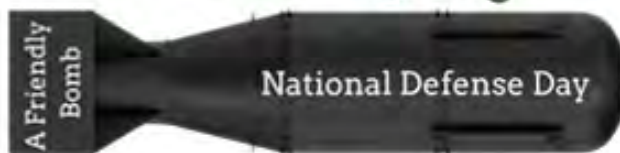


Fall - Winter 2025
\$5.00

UPPER OHIO VALLEY

HISTORICAL REVIEW



In this issue:

- * Heroes of the Shenandoah by Judi Tarowsky
- * A Mild Form of Massacre: A Sandlot Football History of the Upper Ohio Valley, Part 1 by Seán Duffy
- * The Day the US Military Bombed the Upper Ohio Valley by Christina Fisanick
- * More Wheeling Legends

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UPPER OHIO VALLEY HISTORICAL REVIEW



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UPPER OHIO VALLEY HISTORICAL REVIEW

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Founded by the Wheeling Area Historical Society in 1968, the **UPPER OHIO VALLEY HISTORICAL REVIEW** is the only publication of its kind in the northern panhandle of West Virginia. Dedicated solely to local history topics, it has become a treasured publication and valuable tool for studying and learning about our geographic area. Wheeling National Heritage Area Corporation (WNHAC, later Wheeling Heritage) continued the tradition, editing and publishing the **REVIEW** from 2010-2018. Ownership of the **UOVHR** publication was transferred in the second half of 2018 to the Ohio County Public Library in Wheeling.

UOVHR content has historically included articles, transcribed documents, book reviews, and accounts of the economic, political, social, and cultural history of the greater Wheeling area contributed by historians, researchers, and scholars. Any editorial views expressed by authors do not necessarily reflect the views of the **OCPL**.

OCPL is honored to publish the **UOVHR** and continue this great tradition for years to come.

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On the Cover: Public domain image of *USS Shenandoah* from Fred Wallace Special Collection; Columbia Club team photo courtesy Archives of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. Bomb image created.

UPPER OHIO VALLEY HISTORICAL REVIEW

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers:

In this edition, award winning storyteller Judi Tarowsky shares the saga of the U.S.S. *Shenandoah*, 100 years after its crash in eastern Ohio. Included are never before published photographs from the crash site taken by Wheeling man, John Lawrence Vensel.

Award winning writer Dr. Christina Fisanick tells us about the surprising means used by the War Department to test national military preparedness on the first “Defense Day” in 1924.

Zach Musilli gives us a deeper look into the life of Wheeling’s own unsung hero, Valentine Reuther.

And a 1921 photograph of a local football team inspires an exposé of the origins of a violent sport and its popularity on local sandlots.

Happy cold weather reading.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Seán Duffy', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Seán Duffy, Editor

The Heroes of the Shenandoah

by Judi Tarowsky

On August 31, 2025, several hundred observers gathered in the small Ohio village of Ava to remember the September 3, 1925 crash of the Navy airship, the U.S.S. Shenandoah, on their community. Fourteen crewmen died and 29 survived.



Photo by John Lawrence Vensel, courtesy his daughter, Joan Carrigan.

The U.S.S. Shenandoah was the first rigid-framed airship commissioned by the U.S. Navy. She also was the first airship to use helium as a lifting agent. The airship crashed during a public relations flight that began on Sept. 2, 1925 from the U.S. Naval Air Station in Lakehurst, N.J. The flight plan was to take her to Scott Field in St. Louis before she returned to Lakehurst. Her route took her across Pennsylvania and directly over Wheeling, WV, where the populace turned out in the thousands to cheer her arrival. She crossed the

Ohio River from Wheeling to Belmont County at 1:55 a.m., Sept. 3, but within a matter of hours, around 5 a.m., a massive storm had torn her apart over Ava in Noble County. The crew had heroically done everything they could in those few hours to save their beloved Shenandoah – and themselves.

During the August 31, 2025 centennial observance held at the U.S.S. Shenandoah memorial on the roadside in Ava, the 14 deceased crewmembers were honored and descendants of the crew – including those of the airship’s commanding officer, Lt. Cmdr. Zachary Lansdowne – were recognized. Ohio Senator Brian M. Chavez, a Navy officer, announced that the segment of Interstate 77 in Noble County has been designated “The U.S.S. Shenandoah Memorial Highway.” There was a 21-gun salute, the playing of “Taps,” and the laying of a wreath on the memorial. Storyteller Judi Tarowsky gave the keynote, “The Heroes of the U.S.S. Shenandoah,” an historical narrative of the airship’s origins and final flight.

The August ceremony marking the 100-year anniversary was the latest in a series of commemoration events held every five years in Ava, with the exception of 2020, during the COVID pandemic. These observances began through the efforts of Brian and Theresa Rayner of Ava. Brian’s grandfather owned a farm that was the site where one of three sections of the giant airship came to rest. The couple established a Shenandoah museum housed in a travel trailer. Although Brian died unexpectedly in 2013, Theresa and her family have continued the work to keep the memory of the U.S.S. Shenandoah and her crew alive. The Noble County

Historical Society has now also become a partner.

Besides the roadside memorial commissioned by the U.S. government in 1937, the three crash sites of the airship have been marked with signage detailing the events of the crash. Historic tourism has been fully recognized and embraced.

One could say that the U.S.S. Shenandoah has present-day heroes who work to keep her memory alive, as well as to recognize the aviation pioneers of the Shenandoah's crew. The impetus for these heroes to continue their work has its origins in the response



Photo by John Lawrence Vensel, courtesy his daughter, Joan Carrigan.

of the Noble County residents when they found themselves caught in the aftermath of that deadly crash in 1925.

Two local women, Ruth Schad of Wheeling and Inez Hoffman of McMechen, as well as Beulah Clark and her father of Ava, were among the first to respond to the crash victims. The three women had traveled to Columbus in Ruth's car to register for fall classes

at the Ohio State University. Schad and Hoffman were staying overnight at the Clark home before their planned return to the Upper Ohio Valley the next morning.

When the storm awakened them, the three, along with Beulah's father, went outside to move the car into the Clarks' barn. When they stepped outside they watched in disbelief as the storm above them tore the airship apart. They witnessed the control car, or control gondola, plunge to earth on a nearby farm. They watched as the nose section broke away and was carried up into the clouds.



Photo by John Lawrence Vensel, courtesy his daughter, Joan Carrigan.

Andy Gamary and his wife, Mary, were tenant farmers on that nearby farm. When they heard a tremendous crash outside their home, Mary gathered up their baby before they ran downstairs to their front door. There, perhaps 100 feet from their home in their garden, lay the mangled wreckage of the control car and the bodies of the eight men on board, including Lansdowne. Schad,

Hoffman, and the Clarks arrived within minutes, and with Gamary, they waded into the hazardous wreckage to search for survivors. All they found were the mangled bodies of the eight men, who were identifiable only by their uniforms. They had fallen from a height of nearly a half-mile. They did find two survivors in another portion of wreckage nearby.

The nose section of the airship that tore loose in the breakup carried seven men 12 miles south before the section crashed at Ernest Nichols' farm. Lt. Charles Rosendahl, a navigator, used Nichols' telephone to call Lakehurst to inform officials there of the crash. (Rosendahl would later become commander of the Lakehurst Air Station and was instrumental in directing ground crews so passengers were able to escape the burning German airship "Hindenburg" on May 6, 1937.)

Meanwhile, the largest section of the airship, the stern, landed on the farm properties of Charles Neiswonger and Charles Rayner. The 20 men aboard that section all survived.

Word of the crash spread quickly due to local radio broadcasts and amateur radio operators who had been monitoring the airship's progress. Within a few hours, thousands of onlookers arrived and some began pillaging the wreckage. The local farmers tried to stop them, but it wasn't until troops from Fort Hays in Columbus arrived and mounted an armed guard that the activity was stopped. As it was, equipment, personal effects, and parts of the airship were taken. As more military officials arrived, Hoffman, Schad, and Beulah Clark volunteered to drive them to the wreckage sites.

When the last body was recovered more than a mile from the main crash sites, the 14 dead were taken to the C.O. Dye Funeral Home in Belle Valley, just four miles south of Ava. Their remains were prepared, covered with sheets, and placed on Army cots from Noble Post 252 of the American Legion. Twenty WWI veterans, members of the post, and several townspeople set up a guard at the funeral home to protect the bodies from souvenir hunters.

The dead were strangers, yet neighboring farm women gathered flowers from their gardens and brought bouquets to place them on the bodies. Not long after, the dead were placed on a train for the journey back to Lakehurst.

The survivors also received care from the local residents. The Caldwell Kiwanis Club arranged an informal dinner for the 29 survivors before they were to travel by train back to Lakehurst. The meal, it was reported, was eaten in silence. One of the ranking officers, Lt. T.H. Hendley, managed to thank the club members for their hospitality before tears overcame him.

In the months that followed, an inquiry determined that the design of the Shenandoah – a slim, long shape based on the German zeppelins, as well as the decision to fly when volatile weather conditions were likely, led to the crash. The incredible forces she encountered in the September storm were too much for the slender airframe design. Lansdowne had requested that the flight be delayed at least a week to avoid severe storms. However, Admiral William Moffatt, commander of the aviation division of the Navy, wanted the airship to fly over the Midwest county fairs and

state fairs underway that week to garner public support for continued Congressional funding of the airship program. He denied Lansdowne's request.



Photo by John Lawrence Vensel, courtesy his daughter, Joan Carrigan.

The inquiry was told that before the flight, Lansdowne, an engineer and highly experienced airship pilot, had made changes to the airship's helium gas cells. During a 1924 cross-country flight he determined that the automatic relief valves on the 18 gas cells wasted too much expensive helium and added too much weight. He recommended that 10 of the valves be removed all together, but valves would be kept on the eight. Tests then determined that this could be done without endangering the ship when it reached the higher altitudes that caused the helium to expand.

However, when the inquiry board moved to have the gas cells and valves tested in the wreckage, it was found that the valves had been stolen in the post-crash frenzy.

Years went by after the crash and heroes continued to come for-

ward. When the U.S. government commissioned the airship memorial, it originally was placed in Neiswonger's field. The residents of Ava petitioned to have it moved within their community to be more accessible to visitors.

Years later, when a new high school was planned in Noble County, it was named "Shenandoah High School" in the airship's honor. The school's sports nickname is "The Zeps."

And when the high school band makes its annual trip to Washington, DC, the students visit Lansdowne's grave in Arlington National Cemetery. While there, they sing their alma mater, set to the melody of the folk tune, "Oh, Shenandoah."

When the last of the crowd departed the August 31 commemoration that afternoon, many were already looking forward to the next observation in five years, in 2030.

There are pioneers, memories, and heroes to be celebrated still.

Judi Tarowsky graduated from West Virginia University and worked for newspapers in the Upper Ohio Valley. She currently is president of the West Virginia Storytelling Guild. Judi writes and performs original stories, historical narratives, and tall tales. She also presents family stories, old fairy tales, Celtic tales, ghost stories, and traditional folk tales. Judi co-produces the Grand Vue Storytelling Festival in Moundsville, WV. She is a frequent teller at the West Virginia State Folk Festival; the Dublin Irish Festival in Dublin, OH; as well as the Appalachian Festival in Frostburg, MD. She was a Ghost Story Concert performer at the 2024 Tejas Storytelling Festival in Denton, TX, where she also presented a workshop on researching and telling historical narratives. She resides in Weirton, WV.

“A Mild Form of Massacre:” A Sandlot Football History of the Upper Ohio Valley, Part 1

by Seán P. Duffy

“Their sons grow suicidally beautiful

At the beginning of October,

And gallop terribly against each other’s bodies.” ~ Excerpt from

“Autumn Begins in Martins Ferry, Ohio” by James Wright (1963)

“It’s a mild form of massacre, but the victims seemingly don’t mind at

all. [These young men] many of them former high school football

players ... can’t resist the desire to knock noggins again... That’s

sandlot football!” ~*Wheeling News-Register* Sportswriter Arnold Lazarus (1954)

Modern football fans are familiar with the risks players assume, having learned of the brain trauma brought an early death to Mike Webster and having witnessed on national television terrifying injuries to players like Ryan Shazier and Damar Hamlin. But as risky as the modern game can be, imagine playing a lawless brand of football in just a sweater and perhaps a thin leather helmet, or no helmet at all, while dubious or non-existent rules enabled deliberately malicious strategies designed to mangle and maul. Nascent sandlot football was indeed a form of massacre, and not at all a mild one. And despite the violence, its popularity in the Upper Ohio Valley seldom waned.

Long before the Wheeling Ironmen and Pittsburgh Steelers, local sports fans turned out to watch a brutal brand of football featuring teams with names like the Tigers, Vigilants, Staats, and Yankees. Horrific injuries were common. Deaths were not un-

common. This was gladiatorial combat with arms and feet as bludgeons and battle axes, torsos as battering rams, and paltry scraps of leather as woefully inadequate shields.

A Pall of Gloom: The Death of Happy Havercamp

One local contest that would live in infamy took place on September 26, 1920. (1) South Wheeling's Columbia Athletic Club had accepted a challenge to take on Moundsville's brand new football eleven, the Olympics. (2) Early in the first half, Wheeling's star guard George "Happy" Havercamp ran to the sideline complaining of a headache. After seizing and lapsing into unconsciousness, he was carted off to Glendale Hospital. (3) Adding insult to injury, the newbie Olympics won the game 21-0. It was later determined that Havercamp had been accidentally kicked in the back of his skull. Since no fractures were found, he was released from the hospital the following day. But after more convulsions and another loss of consciousness, he was admitted to Wheeling Hospital. Diagnosed with a blood clot, Havercamp's condition declined rapidly. Despite emergency surgery to relieve the pressure on his brain, Havercamp never regained consciousness. He passed on September 31, 1920. He was 19 years old. (4) After a funeral Mass at St. Alphonsus with his teammates as pallbearers, Havercamp was interred at Mt. Calvary. (5) Originally from Warwood, George Havercamp lived in Centre Wheeling and worked for the gas company. According to the *Intelligencer*, his was the first football death in the country for that year, and "cast a pall of gloom over the city." (6)

But Havercamp's sad fate was just a relatively obscure footnote in the national story of carnage that was early sandlot football, where the reaper lurked in every corner of the gridiron.



GEORGE HAVERCAMP SUCCEUMBS
TO INJURY IN FOOTBALL GAME

America's New Bloodsport

The first game of what is now called "American Football," a game that evolved from the brute force of rugby combined with the finesse of soccer, was played on November 6, 1869, in New Jersey, between Princeton and Rutgers, with the latter prevailing 6 to 4. (7) The game included now alien concepts like 25 players to a side all trying to kick or head butt the ball. Carrying the ball was prohibited. This strange new game, which, instead of "Football," might have been called "Assault Rugby," would mutate wildly over the next century to become what we know today as America's most popular sport. (8)

At first, the game remained a pastime only at elite Ivy League colleges. During the early battles between Harvard and Yale, a Yale student athlete named Walter Camp emerged, and would later become known as "The Father of American Football." (9) His rule innovations included 11 players to a side and, most importantly, the 1880 concept of possession, which differentiated the game most starkly from rugby. Now, instead of a continuous fight for possession, a quarterback would take the ball from a

“snapback” (center). (10)

One of the major problems with the early rules was the so-called “block game,” which resulted from teams trying not to lose. As there was no penalty for ending up in your own end zone repeatedly, a team could effectively possess the ball and block the other team from scoring in an entire half by not trying to score themselves. The opponent would often do the same in the second half. The result was a tedious gridiron wrestling match ending most often in zero-zero ties. Something had to give. (11)

The Intercollegiate Association’s solution was to pass a “down and yards to gain rule” (1882), which ushered in what we now know as the “gridiron.” (12) But the next two steps in the game’s evolution would increase the risk to player health exponentially.

Resistance is Futile: Mass Momentum Plays

Tackling below the waist was illegal in rugby, as was blocking for a ball carrier. The ball had to be ahead of the other players or offsides was called.

American football officials made both maneuvers legal in 1888, forever changing the game. The strategies these two innovations would enable – so called “mass momentum” plays – would make playing football one of America’s number one health risks. (13)

Innovated by Princeton, circa 1884, the “V Trick” became the first “mass momentum play.” The idea was to align offensive players in the shape of a V with the ball carrier inside the apex, thereby using the momentum of multiple players (mass) to create a human battering ram in order to force the ball forward. If one is

reminded of a modern variation known as the “Tush Push,” one is not far from the truth. (14)

Other teams saw the success of the V Trick and copied it. By 1892, this simple play had evolved into something far more stunning, and militaristic, based, as it was, on ancient military strategy to attack a point in the opponent’s line with overwhelming strength, using a triangle, with the ball carrier inside.

The V



Developed by Lorin F. Deland and first used by Harvard in a game against Yale, the “Flying Wedge” added momentum by having the two sides of the V converge by running from opposite sidelines to meet in front of the ball carrier at full speed. Now the battering ram had torque, creating a locomotive-like effect that led to numerous injuries and deaths. It was football as the art of war, and other mass momentum plays were developed. (15)

Football had devolved and people started to dislike it. Changes to

the rules were needed. By 1894, momentum plays and piling on were forbidden, the length of games was shortened, and blockers could no longer punch opponents. (16)

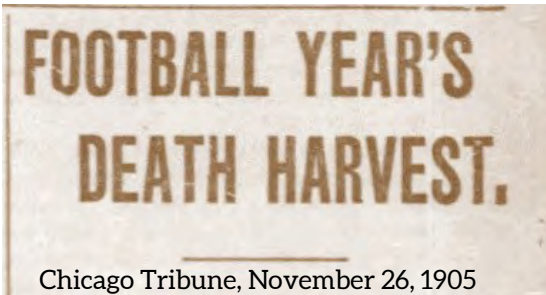


“Weary Willie” football haircut from the 1894 *Register*.

In terms of protective equipment, there wasn't much. Without even thin leather helmets as an option, many college football players of the 1890s chose long hair to protect their vulnerable craniums. The bushy hair served two purposes: it kept the head warm during cold weather games and

it kept “together a football player’s brains [like] the steel helmet of Richard Lion Hearted’s day.” Unfortunately, players would resemble “chrysanthemums after a gale.” Other styles included the “Scotch Terrier,” or the “Yorkshire.” (17)

1905: The “Death Harvest” - Football on Trial



President Theodore Roosevelt was an avid, longtime fan of American football. His sons played, and he often extolled the virtues

of the new “manly” sport. But by 1905, the game was in existential trouble due to excessive violence and corruption. According to reports, 25 people had died and more than 160 had been seriously injured playing football that season, which the Chicago Tribune dubbed the, “Death Harvest.” (18)

The president knew something had to be done. Declaring football “on trial,” he called a summit at the White House, inviting coaches like Yale’s Walter Camp and William Reid of Harvard,



and tasking them with deescalating the violence of the game he loved. (19)

Rule changes eventually passed, including allowing the forward pass, changing the yardage for a first down from five to

ten, and creating a neutral zone between the offensive and defensive lines. (20) But the game was not, in fact, less deadly. By 1909, there were 26 deaths nationally. Officials compiled a list of the “twenty most dangerous plays in football,” which included the kickoff return, striking with the knee, piling on a player with the ball, intentional fouls, using the heel of a hand on a player’s face, exhaustion, concentrated and continuous attacking against one player, throwing oneself under a mass of players, uneven matchups, and poor conditioning. By 1910 the Rules Committee actually did finally pass rules to improve the safety of the game. (21)

But this still wasn’t enough to save Rudolph Munk.

1910: Can Football Be Murder?

Readers might be surprised to learn that, from 1894 until the 1940s, Bethany College and West Virginia University played fourteen football games. Though the modern fan would



perceive this to be a lopsided mismatch – and WVU did win all of the games save one (a 0-0 tie in 1910) – many of the final scores were surprisingly close. On Nov. 12, 1910 on Wheeling Island they played the “State Championship of West Virginia,” which ended with a 9-0 WVU win. (22)



Rudolph Munk

But the real story was that a WVU player named Rudolph Munk was injured near the end of the game and later died of a brain bleed at City Hospital. (23) Furthermore, Thomas McCoy, the Bethany player who tackled Munk on the play, was arrested and charged with murder. Accounts differ, but McCoy either punched Munk, or kicked him in the head. The umpire ruled the hit deliberate, ejecting McCoy from the game. At the coroner’s inquest, however, the umpire recanted and the death was ruled accidental. The

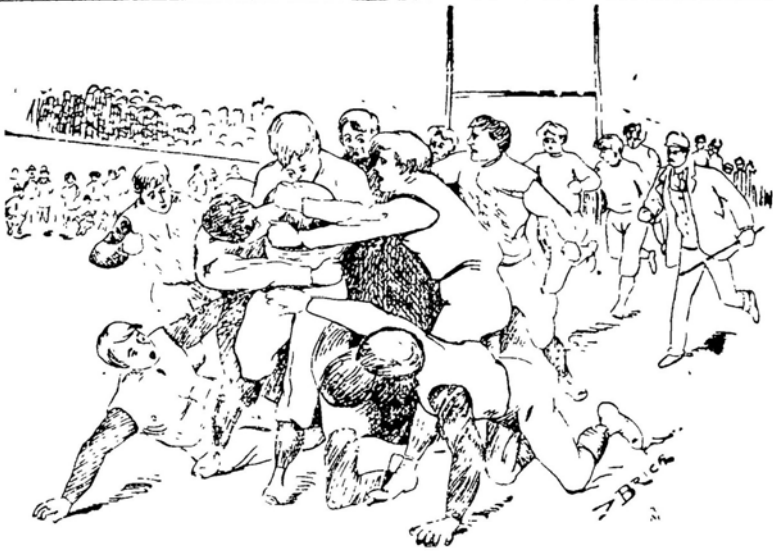
charges were dropped. (24)

Back to the Past in the Valley

The Valley's football story began many years before Munk's death. One of the earliest local mentions of a game of as American Football or "Foot Ball" can be found in the *Intelligencer* of November 25, 1882, wherein "the boys propose having a big game of football Thanksgiving afternoon on the commons above the furnace track." (25)

In general, local teams would form, choose a name, then challenge other neighborhood teams via the newspaper, much like in base-ball during the same period. (26)

1893: Hi! YI! Y.M.C.A. Boom-de-ay! Rah! Rah!



A FAIR TACKLE—WHEELING HAS THE BALL.

This *Register* illustration shows Wheeling with the ball.

In 1893, football's popularity in the Valley soared as the "Gym" team from Wheeling (wearing red and white) and the Martins Ferry Y.M.C.A. club (lavender and black) prepared to

play a Thanksgiving game on the Island Fair Grounds (admission 25 cents) with the proceeds benefitting the recently opened City Hospital (later OVGH). The newspapers predicted “one of the society events of the season.” (27) In anticipation of the match, the *Register* had run a preparatory article featuring an explanation of the rules, saying “throttling,” “striking with closed fists,” and tackling “below the hips” were forbidden. (28) But the flying wedge was still in play. (29) Ferry prevailed 18-0 before a crowd of about 2,000, while Ferry boosters “rent the air” with cheer “Hi! Yi! Y.M.C.A. Boom-de-ay! Rah! Rah!” (30)

By the next season, Martins Ferry fielded another strong sandlot team sponsored by the Vigilant firehouse. (31)

1895-1900: The First Powerhouse – The Wheeling Tigers



AWAITING THE WOULD.

A Tiger player as depicted by the *Register* cartoonist, 1896.

Note the hirsute helmet.

- In 1895, Edward Barrows formed a new Wheeling football team known as the “Tigers” from remnants of the old Martins Ferry Y.M.C.A. team. (32) The four Edwards brothers were the cornerstone. (33) Declaring “the people of the Nail City are football crazy” Barrows went to Pittsburgh looking for opponents. (34)

Led by full back Bob Edwards and his brother John at half back, Barrows’s squad defeated the strong Martins Ferry Vigilants 12-6, then “whitewashed” the Pittsburgh based Nonpareils 19-0 (35) and shut out

Western University of Pennsylvania 12-0. (36) The big contest was to be a rematch with the Ferry Vigilants. Unfortunately, the contest was disrupted by the encroachment of some of the 800 “Enthusiastic Rooters” and the umpire called the game after about an hour due to crowd interference. (37) Of course, both sides claimed victory, and a rematch could not be arranged. (38)

But by the turn of the century, the Tigers, Wheeling’s first powerhouse sandlot football team, had essentially folded. During this period high school football, led by Linsly, Wheeling High, Cathedral (later Central), along with some business schools like Elliott, filled the Valley’s football void.



1905 to 1909 – Who’s the Champ?

By 1905, the year of the national “Death Harvest,” Robert Edwards announced his intention to bring back the old Wheeling Tigers to play for the “Ohio Valley Championship.” (39) Teams formed all over the Valley between 1905 and 1909, from Steubenville to Martins Ferry (Welsh Lads and Indians), Aetnaville, Wheeling Island (Madisons), Bellaire (Globes), South Wheeling (Ritchies), Benwood, McMechen (Tigers), Moundsville (Shamrocks and Independents), and New Martinsville, and nearly all of them at one point or another claimed to be playing for the mythic, “Championship of the Ohio Valley.” They played on fields with ominous names like The Loop,

Gilchrist Park, Mill Field Grounds, League Park, or the Hell Grounds in Benwood.

When Mound City, featuring former Wheeling Tigers star end Sol Edwards, was defeated 6-0 by New Martinsville, the latter then claimed the “Ohio Valley Championship.” Since they also later defeated the Wheeling Tigers featuring Sol reunited with his two Edwards brothers, the claim seemed legit. (40)

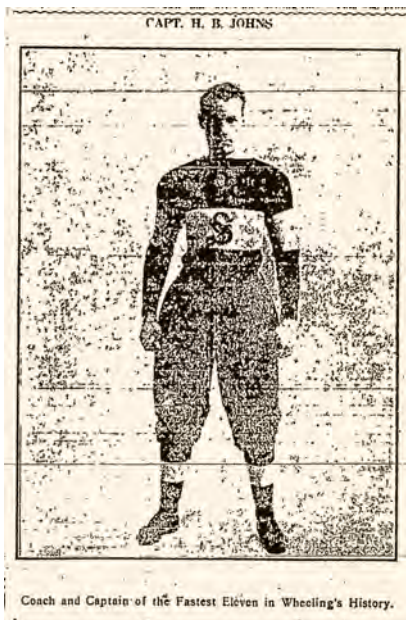
In 1906, North End Athletic Club claimed the title, defeating the Moundsville Shamrocks 6-4. (41) And in 1907, the Welsh Lads of Ferry defeated the Bellaire P.A.C. 10-0. (42) In 1908, the Glen Lawn (Fulton) Tigers claimed the championship despite losing to the Martins Ferry Indians on Thanksgiving Day, 6-0. (43)

1909-1913: “Yellow” Mountaineers –The Staats Athletic Club Saga

In 1909, a new football powerhouse emerged under the title “Staats A.C.” in honor of their founder and benefactor, Dr. O.M. Staats. (44) In a 1913 retrospective about local sports, the Intelligencer hailed Dr. Staats as “the man who has kept football alive in Wheeling.” (45) The Staats were lauded for scheduling, and frequently defeating, regional college teams under the guidance of player/coach H. B. Johns. (46)

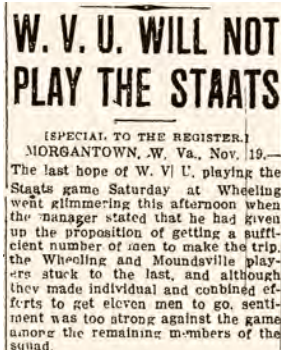


By the end of the 1913 season, the Register was begging Dr.



Staats to keep the team going in spite of the financial losses he'd taken that year due to foul weather and a breach of contract by West Virginia University. (47) According to the Nov. 20 Register, Staats management had received official notice that WVU would not be fulfilling their contract to play Staats the following Saturday. "Local fans," the Register claimed, "find it difficult to restrain their feelings and cries of

'yellow' are generally being heard." But the vitriol did not stop there. In addition to fan disgust, a Staats official was quoted as calling WVU's tactics, "cowardly," and "disgracing the name of the state university." The bottom line was that Staats management lost a ton of money on the breach, and the Staats juggernaut crashed. (48)



1915 and 1956: High School Captains Killed

On November 20, 1915, two years after the Staats folded, Wheeling High School football captain William H. Parker, died after being carried from the field midway through the state championship game at Buckhannon. According to the attending physician, Parker died from a ruptured blood vessel in the brain caused by

“over-exertion.” Both schools canceled the final game of the season. (49)

Four and a half decades later on September 21, 1956, sixteen-year old honor student and Wheeling Central co-captain Lou Mack of Warwood, suffered a “severe brain injury” after a head-on collision with the fullback from rival Wheeling High. Mack died a few hours later at Wheeling Hospital. (50)

Parker wore a leather helmet. Mack wore a “modern” plastic helmet designed to be safer. But the result was the same.

1921: Columbia Club, A.C.

Still reeling from the death of beloved teammate, George Havercamp (see above), the Columbia A.C. squad came back determined in 1921(51) The team consisted of an array of scrappy, talented players like tackle “Buck” Howley (uncle of future Hall of Fame linebacker Chuck Howley), quarterback Herb Breiding, halfback Dubie Dailer, end Clem Lineweber, and guard Warren Pugh (future member of the Wheeling Hall of Fame for officiating).(52)

In impressive succession, the Columbias defeated the Toronto Tigers, Mound City American Legion, Benwood A.C, and Warwood Independents. (53) By November, the Columbias were training for the biggest game of all at Tunnel Green against the rising powerhouse East End Yankees that would determine the “City Championship.” (54) As often happened in those days, the two teams battled to a 0 to 0 tie. (55) Though the city championship remained “hung in the balance,” some-



The Columbia Club A.C. 1921 team photo marked “1921 Wheeling Ohio Valley Champions” at bottom. That key language has been enhanced and enlarged. This photo is now in the collections of the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio.

one from the Columbias wrote “1921 Wheeling Ohio Valley Champions” at the bottom their team photo. But that wasn’t the full story. (56)

There was a December 12 rematch won by the Yankees 13-0. Despite the claim on their team photo, the Columbia Club apparently did not actually win the 1921 City or Ohio Valley Championship. Sometimes, in the old days, a championship “claim” was just that. (57)

Interestingly, in 1979, two of the last living members of the Columbia Club, Clem Leinweber and Warren Pugh, submitted a copy of their 1921 team photo with the championship claim on it to the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton. (58)

1922 and Beyond

The East End Yankees continued their dominance the next season, again defeating Columbia Club on two occasions. In fact, the Yankees were 8-0 and scored upon only once when they received a challenge from a group of ex high school football players from Martins Ferry. (59) The manager of the Ex-Highs placed a challenge in the newspaper, which read: “Manager Woods of the Ex-Highs publicly offers the Yankees \$400 if they will play at League Park...and if the Yankees wish a game with



**1921 City Semi-Pro Photo
In Pro Football Shrine**

the Ex-Highs they will kindly answer this challenge ... Failure to notice this comment means cold feet on the part of the Wheeling team.” 605) The challenge was accepted and the Ex-Highs defeated the Yankees for the mythical Valley Championship, 6-0 before a crowd of 7,000 enthusiastic fans. (61)

Sandlot Editor

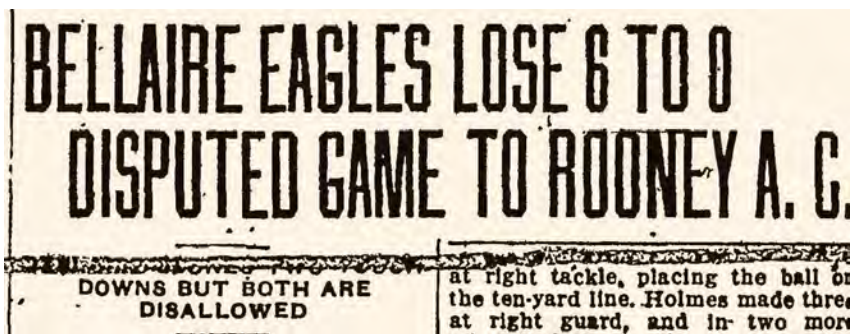
Wheeling’s version of Sandlot Football continued to grow in popularity into the late 1920s when the Intelligencer named a “Sandlot Football Editor,” Bill Seidel, Jr., who cranked out a regular column on the games. (62)

In 1929, Seidel wrote about the clash between the undefeated Moundsville Eagles and the undefeated and unscored upon Benwood Bearcats, won by the latter 21-0. (63) In the title match that year, the Bellaire-based Temple Ex-Highs went to the air to become the first and only team to score on the Bearcats that season, winning 6-0. (64) By the 1930s, the Bellaire Eagles were the dominant Valley team. (65)

1933-1940: The National Game Takes Center Stage

Several years earlier in 1926, a Pittsburgh man named Art Rooney and his brother Dan left the Wheeling Stogies Baseball club, for which they had played the 1925 season, to focus on their own sandlot football team.

Originally known as the “Hope Harveys,” the team was later named the “Majestic Radios” when sponsored by an electronics store. Still later they became the James P. Rooneys to support Art’s brother’s political career. (66)



In 1932, the J.P. Rooneys, referred to in the *Intelligencer* as "... the Pittsburgh District's greatest professional football team ...," played and defeated the aforementioned Bellaire Eagles 6-0 in front of 1500 fans in a "rough and tumble" match at Riverview. Bellaire disputed the result after its two touchdowns were disallowed. The "official had to be escorted from the field by police." the newspaper reported, "The decision[s] of the game were among the worst ever witnessed in the Valley and ... undoubtedly the most biased and prejudiced ever meted out..." (67) The Rooneys had been reportedly undefeated for three years coming into the game. (68) For their part, the Bellaire Eagles were said to be the strongest Valley team since Staats A.C. folded. (69)

By 1933, the J.P. Rooneys were reborn under the name "Pirates" and began playing in the National Football League after Art purchased a franchise. (81) By 1940, they were known as the Pittsburgh Steelers. (70)

Regional fans would soon have a new brand of professional football to hold their interest.



One of Art Rooney's sandlot football teams, possibly the Hope Harveys, or the J.P. Rooneys, ca 1920s. A few different jerseys can be seen. Art is sitting in the second row, third from left. His brother Jim of J.P. Rooney fame is fifth from left. Dan, Art's teammate on the Wheeling Stogies, is fourth from left in the back row. The young boy with the football is Art's nephew Vince.

[Photo credit: Art Rooney signed football team photo, 1920s. Greg Ficery Papers and Photographs, 1899-1983, 2009.0062, Detre Library and Archives, Heinz History Center.]

Conclusion of Part 1

From the late 19th Century to the tragic death of George Havercamp, Ohio Valley semi-professional football mirrored the national game in its level of violence and anarchy. As rules and equipment evolved to improve player safety, the game's popularity fluctuated. Eventually, every river town had a team, from Weirton to New Martinville, and from Steubenville to Shadyside. Local semi-pro teams regularly played college teams, and championship claims were abundant and often conflicting. And this is only half of the sometimes uplifting, sometimes frightening, often tragic and always intriguing story of Ohio Valley football. The research revealed enough information to justify a second installment that will carry the pigskin forward from the World War II era to the rise of the Wheeling Ironmen and the preeminence of the "Friday night lights."

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The Day the US Military Bombed the Upper Ohio Valley

by Christina Fisanick

To commemorate the sixth anniversary of the Battle of Saint-Mihiel, France, the U.S. War Department decided to hold the first-ever National Defense Day on Friday, September 12, 1924. Originally devised to ensure communications across the country via phone and radio transmission, the day became a nationwide celebration of military readiness and patriotic might. While over 16 million Americans participated in parades and other events throughout the day, including residents of Wheeling, Moundsville, and surrounding communities, critics ensured that the first National Defense Day was the last.



Although the outcome of WWI favored the United States, the victory did little to ease the minds of military leaders who realized that the nature of warfare was forever changed. Modern warfare had begun, which meant that “total war” demanded the readiness of both the military and everyday citizens. Establishing clear, reliable, and direct means of communication across the land became a necessity. Radio had recently taken off in American homes, and innovators at AT&T worked tirelessly on

connecting the country and the world by phone lines. To test these twin powers, the National Defense Test was born from the National Defense Act of 1922 and encouragement from President Calvin Coolidge.

The plan: connect 18 radio stations from coast-to-coast and broadcast speeches from high-ranking military officers (like General Pershing, who retired the same day) and conversations between them. Pittsburgh's KDKA was among the connected stations. (WWVA would not make its inaugural broadcast until December 13, 1926). The broadcast lasted for 90 minutes, the recording of which was added to the National Registry and is available to stream via the Library of Congress website.

For most Americans, the Defense Test wasn't the central cause célèbre that September afternoon. Rather, it was the more than 6,500 parades, demonstrations, and other community productions that stirred both patriotic spirit and concerns about world peace.

Here in the Ohio Valley, both Moundsville and Wheeling held National Defense Day parades involving thousands of civilians and hundreds of veteran and active duty military members led by army reserve officers. Planning began months earlier. In fact, thousands of handheld American flags were ordered for the more than 10,000 parade participants and spectators attending the Wheeling festivities. Local government officials, including Wheeling Mayor Thomas Thoner, encouraged schools and businesses to close early so that everyone could participate in the parade. All local mayors from Hundred to Glendale to Hannibal issued proclamations encouraging their citizens to at least decorate

their homes and businesses for the day.

Communities around the country celebrated National Defense Day in a variety of ways from battle reenactments to large-scale military drills. And the Upper Ohio Valley didn't want to miss out on the fervor. According to an article published in the morning edition of the September 12 *Wheeling Intelligencer*, "The gigantic procession will be followed by the bombardment of the city with miniature bombs by the United States army aviators from Langin Field, who will demonstrate to the citizens just what might happen should the enemy happen to fly over the city and the U.S. was unprepared to defend its citizens from attack."

**WHEELING TO STAGE HUGE
PARADE AND CELEBRATION**

**CITY TO BE OBJECT OF
BOMBARDMENT FROM
AEROPLANE.**

PARADE MOVES AT 2:30

**Big Evening Program to be
Staged at State Fair
Grounds.**

Although the thought of the military dropping bombs on its own citizens seems a bit frightening to surmise, especially after the Battle of Blair Mountain just three years prior, it turns out that these "bombs" were made of paper advertising National Defense Test Day. The "bombs" were dropped on 11 Ohio Valley cities on Tuesday, September 9 to encourage people to participate in De-

fense Day festivities, but the weather, which was unseasonably cool and rainy for early September, made it impossible for Captain A. E. Simonin, commandant of Langin Field in Moundsville, to continue his mission up river in the “blinding storm.” Days before, Captain Simonin had flown to Dayton, Ohio to borrow a special stunt plane needed to carry out this “bombing” mission. He attempted to drop the paper bombs on Wheeling and communities north on September 10, but weather derailed his mission a second time.

<h1>CAPTAIN SIMONIN THRILLS.</h1> <h2>WITH AERIAL EXHIBITION</h2>	
<p>are affected thereby for forgiveness, as I believe God has forgiven me," he said in his confession. "As I go to pay the just penalty of my deed I want people to know that I go trusting absolutely, solely and only in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, savior of sinners, to justify me before God. Hav-</p>	<p>CHIEF OF LANGIN FIELD AT MOUNDSVILLE DOES AERIAL STUNTS. OVER CITY.</p> <p>Loops The Loop, Does Spiral, Tall Spin And Acrobatic Work For Benefit of Residents.</p>

In Wheeling, the National Defense Day activities began with a 21-gun salute from Fort Fincastle atop Wheeling Hill immediately followed by the roll out of the parade procession. The first division of participants, school children, kicked off the parade at Chapline Street by the B&O station followed by military, industrial workers, and then civilians at Sixteenth Street. At some point during the procession, “an aeroplane dropped like a plummet from somewhere in the Heavens and the first thing the citizens knew the city was showered with aerial bombs from what seemed

to be a dozen different places.” Captain Simonin’s mission was a success! After dropping “bombs,” he pointed his plane toward Wheeling Island, rose to high altitude, and performed incredible stunts, including loop the loops, spirals, and tail spins, for half an hour before zipping back to Moundsville.

Although no existing “bomb” artifacts have been located, we do know something about what they might have looked like, thanks to a September 10, 1924 *Bellaire Daily Leader* report. Carl Koch of Union Savings Bank in Bellaire, Ohio caught one of the bombs. “‘Just what would you do if this as a real enemy 'bomb,' was printed on one side of the paste-board disk. 'A friendly bomb to awaken all citizens of Marshall County in time to do their part in the National Defense Day parade and exercise to be held at Moundsville, McMechen and Cameron' was on the paper tail of the disk.’”

The evening program was held at the fair grounds on Wheeling Island and involved several speakers, including Wheeling attorney Charles J. Schuck, who had just returned from a four-month tour of post-war Europe. Following Schuck’s speech, fireworks lit the skies above Wheeling Island with the day’s celebrations ending in time for everyone to head home and turn on their radios.

The National Defense Test began at 10:15 PM EST and successfully connected radio stations and phone lines across 38,000 miles. Given the newness of mass radio transmission, the speakers hadn’t quite developed their “radio voices.” Listening to the broadcast today provides insight into a nation grappling with the

aftermath of the first World War, new technology, and globalism.

According to the *Moundsville Daily Echo*, the Marshall County committee responsible for National Defense Day activities raised \$2,550 from citizens and businesses, which would be about \$50,000 in today's money. It is unclear



Indiana National Defense Test pin, Library of Congress.

what the festivities cost the City of Wheeling, but given the extensive use of facilities, equipment, decorations, and other materials, rest assured it was not cheap.

In addition to participation in parades, military demonstrations, and battle reenactments, civilians were urged to “offer themselves for one day of service with any of the regular military organizations.” The *New York Times* reported 838,000 people signed up for that one day of service, which was “disappointing” to the military. And, the fact that 6,536 communities participated in the day's events, meant that “only one-eighth” of the 52,000 incorporated communities in the country did their duty. Later, those volunteer soldiers would be sent pins to commemorate their day of service.

National Defense Day was not without its detractors. Some Americans argued that it was a show of war mongering as opposed to peace seeking. Scores of church leaders, pacifist organizations, and private citizens spoke out against National Defense Day, including the governors of four states: Colorado, Maine, Nebraska, and Wisconsin.

In an effort to appease critics, President Coolidge refused to allow the Department of War to hold National Defense Day 1925 on Armistice Day, which many considered a day to celebrate world peace. It was moved to the Fourth of July instead, but the enthusiasm and turnout were well below expectations. Having just survived the perils of World War I, it is no wonder that the vast majority of the nation yearned for peace at home and abroad. The excitement with which Wheeling and surrounding communities celebrated National Defense Day shows a willingness to come together for a cause greater than their individual interests. That said, there were plenty of detractors as is evidenced by Attorney Schuck's fair ground's speech, which reads more like a defense, so to speak, of the day's intentions than a celebration: "In the hearts and minds of those who stood as its sponsors, there was not the thirst for blood that our ultra pacifist friends would have you believe . . . but rather a constructive program of defense sufficiently developed to meet the needs of the times."

While local voices of dissent were not reported by newspapers, whose editors seemed to fully support National Defense Day, national publications showcased those Americans with differing perspectives. In an article in the *New York Times* exploring the opposing views of five clergymen, Rev. Dr. Ralph W. Sockman, pastor of the Madison Avenue Methodist Church at Sixtieth Street in New York City argued that "if the demonstration shall be interpreted as a glorification of war . . . then 'Defense Day' would be a tragedy unspeakable."

Although National Defense Day's legacy is barely a blip on history's radar screen, the sentiments of September 12, 1924 echo our

current political climate, including the recent change of the Department of Defense to the Department of War, a military parade in Washington, DC, and in the ways in which Americans talk about and display nationalism at home and abroad. Thankfully, the “bombs” dropped on the Upper Ohio Valley a little over one hundred years ago were only a stunt by an enthusiastic pilot wanting to thrill the crowd watching from below and to that we can say, “Mission Accomplished!”

Dr. Christina Fisanick is a writer and professor whose work centers on the stories and voices of Northern Appalachia. A native of West Virginia, she teaches writing at Pennsylvania Western University and is an internationally known expert in digital storytelling. Her creative work often explores themes of labor, resilience, and identity in working-class communities. Fisanick is a founding member and current president of the Writers Association of Northern Appalachia (WANA) and the co-host of WANA LIVE!: The Virtual Reading Series. She is the author or editor of more than 30 books, including Pulling the Thread: Untangling Wheeling History. Her shorter works have appeared in Still: The Journal, the Journal of Appalachian Studies, and Pine Mountain Sand & Gravel, among others.

More Wheeling Legends In our Spring 2025 edition, we provided a sequel to the book *Legendary Locals of Wheeling*. Here we present a few more Wheeling legends for posterity.

Valentine Reuther

by Zach Musilli-

Valentine Reuther was born to Rhineland peasants Jacob and Christina Reuther in Edigheim, Rhineland in 1881. In 1892, the Reuther family immigrated to the United States. Valentine grew up working on his family’s farm, but when he got older he moved to Wheeling, West Virginia. Upon his arrival in Wheeling in 1899, Valentine’s brother Jacob would help him land on his feet. His first job was in Benwood, West Virginia at Riverside Iron Works. It was here that Valentine would learn firsthand the plight of the American laborer. After failed attempts at organizing a labor union, Valentine would go on to work as a



Valentine Reuther engagement photograph circa 1903. Courtesy Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University.

teamster at Schmulbach Brewing Company. This job gave him the opportunity of meeting his future wife, Anna Stocker. The two would marry and settle in an apartment on Jacob Street in a neighborhood with many other groups of immigrants. In socializing with fellow German immigrants, Valentine learned of socialist ideology. Through his membership with the Turnverein (a gymnastics association), Valentine would get to know his cousin Philip, who turned out to have an important impact on his life.

Through Philip, Valentine was introduced to a plethora of socialist literature which in turn inspired him to start a teamsters union at Schmulbach. This led to Valentine's subsequent election to the Ohio Valley Trades and Labor Assembly (OVTLA) as a union delegate and a leader – in memory of his dead union brothers at Homestead – in the opposition to a Carnegie Library being built in Wheeling. In 1909 Valentine would be elected president of the OVTLA. He soon realized that neither the Democratic nor the Republican parties could help the working class and so he began to offer his support to the Socialist Party. He would later make the acquaintance of Eugene V. Debs and worked for his presidential campaigns.

The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 brought about many problems for Valentine both professionally and personally. America's entry into the conflict diminished the influence of his Socialist Party and he ended up dealing with many personal issues as a result. Although vigilante attacks were few and far between in Wheeling, Valentine received threats and had his property vandalized. However, he was hit the hardest when his friend Eugene V. Debs was arrested and sentenced, in 1918, to

ten years in prison for violating the Sedition Act. Valentine even took young Victor and Walter to visit his hero Debs at the Moundsville Penitentiary where he was briefly transferred. The visit had a profound impact on young Walter.

Valentine's union work and support for the Socialist Party had crumbled by the end of the 1920s. However, his political legacy would be carried on by his sons, Walter, Roy, and Victor, who would become highly successful and admired organized labor leaders. Valentine had prepared his sons to debate contro-



Valentine Reuther on his 81st birthday, in 1962. Courtesy Walter P. Reuther Library at Wayne State University.

versial issues of the day at the family dinner table. Walter would establish the United Automobile Workers Union with Victor working at his side. Victor was an active organizer and risked himself confronting company thugs in the 1936 General Motors strike. He later became head of the education department of the United Automobile Workers Union, where Walter was the president. Roy Reuther was an accomplished organizer who helped his brothers build the UAW into a powerful union, beginning with the 1936 Flint Sit-Down Strike and the 1939 Tool and Die Strike, both involving General Motors. He eventually became the political director of the UAW. Like his brother Walter, Roy was heavily involved in the Civil Rights Movement and was a strong supporter of Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers Union.

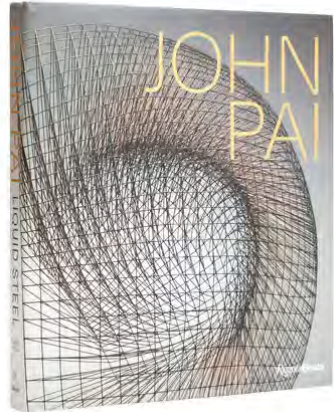
As his sons became more popular, so did their father, Valentine. People started to realize just how influential Valentine was on the lives of his sons. With the help of Walter, Roy, and Victor, Valentine was able to make an impact in the United States and abroad. He and Anna made trips to West Germany in 1952 and

1961. There, he would meet with labor union leaders and members of the German Bundestag. Valentine Reuther continued to be influential in labor union circles both in the United States and abroad until his death in 1967. He is buried in Greenwood Cemetery in Wheeling, West Virginia.

Zach Musilli is a native of St. Clairsville Ohio. He is a graduate of West Liberty University and the University of Nebraska at Kearney where he received an M.A. in History. During his studies, he focused on military and local history, which led him to travel to the Walter P. Reuther Library in Detroit, Michigan. He is a teacher at Triadelphia Middle School and lives in Moundsville with his wife, child, and dog.

John Pai –Sculptor by Seán Duffy

Youngchull (John) Pai (1937 -) was born Oct. 4, 1937 in Seoul, Korea, where he began his art instruction as a child. He moved to the Warwood neighborhood of Wheeling in 1949 and began studying art at Oglebay Institute's Saturday Morning Art Program under Harry C. Holbert while attending Warwood Elementary School despite speaking no English.

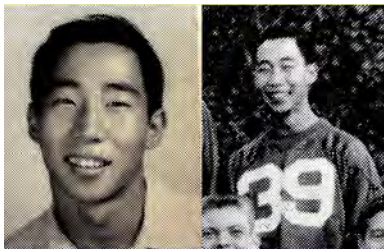


His father, Minsoo Pai, was a Presbyterian pastor and a member of the Korean independence movement that rebelled against Japanese colonial rule. His own father, John's grandfather, had been a commander in the resistance and was executed by the Japanese.

John's mother, Soonok Choi, was born in exile in Russia where her family fled to escape Japanese persecution. The two met when Soonok returned to Korea to flee the Russian Civil War and to advance her education. John was born while his father was imprisoned for his activism. His father later traveled to Chicago to study. Meanwhile, Soonok moved her family to a remote farm in Ilsan to avoid persecution. She called it the "Garden of Eden" and this natural setting had a deep impression on John. When Minsoo

returned to Korea after WWII in 1945, the family moved to Seoul, where John began formally studying art.

In 1948, the family, including John and his sister, boarded the USS General H.F. Hodges for the U.S. In Warwood, the family stayed



Photos of John Pai from the 1956 Warwood High School Yearbook. OCPL Archives.

temporarily with Pai Minsoo's friend, Rev. Arthur Pritchard. John, at 15, had his first solo art show, organized by Holbert, at Oglebay. When Holbert told him there was nothing more he could teach him, John applied to study through the Connecticut based Famous Artists School, learning by correspondence courses. John attended Warwood High School from 1954-56, and became an accomplished saxophonist. He credits J. Loren Mercer for teaching him "the lessons of discipline in music."

After being awarded a full scholarship to Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, John moved to NYC. He graduated with a BFA in Industrial Design (1962) and MFA in Sculpture (1964). He compared his time at Pratt to the experience of listening to Dvořák's Ninth Symphony: "The world opened to me like a new dawn."

In 1965, he met and married Eunsook Lee in Seoul, and began a four decade career as a professor at Pratt, becoming director of the Division of Fine Arts in 1971. Over the years, John and Eunsook hosted numerous Korean artists and musicians at their Brooklyn home.

John has created numerous outdoor art pieces under commission, and has exhibited his work the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Korea, Whanki Museum in Seoul, Zimmerli Art Museum, Sigma Gallery, and Gallery Hyundai in Seoul, among many others.

John retired from Pratt to focus on his sculpture work in 2000. Throughout his life, John Pai also studied and was influenced by

science, architecture, sports, music, and dance, all of which show up in subtle ways in his art.

A beautifully illustrated coffee table book (monograph) about his work, *John Pai: Liquid Steel* by John Yau, was published in 2023. John and Eunsook now live in Connecticut.

New Wheeling Hall of Fame Inductees

Courtesy Wheeling Hall of Fame Board. Inducted 6-29-2025



JESSE A. BLOCH (1879-1951) (Public Service) A successful businessman, West Virginia House and Senate member, and community leader for more than 50 years, Bloch sponsored the state's first workers' compensation legislation and cast the deciding vote by which the state Legislature approved the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. He joined Bloch Brothers Tobacco in 1900, serving

as president from 1937-47, while volunteering with the Wheeling Housing Authority, Ohio Valley General Hospital, Boy Scouts, Red Cross, and the Ohio County Anti-Tuberculosis League. In 1940, family members donated their parents' home, Elmhurst, to the Home for Aged Women, now a retirement home for men and women. He joins his grandfather Samuel and grandson Stuart in the Wheeling Hall of Fame.

BILL CORNFORTH 1950- (Education and Religion) A dedicated educator from 1972-2023, he served at several schools, including 43 years at Wheeling Park High School. His courses ranged from Acting to Speech, Interpersonal Communication to Debate, and Language Arts. His mission was to inspire students to become excellent communicators.



He directed more than 60 plays and musicals for Wheeling Park High, Wheeling Jesuit University, Towngate Theatre, and

the West Virginia Penitentiary. For Wheeling Park High's Speech and Debate team, first as assistant and then as head coach, he guided numerous state and national finalists. As head coach, he led teams to 17 state championships. He regarded his career as a teacher to be a privilege and a gift.



SCOTT DAVIS 1956- (Sports and Athletics) This West Virginia Golf Hall of Fame inductee was a Triadelphia High School graduate. At Marshall University, he was the NCAA Long Drive champion in 1976. After working at Oglebay's Speidel Golf Club, he won the 1978 West Virginia Amateur title before turning pro as a four-decade PGA of America and WV PGA Golf Professional in southern

West Virginia. He won the WV Open championship four times and was Low Senior four times; was a 10-time WV PGA Player of the Year, a four-time Senior WV PGA Player of the Year, Tri-State PGA titlist, Tri-State Tour champion, and Tri-State Match Play titlist; and competed in 18 national Club Professional events and six Majors' championships.

JEANIE CALDWELL DOUGHERTY

1844-1935 (Music and Fine Arts) Jeanie traveled the world as an independent, working artist. Widowed at 30, she devoted her life to making art and seeing the world. A classically trained artist in realism, pen and ink, portraiture, and nudes, she desired to be a well-rounded artist. Interested in politics, a global life, and an awareness of what was going on around her, she strived to find



equality and surrounded herself with people who valued her as an equal. Locally, her art was advocated by fellow Wheeling Hall of Fame member George Kossuth, who, in the mid-

1940s, discovered her paintings hidden for half a century in his home, the former Caldwell homestead in North Wheeling.

DR. HARRIET B. JONES 1856-1943

(Business, Industry and Professions) A leader in women's and public health, Dr. Jones was the state's first licensed female physician and was a member of the State Medical Association, Ohio County Medical Society, and American Medical Association when there were few female physicians. She built and ran Wheeling's first women's hospital at 15th and Jacob streets for more



than 20 years. The first president of the Ohio County Anti-Tuberculosis League, Dr. Jones traveled the state by rail and car to educate citizens on preventing the disease. Advocating women's suffrage, she was instrumental in getting West Virginia University to admit women. Elected in 1924, she served two terms in the West Virginia House of Delegates.



BRIAN E. JOSEPH 1956- (Business, Industry and Professions) Life-long curiosity and a passion for innovation and science inspired Joseph's remarkable career of invention and serial entrepreneurship. His Ohio Valley-based Touchstone Research Laboratory created hundreds of inventions with extraordinary success in materials development, new products, and aerospace testing.

Touchstone has spun-out companies that manufacture revolutionary materials, design new manufacturing processes, and test technologies in a wide array of industries, including next-generation aircraft and rockets. Joseph served as J.B. Chambers Foundation president, West Liberty University board chairman, and as a member of the Wheeling Vintage Race Boat Regatta Committee. He is devoted to mentoring children

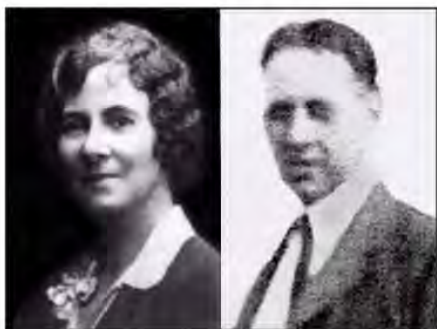
and young adults, encouraging them to pursue science, innovation, and community leadership.

RICHARD P. MEHEN 1922-1986 (Sports and Athletics) A high school, college, and professional basketball honoree, this Wheeling High School graduate joins his older brother Bernie in the Wheeling Hall of Fame. They were the first two high school players named all-class 1st Team All-State three times before starring at the University of Tennessee. In college, Dick was a 2nd Team All-America selection and two-time



1st Team All-Southeastern Conference. Mehen played five seasons of pro basketball: two in the National Basketball League with the Toledo Jeeps and Waterloo Hawks plus the first three seasons of the NBA with Waterloo, Baltimore Bullets, Boston Celtics, Fort Wayne Pistons, and Milwaukee Hawks. His pro career included 2,067 points, 505 rebounds, and 480 assists.

MARTHA CLARK PARLIN 1887 – 1968 & **ROBINSON S.**



PARLIN 1887 – 1982 (Philanthropy) These unheralded Wheeling residents, she a teacher – he a federal employee, living frugally, marrying late in life, and leaving no descendants, established charitable trusts with substantial financial assets directed to promote

the health and welfare of physically or mentally challenged children and the blind. Since these trusts were created, more than \$10 million has been distributed to local charities benefiting children and making Wheeling one of the smallest communities in the nation with multiple prominent benevolent organizations

assisting challenged and underprivileged children.



FRANCES MARY SCHOOLCRAFT 1948 - (Education and Religion) This educator, who earned her master's degree plus 45 hours in Speech and Theater, began her career at Triadelphia High School. Beginning in 1976, she taught at Wheeling Park High School, developing the Speech and Theater program. She directed more than 100 performances and coached more than 125 first-place award-winning speech students. After

retirement, she was employed by the national/international Loews hotel chain, teaching public speaking and creativity. Fran amassed many educational activities and awards before her retirement in 2004; but, to her, the highlight was her speech team winning first place in the State of West Virginia speech and debate tournament for 25 consecutive years.

CLIFF SLIGAR 1933-2021 (Public Service) A visionary public safety leader best known for his service to the Wheeling Fire Department, Sligar became a firefighter in 1955, serving as Chief for 24 years from 1971-95. He was instrumental in adding EMS service to the department and started an EMT/Paramedic program with local colleges and health care providers to enhance medical services. He also worked with NASA to develop breathing



apparatus for firefighters and created a countywide 911 center in 1988 and later the Belmont County, Ohio, 911 Center, serving as its first director. A Wheeling city councilman from 1996-2004, he

was a firefighter who cared deeply about his city, handling high-stress safety crises with the public's safety in mind.



CHARLES L. SONNEBORN, SR. 1883 – 1961 (Philanthropy) This prominent Wheeling business and civic leader had a principal role in establishing Wheeling Park and the Wheeling Park Commission. Rather than developing the property where Wheeling Park now is located, he offered the option to purchase the property to the Wheeling Chamber of Commerce and the City of Wheeling. By December 24, 1924, the community raised the necessary funds to purchase and equip Wheeling Park, making it the first public park in Wheeling. He and his family were significant donors to improvements for Wheeling Park, including the entrance gates, Sonneborn Shelter, Frank Rock Garden, and the living plants spelling “Wheeling Park” on National Road.

To see the full bios and photos of all current members of the Wheeling Hall of Fame, visit:

<https://tinyurl.com/Wheeling-HOF>





Don't miss the Ohio County Public Library's new featured exhibit, "Fabric & Steel," with special thanks to Denis Serig, Susan Haddad, and Cheryl Hummel.



While a traditional archive might not always house historical records for working class people of the 19th and 20th centuries, especially women, their work product (whether rolls of

steel or quilts and other fiber art) can serve as a record worthy of our consideration.

Sarah "Anna" Lewellyn Serig was a quilter and award winning lace maker. Her husband worked at Wheeling Steel



and Iron Company. Together, they represent thousands of Ohio Valley couples of that period.

View the exhibit now until late May 2026 during regular library hours.



The purpose of the Upper Ohio Valley Historical Review is to provide research-based information for readers that is as historically accurate as possible. The conclusions drawn or views expressed by writers and researchers of the articles contained within these pages do not necessarily reflect the views of the Library, its staff, and /or its representatives. The editor invites reasonable challenges to the accuracy of information presented with supporting evidence. Verified corrections will appear in future editions.

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