

# July 12, 2018

## HATT Program Meeting - 2018

86 attended both members and guests

### **Molly Maguires, Heroes or Scourge of the Pennsylvania Coal Region?**

Kris Avery opened the meeting at 5:30, welcoming all who came. We had the Pledge of Allegiance. She reminded all to send in membership dues if not done so already and to sign up at the welcoming desk. Fliers for the annual dinner meeting for September also are available at the welcome desk. The next meeting will be August 9th and will be on the life and times of Sir William Johnson. Publicity fliers were handed out to volunteers.

Rick Smith was introduced to present the program on the Molly Maguires. Mr. Smith recently retired as Vice-President of Sanofi-Pasteur and moved to Jackson Township – now working on various historical programs for the area.

Rick began by discussing the issues of how the Mollys were once seen as criminals but later seen as heroes. He first gave a brief overview of the Mollys and how they, as Irish immigrants, formed a group in the coal mining industry as early as the mid 1800s to fight for rights and protection and safer work environments. Issues of who was at fault when the Mollys attempted to gain rights, were dismissed and took matters into their own hands by revenge deaths remained in the judgment of the powerful – those who owned the mines and politicians. Several names were mentioned and dates of significant incidences including court decisions. Bias against the Irish was noted as well as continued control of the mines by owners.

Rick's lecture included names and dates of several persons involved in the coal mining industry as well as several of the Mollys who were powerful and influential in their own group. He also discussed the fact that the Irish were not only suffering at the hand of the owners but also by coal miners of other nationalities.

It was not until 1964 that a book was published with the true story of the Molly Maguires and how they were discriminated against and often falsely accused and put to death. More books were written after this and the release of the Paramount Movie in 1968 outlined visually, the plight and fight of the Mollys.

Of interest are the current and historic discussions of the Molly Maguires in published format:

- Making Sense of the Molly Maguires - By Kevin Kenny
- A Molly Maguire Story -by Patrick Campbell
- The Hard Coal Docket -by John P Lavelle, Judge, Carbon County
- The Devil is There in Them Hills - by James Green (WV Mining History)

- Video: History Channel: In Search of History - True Story of the Molly Maguires

Places to visit:

- The old Carbon County Jail in Jim Thorpe -(site of the mysterious handprint and gallows)
- Molly Maguires Pub in Jim Thorpe
- Eckley Miner's Village, Weatherly, PA
- John Kehoe's Hibernian House in Girardville, PA - Owned and operated by Joe Wayne, Great-Grandson of John Kehoe (Thu-Fri-Sat)
- Molly Maguire Historical Park, Mahanoy City, PA

After many questions the meeting was wrapped up at 6:45. A thank you certificate was given to Rick Smith for a fine presentation

Respectfully submitted,

**Peggy Rapp**

Peggy Rapp, Secretary