

Luzerne County Historical Society FORECAST September 2017

Travel back in time this fall!

Members Opening at the LCHS Museum “This momentous and tragic day”: Agnes at 45 Thursday, September 14—5 p.m.-7 p.m.

Join us for a members-only opening of our newest exhibition at the Museum, 69 Rear South Franklin Street, Wilkes-Barre.



“This momentous and tragic day’: Hurricane Agnes at 45” looks back at the devastating flood that affected the lives of many Valley residents. Using photographs, documents and objects associated with the storm and its aftermath, the exhibition explores what happened, how we recovered and asks, “Could it happen again?”

The exhibition opens to the public on Friday, September 15, 2017, and will be open Tuesday through Saturday from noon to 4 p.m. (through December 2017; see below for new hours starting January 3, 2018).

Related programming includes a “community conversation” on Thursday, October 12 and a panel discussion, “Could it happen again?” on Thursday, November 9. See the calendar of events inside for more details. Exhibit and programs supported by the Historic & Land Preservation Fund and the Maslow Fund for the Arts of the Luzerne Foundation.

Friday and Saturday, Oct. 27-28, 2017 Haunted History, 6-9 p.m. Denison House, Forty Fort Swetland Homestead, Wyoming

Travel through centuries of superstitions, folklore and mourning customs at our two historic houses. Feel a shiver down your spine as you learn about how Halloween traditions and symbols evolved.

Colonial Superstitions, Folklore and Witchcraft at the Denison House will explore the folklore and traditions of the 1700s when superstitions were intertwined with everyday life.

Victorian Death and Mourning at the Swetland Homestead will recreate the funeral of Margaret (Maggie) Swetland, who died in 1860. Investigate Victorian mourning culture and learn about how it evolved into many of our present-day traditions.



Combination tickets for both houses are \$15 for members, \$20 for non-members and \$10 for kids 5-17. Tickets for one house are \$8 for members, \$12 for non-members and \$5 for kids 5-17. For more information or to purchase tickets, email reservations@luzernehistory.org or call 570-823-6244 ext. 3.

NEW HOURS at the Bishop Library and LCHS Museum Starting Wednesday, January 3, 2018

Starting Wednesday, January 3, 2018, we are changing our hours at the Bishop Library and LCHS Museum!

The **Library** will be open from **12 to 5 p.m. on Wednesday and Friday, 12 to 6 p.m. on Thursday and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday.**

The **Museum** will be open from **2 to 6 p.m. on Wednesday through Friday and from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday.**

The Bishop Library and LCHS Museum will be closed on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday.

**LCHS Forecast
Vol. 14 No. 3
September 2017**

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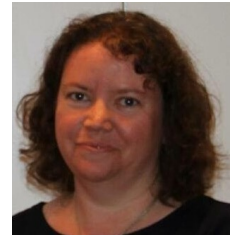
The mission of the Luzerne County Historical Society is to preserve and promote the collective history and heritage of Luzerne County, Pennsylvania.

Message from the Executive Director

Hello! Fall is my favorite season—the crisp, cool weather, pumpkins and apple cider, and cozy evenings to read about history. We have a great lineup of fall programs this year—lectures on coal art and Native American artifacts, our popular Downtown Wilkes-Barre Ghost Walks, our Haunted History program at the Denison House and Swetland Homestead and more (see the calendar on page 3)!

On September 14, we open a new exhibition, ‘This momentous and tragic day’: Hurricane Agnes at 45. It seems particularly appropriate to look back and learn from history in light of the recent devastation caused by Hurricane Harvey in Texas. We hope that this exhibition will help us to remember the way that Valley residents worked together to recover from Agnes, as well as to think about how best to protect ourselves in the future.

This summer, LCHS staff and board started the process to write a strategic plan for the next three years. More on this will be unveiled in the coming months. One change that we will make in January is new hours for the Museum and Bishop Library (see page 1). We hope that these changes will make the museum and library more accessible for you—our members and our patrons.



Thank you for your support of the Luzerne County Historical Society—I hope to see you soon!
Aimee E. Newell, Ph.D.

**Portrait Walk at the Westmoreland Club
August 3, 2017**

Thank you to all who attended our Portrait Walk! Special thanks to the Westmoreland Club and the Bergman Foundation for their support. Participants toured 20 portraits from the LCHS collection that are on loan to the Club. They learned about the lives of these Valley “movers and shakers” and discovered many connections between the sitters. Light appetizers and complimentary champagne set the scene for attendees to compare notes before and after their tour.



Board member Susan Shoemaker tells the group about some of the LCHS portraits on view.

Calendar of Events—September 2017 through January 2018

September 14—Thursday

Exhibit Opening! “This momentous and tragic day”: Hurricane Agnes at 45, 5-7 p.m. at the Museum. FREE! Supported in part by the Luzerne Foundation.

September 22—Friday

Lecture, “It Took Patience” by Dr. Juanita Patience Moss. 6:30 p.m. at the Museum. Hear about the life and career of local coal artist Charles Edgar Patience. FREE for members; \$5 for non-members. Seating is on a first-come, first-served basis.

September 24—Sunday

Benefit Auction and Sale. Noon-4 p.m. at the Swetland Homestead, 885 Wyoming Avenue, Wyoming. Featuring antique and vintage furniture and accessories, local history books, local food and art vendors. FREE!

September 24—Sunday

Last day of the season for tours of the Denison House. 1-4 p.m. at 35 Denison Street, Forty Fort. FREE for members, \$5 for non-member adults and \$3 for non-member kids.

September 29—Friday

Gallery talk, “Is this a river rock?” by Allyson Earl, LCHS Museum Assistant. 6:30 p.m. at the Museum. Learn about how to tell Native American artifacts from pieces of stone and how the Natives made their stone tools. FREE for members, \$5 for non-members.

October 1—Sunday

Harvest Festival, Denison House, 35 Denison Street, Forty Fort. 1-5 p.m. \$5 for members (\$3 for kids); \$7 for non-members (\$5 for kids). Enjoy demonstrations of period crafts.



October 12—Thursday

“Community Conversation—Agnes 45 Years Later.” 6:30 p.m. at the Museum. Come share your stories and memories of Hurricane Agnes. FREE for members, \$5 for non-members.

October 20-21—Friday and Saturday

Downtown Wilkes-Barre Ghost Walks. 6:45 & 7:15 p.m. on both days. Learn about ghosts, murders and hidden graveyards on this two-hour walking tour in the Diamond City. \$7 for members; \$10 for non-members. **PREPAID RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED.**

October 27-28—Friday and Saturday

Haunted History: Colonial Superstitions, Folklore and Witchcraft at the Denison House and Victorian Death and Mourning at the Swetland Homestead. 6-9 p.m. each day. Travel through time and learn about ghostly traditions at two of the oldest houses in the Wyoming Valley. Combination tickets (both houses) are \$15 for members; \$20 for non-members, \$10 for kids 5-17. Single house tickets are \$8 for members; \$12 for non-members; \$5 for kids 5-17.

November 9—Thursday

Panel discussion, “Hurricane Agnes: Could it happen again?” 6:30 p.m. at the Museum. FREE for members; \$5 for non-members.

November 18—Saturday

Gallery talk, “Points of View: Luzerne County Landscapes” by Aimee E. Newell, LCHS Executive Director, 2 p.m. at the Museum; FREE for members, \$5 museum admission for non-members.



November 23-24—Thursday and Friday

Museum and Bishop Library closed in observance of Thanksgiving. **The Museum will be open on Saturday, November 25; the Library will be closed.**

December 2-3—Saturday and Sunday

Holiday Happenings at Denison House and Swetland Homestead. Details to come!

January 11—Thursday

One-act play, “An Interview with John Mitchell,” by Bob Hughes. 6:30 p.m. At Wyoming Presbyterian Church Institute, 40 Institute Street, Wyoming. FREE! Part of Mining History Month.

**To make a reservation for any event, call 570-823-6244, ext. 3
or email reservations@luzernehistory.org.**

Volunteer Opportunities at the Luzerne County Historical Society



We need you! Come and volunteer with us!

We are looking for volunteers to help with our upcoming events.

- **Sunday, September 24, 2017**—noon to 4:00 p.m.—Benefit Auction and Sale at Swetland Homestead, 885 Wyoming Avenue, Wyoming
- **Friday and Saturday, October 27-28, 2017**—6 to 9 p.m.—Haunted History at Denison House, 35 Denison Street, Forty Fort, and Swetland Homestead
- **Saturday and Sunday, December 2-3, 2017**—2-6 p.m. (tentative) - Holiday Happenings at Denison House and Swetland Homestead

We need ticket sellers, gift shop cashiers and traffic directors. We also have slots for character portrayals and tour guides (training provided). Flexible shifts are available. For more information or to sign up, please email info@luzernehistory.org or call 570-823-6244 ext 1.

We are also looking for longer-term volunteers and interns to help with answering research requests, serving as a tour guide at the Denison House and other projects. Call or email to learn more!

LCHS Wish List

Can you help us? We are in need of the following items:

- Lateral filing cabinets
- Canister vacuum cleaners (2)
- iPads (2-3)
- Dehumidifier(s)
- Acid-free textile storage boxes (\$50-\$150 each)

We will accept donations of used items as long as they are in good condition and good working order. We would also appreciate donations of cash toward the purchase of these items.

Call 570-823-6244 ext 1 or email info@luzernehistory.org if you can help!

Please contact us before dropping an item off so that we can be sure to acknowledge your generosity.

We welcome our NEW members!

Ms. Sally Barnes
Mr. & Mrs. Gar W. Davidson
Mr. Jerry Dolman
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Emelett
Ms. Maureen Harmon
Ms. Penelope Hankey
Ms. Marla Hoskins
Ms. Caryl J. Hughan
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Charles Lindbergh's Stopover in the Wyoming Valley By Harrison Wick



The LCHS photo collection at the Bishop Memorial Library includes many treasures. This photograph, “Charles Lindbergh near the Coxtan Yards,” was taken when famed aviator Charles Lindbergh (1902-1974) had to make an emergency landing while flying between Detroit and New York City. He encountered heavy fog along the Susquehanna River, which forced him to land on June 23, 1928, at 7:45 in the evening. He landed on a field that extended from Duryea to the Lehigh Valley Railroad roundhouse at the Coxtan Yards near Pittston Junction.

Photo from the collection of the Luzerne County Historical Society.

See also Harrison Wick, *Images of America: Luzerne County*, Arcadia Publishing, 2011.

Buy a book! Help the Bishop Library

We would like to add these books to our library collection. If the book listed has a price, it is currently available and we would love to have you purchase it for us. If the book listed does NOT have a price, it is out of print—do you have a copy that you would be willing to donate? Please call us at 570-823-6244 ext 2 or email library@luzernehistory.org to claim a book.

Dapper Dan Flood: The Controversial Life of a Congressional Power Broker by Bill Kashatus, Penn State Press—\$29.95

Medical Caregiving and Identity in Pennsylvania's Anthracite Region, 1880–2000 by Karol K. Weaver, Penn State Press—\$64.95

Peaceable Kingdom Lost: The Paxton Boys and the Destruction of William Penn's Holy Experiment by Kevin Kenny, Oxford University—\$21.95

Vital Records of Dallas Methodist Church, from the Northeast Pennsylvania Genealogical Society—\$10.00

Shop Pomeroy's First by Michael Lisicky, History Press, 2014—\$19.99

American Coverlets and Their Weavers by Clarita Anderson, Ohio University Press, 2002—\$24.99

CT's PA "Colony" 1754-1810: Susquehanna Company proprietors, settlers, & claimants by Donna B. Munger, Heritage Books, 2007—3 vols., \$35.00 each

SS Peter & Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church, Plymouth [cemetery book] - \$30

Digging Up Wyoming Valley: an Archaeological Search by Michael Dziak.

History of Glen Summit Springs by the Mountain Top Historical Society.

The History and Genealogy of the Drum Family by Laura Helman, 1927.

History of Butler Township, Luzerne Co, 1786-1880.

Two Hundred Years of Progress: Butler Twp, 1784-1984 by Drums Lions Club, Butler Twp.

2016-2017 LCHS Annual Appeal Wrap-up

A huge thank you to all who donated to the LCHS 2016-2017 annual appeal! These donations are essential to our operating fund and will allow us to bring you the upcoming programs that are listed in our calendar of events. Our fiscal year ended on June 30, 2017 with donations from 166 donors that totaled \$17,056. Here, we recognize gifts received since our spring newsletter went out. Keep an eye out for this year's appeal this fall—we can't do it without you!

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In the Stacks

From the LCHS Library and Archives Collection...

By Amanda C. Fontenova, LCHS Director of Library & Archives

Recently, we received a collection of photographs, newspaper clippings, and catalogs pertaining to the American Auto Stores, as well as information about their founder, Charles Weissman (1888-1961). Weissman's grandson, David Rutstein, generously donated this treasure trove of family history.

Founded in Wilkes-Barre in 1913, American Auto Stores quickly expanded across northeastern Pennsylvania. Most of the photographs donated show the layout of and merchandise being sold at the Kingston store, the largest store of its kind when it opened in 1956. The store had multiple departments in addition to automotive, including housewares, toys, hardware, and sporting goods. One of the store's most innovative draws was an Electronic Store Directory (see photo below) – find the item you were looking for on the directory board, push the correspondingly numbered button, and a recorded voice message would tell you where to find the item as well as any sales and promotions going on in that department.

In addition to being a shrewd businessman, Charles Weissman was a well-known philanthropist in the Wyoming Valley, along with his wife, Fannie. This collection includes historical photographs, clippings, and dedication programs related to the Col.

Ernest G. Smith memorial playground and wading pool that opened in 1948 on the River Common, and the

Weissman Playground, which was dedicated in 1961 and still exists in the East End neighborhood of Wilkes-Barre today. In 1961 the Wilkes-Barre Chapter of the American Jewish Committee honored Weissman for these contributions, as well as for his time spent chairing the United Jewish Appeal.

There are also photographs, clippings, and correspondence showing Weissman's contact with various politicians through the years, from local mayors such as Dan Hart, to Gov. John S. Fine, to President Eisenhower.

Above: LCHS Library & Archives Director Amanda Fontenova reviews the American Auto Stores collection with donor David Rutstein.



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and at our events, reaching an
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