



CONSIDER PLANNED GIVING

Making a bequest or leaving a legacy gift to the Historical Society is a most effective way to support the mission of the Society. Planned gifts make a meaningful difference in our ability to preserve and promote the history of Luzerne County.

There are numerous ways to make a lasting gift to LCHS. Consult your legal or financial advisor to determine which is best for you.

1. A gift in your will is one of simplest ways to provide for LCHS' future and allows you to retain your assets during your lifetime.

Tips & insight:

- This can be easily included when you write your will or may be added through a simple codicil or addition.
- You may wish to designate a specific dollar amount; a percentage of your residuary estate (what remains after debts, taxes and specific bequests have been made); or specific assets such as securities.

2. Beneficiary designations are another way to include the LCHS without adjusting your will.

Tips & insight:

- You can easily name the LCHS as a beneficiary on a retirement account, annuity or life insurance policy.
- Your insurance agent or retirement plan administrator can provide you with additional information.

Please let us know if you are naming us in your future plans so we can thank you!



DISCOVER LC HS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF LUZERNE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



THE SWETLAND HOMESTEAD IS OFFICIALLY RESTORED.

Thank you to all those who helped make this possible!

SAVE THE DATE LCHS ANNUAL DINNER

DATE: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2021

LOCATION: WESTMORELAND CLUB

Our theme will be Historic Preservation and Restoration. More details will be forthcoming.

LUZERNE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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New board members will join us in July. Find more information about them on page 6.

PRESIDENT'S AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The past year presented challenges for the LCHS, but it also presented us with opportunities. We're especially proud of the following achievements:

- The Swetland Homestead received some much-needed exterior work.
- The Society received CARES Grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission, the Pennsylvania Humanities Council and Luzerne County.
- Closures and the grant funding gave staff an opportunity to increase the LCHS digital footprint with virtual exhibits, tours and lectures on our YouTube channel.
- We are reaching many more people by sharing our collections and events on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
- We offered a suffrage poster for \$5 on Facebook. Sales exploded, and we shipped posters to almost all 50 states.
- We made great strides in updating our collections database of artifacts and archives to be available on our website in the future.
- There were two successful online auctions in October and January with another planned for June. Auction items that are deaccessioned from the collection are popular, and we were very pleased with the participation and results.
- Plans are to return to a full schedule that includes opening the Dennison House and the Swetland Homestead to tours, presenting lectures and hosting exhibits.

Thank you to all those who helped us along the way, and all those who continue to support us. Wishing you a healthy, safe and happy summer.



Molly Hinkin
President



Mary Walsh
Interim Executive Director

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

In this new column, we will show you the dedicated individuals who keep the LCHS humming. This issue, we look at one of our dedicated library volunteers. Ever wonder who processes your research request to the LCHS? We talked with Mr. David Glen Wright, Research Assistant and one of the people who helps unearth your family tree.



David Glen Wright
Research Assistant
Drums, PA
Time volunteering with LCHS:
14 months

"Volunteerism is the voice of the people put into action. These actions shape and mold the present into a future of which we can all be proud." – Helen Dyer

1.) Tell us about your background.

DW: After high school, I joined the Navy, where I enrolled in their nuclear training program and became submarine qualified. After six years in the Navy, I worked for over 30 years at the Susquehanna Nuclear Plant in Berwick, then became a freelance Nuclear Lab Tech until I retired.

2.) Wow! So with a background in Nuclear Technology, how did you get involved with LCHS?

DW: I always loved history from my teens onward, and I really got involved in my own genealogy after retirement. I was actually elected the family historian at a family reunion. I found the volunteer posting for the Society along with the VA, where I also volunteer, on a local app. The position sounded fun and a good blend of what I enjoy, so here I am.

3.) For our readers, can you explain what you do here at the Society?

DW: I handle various research requests that we receive, both by mail and online, and do my best to try to find the information that people need using the various resources we have here at the Bishop Library. I make copies of what we find, and then package them up and mail them back. I enjoy it because I'm a genealogist myself, and most of our requests are genealogy-related. I know the excitement of how I feel when I find something out, so I can also imagine the rush they feel when we send them an envelope back.

4.) What was the coolest thing you found in your own family history?

DW: Being that I'm originally from East Tennessee, we have two confirmed Confederate Veterans and we have a semi-confirmed ancestor who served in the American Revolution in my family. But probably the coolest thing is that both sides (paternal and maternal) of my family had farms that were bought out by the government for the TVA. They then both moved down to Oak Ridge, TN, and founded new farms which were then bought out by the government again, this time to build the Oak Ridge Nuclear Facility. The farm on my father's side in particular was land directly under the facility that helped develop the atomic bomb. Then, years later, I became a nuclear tech, which was a cool connection.

David's best advice for novice researchers:

TAKE IT SLOW, BE PATIENT, AND YOU WILL MAKE PROGRESS. DON'T GET DISCOURAGED, EVEN WHEN YOU'RE FRUSTRATED. THE END RESULT WILL ABSOLUTELY BE WORTH IT. YOU'LL BE GLAD YOU DID IT.

5.) Having worked with it quite a bit, what part of the collection here interests you the most?

DW: I really like some of the personal items that we have here that tie back to a particular person. You know the names of the different streets and families here: Slocomb, Fell, Hollenback, Welles, etc. but finding a piece of correspondence from them or a personal record really puts a new light on things and gives you a different insight into them as people.

6.) What is your favorite part of history, both overall and local?

DW: I really enjoy military history overall. Being from down south originally, my local interest pertains more to my wife. She's originally from here. I have been helping her and her brother with their genealogy, so I've really been learning about the area that way.

7.) Finally, what advice do you have for researchers who are just starting out?

DW: Above all, be patient. You can—and will—get frustrated. You can often have leads that trickle out or come to a dead end. There can be disappointments; that's normal. Take it slow, be patient, and you will make progress. Don't get discouraged, even when you're frustrated. The end result will absolutely be worth it. You'll be glad you did it.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SUMMER 2021

JUNE

JUN 24/27 **VIRTUAL AUCTION #3**
 We're excited to host a third Virtual Auction in June. Like our past auctions, this will be held on the Auctria platform. Bid on items that are deaccessioned from our collection and much more!



Follow us on Facebook (@LuzerneHistory) for more information.

AUGUST

AUG 8 **2021 ROAD RALLY**
 Join us for another exciting Road Rally in the Valley! A scavenger hunt with a twist, you'll be challenged to decode clues about historic Wyoming Valley sites. The twist: You must drive to those sites using the least amount of miles possible! You'll drive to each site, take a photo of yourself, and make your way back to the finish line. The team with the most correct answers and that traveled the shortest distance wins. This is not a timed event.

More information will be forthcoming; check our website and Facebook page.

SEPTEMBER

SEPT 24 **ANNUAL DINNER**
 Mark your calendar for our Annual Dinner, which will be held at the Westmoreland Club on Friday, September 24. Our theme is Historic Preservation and Restoration.



More information will be forthcoming; check our website and Facebook page.



Scenes from last year's Road Rally fun



Lewis Hine. Noon Hour In The Ewen Breaker, Pennsylvania Coal Co. Location: South Pittston, Pennsylvania, 1911.

PRESERVATION AND PERSEVERANCE IN THE PATCHES: WOMEN IN PENNSYLVANIA'S COAL COUNTRY

When many people think of the Anthracite Coal Region of Pennsylvania, images of miners covered in black coal dust and Lewis Hine's iconic photographs of breaker boys come to mind. These images evoke important memories and stories about the coal region of the Wyoming Valley. But how often do we think of the women in coal country: the wives of the miners and the mothers of the breaker boys?

As fathers, husbands, and sons went down into the coal mines in coal country, wives, mothers, and daughters preserved daily life outside the mines. Daughters and other young women flocked to the silk and lace factories dotted across the Wyoming Valley. Older women – wives and mothers – worked inside the home. Families needed to eat, money had to be managed, and coal dust had to be cleaned.

An average day for a miner's wife began at 5 a.m. and ended when everyone was in bed. Women raised the children, cooked the meals, and cleaned the home. Coal dust made a wife's work especially hard. Women heated the waters for her husband to bathe in when he returned from the coal mines, scrubbed the miners' clothes, and cleaned the coal dust from the home.

Her family was not the only responsibility. To supplement income, especially when her husband was out of work, women accepted boarders. The majority of boarders were men who came to the coal region without family in search of work. Up to 20 or 30 men would board a three or four room house, often in shifts dependent on their schedule in the mines. Boarders paid the woman of the house to cook their meals, which was yet another way in which women engaged in business inside the home.

Opening her home to boarders was not the only way that women supplemented a miner's family income. Women also raised chickens, grew vegetables, and washed laundry for other families. Others, yet, turned to the culm piles to look for discarded pieces of coal to sell for extra income.

Financial management was an important duty for wives. As historian John Bodnar wrote, "[A miner's] status and authority at home were usually secondary to their wives." When it came to money, women were most often in charge. Indeed, wives took authority over miners' salaries, stopping them at the front door to collect their

paycheck. Her husband might have kept a small allowance for a drink in the bar after work, but the bulk of the money went directly into the hands of the wife.

Wives and mothers working inside the home may not be the image we think of when we think of the coal region, but women were an integral part of the family economy. These women did not often have positions outside the home, but that does not mean they did not work. In the coal industry, which did not always guarantee work to miners, the work done inside the home supplemented a family's income. Outside the mines, a woman's perseverance went in the coal patches.



Most families did not have running water inside their homes, so women needed to get water from outside to bring it inside for bathing and washing.

Sources:
 John Bodnar, *Anthracite People: Families, Unions, and Work, 1900-1940*. Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1983.
 Bonnie Stepenoff, *Their Fathers' Daughters: Silk Mill Workers in Northeastern Pennsylvania, 1880-1960*. Susquehanna University Press, 1999.

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WE COULD NOT DO WHAT WE DO WITHOUT YOU.

YOUR GENEROSITY IS APPRECIATED!



WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS TO OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Members of Luzerne County Historical Society recently elected four new Directors to its Board. Each was elected to serve a four-year term that begins on July 1, 2021 and ends on June 30, 2025. New board members are Amber Goodeliunas, Willard Kresge, David Tarantini and Adam Thalenfeld.

Amber Goodeliunas is a Business Systems Associate at Berkshire Hathaway Guard Insurance Companies. She lives in Wilkes-Barre. Willard Kresge is a retired CEO at Quad Three Group, Inc. who lives in Bear Creek Township. David Tarantini is a Financial Advisor at Wells Fargo Advisors, and Adam Thalenfeld, a Dallas resident, is owner of Bread Service PA and the Business Development Manager at Trion Industries.

The four new members bring experience and expertise to our Board of Directors, and we are excited to have them aboard.

Along with these additions, three talented and generous directors will be stepping down from their positions. Bill Leandri, Joe Matteo and Michael Ward have shared their skills for the past eight years and served us faithfully. Many thanks for their support!

