

The Biery House Herald



www.hcpa.org

Newsletter of the Historic Catasauqua Preservation Association Summer 2012

BIG “thank you” to the following folks:

- Blues Jam volunteers, the Borough of Catasauqua, and the Second Story Blues Alliance (previously the Women’s Blues Alliance) for a successful Lehigh River Blues Jam. HCPA is grateful to be the beverage vendor for this event.
- Victorian House Tour hosts and volunteers. Around 100 people braved the heat to tour a sampling of the wonderful historic homes in our community. Thanks to Ben Ferenchak (Jr) for sharing the family’s WWII exhibit. Also a thank you to our sponsors - Brubaker Funeral Home, Witt's Tree Service and Biery's Port Auto Body - and the following businesses who helped sell tickets for the event - Hartzell's Pharmacy, Schlegel's Dry Cleaning and Branded Consignment.
- The Borough of Catasauqua for hosting the second annual Red, White and George which showcased and raised funds for the George Taylor Home.
- The new Catasauqua/North Catasauqua Trail Tenders group. Formed under the auspices of the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, this group has been clearing the towpath thru our communities. Follow their activities on Facebook, enjoy biking and walking the trail, and/or join up to help maintain the trail, Contact , keithshannonpa@gmail.com
- Harold Hahn for the donation of a wall hung thermometer advertising Beitel Jewelry. On the back, his father has chronicled life events such as his first day working at the Steel.
- Mrs. Honor Reichard Fulop (through Jeanie Smock) for 3 "drawings" of her parents and brother who resided in Catasauqua and a large photograph of Catasauqua Band.
- The donation of a framed photograph of Joseph Holena, Sr. and others planting trees at the North Catasauqua Playground circa 1950's.
- All who stopped by 8 Race during our summer hours. We will continue to be open (along with the GTH) the first and third Sundays of the month through September. Thanks to Ben Ferenchak (Sr) for tending the beds in the coal yard this summer: great having native blooms.

~cut here

Yes! I Wish to Support HCPA
Please accept my contribution

<input type="checkbox"/> Member	\$25
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior	\$15
<input type="checkbox"/> Business	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$ _____



Make check payable and send to:

HCPA
8 Race Street, Catasauqua Pa 18032

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____
E-mail _____

HCPA is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization.
Memberships & donations are 100% tax deductible.

Please send receipt to address _____ or email _____ shown.

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

CAPTAIN WILLIAM RICHARD JONES

1839-1889



CAPTAIN WILLIAM RICHARD JONES

Abridged from history compiled by Dale Wint, Catasauqua historian

When Captain William R. Jones died in a steel furnace accident in 1889, he was one of the most respected men in the industry by steel magnates and workmen alike. His funeral was attended by General Alger, National Commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, and his staff; Commander Stewart and his staff of the Department of Pennsylvania; approximately ten thousand workmen; widows and orphans; and the greatest steel manufacturers of the country. From the Lehigh Valley were Superintendents John Fritz and Owen Leibert of the Bethlehem Steel Works; Samuel, John and David H. Thomas of the Thomas Iron Works; George Davies and James Thomas of Davies and Thomas Company; Daniel Milson of Catasauqua, while Rev. Cornelius Earle D. D. of the First Presbyterian Church of Catasauqua, assisted in the funeral ceremonies, and spoke of the Captain's early manhood

The honorary pallbearers were Andrew Carnegie, New York; Henry C. Frick, Pittsburgh; Robert W. Hunt, Chicago; Owen Leibert, Bethlehem; Andrew Hamilton, Johnstown; and James Thomas, Catasauqua. The casket, which remained closed, was borne by employees of the Edgar Thomson Works, amongst whom was James Tolan, previously of Catasauqua. The remains were placed in a vault at the Monongahela Cemetery. His parents are interred at Fairview Cemetery.

Born 1839 in Luzerne County, he grew up in one of the "company homes" on Church Street in Catasauqua (#315). His father, the Rev. John C. Jones, was the religious and intellectual leader of the Welsh community in Catasauqua and worked as a pattern maker for the Lehigh Crane Iron Works. Rev. Jones was an educated man, possessing a personal library of 150 volumes which his son William used to supplement his grade school education. Due to his father's poor health, he started work at the Crane in the foundry at age 10, and by age 14, working in the machine shop for Hopkin Thomas, he became a journeyman earning full wages.

He left Catasauqua with Hopkin's son Thomas and worked in other machine shops until the panic of 1857. As the economy recovered he found work as an engineer, eventually landing at Cambria Iron Co working for John Fritz. There he was promoted to master-mechanic & sent to Chattanooga, Tennessee to build a blast-furnace. When the Civil War began, his outspoken loyalty to the Union compelled him to return to Johnstown with his new bride. In 1862, he enlisted as a private with the Pennsylvania Volunteers and mustered out nine months later as a corporal after participating with his regiment in the Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville campaigns in 1862. He organized another regiment and mustered back in as captain in 1864, transferring through to other regiments and forming another volunteer company before mustering out again in June 1865.

Upon returning home Captain William R. Jones again entered the employ of the Cambria Iron Company under George Fritz and assisted in the construction of the company's Bessemer steel-converting and blooming mill plants. With the death of George Fritz in August of 1873, Daniel N. Jones, who had also learned his trade at the Lehigh Crane Iron Works under Hopkin Thomas, was appointed superintendent over Captain "Bill" Jones. Daniel offered to turn down the position out of respect for Capt. "Bill". Capt. Jones instead took this as sign that he needed to put his irresponsible youth behind him, resigned his position at the Cambria Iron Works, and left Johnstown. He was then hired as a master-mechanic by the Edgar Thomson Steel Company at Braddock (near Pittsburgh) to help erect their steel works and rail-mill. Upon the completion of the works, the owner, Andrew Carnegie, hired Capt. Jones as the general manager and afterwards gave him full charge of the engineering department. He later became Andrew Carnegie's first Steel Master.

Continued from page 2

In 1875, surrounded by his faithful men from Johnstown, Capt. Jones began to show the world how to make steel. He broke all the records for steel production, not only in America but also in Great Britain. In his first fifteen months of steel-making, he turned out nearly twice as much steel as anyone had made before with a plant of equal size and continued to increase his production and set new records for production year after year. When the British Iron and Steel Institute met in 1881, a paper written by Captain William R. Jones was read by its secretary. In the paper Capt. Jones modestly ascribed his success to the following five causes: 1) the employment of men who were young and ambitious, 2) the "strong but pleasant rivalry" between different plants, 3) the employment of mixed nationalities, 4) the eight hour day ("Flesh and blood cannot stand twelve hours of continuous work"), and 5) the use of the most up-to-date machinery.

Capt. Jones asked for and received "a hell of a big salary" from Andrew Carnegie, whose known policy was not to pay any employee more than five thousand dollars a year but to bind the worker to the company by issuing him shares in the company. Capt. Jones was rewarded with a salary of twenty-five thousand dollars, a salary equal to that of the President of the United States, and along with a percentage on the product of the mill, his income was almost fifty thousand dollars a year.

During his tenure at the Edgar Thomson Works, he built Furnaces A, B, C, D, E, F, and G: H and I were in the course of erection at the time of his death. The improvements and inventions that Capt. Jones produced there made those furnaces the finest in the world. His first patent was for "Washers for Ingot Molds" in 1876 and dozens more followed. His last and most important invention was a method and a device for mixing metal taken direct from several blast-furnaces and charged into two large receiving-tanks, each capable of holding eighty tons of molten metal. The device, known as the "Jones Mixer", was put into operation in September of 1888: letters of patent were allowed but not yet issued at the time of his death.

Capt. Jones was a liberal giver to charities, and widows and families of deceased employees, giving away approximately ten thousand dollars a year. The day after the Johnstown Flood in 1889, he took three hundred of his men, at his own expense to the wrecked city, where they worked for two weeks to help restore the property that had been destroyed.

In 1887, Capt. Jones and James Thomas arranged a gathering of the friends who had lived in Catasauqua thirty years past. The meeting took place at Onoko Glen and on the preceding day, the group went to Mauch Chunk and took a trip over the "Switchback Railroad". From there the group went on to Onoko Glen, where a fine dinner was partaken of at the Wahnetah Hotel, after which the evening was spent in reminiscing.

Captain William R. Jones was a member of the American Institute of Mining Engineers, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, the Society of Western Pennsylvania, and the Iron and Steel Institute of Great Britain. He was a prominent and active member of the G.A.R. and in 1886 was chosen Senior Vice Department Commander of Pennsylvania, and he was a member of the Masonic fraternity. In politics he was a Republican, but in local politics he was a believer in the man rather than the party. In religious matters he was a liberal, was not connected with any church organization, and although reared a Presbyterian, he was a supporter of the Methodist Evangelical Church.

On Thursday evening, September 26, 1889, Jones accompanied Superintendent James Gayley to Furnace C. which had not been working properly all day. Several of the employees were tapping the cinder. In an instant a section of about a foot in dimension about seven feet above their heads, fell out, and a stream of hot coal and metal poured upon the group. Jones, in his endeavor to escape, fell between a stone wall and a cinder car, striking his head on the car. His face and hands were also severely burned. One of the employees at once shut off the blast to the furnace, and the flame ceased. James Tolan was in the machine shop nearby, and when he saw Capt. "Bill" lying amongst the cinder, he ran in and carried him out. He was carried to the company office where he conversed in a dazed manner, while physicians were dressing his burns. He was then taken to the Homeopathic Hospital in Pittsburgh and, upon his reaching the hospital, his mind commenced to wander. He remained in a semiconscious state until he died at 10:30 Saturday night, September 28, 1889.

Historic Catasauqua Preservation Association
 8 Race Street
 Catasauqua, PA 18032



Summer 2012



The Biery House c. 1826

OUR MISSION

To encourage an appreciation of the historical and the architectural heritage of the borough; to encourage the preservation of the architecture in our historic districts and the borough at large as the houses and buildings are the tangible evidence of the events that made Catasauqua important as a contributor to the growth and development, not only of Pennsylvania, but also of the United States; to encourage the preservation of the architectural integrity of our neighborhoods and to foster pride of ownership in the houses and buildings in our historic districts.

Our Board Members

Debra Mellish	President
Betsy Hillenbrand	Vice President
Janice Lathrop	Treasurer
Bob LeFevre	Museum & Gallery Director
Larry Mouer	Director
Keith Shannon	Director
Ray Smicker	Director
Brian Zettlemyer	Director
Dave Bernini	Web Master

Mark Your Calendars

Sept 29th - Fest O' Fall – 12 noon to 5 pm at the Biery and Deily coal yard

Opportunity

: Looking for a volunteer to serve on the Board of Directors. The board meets the first Tuesday of each month; and has various programs throughout the year. There are many opportunities to find an area that interests you, whether it be relating to history, educational opportunities, further developing the museum, the art gallery, towpath restoration and signage. For additional information call Janice at 610 266-0255.

Fest O'Fall will be held the end of September this year, Saturday, 9/29/12 from noon to 5 p.m. In addition to events at HCPA's Biery House (8 Race Street) and Deily Coal Yard (5 Union Street), there will be festivities at the George Taylor House(GTH @Lehigh and Poplar Streets) and Catasauqua Main Streets (Front Street businesses). Each venue will have different activities, entertainment and food, so plan to visit each location. As in the past, we will be attempting to run a hayride between sites .

What's new this year? HCPA will focus on history, so we will have new games and crafts - or should I say historic games and crafts??? - in addition to traditional scarecrow making, food and entertainment. The GTH will have pony rides and a petting zoo, music & other entertainments, and various scout troops will be making and selling food. Downtown will include crafters, music, a scavenger hunt, and more. There will be guided tours at the George Taylor House and slide shows and Open House at the Biery House. And you won't want to miss attractions on the tow path!

We can really use volunteers to plan, prep and to that day. Contact your favorite downtown business, contact Jessica Kroepe for the GTH, or contact Janice or anyone at HCPA. WE WELCOME YOUR HELP AND SUPPORT TO MAKE THIS A GREAT COMMUNITY EVENT!

Inside this issue: page 1 Thanks to all volunteers
 page 2 Captain William Richard Jones
 page 4 Fest O' Fall