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The Journal

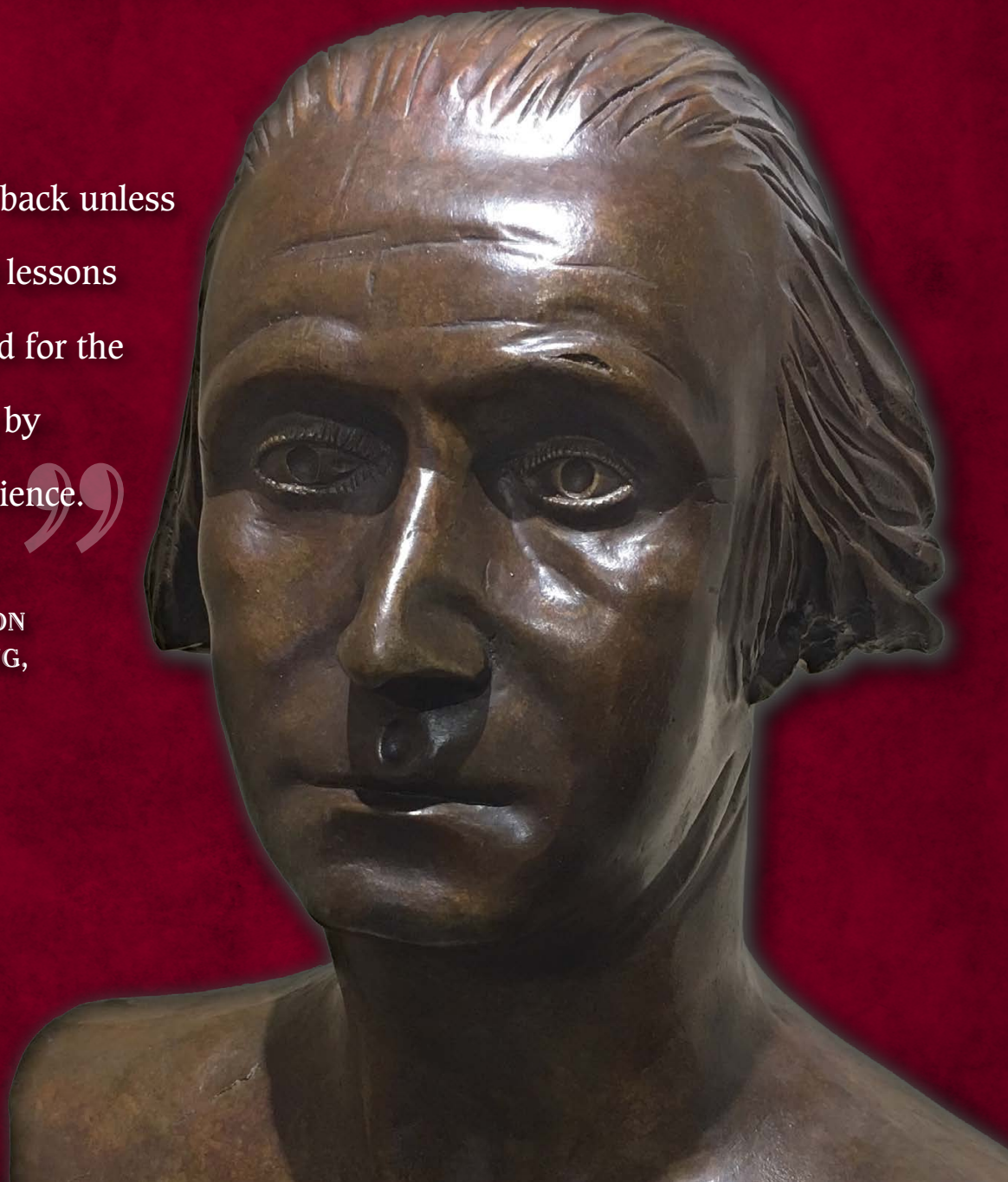
of the LYCOMING COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

— STORIES OF —

TRIUMPH & TRAGEDY in Lycoming County

“We should not look back unless
it is to derive useful lessons
from past errors, and for the
purpose of profiting by
dearly bought experience.”

— LETTER FROM
GEORGE WASHINGTON
TO JOHN ARMSTRONG,
MARCH 26, 1781



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PHOTO FROM COVER:

This bust is a bronze casting of a wooden carving of George Washington. The wooden carving was crafted by Eugene (Gene) Landon of Montoursville in 2006. The carved bust was created from the last living Liberty Tree – a tulip poplar that stood during the Revolution in Annapolis, Maryland. Gene's woodcarving was commissioned by Mr. Templeton of Templeton Funds and presented to President George W. Bush at the White House.

— 2017.95, gift of Susan G.S. Anderson, D.M.D. and Dan Llewellyn

The Journal of the Lycoming County Historical Society, 2017-2018 edition, is graciously underwritten, in part, by John C. and Linda Lundy and the Stephen C., John W. and John C. Lundy Fund through the First Community Foundation Partnership. It is interesting to note that Mrs. Lundy's ancestors Michael and Sarah Dutt and their daughter Flora Dutt (later Mrs. Charles Dieffenbach) were members of the Baptist Church in Newberry, central to one of the tragedies recounted in this year's Journal.

— FOREWORD —

As I write this Foreword, Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria have left a path of destruction in Florida, Texas, the Caribbean and Puerto Rico. We can only imagine the heartache that people experienced as they lost loved ones and their pets, their homes, and their possessions. Wildfires raged in California and earthquakes shattered California and Japan.

What survives? The indomitable human spirit which brings about rebuilding, going on and bravely facing life's challenges, and memorializing those who are no longer with us. The articles in this year's journal pay tribute to the tragedies of life and the spirit with which people ultimately triumph. As George Washington wrote to John Armstrong in 1781, "*We should not look back unless it is to derive useful lessons from past errors, and for the purpose of profiting by dearly bought experience.*"

Many Lycoming Countians remember the tragic crash of Allegheny Flight #371 which took the lives of everyone aboard except a sole survivor. Robin Van Auken has recounted the events of that fateful day in 1959. Decades later, Shane Collins and his cousin Mark Avery took it upon themselves to find the crash site. Not knowing what they would encounter, they recovered fragments of the crash, including poignant mementoes of the lost lives. Thanks to the efforts of these awesome archaeologists, a plaque has been placed at the crash site so that we will not forget. Someday, we hope to exhibit the artifacts at the Lycoming County Historical Society.

Stories of triumph exist within John Piper's treatise of five families who established businesses within Lycoming County. Through their tenacity and hard work, the businesses have not only survived, but flourished. The Van Campens, the Plankenhorns, the Spitlers, the Lundys and the Staimans are highlighted in this issue of the *Journal*. Ali Preston has added a history of Merriman and Merriman Lumber Company as an example of a successful company during the Lumber Boom. Though considered a small lumber company, the huge impact it had throughout the continent is revealed. Blanche Miller Grimes, a Navy yeoman during World War I, was certainly ahead of her time, triumphing amidst a majority of men. Reverend William S. Baird survived the death of three children bolstered by his great faith. Momentarily defeated, the Baptists in Newberry rebuilt after the church balcony collapsed in a Christmas Eve tragedy. The Ocheys, displaced during World War II, spent many years in displaced persons camps before receiving the opportunity of passage to America and ultimately, enjoying the American dream.

As a *leit motif*, a small remembrance of the devastation created by Hurricane Agnes in 1972 is included. As we remember the flooding which occurred forty-six years ago, Stephen Wasby of Eastham, Massachusetts, contacted us just at the right time. Even though it is apparent that he was marooned in nearby Lock Haven during Hurricane Agnes, the message is reinforced, that the best in human beings arises during crisis. We pull together and help one another through difficult times.

I sincerely hope you enjoy reading these articles! Wishing you all the best in 2018, I am,

Gary W. Parks

EDITOR



“What conflicts we have seen, What trials we have passed”: Reverend Baird’s Test of Faith

By Gary W. Parks

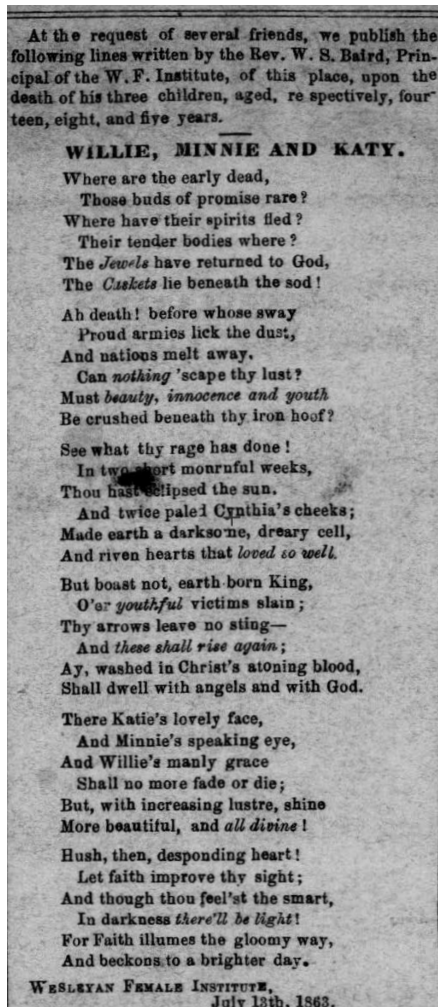
Lycoming County native William Siggins Baird was a Methodist minister during the mid-nineteenth century, witnessing conflict and turmoil within the United States. War erupted, pitting brother against brother, Confederate rebel against Union Yankee. While Reverend Baird did not serve in a military unit, he suffered a most horrendous loss during the War. In late May and early June 1863, four of his children were stricken with diphtheria. Three died from diphtheria within days of one another. The pain of his loss was still abundantly clear in a letter written to his sister three years later (1866). At the time, Reverend Baird was located in Staunton, Virginia.

Staunton was the site of the Wesleyan Female Collegiate Institute which was opened by the Methodists in September 1846. Initially, there were thirty day students and a handful of boarders. Reverend J.R. Finch served as its first principal. Classes were held in the basement of the Methodist Church, but ultimately a site was purchased adjacent to the Methodist Church. The supervising architect was Captain John F. Smith and the cornerstone was laid by the local Masonic lodge. The Institute flourished at that location from 1850 until 1870. Reverend Baird served as the principal from 1860 until 1866.¹

While Reverend Baird was serving as principal, he suffered the devastating loss of three of his children within two weeks of one another.

The *Staunton Advertiser* published the following lines on July 21, 1863. (To the right.)

He later wrote his sister Rachel (Mrs. John Hamlin) from the Wesleyan Female Collegiate Institute, February 20, 1866, “lamenting the days of peace & innocence,



Poem written by Rev. Baird and published in the *Staunton Advertiser*, July 21, 1863.

when we dwelt upon the past with pleasure, and contemplated the future with delight”. He continues, “But as the privilege is denied me, I must content myself with jotting down a few incidents of the five past eventful years which may be interesting to you. And yet the most of what I am about to relate will embrace only two weeks of the above mentioned time.

What a change has taken place in our our [SIC] dear little family, & what a deep, deep sorrow has settled down upon our once joyous spirits! Katie, Minnie & Willie were snatched suddenly from us, in the order in which I have named them, by that terrible disease diphtheria. Katie died on the 26th of May, 1863, Minnie, the 2nd of June, & Willie the 10th- being respectively 5-1/6, 7-2/3 & 13-3/4 years old. They were all in vigorous health, active, cheerful & happy, but in two short weeks death performed his work, and their mortal remains are now lying, side by side, in the lonely grave. Katie was an affectionate, lovely little creature, and as gentle & good as she was lovely. She was a great favorite of all who knew her, & was daily the object of caresses & the subject of eulogy O how our hearts were pained, & how we longed for this precious child when the dark silent grave concealed her from our view!”

He continued, “Minnie was quite as dear to us, if not dearer, but she was not dead. She had lived longer with us & had entwined herself about our hearts in a thousand ways. She was symmetrical in form & features, graceful & energetic in action, ardent in affection, quick in perception, and, for one of her age, possessed a mind of more than ordinary compass & power. We often contemplated her physical & mental development with pleasure, & thought what a comfort she would be to us in years to come. But now, our thoughts were concentrated upon another, and Katie, for the present, was the bright star of hope which had become obscured by the dark clouds of death.

Would that it had pleased God to have stayed the hand of death here, & said, ‘It is enough.’ Lovely & precious as they were, we could, I think, have given them up with comparative composure & resignation, if we had been assured that Willie (our first born & the partner of our sorrows & our joys for nearly 14 years, who was so affectionate, so obedient, so companionable, so obliging, so manly, so useful, & upon whom we were beginning to lean for support that Willie would be spared us.) But, no, insatiate Archer, two would not suffice:

‘Thy shaft flew thrice, & thrice my peace was slain,

And thrice ere once yon moon had filled her horn.’

The greatest comfort we have is derived from the indubitable fact that we now have two-thirds of our children safe in heaven- 2 sons & 2 daughters.”

¹ David J. Brown, ed., *Staunton, Virginia: a pictorial history*, Staunton, Virginia: Historic Staunton Foundation, 1985.

He continues with paragraphs of his children's comforts through reading from the Bible and prayer. As his son Willie was near death, Rebecca Baird, Reverend Baird's wife, remarked to her son, "'Willie, when you get to heaven you must watch over & guard your two little sisters, Minnie & Katie.' 'No,' said he, 'I will guard Everett', meaning his brother who was taken with the same disease when he was, but then recovering." Reverend Baird continues, "With great calmness and presence of mind he settled up his business transactions, and gave directions as to what disposition should be made of his little effects. Everett was to have every thing not otherwise disposed of, & especially his Bible. He then requested us to call Everett in that he might bid him farewell. Everett approached him. He rose in the bed, & looking earnestly and affectionately upon his brother he said, 'May the Lord bless you, make you a good boy, & finally save you in heaven for Jesus' sake. Amen. Farewell'. A short time before he died, he asked me in the presence of Aunt Jinsey, our colored cook, who was standing at his bed-side weeping, 'Who will lay me out when I am dead?' I answered that I did not know. 'Whom do you desire?' 'Aunt Jinsey, & no one else,' he replied. Aunt Jinsey assured him that she would do as he desired. Realizing that death was near, he then asked his Ma how he should place his arms, & folding them across his breast, he calmly & peacefully fell asleep in Jesus." It was solace to the couple that their other children escaped the diphtheria outbreak as he mentions his two sons "who demand our attention and support. May God help us to do our duty by them."

Children of William and Rebecca were: Willie, b. 1849-d. June 10, 1863; Benjamin, b. 1854- d.?.; Minnie, b.1855-d. June 2, 1863; Joseph Everett, b.1857-d. October 14, 1932; Katie, b. 1858-d. May 26, 1863; Joanna, b. 1860-d.? ; Francis T.M. "Frank", b. 1863- d. January 7, 1898; Mary Lydia Alma, b. 1868-d. December 26, 1963; and Jane E.C. "Jennie", b. 1870-d. April 17, 1948. A number are buried with their parents, but I was unable at this writing to find out where the three diphtheria victims are buried.

Diphtheria and upbreaks of typhoid fever gripped many parts of the nation during the Civil War. A report from Floyd County, Virginia, chronicles the spread of diphtheria, "When eleven year old John Howard died January 14, 1861, of diphtheria, Floyd County, Virginia may not have realized its danger. While seventy-three people died in Floyd in 1860, none died of diphtheria. But in 1861, 90 people died in Floyd County not including four Civil War soldiers. Through the end of August only 6 deaths were from the disease but by years end twenty deaths or 22% of the year's total were attributed to diphtheria... The September 1862 total of diphtheria deaths was 16, followed by 15 in October, 20 in November and 16 more in December. The year's death total was 242 not including 38 soldiers. This was a 268% increase from 1861. Diphtheria accounted for 165 or 68% of the deaths..."²

And the death notices were frequent. The *Staunton Spectator* of June 23, 1863 records the death of Sallie M. Kennerly, wife of John T. Kennerly, who died June 2 "of *Dyphtheria*," at the residence of Reverend S. Kennerly in Augusta County. "The sting of death being extracted, the grave lost its victory; she passed away as the morning dew before the rising sun, and sweetly sleeps in Jesus." The following week's newspaper records the death of Wm. K. Clayton, aged 41 years, 8 months and 18 days of diphtheria in Harrisonburg. The same newspaper carries notice that "Dyphtheria has claimed another trophy from the number of this deeply afflicted family, Jno. A. Clayton, aged 30 years and 2 days, of typhoid fever."

Apart from his outpouring of grief, William S. Baird also writes passionately about the Civil War, "Our greatest sufferings were of a mental character... the loss of our country, the demoralization of the people & the desolation of our country... I was opposed to disunion, but a believer in state sovereignty, and hence opposed to co-ercion on the part of the General Government. But this question has decided by the arbitrament of the sword... At the last session of the Baltimore conference which met in Alexandria, Va., I, with one hundred and one other ministers, took my position with the M.E. Church, South."

Reverend Baird had a long and illustrious career. Born in Lycoming County November 4, 1815, he was the son of Benjamin (1751-1835) and Frances Siggins Baird (1777-1848). Benjamin and Frances are buried in the Dunnstown Cemetery, Clinton County. William's early education has not been recorded, but he attended Allegheny College and graduated in 1841. Founded in 1815, Allegheny College ranks among the oldest 1% of colleges and universities. According to its website, it is the 32nd oldest college in the United States. The Reverend Timothy Alden was appointed the first President of the College, arriving in April 1815. Rev Timothy Alden, Jun. (Yarmouth, Massachusetts, August 28, 1771 – July 5, 1839) was an educator and founder of Allegheny College. After receiving a theology degree from Harvard University in 1794, he was appointed as a pastor in 1799. As an educator, he held posts in Boston, Cincinnati, and Newark. Allegheny College is situated in Meadville, Pa., which was established in 1788 in the French Creek Valley, along the route traversed by George Washington on his journey to Fort LeBoeuf a generation earlier. In 1815, Meadville was still a raw frontier town of about 400 settlers, of whom an unusually large number had come from Massachusetts and Connecticut. They dreamed of a college that might bring the educational opportunities of New England to the frontier.

William Baird was conditionally admitted to the Baltimore Conference in 1842, ordained a Deacon in 1844, and later ordained an Elder. He served a number of churches and served as a mentor to rising ministers

² The Floyd Co., VA Diphtheria Epidemic of 1862, freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~swva/diphtheria.htm.

of the Gospel. For example, Edmund Wesley Kirby was born April 1831 in Virginia. His parents John H. and Mary Ann Mansfield Kirby moved to Harford County, MD and it was in 1853 that Edmund was recommended for the ministry by the West Harford Circuit of the M.E. Church. According to Jon E. Noring's article concerning Kirby, "*The pastor on the West Harford Circuit 1852-53 was the prominent William S. Baird. Baird most likely counseled Edmund regarding his perceived call to the ministry and helped arrange for him to serve with a quarterly conference license as the junior preacher on the Castle Fin Circuit 1852-53. When Baird was assigned to the Woodstock Circuit in 1853, he apparently asked that the newly admitted Edmund Kirby be assigned as his junior preacher so that he could continue mentoring the young man.*"³

In Baird's latter life, he served as the editor of the *Baltimore Episcopal Methodist*, a newspaper. Reverend Baird died at the age of fifty-nine years on August 13, 1874. Among his children and with his wife, he is buried at Glenwood Cemetery, District of Columbia.

Note from the Author: *I am indebted to the Augusta County Historical Society for the use of the image of the Wesleyan Female Institute.*



GARY W. PARKS is the Executive Director of the Thomas T. Taber Museum of the Lycoming County Historical Society, a position he has held since January 2011. He also serves as Editor of the *Journal*. He was no stranger to the museum when hired,

however. From 1992 until 2005, Gary served in various capacities as the Museum's Archivist, Acting Collections Manager and Guest Curator. Gary is a graduate of Towson University with B.S. degrees in Biology and English and a graduate of the University of North Carolina with a M.A. in History with a concentration in Public History. Gary's previous work sites have included the Maryland Historical Society, the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, the Monmouth County Historical Association, Freehold, NJ, and most recently as Director of the Slifer House Museum in Lewisburg, PA. Gary is the author of numerous articles regarding local history published in *Susquehanna Life* and *Mountain Home* magazines. Gary is the compiler of a number of genealogical indices published by Genealogical Publishing Company. He is a graduate of Leadership Susquehanna Valley and the recipient of the Union County Historical Society Preservation Award for his preservation efforts of the alleged oldest house in Winfield, PA, the site of the Lee Massacre.

APPENDIX A:

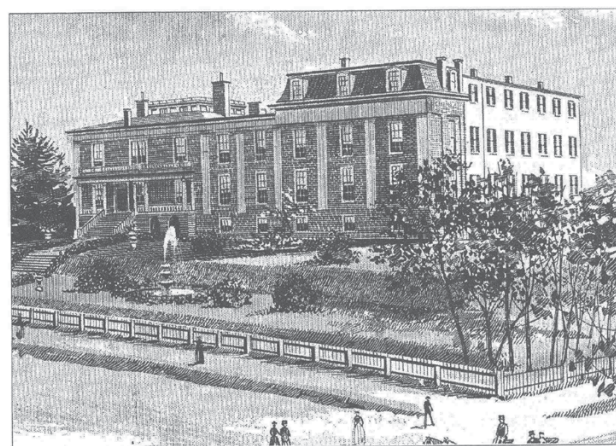
Collateral Relatives:

Nephew: Reverend Benjamin Boatman Hamlin, son of John and Rachel Baird Hamlin, was born August 28, 1823 in Warren County, PA, and died in Huntingdon March 8, 1904.

He became a Methodist Episcopal minister in the East Baltimore Conference and the Central Pennsylvania Conference. According to Samuel T. Wiley's *Biographical and Portrait Cyclopedia of Blair County, Pennsylvania* (1892), 'he served Everett, Bedford County, Juniata District, Pa., 1887-1889.'⁴ He became a minister and continued until his retirement in the year 1900. He is buried in the Mechanicsburg Cemetery, Cumberland County, PA.

Nephew: James Baird Hamlin, son of John and Rachel Baird Hamlin, was born February 28, 1828 and died February 2, 1860. He was a lawyer by profession and was appointed Union County, PA District Attorney in 1856. He died February 2, 1860, and was initially buried in Salona, Clinton County. His body was later removed to Cedar Hill Cemetery, Mackeyville, Clinton County.

Correspondence quoted is from 'Your Affectionate Brother Until Death' William S. Baird to 'My dear Sister Rachel', Wesleyan Female Collegiate Institute, Staunton, Va., Feb. 20th, 1866. BAIRD-HAMLIN Manuscript Collection, LCHS, Small Manuscript Collections, Box #1.



The Wesleyan Female Institute at 500 West Johnson Street incorporated the George M. Cochran house at the left when it was built in 1870. Courtesy of the Augusta County Historical Society, Staunton, Virginia.

3. Noring, John E., "Rev. Edmund Wesley Kirby (1831-1902) A Participant in Methodist History," *The Chronicle* (2008).

4. Samuel T. Wiley, *Biographical and Portrait Cyclopedia of Blair County, Pennsylvania* (1892), p. 168.

The Christmas Eve Tragedy

at Second Baptist Church in Newberry

By Ralph Lukens, Jr.

On December 20, 1872 preparations had begun by the officers of the Second Baptist Church, corner of Arch and Boyd Streets in Newberry, to have a Christmas party for its congregation.

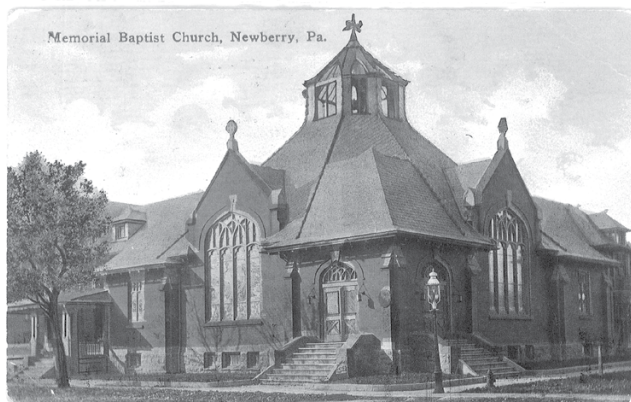
Church History – The Second Baptist Church was formed from employees of the former Dodge Lumber Mill who expressed a need to have a place of worship close to their homes and place of employment. Mr. E.B. Campbell, formerly of Pine Creek came to Newberry to become superintendent of the Dodge Mills and was instrumental in forming the Church for the people employed both at the Mill and on the Susquehanna Boom.

On July 30, 1869, eighteen members of the First Baptist Church of Williamsport withdrew their membership for the purpose of organizing the Second Baptist Church in Newberry.

A building that was located at the northeast corner of Boyd and Arch Streets, known then as the Dodge Academy, was purchased and easily adapted for the Church and Sunday school purposes. The first Pastor of the Second Baptist Church was the Reverend Thomas G. Lincoln, D.D., who served the church until July of 1871. He was replaced by the Reverend J.S. Houck who was pastor during the tragic events of Christmas 1872.

The Tragic Events of Christmas 1872 at the Second Baptist Church

C.V.L. McMinn and officers of the church who previously had made plans for the Christmas Eve Program appointed a committee to provide a suitable Christmas tree and decorate it. Rehearsing for Christmas caroling, food preparation and gifts for the children all seemed ready for the religious ceremony. The Christmas tree had been decorated and the committee had decided to stage the event on the second floor of the church due to the expected large crowd. It was a cold rather crisp evening, December 24, 1872 ... and the members of the Second Baptist Church filled the second floor room of the church to its capacity. An address given by Mr. Kinsole, welcoming the members of the church to the event had just concluded. The Christmas committee then proceeded to distribute gifts to the children of the



church, who were waiting in eager anticipation for this part of the party to begin.

Sarah Moffett, the church organist, had been singing "Think of Me Mother, When I'm Gone," during the distribution of gifts to the children when a sudden hush came over the congregation. A terrifying noise, like a crackling split, filled the air of the second floor room of the church and a tremor caused the building to shake. Within seconds the second floor of the Second Baptist Church had collapsed, plunging the gathered congregation to the first floor below. Members of the church later described the crash of the floor in these words: "It happened without a moment's warning. There was a peculiar tremor, a quivering of the timbers, a fearful sound like the falling of trees and the breaking of limbs." In an instant the members of the church were forced toward the center of the building in a funnel-like trough. The people who had been seated in the middle of the room were the first to fall and were immediately crushed or smothered. Children wildly calling out for their parents, loved ones howling out for their spouses, and groans from the injured and dying filled the Holy night with lament and distress.

Broken oil lamps had sparked flickering fires which fortunately were doused out by the uninjured and the catastrophe had taken on a gruesome scene that no one had expected to take place. The uninjured, relatives and friends joined to begin helping the injured and to remove the fourteen who had died in the collapse.

Many of the injured were able to reach a window, break the glass and jump into the waiting arms of others below. Messengers were sent to notify doctors and others to help with the injured. Nearby farmers came to assist with their wagons and horses to remove debris from the church so the trapped and dead could be removed from the scene. Helping the injured were George and Rose Barnhart Berry (pictured).



The dead members of the church due to the collapse were: Anna McMinn (two year old daughter of C.V.L. McMinn), Grace Seaman, Margery Campbell, William Campbell, Mary Fisher, William Shuman, Boyd Mahaffey, William Bochman, Elizabeth Baskins, Sarah M. Reeder, William Houck, Sarah Moffett, Church Organist, John Ritchie and Mrs. J.R. Wilkinson. Forty-eight members of the congregation were injured, but all recovered.

Ironically, the music that organist Sarah Moffett had been singing was found intact on the rack of the organ, but unfortunately Sarah had died in the collapse.

C. L. Berry, lifelong resident of Newberry, accomplished historian and writer spoke of the event in a 1949 *Williamsport Sun-Gazette* article and noted that his parents Mr. & Mrs. Abraham Berry, lived directly across the street from the church. His mother, who was in attendance at the service, was caught under a falling timber and had her leg broken in two places. His brother Jeremiah was there too and escaped injury.

After the collapse of the church, the church was remodeled by architect A.S. Wagner, and through the generosity and energy of F.B. Campbell, the new remodeled church was admired by everyone who visited it. On June 29, 1873, the church was re-dedicated and re-named the "Memorial Baptist Church" in honor and in memory of those members who lost their lives on Christmas Eve 1872.

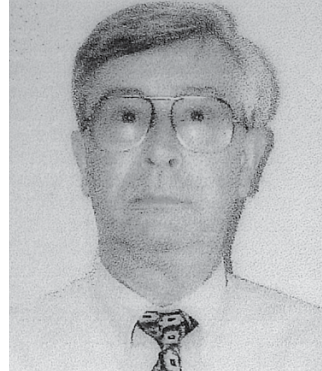
Later in 1891, because of the annoyance from the close proximity of the Reading railroad tracks to the church, the corner lot of Depot and Elm Streets (now West Third Street) was purchased and the church was moved, in April 1892, from Boyd and Arch Streets to its present site.

A poem was written, apparently in honor of those who lost their lives in the Christmas tragedy of 1872, by Professor John Edward Williams.

*The hours pass in speech and joyous song.
Assembled there a glad expectant throng
Hopeful youth, men and loving wife,
Happy children, care free, full of life,
Loving maidens, winsome, sweet and fair,
Boyhood's happy faces, all are there
They little dreamed that death stood at the door,
Unseen he enters, and there upon the floor
He bides his time, then deals the fatal blow
And hurls his victims to the floor below*

*A weighted floor gives way, beneath the strain,
And young and old are numbered with the slain
Now sad to find amid life's happy hours,
Death often lurks amid the sweetest flowers
When Christmas bells within the towers ring
The cruel thorn inserts his fatal sting
When life is sweet, and death seems far away,
"Not tomorrow," he deals the blow today.*

RALPH LUKENS JR., is a lifelong resident of Lycoming County.



Ralph has had an interest in local history for the same length of time. He attributes this interest to his grandmother who often reminisced about the lumber mills and the residents of Millionaires' Row, having been born near

the end of Williamsport's heyday as the 'lumber capital of the world'. His interest was reinforced by a dynamic fourth grade teacher and since Ralph's family lived near the Lycoming County Historical Society, he was often a visitor to the original building. Graduating from Williamsport High School, Ralph has fond memories of working at L.L. Stearns Department Store, which possessed a family atmosphere whether you were related to the Stearns family or not. As well he worked at the local Bethlehem Steel and later in the Prothonotary's Office from which he retired.

He remarks,

William Shuman, a child and one of the fourteen that died in the tragedy, was my great-great uncle. Rosie Barnhart Berry, who helped to remove the injured is a great-great Aunt. C. Lee Berry, writer of one of the accounts, is a distant cousin. William Shuman was buried in the former Newberry Burial grounds—which is now the south lawn of the Lycoming Presbyterian Church on Arch Street. Megan S. and Rebekah C. Hepler, great-great-great nieces of William Shuman were recent students at the present day school of the Memorial Baptist Church. They are great-granddaughters of the late Russell and Sophie M. Shuman-Holmes, longtime Newberry residents.

Merriman & Merriman

Lumber Company, 1875-1900

By Ali Preston

The stands of pine, hemlock, and hardwood around Williamsport made the city the “lumber capital of the world” in the 1870s. Lumber mills began appearing along the river in the 1830s. During the Susquehanna Boom young business men of the lumber mills gained most of their riches.¹ Among the lumber companies was the Merriman and Sons Lumber Company which began at the height of the boom in 1875. By the 1890s, the company was owned by the Merriman brothers and its name changed to the Merriman and Merriman Lumber Company. Although the company was one of the smaller saw mills, they still had around four thousand customers between 1875 and 1900. Despite their size, Merriman and Merriman sent lumber along the East Coast and Canada. They primarily sold in New York, New Jersey, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. The Merriman and Merriman Lumber Company had a lucrative business until September of 1900 when their records stop.

The company’s transactions are sparse between 1875 to 1885. The years 1886 to 1888 have very few files and orders. For 1889, records exist only for October through December. These missing dates and files could have disappeared as the Merriman and Merriman Company records were moved or they were lost during any one of the floods that occurred when they were in business or after. The Great Flood of 1889 coincides with lost records and a company name change.

After the flood, from 1890 to 1899, the company reached their peak year in 1898 with around one fourth of the total number of orders coming from that year alone. Those years were the peak of other companies as well, as new railroads emerged to gather wood further from the river.² From 1890 onward, the business slowly saw an increase of companies and returning customers who ordered more lumber each year. By 1898, they already had thousands of customers every year and had dealers in Maryland and New York selling to more businesses not recorded by either brother. However, in 1899, their sales decreased from \$1,181 to \$717. They completely

lost all of their out of state dealers except one by October of 1899.

Halfway through their ledger for 1900, the records end. There had been a stark decrease in the number of companies seeking out or buying lumber from the brothers. Previous books contained two to three months each. The year 1900 only had a few books that ranged from January to September. At the beginning of 1900, one company asked to do business with them again since they had not worked together since 1890. However, that was the last correspondence with that company. By 1908, lumbering in Pennsylvania was reduced in favor of harvesting forests in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and other western states. Lumber companies moved or went out of business as Lycoming County shifted their goals from cutting down trees to protecting them.³ The Merriman brothers could have seen the lumber business declining and decided to step out with that fortune they had gathered, or they were one of the first companies to simply run out of business, unable to compete with larger companies buying up the rest of the available lumber.

Customers

Regardless of how they ended, the Merriman and Merriman Lumber Company sold hundreds of thousands of board feet lumber across multiple states and even to Canada. Their wood became cut lumber, boats, floors and walls of houses, supports for coal mines, and a multitude of other possibilities. Their business helped spread Lycoming lumber throughout the nation and into others. The transactions with most of the companies they worked closely with began in 1893 and continued on until 1898, tapering off between 1899 and 1900. Their records also show the evolution of some companies who were taken over by the sons or new business partners.

The companies ranged from a variety of different businesses. There were general stores that sold feed and groceries along with coal and lumber. Coal and lumber dealers bought as many varieties of wood that the brothers offered to fill their own orders. Contractors and builders ordered the elements they

¹ “History of Lycoming County,” Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce, http://www.williamsport.org/Lycoming_History.php (August 24, 2017).

² Susan Q. Stranahan, “Williamsport Historical Marker,” Explore PA History, <http://explorepahistory.com/hmarker.php?markerId=1-A-14E> (August 24, 2017).

³ Susan Q. Stranahan, “Williamsport Historical Marker,” Explore PA History, <http://explorepahistory.com/hmarker.php?markerId=1-A-14E> (August 24, 2017).

needed to build houses, docks, and other buildings. Businesses that specialized in doors, sashes, blinds, flooring, moldings, boxes, mason tools, and other specialized work bought lumber of specific types. Planing mills bought logs to make into boards and sell or were commissioned by the brothers. Some companies returned to Merriman and Merriman every two years or at the same time every year, perhaps to replace broken or old lumber. Joseph M. Smith appeared only in 1893, 1896, 1898, and 1900. Railroads also had to replace their ties every one to two years. George Thomas & Company appeared in January nearly every year and bought from the brothers. J.F. Dinkey appeared once a year in December. There would also be large gaps between purchases like Joseph Bartholomew, who appeared in 1893 and then again in 1897. By 1900, many companies that had not made an appearance since 1890 or older, were suddenly reappearing. That could be because the brothers were reducing their inventory seeing the writing on the wall, the end of the lumber era.

Railroads

Railroads were long term buyers and associates of Merriman and Merriman. Local railroads like the Williamsport and North Branch Railroad Company brought the freshly cut trees to the river for the mills. Others carried the processed or cut wood out to buyers and dealers. The same railroads the brothers paid to carry their wood also bought logs to use as railroad ties. W.E. Fraser was a local agent for the Philadelphia and Erie Railroad, Northern Central Rail Way Company. He worked with the brothers from 1890-1898, buying lumber for the railroad's use. Fraser was marked as one of the most dependable men from the railroad. His death came as a surprise to Williamsport on September 12th, 1912. The vice president of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company attended his funeral along with three separate trains of fellow railroad employees and six pallbearers and sixteen honorary pallbearers, according to the *Williamsport Gazette & Bulletin*.⁴

Coal Mining

There were only a few coal companies that dealt with the brothers. Most companies that dealt in coal also sold something else, probably buying from various different sellers. Few mining companies bought lumber from them. Coal companies dealt in anthracite coal, which is a more pure and

efficient variety of coal. The coal mining industry was a massive buyer of lumber in the 1880s. Every structure used in the mine was made out of wood. Mine cart tracks needed railroad ties. Support beams and hoists were made from wood as were trusses. Tipples, large chutes where coal would be placed into a large basin from a developing part of the mine and then dropped into mine carts heading for the surface by a chute, were also made from wood. Curbs, or an interlocking prism of wood filled with dirt, were also used to maneuver tracks above and below the surface. Companies were in constant need of wood because they were always digging deeper into their mines.

Kettle Creek Coal Mining Company worked with Merriman and Merriman in 1892. Their headquarters were in Bitumen, Pennsylvania and they had around six mines throughout the state.⁵ In November of 1888, sixteen of their miners died in a mine collapse. Afterwards, they were more careful of safety precautions, buying thousands of board feet.

Dealers

National businesses were not the only places that needed lumber, although they were common customers. Baltimore and New York City were both major port cities. They needed lumber to build and maintain docks. There were also boat building companies looking for vast sources of lumber to fill the need for more and more boats. Many companies in New York bought lumber straight from Merriman and Merriman, but they typically bought lumber that was sent to J.M. Reamer who handled nearly all of the sales in New York State. Reamer was a representative of both Merriman and Merriman and Schacks Brothers. He remained the longest dealer, starting in 1898 and ending with the company in 1900. Eugene A. Lord was another dealer, representing only Merriman and Merriman in Baltimore. He stayed with the company from 1897-1899. Both New York and Maryland have few companies that worked with Merriman and Merriman directly as long as they had dealers in those states. They would send mass amounts of board feet for each dealer to sell.

Maryland

During the 1880s, the port in Baltimore continued as one of the largest in the nation. Shipbuilders were adapting to the new technology, building boats with steam engines instead of sails. While the cotton sails industry plummeted, wood was still a necessary

⁴ Kathryn, "William E. Fraser," Find a Grave, <https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSln=Fraser&GSfn=W&G-Smn=E&GSbyrel=all&GSdyrel=all&GSst=40&GSenty=2281&GSentry=4&GSob=n&GRid=151450086&df=all&> (August 24, 2017).

⁵ John Langlois, "Cancel for February 20: Kettle Creek Coal Mining Company," 1898 Revenues: United States Revenue Stamps that Financed the Spanish-American War, <http://1898revenues.blogspot.com/2011/02/cancel-for-february-20-kettle-creek.html> (August 24, 2017).

element of shipbuilding.⁶ In 1893, the Pennsylvania Steel Company monopolized the selling of steel for the siding of boats but the ship yard still profited from creating new types of boats.⁷ Ferries remained popular up until 1900.⁸ The B&O Railroad, which ran from Baltimore to Ohio, was a major player in bringing in business and supplies into Baltimore's port. People traveled by the railroad to sail out from Baltimore, helping make the port become a major transportation and business center.⁹ The city rose up around the prosperous business and more supplies were needed to house all of the new residents visiting or traveling from Baltimore. Dealers of multiple different companies flocked to the city to sell lumber, steel, and other supplies throughout the city to a variety of businesses.

New York

New York State had two dealers. J.M. Reamer lived and worked in New York City while another man, A.F. Burgess, worked under a managing company and sold lumber throughout much of the rest of the state. Burgess was a dealer from 1892-1899, becoming just a customer in 1900. Reamer and Burgess worked together on many deals, trading lumber with each other to fill orders. They seemed to have a hard time communicating back with Merriman and Merriman, often asking for more shipments of lumber when the stock that they had was not gone yet.

New York City was already an established major port. In 1881, Bernard N. Baker established the Atlantic Transport Line which was a steamship company that carried people and cargo to and from London and New York. The line became the most popular and well-traveled line.¹⁰ Like Baltimore, New York needed lumber for building and maintaining docks and shipbuilding, while the city itself was growing. In 1888 to 1889, some of the first skyscrapers were built within the city. New steel, stone, and wood building styles made structures taller than ever before.

Philadelphia

Philadelphia was a thriving city that had mills, factories, and a plethora of businesses. H.C. Essington was the brothers' dealer in the city, selling to large companies and smaller ones. Many of the letters from Essington were long and detailed lists of various lumber needed to be sold in Philadelphia. Through Essington, many companies began corresponding

to the brothers themselves, picking up their lumber from Essington when it arrived in the city by train. They also had another dealer, J.H. Holloway, who worked in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, just outside of Philadelphia. Holloway had the space to house the lumber while Essington sold the lumber within the city.

Although all of the dealers had an important role in the success of Merriman and Merriman, only a few of their letters and requests talk about the companies they sold to. Occasionally they would make a deal with a person or company that was simply visiting the town where they lived and the brothers would have to ship the lumber to them directly. However, most of the time, the dealers sold what lumber the brothers gave them, requesting more when they ran out of stock.

Noteworthy Companies

Throughout Merriman and Merriman's time as a company, there were a few companies that changed names. Some were handed down from father to son while others were absorbed into larger companies. Merriman and Merriman usually dealt with the successors of companies that had changed hands. However, there were a few companies that changed hands while dealing with the brothers; sometimes they changed mid-year or from one year to the next. These changes show an interesting exchange from an outside perspective. Depending on how the company was moved, the interior structure may have had to change completely or was simply updated. A few times, the company continued to use old letterhead until new ones arrived. To prevent confusion, they would cross out their old name and write in the new one before sending the letter out. Other times, one of the brothers would take the time to go through their records and change all of the names with a pencil.

The vast majority of the companies that Merriman and Merriman dealt with were other local or family owned businesses. There were national companies that needed mass amounts of wood from multiple different dealers, but there were also other small companies that needed the lumber to make their products or to sell for themselves. The brothers mainly sold in Pennsylvania, Maryland, New York, New Jersey, and Ohio although they occasionally sold to further places. There were two companies and

⁶ Deane Nettles, "Shipbuilding and the Rise and Fall of Sails," Baltimore Industry Tours, <http://www.baltimoreindustrytours.com/shipbuilding.php> (August 24, 2017).

⁷ "Waterfront History," Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore, <https://baltimorewaterfront.com/waterfront-history/> (August 24, 2017).

⁸ "The Baltimore Dry Docks Ship Building Co.," Maritime Reporter and Marine News Magazines Online, <https://www.marinelink.com/history/the-baltimore-dry-docks-ship-building-co> (August 24, 2017).

⁹ "History," Port of Baltimore: Serving Maryland and the World for 300 Years, <http://portofbaltimore300.org/history/> (August 24, 2017).

¹⁰ D. Blethen Adams Levy, "Maryland," The Maritime Heritage Project, <http://www.maritimeheritage.org/ports/usMaryland.html> (August 24, 2017).

a bank from Canada that Merriman and Merriman worked with. The bank helped transfer payments between the companies – Beck Manufacturing Company in London, Ontario and Conger Lumber Company in Toronto, Ontario – and the brothers in Williamsport. Beck Manufacturing Company bought wood in 1895 and so did the Conger Lumber Company. Both were small-time companies in Ontario. Beck Manufacturing made veneers, a thin decorative covering of fine wood applied to a coarser wood or other material, for cigar boxes.¹¹ Still making veneers, they flourished until circa 1920.

Canada

The Conger Lumber Company provided flooring and decorative wooden interiors for houses. They did primarily small jobs and sales. However, in 1889, the Confederation Life Insurance Company held a contest for designs for a new office building. The firm of Knox Elliot and Jarvis won the competition and the building was built on 14 Richmond Street East in Toronto. In 1892, the building was complete and went through a few minor alterations and renovations until 1908, the company providing wood for the changes. The Conger Lumber Co. was hired to do work on the building in 1920 to 1921 to make larger renovations. The Confederation Life Building was known as one of the best and up-to-date offices in Toronto when first built until 1981 when it caught fire. Shortly after the fire, the building was restored but not quite to its former glory.¹² The Conger Lumber Company remained a customer of Merriman and Merriman for many years.

Maryland

J.H. Thiemeyer and Company was located in Baltimore, Maryland and was one of the few companies that worked with Merriman and Merriman directly. They were manufacturers and wholesale dealers in kiln dried North Carolina pine, flooring, ceiling, and German siding. They bought from the brothers from 1898-1899. Kiln dried wood is wood that has had the moisture removed by placing the wood in a kiln. This process prevents the wood from changing size in different types of weather. Wood with moisture will tend to shrink and expand depending on the season. Removing the moisture can prevent flooring from breaking or shifting or prevent a house from losing structural integrity.¹³

New Jersey

The Hutton family company went through many names as they did business with Merriman and Merriman. They first appeared as the Hutton Brothers Company, then Hutton and Sons, then finally only as the name Isaac E. Hutton. They did business with the Merriman brothers from 1893 to 1899 as dealers in coal, lumber, and mason materials in Ridgewood, New Jersey. It is possible that one of the Hutton Brothers took over the company with his sons when his brother either stepped down or died. From there, one of the sons, Isaac E. Hutton took over the business, sending personal letters to Merriman and Merriman.¹⁴ After Isaac took over the family business, most official letterhead stopped arriving and the only records remaining were those found in the ledgers.

The company Day & Ennis began as Day & Muchmore. F.A. Day was Charles W. Ennis's father-in-law. Ennis originally started a business as C.W. Ennis & Company but moved to Morristown, New Jersey. The company became Day & Muchmore in 1885. Eventually, Ennis bought his father-in-law's company and renamed it C.W. Ennis & Company. Through the biography of Ennis, the connection between C.W. Ennis & Company, Day & Ennis, and Day & Muchmore was uncovered.¹⁵ In all incarnations, the company bought lumber from Merriman and Merriman from 1889 to 1897. While the changeover happened, Ennis sent personal letters to the brothers to request wood, but once new letterhead stationery arrived, those were the only names and letters that appeared in the records. The new letterhead made no mention of the previous title of the company and the letters did not specify anything about the change. Many of the correspondent letters in the ledgers have no response that connects with them. They were all letters sent to Merriman and Merriman with no indication that there was ever anything sent back.

There were also buyers from other walks of life. R.F. Hopper lived and worked in Eatontown, New Jersey and was a well-known and liked member of the community although his family seemed average Americans. He was a lieutenant in the Civil War after enlisting in Wisconsin. He bought lumber

¹¹ *Canadian Trade Index: Issue of 1920-1921 Comprising Three Parts* (Toronto: Canadian Manufacturers Association, Inc., 1920), 160.

¹² Doug Taylor, "Toronto's 1890s Confederation Life Building," *Historic Toronto: Information on Toronto's History*, <https://tayloronhistory.com/2012/04/10/enjoying-torontos-architectural-gems-1890s-confederation-life-building/> (August 24, 2017).

¹³ Niels Jorgensen, "Why Kiln Dry Lumber," *Wooddryer System*, <http://www.njc-usa.com/wooddy/whydry.htm> (August 24, 2017).

¹⁴ Cindy, "Isaac E. Hutton," *Find a Grave*, <https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSln=Hutton&GSfn=I&GSmn=E&GSbyrel=all&GSdyrel=all&GSst=33&GSsentry=4&GSob=n&GRid=56940565&df=all&> (August 24, 2017).

¹⁵ *Biographical and Genealogical History of Morris County New Jersey* (New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1899), 206-207.

from Merriman and Merriman from 1889-1900 for his community.¹⁶ Some of the buyers were major players in other industries that utilized the lumber industry to aid their own business adventure, like Samuel Heath who lived and worked in Trenton, New Jersey. Heath was a dealer in lumber, lime, and coal. He bought from Merriman and Merriman from 1890 to 1896. He lived to be eighty years old, outliving Merriman and Merriman by seven years.¹⁷ The lime industry burned limestone in giant kilns to obtain lime which could be a dangerous material. If lime got wet, a chemical reaction would cause it to heat up and catch fire.¹⁸ Lumber was used to fuel the kilns and to make crates to hold the lime which was used for agriculture for its high calcium content.

Smith M. Birch worked and lived in Passaic, New Jersey as a lumberman. He worked with Merriman and Merriman from 1889-1899. Some lumber companies only bought and sold wood obtained by other companies because they were no longer located in places where lumber was easily accessible. They ordered uncut logs to make into boards themselves or sell as is.

W.D. Gulick lived and worked in Washington, New Jersey as a dealer in lumber, sash, doors, blinds, and lime. He bought from Merriman and Merriman from 1892-1897. The lumber he bought went into creating sashes for windows, blinds, and doors.

A.J. Drake worked and lived in Netcong, New Jersey and was a dealer in lumber, coal, and building materials. He bought from Merriman and Merriman from 1889-1898. Building materials ranged from boards to tools like hammers, rope, and nails.

The Roe Brothers were another company that featured coal, feed, and lumber as their primary products. They ordered cut and uncut lumber from Merriman and Merriman from 1893-1899 to sell at their store or to make other goods. They are one of the few companies that continued on to the modern period. Today they still sell lumber in Florida and New Jersey. Their website states that George Louis and John Roe started the business in 1886. They make roofing, doors, siding, windows, masonry, insulations,

and decking.¹⁹ They have been family owned for the past hundred years.

Ohio

Some companies offered nearly every service while other companies were more specialized. Daniel Holwick worked in Canton, Ohio as a contractor, builder, and dealer in lumber, doors, sash, blinds, and mouldings. He worked with Merriman and Merriman in 1894.

F.M. Howell and Company worked in Harrison, Ohio, making boxes and labels. They worked with Merriman and Merriman in 1894 and then again in 1899. In industrializing America, there were a multitude of various factories to make objects that used to be done in the home. Box factories were among those ranks. Boxes were being made quickly and in mass amounts which meant there was a constant demand for lumber.

Pennsylvania

The more local buyers of the brothers came from a multitude of different types of work and backgrounds. Many of them were regular customers, ordering mass amounts of lumber every year. Some of them were locally famous like Elisha K. Kane. He partnered with W.E. Bradley to become processors of Pennsylvania hemlock. They bought raw hemlock from Merriman and Merriman from 1891-1899. Kane was a well-loved member of his community. A bombed destroyer was named after his great uncle who was an arctic explorer and with whom he shared his name.²⁰ Others, like Thomas Geier, were not nearly as well known. There is little information on who Geier was and where he lived. His letters to Merriman and Merriman were strictly about business. What is known is that he was a wholesale dealer in all kinds of dressed and undressed Michigan and Pennsylvania lumber, working with the brothers from 1889 to 1900. He bought lumber nearly every month to sell. From 1889-1890 his letters came from Pottsville, Pennsylvania and then, from 1890-1900, he relocated to Philadelphia.

George F. Kichline lived and worked in Easton, Pennsylvania as a lumber contractor. He bought

¹⁶ Rich H., "Lieut. Rulif Ferguson Hopper," Find a Grave, <https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSln=Hopper&GSfn=R&GSmn=F&GSbyrel=all&GSdyrel=all&GSst=33&GSctry=4&GSob=n&GRid=15533534&df=all&> (August 24, 2017).

¹⁷ Carol Foss, "Samuel Heath," Find a Grave, <https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSln=Heath&GSfn=Samuel&GSbyrel=all&GSdyrel=all&GSst=33&GSctry=4&GSob=n&GRid=26226973&df=all&> (August 24, 2017).

¹⁸ "Nineteenth Century Industries: Lime," Penobscot Marine Museum, <http://penobscotmarinemuseum.org/pbho-1/working-the-bay/nineteenth-century-industries-lime> (August 24, 2017).

¹⁹ "Lumber," Roe Lumber, <http://roelumber.com/wood.asp?mnu=wod&cat=lmb> (August 24, 2017).

²⁰ James Burn, "Elisha Kent Kane," Find a Grave, <https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSln=Kane&GSfn=Elisha&GSmn=K&GSbyrel=all&GSdyrel=all&GSst=40&GSctry=4&GSob=n&GRid=86136476&df=all&> (August 24, 2017).

lumber from Merriman and Merriman from 1892-1899.²¹ Lumber contractors bought and sold lumber for the government or for other companies. They were similar to dealers but worked on short term projects. They could also direct the lumber from the river to each saw mill and company.

Saml Diemer & Son worked and lived in Spring City, Pennsylvania as dealers in lumber, coal, lime, and ice. They worked with Merriman and Merriman from 1889-1899. The ice industry was a newer industry that started. Frederick Tudor brought ice to cities that did not have or couldn't afford icehouses. He sold the ice to the masses in the warm weather. Once Tudor managed success, other businesses started to make mass amounts of ice from the water in rivers and bonds, floating the blocks down the water ways to the nearest city to sell.²²

W.W. Barrows worked and lived in Cameron, Pennsylvania as a manufacturer and wholesale dealer in hemlock lumber, lath, and pickets. He bought from Merriman and Merriman from 1891-1898. Laths were thin, flat strips of wood that could be used in building walls and roofs. Picket fences were also commonly built and sold by companies. They would build entire fences in pieces to be sold.

George B. Breon lived and worked in Newberry, Pennsylvania as a manufacturer of lumber. He worked with Merriman and Merriman from 1892-1899.

F.J. Kress lived and worked in Allegheny, Pennsylvania as a manufacturer and dealer in flooring, siding, lumber and boxes. He worked with Merriman and Merriman from 1889-1890. He was the president of the National Wood Box Association which created guidelines for how boxes should be made and sold.²³

Miscellaneous

There were also a few other companies that wanted lumber from Merriman and Merriman, like the Lehigh Valley Show Company who purchased lumber from 1898-1900. There's little information about the company itself and their letters to the brothers did not reveal why they needed the wood. They were possibly updating their store with new furnishings and lumber.

Nearly every year, there would be a different attorney at law or law firm corresponding with the

brothers either about fines or legal matters. One group, Silver, Bartlett & Company, Law and Mercantile Collections, appeared for three years. Another, W. Roger Fronefield, Attorney at Law, corresponded from 1894-1897. None of the correspondence seemed to suggest that they were ever sued, but a couple of the firms were speaking on behalf of other companies or the state, asking for unpaid fees. Others discussed payment to the firm itself.

From 1897-1900 the brothers invested in the Pennsylvania Lumbermen's Mutual Fire Insurance Company. Before this, they had invested in life and other insurance. The brothers got the insurance during their peak years and continued to pay for the insurance into 1900 when their records end. There is a possibility that there are more books past 1900 or that the end of the company was sudden and unexpected.

File Details

While the people and companies within the records were interesting, the books themselves and how the brothers wrote is equally as interesting. Occasionally, there is a correspondence or order from the company to itself with no money ever exchanging hands. The letter would begin addressing the Merriman and Merriman company and then also be signed by them. This could be that they needed to use their own products to repair damages or use for their own purposes and needed to record something for their books so that mass amounts of lumber would not just suddenly disappear. One brother might have needed the wood to repair a part of their home, or, like with the dealers, one brother would temporarily be in another state or county and made a sale. Most sales to dealers went out to other companies instead, although they were never listed.

The Merriman and Merriman records were found in a barn. Most of the day books were falling apart, missing covers or had no spines to hold them together at all. Pages were folded, torn, and missing and were of rice paper consistency. The loose papers and letters were in better condition although all of the files were covered in grime. Regardless of their condition, most were easy to read and were, for the most part, all in one piece. However, perhaps rebinding the books together would help in their preservation.

The ledgers were fairly well organized. Occasionally there would be pages that belonged in other books or

²¹ Carrie and Allen, "George F. Kichline," Find a Grave, <https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSln=Kichline&GSfn=George&GSmn=F&GSbyrel=all&GSdyrel=all&GSst=40&GSctry=4&GSob=n&GRid=144076836&df=all&> (August 24, 2017).

²² "America's Last Ice Age: More Recent than you Think," In the Past Line: Podcast (& Blog) About History and Why it Matters, <http://inthepastlane.com/tag/history-of-the-ice-industry/> (August 24, 2017).

²³ PL, "Frederick J. Kress," Find a Grave, <https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSln=Kress&GSfn=F&GSmn=J&GSbyrel=all&GSdyrel=all&GSst=40&GSctry=4&GSob=n&GRid=73795257&df=all&> (August 24, 2017).

other months hidden among the pages of different months and years. A few of the books had washed out ink. Some were so faded that they almost looked blank. Each page was filled with two to three different orders, some orders taking up two to three pages. The loose orders and letters were more torn and delicate. Some were written on stiff cardstock and remained in good condition. Most of the cardstock were letters directly from some of the companies the brothers sold to, giving the full names and address of the company as well as their order and the person they dealt with.

With faint or impossible to read ink, there must be some skepticism to the catalogue of the companies. There could be more dates or companies that have become impossible to read. The spellings of some of the companies varied depending on who was writing in the book or in a letter. The Merriman brothers and their father all had very different handwritings from each other. In the early files, there was primarily one easy to read. Once the company came under the brothers, there were two typical handwritings in both the books and letters. One brother had large and

flowing handwriting that was easy to read although some letters looked exactly the same. Capital Ts and Fs were nearly identical. The other handwriting was smaller and looked more like a series of lines rather than letters.

The records, although incomplete, show an interesting connection one lumber company in Williamsport had with the rest of the nation as well as with the world. Lumber from Williamsport could have been on the ships that sailed from Baltimore or New York. It could have been used in famous buildings or typical family homes states away. It could still be in mines or used on railroad tracks. Merriman and Merriman was a small company, but the lumber industry in Lycoming County was so massive and powerful that they were able to maintain their company for twenty five years and sell lumber all over the East coast and into Canada. The records provide an excellent look into the local business of Williamsport as well as exact locations of where lumber was used. Their business helped shape other industries that were reliant on the lumber industry and helped other small companies grow.

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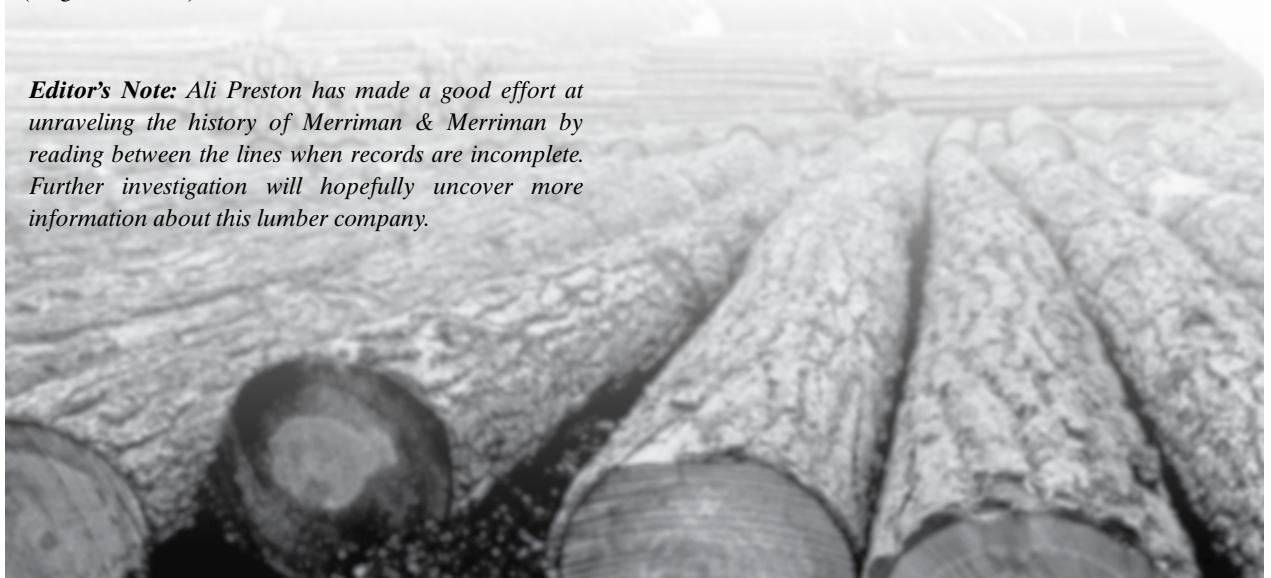
***Editor's Note:** Ali Preston has made a good effort at unraveling the history of Merriman & Merriman by reading between the lines when records are incomplete. Further investigation will hopefully uncover more information about this lumber company.*



ALI PRESTON is a senior at Lycoming College majoring in History. He took part in the Williamsport Internship Summer Experience (WISE) program to work at the Taber Museum over this past summer. While at the Taber, he created a spreadsheet of the companies which conducted business with Merriman & Merriman

Lumber Company of Williamsport, produced a postcard exhibit for our lobby kiosk, helped set up the YesterShope! yard sale, and readied materials for the summer City Hall exhibit. A member of Phi Alpha Theta (history honor society), he hopes to pursue graduate school, possibly at Rutgers University in New Jersey.

Ali's family is from Edgewater, Maryland where his father Matthew is a coal mining engineer and his mother Elizabeth is a retired accountant. He has one sister Victoria who is currently studying oceanic robotics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. While not studying his favorite period of history, medieval history, Ali enjoys creative writing, video games and volunteering with the Theatre Department "behind the scenes, working with the robotics."



Entrepreneurial Families in Lycoming County, Pennsylvania

By John F. Piper, Jr.

Entrepreneurs are a significant part of the history of Lycoming County and of its major city, Williamsport. They are the people who decided to settle in the County and created a variety of businesses to sustain their lives. Most of the early settlers were farmers or worked in some farm-related business, but some were blacksmiths, opened schools, founded banks, worked as attorneys and physicians, built and repaired wagons, became undertakers, founded newspapers, opened inns and taverns, and became involved in a wide variety of other economic ventures. Together their efforts began to create the economy of the area, and their collective stories constitute the early economic history of it. Some entrepreneurs in each generation were able to pass forward their businesses to their children, and entrepreneurial families emerged.

The economic life of the area in the mid-19th century became dominated by the lumber industry. The entrepreneurs who were the leaders of that very large national industry were important to the area but few were able to pass their industries forward to the next generation. Lumber began to play out in the 1880s as the availability of virgin timber dwindled, and lost its dominant role after the flood of 1889. Known as the Johnstown Flood in the history books because of the terrific loss of life in that city, it devastated the lumber industry and related businesses and damaged the economy of Williamsport.

It was very fortunate that several community leaders, well aware of possible dangers to the lumber industry, organized the Board of Trade in 1885. This nascent chamber of commerce became the leading group in

attracting new and more diversified businesses to the area after the flood. People were drawn to the region, some from other locations in the state and nation, and some from distant nations. No single business or group of businesses stepped forward to take the place of lumber but many individual businesses did. Together they created the economic life of the County. Unfortunately their individual and collective stories remain untold. There is no economic history of the County in the 20th and 21st centuries. It is certain, however, that one important feature of it has been the presence of entrepreneurial families. Some of them date from the 19th century, especially the agricultural ones, but most of them were founded in the 20th century.

This is a preliminary study of one fifth generation entrepreneurial family, the Spitler family, and several fourth generation ones: Plankenhorn, Staiman, Lundy and Van Campen. The purpose of these essays is to launch a more extensive study of the economic history of the County. Additional research will doubtless uncover other such families, and those which are in their third generation. One group of businesses has been entirely left out of this study. Farming continues to be an important part of the County economy. Some years ago the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture began a Century and Bicentennial Farm Program. The most recent list of such farms identifies 68 of them, and a study of them is a very worthwhile project. Readers are encouraged to contact the author at Lycoming College or Gary Parks at the Lycoming County Historical Society with information about their families or about others who might be included in the entrepreneurial family group.

SPITLER FUNERAL HOME



Spitler Funeral Home, 2017

The Spitler family has been providing funeral services for residents of Lycoming County for five generations, an enviable record matched by few other

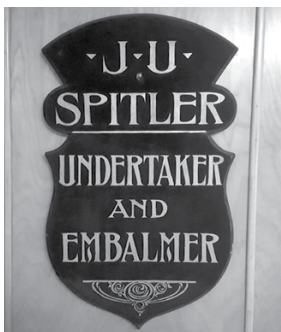
entrepreneurial families in the County. The Spitler tradition of working in the funeral business began in Union County before the Civil War. Daniel Spitler and his brother Andrew built caskets in those years.¹

In 1895 Joseph U. Spitler, son of Andrew, moved from New Berlin to Montoursville. He opened an undertaking business on Broad Street. No



*Joseph U. Spitler,
Founder*

¹ Interviews with Brett and Justin Spitler. They shared early publications and many pictures from their collection.



Early sign announcing the Spitler business.

record remains of what his dreams of the future were but he became the founding father of the family in the County and the creator of the Spitler Funeral Home. He was a very successful businessman, with a drive to improve and grow his business. In a little over a decade, in 1906, he moved

to a larger home on Cherry Street to accommodate this growth. Joseph began the family tradition, still in place, of being personally involved in every funeral to make sure that it was carried out to his standards. Funerals were typically in homes or churches. Hearses were horse drawn.

The crisis in the family's history took place in 1918. Joseph's son Claude had been working with his father for some years and had completed his public school work. He was primed to be the leader of the next generation when tragedy struck. He became a victim of the Spanish Flu, remembered in history as the great influenza pandemic of 1918. It took many hundreds of thousands of American lives and forced the United States Government to close all its military camps despite the fact that World War I was still going on. This was a tragedy for the family, but in this particular family's case it had economic as well as personal impact. In the immediate days after Claude's death it appeared that Joseph might be the first and last Spitler to own a funeral home in Montoursville.

That moment became the defining one for the Spitlers. Joseph's younger son, Joe B., was just thirteen and still attending school. He stepped forward to take his older brother's place and began to spend every moment when he was not in school working with his father. He learned the business quickly.



Joseph B. Spitler

When school was behind him he joined his father full time and proved to have his father's entrepreneurial spirit. The next generation now secured, father and son made some significant decisions. They introduced a motor driven hearse sometime in the early to middle 1920s. The business continued to grow and they looked for a building with more space. They found it on East Broad Street, No. 733. It was the middle one of three identical houses which were under construction. It was built as a home not a place of business, but was large enough



733 East Broad Street, c. 1920s.



The Spitler motor cars, c. 1930s.

to meet the needs of the growing business. The first floor became the funeral home and the family moved into the rooms upstairs. This arrangement was very standard for funeral homes in this era.



Joe S. Spitler, third generation.

Joe B. became owner of the Home in 1940 when his father passed away and remained the owner until 1965. His son, Joe S., the third generation, joined him in 1947. They continued the personal service tradition they inherited and the business continued to grow. In 1958 they decided on a major renovation of

their building. They added the signature pillars on the front, replacing the one story peaked roof over the front entrance of the original home. They made



The new look to 733, pillars added.

many changes to the first floor, reorganizing it so that it no longer looked like a home but a funeral home.

A major consequence of this decision was that they were able to retain the comfortable elements of a home at what had become a familiar location to the community, without moving to a new location.

Successful entrepreneurs often decide to expand and to move their businesses into new geographical areas. The Spitler family had been very successful, but instead of replicating their business elsewhere, they created a new one. In 1955 Joe B. partnered with his son Phil and opened a Professional Vehicle Dealership. They located it further east on Route 220 and ran it as part of the Funeral Home. They separated it from the Funeral Home in 1965.

Joe S. became the owner of the Funeral Home in 1966 when his father retired to focus his energies on the Dealership. His son, Brett Joseph, grew up in the business. He attended Lycoming College and left to attend mortuary school. He was licensed in 1976. He was with the business when the most recent major expansion of 733 took place in 1978. This generation of father and son added to the east side of the building, introducing a new, more spacious chapel and new meeting rooms. All the office work was moved upstairs. Members of the family ceased living in the Home in 1997 but continued to live in the apartment back of the Home. Brett notes that someone interested in what the original building looked like can stand across the street and compare it to the two homes built alongside it in 1928.

Brett Joseph became the owner in 1989 when his father retired. His son, Justin Joseph, joined him in 1995. He graduated from Pennsylvania College of Technology in 2007 and from mortuary school in 2013. Justin is the fifth generation of family entrepreneurs. He has grown up in the business and reports that he has always enjoyed working with his father.



Justin and Brett Spitler, the current generations.

The funeral business seems secure but it has been changing. In the 1990s, according to Brett, more families requested church services for their loved ones. Since the early 2000s fewer people have been requesting either religious or funeral home based services, and there have been more requests for cremations. Brett said that only once in his career has he given any thought to expansion beyond Montoursville and that was only for a brief moment several years ago. He and his son are convinced that if they continue the personal service tradition they have inherited they will have a long and successful future at 733.

PLANKENHORN STATIONERY COMPANY



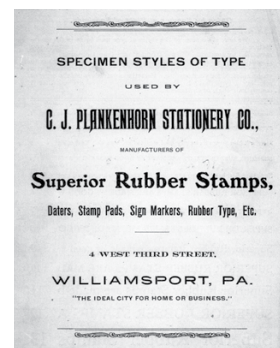
Charles John Plankenhorn, Founder

Charles John (C.J.) Plankenhorn founded the C. J. Plankenhorn Stationery Co., on the second floor of a building on the northwest corner of Market Square in Williamsport, Pennsylvania in 1899. His family had immigrated from Pfulligen, Germany in the district of Baden-Wurttemberg, earlier in the century. He was a young man, just 22. He had a fifth grade education, not unusual in his era when many people left school before high school in order to learn a trade. He chose to become an apprentice at the Fred R. Miller Blank Book Company, a printing company which made ledgers and ledger paper, and bound books. After a few years of work he joined the army and served in Cuba during the Spanish American War.¹



Plankenhorn Stationery Company c. 1920s.

When he returned home he decided to follow his entrepreneurial instincts and use what he had learned as an apprentice to open his own printing business. He wisely chose a location at the very center of the business district. He accepted many small printing jobs but focused his attention on selling rubber stamps. His largest customer for the stamps was *The Grit*, a rapidly growing newspaper with



Ad for rubber stamps.

¹ Interviews with Charles and Diane Plankenhorn, and Charles C., and Christopher Plankenhorn.

Charles provided a brief historical sketch of the business and access to an extensive collection of Family Scrapbooks, including many pictures from across the years.

a focus on serving the needs of rural America and which had its main office nearby on West Third Street. The year after he went into business he made a very significant decision. He joined the Board of Trade. Cyrus La Rue Munson and John F. Laedlein had organized the Board in 1885 to attract new businesses to their town as the lumber industry began to fade. C. J.'s decision to join at the very beginning of his career reveals not just his confidence in his own business ability but also a concern for the larger community. The Board of Trade continues into the present as the Williamsport-Lycoming Chamber of Commerce. The Plankenhorn Company has been a member for 117 continuous years, the oldest member of the Chamber.

An important sign of C. J.'s business success was his decision in 1909, after just one decade in operation, to move. The business was growing and he needed more space so he purchased a building at 144 West Fourth Street for \$24,000, the location that remains the home of the business. His decision met substantial criticism, from friends and family alike. The family tradition is that most people considered it a "bad buy." The issue for them was location, a move from the business heart of town to what they considered a peripheral part of it. C. J. left no record of his motives for the move, aside from the additional space, but two things seem obvious, whether they were in his mind or not: he moved to a location he owned and to one which was at street level. At the time of the move he added office and art supplies to his merchandise. He made another distinctive decision that year. He welcomed the printers union. His company has always had union members running the presses, a feature which has often been important to secure contracts.

In the next two decades C. J.'s business continued to grow but not without herculean efforts. He faced stiff competition from other printers, especially from two other family printing businesses: The Smith Printing Company, Inc., and the H. G. Phillips School Supply House. When the Great Depression hit in 1929 Plankenhorn Stationery survived but business was not good enough for C. J. to hire his son, Charles Frederick, a graduate of the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. Times were hard and the young man found a job as a desk clerk at the famous Willard Hotel in Washington, D. C.

A natural disaster helped change the course of the Plankenhorn business. Charles Frederick was home visiting his family in March of 1936 when the Susquehanna River overflowed its banks. The flood reached epic proportions, covering over two-thirds of the city. Charles the father and Charles the son were sitting at the top of the steps to the second floor at 144



Charles Plankenhorn, second generation.

watching the water creep toward them, reaching a depth of at least six feet. It was dark and damp but there was enough light that they could see merchandise floating up toward them. Father turned to son and said "Give me a dollar." When the son handed over the dollar his father said "You just bought the business." This was surely a unique setting to pass a family business from one generation to another.

It took months for the family to clean up the mess from the flood but they were able to reopen in late 1936. The business continued to benefit from substantial sales of rubber stamps. In 1937 C. J. went to Cuba for a reunion of his war buddies. He learned that many of them faced legal issues and that there seemed to be a shortage of legal forms. When he returned home he told his son about his discovery, who promptly moved the business into the corporate supply market, selling corporate seals, stock certificates, and all kinds of legal forms, including those for deeds, bonds, mortgages, and legal notices. This market was a boon to the business and eventually reached into five states.



Clean up from the 1936 flood.



Plankenhorn c. 1940s.

C. J. was essentially retired and in his sixties when his son, a Captain in the Reserves, received the call to active duty in 1940, as the nation began to prepare for possible war. C. J. returned to his familiar station as head of the business for the next six years. When his son returned home in 1946 he was greeted by another flood. It was not as disastrous as the one a decade earlier, because father and son knew what to do and moved much of the merchandise upstairs. They were able to quickly restore the business. C. J. fully retired in 1946 and enjoyed watching the business share in the post-World War II era of prosperity. He died in February, 1948, secure in the knowledge that the business that had been his life was thriving.

In 1948 Charles expanded the store to the rear to West Edwin Street. The year 1962 was a very important one. Charles made further improvements to the building and welcomed his son Charles M. (Manson) to the business. The next generation was in place, but not yet complete.



Plankenhorn c. 1940s.

In 1964 Charles' younger son, Frederic M. (Manson) also joined the business. The formal generational transfer took place in 1968 when the sons bought out their father and incorporated the business as The Plankenhorn Stationery Company, Inc. Their father continued to be involved as his father had before him. It was truly a family business.

The business continued to grow under the new leadership, requiring more space. The Plankenhorns decided to remain at their location. They built a new building to the north across West Edwin Street, expanded the printing department, and added new lines of merchandise. In 1989 the fourth generation began to work at the store. Charles C. (Cupp), son of Charles M., joined the Company, and in 1991, Christopher M. (Manson), son of Frederic came aboard. The cousins gradually became owners of the business. Both had been around the business from their early years. Charles C. said it seemed like a natural thing to work with his father. Christopher graduated from College and spoke to one of his professors about what he thought about his future. The professor encouraged him to talk with his father, who invited him to join the business.



100th Anniversary, 1999. Chris, Frederic, Charles M. and Charles C. ("Chip").

The most recent major development at Plankenhorn Stationery Company occurred in 2015 when the Company welcomed Tom Hunsberger, owner of Hunsberger Office Supply, into the business. This launched a new phase in the business, greatly enhancing the layout and supply of office furniture.

The Plankenhorn family has always been very involved in the Williamsport community. Beginning with its early commitment to the Board of Trade, members of the family have been involved with the Williamsport-Lycoming Chamber of Commerce. Every generation has given time, energy, and money to organizations seeking to improve the life of the community. Two distant relatives have left their names in prominent ways in the community. Harry Plankenhorn established a foundation now known as The Plankenhorn Foundation, and Frank E. Plankenhorn envisioned and began a project on Grampian Hills, which became the second suburb of the city. The Company has been a fixture of the business community for 118 years and there is much evidence that it has a promising future.

LUNDY CONSTRUCTION COMPANY



Lundy Construction Company office, 200 Arch Street, Williamsport.

The Lundy family which is now in its fourth generation in the lumber/construction business in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, traces its history to Maurice Lundy. He was from County Sligo, Ireland. He decided as a young man of 14 to leave his homeland in 1836 in order to find a better life for himself. He stowed away in a ship headed for the United States. Discovered by the ship's crew, the captain indentured him to a lumberman from Maine in order to pay his passage. Maurice learned a great deal about the lumber business and at the end of his indenture he heard that a Major

Perkins was recruiting men to work on a lumber boom in Williamsport. Maurice walked from Maine in 1843 and landed a job with the Susquehanna Boom Company. He demonstrated his entrepreneurial spirit by working his way to Superintendent of the Company, and then by becoming an independent rafting contractor delivering logs to the lumber mills. He also eventually became very active in the political life of his new home, serving as a Common Councilman.¹



Maurice Lundy, employed on the Susquehanna Boom

Maurice's son Frank B. Lundy, born in 1870, grew up in Williamsport and worked at several jobs

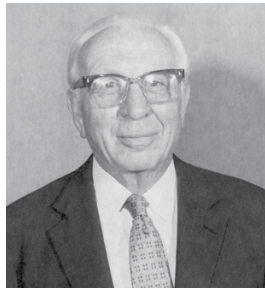
¹ Interviews with Frank B. Lundy, II. He provided a brief history of the business, and many materials, including advertisements and pictures from across the years. He also shared the Lundy Family Scrapbook.



Frank B. Lundy, founder.

before settling in at the Williamsport Planing Mill where he remained for a number of years. He later created his own company, the Lundy Hardwood Lumber Company, as a broker of furniture grade hardwood lumber. He spent time each year traveling to small sawmills in the south in search of quality

hardwood lumber which he sold to furniture factories throughout the eastern and mid-western parts of the country. In 1922 he founded the Lundy Lumber Company with his oldest son Richard H. Lundy, who had just graduated from the Pearce Business School in Philadelphia.



Richard H. Lundy, second generation.

Lundy Hardwood Lumber Company specialized in furniture grade hardwood lumber. One of the first decisions the founders made was to join the Board of Trade, now the Williamsport-Lycoming Chamber of Commerce. It was a signal that they expected to be a permanent business, and they have been a member of this organization for 95 years, currently the fourth oldest member. They purchased the McNamara Lumber Company and maintained their newly acquired lumber yard on land now occupied by Pennsylvania College of Technology on the south side of West Third Street. In the late 1920s they purchased the Fisher Lumber Company and moved their operations to 1896 West Fourth Street in Newberry.



Newberry office, 1896 West Fourth Street.

The new site on the west side of Lycoming Creek was large enough to accommodate lumber yards, warehouses, woodworking shops, and the main office. The business grew substantially and Frank invited his younger son, John W., to join the Company in 1927.

These were important historical developments, establishing the already significant history of the Lundy family in various aspects of the lumber business.

However, they were all prelude to the decision in 1933 when Frank, Richard, and John joined with Earl M. Jonas, an individual contractor, to create the Lundy Construction Company, and in doing so entered the general construction business. This was the beginning of the present Company. The founders enlarged their offices to increase display space and the mill to provide complete woodworking facilities.² They purchased a lot across West Fourth Street from their offices to provide additional space for the growing business. Their success led to the need for more space and they expanded to nearby communities, purchasing the former Glass Lumber Company in Muncy, the former Reeder Lumber Yard in Hughesville, and the Emery Lumber Company in Williamsport and used them as branch yards. They focused on residential construction in the early years. These were nothing if not bold decisions, given the economic condition of the nation, a sign of the family's very strong entrepreneurial spirit. The roadside sign "See Lundy for Lumber" was ubiquitous in the area.



Lundy billboard

The business of the new Company included commercial, industrial and institutional construction. One of its important projects was the construction of Clarke Chapel, now on the Lycoming College Campus, in 1939. John Lundy became manager of the retail lumber business, later joined by his son John C., and Richard managed the construction business. Their father ran the hardwood lumber part of the business until his death in 1944. During the war the Company also manufactured shipping crates for local businesses which were producing war materials. In addition, it built and remodeled several local industrial plants for war production.³

A major event in the Company's history in the 1930s had nothing to do with the construction business and everything to do with the community spirit of the Lundy family. In the summer of 1938 Carl Stotz, who worked at the Lundy Company's Newberry location, was watching his nephews, Jimmy and Major Gehron, play baseball in a nearby vacant lot. He hit upon the idea of forming baseball teams and a league for young teenage boys. He enlisted the aid of other neighborhood boys and they set about trying to figure out the appropriate dimensions for a baseball diamond for kids their size and the equipment they would need. Stotz planned to begin play in 1939 but he needed

² The various companies which have emerged from the decision of 1933 are entirely separate. There has been no financial involvement among them.

³ Frank B. Lundy, Obituary, Lundy Scrapbook in the possession of the Lundy Family

sponsors. He discussed his situation with Frank B. Lundy who said he would support the idea if Carl could secure two other sponsors. Lundy Construction stepped up as the first of three sponsors, joined by two other companies, Lycoming Dairy and Jumbo Pretzel. Sponsorship cost \$30, the funds used to help pay for uniforms and equipment. Stotz also talked to friends and neighbors and came up with the name for his dream: Little League. The first Little League game was played on June 6, 1939. The teams were named for their sponsors, and the Lundy Lumber one prevailed over the Lycoming Dairy one, 23-8. Little League held its first Tournament in Williamsport in 1947. It has become the largest youth sports program in the world, with an international tournament, the Little League World Series, every August in South Williamsport. Every team gets to play at least one game at Lamade Stadium, where the championship game is held. It seems fitting that Lundy Construction Company built the stadium and the Little League headquarters building. Lundy Construction continues to support a Little League team, and remains the first and oldest team sponsor.



Little League Headquarters

The construction business boomed in the post-World War II era and Lundy Construction became a major player in it. One of the Company's signature buildings from this era is Rich Hall, erected on the campus of Lycoming College in 1948. Two members of the third generation, Frank B., II, who was named for his grandfather, and his younger brother Richard H., Jr., had grown up in the business. Frank has early childhood memories of the damage that the flood of 1936 did to the business, but he was in 7th grade when the flood of 1946 hit and remembers vividly the work required to recover from it. Both men joined the Company formally in the post-World War II era after completing military service. Frank graduated from Notre Dame with a degree in Mechanical Engineering and then served two years in



Frank B. Lundy, II



Richard H. Lundy, Jr.

the Army as a Mechanical Engineering Assistant in the Chemical Corps R&D Command. He joined the business in 1958 and became a Professional Engineer in 1980. He left for work in Colorado in 1981 and then in New Jersey, where he started a new business with his son, Frank, III. When he returned four years later he became Vice President and Chief Engineer of the firm. Richard Jr. was a Navy pilot and remained an avid pilot all his life. He became General Superintendent of the Company in 1960, Vice President in 1968, and President in 1976, and a Partner with his brother Frank in 1987. The Company became a Butler Building Dealer in 1958 and is currently one of the oldest Butler Building Franchises in the nation. The brothers, working with their father, Richard, and E. M. Jonas, expanded the business, taking on projects from State College to Hazleton, transforming it into a regional business covering a seven county area. When John retired the Company sold its retail business to Your Building Centers.

The Company has faced two important changes since the third generation brothers became its leaders. In 1972 the Appalachian Thruway project, Interstate 99, took the property on West Fourth Street. Lundy Construction moved to a new site, also in the Newberry section of town, on Arch Street near the point where Lycoming Creek flows into the Susquehanna River, land once occupied by the Sweet Steel Company. Lundy was able to use some of the former steel mill buildings and constructed several new ones, including a Retail Building Supplies Store and the Construction Company Office and Shop building which remains the headquarters of the Company. In 1977 an arsonist set fire to several churches in Williamsport, including Pine Street United Methodist Church, and to the Lundy Lumber Company yard on the south side of West Third Street at Center Street. Lundy eventually sold that property and left that area of town.

The brothers Frank and Richard worked together for over forty years, with a slight interruption when Frank was away. They have designed and constructed a very large number of buildings in the area. They have continued their residential business so that over the years the Company has built over 2,000 homes. It has served the industrial sector of the economy, building a number of structures in the Industrial Park, including ones for Vidmar, Inc., Alcan Cable, M. W. Kellogg Co., Overhead Door, Frito-Lay, and Tetley Tea, and



M. W. Kellogg Co.

buildings outside the Park, including ones for Williamsport Wire Rope, Textron/Lycoming, Keystone Friction Hinge, and industrial buildings in Woolrich, McElhattan, and Lock Haven. It has built some significant



Lycoming County Court House

public buildings, the most important of which is the Lycoming County Court House. It has constructed a large number of institutional buildings, including the Lycoming County Historical Society, and buildings for the Williamsport and Divine Providence Hospitals. It has left a very large mark on the educational life of the city, winning the contracts to build or renovate a number of the schools in the Williamsport Area School District, including the Roosevelt Junior High School, the Lycoming Valley Middle School, Curtin Middle School, and the Jackson Elementary School. It has constructed buildings on the campus of the Pennsylvania College of Technology and Lycoming College, including most recently the Mary Welch Honors Hall and the Douthat Commons at Lycoming.

In the 1980s Lundy Construction became involved in several projects of historical restoration. Richard took the lead on these projects, often consulting with architectural historian Samuel Dornsife. The restoration efforts produced magnificent results in

saving and transforming Old City Hall on Pine Street and the Berkshire building on West Fourth Street. Without question the most dramatic rescue of a building was the home of Peter Herdic, originally built in 1855 at 407 West Fourth Street. Richard and his wife Gloria received a State Historic Preservation award for their contributions to the Herdic House project. The house has become the Herdic House Restaurant run by members of the Miele family. When Richard passed away in 2007 Frank II chose to retire from active management and in their place arrived Frank's son, Frank, III. He had spent twenty-five years in construction work and company ownership in Atlantic City and Philadelphia. He returned to become Owner/CEO of the Company.



Peter Herdic House restoration



Frank Lundy, III

Lundy Construction continues as the premier construction business in the region. It has built over 3,000,000 square feet of commercial and industrial buildings. It is at least reasonable to say, as a reporter for the local newspaper said of its work in Williamsport: "They Built This City."⁴

VAN CAMPEN MOTORS



Van Campen Motors, 601 West Third Street. The "Good Guys" with a 1966 Dodge Monaco.

Van Campen Motors has been an automobile dealership in Williamsport since 1943. The automobile business is a twentieth century one. In its early years there were a large number of companies which began to come together in the 1920s, dominated by the Big Three: Ford, General Motors, and Chrysler. They had marketed their cars through dealers before

World War I. Dealerships expanded greatly in the 1920s with the dramatic growth of the used car market. Charles B. Van Campen, a graduate of Lebanon Valley College, joined this burgeoning business in 1935 when he partnered with Richard Bonner and opened a Chevrolet dealership in Kingston, Pennsylvania.¹



Charles B. Van Campen, founder

Van Campen demonstrated his entrepreneurial instincts again during World War II. Domestic new car production ceased during the war. Van Campen sold his share of the Kingston business and used the proceeds to purchase the W. U. Mussina Company, a Dodge-Plymouth-Dodge Truck Franchise, located at 601 West Third Street in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, for \$10,000 in 1943. He completed the sale after Chrysler Motors approved him as the new owner of the franchise. He then changed the name of the company to Van Campen Motors.

⁴ Williamsport *Sun-Gazette*, March 15, 1996

¹ Interviews with Josh Van Campen. He provided many documents and numerous pictures from throughout the life of the business.

The location of the new company had the great advantage of being in a traditional area for automobile dealers. The well-known local firm of W. H. C. Huffman's Sons constructed the building in 1905. Harry A. Bubbs opened his Williamsport Automobile Exchange in it in 1906 and it has been the home of various automobile companies or automobile garages ever since. Garrett Cochran ran his Imperial Motor Car Company out of it by 1908, which produced the "Imperial", the only automobile made in Williamsport.

Van Campen began his new business by announcing his presence in two newspaper advertisements. The first introduced his company as the new Dodge and Plymouth Dealer, successor to the W. U. Mussina Company, and in immediate need of 15 Auto Mechanics and Mechanics' Helpers. He offered "excellent opportunities for permanent positions," with "excellent wages with bonuses" and favorable working conditions. The final line of this advertisement was: "Persons now employed in war work will not be considered." He was making it clear that he was a patriot and not in competition with the war effort. The second presented his business philosophy: "To the full extent of our abilities and resources we pledge our loyalty and cooperation to the Dodge and Plymouth car owners and to the operators of Dodge Job-Rated Trucks in and about Williamsport." He invited people to visit the business and see the "modern shop facilities," and promised that "We'll Keep 'em Rolling in Williamsport."²

The new car market exploded after the war and Van Campen's shared in that growth. The flood of 1946 interrupted business in all of Williamsport but was not nearly as devastating as the floods of 1889 and 1936 had been. The citizens of Williamsport and South Williamsport had approved the building of a dike before the war but construction had been on hold. Water rose about half way up the Van Campen showroom and caused some losses, but the staff was able to move the automobiles to high ground near Brandon Park and save them. In 1947 Van Campen incorporated his business as Van Campen Motors Incorporated. He was President and Treasurer and earned \$12,000 a year plus 20% of the annual net income of the business. His son, Charles Jr., better known as "Chick", had joined the business and was Vice President at \$50 a week plus a bonus for every new



Chick Van Campen

vehicle sold over 150. Herbert T. Uskurait, Chick's brother-in-law, was Secretary at the same wage. The total assets of the business were \$58,840. In 1950 the company acquired a large lot adjacent to the business west toward Walnut Street and erected a used car sales and reconditioning building.

Charles Sr. died of a heart attack in 1954 while hunting. He had been active in his local church, Covenant-Central Presbyterian, and in several community organizations, including the Williamsport Baseball Club and the Williamsport Country Club. His business was well established and in the capable hands of his son, who became President. Chrysler Motors approved him as the new dealer.

Chick was primarily responsible for the substantial growth and expansion of the business in the last third of the 20th century. In 1959 the Company acquired the rights to sell Triumph and Simca Motor Cars and sold them successfully until the early 1960s. Chick began to purchase land to the east across Locust Street, acquiring vacant lots, homes, and some businesses. In 1967, following the lead of many successful businesses, he decided to seek an additional

location and opened a used car dealership on Broad Street in Montoursville, and closed it five years later. In 1982 the Company began to sell Chrysler cars. The Company attained and has maintained the Chrysler Five Star endorsement soon after Chrysler began that program in the early 1990s. The new status gave the Company the opportunity to sell several new Dodge sports cars, including the Viper, and it was the first dealership in the area to sell the Plymouth Prowler. The building at 601 had not been changed very much since repairs made after the flood. In 1985 Chick launched his Company's most ambitious remodeling project, which involved renovating the showroom and adding nine service bays. This renovation put to rest discussions about moving out of the downtown area and following other car dealers to the outskirts of town where more space was available.

"The Professionals"
SUPPORT
THE WILLIAMSPORT HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BAND

VAN CAMPEN MOTORS
INVITES EVERYONE TO SEE THE BAND PERFORM
AT THE DEALERSHIP ON
Monday, October 30
7:00 to 7:30 P.M.
AND
8:00 to 8:30 P.M.
refreshments will be served

HELP US SUPPORT THE WILLIAMSPORT HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BAND
FOR ANY NEW OR USED VEHICLE PURCHASED DURING THE
MONTH OF OCTOBER VAN CAMPEN WILL DONATE
\$50 TO THE WILLIAMSPORT HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BAND

Van Campen
DODGE CHRYSLER PLYMOUTH
601 W. THIRD ST. 326-0567

Ad features Williamsport High School Marching Band, 1989.

² Williamsport *Sun-Gazette*, December 9, 1943; January 19, 1944.

A black and white photograph of three men in suits standing on a sidewalk in front of a large, two-story brick building. The building has a prominent sign that reads "VAN CAMPEN MOTORS INC" in large, bold, capital letters. Above the sign, there are several windows with decorative white frames. The man on the left is wearing a dark suit and tie. The man in the middle is wearing a dark suit and tie. The man on the right is wearing a dark suit and tie. The building behind them has a classic architectural style with a pedimented roof and multiple windows. A car is visible parked in front of the building.

sole owner in 1999. Under James' leadership the Company moved forward. The year he became owner he acquired the Suzuki franchise, decided to demolish the 1950 reconditioning building, and replaced it with a Suzuki Showroom and a reconditioning department with three bays. He began off-site tent sales, at first six monthly ones a year beginning every April at a site in South Williamsport on Route 15. Currently the Company has one large tent sale a year on Maynard Street adjacent to the beltway. In 2002 it purchased the Jeep franchise. It became the best acquisition in the history of the Company, soon accounting for over 40% of the business. Although that was an important acquisition that year was primarily significant because James' sons, Josh and Jonathan, joined the business as the fourth generation. Jonathan began in the parts department, then sales, and then became a manager. Josh began in sales before moving into management. The Company continued its eastward expansion, purchasing the landmark Columbia Hotel in 2006 and demolishing it in 2007 to make way for a larger inventory.

decision. As the time ticked away that morning the showroom began to fill with family members and managers. Josh received the letter from the UPS driver and handed it to his father, whose hands quivered as he read the news to those who had gathered: “We are pleased to inform you on May 14th Chrysler designated your Sales and Service Agreement(s) to be assumed and assigned to a new company that is purchasing the primary operating assets of Chrysler. You can remain our dealer as we move forward with establishing a new company.” There was great relief in the showroom that Van Campen’s would survive, but members of the family still felt a sense of loss as many friends and dealerships, some with longer tenure in the business, closed.

AUTOMOTIVE TOMBOLIES	AUTOMOTIVE AUTOMOBILES	AUTOMOTIVE AUTOMOBILES	AUTOMOTIVE AUTOMOBILES	AUTOMOTIVE AUTOMOBILES
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CHRISTMAS COMES EARLY AT VAN CAMPEN!

We've Decorated Our Tree With Christmas Cash!

Buy Any New Or Used Vehicle From The Professionals At Van Campen & Pick A Cash Amount Voucher From Our Tree To Receive.

up to \$**500!!**

Offer Valid November 9th - 30th

NEW 1993 DODGE SHADOW 3 DOOR

SAB - Aqua, 2.3 liter EFI engine, 5-speed manual transmission, rear window defogger, AM/FM stereo, door locks, driver side air bag and much more.

LIST PRICE	\$9,339
Chrysler Rebate	-400

NOW ONLY.....\$8,939

NEW SPF

D514 - Jet II 4 cylinder Metro cab motorhome, 1 more.

LIST PRICE Factory Chac Chrysler Bank Van Campen

NEW 1992 DODGE DAKOTA 4X4

2K4S-Copper & sand two-tone, V-6 1 speed manual transmission, tilt seat, passenger, AM/FM stereo, ABS, vinyl wheels, sliding rear window, solid tie, payload, 8 box & much more.

LIST PRICE	\$17,231
Factory Discount	-1,888
Chrysler Rebate	-750
VanCampen Discount	-700

NOW ONLY.....\$13,985

NEW 1993 DODGE CARAVAN

D512 - Flame red, 2.3 liter EFI engine, automatic transmission, air conditioning, passenger seating, AM/FM stereo cassette, four wheel disc brake, power (slide) doors, 16 tie air bag and much more.

LIST PRICE	\$16,362
Factory Discount	-837
Chrysler Rebate	-500
Van Campen Discount	-500

NOW ONLY.....\$14,505

NOW ONLY..

NEW 1 DAY!

D510 - Blue engine, 5 speed sport packs aluminum more.

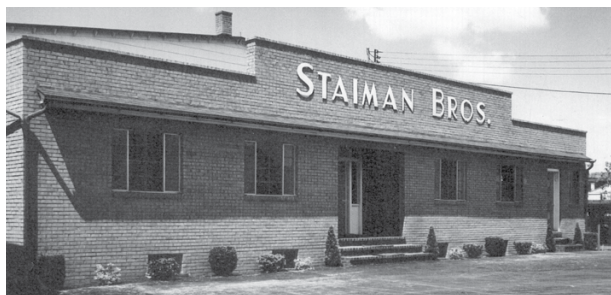
LIST PRICE Factory Chac Chrysler Bank

NOW ONLY..

601 W. THIRD ST., WILLIAMSPORT, PA ★

Van Campen Motors has continued to face challenges. The most important one came in 2013 when the Suzuki Company failed. Van Campen responded by focusing on the sales of Chrysler autos. The current status of the Company is very strong. In 2016 gross sales rose to \$22,255,342 and total assets reached \$7,354,800, both signs of remarkable success. In 2017 James sold the business to Josh and Jonathan and Chrysler Motors approved them as the new owners of the franchise. Josh serves as President and Jonathan as Vice President. Josh reflects that a beltway location would definitely increase the visibility of the Company and likely its sales, but he and his brother have decided to remain at the traditional location, a familiar and easy one for customers to reach, and an important part of the business history of Williamsport.

STAIMAN RECYCLING CORPORATION



Staiman Brothers Office, 201 Hepburn Street

Brothers Kalman and Jacob Staiman, young men of strong Orthodox Jewish faith, left Tsarist Russia in 1898. Pogroms, a name given to anti-Semitic riots, had emerged in Russia beginning in 1881 and recurred periodically creating an uncertain future.



Kalman Staiman

Family memory is that their ancestors fled to the United States for, among other things, religious freedom. They went first to Elmira, New York, and in 1900 were attracted to Williamsport, Pennsylvania, to launch a business and to help establish an Orthodox Jewish congregation. Their business, first named Staiman Brothers, is now 117 years old and the synagogue they helped establish is in its 110th year.¹

The brothers Staiman were very entrepreneurial. They bought land on Center Street with its southern border the Susquehanna River. They wisely chose a location in the heart of what was then the industrial area of the city, and they founded a scrap peddler business on it. The business they founded continues on that land, as well as on some that has been added to it for a total of 14 acres. Their vehicles were horse drawn wagons. They collected rags and papers but also many kinds of scrap metal, suggesting that they understood the importance of diversification from the beginning. It was very labor intensive work, consuming much time and energy, and they often had to endure the derisive public image that they were merely "junk dealers."

A religious commitment had helped draw the brothers to Williamsport and they were as active in pursuing that as they were their business. They joined an effort to create an Orthodox congregation shortly after they arrived in Williamsport, and the first services of the new congregation were held in their

home.² They were, along with Morris Gartenhaus, Benjamin Kaplan, Louis Marks and Frank Wilson, founding members of the Williamsport Judische Orthodox Ohev Sholom Gemunde. Incorporated in 1905, the Congregation celebrates its anniversary from 1907. The brothers established the first local Mikvah (ritual bath) in their home, and were part of the first Jewish adult education and study group.³ The congregation grew and in 1913 purchased land on West Edwin Street and two years later erected a brick house of worship on it. The congregation adopted the name Ohev Sholom in 1943. Increasing membership led to the decision to purchase land at the corner of Cherry Street and Belmont Avenue and build a new synagogue, which was dedicated in 1951. The brothers Staiman passed their faith to their descendants, in particular to Marvin and his wife Jean, who have been a vital part of the synagogue.

The business grew through World War I and the 1920s. Jacob left the business and Kalman's sons, Walter and Aaron, joined it. In 1928 Kalman and his wife left to live in what is today Israel and their sons took over the business. It was not an easy time. The economic depression created hardships for many businesses, but the Staiman Company suffered an additional setback in 1933 when it was hit by a damaging fire. No sooner was the business back on its feet than the flood of 1936 swept through. The Staimans persevered and worked through the difficulties. World War II created a huge demand for scrap materials and the Staimans rose to the challenge. They collected and recycled essential commodities, including steel, copper, aluminum and rubber. They were so successful in their efforts that



Walter and Aaron Staiman, second generation.

¹ Interviews with Marvin and Jean Staiman. They provided access to many family materials, including an extensive picture collection.

² Ben Hirsh, "A Half Century of Orthodox Religious Activity of Ohev Sholom," 1952-53 *Ohev Sholom Holiday Journal*.

³ "The History of Ohev Sholom," Ohev Sholom 75th Anniversary Booklet.

the United States government recognized them and their business for their strong support of the nation during the war.

The post-war years through the 1960s were crucial ones for the future of the Company. The nation's need for scrap material continued after the war. Walter spent much of his time on the road soliciting new business. The flood of 1946 inundated the business but was not as damaging as the one in 1936 had been. It is arguable that the most important immediate post-war event was the presence of the next generation of the family in the person of Marvin, Walter's only son. Born in 1927, he grew up in the business. More importantly, he said: "I was intrigued by it. I was enthusiastic about it."⁴ He graduated from high school in 1945 and joined the Army. Discharged in two years, he married Jean R. Alpert of Williamsport, who had just graduated summa cum laude from Williamsport Dickinson Junior College. Marvin attended the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and then went to work full time with his father and uncle in 1947.

The three Staimans made a number of crucial decisions but two of them have had a major impact on the future of the company. The first one was forced on them by a disastrous fire in 1955 which destroyed the office and the warehouse. Their response was to expand. They purchased the adjacent land to the east from Conrail, which extended the property to Hepburn Street. This gave their Company a presence on a major city street, and they immediately erected a brick and metal office building on it. It remains the headquarters for the business. Success in the 1960s led to a decision to expand off-site and to open a rail-breaking plant in Avis, Pennsylvania, some eighteen miles west on the Susquehanna River. During these years Walter became the sole owner when his brother Aaron left in the mid-1960s. In 1971 Marvin became President of the company. His father continued to share the work load into the mid-1970s.



Avis rail yard.

In the next twenty years Marvin demonstrated time and time again that he had inherited the entrepreneurial gifts of his grandfather and father. The Company grew so that it became a regional recycling business, selling material beyond the boundaries of Pennsylvania to companies



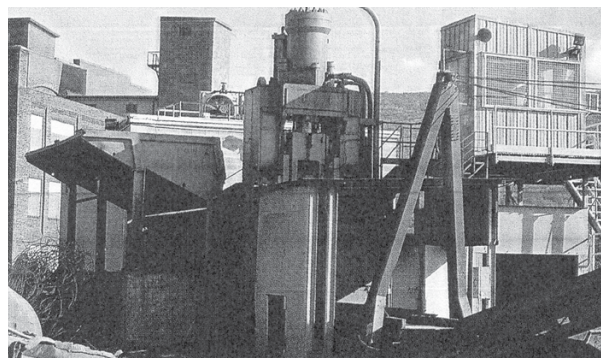
Marvin Staiman

in all the surrounding states and Canada. Marvin sustained the long term contracts the business enjoyed, with, for example, the Jersey Shore Steel Company, and developed new ones. He welcomed members of his family into the business. Wife Jean worked for twenty-two years helping to "keep track of invoicing, shipping, and other paperwork," until she retired in the mid-1990s.⁵ Daughter Cynthia and her husband "helped establish the company's environmental program and grew the Avis rail business," before they left the business.⁶ Most important for the future, son Richard joined his father in the 1980s. Marvin turned the business over to him in 1992, the fourth generation, but he has continued, now for twenty-five years, to keep active in many aspects of the business, maintaining an office and going to work virtually every day.



Richard Staiman, fourth generation

Staiman Recycling began to modernize under Marvin in the 1980s and has continued to do so under Richard's leadership. The company purchased a 500-ton Harris shear machine in 1987, a 1,000 ton Logemann shear in 1997, installed a larger truck scale, and updated its radiation equipment. More recently it added a 1,000 ton hydraulic guillotine



Logemann Shear

⁴ "A Lifetime of Commitment to Business and Community," Williamsport *Sun-Gazette*, March 15, 2002.

⁵ Robert L. Reid, "The Staiman Century," *Scrap*, 2000.

⁶ Ibid

and a 1,000 ton Mobile LaBounty shear. It has also hard-surfaced much of its operating area.⁷ The Company's diversified products fall into four areas: ferrous, rail, nonferrous, and paper. Almost 75% of the Company's product falls in the ferrous/rail category, and about 15% in the nonferrous



Marvin Staiman

group, including stainless steel, aluminum, and copper. Recovered paper and plastic accounts for the remaining 10% of the product.⁸ About half of the scrap comes from within a fifty mile radius of Williamsport, but more and more of it is coming from farther away. Staiman has a fleet of twenty-five trucks and has increased its use of rail service.



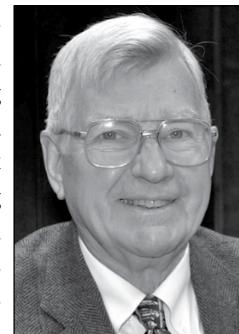
Recent ad highlighting new fleet of trucks.

The growth of the Company led to the creation of two operational branches in 1996: Staiman Brothers, Inc., which serves the paper recycling industry, and Staiman Recycling Corporation, which deals in metal recycling, processing ferrous and non-ferrous scrap metals. Staiman Brothers is the largest paper recycler in the area. The Company relocated its Avis operation to nearby Newberry. Increasing business has led to the opening of a feeder yard in Hanover, Pennsylvania, 130 miles to the south, and another one in Elmira, New York, 76 miles to the north. When Wegman's, a major food market, moved in across the street, Staiman landscaped the area around its office and has more recently painted many of its major buildings a distinctive blue. Staiman adopted a mission statement in 1998: "Our mission is to satisfy our valued customers with comprehensive recycling services and quality scrap products with committed

and dedicated teamwork."⁹ That had been the mission of founders Kalman and Jacob, although unstated at the time. It remains the mission, which promises a long and prosperous future.

The Staiman family has since its arrival in the area been active in the Williamsport and Lycoming County community. It began that service with the founding of an Orthodox synagogue but it also gives time and money to a multitude of groups in the area. Marvin and Jean shared their dedication to their business with an equal commitment to improving the wider community. They co-chaired the United Way Campaign in 1992. Marvin has served on several boards of local non-profits for over fifty years, including 55 years on the Board of Hope Enterprises. Each has received an honorary doctorate from Lycoming College, Marvin a Doctor of Humanities degree and Jean a Doctor of Laws degree. Marvin was the first person of the Jewish faith to be an elected member of Williamsport City Council and the first to be president of the Greater Williamsport Chamber of Commerce. The name "Staiman" stands for recycling, and it also represents community service and philanthropy at its highest level.

JOHN F. PIPER, JR. is a retired Professor of History and Dean, Emeritus, of Lycoming College, and is a retired United Methodist pastor. He is a past president of the Lycoming County Historical Society and until recently served on the Board. He is the author of several books, including two related to the history of Lycoming County and Williamsport. He has written a history of Lycoming College, and is joint author with Robert Larson and Richard Morris of a history of Williamsport.



⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

Area Woman a WWI Navy Yeoman

By Carol Sones Shetler

Weeping, waiting and working were roles women were expected to fill during World War I. The involvement of females in the military was not acceptable as verified by pamphlets carrying the message, ‘women were not to bear arms,’ but ‘bear armies.’ They were, however, encouraged to join the labor force, be nurses, Red Cross workers and the like.

Whilst military inclusion for women in the First World War in 1917 and 1918 was rare, it did exist. Blanche Miller Grimes of Muncy Valley, Sullivan County, Pennsylvania, enlisted in the Navy. At the time, it was said the revelation caused quite a stir in the village.

The reasoning for such a decision by a 29-year-old wedded woman is unknown. Events at the time may have been part of her consideration. A month prior to enlistment, a Muncy Valley native died in New York City while awaiting boarding for France. Nurse, Miss Meryl Phillips, had been a neighbor and less than two-years her junior. In addition, her two younger brothers went to war, Grant H. and Donald C. Miller.

In the valley situated at the foot of North Mountain near the borders of Lycoming and Columbia Counties, Blanche saw many of her contemporaries answer the call. They were, to list a few: Simpson Rider, Thomas and Harry Sones, and brothers, Edward ‘Jerry’ and Frank Swisher.

In the Navy, Blanche served as a Yeoman 3rd Class. She was assigned to clerical duties with the supply department at Washington, D. C.

While locally Blanche has been lauded as the first female to enlist in the U. S. military, records credit Loretta P. Walsh as the first active duty Navy woman.



WWI Navy Yeoman Blanche F. Miller Grimes (1887-1975) of Muncy Valley, Sullivan County, is interred at Pleasant Hill Cemetery, Hughesville, PA. Photo compliments of the Sullivan County Historical Society.

Walsh had joined in March 1917, while Blanche entered in June 1918. By the end of the war, 11,274 female yeomen had been sworn in and given the same status as men.

In June 1936 Blanche, along with approximately 400 additional females from the Keystone State, became members of a newly established group. The National Yeomen (Female) Organization was founded in Washington D. C. This corporate and political society was to support patriotic, historical and educational purposes. It also sought to perpetuate the memory of the service of the female yeomen with the U. S. military.

The charter directed the group’s collections be deposited at the Smithsonian Institute. However, the uniform Blanche wore is reported to be at the Pennsylvania State Museum in Harrisburg.

Blanche F. Miller was born June 27, 1887 in Muncy Valley, Sullivan County, PA. Her parents, both Columbia County natives, were James Polk Miller and Elizabeth E. Johnson.

The Miller family was supported by the father’s work as supervisor at the Elk Tannery in Davidson Township. Elder sister Maude was bookkeeper at the same establishment. Following the closing of the tannery, Maude was post mistress at Muncy Valley. Myrtle, another sister, was a nurse. These sisters entered the workforce at a time when women were yet to acquire voting privileges.

In 1909 at Philadelphia, Blanche wed Carl “Ralph” Grimes. They would reside in Millville, Columbia County, Williamsport, Lycoming County, and lastly in Harrisburg. At each place, the husband was a

salesman; at the latter site, in auto sales. For 30 years Blanche was employed as a stenographer with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in Harrisburg.

The father, James P. Miller, died in 1926 at their Broadway residence in Hughesville. Eight years later, Blanche was the informant on her mother's death certificate. As her sister Maude was a Hughesville resident until her death in 1951, this part of the family spent more than 25 years in the borough.

In 1951, Mrs. Carl R. (Blanche) Grimes of Harrisburg was listed in the obituary of her sister, Miss Maude Miller. Additional survivors included Mrs. Myrtle (George) A. Mills, Albany, NY; James R. Miller with the New York Central Railroad in Syracuse; Donald C. Miller of Albany NY, who died and is buried at Fort Lauderdale, FL; and Grant H. Miller, employed by the Bell Telephone Company in Greensburg, PA.

The widow, Blanche Miller Grimes, died June 19, 1975 without issue, at a nursing home in Camp Hill, PA. Services were held in Hughesville at the McCarty-Thomas Funeral Home. She and other relatives share the Miller family plot at Pleasant Hill Cemetery in Wolf Township bordering Hughesville.

Prior to Memorial Day 2017, the Centennial year for WWI, thirteen members of Boy Scout Troop #26 aided veterans of the Glenn Sharrow American Legion Post of Hughesville, in placing flags in the stanchions on all veteran's graves. Those at the Grimes grave site were Eagle Scout Jacob Reynolds and the Rupert brothers, Brady, Kyle and Robbie. Seventy WWI veterans are interred at Pleasant Hill Cemetery.

Information Sources:

The Sullivan County Historical Society, The Sullivan County Council of the Arts, The National Yeoman F Organization, and the She-Soldiers of WWI.



Jacob Reynolds (left) with overseers Brady, Kyle and Robbie Rupert, pause at the gravesite of WWI Navy Yeoman Blanche Miller Grimes. Members of Boy Scout Troop #26 aid the Glenn Sharrow American Legion Post of Hughesville in the annual placing of flags on veterans' graves at nearby Pleasant Hill Cemetery. The May 2017 event was especially significant as it marked the Centennial of America's 18-month involvement in The Great War.

CAROL SHETLER has been a genealogy/local history researcher since 1980. Beginning in Feb 2016, her articles on local WWI veterans have appeared in *The Muncy Luminary*, *West Branch Life* magazine, the *Sullivan Review* and the *Standard-Journal* at Milton. The writer presents programs on The Great War to area organizations. She is a member of the Lycoming County Historical Society Board of Governors.



Luba's World War II Timeline

The Chronicle of Displaced Persons from Camp to Freedom

Editor's Note: Interview with Luba Ochej, mother of the author.

By Helen Ochej

1940: Luba received a ticket to work in Germany. She and her friend accepted the work offer because eventually she would be forced to go to Germany and there were no jobs in Poland. Her sister did not want to go. Her father sold half a pig to get her an exemption. Luba was taken from home to Lublin by wagon and from Lublin to Erbach by train. She sat in a passenger compartment and the train was not crowded. After arrival in Germany, a group of 300 people were presented to Germans who were waiting for workers. A man chose my mother and took her to a restaurant. He had brought sandwiches for both of them and bought coffee in the restaurant. After dinner, the German farmer took Luba to his farm in Hezbachov and she worked there for 6 months. She shared a bed with the owner's daughter who had urinary incontinence. Mom complained to an administrator from the employment office, who ordered her to have her own bed. The owner of the farm assigned her to her son's bedroom. However, the son returned from the war and she was returned to sleep with the incontinent woman. Luba had various farm tasks like milking cows, making bread, house cleaning and working in the kitchen. When the administrator returned, mom complained again about having to sleep with the woman who wet the bed. She was assigned to work at another larger farm outside of Erbach managed by the Prillip family. The farm was owned by a noble.

1941–1945: Luba worked in Rozbach for the Prillip family. She liked working there. She worked in the kitchen and as a housekeeper. Her sister, Hela eventually joined her there (mom requested Hela to be moved there, and the administrator arranged it). Sometimes, she was sent to town where she could go shopping for shoes and clothing. She hired a tailor to make her clothing. She paid for the items with money that the farmer paid her for her work. She also received coupons with which she could make purchases. Luba also had a Christmas vacation. During one vacation, she travelled home to Poland. The farmer had given her a note to show in case she ran into wartime trouble. She used the note to save the life of her father and brother when German soldiers came to her parents' house. They wanted to shoot the men of the family. Luba showed her note. One of the soldiers was from the same village as my mother's employer. He spoke to my mother in German and asked her how she liked his village. After their discussion, he decided not to shoot my mother's father and brother. Her uncle who had just been visiting their home, but was in a hurry

to get back to his own family, was shot dead by other soldiers outside.

1945: Transferred to Erbach where Luba met Frank. She was there a short time, was transferred to Darmstadt for a few months where she lived in a building near a railroad station and slept on the floor. Then she was transferred to Wetzlar where she married Frank. They were there for 6 months. A mutual friend told Luba that Frank was interested in marrying her. He told her that Frank's father was an alcoholic, but that Frank was not. Frank wanted to settle down and have a family. Luba agreed to marry Frank.

Frank worked for a brewery in Erbach. He came to Luba's farm twice to visit his friend. The friend introduced them. Later, Frank found Luba in Darmstadt. From Darmstadt Luba moved to Swarzenborn, where she stayed from August through winter.

Frank came to Luba at the camp in Swarzenborn. He proposed to her, promising a stable family life. They were married on Sept. 9, 1945.

Marion (He later married Hela, Luba's sister), a radio announcer and singer in the camp arranged a musical group and the policemen from their camp lined up in front of the church in uniform to make a procession. Before the wedding ceremony, Frank had taken his bicycle to purchase wine for the reception. He tried to hold on to a truck to speed his way home, but the driver of the truck swerved and dislodged Frank and the bike. It flew into the air with Frank. Frank landed on the road with a sore butt, and the bike with the wine was destroyed. Luba's friends, Sophie and her sister, made pumpkin compote and pancakes for the reception. The musicians played and everyone danced!

1946: Luba and Frank were transferred to Swarzenborn for 4 months. There, the decision was made whether to return to Poland or travel to the USA. Hela and her husband returned to Poland because her husband was an alcoholic. Luba and Frank decided to wait for transit to the USA. Luba's first daughter, Helen was born in Treysa (where the hospital was).

1946–1950: Lived in a displaced person's camp in Wildflecken for 4 years. 24,000 people lived there. Richard and Sophie also lived there, and so did Sophie's sister and Frank's best friend, John. At first, Luba, Frank and Helen lived in a kitchen with 5 other

people. Eventually, Luba and Helen got a private room. Frank worked in Manheim (and was able to save \$175.00). As more people arrived, Luba was asked to share her room. Instead, she opted to move into a room with her friend, Wanda. Luba did not like the soy bread and kidney bean soup that was served in the camp, so she ate very little. She got hepatitis, gastritis and anemia. From 1948-1950 she was in a German hospital. Frank and his friends were notified about available space on a ship called the *General Haan*. They started building wooden shipping boxes so they could bring their possessions to the U.S. with them. They prepared clothing, a mattress that could be stuffed with straw, cooking utensils and dishes.

1950: Luba, Frank and Helen came to NYC in the United States by ship (the *General Haan*). Their sponsor lived in Fairmont, West Virginia. The sponsor was an old woman who spoke Polish, and she signed as a sponsor for almost 100 people. Most got diverted to other places, and she never saw them. Luba and Frank spent one week in W. Virginia, and when my father could not find employment there, took the train to Shamokin Pa where their friend from the camps, John, was living. Luba worked in a hotel, cleaning, preparing and serving food. Helen was cared for by John's wife. Frank worked as a laborer on farms and in the coal mines when help was needed. He decided to look for work in surrounding cities.

In 1951, he found a job in Williamsport, Pa. in a tannery. Eventually, John also found work at the tannery, and another friend, Richard (who moved to Williamsport from Kansas), also got a job at the tannery. Frank worked at the tannery for five years. During that time, he took night classes in English and drafting. They all (John and Richard's family and the Ochej family) lived in a garage that was owned by an Italian man. It was heated by a space heater. They purchased a used refrigerator.

1952: Frank and Luba purchased a house on Green St. in Williamsport, Pa. It was in terrible condition, but people from 2 other families moved in with them. Richard's family lived upstairs, John's family lived in a room upstairs, and Luba and Frank's family lived downstairs. After they purchased the house, they realized that the water pipes were completely calcified and only drips of water came out of the faucet. Richard and Frank decided to clean them out with a brush. After that, the pipes developed holes in them and when the water was turned on, water sprinkled everywhere. The men decided to replace

all of the pipes with copper. After that, the ceiling in the living room fell down. Luba's youngest daughter was in a buggy in the living room. She had started crying, and my mother moved her to the kitchen just before the ceiling came crashing down. Everyone pitched in to renovate the house by changing all the walls with plasterboard, plastering ceilings and putting in hardwood floors. Evenings after work were spent on renovation of the house. Frank took evening classes in drafting and English. Luba learned the English language from a volunteer who came to her home during the day.

In 1956, Frank took a job as a draftsman with Babcock & Wilcox Co. He worked there for 3 years until the company moved to Pittsburgh. Luba and Frank did not want to move to Pittsburgh because of the pollution there. Frank took unemployment insurance for one year, before he was hired by the Lycoming County Courthouse in the Assessment Bureau. He worked there until he retired.

1957: Luba's employment. Luba had always wanted to become a seamstress. In Williamsport, she took a sewing job with Weldon Pajamas and worked there for 3.5 years. After that, she was hired by Arrow shirts where she produced shirt collars for 14.5 years (700 collars/8 hours). She had 2 weeks of vacation there. She spent her vacation washing windows and polishing floors at home. Evenings, she helped my father renovate the house on Green St. When Arrow left Williamsport, she joined the Lesko factory, sewing London Fog coat collars for 7 years. She was laid off because the company lost their contract. At age 61, she took unemployment payments and retired at age 62.

Narrated by Luba Ochej 5/2011 – 12/2013 (age 92).

HELEN OCHEJ was born in a displaced person's camp in Germany after WWII, and lived there with her parents until she was 4 years old. In 1950, she immigrated to the United States and eventually lived in Williamsport, Pa. on Green Street. She attended local schools and graduated from Lycoming College with a degree in Biology. Helen is fluent in three languages: Polish, English and German. She started her career by working in various labs as a research assistant. She eventually became an information specialist for MEDLINE at the National Library of Medicine. There, she succeeded in combining her language skills with her Biology training by indexing medical journals in Polish, English and German.

She is retired and lives in Rockville, Md. with her husband, David. They have one daughter, Anne, who lives in California. During her retirement, Helen has been researching her family history.



2014.59 Wooden shipping box, permanently on display at LCHS. Gift of Helen Ochej.



Allegheny Airlines Flight 371:

A Story Fifty-Eight Years in the Making

By Robin Van Auken

Abstract

In 1959, Allegheny Airlines Flight 371, enroute to Williamsport Regional Airport, crashed into Bald Eagle Mountain, killing 25 of its 26 passengers. On the 55th anniversary of the disaster, a Williamsport man gave a presentation on his rediscovery of the long-forgotten plane crash. His curiosity lead him to enlist the help of Lycoming College's archaeology department and Northcentral Chapter 8, Society for PA Archaeology, and resulted in the identification, registration and protection of Site 36LY0351.

The Accident

Snow pelted the windshield of Flight 371 as it neared the Williamsport Regional Airport. It was impossible to see the runway, so the pilot of the Allegheny Airliner banked south. Captain Thomas Goldsmith decided to retry his final approach by instrument, and radioed his plan to circle 360 degrees.

It was a maneuver that cost him his life, and the lives of all passengers and crew, save one.

During the banking turn, the airplane's compass malfunctioned. Without an accurate heading, and with fog and snow showers limiting his field of vision, Goldsmith didn't realize he hadn't completed the turn. Instead, he headed toward Bald Eagle Mountain, disappearing into the clouds and snow. Goldsmith finally saw the mountain and went into a steep climb, a desperate attempt to avert disaster.

Witnesses reported hearing airplane engines rev prior to the explosive crash that killed Goldsmith and 25 of his 26 passengers and crew at 9:47 a.m. December 1, 1959. (Civil Aeronautics Board 1960)

The Aftermath

Volunteers and local emergency response workers hiked to the remote mountain location, searching for survivors. At 1,150 feet above sea level, the crash site sat square in the middle of the mountainside. Some rescuers climbed nearly 600 feet from the railroad tracks at the base of the mountain, while others hiked down the 500 feet from State Route 15. Several men were ferried in by helicopter, lowered by cable to the scene. (*Grit* 1959)

Only one person survived the crash. The Civil Aeronautics Board, then a division of the Federal Aviation Administration, interviewed him on February 3, 1960. It took three months for the

badly injured man to improve enough to discuss the incident.

Associated Press journalists, however, tracked Louis Matarazzo, 35, manager of a Philadelphia sportswear company, to his hospital bedside and were able to conduct some short interviews.

Matarazzo suffered severe burns and his eyes were covered with bandages as he talked with Tom Pettit of WRCA-TV, Philadelphia. "All of a sudden the pilot seemed to race the motors and pull up. There was a crash. The plane burst and exploded. The Lord opened my side of the plane and I was able to jump out," he said from his hospital bed in nearby Williamsport. "I fought my way through flames, past the wreckage." (Stroudsburg *Daily Record* 1959)

Two other passengers were alive when rescuers reached the scene, but both died before they could be brought down the mountain. Volunteer fireman Donald Ault, 31, was one of the first responders to arrive by the ground route. He told reporters of encountering Matarazzo: "The first thing I saw was one man, creeping and crawling, coming down the mountain." (Stroudsburg *Daily Record* 1959)

According to the newspaper reports, responders "heard moans from a nearby tree and found a man, strapped to an airplane seat, upside down at the base of the tree. The man died en route to the hospital."

Matarazzo told Civil Aeronautics Board investigators that despite severe burns from the intense fire, he walked out of the wrecked fuselage. The formal Civil Aeronautics Board reports states:

"This witness [Matarazzo] stated that upon approaching the Williamsport Airport the flight steward announced this fact and the 'No Smoking' and 'Fasten Seatbelts' signs were lighted. He stated that he observed

the airport on the initial pass over the field and that the aircraft turned right, and when it came around the second time it was descending. He stated that on the second approach he saw the landing strips and that the aircraft, which was going straight into the airport, was turned left, entered a cloud bank or fog, and crashed shortly thereafter. The witness indicated that shortly after entering the cloud or fog bank he heard the pilot 'gun the motors' and at the same time he saw trees. The aircraft crashed almost immediately after this. The witness indicated that after this left turn the aircraft was flown straight up and level in the clouds or fog until just before the crash when 'the nose seemed to lift up.' Just prior to the accident the cabin lights were on and nothing unusual was noticed." (Civil Aeronautics Board Report, 1960)

After concluding its investigation, the Civil Aeronautics Board decided that the pilot of the Martin 202, N174A, failed to "execute a timely abandoned approach" at the Williamsport Regional Airport, most likely because a crew member accidentally bumped the fluxgate compass, tampering with the settings.

Located in the wingtip of the plane, the fluxgate compass provides the pilot with direction; however, when the compass is not level, the pilot "cages" it. The Civil Aeronautics Board reported that flight tests showed that someone in the jumpseat could accidentally actuate the caging switch, preventing the compass from engaging. Immediately after learning about the accidental caging of the fluxgate compass and its effect on Flight 371, Allegheny Airlines installed guards on the aircraft in its fleet. (*Chicago Tribune* 1960)

"It was the second time this year that the board had noted the possibility of fluxgate compass malfunction as an accident cause. The other finding was in connection with the crash of a Trans World Airlines plane into a mountain near Albuquerque on Feb. 19, 1955." (*Chicago Tribune* 1960)

Five decades passed and local memory of the airline disaster faded. The men and women who died on the mountainside were strangers, traveling to cities along the Allegheny Airline flight from Philadelphia to Cleveland, Ohio, with stops at Harrisburg, Williamsport, Bradford and Erie.

A local oral history, however, kept the memory alive for Shane Collins. (Collins 2014) In May 2014,

he and his cousin Mark Avery revisited Bald Eagle Mountain and finally found the crash site. Shane's reminiscences follow this article.

The Research

In September, Collins contacted Lycoming College's archaeology department to ask for guidance. It was a wise decision, because it halted his independent explorations and began the scientific study at the Allegheny Airlines Flight 371 Crash Site. Instead of being a curious visitor with good intentions but harmful actions, he became educated on the importance of preservation and conservation. He turned all notes and artifacts over to Lycoming College and joined Northcentral Chapter 8 (NCC8), Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology.

The two organizations have a long-standing relationship and work together each year, partnering Lycoming College students with experienced, local avocational archaeologists.

A loose coalition formed, its membership consisting of individuals from Lycoming College and NCC8, as well as Jim Dunn, an Armstrong Township supervisor with a passion for conservation, and Brian Auman, a landscape architect working on behalf of Susquehanna Greenway and the Ridge Trail project. Their interest in the site was cemented by the nearby Ridge Trail, a 32-mile corridor that will eventually link a network of trails from Muncy to Jersey Shore.

The group hiked the tortuous path to the crash scene to record the site and initiate the Pennsylvania Archaeological Site Survey application (PASS) for the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC).

The Allegheny Airlines Flight 371 Crash Site received designation from the Commonwealth as an official archaeological site (36LY0351). The site is on state forest lands, so archaeological registration offers a second layer of protection.

Lycoming College archaeology students Mark McKenny and Taylor Rabickow spent the 2015 Spring Semester researching aviation archaeology and hiking to the site to map the debris field.

Artifacts recovered by Collins were cataloged and paperwork is being processed for submission to the Archaeological Collections at the State Museum of Pennsylvania; however, Northcentral Chapter 8 and Lycoming College hope to work with the Taber Museum of the Lycoming County Historical Society to create a permanent exhibit, to educate the public about the crash and honor its victims.

The next step is to petition the PHMC for a “Designation of Alternate Repository Letter,” allowing Lycoming County Historical Society to retain the artifacts. (PHMC, Revised Curation Guidelines 2006)

Future plans include coordinating with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for permission to install a monument onsite. The group also plans to propose an interpretive panel be placed along Williamsport’s Riverwalk that draws visitors’ eyes towards the north face of Bald Eagle Mountain.

The Return

On Dec. 1, 2014, the 55th anniversary of crash, Collins discussed his personal efforts to honor the victims of Allegheny Airlines Flight 371 at the Lycoming County Historical Society. At the event, Collins was joined by his cousin, Mark Avery, an amateur historian who has been collecting biographies of the victims and oral histories from family members.

The event, sponsored by NCC8, was well attended, and included family members of the crash victims, as well as individuals who assisted at the crash in 1959.

When Collins shared a message from Debbie Mooney, the daughter of a victim Evelyn Marie Mooney, a haunting memory of one artifact came to mind: a bead from a woman’s necklace:

“I am not really sure how to start this story but I remember it like it was yesterday! We were a happy family of five. I was 9 years old, my sister was 7 and my brother was 17, a senior in high school. I remember it very clearly. I was staying at my Grandmother’s when I got the phone call from my Mom telling me that she was leaving town to attend her Aunt’s funeral in Harrisburg. Little did I know that that would be the very last time I ever spoke to her. She told me ‘I love you’ and we hung up. Those were her last words to me. A couple of days later, we got the awful news of the plane crash, changing our lives forever. We were devastated! My Mom was a young, vibrant, classy woman. She loved dressing up, wearing her matching jewelry, her wing-tipped heels and driving her bright red Buick convertible, which we all loved. She was very outgoing and was loved by all who knew her.” (Mooney 2014)

Collins was re-invited to the Lycoming County Historical Society to talk about Flight 371 in June

2015, and this time more first responders attended. Collins added more names to the list of potential interviewees for oral histories.

He made another connection, one of many friendships he hopes to form. Linda Bowers, niece of George Bowers, the co-pilot of Flight 371, visited the crash site on June 7, 2015. She is the first relative, according to Collins, to visit the site since the accident.

“The hike on Bald Eagle Mountain is not easy, but Linda made it there, and was able to place flowers with the wreckage to honor her uncle,” Collins said.

Conclusion

Allegheny Airlines Flight 371 Crash Site, 36LY0351, is an example of a significant archaeological site that is being investigated, documented and conserved without the use of excavation. Although it began as a personal pursuit by one individual, it evolved into a scientific and altruistic project with lofty goals. In truth, the site would have remained unknown to all, with the exception of the occasional hunter hiking through the woods, if Collins had not followed his obsession.

Public archaeology relies upon the cooperation of the explorer and the collector, those individuals whose interests drive them to discover the hidden.

The site’s remoteness and the steepness of the slope make it untenable for both Lycoming College and NCC8 to consider it as a future site for archaeological excavation, so for now our mutual goal is to conserve it. With its double layer of protection -- it sits in a state forest and it is a registered archaeology site -- it is illegal for anyone to trespass with the intent to salvage, collect or loot any remaining artifacts.

The Allegheny Airlines Flight 371 Crash Site also exemplifies some of the best aspects of historical archaeology: the ability to marry archaeological methods with historical records and oral traditions to complete a true story.

For now, that’s the best we can do. In the future, as the field of aviation archaeology expands, it may serve as an appropriate research project.

These goals meet with Collin’s aspirations of the site, which are:

“To make sure the site is protected for future generations to explore and see. That a proper memorial is placed alongside the many pieces of debris that remains on site. The debris itself is a lasting tribute to the carnage

that occurred there 55 years ago. It is my belief that most of the debris should stay on site for the public to gaze upon as they visit the site. There are many such sites dotted across the landscape here in the United States. Many sites still retain debris and also have memorials that have been erected over the years to remember those killed.” (Collins 2014)

It is a sentiment echoed by Debbie Mooney, who wrote a letter to Collins as he prepared for the 55th anniversary presentation:

“Growing up, I always thought maybe one day we would be able to go to the site of the crash. Why I don’t know, maybe just to be where my Mom took her last breath ... just to stand there and wonder what all of those passengers/crew must have gone through, what were they thinking? I had no idea that anyone even

knew where the plane site was and that it is so ironic that it was found during the year of the 55th anniversary. I am so glad that there may be a memorial constructed at the crash site one day. What a great remembrance! We still hope one day to make the trip to visit the site. Thank you again, Shane. You will never know how much this means to me and to my family.” (Mooney 2014)

Donations will be sought for the costs of a monument and interpretive panels. More information about the airline disaster can be found on Collin’s website, <http://www.alleghenyflight371.com>.

More information about Northcentral Chapter 8, SPA, can be found on the organization’s website, <http://www.PennArchaeology.com>

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ROBIN VAN AUKEN is an archaeologist and author. She has a bachelor’s and a master’s degree in anthropology, and an associate’s degree in mass communications. At Lycoming, she has taught classes in American Archaeology and media writing. She also oversees the college’s summer youth program, Lycoming College for Kids and Teens.



She specializes in public archaeology projects and historic preservation and is the principal investigator for the Glunk Site, a multi-year project that serves as a site for archaeology field schools, as well as independent research projects for students in many fields of study.

Van Auken has published ten books of regional history. In addition to five years as a museum curator, and 20 years as an anthropologist, she has more than 25 years experience in journalism and mass communications.

Her professional memberships include the Register of Professional Archaeologists, American Anthropological Association, Society for Historical Archaeology, Archaeological Conservancy, Archaeological Institute of America, and the Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology, Northcentral Chapter No. 8. Her personal website can be found at <http://www.RobinVanAuken.com>.

Allegheny Airlines Flight 371:

The Artifacts Revealed

By Shane C. Collins

It was Tuesday December 1, 1959, a snowy and cold day in Williamsport, Pa. At 9:47AM Allegheny Airlines Flight 371 crashed into Bald Eagle Mountain, just south of the Williamsport Regional airport in Montoursville. Twenty-five of the 26 passengers, and crew were killed. Most died on impact. It would be the largest passenger crash to ever happen in Lycoming County. Six decades later it's still the worst airline disaster in our county.

Several weeks after the crash, mid-December, a local company, by the name of Minkin Salvage, bought the rights to all salvageable parts from Allegheny Airlines. The airline had no intent of removing any of the wreckage from Bald Eagle Mountain. In early 1960, with the help of many local people, Minkin removed much of the wreckage from the mountain. The largest pieces removed included the tail section, wings, both engines, and several other pieces of debris that had survived the impact. What remained of the wreckage would spend the rest of the 20th century, and the early part of the 21st century undetected by the general public. Minkin Salvage was not interested in the smallest pieces of debris and other artifacts. In fact many small items, personal items were left behind. Part of the reason was the rocky terrain hid much of these smaller artifacts. The crash was so violent that pieces of the plane and personal artifacts went airborne in all directions. In some ways this salvage method benefited the crash site for future exploration. It would be the sole reason why we found it many decades later.

As the decades rolled by, the local public had all but forgotten about the crash. It's believed the only contact the crash site had since 1960 was from the occasional hunter or hiker off the beaten path. The crash site sits in an area that is not widely accessed. Its remoteness has helped its preservation over the many decades. Those that did make contact probably had no idea what they were stumbling upon. The crash debris is not immediately recognizable. Much of the artifacts are mangled and twisted pieces of metal.

In April 2014 my cousin Mark Avery and I went looking for the crash site on Bald Eagle Mountain. We spent hours on that trip zigzagging back and forth in an effort to locate some kind of debris. It

was several hours later that we came upon a long piece of black rubber. It was two feet by two feet in size. We both examined it and didn't think much about it. In reality the area it was located in was close to where we thought the crash site should be. However those long hours of hiking over rocks and up and down had both of us exhausted. We decided to leave and return some time in May.

In May 2014 we returned to the mountain in an effort to finally locate the crash site. As we did in April, we zigzagged back and forth, up and down the mountain. Three hours later we could not believe what we saw! It was that long piece of black rubber we had discovered in April. It was then we decided it was time to look around. Could this be debris? We weren't exactly sure. A few minutes later I came upon a small but shiny piece of metal sticking out from between two rocks. Moments later more pieces of metal were found sticking out from between the rocks and leaves. Could this be the site? By this time we were certain it was. More and more pieces of metal were located. Then came the time to depart and make our way back to the car. As we started to hike away from the site I came over a rise and there they were, several large pieces of debris. This was definitely the crash site! We decided to mark the spot using our GPS. This waypoint would guide us back to the site for further exploration. The months that followed would yield many artifacts. We could not believe how much debris was still there.

Several months had passed and I decided to return to the crash site to look around for more artifacts. On this particular trip I had been scouring the area

where the fuselage had come to rest. Much of this area consisted of burnt metal and other unrecognizable artifacts. Some of these items had burned so hot they melted together into globs of what looked like lava after it had cooled down. As I scoured around I discovered a small pile of burnt



coins. Dimes, pennies, and a few nickels were among some of the items recovered. I also discovered pieces of plastic spoons that still said Allegheny Airlines. There were pieces from a women's necklace, a small pearl. Then I came across an Allegheny pin that would have probably been on the crew's hat or coat. The pin was metal and there was the faint color of blue. After I cleaned the item, with water, I realized it was a porcelain material. This pin had survived the intense fire and was in remarkable condition. The last artifact I found that day was a bone. It would be the one item that made me pause to remember what terrible events had occurred at this remote location on Bald Eagle Mountain. The more I examined this bone I began to realize this was probably of human origin. My first thoughts were a small piece from the rib bone, possibly. I decided it was time to reach out and find some assists with site protection. However, it wouldn't be for another month until I made contact with someone regarding the site.

On a third expedition to the site I discovered a piece of instrument panel from the cockpit. It was laying flat on the ground under a fern that had been growing above it. The color of reddish pink was still evident as was the lettering for each switch. I later discovered from online research this panel was above the pilot and co-pilot. The panel included switches for de-icing the plane's wings and heating the right wing during the Winter months.

Amazingly it was in remarkable condition considering how long it was exposed to the elements. Also on this same trip I came across a black round instrument cover. It read "Re-Set Every 15 Minutes".



An inscription on the bottom indicated it was made by the Sperry Gyroscope Company. Later this artifact was researched and an unbelievable revelation had been discovered. It was in fact the cover for the fluxgate directional gyro. The very instrument that had caused the pilots to erroneously fly the plane into the mountain. What a find this was! I knew from reading the official crash investigation that the gyro itself was removed from the site, and later tested in Washington DC. Somehow the gyro's panel cover was left behind.

As more trips followed other important artifacts would be located. On one such trip I located the plane's identification plate. The ID plate on all Martin 202s was located on the left side of the



cockpit. Somehow this ID plate survived the crash and was not damaged in any way. After cleaning off layers of dirt I was able to read the numbers. The tag revealed the plane was made by the Glenn L. Martin Company. It also included the serial number and model being a 202. This would be the one artifact that positively identified this was the crash site of Flight 371. I point this fact out because there were a few who doubted this was the actual site even after I provided evidence it was in fact the site.

On the same trip I came across a large square metal frame. What could this be I thought? After examining it further I came to the conclusion it was either the "No Smoking"



sign frame or the "Fasten Seatbelts" frame. Its condition, like the ID plate, was in remarkable condition. No signs of damage or corrosion. While the list of artifacts here is incomplete, I would like to add that many more were found and catalogued. Each one representing a piece from the plane, or an item carried on by a passenger. The personal artifacts are the ones that touched me the most. They represent the humans who boarded the plane.

People who had a final destination that would never be reached. When human tragedy occurs it's the personal items we look to that tell a story. I remember the very thoughts that occurred after finding the upper part of some luggage. A handle and some



rusted brackets. This artifact represented a passenger, but who I wondered. Unfortunately, many of these questions will never be answered.



It is my hope that one day many of these personal artifacts and several items from the plane itself will be on display at the Taber Museum. It will provide a lasting tribute to the people killed on this flight, and the largest aviation disaster in our county.

In September 2016 I received permission from the Forestry Department to place a memorial plaque at the crash site. In June I had received a donation from the family of George Bowers. He was the co-pilot on board Flight 371. With this donation in hand I built the plaque. My cousin Mark and I placed the plaque on site in October of the same year. It now stands proudly over the remaining large pieces of debris. Somehow the site now seems complete! The plaque includes the names of all 26 on board. It also includes photos and a small paragraph telling the story of Flight 371. Fifty-eight years have passed since the crash occurred, and the site is now getting the care and preservation it deserves.

SHANE C. COLLINS is a Williamsport city employee working for River Valley Transit. He has been employed there since 2014. He is also a member of North Central Chapter 8 (NCC8), for the last three years. He's been actively involved with ongoing efforts to curate and catalog artifacts related to the Allegheny Airlines Flight 371 crash on Bald Eagle Mountain. He gave two presentations, about the crash, at the Thomas T. Taber Museum in 2014 and 2015. Shane is also a Website Administrator for the official Allegheny Airlines Flight 371 website. For more information visit www.alleghenyflight371.com.



Born on July 29, 1974 in Williamsport, Shane at six years of age moved with his family to Montoursville. He graduated in 1993 from Montoursville High School. In June 2011 he married Lindsay S. Barnes from South Williamsport. The two of them reside in Cogan Station, along with their two cats Drea and Chessie. Shane enjoys his off days hiking the local mountains, as well as photography. His hobbies include collecting mid-century radios, movie cameras, and audio machines. Shane can be reached by email at shaneteacman@gmail.com.



Williamsport,

Not By Chance Or Intent But By Necessity

By Stephen L. Wasby

Editor's Note: After sending us slides and writing about his experience during the days of Hurricane Agnes, Mr. Wasby realized that he was probably stranded in Lock Haven and not Williamsport, but we thought it was such a gentle story of human kindness, that we included it in this issue, in which the human spirit prevails.



On going through some old photographs, I came upon several Kodachrome slides from my “required detention” in Williamsport 45 years ago.

It was Hurricane Agnes that detained me.

As those who lived through it will remember, Agnes took up residence in Pennsylvania. It (she?) sat over the state for several days, drenching it. But those on the outside didn’t really know this – 1972 was before iPhones and weather apps. If one were going someplace, one was not likely to be aware of the weather to be encountered – certainly not a recalcitrant hurricane that wouldn’t leave (no “cones of impact” then).

At the time, I was living in southern Illinois, teaching at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (obviously not to be confused with Carbondale, PA). My brother was living in Connecticut, where he was teaching at a private school. I was headed for Amherst, Massachusetts, where I was to be based at the University of Massachusetts for the summer while interviewing police chiefs. (I never was able to contact William Obenheim, the “Officer Obie” of Arlo Guthrie’s “Alice’s Restaurant.”)

I was driving on I-80. It was raining, not so hard as to cause real difficulty, when, ‘allofasudden’, there were state troopers, and they were directing people to leave the Interstate highway to go onto secondary

roads. I was one of the first cars they sent in that direction. It was clear that roads were closed and that forward movement would not be possible. So I looked for a place to stay. Fortunately, because I was one of the first sent off I-80, I was able to obtain housing in a motel that was on high ground and I took a room. As things got worse, the motel owners asked those of us who were alone, as I was, if we would share our rooms. So I acquired a roommate. He was a traveling salesman whose house in Johnston City was probably going under water. We got along and I think he liked having some company; he didn’t whine about his terrible situation – I was only delayed and had time-flexibility; I wasn’t losing my property.

So one had a motel full – really chock-full– of people who didn’t know each other. There were lots of different folks, including a state trooper just back from extra duty dealing with a union march at Norristown. Grim as the situation was for many who were there, particularly those from the immediate area affected by the hurricane, we became a small, self-contained community. Much of our time was spent in the motel’s restaurant, which fortunately was reasonably well-stocked. However, the motel help couldn’t get to work. So, in addition to cleaning our own rooms, we helped out, as best

we could, in the restaurant. Someone became a “bar-keep,” and we instructed him how to make certain drinks. Others waited tables and helped in cleaning up. Considering the amount of stress being experienced by some of these captive residents, the camaraderie kept the atmosphere amazingly light – although, unfortunately with the passage of time, I can’t remember any particular incidents. I do know that people who would not normally have met each other or spent time together got along well.

There was much “empty” time. I had written some articles for the newspaper in Carbondale, the *Southern Illinoisan* (sometimes called the *Southern Illusion*), including some about my stays in other cities. So, to keep myself occupied, I asked if I could use the office typewriter (I can’t remember if it was an electric) – actually, I probably commandeered it – and I sat in the office, a bit away from the crowd, and wrote an article for the *Southern Illinoisan* about my experience.

When the rain abated somewhat, we could get out of the building – out of danger because reasonably high up a hill – and take a look around, which meant mostly seeing what the Susquehanna River had done and was doing. Most striking was the Piper Aircraft facility. I was able to take some pictures, two of which – of fleets of Piper Cubs under water – I wish I could have transmitted to the media, something I could do in this day of iPhones; another is of the river with a house floating downstream; and the last is of a road ending in water.

Local residents had known that there was going to be some flooding, so they had moved their possessions from the first floor of the house to the third floor. But no one had anticipated that Agnes would overstay her welcome and thus dump so much water that the river rose very suddenly and very high, something for which people were unprepared. Thus even what was on the third floor of a home was flooded. And houses broke away and went down the river, in plain view of our site.

After a couple of days – I think I was in the motel for two nights – we were told we could leave. Those of us heading east were escorted, by state troopers, on a one-lane road (the other lane being in the river), and we were able to continue our travels.

I’m a “railroad person,” that is, a railfan, and I’m active in the National Railway Historical Society, but I didn’t learn until relatively recently how destructive of the area’s railroads Agnes had been. Some never recovered, entering bankruptcy.

STEPHEN WASBY, who resides in Eastham, Mass., on Cape Cod, is professor emeritus of political science, University at Albany-SUNY. He received his B.A. from Antioch College and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Oregon (which makes him a “Duck”).



He has also taught at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, at the U.S. Naval Academy, and at the University of Toronto. He writes about the federal courts and is author of *The Supreme Court in the Federal Judicial System* (now out of print), several other books, and numerous articles. He has served as editor-in-chief of *Justice System Journal*. He is a member of the Zoning Board of Appeals for the Town of Eastham and presently chairs the Town’s task force on animal regulations (dog-owners, beware [just kidding]).

He has numerous shelter-rescue cats and carries dog treats for his many dawg friends.

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Jeff Byerly
Gwen Cornell
Shirley Crawley
Pat Damaska
Joni Decker
Ashley Deitrick
Jonathan Deprenda
Ruth Ditchfield
Victor Engel
Linda Estupinan-Snook
Tiarnan Ferry
Gary Fogelman
Roger Goodman
Sharon Goss
Maria Gustafson
Brad Hall
Lucy Henry
Charles Hess, Jr.
Max Hospes
Martha Huddy
John Hunsinger
Megan Kearns
Larry Keller
Don King

Shirley Knade
Joan Knight
Joseph Kustanbauter
Ted Larson Jr. (Deceased)
Carolyn Ludwig
Norman Ludwig
Emily Lynch
Maureen Lynch
Mick Mann
Dorothy Maples
Kari McCoy
Joy McCracken
Ann McMahon
Valarie Mowrey
Rob Mueller
Bea Parker
LaRue Pepperman
Charles Persun
Eleanor Phillips
Linda Phillips
Ashley Rall
Sandra Rife
Bruce Rogers
Nate Rogers
Ashlee Ruzicka
Bob Schildt
Charles Schmitt
Mary Sieminski
Alicia Skeath

Julia Suchanek
Franklin Ulman
Robert Wallace
Rose Ann Wallace
Frances (Jan) Warren
Rebecca Wither
Glenn Williams

Genealogy Volunteers

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Kay Bitner
Vicki Enigk
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Greg Forsburg
William Gibson
Tom Gouldy
Mary Guinter
Kitty Hofer
George Holmes
Louise Latsha
Mary Lyons
Nancy McCurdy
Karen Stotz Myers
Christine Smith
Helen Yoas

Work Study Students/Interns

Ali Preston
Krissy Wetzel

The Lycoming County Historical Society is a not-for-profit educational organization with a museum, library and archives; its purpose is to discover, collect, preserve and interpret the pre-historical, historical and cultural heritage of north central Pennsylvania.

