

THE YELLOW WASP

Lima Historical Society

September 2022



Can You Solve Lima's 100 Year-Old Cold Case? Robbery of The Bank of Lima February 6, 1915

Sometimes touted as Livingston County's first bank robbery, this century-old crime in Lima remains unsolved today. There were a number of interesting bits of evidence about the robbery at the Bank of Lima, located in a small brick building just west of the Lima Presbyterian Church driveway on West Main St. There were also a few intriguing events in the years following, although the money was never found. What are your thoughts? Let us know at: limahistoricalsociety@gmail.com

The Robbery

At 11:55 am on a snowy February morning, a tall man with an accent, heavily disguised in fake black hair and beard, mask and blue goggles, walked into The Bank of Lima with a revolver in each hand and held up the Cashier, Smith Landon Parmelee, and Clerk John Gray. Demanding the keys and the combination to the safe, the man told Parmelee to tie Mr. Gray's hands and feet with a piece of insulated wire and was then himself tied up by the robber—leaving both men face down on the floor and threatened with their lives if they alerted anyone to the robbery. After availing himself of more than \$9,900 in gold, silver and paper dollars (nearly \$300,000 in today's value), the man quietly exited the building through an office door on the east side of the building. Parmelee and Gray were not discovered until around 12:30 pm when Mr. Gray's father-in-law, J.T. Cole, came to check on him.

The Evidence and the Arrest

-2/6/1915 - Several unidentified witnesses said they had seen a man coming from the Presbyterian church sheds located behind the church north of the bank; the man was also reportedly seen leaving by the same route and a child said he was carrying a bundle. Others said that they had seen a strange "rig" in town before the robbery.

- Horace Gilbert, longtime President of the bank, had just recently died (December 1914); no one had yet been named President.

-Smith Landon Parmelee, the Cashier, was generally known to leave for dinner at 11:55 am, leaving Mr. Gray to close up alone.

- 2/6/1915, Dveslaw Gaczewski, a married 21-year old student from Batavia at the Genesee Wesleyan Seminary, who lived with his in-laws, the Humphreys on College St., became the prime suspect. That afternoon he was detained and questioned at the Lehigh Valley train station in Honeoye Falls, while attempting to leave the area. He had no evidence on him, but wire like that which was used in the robbery was later found at the Humphrey home.

- 2/11/1915-Pinkerton and Burns Detective Agents descended on Lima—irritating townspeople and eventually ordered off the GWS campus. Most people in town held confidence in bank officials and felt that an "habitué" of the city was responsible.

- 3/4/1915 Gaczewski was arrested -sent to city jail in Geneseo. His father hired legal counsel—J. Lynn and J. McSweeney.



The Hearings in Lima and Geneseo

4/22/1915- final court hearing in Lima - Justice George Adams presiding.

-12 -year-old Ingraham Humphrey testified that his brother-in-law was ironing his pants at the College St home at the time of the robbery and suspect's wife and mother-in-law confirmed. Ingraham also said that Gaczewski owned a revolver.

-Gaczewski not held for Grand Jury scheduled or June 14th, 1915.

The Aftermath

- 1916- Smith Landon Parmelee elected president of the bank.

- 1918-Gaczewski, now a law student at Syracuse University, sues The Bank of Lima and Mr.Parmelee in Onondaga County.

- 1918 -Smith Landon Parmelee commits suicide.

- 1921-Gaczewski is arrested for robbing a theater in Jamestown NY and convicted. He spent 5 years in Auburn prison.

Refs. *Union and Advertiser, Rochester* 2/6/15, *Lima Recorder*:2/11/15; *Democrat & Chronicle*, 2/11/15 3/4/16, 4/22/15)

LHS Calendar of Events

PLEASE CLIP AND SAVE

September 25, 2022

Closing of Tennie Burton Museum for season. Contact us for an appointment.

September 28, 2022

LHS Hybrid Board meeting at 7pm. Members welcome to attend. Contact us for link.

LIMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY 1850 ROCHESTER ST. LIMA NY 14485 (585-624-1050)

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The Lima Historical Society Mourns the Passing of Two Longtime Members



Ellen Storke Gillette (1922-2022) and Estelle VanAlstine Barber (1932-2022) were active Lifetime members of the society. Their dedication to the organization went far beyond membership. Essie served as the society's first Treasurer and Ellen was awarded a unique Volunteer Award for her service. Both gave tirelessly of their time and energy as "hands on" members of the Museum Committee, helping to maintain the Tennie Burton Museum as we know it today. They could regularly be found dusting exhibits, washing floors, or cataloguing and rehousing the masses of historic clothing and other items donated for preservation by Lima residents over the years. Ellen's and Essie's kindness and good humor will be remembered and greatly missed by all who knew them.

Tennie Burton Museum Gets A Complete Facelift

Extensive work on the museum has been finished. In recent months, repairs and repainting of the house and garage have been completed and the museum looks spectacular. Marshall Patton was responsible for the thorough, painstaking refurbishment of the exterior. Come and see for yourself.

The Lima Historical Society Picnic August 28, 2022

It was a perfect Sunday afternoon, as nearly 40 members and friends of the Lima Historical Society gathered at Mark Tubbs Park to celebrate together. Thanks to all of you who contributed to a table replete with special dishes, and to Mayor John Skiptunas who provided a raft of Nathan hot dogs, and Dan Marcellus who manned the grill. One of the highlights of the day was a Lima History Trivia contest designed by new board member Elizabeth Osta and run with the help and good humor of



our new Lima Historian, Karen Coykendall Zisler. Prizes were presented to a number of successful Trivia contestants, including the Depew children who had a little help from their parents. A Corn Hole Tournament was just slightly more competitive, with some members proving that they need to spend more time practicing. Many members expressed the hope that the picnic might become an Annual LHS event.

More On Factory Hollow

Last May’s issue of the Yellow Wasp included a piece on the history of Factory Hollow, located where Routes 5 & 20 cross the Honeoye Creek just east of Lima. In 2007, two cousins, David Kayner and David Sisson, became interested in what was referred to in old records to as "Florence Mills" near Factory Hollow. They contacted John Dusett (now deceased), the owner of property on the northwest side of the creek who held over one hundred deeds from his extensive tract of land. A study of the deeds led the men to contact Justin Tubiolo, archaeologist at St John Fisher College, who brought two students (Brett Kaufman and Jeff Partell) to do a preliminary survey, mapping, and photography of the area.

The team documented few residential remains, but numerous mill sites, including lumber and grist mills, a distillery, and others. According to Dusett’s estimates, factories in this northwest section of Factory Hollow probably employed some 200-300 people in the early 19th century. “Many raceways diverted water from the creek and some of the millraces were also split into branches to serve multiple mills. The entire valley floods during spring, while dams and millponds were employed to store enough water to power mills through the dry season” (Justin A. Tubiolo, 2007, *The Iroquoian*, Issue no. 31, Morgan Chapter, NYS Archaeological Association). The team also found traces of a probable wagon road leading to/from the main road, then known as the Genesee Turnpike. Research in the 1970’s by archaeologists Daniel Barber and George Hamell had also identified factory remains—a tile factory—located on the south side of the turnpike. Tiles were manufactured for draining farmlands beginning in the mid-1840s according to Daniel Barber (personal communication to Tubiolo, 2007). After the City of Rochester purchased land around Hemlock and Canadice Lakes and began piping water to the city of Rochester in 1876, the Factory Hollow buildings had to be removed to protect the watershed surrounding the creek and pipeline (Monroe County Water Authority website 2007). Many of the buildings were moved to the village of Lima, but most of the foundations were left in place. The land along the creek did not revert to private ownership until 1929.

It is also worth noting that almost 200 years before the 19th century industrial use of Factory Hollow by early Lima settlers, there stood a large Seneca Iroquois village of longhouses on land high above the creek in the southeast section of the area. It was home to an estimated 800 to 1000 Senecas between about ca. AD 1605 and 1625 (Martha L. Sempowski and Lorraine P. Saunders 2001, *The Advent of Dutch Trade Among the Seneca*. Rochester Museum & Science Center, Research Records No. 24).

LHS 50th ANNIVERSARY MEMBERSHIP DRIVE (1972-2022)

First organized in 1972, the Lima Historical Society is excited to launch a membership campaign in celebration of our Golden Anniversary. The drive is aimed at ANNUAL RENEWALS from existing members and old friends, and at attracting NEW MEMBERS from the wider Lima community who have yet to get to know us. Please help us kick off the campaign with an annual renewal online via our website www.limahistorical.org or use the form below to renew by snail mail.

LHS Membership Form

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____ Phone _____

City/State/Zip _____ Type of membership _____

Email address _____ **(We do not share our email address list)**

Annual Dues	Family: \$20	Senior Family: \$15	Sustaining: \$30 - \$100
	Individual: \$15	Senior Individual \$10	

Please send check and membership form to:
Lima Historical Society Membership Chair, P.O Box 532, Lima NY 14485

1850 Rochester St.
 P.O. Box 532
 Lima NY 14485



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<p>ITS TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP</p> <p>The LHS 50th Anniversary!!!</p> <p>A Great Time to Renew or Become a New Member</p> <p>Online www.limahistorical.org</p> <p>Or use form inside for snail mail</p>	
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