

# History of Carbondale.

**I**N APPROACHING the history of Carbondale, the fact that stands out most prominently is that with the birth of the place also took place the birth of the great anthracite coal industry.

Carbondale is the "Anthracite City." It is also the pioneer city of the anthracite region, and among it claims this one is foremost that it is the oldest city in the hard coal regions. When Carbondale was a city fifteen years, Scranton took on that dignity, and it was five years after this when Wilkes-Barre was clothed in its municipal raiment.

The history of Carbondale is not fraught with great achievements; it cannot lay claim to any great accomplishments such as the pushing and bustling "Electric City" down the valley, but it can boast of

A bold peasant, their country's pride,  
When once destroyed, can never be supplid.

Carbondale is proud of her contributions to the civic, financial and social life of the county. They were a sturdy band, those Welsh and Irish settlers

used to hoist the cars, but these proving unsatisfactory by frequently breaking, when cars ascended the planes, tarred ropes were substituted in 1836. Beginning with 1833 freight was carried. The gravity road was extended to Archbald in 1846, to Cippahnt in 1859, the year in which the first passenger train ran there.

In the "Annals of Luzerne County," published by Stewart Pearce in 1896, it says of Carbondale:

"Prior to that time it was a borough. The first house in the place was built by Maurice Wurts, esq., in 1821, and for some years was used as a boarding house, and called the 'Log Tavern.'"

"In the year 1828 a Catholic church was built, also a union church, occupied by the Protestants, and a school house. With a few exceptions, the following named gentlemen are the only persons residing in Carbondale who located here prior to 1850: Dr. T. Sweet, D. N. Lathrop, J. M. Poor, S. E. Rayner, Samuel Mills, R. E. Marvin, Henry Johnson, Steven Rogers and D. Yarrington.

"There are a court house and jail

The population of the town and township, in 1849, was 2,398. The lands in this city were originally owned by Mr. Russell, a wealthy English gentleman, who resided with or near Dr. Priestly at Northumberland. He took up large tracts in the north part of the state.

**Pioneer Days of Mining.**

The first opening for coal was made at the foot of what was then known as Shanty Hill, now the West Side, at a point opposite the Seventh avenue crossing of the Delaware and Hudson company. The coal obtained here was the outcropping and traces of it can be seen to this day. It was "picked" out and was wheeled on barrows. Subsequently levels were driven at points close to the opening. The coal industry was the one which called into play the activities of the early settlers, and as they developed, so did the town. It was the growth of this industry that speeded developments in other directions and as the mine openings increased so also the signs of Carbondale's prosperity multiplied. With the extension of the gravity from Honesdale and to Archbald, then the introduction of the first steam locomotive, the "Major Sykes," which is now dismantled in a stall in the Delaware and Hudson company's round house in this city; next the building of the Jefferson division of the Erie—all these were factors in forcing the growth of Carbondale until 1851, the time of its incorporation as a city, when it was quite a flourishing town.



JAMES ARCHBALD, Carbondale's First Mayor.

who came to the village that grew to the city, the first in the anthracite region; and today their sons are in eminent places all over the country. Their influence is felt and their names are honored throughout the length and breadth of the land, and Carbondale will be proud to welcome them to the "seats of their youth" during these days of jubilation joy.

**The Name of Carbondale.**

It was the magic power of coal that leveled the forests and raised the city of Carbondale, and to this the city owes its name. Washington Irving, the great novelist, it was, who gave the name to the city. He was interested in the Delaware and Hudson Canal company and he showed a becoming sense of appreciation of the eternal fitness of things when he christened the then thriving village "Carbondale."

This was in 1823, after the completion of the road to Honesdale. Some freight came over the road labeled "D. & H. C. Co., Carbondale." The name fitted so well that it remains to this day.

**Birth of Coal Industry.**

The birth of the coal industry dates back to 1823, when William Wurts of Philadelphia, and his brother, Maurice, secured tracts of lands from the Quakers who owned them, and began to dig out coal from the hillsides. The first shipments were loaded down the Delaware river from Lackawanna to Philadelphia, but when they were brought in competition with Lehigh coal, the Wurts' turned their attention to the New York market, and this is what led to the building of the Delaware and Hudson canal, which was completed in 1828.

The first house in Carbondale was the old log tavern shown among today's illustrations. This was located near the present city station of the Delaware and Hudson company. This old tavern has been occupied by families who are here and among those whose modest home was there is John Copeland, the present prothonotary of Lackawanna county.

**The Pioneer Railway.**

The gravity road was the pioneer railway, and its completion in 1829 gave first communication with the world outside of the wilderness of the growing village. Chains were first

here and a recorder's court for the city is held four times in each year by Hon. John N. Conyngham. There is also a mayor's court held four times a year.

"The city contains 56 dealers in merchandise, 24 restaurants, 5 hotels and 8 churches; also 2 machine shops and 3 foundries. There is only one brick building in the city.

"The present population is estimated at 7,000, of whom probably three-fourths, including the children, are foreign-born, are native born Americans. About one-half of the adult population is thought to be foreign born."

**Looked Like an Army Camp.**

In the history of counties of Pennsylvania, published by Sherman Day in 1831, the story of Carbondale's career up to that period is interestingly related as follows:

"Carbondale, now a populous borough, has sprung up within a few years with the wonderful power of anthracite coal. It was started by the Delaware and Hudson Canal company, who own the mines about this place about the year 1828. The coal mine is one of the most extensive of the Lackawanna basin. Its products are transported at the rate of 800 to 900 tons daily by inclined planes and railroad over the Moosic mountain to Honesdale and thence by canal to New York. The coal was formerly wrought by laying bare the surface of the stratum, but is now excavated by means of drifts and side chambers. It is sent away in fact as mined. About 300 miners employed; they are paid by the ton; two men contracting for a chamber. The use of the neighboring land is allowed them free for the purpose of building shanties. The miners are principally Irish and Welsh and compose a large part of the population of the place. Their shanties are crowded together on two hills, Irish Hill (this is now the West Side) and Welsh Hill, and from the village have the appearance of the camp of an army in winter quarters.

**Had a Pustling Business-Like Air.**

"The dwellings of the mercantile and professional citizens in the village are neat and pleasantly adorned with trees, and the place has quite a bustling, business-like air.

"There are here Catholic, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Methodist, Welsh Baptist and Independent Welsh churches.

**Carbondale as a City.**

In 1851 Carbondale was an important center in this section of the state. Houses had multiplied, churches and schools were numerous, and to the residents there were strong reasons for the necessity of being possessed of the powers of a city. Carbondale was only a village then, it had not reached as yet the dignity of a borough. But this was only so far as the powers of government were concerned. Carbondaleans rightly believed that they were entitled to the powers and the protection afforded by reason of being incorporated. It was especially desirable that the town have a court of its own, which would obviate the inconvenience and difficulty of traveling over thirty miles by stage to Wilkes-Barre, the county seat of Luzerne. Accordingly after the disastrous fire of over a half a century ago, a meeting of citizens was held, the following report of which is taken from a stall in the Lackawanna Journal of Oct. 18, 1850:

"First—That as the first of a series of measures necessary for our protection against fire, we take early steps to procure through the legislature a city corporation.

"Second—That a committee of twenty-five citizens be appointed to act as a police on all occasions of fire to protect property from plunder, that has been rescued from the flames; and that Thomas Dickson, Evan Harris and Thomas Gillespie select such committee and report at a future meeting.

"Third—That a committee of seven be appointed to procure, by subscription, funds adequate for the purchasing of engines and hose to extinguish fires, if such should again occur. Whereupon the president appointed James Archbald, James Dickson, Thomas Gillespie, Judson Clark, Anthony Miles, Anthony Grady and Henry Evans said committee."

The bill incorporating Carbondale was passed in 1851. The member in the legislature was S. S. Benedict and in the senate was Hon. C. R. Buckle-



LEWIS FUGLE, First City Treasurer.

low. The city charter was signed by Governor William F. Johnston on March 15 of the following year.

**The First Election.**

The first election held that year, according to the Lackawanna Citizen, resulted as follows:

"The first annual election of officers

for this city was held on Friday, the 21st, and although the weather was not as favorable as could have been wished, 428 votes were polled. Our much esteemed and highly worthy citizen, James Archbald, having received the unanimous support of the delegates from the different wards, was elected mayor by an almost unanimous vote. We give below a statement of the vote as polled:

Mayor—James Archbald.

Select Council—Joseph Benjamin, Peter Campbell, Thomas Gillespie, Michael Flynn.

Common Council—Thomas Sweet, Daniel Scurry, William Ball, Patrick Moffitt, et., James Jackson, William W. Bronson, Edward Jones, Alexander Bryden, Richard Howarth, Terrence Powderly, Patrick Connor, Daniel Thatcher.

Constables—James White, Isaac Wolf.

Aldermen—Fourth ward, Patrick Farrell, but vote not reported.

Prosecuting Attorney—George Perkins.

Jury Masters—John Campbell, John Lee.

Auditors—William H. Richmond, James Stott, Thomas Voyle.

Clerk Mayor's Court—William Brennan.

Assessor—Phillips Wilson.

Treasurer—Lewis Fugle.

**The Mayor's Court.**

The mayor's court of Carbondale has quite an interesting history. It had concurrent jurisdiction with the county courts, except in over and terminer cases and in cases belonging to the orphan's court. The first trial list is as follows:

Commonwealth vs. Thomas and Robert Mathews and Francis Bowen, riot, surety of peace; recognizance forfeited to be respited next term. Thomas Sherry, false pretense under act of 1842; recognizance ditto. William Evans, keeping ten-pin alley without license. David Prendergast, assault and battery, recognizance ditto.

Among the early legislation were se-

lect council ordinances, one prohibiting swine, goats, sheeps, etc., to run at large either with or without rings in their noses or with or without yokes or bows on their backs or necks; the other creating the office of chimney and stovepipe inspector. This was to safeguard against fire.

**Various Public Officers.**

The old mayor's court was presided over by the following:

William Jessup, May 12 to Dec. 8, 1851; J. N. Conyngham, to Dec. 15, 1868;



D. N. LATHROP, First Lawyer in Carbondale.

Henry M. Hoyt (acted as) December, 1867; E. L. Dana to Sept. 12, 1870. (Elected for the term of ten years.) D. N. Lathrop, 1870, died in office, and Alfred Dart, appointed in 1872; I. D. Richards, 1873, died in office and Alfred Dart was appointed to fill the vacancy and elected in 1874.

District Attorneys—George W. Perkins, 1851-59; P. C. Gritman, 1856-59, 1862-65, 1869-71; I. D. Richards, 1865-69; Alfred Dart, 1871-73; George H. Squier, 1873-75.

Clerk of the Mayor's Court—William Brennan, 1851; Bernard McTigue, 1854-63; John E. Brown, 1863; George H. Squier, 1867; M. G. Neary, 1870-75.

Following James Archbald, the first mayor, the chief executives have been Edward J. Jinks, 1855; Gideon Frothingham, 1856; John M. Pears, 1857-61; Canfield Harrison, 1861; Anthony Grady, 1862-65; William Brennan, 1865; J. M. Poor, 1866; Thomas Voyle, 1867-68; J. R. Van Bergen, 1869-72; Thomas Voyle, 1873; William Morrison, 1874; John Nealon, 1875-76; Joseph Birkett, 1877; L. Marshall, 1878; Thomas Brennan, 1879; Anthony Battle, 1880-81; Thomas Voyle, 1882; Henry B. Jahnke, 1882; James Russell, 1884; John Kelly, 1885-89; C. E. Rettow, 1889-92; E. E. Hendrick, 1892-95; J. J. O'Neill, 1895-98; J. W. Kilpatrick, 1898-1901.

The postmasters since 1829 have been James W. Goff, appointed in 1829; William Eggleston, 1833; Horatio S. Pierce, 1837; C. T. Pierson, 1841; Martin Curtis, 1842; P. M. Crane, 1843; H. P. Ensign, 1844; Joseph Gillespie, 1849; Anthony Grady, 1854; D. N. Lathrop, 1861; William R. Baker, 1864; Daniel Prendergast, 1867; P. S. Joslin, 1868; E. Y. Davies, 1881; Joseph Powderly, 1886; W. L. Yarrington, 1889; John Nealon, 1894; J. H. Thomas, 1898.

**The First Churches.**

It was in 1829 that churches began to be organized. Rev. Alanson Reed organized the Carbondale Methodist church in that year. The same year the Catholics had their first priest to come into their midst. Father Fitzsimmons was the first priest and the church was built of lumber hewn from the forests by the members of the flock. The first Presbyterian church was organized by Rev. Joel Campbell and Rev. Lyman Richardson on June 25, 1829; the first Episcopal church, Trinity, by Rev. James Tyng in 1832; the Welsh Baptist and the Welsh Cal-

vinatic churches the same year; the Berean Baptist church in 1848.

**Pioneer Residents.**

Among the pioneer residents who were conspicuous in the community were Dr. Thomas Sweet, the first physician in Carbondale; Rev. Jonathan Noble, the first minister; Amzi Wilson, the first editor; father-in-law of Attorney Squier of this city, who is also an old settler; Alexander Bryden, mine superintendent, who proved himself a hero during the terrible mine cave-in in 1846; Archbald Law, the first mining engineer of the Delaware and Hudson company; Thomas Gillespie, who formed a mine partnership with the late H. S. Pierce; Rev. Francis Carlew, the beloved pastor of St. Rose church; P. C. Gritman, the oldest member of the Lackawanna bar, and the late John P. Smith. All of these are deceased except Mr. Gritman, who is an honored citizen of the city at the present time.

Speaking of former citizens, the name of the late William Goebel, the governor of Kentucky, who was assassinated in Frankfort, the capital of that state, in January of last year. He was a native of Carbondale.

There was a celebrated character in the early days, whose home is printed herewith—Dr. Rafferty. He was famed among the people of Carbondale and vicinity for his knowledge of the science of healing, and when Dr. Rafferty pronounced a sufferer incurable all hope vanished, with his words, so much did the residents rely on his knowledge and skill.

**Military Companies.**

There have been various military companies in Carbondale during the last half century, before and after the war.

The Tribune has published the roster

(Continued on Page 2.)

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**Singer's Park Clothing House,**  
Temporary Location,  
Salem Avenue.

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Make our store your headquarters. Come for general information, rest and recreation.

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**PARK CLOTHING HOUSE**

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Prescriptions a specialty.  
Agency for Sale of *Snyder's* Chocolates and **Bon Bons.** During semi-centennial our Soda Water will be to its usual standard, which is the best.  
Full line of Domestic, Key West and Imported Cigars.

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