

HATT September Meeting

September 14, 2017 at Clymer Library

5:30 pm

Attendance - 45 Members and 25 Non-Members

The meeting was opened by Rick Bodenschatz, program chair with thanks to the supportive program members who set up the Clymer Library room. He invited us to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. He then announced the programs for October (the annual meeting and dinner, and the November 9th meeting and the HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS concert scheduled for Saturday, December 9th at 1 pm at the Pocono Lake United Methodist Church. He then announced the committee meetings: the program committee had just met prior to this meeting developing the 2018 program agenda, the archive committee will be meeting the next two Wednesdays 11-1 pm(9/20 and 9/27) at Clymer Library to work on new materials, and the Display committee will be meeting on the 9/19 at 4 pm at Clymer Library. He reminded folks to check the website for this information as well as past minutes which are always posted. Volunteers were then asked to post signs for the October meeting and were thanked!

Rick introduced our current speaker, Mr. Dick Cary, author of books on the Pennsylvania Railroads and its history. Today's presentation will be on the lifestyle of those who worked alongside the Railways to support the lumbering industry. The title of the presentation was "Wood Hicks and the Logging Era of Pennsylvania".

Mr. Cary began by stating that logging opened up in Pennsylvania in the 1800's. He pointed out that Monroe County was on the edge of the boundaries that were touched by the railroads. There were four eras in the lumbering industry's history:

1. The Family Mills Era
2. The Rafting and Slide Era (floating logs through waterways)
3. The Railroad Era – including trams
4. The Diesel Era – fuel powered rails and trucking

Monroe County made a significant impact on the lumbering industry with the rising of Isaac Stauffer – named the King of the Lumber Business in NEPA – who used the creeks and streams with his workers to push, pull – then make log slides to get the timber to those creeks and streams. The life of those who worked this process, the WOOD HICKS, lived in small make shift houses mainly along those waterways. Many also stayed in boarding houses.

Around the small clusters of homes and as a support to the wood factories that sprang up, people would build and stay to work in the Clothes Pin Factories or the Shoe Peg Factories. Some of these small housing groups formed villages some of which have survived to this day but many which are totally gone such as Ricketts Glen.

The type of wood harvested in NEPA was primarily White Pine but Hemlock was used as well. The "HICKS" preferred the white pine and not the hardwood because it floated better down the waterways. Rafting began to come into vogue with major rafts containing the logs so that the counting and sorting by mills (and there were many) was minimized. Small living quarters were actually built on the rafts so that the "HICKS" could live and stay with their valuable logs. The rafting was done primarily on the Delaware and Susquehanna Rivers.

From 1890 to 1910, Williamsport became the lumber capital of the world. There were 30 sawmills there as well as tanning factories. The wood bark was used to make paper and other produces in the tanning process. This is how the village of Tannersville, here in Monroe County, came to be.

With the addition of the "Coffee Can on Wheels" trolley and then the locomotive, the processes of transporting lumber were made easier, although the "HICKS" still had to work and load the Railroad flats. It was somewhat of a relief for

them but they still had to live in close proximity to the logging process. So “Family Camps” sprang up and living in even a small community such as this afforded them some protection and support for each other.

Loading heavier timber became necessary and was made easier by the railroad. These heavier woods were used in Mining and to help separate crops as well as in railroad ties. Other factories which emerged from the lumbering process were Chemical Factories producing such produces as acetone and pulp and paper mill factories. Many of the women of those logging worked in these factories as they were close to the waterways. Every mill had a mill pond.

The talk ended with Mr. Cary reminding us that although the lumbering and railroads were short lived in our history, they made a significant impact on the economy and the infrastructure of our area and other areas around Pennsylvania, especially around the major waterways.

A question and answer period followed with many interesting comments shared on the life and times of the Railroad and Lumbering era.

Rick thanked Mr. Cary for his fine presentation and presented him with a certificate of appreciation. The meeting ended at 6:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Rapp

Peggy Rapp, Secretary