



HISTORY BYTES

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Rick Sedlisky, Editor



A loom and a lace cart at the abandoned Scranton Lace Company factory
Photo by Diane Danthony, courtesy of Roman Golebiowski

Scranton Lace Company Exhibit



Scranton Lace Company building with clock tower
Image source: U.S. National Register of Historic Places

On January 28, as part of the Lackawanna Past Times series, Dr. Darlene Miller-Lanning and Roman Golebiowski offered a presentation on the Scranton Lace Company. The event included an in-depth look at the company and its legendary history, as well as a sneak peek at the Scranton Lace exhibit that will be held later this year at the Hope Horn Gallery located on the University of Scranton campus.

Examples of what will be presented include photographs of early workers, a Scranton Lace *furnishing guide for the home* from 1923, photographs of the complex taken within and outside the buildings, and photographs after the operation was abandoned.



A wooden fragment of a crate with Scranton Lace logo
Photo courtesy of Roman Golebiowski

The Scranton Lace Company was established by the Scranton Board of Trade in 1890 as the Scranton Lace Curtain Manufacturing Company and was incorporated on June 15, 1897. Upon consolidation of operations with a subsidiary in 1916, the company became known as the Scranton Lace Company.

The company was the world leader in the production of Nottingham lace. Also manufactured were tablecloths, napkins, curtains, as well as other lace items. During the 1940s, Scranton Lace participated in the war effort by manufacturing parachutes and camouflage netting. At one point, 1,600 men and women worked at various capacities in its 34 buildings that totaled more than 600,000 square feet.

The company prospered well into the 1950s, but several bad investments led to financial difficulties that resulted in the firm's closure in 2002. The existing buildings are currently being redeveloped into a residential/commercial community that will include townhouses, loft apartments and commercial space, and will be known as Lace Village. As part of the redevelopment, the iconic clock tower is expected to be preserved.



Part of a wooden sign featuring the words "Scranton Lace Curtain"
(Photo property of The Lackawanna Historical Society)

Upcoming issues of History Bytes will provide updates on the Scranton Lace exhibit, its contents, as well as the opening date.

Please contact either Roman Golebiowski at romangolebiowski757@gmail.com or Dr. Miller-Lanning at darlene.miller-lanning@scranton.edu for additional information. Dr. Miller-Lanning is the director of Hope Horn Gallery.

A Stately New Home for the Black Scranton Project

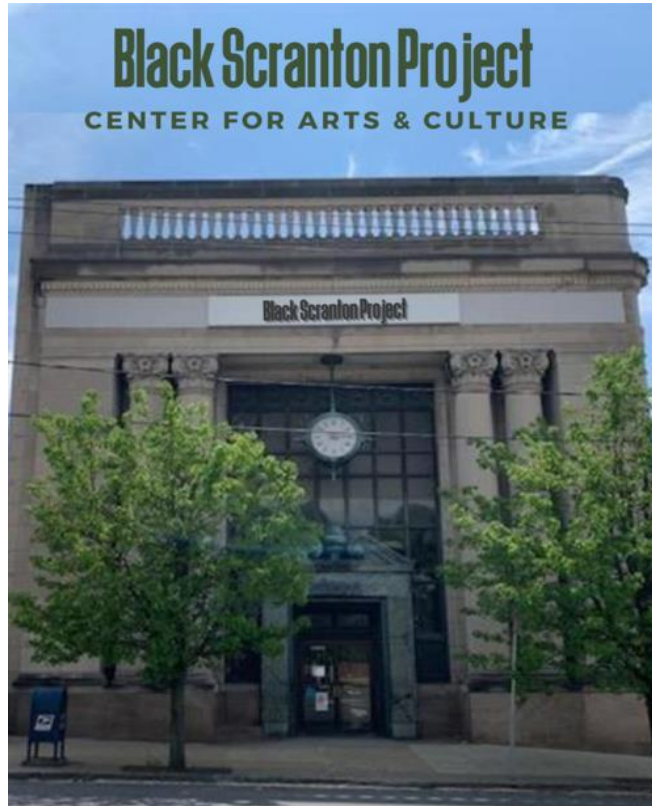


Image source: blackscranton.org

The North Scranton Bank & Trust Company was established on April 20, 1901, as a commercial bank. The institution continued under that name until September 20, 1980, when through a merger, it became known as First Eastern Bank. Operations under the First Eastern name continued until it became part of PNC Bank on June 17, 1994.

In mid-2021, in a transaction valued at more than \$250,000, PNC donated the stately - structure to the Black Scranton Project. Built in 1926, the 8,000 sq. ft. structure, which is made of Italian marble and limestone with a granite base, will continue to be the cornerstone of Providence Square under its new name, the Black Scranton Project Center for Arts & Culture.

Under the direction of Prof. Glynis Johns, the facility will be a multi-purpose building that offers creative and recreational space for kids and adults, as well as free counseling, educational classes, tutoring, job placement assistance and other services. It will also be available for social events and meetings. As the home of the Black Project Center for Arts & Culture, the building will represent the wealth and preservation for the culture and history of Black Scrantonians and the city as a whole.

The Black Scranton Project is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization and local heritage initiative dedicated to archiving and celebrating Black history and culture of the Scranton region. The Black Scranton Project aims to uplift the creative and cultural spirit in the Scranton area by supporting community artistic and ethnic representation to elevate the core of neighborhood culture. For additional information, please visit the Black Scranton Project website at www.blackscranton.org

LHS 2022 Membership Information

About Membership: Membership privileges include unlimited access to the Society library, 10% discount in our bookstore, advance notice, special discounts and invitations to all Society activities, members-only programs, the quarterly newsletter, and the bi-monthly e-newsletter. Attached is a membership form you can use to renew your membership or give to a friend who is interested in joining. Please return it to:

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

Lackawanna Historical Society Membership Form

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

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

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

LHS Zoom Meetings

Lackawanna Past Times, Fridays at 2 pm

April 29: Bernie McGurl discusses the Lackawanna River

May 20: Dale Keklock discusses local cemeteries

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

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

Ghostly Gallery Link:

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

lackawannahistory@gmail.com

Dine Lackawanna

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

Wednesday, April 20: OTown Bar and Grill, 400 W. Lackawanna Ave, Olyphant, 570-483-4429

Wednesday, May 18: Frank's Place, 57 Jefferson St, Simpson, 570- 282-0159

Wednesday, June 15: TBA

Wednesday, July 20: Delish, 254 N. Main St, Moscow, 570-848-2204

Abingtons

Clarks Summit

Camelot
Formosa

The New Cafe
State Street Grill

Chinchilla

Armetta's Restaurant & Pizza

Upvalley

Carbondale

KOL Steakhouse
Pat's Pizza & Hoagies

Jermyn

JW's Bar & Gtill

Eynon

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

Simpson

Frank's Place

Mid Valley

Dickson City

Texas Roundhouse
Colarusso's Coal Fired Pizza

Jessup

Café Colarusso

Scranton

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

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

Downvalley

Old Forge

Dooley's Pub & Eatery

Dunmore/North Pocono

Dunmore

3 Jacks Burgers

Springbrook Twp.

Olde Brook Inn

lackawannahistory@gmail.com

Genealogy Forum

Genealogy Forum goes in-person this month: Registration required. 570-344-3841

Wednesday, April 27: Tracing records for Irish ancestry

Wednesday, May 18: Tracing records of Italian Ancestry

Beginning in June: Genealogy for Beginners workshop. Saturdays, June 18 & 25, and July 9 & 16, 9:30 am - Noon. Participants must commit to all four sessions. (fee)

Local genealogists are invited to share ideas, research tips, and local resources. To register, please email lackawannahistory@gmail.com or call 570-344-3841.

In-person Programs

Sunday, April 10, 2pm: Organized Crime in NEPA with James Kanavy

Sunday, May 15, 2pm: Early Wyoming Valley with Nancy & Mark Walker

Wednesday, June 15, 7pm: Local Underground Railroad with Sherman & Cindy Wooden

Additional Events

Wednesday, June 1 – Sunday, June 5: Lackawanna County Fair. Details TBA

Thursday, June 2, 6 pm You Live Here; You Should Know This! at Montage during the Fair

Saturday, June 18, 7:30pm: Forest Hill Cemetery Ghost Hunt with Wyoming Valley Ghost Tours (call or email LHS for details and registration information)

Friday, June 24, 6pm: Meet the Generals and documentary screening of **Confederation of Civil War Generals** at the Waverly Community House

Saturday, June 25, time TBA: Annual Civil War Ball, Waverly Community House

Sunday, June 26: Beyond the Hill a tour of some of our favorite places & plantings Details TBA

Mid Valley Fire Companies Information Request

Joseph M. Klapatch is currently working on his fourth book in a series that details the histories of Lackawanna County fire companies. The next book will include the six companies that served Dickson City and Priceburg, the three companies that served Throop and the eleven that served Olyphant.

Joe is looking for anyone who may have information, photos, minute books or memorabilia on these companies. Currently, Dickson City is written, Throop is being written and Olyphant is being edited. He is looking for anyone who may have copies of the Olyphant Gazette or Record or any Mid Valley editions of Scranton newspapers, especially from 1926 and earlier. All materials will be copied, and originals returned as soon as possible. Information contributors will be acknowledged in the book.

Current books in the series include *The History of the Carbondale, PA Fire Department 1843-2015* (24 companies), *The Scranton Fire Department 1854-Present Including Minooka Hose Company* (67 companies + Minooka) and *The Boys from Bucktown, The History of the Dunmore Fire Department* (13 companies).

Joe can be contacted at sendem39@aol.com. Release is planned for early 2023.

Welsh Patronymics? Maybe Not

By Torry Watkins

(Editor's note: Welsh Patronymics? Maybe Not originally appeared in the January – February 2022 issue of Ninnau, the North American Welsh Newspaper)

As with many other European cultures, Welsh peoples' names, traditionally involving the father's surname, go back for many centuries of recorded history. The names and their derivatives are highly convoluted, but over the years scholars have systematized the field. It is a fascinating topic of study, and much social history can be learned from it. In more recent centuries, however, the use of the given name added much complexity.

In the case of Welsh, the occurrence of the given name sometimes results in alliterative juxtapositions of these names. Although mostly taken for granted inside the Welsh-American community, the results are a source of amusement to many who are less familiar with these practices. For example, my grandfather, who lived with our family near the end of his life, was called William Wynn Watkins. A few doors up the street lived a man called Watkin Williams. And so, it went in the Hyde Park section of Scranton, Pennsylvania, where I spent my childhood years, day after glorious day. And in retrospect, I was privileged to have done so. It was a place, a time, and a people unlike any other.

But this story is not really about Welsh naming practices in general. It is, rather, a tale of child labor within a triumphal story of immigrant success, a story about the people whose labor made possible the Industrial Revolution in North America, and a story of two boys who went to sea at age 19, 110 years apart. Can we begin?

My own name, Torrington Davis Watkins, does not fit neatly into any of the Welsh naming systems, and it has baffled and sometimes perplexed me for much of my life. I'm the only son of Torrington Roosevelt Watkins (more on that later) and Ruth Helen Davis. My namesake Dad was the son of William Wynn Watkins Junior (1865-1943), and Gertrude Morris (1866-1938). My paternal great grandparents were (also) William Wynn Watkins (1835-1891) and Jane Jones (1838-1913). We're sort of Welsh. Not only Welsh, but a particular kind of Welsh: colliery boys who made their way from the valleys of South Wales to the valleys of Northeastern Pennsylvania in the 1860's to do what they knew best – to seek a living in the anthracite pits.



*Torrington D. Watkins
as a young choir boy*

Men often came alone or with brothers or friends, as did William Wynn Watkins Senior, who came with two brothers, leaving Jane and a growing family back in Merthyr Tydfil. Others brought their redoubtable Welsh wives, mothers, and sisters. By the time the Watkins family was complete, Jane had given birth to 13 children, 11 of whom lived into

adulthood. Eventually, the younger Watkins men worked their way out of the pits and took up a variety of occupations and professions. Several achieved some measure of fame in their communities. Sadly, their father, William Wynn Senior, did not live to see his offspring at the pinnacles of their lives. He was killed in the Taylor Mine in 1891.

Over the years I've often said that a name like mine is something to live up to or something to live down, since it is not easily ignored. Living the name "down" was never really an option. It's mine, I'm kind of stuck with it, so going with the flow seemed to be the pragmatic option (While hoping the other kids would get tired of making fun of it. Thankfully, they did. But girls seemed to like it, which only made matters worse). Was living "up" to my name in the realm of possibility? Because it was also my father's name, that was a tall order. Dad was a man of musical talent, intelligence, wit and charm, a gentle and loving family man, and a man of impeccable character. His untimely death, at 46, was a shock to the entire community and a personal loss that I still feel acutely to this day, nearly 75 years later. Trying to live up to his name would prove to be a challenge.



Torrington R. Watkins

But where did Dad get his name? Finding that answer was a task I set for myself and filed away in one of my brain's many otherwise idle recesses. Torrington – a town in Connecticut possibly named for a town in England – but not a very likely handle for a boy born in Peckville, Pennsylvania in 1901. One of my working hypotheses was that – horrors! – Dad was named for a member of the English aristocracy and that indirectly so was I. And given my political leanings, that thought did not rest easily with me. Besides, Grandpa Will was a Wales-born boy who went into the Taylor Colliery as a 7-year-old breaker boy and worked his way up and out of the mines to become owner of his own pharmacy. Would he and Gertrude think that was a suitable model for naming their son? Possibly, but not likely, I hoped. Please don't let Dad and me be named for an English aristocrat! Or a mine owner!

There things sat with me for years, until one wonderful day in 2012 when the North American Festival of Wales was held in Scranton, and I had the good fortune to spend some time with Professor Bill Jones of Cardiff University. Bill had written *Wales In America*, the definitive history of the Welsh in Scranton. He asked me whether I was related to John T. Watkins, one of Scranton's most famous Welsh-American musicians. I proudly informed Bill that Uncle John T. was my grandfather's next older brother (of 7 boys), and he showed me a page from a 1914 book of prominent Scrantonians.

(Unsurprisingly, all 165 of them were male, despite Scranton's having been a hotbed of the Suffrage Movement.)

The book identified John T. as John **Torrington** Watkins. Now I realized I was on to something. John Torrington Watkins – “John T” to everyone - was born in Merthyr Tydfil in 1863 and came with his mother and other siblings, including my grandfather, to join their husband and father in Taylor, Pennsylvania in 1870. Like my grandfather, John T immediately went into the Taylor Mine alongside their father and older brothers. He was known for his magnificent baritone voice, and he showed his conducting skills while still in his teens at various churches around the area. In his early 20's he worked his way out of the mines, opened a voice studio, and apparently took up choral music as a full-time vocation. He was destined for membership in the top ranks of the Pantheon of America's Welsh musicians. The list of church and community choirs he conducted is too long to enumerate here, and the list actually grows with every obituary or contemporaneous article about him that I read. To list only his achievements in the Welsh-American community, his choirs took prize money at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, the 1904 St. Louis Exposition, Eisteddfodau at Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Brooklyn, and numerous other places throughout the Eastern United States. In 1896 this boy from the Taylor “Patch” went off to the Royal Academy of Music, London, to study piano, voice, and conducting. While there he was hired as baritone soloist at two major London “society” churches. Unfortunately, his career was cut short in the late 1920's by a stroke that left him incapacitated until his death in 1937. Sadly, I never met the man, but apparently his younger brother, my grandfather Will, who was a fine singer and conductor in his own right, wanted to honor him by giving his own son at least part of John T's name. (And while they were at it, Dad's parents also bestowed on him a middle name, Roosevelt, for “Teddy”, another celebrity of that year, 1901).

But for purposes of my own quest, how did John T get his name? Were there parish records or other documents from 1860's Wales, perhaps listing an uncle, a community member, a baptism witness, or someone else who might have borne that same name? What possessed William Wynn, Sr. and Jane Jones Watkins to bestow such a name on their third son? I shared my story-to-date with my good friend Lisa Evans Hopkins, a skilled genealogist, and she enthusiastically joined the hunt. Searching official and church records of that period, Lisa found nothing of interest. Middle names seldom were included in those kinds of data bases.

A town in Connecticut, maybe a town in England; why not go own that alley? So, I took the plunge into that infallible source of truth and wisdom – the internet – and paydirt! I quickly learned that Torrington, Connecticut, was named for a very small town in Devon, England. Torrington, England, was name for a “celebrity” of the day (1850's) called John Shaw Torrington.

My great uncle, John Torrington Watkins was, I am certain, named for John Torrington, who was, of all things, a 21-year-old stoker in the Royal Navy, who died while serving aboard *HMS Terror* on a voyage begun in 1845. To my great relief, my (our) “namesake” was not an English aristocrat, but a humble stoker who left Manchester at 19 to join the Royal Navy. So far, so good, but things weren’t quite adding up for me. A stoker on a warship built in 1813? And how did this mere boy become a celebrity? As the story unfolds, *HMS Terror* and her sister ship *HMS Erebus*, although built in 1813 as bombardment vessels, later became the first Royal Navy ships to be retrofitted with auxiliary steam engines and screw propellers. Like my own family, John Torrington was a shoveler of coal, good Welsh steam coal, no doubt. But the celebrity part – what was that all about?



William W. Watkins

HMS Terror and *Erebus* saw much action in the War of 1812, including the bombardment of Fort McHenry in Baltimore Harbor. In the 1830’s they were converted to Arctic exploration vessels, structurally reinforced, and given their steam engines (and stokers). They made one Arctic voyage, then one to the Antarctic, and in 1845 another Arctic voyage with the Franklin Expedition in search of the long-sought Northwest Passage to Asia.

(Let us note here with some irony that it is no longer necessary to go in search of a Northwest Passage; because of global warming, the Passage has come to us!)

The 1845 voyage, alas, would be their final voyage. The expedition, to explore little-known channels of the Northwest Passage, was expected to last three years, and the ships were fitted out and provisioned accordingly. Both ships became icebound and partially wrecked in July 1847, then abandoned in 1848. Nothing more was heard of the crews after that time. Search parties found nothing of interest until 1850 when a major discovery was made. (There have been many explorations to date, and there now exists an extensive bibliography of what is known of the Franklin Expedition and their ships. That, of course, is not my principal focus here.)

John Shaw Torrington was not with his ship when both vessels and their crews met their icy doom. He had died of pneumonia aboard *Terror* before she reached the Arctic and as fortune would have it, he actually became a celebrity twice. His short life and tragic death became the stuff of legend. His first bit of celebrity is the one that has a direct connection to my version of the Watkins family story. This first event, the 1850 one, involved three graves, located on what is now known as Beechey Island, Nunavut, Canada. One of these graves was that of John Torrington. There was a headboard whose inscription

revealed that he died January 1, 1846. The other two graves belonged to Seaman John Hartnell, and William Braine, a Royal Marine.



*Torrington D. Watkins
during his time in the Navy*

During the 1850's these three graves were, in effect, the only known traces of the lost expedition. The three victims' names and word of their fate quickly spread throughout Great Britain and the rest of the English-speaking world. I have no doubt this is where and how John Torrington's name came into the William Watkins household and came to be given to their third son, "John T". But I needed at least one more piece of support for this conclusion: Although Merthyr Tydfil was at that time perhaps the most cosmopolitan place in South Wales, would my ancestors actually have known about the graves in question? I turned once again to my friend Lisa, and again the word came back. Yes! The South Wales newspapers did carry stories of the discovery and the identities of the three men. And this is where I pause my story of a highly probable origin for my own name and those of my dad and of his uncle.

But there is a second phase to the saga of the celebrity of the original John Torrington: Totally unbeknownst to me, a very infrequent television viewer, there has been a developing trove of information about him. It seems that many people,

serious scholars and popularizers alike, have been delving into aspects of his legend since the 1850's and right down to this very day.

Buried deep in permafrost, Torrington's body lay undisturbed until 1984, when the three bodies were exhumed and examined. Autopsies found him to be in a remarkable state of preservation. His was declared the best-preserved mummy since Tollund Man, discovered in 1950. He was found to have been seriously ill at the time of his death and weighed only 85 pounds. Pneumonia is believed to have been the immediate cause of death. Lead poisoning and botulism were also named as suspected contributors, most likely from the tinned food the crewmembers ate.

His second "career" as a celebrity took off after the 1984 autopsy. The autopsy was documented, of course, in the scientific literature, but quickly picked up by various popular sources that continue to this day. They include photographs published in many places, a declaration in *People Magazine*, of all places, as one of the most intriguing persons of 1984, songs by Iron Maiden and James Taylor, television documentaries, and articles on the expedition that have appeared as recently as 2016.

My own piece of the story is coming to a close, and I hope that my yarn has not been a yawn for my readers, because it has been great fun for me. When I first set out on my little voyage of self-discovery, I never, ever, could have foreseen where it would lead. Or that the key to answering my question would be found in the documented life story of a real person. Or that that person would be a young man, an ordinary working man, born about 110 years before my own time. Or that the story would have taken the emotional and bittersweet turn that it has taken for me. John Shaw Torrington went to sea as a 19-year-old Royal Navy stoker. I, a grandson of generations of Welsh coal miners, went to sea as a 19-year-old US Navy radarman. John played a key role in his ship's propulsion systems. I was part of a team that navigated our ship and kept her ready for action. John died in the service of Queen and Country, a boy whose life had barely begun. He probably suffered horribly.

I was spared from any such fate and went on gratefully to live a long and satisfying life. It moves me to know that he and I most certainly would have crisscrossed the very same expanses of the vast Atlantic more than a few times. R.I.P., shipmate.

Torry Watkins,
Hightstown, NJ 08520
609-448-7647
torrywatkings@hotmail.com



John T. Watkins

The Legacy of Frank O'Brien: Bossie O'Brien Hundley

By Monica Tapper

In the previous three installments in the life of Frank O'Brien, we traced the journey of a Honesdale boy who witnessed the Irish War of 1850, fought in the Civil War in the 1860s, and served his community during the Cholera Epidemic of 1873. His death from overwork and exhaustion in 1910 left behind a wife and two adult daughters. The eldest living

lackawannahistory@gmail.com

daughter, Annie, took the veil in 1899, but his youngest daughter, nicknamed Bossie, was the one who inherited Frank's traits.

Julia O'Brien was born in 1876 but was given the nickname "Bossie" by her nannie and the name stuck. Bossie grew up in Birmingham, Alabama as the youngest in a family of five daughters. Frank entertained his children with tales of adventure from his boyhood days in both Ireland and Pennsylvania, and Bossie remembered her father's stories for the rest of her life. She married Oscar Hundley in 1897, and her only daughter Margaret was born in 1909, only a year before Frank died. Bossie was a lot like her father – she had the potential to see how things could be in the future. She also had her father's skill which rendered her immune to other people's criticisms. And of course, she had a strong will and a restless spirit, just like her father.



Bossie with husband, Judge Oscar P. Hundley
Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress

When Frank was admitted to Burn-Brae Sanitarium in Clifton Heights, Bossie and Oscar were both in Pennsylvania, hoping and praying for his recovery. When he died there, the couple sent word to Bossie's mother, who remained in Alabama.

Frank's death happened to correspond with the era of new political activity in Alabama women, and within two years of her father's death, Bossie threw herself into the suffrage movement and gave it all she had. Her crowning achievement was turning education into activism, which was unheard-of before her.

In 1912, Bossie joined the Birmingham Equal Suffrage Association, and the following year she was elected President. However, Bossie's real work on suffrage began in 1914, when the Alabama Equal Suffrage Association planned to lobby the Alabama state legislature

to propose an amendment to Alabama constitution, and Bossie was put in charge of the campaign.

Bossie's campaign marked the beginning of women's political activism in Alabama. No longer content to simply provide the public information on the benefits of voting rights for women, Bossie and her army took their fight straight to the Alabama legislature. First up on the agenda, Bossie and her suffragists sent questionnaires to every Alabama legislator. Cooperative legislators filled out a form stating whether or not he supported women's suffrage, but also whether or not he was a Confederate veteran, a preacher, and his religious affiliation. Less than cooperative legislators who did not fill out a form received a visit from one of Bossie's suffragists, who would fill out the form for them.

Once the suffragists had all their information, they went to work. Legislators opposed to suffrage received visits and educational materials from suffragists who were always looking to turn a "maybe" or a "no" vote into a "yes." For her part, Bossie did not limit her work to convincing the legislature – she also went to work on the Alabama electorate. Up until that point, "education" simply meant handing out literature or providing entertainment in appropriate women's venues. Bossie was creative with both tactics.

An excerpt from my book, *A Culinary Tour through Alabama History*, details one of Bossie's events to promote women's suffrage:

"At a private club in Birmingham called the Southern Club, Bossie, in her role as general chairman, color coordinated an afternoon tea party in yellow, one of the colors of the women's suffrage movement. Bossie began the day in her own garden, plucking four dozen yellow irises to form into an enormous sheaf. The display of Bossie's own irises rested inside a wicker basket on Cluny lace, next to the display of yellow bonbons on the center table. Two additional tables had yellow mints, yellow suffragette wafers, and a bowl of fruit punch with chunks of orange sherbet surrounded by bunches of yellow roses. Yellow shades were used to soften the lighting at the tea tables, which were accompanied by assortments of yellow flowers. It must have looked as though a thousand yellow butterflies had landed in the room at once. Although the decorations were yellow, the suffragettes dressed in other colors. Bossie wore a white ratine outfit and a Panama hat. Bossie and her ladies also had suffrage supplies for sale, including stationery, postcards, ribbons, and gardenias. The tea was successful and well attended, with at least fifty people there to enjoy a dance after the tea. There are a number of cookbooks for suffragettes, but this recipe for vanilla wafers from *The Woman Suffrage Cookbook* (1886) might be fairly close to what Bossie served that day:

Vanilla Wafers

One cupful sugar, two-thirds of a cupful of butter, four tablespoonfuls of milk, one of vanilla, one egg, one and a half teaspoonfuls of cream of tartar, two-thirds of a teaspoonful of soda, flour enough to roll out very thin."

In addition to tea parties and other "appropriate" events, Bossie drove her Hudson 6 automobile throughout the state of Alabama giving speeches on the cause. Today, a woman driving her car across the state to give a speech would not ruffle any Alabama feathers. But in 1914, women had barely held driver's licenses for a few years, and the

automobile had only been widely available as a common vehicle for transportation for a few years longer than that. More to the point, the interstate system had not been invented yet, so she had to maneuver over roads which would most likely fail today's safety inspections. There were also no hotels in the rural parts of Alabama, which meant Bossie had to sleep with whoever was kind enough to supply her with shelter.

Sleeping at a stranger's home would certainly ruffle feathers in today's Alabama, but Bossie was fearless. She had a mission and there was no stopping her. She gave speeches during an era when women did not speak in public, and she slept wherever there was a place for her. When she tried to pay one of the families for their hospitality, the woman of the house refused. She told Bossie, "O, I couldn't take anything. All of my life I've somehow believed in the things you talked about last night and have never been able to help it along. If I can help you by your staying with me last night, I'll feel that I've done something for the thing you're working for."

When the amendment proposal was put before the Alabama legislature, and after all the hard work put in by Bossie and her team, the final vote was 52 – 42 in favor of letting Alabama voters determine women's voting rights in the state. Bossie had gotten a majority of the votes, and it would have been a time for celebration, but unfortunately, Alabama law requires a 3/5 majority, and the suffragists were five votes short.

Bossie might not have succeeded in her major goal of achieving suffrage rights for Alabama women, but five years later it was irrelevant – national suffrage rights for women became federal law and she could finally cast her ballot. Therefore, her legacy was never suffrage for Alabama women, but it was her total abandonment of the rules she was supposed to live by. Just like her father.



Julia (Bossie) O'Brien
Photo courtesy of
Bossie's granddaughter, Linda Brown

Anthracite Ancestry

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

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

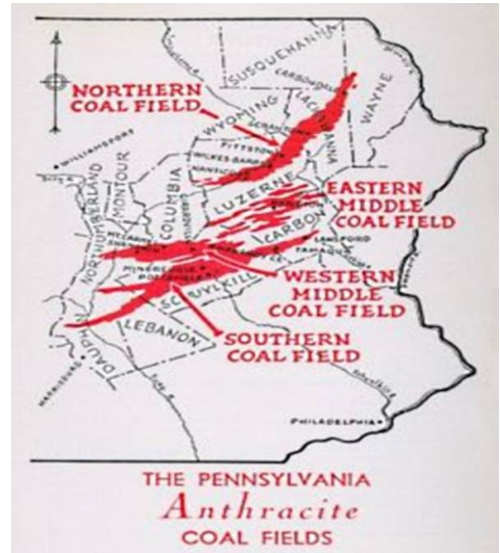


Image source: Pinterest

Remembering Pancoast April 7, 1911

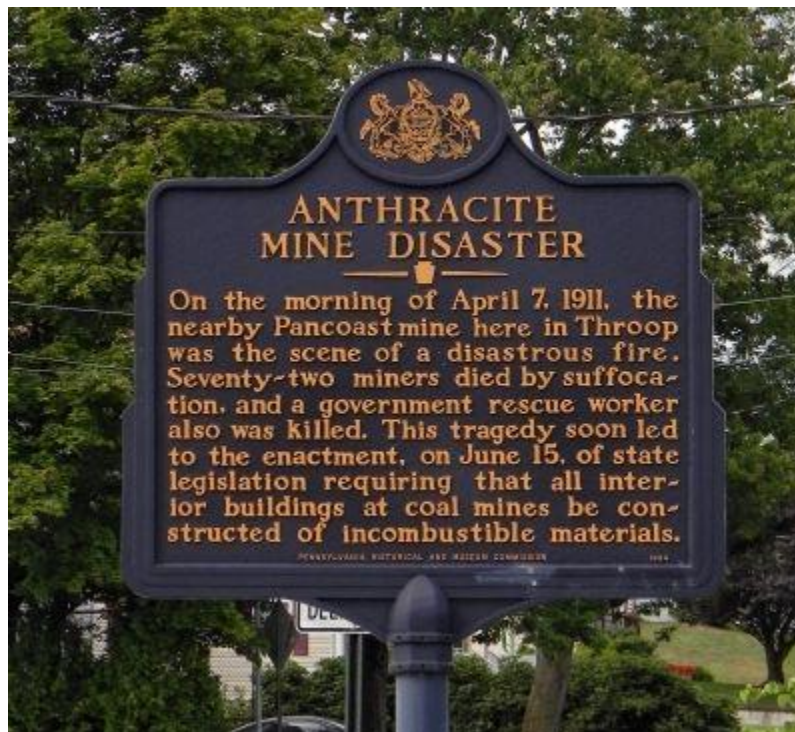


Image source: HMdb.org

Around 8:30 am on April 7, 1911, in Throop, a fire began in the Pancoast Mine's engine house that was not constructed of non-combustible materials, but of wood supported by a flooring made of yellow pine plank. The fire was initially considered to be a nuisance and it wasn't until two hours later that the men were told to evacuate. It was too late as the fire took the lives of 72 immigrant miners and one government rescue worker.

The Pancoast Mine, also known as Price-Pancoast, was Northeast Pennsylvania's third major anthracite mining disaster in terms of lives lost (1911; 73 dead) that took its place with Avondale (1869; 110) and Baltimore Tunnel (1919; 92).

A visual remembrance of Pancoast is a Commonwealth road sign, located on Charles Street near Sanderson Street, not far from the mine site. Although it was one of the region's smaller operations, Pancoast takes its place in Northeast Pennsylvania's anthracite legacy. Those who worked Pancoast and those who lost loved ones and friends are recognized as all are remembered in 2022.



Resting places of seven killed at Pancoast
Photo courtesy of Joe Rudzinski

New Use for the Pancoast Mine Site Proposed

The lunar landscape that existed across much of Lackawanna and Luzerne for decades is quickly becoming non-existent. The land on which pyramid-like culm dumps, tall breakers and other mining-related structures once stood is now occupied by shopping centers, industrial parks, distribution warehouses, upscale housing developments and schools. Trees now cover much of the currently reclaimed and unused mine sites.



Pancoast Breaker
John Stellwagen Collection
Photo courtesy of Frank P. Adams

The former Pancoast Mine site is one that is, as of now, still unused. Located between Oleckna and Pancoast streets in Throop, the mine operated from 1881 to 1936. In 1972, a large tract of that land was acquired by real estate developer Anthony J. Rinaldi, but the property remained untouched for decades.

According to an article that appeared In the March 7, 2022 issue of the Scranton Times-Tribune, Mr. Rinaldi's son, Donald, has proposed to turn the property into a mix of senior citizen residences and offices. The development could provide well-needed homes for people struggling to pay mortgages, property taxes and higher rents. Donald Rinaldi is currently in the process transforming the former Scranton Lace Company facilities into a residential community to be known as Lace Village.



Photo showing Pancoast Mine site location
Area outline in red is the proposed development location
Photo courtesy of Joe Rudzinski

Anthracite Heritage Museum Is Open



Image source: visitnepa.org

As we begin to return to some semblance of normalcy following the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Anthracite Heritage Museum announced that the museum is open from Friday through Sunday, 10am to 5pm, March through December.

Located at 22 Bald Mountain Road, McDade Park, Scranton, the museum interprets, collects and presents the story of hard coal mining, its related industries, the immigrant culture of Northeast Pennsylvania and the evolution of the region's culture.

The museum website states that although The Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC) has eliminated mask wearing and social distancing, these practices are strongly recommended. For updates, please visit their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/anthraciteheritagemuseum> For questions, comments or additional museum information, please call 570-963-4804 or email to bmorin@pa.gov

Anthracite Reading

Mining Disasters of the Wyoming Valley – Bryan Glahn

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

lackawannahistory@gmail.com

Brooks Mine to Reopen?



Image source: nayaugpark.com

If the Underground Miners have their way, the Brooks Mine located in Nay Aug Park, Scranton, will reopen after being closed for almost half a century. Opened in 1902 by coal mine owner, Reese Brooks, it was part of the Scranton School of Mines program of educating the public about anthracite mining. It was built to be a teaching museum, affiliated with the Everhart Museum. The mine was never a commercial operation.

Throughout its 120-year history, the teaching museum/tourist attraction was closed to the public on several occasions. The first time was from 1938 to 1945. It closed again in the 1950s, and following retimbering during the 1960s, the mine remained open until 1975.



Inside the Brooks Mine
Image source: ironminers.com

Members of the Underground Miners inspected the mine and found that it's in relatively good condition. They noted that while it will have to be retimbered and cleaned, there was no evidence of falling rock, which is a very good sign.

The inspection report was forwarded to the state for the necessary approvals. Upon receipt of approvals, the group expects to fund the project through private donations, sponsors and grants.



Path leading to mine entrance
Image source: nayaugpark.org

Founded in 2002, Underground Miners is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, dedicated to preserving Pennsylvania's anthracite coal mining heritage through an historical online archive, equipment restoration and educational public events. For information, visit <https://www.facebook.com/undergroundminers>



In The Mines
The Daily Diaries of Thomas J. Gobllick
By Carl Orechovsky

Thomas J. Gobllick 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. Gobllick lived in the Austin Heights section of Old Forge. A friend was removing items from Mr. Gobllick's house and came upon his work diaries that cover six years, extending from 1938 to 1944. The owner of the house didn't want the diaries, which are smaller sized, spiral bound notebooks. They were scanned and enlarged, and subsequently donated to the Old Forge Historical Society. Most entries pertain to Old Forge, and I have permission to share the contents.

lackawannahistory@gmail.com

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

July 1941

July 1. 10 DAY VACATION WITH PAY

July 2 – 3. No entries

July 4. July 4Th colliery Idle.

July 5. No entry

July 6. Sunday stayed home.

July 7. Vacation over.

July 8. O'clock shift. Worked with Jimmy Durry brakeman.

July 9. Done 9:30.

July 10. Warm. Bearing on motor gone. Done 9:30. Painting house.

July 11. Rain. Done 9:30. Tough night.

July 12. Warm. Motor broke down. Bad roads. Last coal. Due bills.

July 13. Warm. Sunday. Andy's bunch by river. Had a good time.

July 14. Warm. Painted all day, done late.

July 15. Pay Day. Hard shift. 49hrs, \$41.16

July 16. Warm. Short cars. New scale at Volpes tipple. Done 5:15.

July 17. Hot. Plenty of cars. Extra coal wheeled out. Done 5am.

July 18. Hot. Short of cars. 5am.

July 19. Hot. 118, 1 place 8 cars coal. Pulled 3 rails. Done 4am.

July 20. Sunday.

July 21. Warm. Still painting. Done 2pm. Oiled motor.

July 22. Hot. Still painting. A. Wilson not working. Done late.

July 23. Hot. Full coal. Tom bought a pup.

July 24. Very hot. Tough day at work. Done late. Rubber shoes.

July 25. Rain. Worked a double. Billy to pay me, cars in Bills place. Slippery. Full coal.

July 26. Very hot. Shakers not working so good. Shifts cars in Marcy Babylon.

JUL. 27. Very hot. Sunday. Me Tommy, Dave to Mill Creek. Tom Cott & Family visiting.

July 28. Hot. Rain. Done early. Full Coal. Nice night to work.

July 29. Rain. Worked double in Art Coopers place. 2 pump armatures burned out.

July 30. Rain. Cars off the road in the swamp. Helped Bill to Branch.

July 31. Paid Mrs. Chilhg \$1.20. Long night. Done 10pm. 2 shifts be paid me from Bill Deible.
94hrs\$78.96

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

August 1941

August 1. Warm. Car weight tonnage base. Nice shift.

August 2. Warm. No cars on the road. Done 8pm.

August 3. Sunday. Drove Cott family to D&H Station Scranton.

August 4. Hot. No cars off. Done 4am.

August 5. Hot. 122 not working. Done 4:30.

August 6. Everybody in. Full coal. Was to town for paint. Done 5am.

August 7. Hot. New place along the road 123. Moved a shaker. Done 4:30am.

Au 8. Hot. Full coal. Nice working. Done 4:30 am.

August. 9. Hot. Worked behind the engine road.

August 10. Sunday. Stayed at home.

August 11. Rain. Full crew. 45 cars coal. Done early.

August 12. Cool. New miner 107. 41 cars coal. Done 2pm.

August 13. Cool. HENRY THOMPSON KILLED PUNY ROAD 11PM. 38 coal 3 rock. Done 1:30 pm.

August 14. Cool. Full coal. 40 coal 1 rock. Done 1:30pm.

August 15. Warm. Full crew. Full coal. Done 2pm. \$91.73. 19 hrs bal. paid for 87 hrs, \$73.80

August 16. Rain. Everybody working. Full coal.

August 17. Sunday. Sick all day, stayed home.

August 18. Rain. Easy double shift. Worked double in Big Joes place.

August 19. Rain. 122 gone behind the engine. New miner 107 and crew. Done 9pm.

August 20. Warm. Nice day at work. 26 coal 3 rock. Done 9pm.

August 21. Warm. No cars off. 30 cars full coal. 112 miner back on road. Done 8pm.

August 22. Rain. Everybody in. 44 cars coal. Done 9:30.

August 23. Warm. Was to No 6 to see if shopping. Colliery idle.

August 24. Sunday. Stayed at home.

August 25. Rain. 4 places. 24 coal 3 rock. Dandy shift. Orders to quit work no sooner than 5am.

August 26. Rain. Was to town for paint and oil. Done 4am. 4 places. Good job.

August 27. Cool. 123 back in Back Branch. Done early.

August 28. Cool. Was to Taylor with Helen Puzio for wall paper. Done early at W.

August 29. Warm. Due bills. Worked extra time picking up props for 122.

August 30. Warm. Pay Day. Colliery Idle.

August 31. Sunday. Stayed home. Bal. 18 hrs. worked 84, paid for 85. \$71.40

***** END OF BOOK 1*****

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

September 1941

September 1. Warm. Labor Day. Colliery Idle. Painted the porch.

September 2. Warm. 4 places in Tunnell. 21 coal, 3 rock. 118 crew not in. 107 crew quit. Done 13:30am.

September 3. Warm. 4 places. 20 cars full coal. Done 1:30. A. was mad at Edna. Water pipe burst.

September 4. Warm. 118 in 5 places. 23 coal 1 rock. Done 1pm. Picked pears.

September 5. Warm. Full coal. 28 coal 1 rock. Done 1:30.

September 6. Warm. 122 crew not in. 17 coal. 123 chain broke.

September 7. Sunday. Was to Chyis Eve.

September 8. Pm shift. Full coal 28 cars. Done 10pm. Lob and Jacobs buying.

September 9. Election day. Jacob lost. Was to town for rug. 30 coal. Done 9:30.

September 10. Warm. Was to Taylor for wallpaper. Marley working. E.W. ok. Done 9:30.

September 11. Cool. Motor broke studs. Tough day. Cash. Worked double in Big Joes place.

September 12. Warm. Full coal, 27 coal 2 rock. Done 9:30. Due bills.

September 13. Warm. Coal working 1 shift only. 3 & 11 idle. Roman Married.

September 14. Sunday Stayed home.

September 15. Pm shift. 4 places. Peter 123, 5 men. Done late 6am. Bal. 8 hrs. worked 77, paid for 87, \$73.08

September 16. New fire boss. New number 106, in over head. Full coal. Done 4:30

September 17. Was to Taylor for varnish. Done 5:30.

September 18. Everybody working. Done 5am.

September 19. New fire boss. Full coal. 29 coal.

September 20. Was to Old Forge. 11:00 Idle.

September 21. Sunday. Was to movies.

September 22. Done 1:30. Full coal.

September 23. Loaded 3 cars dirt. Worked extra shift.

September 24. Lost coal. Shaker snow. Pete 123 snow. Done 3am.

September 25. Joe Volpe was in Back Branch. Done 2:30. Tom and I ride Mt. Road.

September 26. Done 2pm.

September 27. Pay Day. 2nd & 3rd shift's not in. Jeffries was in Back Branch.

September 28. Sunday. Stayed home all day.

September 29. Marley back on job. 15 cars coal. A. Wilson on Vacation. Done. 8:30.

September 30. Blowed on 106 rock Jeff. 15 coal 2 rock. Done 6:30.

Bal. 11 hrs. Worked 90. Paid for 87. \$73.08

Notes

Sept. 24: Shaker snow, and Peter 123 snow, may refer to dust.

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- [Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority](#)
- [Steamtown National Historic Site](#)
- [Anthracite Museum and Iron Furnaces](#)
- [Electric City Trolley Museum](#)
- [Lackawanna Coal Mine Tour](#)

Cultural Partners

- [Albright Memorial Library](#) and the Lackawanna County Library System
- [The Everhart Museum](#)
- [Scranton Cultural Center](#) at the Masonic Temple
- Scranton Times-Tribune's [Pages from the Past](#)

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Anthracite Research

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

Historical Societies

- [Carbondale Historical Society](#)
- [Dunmore Historical Society](#)
- [Luzerne County Historical Society](#)
- [Wayne County Historical Society](#)
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- [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
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Business Hours

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

Phone: 570-344-3841

e-mail: 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, from 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 (C) 3 non-profit organization, is supported in part by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Catlin Memorial Trust, Lackawanna County, and memberships.