forget how terribly frightened I was, fearing for my father’s safety more than my own, as it was noised about that a “Connaught Ranger” had appeared on the grounds determined to put a stop to the fight. Your Irish readers will recognize at once what an announcement of that kind would mean in those days. Thank God all such sectional bickering among our countrymen has died out entirely.

The “melee” above referred to and a similar fight between a batch of Germans, working on the Clark Summit section and a goodly number of my hearty countrymen at work on the “Notch” section of the Lackawanna railway, furnished the theme for a very humorous book entitled “Bryan Moolican, the Rollicking Irishman,” written by Mr. Cornelius Ward, a brother-in-law of the brothers John and Thomas Connolly, who were the contractors in the building of the road from Scranton to Abington. I remember one of the illustrations represented the strenuous Bryan walloping ten “Dutchmen,” using one of their companions—whom he was holding by the right hand with the aid of a wide belt—as a shield and a battering ram. The wide circulation of the book so incensed the German contingent in the entire district, that it was several years before the two nationalities became reconciled.

The blocking of the mouth of the tunnel on the D. L. & W. came to mind as freshly as if it occurred but yesterday. My recollection of the incident is, that the

contractors, Malone & Co. had not been entirely paid for their work and that was the means they resorted to, to enforce payment instead of going into the courts. I was attending school at the Odd Fellows' Hall school at that time, and one of my boon companions—Leander Tripp, of Providence, first gave me the information he had, that Mr. Phelps was going to send several carloads of men from the shops to remove the obstructions from the mouth of the tunnel if necessary, to fight for possession of same. Leander proposed that if I would go with him he would take in the fun. In those days boys were always ready and willing to get into anything that promised a "scrimmage," so I readily consented and when we reached the shops Mr. William Falkenbury, of Hyde Park, who was foreman of the foundry in the D., L. & W., was directing the loading of an old gun on the first car. Leander, Hank Canavan and myself mounted one of the cars, determined to see the fun, but were as quickly ordered off by Mr. Watts Cook, who was at the time master mechanic of the shops, and in immediate charge of the expedition.

Mr. Merrifield, in his reference to the various pastors of the then existing churches, states that Rev. John Loughran was the first priest in Scranton and that Father Moses Whitty came after the frame church was built in Franklin and Spruce. My recollection is, that Father Loughran was located at Hawley and came frequently to Scranton to celebrate mass. This I do know: the first time mass was celebrated in that section was by Rev. Father Cullen in his mother's house at Fellows' Corner, near Hyde Park. If my memory serves me correctly, he was stationed at Wilkes-Barre, but frequently visited his mother and sisters, who lived at Fellows Corner. Frequently before we had a resident priest, the Rev. Fathers Fitzsimmons and Pendergast of Carbondale would visit Scranton and officiate at the little frame church in "Shanty Hill". Rev. Moses Whitty came to us as resident priest before we left "Shanty Hill" church, I know positively, because I served mass for him in that church.

I could go on indefinitely calling up interesting incidents, but do not dare to infringe on either your time or patience. My personal knowledge of the richness of Scranton and the entire mining district of both coal and iron, in its immediate vicinity, had more to do with my coming to Birmingham, Ala., and locating here when it was first conceived—in 1871—than any other motive. I left Hyde Park and came south, September 1859. I can't help but feel an honest pride in the spirit of industry that has placed Scranton among the phenomenal creations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Also for the reason that the ashes of my dear father, mother, and brother lie in the Cathedral Cemetery, back of Hyde Park.

Continued good luck to you,

FRANK P. O'BRIEN
Birmingham, Alabama.

Anthracite Mining Heritage Month

By Bob Wolensky

As of this writing, AMHM will consist of six events in January 2021, all of them conducted via Zoom. The following programs have been scheduled:

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1. **Jan. 21, *The Annual Msgr. John J. Curran Lecture***, King's College, 7 pm, Prof. Paul Shackel, University of Maryland will speak on, "*Remembering The Lattimer Massacre of 1897.*"
2. **Jan. 22, *The Annual Knox Mine Disaster Commemoration***, Anthracite Heritage Museum, 2 pm, Dr. Bode ** will speak on, "*After Knox: Understanding the Post-Knox Disaster Community.*"

The following programs will soon announce full details:

3. **Jan. 25, "*The Carnegie Hero Medal in Northeastern Pennsylvania Mining*,"** The American Institute of Mining Engineers, Anthracite Division will sponsor the event; AIME member, Michael Korb, putting together the details.
4. **Richard Healey, University of Portsmouth, England; and John Fielding, Anthracite Heritage Museum,** will present a program on historic anthracite breakers, sponsored by the Lackawanna Historical Society.
5. **Mark Riccetti and his colleagues** at the Luzerne County Historical Society will present a program consisting of speakers who will address a woman's role in a patch town, safety and mining equipment, and visual images of anthracite mining.
6. **The National Industrial Museum** in Easton will host a program, the details of which are forthcoming.

Please check the January – February 2021 issue of History Bytes for updates. For questions or comments about the schedule of events, contact Bob Wolensky at rwolensk@gmail.com.

In The Mines

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

By Carl Orechovsky

July, August and September 1939 provide some interesting occurrences in Thomas Goblick's life. We learn what he does with his time when the colliery is idle for long stretches during this period. For example, he mentions on July 8, "First registration in Scranton", followed by July 28, "In town with Joe to reg.". During the three month period, he mentions "reg. at the Boro Building". We assume Thomas was registering for unemployment checks while the colliery was idle.

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On September 9, 1939, Thomas writes that he's seeking employment with another operation he calls Russell's. Two days later he's at the new job. His September 1 three word entry in all upper case letters warns us that something serious is on the horizon.

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

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

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

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

July 1939

The Volpe Coal Co, Sibley Colliery, Old Forge, 1939: Jermyn Section.

July 1. Colliery Idle.

July 2. Sunday

July 3. ***COLLIERY IDLE FOR THE MONTH OF JULY***

July 4, 5, 6. No entries

July 7. To Scranton.

July 8. First registration in Scranton.

July 9. Sunday

July 10, 11, 12. No entries

July 13. Old Forge registration in Boro Building.

July 14, 15. No entries

July 16. Sunday

July 17. Town. Joe's suit, wagon for Tom, at Household \$3.98.

July 18. Trippi Fined.

July 19. No entry
July 20. 3rd reg. Boro Building Old Forge
July 21. Barber .45 cents.
July 22. Movies with Tommie, Hot Dogs.
July 23. Sunday. Rep. Club formed, name down for Boro job.
July 24. Rain. Dug in cellar 25 loads dirt.
July 25. Dug in cellar 28 loads dirt
July 26. Finished in cellar 3 loads dirt.
July 27. 4th reg. day Boro Building.
July 28. Rain. In town with Joe to reg.
July 29. Movies with Tommie.
July 30. Sunday. Helen and Joe in Toby.
July 31. Cemented 1 block.

August 1939

The Volpe Coal Co, Sibley Colliery, Old Forge, 1939: Jermyn Section.

August 1. Cementing, River Joe, Charlie & me. ***COLLIERY IDLE TILL AUGUST 16***
August 2. Cementing
August 3, 4. Cementing. Rain.
August 5. Finished cementing. Me & Tom to movies.
August 6. Sunday. Nell and Helen to movies.
August 7, 8, 9. No entries
August 10. Boro Building to reg.
August 11. No entry
August 12. Red Mans Excursion, Movies with Tom.
August 13. Sunday
August 14. No entry
August 15. Double Show Home Theater. .25 cents.
August 16. 7 hours worked. Resumed work. Idle since June 26.

August 17. 7 hours worked. Tommy hair cut .25 cents.
August 18. 7 hours worked
August 19. Colliery Idle. Movies with Tom.
August 20. Sunday
August 21. 7 hours worked
August 22. 7 hours worked. Hoisting coal every other day.
August 23, 24. 7 hours worked
August 25. 7 hours worked. Sore nose.
August 26. Colliery idle. Movies with Tom.
August 27. Sunday
August 28. 8 hours worked
August 29. 7 hours worked
August 30. Orders to split time.
August 31. No entry

September 1939

The Volpe Coal Co, Sibley Colliery, Old Forge, 1939: Jermyn Section. *Russell Mining Co, Kelmars Section.*

September 1. 7 hours worked. Brakeman. WAR IN EUROPE!
September 2. Colliery Idle. Movies with Tom.
September 3. Sunday. Nelly to Dorney Park.
September 4. Labor Day. Colliery Idle.
September 5, 6. 7 hours worked
September 7. Split time.
September. 8. Reported to Rudy. Resigning.
September 9. Called to Russells for Job!
September 10. Sunday.
September 11. 7 hours worked. Started for Russells with John Soha.
September 12. 7 hours worked. Running motor in Kelmars.

September 13. 7 hours worked
September 14. 7 hours worked. One brush fell out of the reel mount.
September 15. 7 hours worked. Pay Day in Volpe's.
September 16. 7 hours worked. One roll tar paper from Norman Smiles.
September 17. Sunday.
September 18, 19, 20. 7 hours worked. John Bunivitz house burned down.
September 21. 7 hours worked. Cool frosty morning.
September 22. 7 hours worked. E. Huges not in. Got 10 lb. carbide.
September 23. Colliery Idle. To movies with Tom.
September 24. Sunday. Nellie and Helen to movies.
September 25. 7 hours worked. Motor broke down for Ike.
September 26. 7 hours worked. Rain. Coal ordered & coal delivered.
September 27. 7 hours worked. Tough night.
September 28. 7 hours worked. Major Bowes Program E. S. T. (????)
September 29. 7 hours worked. Six places.
September 30 Colliery Idle. Last pay from Volpes.

The photograph is of the second Sibley breaker 1886. The original is owned by what was the Sibley McClure Hose Co, now Eagle McClure Hose Co, and was given to the fire company long ago. This photo is responsible for the start of my journey in researching coal mining history when our oldest member at Sibley McClure asked me to find out about this picture. I have this picture at home entrusted to my care and preservation.



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

During the winter season, Mr. Orechovsky works with the No. 9 Coal Mine Tour in Landsford, PA as a track man. Mr. Orechovsky is also responsible for maintaining the Tri-Boro Soccer Association's playing field.

A Cemetery Tour Becomes a Harvest Festival



**Catlin Mausoleum Entrance
Dunmore Cemetery
Photo courtesy of Julie Esty**

Although many public events have been either cancelled or postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 Dunmore Cemetery Tour went on as scheduled albeit with a few alterations.

This year's tour was dubbed, "The Drive Through Edition". It served a two-fold purpose. 1) The tour was able to go on, and 2) Visitors were spared the worry of exposure to coronavirus by remaining in their cars.

Julie Esty and her fellow Dearly Departed Players came up with the idea to complement the cemetery's tranquil autumn atmosphere by decorating mausoleums and graves with things associated with the fall harvest such as cornstalks, scarecrows, and bouquets of autumn flowers.

Businesses and organizations joined the effort by providing decorations and in effect, adopting resting places. The Dunmore Federation of Teachers took care of Martha Matthews Owens, a long ago departed music teacher. Carlucci-Golden-DeSantis Funeral Home adopted the Zimmer resting place. Stephens Wreath's decorated the Schroder and Boies family spaces, representatives of Miller-Bean arrived in costume with displays for the Miller gravesites, and the Lackawanna Historical Society took responsibility for the Catlin Mausoleum. Jerry's For All Seasons donated scarecrows and the Meadow Avenue Dollar Store provided artificial autumn flowers that were made into bouquets and placed in the Civil War Section.



Catlin Mausoleum
Photo courtesy of Julie Esty

As with every tour, “residents” of the cemetery were at their respective resting places to “welcome” visitors. However, this year although they were close enough to make contact with smiles and waves, they were far enough away to make it feel as though they were looking from their world to ours.

The event's organizers, The Dearly Departed Players, in an attempt to record participation numbers, did a careful estimation based on the number of cars that drove through. Estimating three people per car in more than 250 cars, “crowd total” (as event estimates are often called) amounted to about 800 people, which organizers said is what they experience on a normal tour day.

A documentary about the tour by Scranton Films is in the works. The short excerpt in the below link offers air and ground views of the picturesque Dunmore Cemetery as well as what might be considered “the longest funeral procession” ever witnessed at the resting place of both the notable and sometimes notorious. To view the excerpt, visit: <https://www.facebook.com/TheDunmoreCemeteryTour/videos/1863508807120682/>

Holiday Season 2020

Because of the continued COVID-19 pandemic across the country and around the world, holiday celebrations for many will not be the same this year. Many will not travel to and from Northeast Pennsylvania to spend holidays with family and friend.

Whatever you choose to do, we wish you a healthy and safe holiday season. Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all.

Person of Interest

A Scranton Native Reaches The Top



President-elect Joe Biden

Image: DNC via CNP/MEGA

On January 20, 2021, Scranton native, Joe Biden, will become the 46th President of the United States of America. The only other native Pennsylvanian to be elected to the highest office in the land was James Buchanan, the 15th president (1857 – 1861). He was born in a log cabin in Cove Gap, PA, near Mercersburg. He served immediately prior to the Civil War and unlike Biden, Buchanan was a lifelong bachelor.

President-elect Biden hails from the Green Ridge section of Scranton. He attended St. Paul's Elementary School, Green Ridge, and will be the second Roman Catholic to be elected to the presidency. The first was John F. Kennedy who was elected in 1960 and served until November 1963 when he was assassinated in Dallas, TX.

In 1972, Biden was elected as a US senator from Delaware. He served in the Senate for 36 years and chaired the Foreign Relations Committee. From 2009 to 2017 he served as vice president under President Barack Obama.

Joe Biden joins the list of native Northeast Pennsylvanians who, through a variety of fields, have become well-known for their contributions to American culture.

The list includes:

Walter Bobbie

Stage director/Choreographer (Scranton)

P J Carlesimo

NBA coach (Scranton)

Mary McDonnell

Actress (Wilkes-Barre)

Matt McGloin

NFL player (Scranton)

Pat Crowley

Actress (Olyphant)

Cy Endfield

Movie director/Inventor/Magician (Scranton)

Ham Fisher

Cartoonist (Wilkes-Barre)

Joe Gill

Comic book author (Scranton)

Jane Jacobs

Journalist (Scranton)

Russell Johnson

Actor (Ashley)

James Karen

Actor (Wilkes-Barre)

Jason Miller

Playwright/Actor (Scranton)

Mike Munchak

NFL coach (Scranton)

Jerry Orbach

Actor/Singer (Wilkes-Barre)

Jack Palance

Actor (Hazle Township)

Adam Rippon

Olympic figure skater (Clarks Summit)

Lizabeth Scott

Actress, film noir/Singer (Scranton)

Jonathan Slavin

Actor/Activist (Wilkes-Barre)

If you know of any Northeast Pennsylvania notables not included on our list, please let us know by contacting us at lackawannahistory@gmail.com and place **Notables** in the subject matter. Their names will be included in the next issue of History Bytes.

Subscribe to History Bytes

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

Share Your NEPA Stories with History Bytes

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

Internet Links

Historical Attractions

- [Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority](#)
- [Steamtown National Historic Site](#)
- [Anthracite Museum and Iron Furnaces](#)
- [Electric City Trolley Museum](#)
- [Lackawanna Coal Mine Tour](#)
- G.A.R. Memorial Association Museum: Contact Joseph Long, Jr. 570-457-8438

Cultural Partners

- [Albright Memorial Library](#) and the Lackawanna County Library System
- [The Everhart Museum](#)
- [Scranton Cultural Center](#) at the Masonic Temple

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- Scranton's Annual [Civil War Weekend](#) Events
- Scranton Times-Tribune's [Pages from the Past](#)
- [Pocono Arts: Where Culture Builds Community](#)

Anthracite Research

- [Pennsylvania's Northern Anthracite Coal Field](#) <http://www.northernfield.info/>

Historical Societies

- [Carbondale Historical Society](#)
- [Dunmore Historical Society](#)
- [Luzerne County Historical Society](#)
- [Wayne County Historical Society](#)
- [Susquehanna County Historical Society](#)
- [Monroe County Historical Society](#)
- [Wyoming County Historical Society](#)
- Archbald Historical Society: Contact Ed Casey (570) 614-3628
- Scott Township Historical Society: Contact Robert Vail (570) 254-9536
- Taylor Historical Society: Contact Christine Schaefer (570) 562-1225

County and Educational Partners

- [Lackawanna County](#)
- [Lackawanna County Convention and Visitors Bureau](#)
- [Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit](#)

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