

RUFFIANS, ROBBERS, ROGUES, RASCALS, CUTTHROATS, AND OTHER COLORFUL CHARACTERS

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THROUGHOUT the ages human society has encompassed all types of people; some have been good and some bad, but fortunately for us who must live with our fellow man, most have been good. With justifiable pride we boast about these good citizens. But, human as we are, we are inclined to forget those who came before, whose reputations were more than just a bit tarnished, whose character was anything but angelic, and whose actions, at times, were such as to curdle the milk in the icehouse. It is about these ruffians, robbers, rogues, rascals, cutthroats, and other colorful characters that I am writing. This I will do, being as gentle about the matter as I can.

Let's begin at the beginning. Leland Baldwin in his *Pittsburgh, the Story of a City* tells us that in our town, "at the close of the Revolution, [there were] perhaps fifty or more houses, nearly all of them of logs, and one might guess that there were five hundred inhabitants. . . . the place was infested by a 'Combination of pensioned Scoundrels' who made a business of cheating and overcharging strangers." John Wilkins, a prominent citizen who had arrived at the end of 1783, admitted, "that all sorts of wickedness was carried on to excess; there was no appearance of morality or regular order; it seemed that the Presbyterian ministers were afraid to come to the place lest they should be mocked or mistreated." And why not? This was the western frontier, and history tells us that no frontier, especially that in America, is gentle in its character.

As the city grew in size, it changed little. Baldwin continues, "There was plenty for constables and watchmen to do. There were the usual crimes incident to a city: burglary, prostitution, and murder; and counterfeiters, pickpockets and gamblers; . . . boys were prone to

The author of this article, which was presented as a lecture to the Society in May of 1972, is the acting director of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. He states that this approach to history is strictly whimsical and is not meant to be regarded as a serious attempt at historical research. The author recognizes that many footnotes should be employed, but in the interest of readability they have been eliminated.—Editor

juvenile delinquency then as now, and gang wars, the robbing of missionary boxes, and attendance upon, 'free concert saloons' of questionable reputations were among their activities." This was the frontier, and its inhabitants were rough and tough.

The early editions of the *Pittsburgh Gazette* give some hints of life at the Forks of the Ohio. Note this item from the August 31, 1799, edition, "On the 23rd instant between the hours of two and three in the morning, a person calling himself Samuel Johnson, was brought before Justice Wilkins, apprehended in committing a burglary in the house of Mr. Thomas Bracken in the Borough. On examination some suspicions arising that this person was not a man, though habited as such, a strict search took place, and it was soon discovered that HE was of the female sex. All necessary precautions had been taken to prevent such a discovery, and in which she succeeded for a length of time as appears by her confessions, viz." And then there follows a description of robbery, horse-thievery, and general breach of peace.

Some of the colorful characters in our early history were incipient poets, as well as long-suffering citizens, as is witnessed by this advertisement in the *Pittsburgh Gazette* for December 23, 1780:

July the twenty-seventh day,
My wife Betty ran away,
From bed and board did flee and say
She would no longer with me stay.
Since she has left me without cause,
I'll give her time enough to pause,
That she may see her error
When I live happy with a fairer.
Therefore I forwarn, both great and small
To trust her anything at all.
For her contracts from this day
Not one farthing will I pay.

Dennis O'Bryan.

Some, indeed, were masters of English prose, as is evidenced by this "Stop the Villain" note in the *Pittsburgh Gazette*, May 29, 1820: "Fifty dollars reward will be given for the apprehension of the person hereinafter described. I feel it to be my duty to make known to the public the infamous trick which was played on me by a man calling himself Theodore Lambertie, on the 22nd of last month. It was in forwarding a letter to Cincinnati, addressed to Mr. Anthony Jogan and

containing \$422 in Madison money, payable at Lawrenceburgh. Previous to that day the said Lambertie had been introduced to me by different respectable citizens of Louisville, and as he was going on board the General Pike I entrusted the letter in his care; I have since that time been informed that the letter was not given to the said Mr. Anthony Jogan, and the said Lambertie had broken it open and used the greater part in purchasing, in Cincinnati, a horse, wagon and different other articles.

He is about 26 or 27 years old, five feet 5 inches high, of a very dark complexion, stout made; has curly hair, of a very genteel appearance; he walks boldly; round faced; squinting a little in the left eye; sharp nose and chin rather so; small whiskers, wears a small bordered hat, a surtout with a brown velvet collar and sometimes a dark green coat pretty much worn (with a black velvet collar), and sometimes grey or nankeen ones; he has a new blue suit of clothes he wears on particular occasions; all but the surtout being French make. He also generally wears Monroe boots; he had a handsome French gold figured faced repeating watch, hung round his neck by a steel chain; his watch chain is goldone, and his seals of common jewelry gold. He has a small finger ring set with a diamond; a breast pin with false diamonds; commonly wears ruffled shirts, black waistcoat and generally a black cravat; being a musician by profession he carries a violin box, with two trunks, one very small and the other rather large; one covered with leather; will quickly be known for a stranger by his accent, having but little knowledge of the English language, he calls himself Lambertie, but he is presumed to have changed it often. It will be for the good of society to stop such a man, for it is thought it is not the first time he has played the same game. . . . When he left Cincinnati he had a Dearborn waggon, the running gears painted red, tipped black, the body green, with a falling top, two seats trimmed inside with light colored cassimere, hung with iron springs. He had a new pair of saddlebags, and his trunk covered with a bouffal [*sic*] robe. A bay horse about fifteen hands high, seven years old, stoutly made, short tail, lately nicked, and not yet completely cured, and trots well in harness. It is presumed he took the Lexington or Pittsburgh road. H. Vignon"

Well, now, where do we go from here? Shall we talk about robbers or cutthroats or rogues — or just plain murderers — or renegades? For a quick treat how about "Demented" Kelley? In 1850, the Second Presbyterian Church was located at 247 Fifth Avenue. On

the night of June 6 in that year, a dramatic incident took place when one of the city's more unusual citizens, known as "Demented" Kelley, rode on horseback into the midst of the congregation and shouted, "I come this time on a black horse, but I will come next on a red." History records the sad, sad news that on the same evening the church burned to the ground — a complete loss. Kelley on a red horse? No one ever was certain.

But Kelley, demented or not, was a piker when placed beside a few other characters. What about that most infamous man, Simon Girty, "the white savage, the renegade, the man who could laugh in fiendish mockery at the agonies of a captive, burning and writhing at the stake. His story is that of a backwoods ruffian who left his own people because of a slender grievance and for twenty years led raiding parties of Indian warriors through the Ohio wilderness to the white man's border — a dark, brawny man who fought as fiercely as a red warrior chieftain.

"He was a wretched miscreant than whom no country has ever produced a monster so brutal, depraved and wicked." He was a Tory who eventually went to Detroit in the services of Gen. Henry Hamilton, lieutenant governor of Canada, along with Alexander McKee, Matthew Elliott, and Robert Surphlit, all boon companions. He participated in the massacre of the whites at Fort Laurens — he did not spare the life of Col. William Crawford, captured by Indians, when perhaps he could have — he was judged guilty as an outlaw, convicted of treason, and therefore subject to execution under the laws of Pennsylvania. But he was never executed. He died peacefully of old age, in Canada, at Amherstburg in 1818 at the age of seventy-seven. He was controversial then and now, for some thought him no different than others on the frontier, nor more evil than others.

But life on the frontier was hard and tough and in many ways cruel. One of the characteristics of the frontier in all of American history is the fierce independence of its people. And it was no different in Western Pennsylvania. The Whiskey Rebellion was an example of the frontiersman exercising his independence. Nobody likes to pay taxes, then or now. Alexander Hamilton's excise tax on whiskey was highly unpopular, and its collection was resisted by force. The tax was the first trial for the infant Republic. While the issue of who was the rascal or the rogue is still debated, the facts are that the government of the new nation established its control, its right to tax, but not without rough treatment and many indignities to the collectors of the unpopular tax.

One time a mob of about one hundred caught a tax collector near Cross Creek in Washington County and attacked him in open daylight. "His pistols which he carried before him were taken and broke to pieces in his presence ; his commission and all his papers relating to his office tore and thrown into the mud and he forced, or made to stamp on them, and imprecate curses on himself, the commission and the Authority that gave it to him ; they then cut off one half of his hair, cued the other half on one side of his head, cut off the cock of his hat, and made him to wear it in a form to render his cue the most conspicuous, this with many other marks of ignominy they imposed on him and to which he was obliged to submit, and in the above plight they marched him from the frontiers of this county to Westmorland County calling at all the still houses on the way where they were treated gratis, and exposed him to every insult and mockery that their invention could contrive. They set him at liberty at the entrance of Westmorland but with the threats of utter desolation should he dare return to our country." Such was the sport of men like John Holcroft, alias "Tom the Tinker," whose chief diversion in those days was shooting holes in the stills of those distillers who were prompted to pay the tax.

In 1795, our present North Side was known as Allegheny Town then inhabited by three families, one of which was a jolly Irishman named John Kelly, his wife, and four children. Kelly's affection for the bottle often outweighed that for his family. He was a wood-cleaver by occupation. He worked hard at his trade for a month so as to indulge in a week's spree. On more than one occasion when Kelly was in the clutches of the firewater, Old Allegheny Town stood in imminent danger of losing one-third of its population.

Once he exchanged costumes with a friendly Indian who had assisted him in consuming large doses of bad but hot and tasty liquid. His face painted in bright red and yellow, his head crowned with a bright bunch of eagle feathers, and the upper part of his body bare to the waist, honest Kelly who, as long as there was no fight in sight, was the best natured man in the world, looked as savage as any Iroquois who ever went on the warpath. Kelly and his Indian friend finally made their way in unsteady fashion to the banks of the river, where midst the willows, they intended to sleep off the fumes of the liquor.

By now Kelly was in a reflective mood ; he thought of the money he wasted, his wife and children, the things he was asked to buy but didn't ; he became remorseful and stared into the river. It was a bright

sunny day; the Allegheny, clear and limpid, reflected objects near the river and the sky above, as true as a mirror. And what did Kelly see? A ferocious Indian, his face twisted into a horrible sneer — and that was too much for our friend. With a curse at the Indian image he leaped on it with clenched fists prepared to beat him into insensibility. But Kelly couldn't swim and would have drowned had not his copper-colored friend come to his rescue. By now Kelly was a wet, somewhat sober, but still colorful character.

The Allegheny River is part of our heritage. It occupies an important place in our history. In March of 1879, Paul Boynton, in a rubber suit, floated from Oil City to New Orleans with no trouble save the trip over the falls at Louisville. Perhaps the craziest stunt on record was the fellow who greased himself, donned a bathing suit, and swam the distance from Warren to Pittsburgh — 191 river miles. For his effort he received nothing but badly swollen legs.

But no one can take the place of Ben Hogan, who called himself the wickedest man on earth. Oil was discovered at Parker's Landing in 1869, and immediately the hamlet became a city, typical of all cities in America where the discovery of minerals or fossil fuels changes their character overnight. Like all such places it attracted a polyglot population. One of its central features was a large barge anchored at the wharf providing wine, women, and song. The owner and master of ceremonies was Ben Hogan. The mention of his name sent chills up the spines of all God-fearing mortals in the land. Ben's woman was "French Kate," and both had criminal records as long as your arm. She ran a variety show which was enough to make a hardened teamster blush. Ben, in his time, had been a prizefighter, pirate, bounty jumper, and blockade runner.

Ben and Kate finally landed in New York where Ben, in a weak and unsuspecting moment, went to hear Charles Sawyer, the "Converted Soak." Ben fell like a ton of bricks. He went back to his hotel, spent the night on his knees asking divine forgiveness, and the next morning emerged from his prayers with these words, "Peace fills my soul chock full and I feel awfully happy." He did become an evangelist, showed Kate the error of her ways, and there was a marriage ceremony. Ben's inoculation took, but Kate's didn't. She left him for a tough who struck her primitive fancy, but Ben persisted and remained true to his late life's calling for eighteen years until his death.

John Wilkes Booth spent some time in Franklin, Pennsylvania, in 1864 seeking his fortune in oil. All he did, however, was to irritate

all with whom he came in contact with his emotional diatribes against Lincoln, giving clear evidence even then of the emotional instability which caused the great tragedy just a short time later.

The story of Pittsburgh's rivers is not complete without tales of red-jacketed raftsmen who came down the Allegheny each year with lumber for the sawmills. Their journeys ended at Pittsburgh, and the hotels along the banks of the Allegheny catered to river men like Big Ellery Morgan whose exploits sound like Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.

A character study such as this cannot be told without mention of the keelboatmen who moved the barges and the keelboats up and down the rivers, especially the Ohio. The events in the lives of these men of history have for the most part survived as legend, but even so they were real people. Mike Fink, Mike Wolf, James Girty, and Bill Sedley are examples of the best, or the worst, of them. Take James Girty, nephew of the famous renegade Simon Girty. He boasted he had never been whipped. According to his mistress, "he was not constructed like ordinary men, for instead of ribs, bountiful nature had provided him with a solid bony casing on both sides, without any interstices, through which a dirk or a knife or bullet penetrate." His headquarters were on the Monongahela where he held high carnival with Indians and devils.

His narrowest escape came when he was in command of the barge "Black Snake" of Maysville. Several of his crew had been fleeced by gamblers in a dance hall in Natchez, and Girty and his men cleaned out the house, killing and wounding several of the gamblers in the process. Girty and one of his crew were held for manslaughter. The proprietress of the dance hall was an admirer of Girty's and succeeded in persuading the witnesses to absent themselves from the trial. That is, all but one. And she managed to give him a dose of arsenic in time; thus no one appeared against Girty at the trial, and he was acquitted.

Without question Mike Fink was the Paul Bunyan of the boatmen. Born in Pittsburgh in 1780, he was an Indian scout while in his teens, a keelboatman for most of his life, finally living out his last days as a fur trader with the Missouri Fur Co. until his death in 1823. He was an expert marksman — the William Tell of the frontier — only he shot tin cups full of whiskey off the heads of his friends at thirty yards. The keelboatman was always ready for a frolic, a song, or a fight. He drank in every dive from Pittsburgh to New Orleans, matched boasts with the loudest, and made them good in fair fight and

"rough and tumble." He had graduated "cum laude" from Gen. Anthony Wayne's school of Indian fighters and eventually became king of the western waters. "He was tough, boastful, blasphemous, and brutal; he acknowledged no deity or code not of his own making. He recognized no spirits other than those which could be found in a jug of whisky."

While their history is not that of Western Pennsylvania strictly speaking, no article of this nature can be written without mention of the river pirates, headquartered for the most part at Cave-in-Rock, Illinois, who worked their nefarious trade along the Ohio River. People who traveled the Ohio out of Pittsburgh often met a bloody fate at their hands. Lafitte, Blackbeard, Pew, and Long John Silver were somewhat angelic compared to the brothers, Micajah or "Big" Harpe and Wiley or "Little" Harpe. Nor can we forget Colonel Plug or Samuel Mason, all the scourge of the "Beautiful Ohio." The Harpes were unquestionably the most ruthless and purposeless killers in American frontier history. They and their women, if that's the correct word to use, left a trail of killings across the states bordering the Ohio and were the protagonists of some truly amazing and blood-curdling episodes.

Some of the rogues and ruffians in our history may not ever have been as colorful as river pirates or keelboatmen, but rogues and ruffians they were. Generally they paid for their crimes by execution at the hands of the colony or the state. It fell to the lot of an Indian, a Delaware, Mamachtoga by name, to be the first person convicted of murder west of the Alleghenies and hanged for his crime. I regret to report that the first woman executed in this county was Charlotte Jones who, in 1857 with the assistance of her lover Henry Fife, disposed of her uncle and aunt, George Wilson and his sister. The scene, McKeesport; the place, a little log cabin; the motive, robbery.

Public executions were the thing years ago. In fact, Pennsylvania was the first state in the Union to ban public executions. They were grim and slightly ribald spectacles; they were debasing. Thousands turned out to witness the death struggles of those poor unfortunates catapulted into eternity. District attorneys and sheriffs vied with one another to see who could put on the best, and in some cases, the cheapest public exhibition. For example, the hanging of Joseph Oroz here in 1896 was proudly reported by the local press as, "the most successful hanging in the county's history." Perhaps the most bizarre

of them all was that of James Allison from Indiana, Pennsylvania, who was executed in Pittsburgh on February 17, 1882, for the killing of his aged father with whom he quarreled constantly. It is reported that after his conviction he stood in the courtroom and pointed a finger at each juror in turn and predicted that none would die a natural death. And wonder of wonders, so the records state, none did.

Then there was that delightful Martha Grinder who was always to be found in the chambers of sick neighbors and friends — pleasant, genial, and with soft hand and kindly word soothing the pillow of the sufferer. But somehow the patients under her care never did get well. In fact, they died, and the cause of death, generally, was a mystery to their family as well as to their physician. While administering to the wants of a lady named Carothers, Martha was suspected of putting poison in her food. Mrs. Carothers died, and finally some bright soul had the brains to order an autopsy — and you know the rest — she was indeed full of poison. Martha was tried, convicted, and executed by hanging. She died on the scaffold smiling, we are told, on January 19, 1866.

How about "Shoe-box" Miller who was jailed for robbing an old couple named Connors of their life savings?—twenty-one thousand hard-earned dollars. He was caught, convicted, and sentenced to jail for seven years. While resting in the calaboose he acquired the sobriquet of "Shoe-box." He worked in the shoe shop and one day got some friends in the pen to nail him inside a large shoe box. This they did, and in that condition he was carried to freedom and the friendly arms of accomplices on the outside.

Of a certainty we can't forget John Pusey, a Pittsburgh native, who, while a guest of the state of Kansas in its penitentiary, robbed said institution. He was the bookkeeper and, when found out, was in default several thousand dollars.

In the early days of the Republic, there existed in those about to be executed a much keener sense of repentance and awareness of the magnitude of their crimes than we seem to sense today. Reflect on this from the pen of Jimmie Quinn executed on February 9, 1827.

O, thou gruesome gallows tree, built, O horror, built for me;
Lord of Heaven, on bended knee, do I cry in fear of Thee.
Gallows tree! Thy timbers strong feed my anguish all day long,
Telling me that soon my light must go out in blackest night.
When I leave my prison cell shall I go to heaven or to hell?
Lord, in Thee I place my trust, Thou art kind as well as just.

Terror makes my spirit sore — How I wish that all were o'er.
Time for me is but a span, yet I'd warn my fellow man
Here upon perdition's brink, Warn him 'gainst the curse of drink.
Rum, alas, has been my bane, cause of crime, disgrace and shame.
Lord, Thine ear in mercy lend, help, Oh help me face the end.
Glad I'll die on scaffold tree and atonement make to Thee.
Pain to reach that heavenly plain washed and cleansed from
sin & shame
Soon will come my fearful end; Thou O Christ will stand my
friend,
Thee I feel — Thy power and might. Now, O world, good night,
good night.

Even after all that, I am sorry to say, Jimmie was executed.

There were many hair-raising episodes in our history. Let the story of Emma Shafer speak for itself. She lived at 2125 W. Horton Street in the year of Our Lord, 1887. She had a marvelous head of fine blonde hair, which when loose, flowed beautifully over her shoulders. As she told the story, it was about nine in the morning when the front doorbell rang. She was combing her hair at the time and did not take time to put it up before answering the door. A well-dressed stranger asked her if she had any combings of her hair for sale. When her answer was no, he offered her ten dollars for her hair. She refused, and the stranger left. At about two in the afternoon, a heavily veiled lady called at the house selling hair crimpers and was invited into the parlor where Emma inspected the articles, finally stating that she had no use for such tools. But now she made her mistake. She said she had a lady friend who might be interested; at which point the saleslady talked beautiful, blonde Emma into sitting in a chair for a demonstration of how the crimpers worked. While thus seated, Emma was chloroformed, and when she awoke she found her golden tresses were gone and so was the saleslady. Thus endeth a tale; a Pittsburgh story — a bit hairy, I admit — but which might be called the "rape of the lock" at the Forks of the Ohio.

Pittsburgh's history is replete with many an engaging rascal, to wit, Sheeny Mike and English Bill, bank robbers, not to mention Pat the "Avenger." They confined themselves to the more gentlemanly crimes — bank robbing, heisting jewelry stores, etc. There were counterfeiters by the dozen — there were spectacular escapes from the penitentiary and from "Mt. Airy" as the county jail was called. Gaining widespread fame for their escapades and their escapes were the

famous "Biddle Boys." Here, briefly told, is their saga of crime and punishment.

There were two of them, Ed and Jack, and a third member of the gang named Walter Dorman who later turned state's evidence. The affair began with a robbery in the home of a Mt. Washington grocer named Kahney. They tried to chloroform Mrs. Kahney but she awoke, screamed, and when her husband rushed to her rescue he was shot and killed by the gang. Eventually the police found them in a rooming-house on Fulton Street, but the "Boys" mortally wounded police officer Fitzgerald while resisting arrest. Finally, all the gang were captured, tried, sentenced, and jailed.

During their jail sentence, they were visited often by the warden's wife, mother of four children, who smuggled to them hacksaw blades, clothing, guns, etc., and eventually assisted in their escape from jail. On the night of January 20, 1902, they sawed their way through the bars of their cells, captured the guards, shot two of them, and with keys furnished by the obliging lady in question they walked out the front door of the jail into temporary freedom. Never underestimate the power of a woman! She, wonder of wonders, accompanied them, finally ending up in a blinding snowstorm in Perrysville where, after much backing and filling, seeking food and drink, they were recognized, and the armed minions of the law set out after them in hot pursuit.

The Pittsburgh city and Allegheny County police spread the alarm far and wide and finally county detective McGovern's men, armed with high-powered rifles, caught sight of the "Boys," and a battle ensued, but not for long. The Biddle Boys' pistols were no match for the heavy artillery of the forces of the law, and shortly the Biddles were laid out in the snow, slightly perforated. They, then, were the riddled Biddles.

The "Boys" died; the jailer's wife recovered, was sentenced, served ten months of a two-year term, and was paroled. What prompted her to do what she did? God only knows — or perhaps her husband, but if so he wasn't telling. The chief of the county detectives was Col. "Buck" McGovern, a longtime trustee of this Historical Society. It is not to be inferred that capturing and shooting criminals is a condition precedent to trusteeship in this organization.

Were there no ungentlemanly lovers in our historical past? Yes, there were. George Swetnam, in poetic form, tells the story of Polly Williams and Philip Rogers. Boy meets girl in New Salem, Pennsyl-

vania, in 1808. Boy woos girl, sweet-talks her into leaving town to elope; when he gets her into the woods he does her in by the simple expedient of bashing her head in with a rock and then pushing her off a cliff. Poor Polly! Dastardly Philip!

Once upon a time in our history, a silver cup was awarded an imaginative Pittsburgh resident for this conundrum. "Why is ex-Mayor Barker like Joseph in Egypt? Because he was taken out of prison to rule the people." Joseph Barker, mayor of Pittsburgh in 1850, was elected while in jail. And thereby hangs a tale. During the 1840s the city was afflicted by a rash of street preachers, most of them uncouth and ignorant, and each fanatical on some measure of reform or other social panacea. Joseph Barker was the most famous of this group as he harangued against Masonry, Catholics, and politicians. He made such a nuisance of himself that he finally was tried, sentenced, and jailed for one year. The furor surrounding the trial was such as to make him a public hero, and as a joke he was put forth as a candidate for mayor. Always for the underdog, the good people of Pittsburgh chose him as their mayor in the election of January 7, 1850. He was carried from the jail to the mayor's office where the incumbent was ejected from the chair, and Joe was placed therein.

At first he stuck to business, abandoned his street preaching, and did reasonably well as the city's chief executive. But soon he was in trouble with everyone, especially the police department with whom he feuded constantly. He jousts with every department in the city government, city council, the courts, but especially the police department. There was a short period during his term of office when the city had two police departments, each taking great pleasure in clubbing the other rather than in caring for public safety. There were lawsuits and countersuits and tremendous municipal confusion which ultimately resulted in the mayor losing in the courts, taking up street preaching once again, and being defeated in the next election. That election was noteworthy in that a woman, Jane Grey Swisshelm, ran for the office and polled three votes.

What of Barker? He went from bad to worse, became the town drunk, his harangues became unprintable, and finally he was killed by a train in Manchester in 1862.

Pittsburgh's North Side, or Old Allegheny as it was known for years, contributed many disreputable characters to history. William H. Rimmel, longtime writer for the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, tells of a heavy-set, red-headed woman known as "Mother" Miller. She ran a

boardinghouse on Grantham Street known to the police as "The Buzzards Roost." The house was a haven for beggars over whom she had complete control. She ruled the roost with an iron hand. At times there were as many as fifty beggars registered, and each had a street assigned to him. Each reported to "Mother" every evening while she took her "cut" from the loot they spread before her. Their "take" was room and board and the honor of being able to work under her rule. If any beggar violated her rules or strayed off the assigned route, she had him driven off the street and sent to the workhouse. With the advent of the reform movement the roost was closed, never to open again. And when she died, none of the supposed riches were found in her possession.

Rimmel tells of the fabulous Jimmie McKey, saloon keeper extraordinary and boss of the underworld, known to thousands as "Little Canada." His saloon was the capitol of crookdom for years, and through his wild and welcome doors came the great and near great and the wanted in the world of crime. No writ or extradition from any state was worth the paper it was written on in Old Allegheny. To the thieves and police alike the city was a refuge. One rule was sacred — pull no jobs in Allegheny. If you obeyed that rule you could eat, drink, and be merry in Jimmie's place or any Allegheny joint without fear of being arrested. The stories about Jimmie are legion — far too numerous to relate in this short article. Suffice to say, Jimmie weathered all the political and reform storms, lived to be eighty-five, and had we been at his funeral we would have seen hundreds of thieves, politicians, rich men, and poor men standing bareheaded at his grave as he was lowered to his last and long sleep.

In his well-known "Pittsylvania" articles, George Swetnam tells of a stooped, aged hag named Moll Derry who lived years ago some ten miles south of Uniontown. Her reputation was ghastly — the worst in Pennsylvania female history. She was credited with being able to cast spells, foretell the future, and take ghostly flights through the air—in fact, perform as a witch, for it was believed she was a witch. More than one housewife who angered Moll, so the stories say, found that her bread would not rise until she heated a horseshoe white-hot, cooled it, and put it over her door to break the spell. Legend says that Moll placed a curse on three men who made fun of her telling them that all three would be hanged.

One was John McFall who in a drunken rage pulled a tavern door from its hinges and bludgeoned to death the tavern keeper. He

was the first man to be hanged in Fayette County. The second was Ned Cassidy who fled west after a peddler was butchered and sunk in a mill pond in 1800. In Ohio he murdered another man and was hanged for that crime. And the third went to Greene County and hanged himself in a fit of despondency so the story goes. The question here is — who was the rogue? — Moll or the three who were hanged?

I have not done justice to my subject. There is but limited space in which to tell of all of those characters, colorful and otherwise, who were the sinners, and not the saints, in Western Pennsylvania's past. I have said nothing of Lorilla and Willie, a pair of lovers whose life's tale is a sad one; or that simply fascinating gentleman from Paris, Kentucky, who set himself up in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, as a doctor and whose fame as a healer spread far and wide. "Doctor" John F. Bradee was quite a character. It is a fact also that he was a counterfeiter; convicted of assault and battery and perjury; had his land sold out from under him at sheriff's sale for nonpayment of taxes; married the daughter of the town's leading citizen; and finally came to an inglorious end for robbing the United States mails.

I have not recorded how the *hoi polloi* treated the "Swedish Nightingale," Jenny Lind, on her first appearance in Pittsburgh. So rough and uncouth was the raucous crowd that the incomparable songstress was finally whisked away from Masonic Hall where the concert was held by being placed in the van of a drayman named Keating and driven to her hotel. I have left unsung the saga of the gang which murdered Ross Township constable Vernon Ross near the Keating Car barn in West View and then escaped from "durance vile" after conviction and sentencing. I have not risked censure by recalling how Catherine Bevan fed her husband rat poison until he died and that she rests in our history as being the only woman in the county to be burned to death for her crime.

And the newspaper notices — a story in itself could be written about the characters who spread themselves on the pages of public print years ago in this city by the Forks of the Ohio.

"Notice: My wife Fanny having thought proper to withdraw herself from my company and protection, without the least cause given on my part for her having done so, I am compelled, though very reluctantly, to forbid all persons from trusting her on my account, as I will pay no debts which she may contract hereafter. N.B. I also inform those who wish to be shaved in Imperial Style that I am always to be

found in my shop on Market Street between Front and Water Streets ; signed J. Tibbette."

Before I close, let me be serious for a moment and say that there is one interesting theme which seems to be present in all the police records and other such documents examined in preparation for this article. The theme is this: regardless of the era or the year, there always is a cry about "police brutality," loss of civil rights, and many other phrases so familiar to us today. The history of our nation is one which testifies that no one likes personal restraint or wants personal liberties curtailed. Nevertheless, some limitation on liberty is necessary for there to be the tranquility of order in society. And it is the police — the forces of "law and order" — which see that peace is preserved. But their lot is not a happy one, and that prompts me to conclude by recalling a song which came from the fertile imaginations of those two great and colorful characters of the days of the greatness of the British Empire, Sir Arthur Sullivan and Sir William Schwenk Gilbert. It's from their operetta *The Pirates of Penzance*, and it's sung in the second act by the Sergeant of Police.

*When a felon's not engaged in his employment
or maturing his felonious little plans
his capacity for innocent enjoyment
is just as great as any honest man's.
Our feelings we with difficulty smother
when constabulary duty's to be done
Ah, take one consideration with another
a policeman's lot is not a happy one.*

*When the enterprising burglar's not a-burgling
when the cut-throat isn't occupied in crime
he loves to hear the little brook a-gurgling
and listen to the merry village chime.
When the coster's finished jumping on his mother
he loves to lie a-basking in the sun
Ah, take one consideration with another
The policeman's lot is not a happy one.*

HAVE YOU BEEN IN YOUR ATTIC LATELY?

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