



## HISTORY BYTES

*A Lackawanna Historical Society Publication*

*Vol. 1 No. 2*

*May – June 2018*

*Rick Sedlisky, Editor*

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### Memorial Day

May 28, 2018



The tradition of honoring war dead dates back centuries. The ancient Romans and Greeks were known to hold annual days of remembering loved ones each year by placing flowers at graves and holding public events in their honor.

Union Army General John A. Logan, in May 1868, decreed that May 30 should be a national day of commemoration for all soldiers killed in the Civil War. He chose May 30 because it was a date that didn't fall on the day of a Civil War battle.

He called it Decoration Day and said that on that day, Americans should place flowers and decorate the graves of soldiers. It wasn't until our country's involvement in World War I that Decoration Day included fallen Americans from all wars.

Although the day was called Memorial Day in the 1880s, it remained known as Decoration Day until it was changed to Memorial Day by federal law. The Uniform Holiday Act of 1968 moved the date from May 30 to the last Monday in May.

There are some formal traditions still in effect. On Memorial Day, the flag must be flown at half-staff and then raised to full-staff at noon. In 2000, when Congress passed

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additional legislation, Americans are asked to pause for a National Moment of Remembrance at 3pm local time.

There remain many service members who are laid to rest in unmarked graves. Please see a new segment in *History Bytes* called *Person of Interest* for the story of a Northeast Pennsylvanian who gave his life during WWII on home soil.



## Armed Forces Day Parade 2018

The 20<sup>th</sup> annual Armed Forces Day Parade will take place in downtown Scranton on Saturday, May 19 at 11am. Joe Sylvester, with 43 years of Army service, both active and reserve, will be the grand marshal.

The parade route begins at Gino J. Merli Veterans Center, traverses downtown Scranton, ending at a grandstand at Courthouse Square. Included in the parade are marching bands, veterans' organizations and various types of military equipment, including Humvees, vehicles that deflect bomb blasts and Vietnam-era aircraft.

Two hours prior to the parade, Ronald McDonald House will sponsor the *Show Your Stripes* 5k race. Registration cost is \$20. For additional information and registration, please visit [RMH5k.com](http://RMH5k.com)

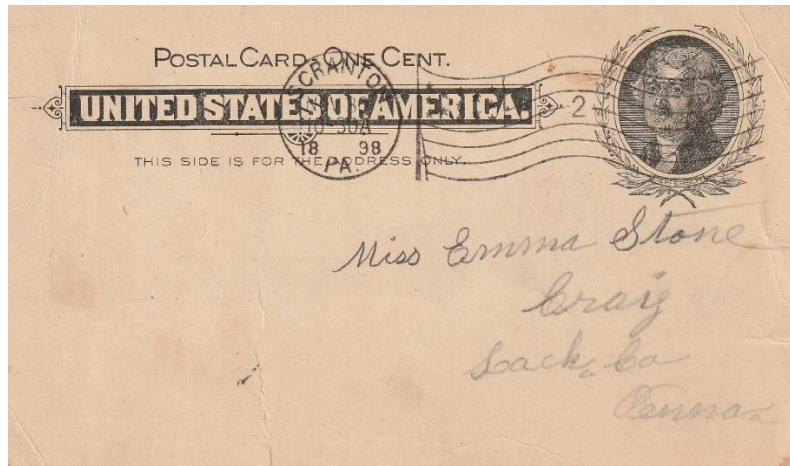


# The Beginning of Postal Cards

By Dennis Martin

Many people collect things. Occasionally such collections can be used to illustrate how things used to be. Recently, the Lackawanna Historical Society acquired a collection of post cards put together by Emma Stone, who lived with her four brothers on a farm in Scott Township. She died at the age of forty in 1920 and her brothers saved her collection, even adding a bit to it.

Our first cards were government-issued “penny postcards” from 1898. According to Wikipedia, the first pre-stamped “penny postcards” were created by the Post Office in 1873. They provided an inexpensive way to stay in contact with people. Emma’s collection started with a set of 15 such cards from 1898. Most were from her mother in Scranton to Emma and the family back on the farm. Elmer, Emma’s oldest brother, was seriously ill. He was living and working in Scranton and their mother was there for more than three weeks taking care of him.



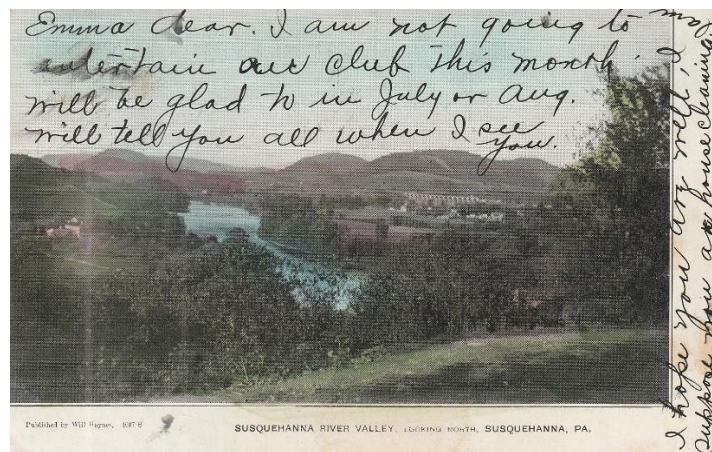
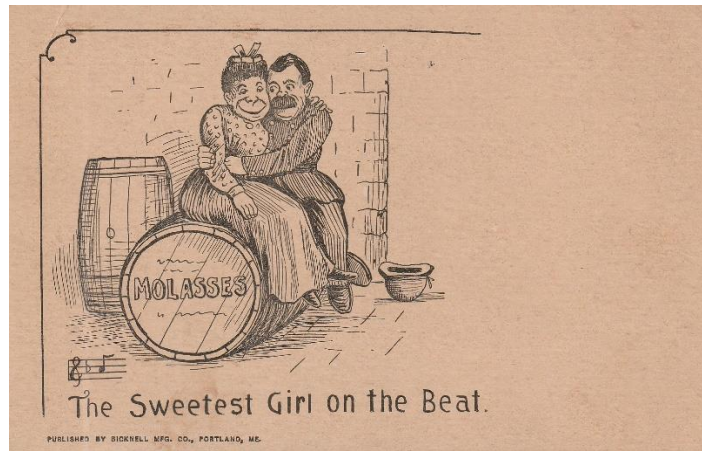
That year, 1898, was when the post office monopoly on post cards was removed. There had been what we would consider “postcards” before then but they could not have a one-penny stamp attached and mailed. At a time when personal photography was expensive and strictly black-and-white, picture postcards provided an inexpensive way to share photographs of scenic features and artwork.



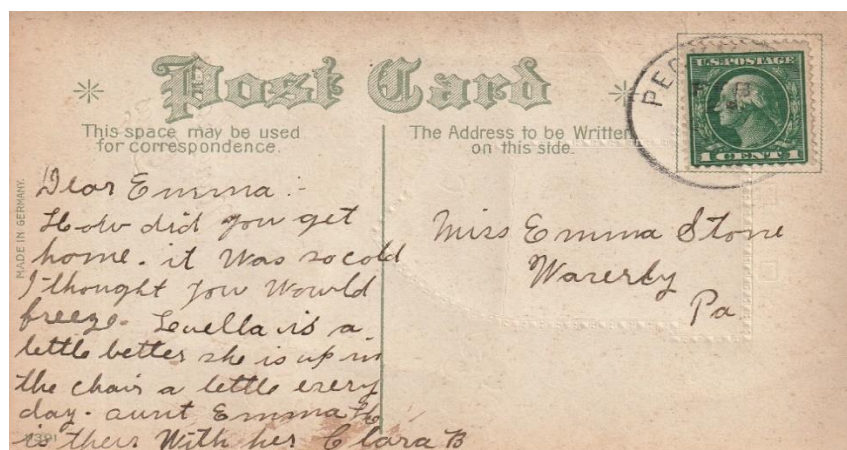
The first commercial postcards had “undivided backs,” that is, one side could only contain the recipient’s name and address and looked just like the recipient side of the official Post Office-issued cards. They just needed a stamp glued on instead of the prepaid postage. Any message had to be written on the illustrated other side. The image may have had room for writing a message such as the name of the sender or the message could be written on the image. Most postcards were highly colored but some were black and white. Colors may have been added in the printing process.





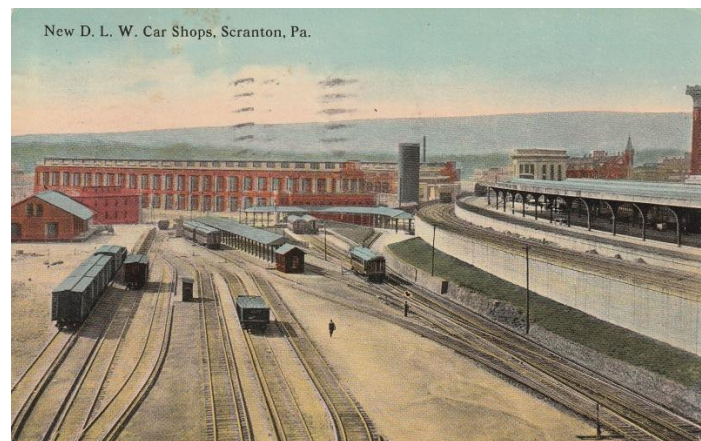


In 1907, the Post Office allowed a “divided back” to hold both the address and a message. No longer did the image have to be shared with the message. A number of early cards were printed in Europe especially in Germany, a possibility that ended with World War I. The price of sending a postcard also temporarily doubled in 1917 as a war tax. After the war, the cost was returned to its previous amount.

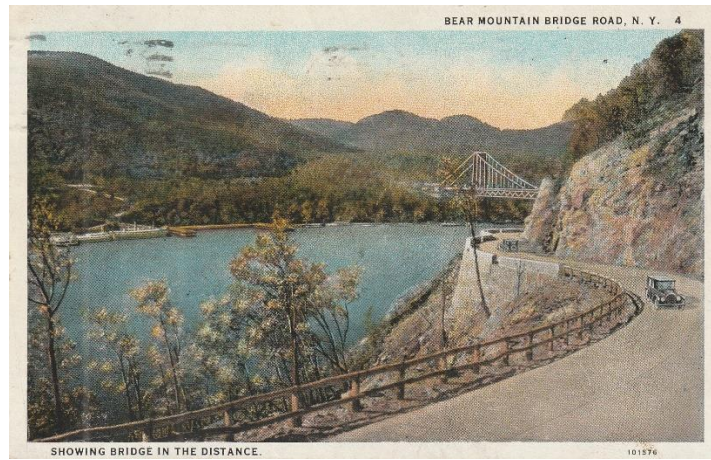




For many people, this provided local scenes as well as more famous ones.





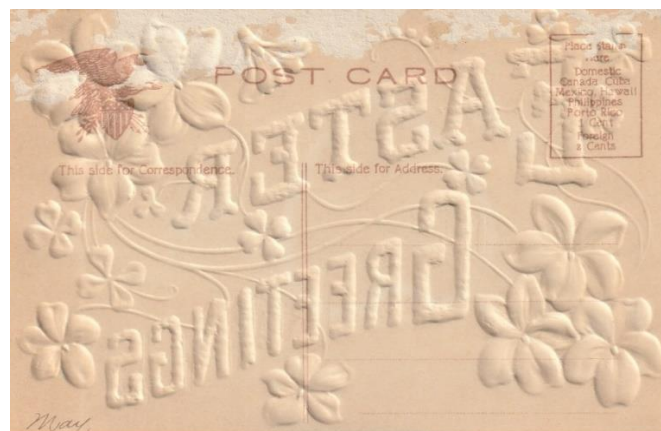


In addition to pictures of humor, scenic features and buildings such as the Statue of Liberty, Niagara Falls, state capitals, and local banks and stores, there were a lot of holiday postcards for New Year's Day, Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Such holiday cards are seldom postcards today.





Some were so fancily embossed that writing a message or even a recipient on the back would be problematic.



The postcards later added by Emma's brothers included tax notifications and other personal information that would never be put on a postcard today.



**Collector's Notice to Taxables 1927 Scott Township, Lacka.Co.,Pa.**

Valuation, \$	2700
State, 4 mills	\$
County, 8 mills	\$ 21.60
Road, 12½ mills	\$
Poor, 1 mill	\$ 2.20
	\$ 24.30
Rebate, 5 per cent.	\$ 1.22
Penalty, 5 per cent.	\$
5 per cent. discount on above if paid on or before Nov. 8, 1927.	
5 per cent. added if not paid on or before Feb. 8, 1928	
School, 12 mills	\$
Occupation	\$
5 per cent. penalty	\$
Amount Received	\$ 22.08

I will be at the following places to receive taxes. Hours 1 to 5 p.m.  
 Frank Oakley's, Oct. 28, 1927.  
 Orvis School House, Oct. 29, 1927  
 J. B. Lowry's Store, Nov. 8, 1927 from 12 m. to 7 p. m.  
 Odgen School, Nov. 5, 1927.  
 Justus School, from 7 a. m. to 12 m., Nov. 8, 1927.

**GEORGE WHITE**  
**COLLECTOR**  
 R. D. Olyphant, Pa.

Received Payment  
 1927  
 Collector

**TRIENNIAL ASSESSMENT NOTICE**

Scott Ward  
 No. Street Patten Hill

The following is a true and correct transcript of your Assessment for the year 1949 as shown by the records of this office.

Lot	
House 1	480
Other Improvements	
Improved Acres 20 @ 40	8.00
Unimproved Acres 23 @ 20	8.05
Total Assessment	\$ 2085

The Board of Assessors has fixed the Thursday, June 30, 1949, at Scott Twp. High School, from 10.00 to 1.00 P.M. for Scott Township, as the place for hearing appeals on above assessment. This notice is given in accordance with the requirements of the Act of the General Assembly No. 348, June 26, 1931, P. L. 1379 and its Supplements.

**BOARD FOR THE ASSESSMENT AND REVISION OF TAXES**  
 WILLIAM P. KNEPPEL,  
 Chief Clerk

Dennis Martin is a resident of Clarks Summit, PA. He taught college-level math and computer science for 37 years at the State University of New York/Brockport, the University of Scranton and at Jackson (Alabama) State University.

Dennis was a volunteer for five years at Steamtown National Historic Site where he catalogued artifacts. Dennis and his wife, Sharleen, are volunteers at Abington Community Library where they created scrapbooks of the library's history from available clippings, and as part of the library's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, conducted oral interviews of long-time volunteers. Dennis was co-chair of the Clarks Summit Centennial in 2011 and with two others, was responsible for the event's historical aspects. He and two other historians also updated *Clarks Summit: A Narrative* that was originally written for the borough's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

At LHS, Dennis and Sharleen catalogued much of the society's collection that was stored in boxes. Sharleen transcribed many of the oral histories for the Women's Oral History Project of Northeast Pennsylvania, an LHS effort conducted more than 15 years earlier. They were named LHS volunteers of the year in 2010. Dennis and Sharleen continue in their capacities at both LHS and ACL.

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## **“Let’s Get Wired!”**

Commit now to keep the Catlin House wired! The cost of the Catlin House electrical and HVAC upgrades is \$463,180. To date, slightly more than \$414,000 has been raised, leaving a balance of \$49,000. Please join us in taking care of one of the region’s architectural treasures and make your commitment today.

Please use the form below to make your pledge. Please make checks payable to the LHS Restoration Fund and return to:

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

### **LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY Capital Campaign Pledge Form**

I am pleased to support the Lackawanna Historical Society with my contribution indicated below to upgrade the Catlin House electrical and HVAC systems:

Please Print

\_\_\_\_\_

Name(s)

\_\_\_\_\_

Address

\_\_\_\_\_

City

State Zip Code

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Day)

Phone (Evening)

Email

The Lackawanna Historical Society is a 501 (C) (3) organization. All contributions are tax deductible in accordance with Pennsylvania state law. Your check is your receipt.

#### Levels of Giving

// Amps \$3000 or more

// Ohms \$1000 - \$2999

// Joules \$500 - \$999

// Watts \$100 - \$499

// Volts Under \$100

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# LHS Membership Information

**2018 Membership are now due!**

**About Membership...** *Membership privileges include unlimited access to the Society library, 10% discount in our bookstore, advance notice, special discounts and invitations to all Society activities, members-only programs and the quarterly newsletter. Attached is a membership form you can use to renew your membership or give to a friend or neighbor who is interested in joining. Please return it to:*  
The Lackawanna Historical Society at 232 Monroe Avenue, Scranton, PA 18510

## LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$10	NAME _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$35	
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$45	ADDRESS _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing	\$75	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining	\$150	
<input type="checkbox"/> Silver Corporate	\$250	TELEPHONE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Gold Corporate	\$500	EMAIL _____

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

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

## Upcoming LHS Events

**Saturday, May 5, 6pm: You Live Here: You Should Know This!** A local history game show at the Lodge at Montage. Doors open at 5:30pm. Games begin at 6pm.  
\$5 for students; \$10 for adults.

**Wednesday, May 9, 7pm: Historic Moxie Mammals with Cheryl Kaiser** at the Catlin House.

**Wednesday, May 16 (You Choose the Time): Dine Lackawanna at New Café** at Greystone Gardens, 829 Old State St., Clarks Summit, 570-319-9111.

**Friday, May 18, 6 pm: An Evening of Wine and Whimsy** at 612 Clay Avenue, Scranton.

**Sunday, June 10, 2 pm: Book Signing by Stephanie Longo: Italians in Lackawanna County.**

**Wednesday, June 20: Dine Lackawanna** at 3 Jacks Burger Bar, 233 E. Drinker St., Dunmore, 570-955-5137.

**Saturday, July 14, Noon – 3 pm: Children's Day** at the Catlin House.

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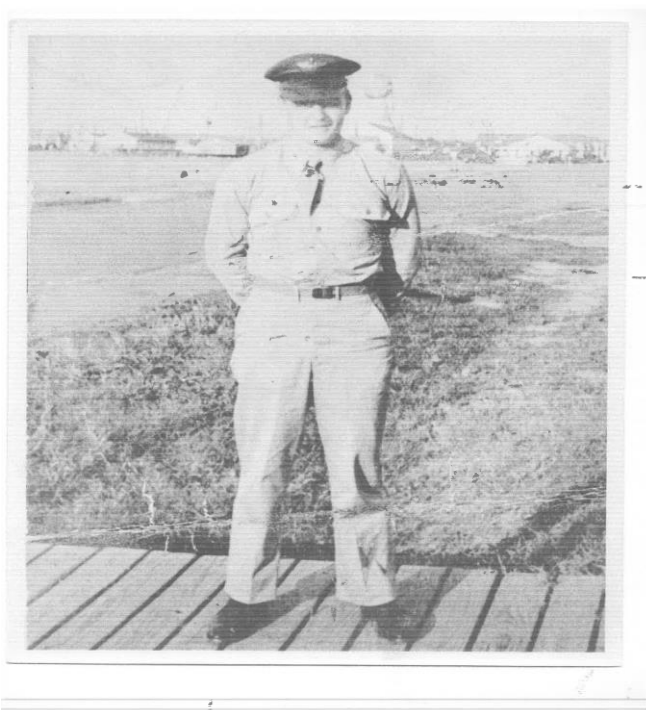
**Wednesday, July 18: Dine Lackawanna** at State Street Grill, 114 S. State St., Clarks Summit, 570-585-5590.

Visit our Facebook page or website for upcoming Civil War Roundtable topics!  
Visit [www.lackawannahistory.org](http://www.lackawannahistory.org) up-to-date listings of all activities! Also, like us on Facebook.

## Person of Interest

1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Russell R. Coates

By Rick Sedlisky



**1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Russell R. Coates**  
**Photo courtesy of Faith Fetterman**

This is the story of a man who was a high school and university football star, a man who earned his fighter pilot's wings during WWII, but didn't receive his opportunity to defend our country.

Underwood Village, PA resident, the late David McGowan, in his bio, wrote that Russell R. Coates, in his early years, was known as "the daredevil of the village". Russell would climb the roughly two-story high steam pipe that extended from the Underwood Mine operation to provide heat to village homes and community buildings. From the pipe,

Russell jumped from roof to roof to entertain village kids. He would then go to the intersection of the two paved village streets, climb the utility pole and adjust the lights so that the kids could play well into the Underwood evening. Underwood Village was anything but a patch town and Russell was anything but a quiet kid.

If you've ever experienced that "gut instinct", the feeling that tells you there is more to the story and that you must follow your instincts, this is one of those occasions.

In 1939, Russell continued his daredevil ways and led his Olyphant High School Greyhounds football team to the Big Eight Conference championship. In 1940, as a student at the University of Miami (FL), he joined the football Hurricanes and during the following three years, helped the Hurricanes to become a Category 4 football storm.

Upon receiving his degree in 1943, World War II was in full mode. Russell joined the US Army Air Corp. (today's US Air Force) and earned his fighter pilot's wings at Centre College, Danville, KY. He was subsequently stationed near Charleston, SC.



**1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Russell R. Coates, middle row, center.  
Note WWII fighter planes in the background.  
Photo courtesy of Faith Fetterman**

On December 5, 1944, during a training mission near Charleston, the bomber Russell was copiloting, collided with a fighter plane. The fighter pilot in training was also prepared to defend our country and hoped to become a member of our country's famed Tuskegee Airmen. He didn't receive his chance either as all 13 lives were lost, 12 in the bomber and the lone fighter pilot.

Upon learning how Russell lost his life, there was more to find. Thanks to people at the Genealogical Research Society of Northeastern Pennsylvania, I was introduced to Russell's niece, Ms. Faith Fetterman and her son, Gregg.

At our first meeting in January 2013, Ms. Fetterman and Gregg shared photos of Russell, letters written by him to his family, letters sent to the family from those who knew him and served with him. His life was coming into focus.

During our conversation, Ms. Fetterman said that Russell was laid to rest at the family plot at Abington Hills Cemetery. She said that because she was so young at the time, she didn't know why Russell didn't receive his military honors and thus, was laid to rest in an unmarked grave for 69 years.

That was it. That was the gut instinct. Russell was without his honors and thus, not officially recognized. I said to Ms. Fetterman that if she, as next of kin, would sign the paperwork, I'd do the legwork and together, we'd get it done for Russell. She agreed.

Enter, Elaine Lagreca, expert genealogist from Long Island, NY. If anyone knows how to dig to find the answers, it's Elaine. Ms. Lagreca, using her expertise, immediately went into action. She went through the Pennsylvania Military Archives and found no mention of 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Russell R. Coates.

She then contacted the Veterans Administration's Scranton office. The people at the Scranton office searched the VA database and found nothing on Russell. They said that as far as the database showed, Russell was alive. It was obviously the proverbial glitch in the system.

Ms. Lagreca said, "The man writing about 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Coates has a copy of his death certificate issued by the State of South Carolina." Proof of Russell's passing was given to the VA and the records were corrected, thanks to Ms. Lagreca.

Ms. Fetterman and I continued to complete the necessary paperwork only to learn that at the agency in St. Louis, MO, where military records are stored, Russell's and thousands of others' records were destroyed by fire in 1973. The people in St. Louis sent other forms that they said would be accepted by the Veterans Administration in Quantico, VA, so that Russell would receive his honors.

Enter, Dominic Graziano, administrator of Abington Hills Cemetery. Mr. Graziano and I met in October 2013 at Russell's unmarked resting place. I explained that 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Coates was without his honors and that his niece and I were in the process of correcting that. Mr. Graziano said that he would take care of things on the Abington Hills end and that he would be responsible for receiving Russell's foot marker when it arrived.

In June 2014, Russell's maker arrived at Abington Hills. Mr. Graziano's crew, using a back hoe, removed tree roots below Russell's resting place and placed his marker in the proper location. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Russell R. Coates, after 69 years, finally had his honors in place.



Once Russell's marker was in place, family and friends from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and California gathered at Ms. Fetterman's home for a summer picnic in Russell's honor.

Following the gathering, all went to Abington Hills where Ms. Fetterman placed our American flag at her uncle's resting place. During Russell's private remembrance, the late Mr. John (Jack) Hoban, from Olyphant, PA and San Diego, CA, was the Navy veteran who was the first to salute his comrade as all stood quietly nearby.

Russell's story doesn't end at Abington Hills. About a month or so later, Ms. Fetterman received a large envelope from the Veterans Administration. In the envelope was a proclamation recognizing 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Russell R. Coates for his service to our country. The proclamation was signed by President Obama.

After 69 years, "the daredevil of Underwood Village", 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Russell R. Coates, a man who was ready to defend us in WWII, a man who didn't receive his chance, was officially recognized by the President of the United States.



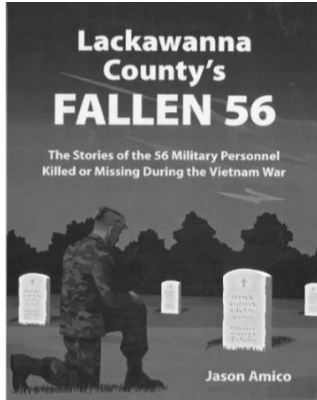
**1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Russell R. Coates' marker in place at Abington Hills**  
**Photo courtesy of Rick Sedlisky**

# Editor's Book Review

By Rick Sedlisky

## *Lackawanna County's FALLEN 56*

By Jason Amico, Dunmore, PA, 362pp.



Anyone who viewed the Public Television series about the Vietnam War, offered by KenBurns and Lynn Novick, and anyone who lived during the Vietnam period of our country's history knows the emotions felt and shared when news of another fallen American was told either on the evening news or reported in newspapers.

*Lackawanna County's FALLEN 56*, by Jason Amico, brings the Vietnam experience directly home to Lackawanna. His work allows readers to recall those who left, those who did not come home the way they left, and also remember the two who remain

among the missing.

Whether or not the reader knew any of the 56, you may find yourself first reading emotionally, but upon reading a second time, it's a somewhat different experience. You may smile or perhaps laugh at things some did during their young years of life and also ask why they took a chance with their lives when it came to Vietnam.

*Lackawanna County's FALLEN 56* offers the reader the opportunity to understand whether or not any felt the desire for adventure or felt a patriotic call. For those who were not drafted into the military but chose to go to Vietnam, the book includes some of their stories that explain their decisions.

Regarding time spent in that country, some, drafted or not, experienced Vietnam more than once. For one soldier, it was one visit that lasted just nine days. The reader is left to ponder their decisions and their fates.

Anyone who was or is a member of our country's armed forces will understand. Those who were not or are too young to remember American involvement in Vietnam will understand as well. The author offers an insight to that time and most importantly, a personal look at 56 lives.

Author Amico makes a serious point. He states that his work is not about how anyone felt about American involvement in Vietnam. His work is simply about the 56 service members from Lackawanna County who rose to an occasion that resulted in them making their ultimate sacrifices.

The book contains 56 biographies, each of which includes a photograph of each service member and markers at their resting places. The biographies offer a look at their lives,

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where they were born, where they grew up, where they attended school, their personal interests and in some cases, future plans and whether or not they lived happy lives.

His research, which is extensive and detailed, led him to a number of websites from which he obtained much necessary information. His source for obituaries is the Scranton Times (Scranton Times-Tribune). Editions of that newspaper provided obituaries on 53 of the 56.

Knowing that he needed additional information to document their lives as thoroughly as possible, the author took the necessary chance. He found family members, friends and comrades of the fallen ones. He was aware that some might or might not be prepared to share their recollections. Because he took that chance, the biographies contain stories shared by those he found, and each is unique. These are stories that might otherwise be lost to time had the author not taken the necessary chance.

Amico's research also offers locations of their names on the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Wall in Washington, DC. This information is an important contribution for anyone who visits Washington to pay respect to a fallen one.

The author offers Lackawanna's experience of the Vietnam period in a book that many will agree is long overdue. It is refreshing to find an author who called Vietnam "practically ancient history" and yet understands the emotion of that time and offers the reader, particularly those who remember, the opportunity to accept and move forward, if one chooses to do so.

As a project that according to the author began unplanned and accidentally, his presentation is well done. His work accentuates their humanity in a way that evening news, newspaper reports and obituaries could not. In one book, the author brought all home for the reader to remember, including the two who remain among the missing.

Books about fallen soldiers are often written decades after their passing, at a time when there is no one alive to share their recollections. *Lackawanna County's Fallen 56* was written at the right time, simply because many who knew them are alive and opted to share their recollections with a writer who took a chance in the hope that many would accommodate him. He was successful in his endeavor.

Author Amico's work is done with care, objectivity and courage. Provide a space on your shelf for *Lackawanna County's Fallen 56*. You will return to read again for your personal reasons, whatever they may be.

**Jason Amco resides in Dunmore, PA. He received a Master's Degree in History from the University of Scranton. He interned with the National Park Service at Eisenhower's Farm in Gettysburg, PA and at Antietam National Battlefield, Sharpsburg, MD. In addition to being a presenter at Civil War roundtable conferences, he offers his expertise to others involved in historical research. His first book is entitled, *Fallen Leaves in a Storm: The Sacrifice of Iverson's Brigade at Gettysburg* (Shroeder Publications, 2010)**



Memorial Day 2018  
Lance Corporal Jimmy Reddington  
One of Lackawanna County's Fallen 56



U.S. MARINE L/CPL  
**Jimmy Reddington**  
*Remembrance*



Scranton's own Vietnam War hero, died in combat at age 19 while serving with Echo Co. 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn 5<sup>th</sup> Marines, on March 23, 1967. He earned two Purple Hearts. Being that his family was deceased, the Purple Hearts and his ten additional medals have never been claimed for 51 years.

Lt. Gen. Ron Christmas, the legendary hero of the Battle of Hue while with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn 5<sup>th</sup> Marines, will present Jimmy's medals to the Marine Corps League, N.E. Detachment, where the Marine Corps has directed that they be held in repose and displayed.

Surviving members of Echo Co., including Commanding Officer, Col. Terry Ebbert, and friends of Jimmy have planned this memorial.

**SATURDAY, MAY 26 | 11AM**

March and presentation of medals by Lt. Gen. Christmas, accompanied by the U.S. Marine Corps Color Guard from Marine Barracks Washington, D.C. and the Greater Scranton Black Diamonds Pipe Band.

Marines and fellow Vietnam veterans are requested to join in this short march.

**COURTHOUSE SQUARE, DOWNTOWN SCRANTON**

- This is an Official Vietnam War Commemorative Event -

**SUNDAY, MAY 27 | 11AM**

Memorial Service with Full Military Honors

**JIMMY'S GRAVE, CATHEDRAL CEMETERY**  
with Lt. Gen. Christmas, Col. Ebbert, and members of E/Co 2/5

★ ★ ★ **Both Events are Free & Open to the Public** ★ ★ ★

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# Mid Valley Parade: Another History Mystery Solved

By Joe Rudzinski

The following article, written by Joe Rudzinski, initially appeared in the May – June 2016 issue of eZine, the bi-monthly e-newsletter published by the Genealogical Research Society of Northeastern Pennsylvania. Mr. Rudzinski's piece is included in the second edition of *History Bytes* as a complement to the issue's focus on Memorial Day and those who served our country.

When I received the May- June GRSNP eZine, the article "History Mystery, *Mid Valley Parade Photographs circa. 1945 – 1946*" immediately caught my attention. Being a collector of old photos, I thought the parade photos were amazing. At about the same time, I also received an email from Rick Sedlisky, editor of the GRSNP eZine regarding the History Mystery, asking a few questions and calling on my recollection of Throop history regarding the photos. He also included an email he received from Joe Klapatch who was of the opinion that the parade was in Throop. What follows is great example of old friendships, networking, collaboration, and using the Internet to tie it all together.

My initial look at the photos left me unsure of where the photos were taken, however, a much closer examination of them yielded several clues that led me to the conclusion that the parade indeed took place in Throop. The most telling clue for me was the fence in several of the photos and as shown in the portion of one of the pictures. That fence surrounding Glinsky's Funeral Home is unique and is still there today.

I received another email from Rick, forwarding a response he received from Jim Sovaiko who lives in Throop. He also came to the conclusion that the photos were taken in Throop. He cited several reasons and is quoted as follows:

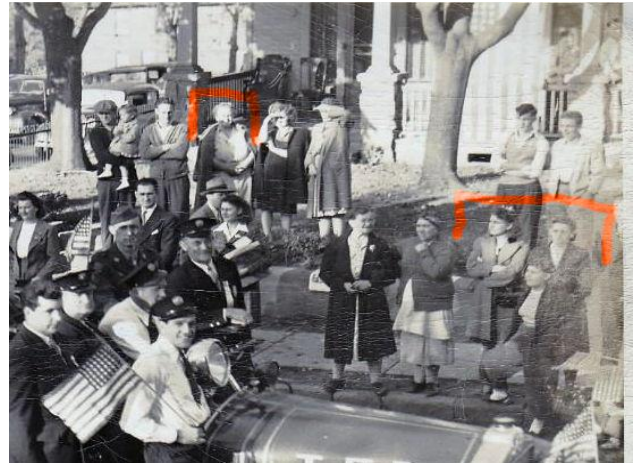
"The parade pics are interesting. Judging from the banners and the fire truck, I'm pretty sure that it took place in Throop, as "Throop" is missing from all of the marchers' banners. Throop ID would have been added if this was in any other town."

What finally put the mystery to rest were the newspaper articles Joe Klapatch had in his files and forwarded to Rick describing and dating the parade as occurring in Throop, on 26 October 1946. One article about the parade is shown below.





With the knowledge that the pictures were taken in Throop, I emailed copies to former classmates of Throop High School, friends and family, hoping someone would be identified in the photos. I quickly received a response from Gene Gretzula Kaminski, indicating that her aunt and cousin were in the fire truck photo, in the bottom right corner. The house in the background is on the corner of Sanderson and Charles streets and owned by the Kiesel family; the next house to the right was owned by the Gretzula family. It would seem a logical place for them to view the parade. After another examination of the photo, I am very confident that Mrs. Elizabeth Kiesel, owner of the house in the background, is also in the photo, standing on the sidewalk in the front yard.



Another Throop acquaintance, Dorothy Liesniesky Cherochak is confident that her father, Edward Liesniesky, is driving the fire truck. Additionally, several people have identified Edmund "Butch" Kallay in the Junior Police Association photo. He is one of the boys holding the banner and is located right behind the letter "A" in Association. Gaspar Barone was identified as the person (not in uniform) on the running board of the fire truck.

## Throop Welcomes 1,300 War Heroes At Big Celebration

Throop welcomed its 1,300 war heroes home Saturday—and the Navy was on hand to make it official.

An alert bomber pilot, flying in a group of planes here for Navy day, apparently spotted the parade and decided to lend his services. He was joined by other pilots and they zoomed over the zone of march for several minutes.

The parade and impromptu aerial circus were but two features of the day-long celebration arranged for the veterans.

Memorial services were conducted in the Borough's churches and an additional program was held at the Memorial Plaque. Those participating were the Rev. Martin K. Schell, Throop Methodist Church; the Rev. Joseph S. Tomicek, St. Mary's Church; State Senator Edward J. Coleman, Attorney Stephen E. Gombar, John A. Keyasko, commander, Herbert Clark Post, American Legion, and members of Throop VFW.

## 36 GOLD STAR MOTHERS RIDE

More than 900 veterans, representing all branches of the service, marched in the parade. The Borough's 36 Gold Star Mothers rode in special cars. Burgess Stephen Dembrosky headed a delegation of Borough officials. Also in line were Andrew Chezik, commander of the VFW, Boy Scouts, school children, volunteer firemen, police, musical units, Army vehicles and floats.

Prize winners were: bands, Raymond Henry Post Victory Band, Olyphant; drum corps, Koch-Conley, American Legion, this city; floats, Throop Volunteer Hose Co.; Warsaw Sportsmen's Club, and Herbert Clark Legion Auxiliary. Fire company awards were won by Taylor, Dickson City and Dalton Hose Companies.

Boxing bouts were presented at the Lincoln School after the parade with Mickey Barron, Dickson City, in charge. A banquet and dance Saturday night climaxed the celebration.

Banquet speakers included the Revs. J. J. Ritter, Joseph Tomicek, Joseph Galambos and Thomas Gildea, Burgess Dembrosky, Anthony Matuszewski, Dickson City; Attorney John Sirotnak, and Tom X. Reilly.

Members of the Herbert Clark Auxiliary presented emblems to the Gold Star Mothers and veterans received attractive souvenir programs.



In addition to using the Internet to contact friends, there are some who don't use computers so I resorted to the good old telephone. My first call was to Mrs. Betty Davis Chimock, a friend and longtime Throop resident. Betty is the glue that holds the Throop Alumni Association together and if you need to know something about Throop, Betty is the person to talk to. I told her about the GRSNP article, the pictures found by Andrew Hricko and that the parade took place in Throop. Her reply was, "Oh! You mean the Veterans welcome home parade."



"I have a picture of the parade with me standing in front of Kubasko's house across from Throop High School". She went on to describe a float that was passing on a flatbed truck; it included a wounded GI on a bed attended by an Army nurse. She said the Army nurse was Josephine Gretzula.

Gene Gretzula Kaminski confirmed it was her Aunt Josephine and that she had been an Army nurse and had served at the Battle of the Bulge. This photograph was also taken by Alwyn T. Davies. Betty was kind enough to allow me to copy the photo. She said that she was supposed to march in the parade, but was not feeling well that day and her mom did not allow her to participate.

This was all an interesting exercise and identifying people participating in the parade has made the photos more meaningful. As the photos are passed around I am sure additional interesting stories will surface. It now appears that Alwyn T. Davies took many more photos as the parade passed and they may be still out there in family memorabilia collections.

One of the newspaper articles about the parade mentioned the fact that after the parade, Gold Star Mothers and veterans who marched in the parade received "attractive souvenir programs". I have been in contact with several people who have talked to Throop residents who have copies of the program, however, there was not enough time to attempt to get a copy for this article. The souvenir program to accompany the newspaper articles, parade photos and stories that go along with the pictures will make a very nice historical package. I will volunteer to collect, assemble and share this historical information. If anyone knows of someone who has a program, additional photos or any memorabilia associated with this event, please contact the editor at [NJRicky2@aol.com](mailto:NJRicky2@aol.com) or Joe Rudzinski at [sandsroad1@hotmail.com](mailto:sandsroad1@hotmail.com)

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For myself, researching the photos and the parade has been a fun experience and has brought an important piece of history back to life. What follows are two more personal reflections on the photos and parade. The first is from Eugene Purvin, a classmate from the class of 1957, who lived on Mary Street in 1946. Here is a paraphrasing taken from the communications Gene and I exchanged about the parade and photos.

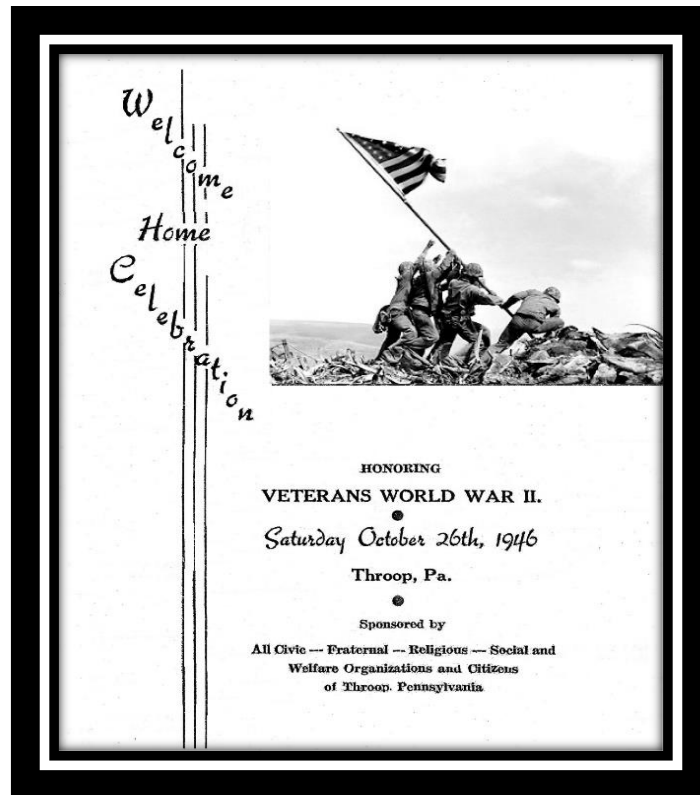
In October 1946, I was seven years old. We lived on Mary Street. There was a Navy vet who lived on our street next to Marge Orlevitch and she has confirmed to me that his name was Johnny Swenton. I'm not sure exactly if the first time I met Johnny was the week of the parade or the day before. What I do remember and will never forget was one day passing by his house, he called me to his front yard. We talked a while and then he gave me a nickel.

I was able to forward to Gene a document that verified that Johnny Swenton served in the Navy and that he was discharged in August 1946. After reviewing this information, Gene was absolutely certain he was at the parade and he remembered he was standing on George Street near Veltri's clothing store watching the parade. He remembers seeing Johnny Swenton, who was on this open top truck and shouting, "Johnny, Johnny", to him as he passed.

Finally, the photos have a very special meaning for me. While reviewing them and the newspaper articles, a memory from my childhood was rekindled. At the time the photos were taken I was seven years old and we lived at 174 Boulevard Avenue. The assembly point for veterans marching in the parade was right behind us on Brick Street.

I don't remember any of the parade gathering on Brick Street; but what I do remember is that on that day, my grandfather, who was the sexton at St. Anthony's Church, took me along with him to the church. As the parade passed in front of the church my grandfather and I rang the church bells. I can remember this vividly as there was only one bell that I could ring. My grandfather had modified it, extending the rope with a loop at the end so that I could use my foot to pull down and ring the bell. I also remember my grandfather having me look out the window in the choir area of the church and report on the progress of the parade. I remember seeing the people standing along Rebecca Street viewing the parade as it passed in front of the church. Mr. Hricko, we would like to thank you for bringing these memories alive again.

Additionally, I would like to thank all of my Throop friends (too many to mention individually) for taking the time to review the photos and provide me with their input. It appears there may be enough information available for a follow-up article.



**Throop Welcome Home Celebration Program Cover  
Courtesy of Joe Rudzinski**

Joe Rudzinski was born and raised in Throop where he attended St. Anthony's Elementary School and Throop High School, graduating in 1957. He then joined the U.S. Navy where he served in the Naval Security Group in Hawaii and Taipei. He subsequently returned to Throop to marry his high school sweetheart, Barbara Kashmer. In 1962, the couple moved to Arlington, VA and for the next 12 years, Joe's work with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) took him on several assignments overseas. Resettling in Sterling, VA, in 1973, he continued working at CIA headquarters. After retiring from the CIA in 1989, Joe worked with General Electric, Lockheed and Quest Communications as a Senior Systems Engineer before retiring in 2000. Joe is an avid genealogist and has researched their families for more than 30 years.



**American flag with 48 stars, flown in Throop, PA, 1946**

# Internet Links

## Historical Attractions

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

## Cultural Partners

- [Albright Memorial Library](#) and the Lackawanna County Library System
- [The Everhart Museum](#)
- [Scranton Cultural Center](#) at the Masonic Temple
- Scranton's Annual [Civil War Weekend](#) Events
- Scranton Times-Tribune's [Pages from the Past](#)
- [Pocono Arts: Where Culture Builds Community](#)

## Anthracite Research

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

## Historical Societies

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

## County and Educational Partners

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

## Lineage Societies

Provided by Ted Bainbridge, Ph.D.

*If you can trace one of your ancestral lines far enough back in time, and if you have acceptable proof, you might be able to join a lineage society. Here are links to the most popular ones. (You can find links to others by doing internet searches for descriptive words.) Links below include those for the organization's national headquarters web page, their Pennsylvania page, pages for*

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*selected local components, locating individual chapters, information about joining, and contacting the organization.*

- The General Society of Mayflower Descendants:  
National <https://www.themayflowersociety.org/>  
Pennsylvania [valcullen@comcast.net](mailto:valcullen@comcast.net)
- The Daughters of the American Revolution:  
National <http://www.dar.org/>  
Joining <http://www.dar.org/national-society/become-member/how-join>  
Locations <http://www.dar.org/national-society/become-member/chapter-locations>
- The Sons of the American Revolution:  
National <https://www.sar.org/>  
Pennsylvania <http://www.passar.org/> and [ehtroutman13@gmail.com](mailto:ehtroutman13@gmail.com)
- First Families of Pennsylvania:  
Pennsylvania <https://genpa.org/first-families-of-pennsylvania/>
- The Pennsylvania Society of Sons of the Revolution:  
Pennsylvania <http://amrev.org/>  
Lancaster <http://amrev.org/about-the-society/lancaster-chapter/>  
Joining <http://amrev.org/becoming-a-member/overview-instructions/>
- The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War:  
National <http://www.suvcw.org/>  
Pennsylvania <http://pasuvcw.org/>
- The Northeast Pennsylvania Genealogical Society, Inc. (NEPGS):  
Local NEPA <http://www.nepgs.org/>

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

If you have anything to share that will add to the documentation of Lackawanna and Northeast Pennsylvania, please contact the editor at [NJRicky2@aol.com](mailto:NJRicky2@aol.com) and place *History Bytes* in the subject matter. All are welcome.

**Editor's Note:** The second issue of *History Bytes* is indeed special. In our second issue, we are fortunate to have those who share all they know. Be it our postal card history, remembrances of those who made the ultimate sacrifice and to all who continue to document Lackawanna and Northeast Pennsylvania, thanks for sharing.

Please enjoy our upcoming, second "Special Edition", *The Early Settlers of Throop*.

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