
Lyon, Shorb & Company Photograph Album

THE Historical Society has recently acquired an unusual collection of photographs from the Centre County Historical Society. These photos depict the owners and employees of Lyon, Shorb & Company, also known as the Sligo Iron Works of Pittsburgh. They are all studio shots, showing the workers in what is assumed to be their work dress; most of them hold a tool used in the factory. (There is not in every case, however, a definite correlation between the tool and the job the man held.) Forty-five of the workers were also photographed in their better "street clothes." The Society has no information on the particular reasons why these pictures were taken.

The work was done primarily by Cargo's Photographic Rooms, which were located at the Dispatch Building, 69 Fifth Street, Pittsburgh. And by tracking the photographer through city directories it is possible to say that the album was produced sometime between 1862 and 1867. Two photographs in the album have revenue stamps on them dated 1865; these two pictures, however, are not the same as the majority of others.

The album itself is 9 1/2 by 9 1/4 inches. It has a green cloth board cover and had a leather spine, now missing. Some of the pages are still sewn together, and the whole album closes with two brass clasps. There are 47 pages of photographs — no text — with six photographs per page, for a total of 282. The photographs are all *cartes de visite* — small, easily exchanged portraits — in excellent condition. All but seven of the photographs are identified.

Accompanying the album is a handwritten list of the company's employees with their job titles. This list includes the names of 208 individuals, only one of whom is not pictured in the album. There are 21 individuals in the album, though, who are not included on the list. In many instances the spelling of names found on the list varies considerably from the spelling found in the album. The handwriting on the list is

different from that found in the album, and it may well be that the two were done at different times. (The writing also varies within the album, possibly with separate shooting sessions.) The list itself is two sheets of long, blue, lined paper which is folded to create seven pages of names.

Lyon, Shorb & Company was founded in 1825 by Robert T. Stewart and John Lyon. The Sligo Iron Works was located on the south side of the Monongahela River opposite Pittsburgh's Market Street. The mill was in many respects a branch of the more extensive iron works owned by Stewart and Lyon on the Juniata River in Centre County. In 1828 Stewart sold his interests in the company and the establishment became known as Barnet, Shorb & Company. Then in 1831 the company changed hands again and was renamed Lyon, Shorb & Company. The mills were acquired by Phillips, Nimick & Company in 1873, but the name did not change. Throughout the company's history its manufacturing facilities remained on the South Side; its warehouse, and possibly the offices, were located at the corner of Wood and Water Streets in Pittsburgh.

In 1826 the Sligo mill processed 900 tons of iron annually. All the iron was brought from Centre County in large blocks, or "blooms," which did not require puddling but were immediately ready for rolling. The rolling engine, built by Mark Stackhouse, was one of the most powerful in the Pittsburgh area — weighing 120 tons, with 130 horsepower. The 30 men employed at this time produced bar, boiler, nail and sheet iron valued at \$99,000 per year. The Pittsburgh City Directory states that by 1937 the company owned two engines which produced 5,000 tons of iron annually, worth \$800,000.

From a list in the 1839 Pittsburgh City Directory, we know of 59 men who worked for Lyon, Shorb & Co., and 26 boys whose names are not given. About 200,000 bushels of coal were consumed annually, and about 4,000 tons of Juniata beams were manufactured yearly into: 500 tons of nails; 500 tons of boiler iron; 300 tons of sheet and fire-bed iron; 2,700 tons of assorted iron bar. (This seems to be an approximation.) The whole manufacture amounted to about \$600,000 per year.

A description of the works from 1879 states that the company employed 250 men. There were 25 puddling furnaces, 10 heating furnaces, eight steam engines with 14 boilers in four separate batteries, and three steam hammers. (Much of this equipment must have been extant under the ownership of Lyon and Shorb.) The mill seems to have been known

particularly for flanged boiler heads and flue holes which were manufactured by specially designed machinery.

Lyon, Shorb & Company continued to exist for a number of years following the sale to Phillips, Nimick and Company in '73. Well into the 1880s an officer of the company is listed in the Pittsburgh City Directory. The Society could find no other information about the company through the 1880s or beyond.

With this scanty story, we've chosen photographs for publication somewhat at random. One criteria was how well the photos would reproduce, so lighter photos with less contrast were not used. Since there was a wide age range of employees — although most are young adults and middle-aged men — and several surnames are repeated, we've included groups that appear to be relatives and span two or three generations of iron workers. And we tried to vary our choices according to job. This was not a priority, however: we looked mainly at the photos and not the job descriptions. With so many different kinds of work to be done, a small sample could not possibly represent each type of labor. Here is a list of the job titles:

ash wheeler	carpenter
assistant bundler	carpenter and house builder
assistant catcher	carter
assistant engineer	catcher, 8 inch train
assistant furnaceman	catcher, 10 inch train
assistant heater	catcher, bar rolls
assistant muck shearer	catcher, muck rolls
assistant plate roller	cinder wheeler
assistant roller	coal heaver
assistant shearman	coal stocker
assistant watchman	coal tipper
assistant wheeler	day watchman
blacksmith	drag down
bloom hauler	drag down, plate mill
boiler	drag out
boiler superintendent	drayman
bundler	engineer

ex engineer
ex sheet roller
furnace builder
hammerman
heater
heater at hammer
heater, 8 inch train
heater, 10 inch train
heater, bar mill
heater, bar rolls
heater, sheet mill
heave up, bar mill
heave up, plate mill
helper
helper at hammer
laborer
machinist
marker
marker out, sheet mill
mason tender
millwright
muck roll heave up
muck roller
muck shearer
N.Y.A. (New York Agency?)
New York Agency
painter
pile maker
plate shearman
pull up
rivet cutter
roll turner
roller, 8 inch train
roller, 10 inch
rougher down
rougher down, 10 inch train
rougher down, bar mill
rougher up, 8 inch
rougher up, bar mill
run out, 8 inch
scrap shearer
scrap stocker
scrap straightener
scrap wheeler
scrapper
screw down, plate mill
screw down, sheet mill
shearman
shearman, 10 inch
sheet roller
sheet shearman
St. Louis Store
stamper
stocker
stocker at hammer
stocker, 10 inch train
stone cutter
stone mason
straightener
straightener, 10 inch train
straightener, bar rolls
warehouseman
watchman
weighmaster

HARTS



F. Hart



Adam Hart



C. Hart

Clockwise (from top left):
F. ("Salty") Hart, assistant roller
Adam Hart, heater, bar mill
C. Hart, scrap straightener

MYERS



Geo. Myers



P. Myers



M. Myers



J. Myers

SNAUERS



P. Snauer



A. Snauer



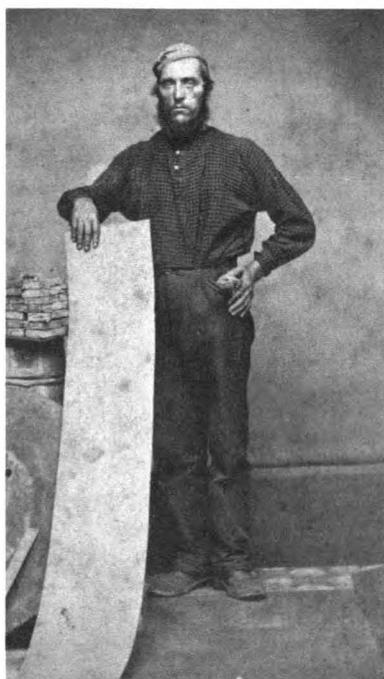
J. Snauer

- Clockwise (from top left):*
Geo. (George) Myers, bundler
P. Myers, assistant bundler or
assistant shearman
P. Snauer, straightener
A. Snauer (Snuer), straightener
J. Snauer (Sneur), stamper
P. Myers, assistant bundler or
assistant shearman
M. Myers, (Jr.), pull up

KERCHERS



M. Kercher Sr.



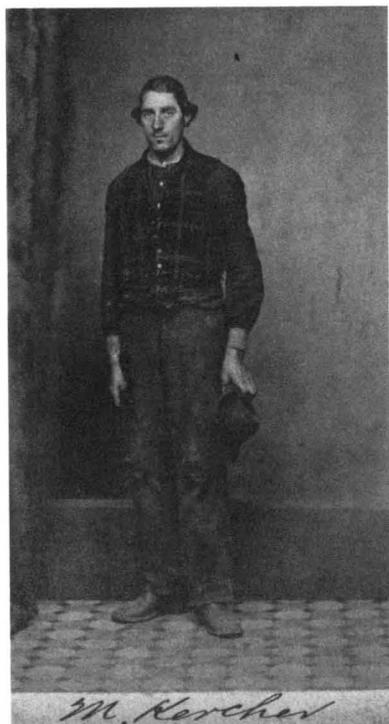
M. Kercher Jr.



B. Kercher



B. Kercher

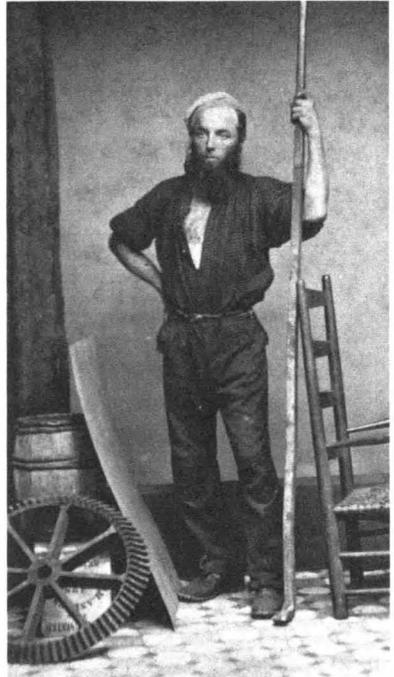


- Clockwise (from top left):*
- M. Kercher, Sr., pile maker
 - M. Kercher, Jr., stocker at hammer
 - M. Kercher, scrap wheeler
 - J. Kearcher (Kercher), helper
 - V. Kaercher (Kercher), muck shearer
 - C. Kaercher, (Kercher), pile maker
 - B. Kaercher (Kercher), heave up, plate mill

OTHERS



C. Hagen



F. Weixel



John Steiner

Clockwise (from top left):
C. Hagen (Hagan), boiler
F. Weixel, boiler
John Steiner, assistant shearman

OTHERS



Geo. Keil



Jos. Reine



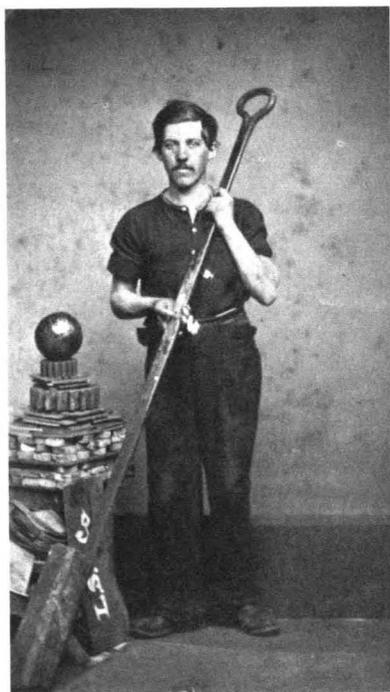
And. Sneider

Clockwise (from top left):
Geo. (George) Keil, pile maker
Jos. (Joseph) Reine, pile maker
And. (Andrew) Sneider
(Snyder), watchman

OTHERS



J. Carlin



R. M. Brokaw



C. Pauline

Clockwise (from top left):
J. (James) Carlin, heater,
8 inch train
R. M. Brokaw, heater
C. Pauline, mason tender

OTHERS

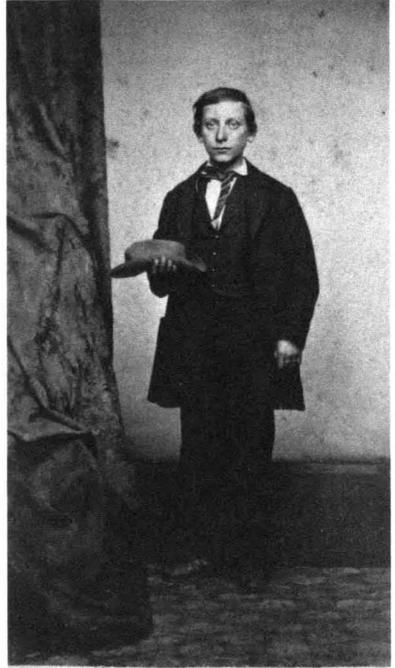


Clockwise (from top left):
C. Glans (Glaus), carter
S. Wells, carpenter
M. Hagan, boiler

OTHERS



Jas. Watt



Jno. Walters



J. Diebold

Clockwise (from top left):

Jas. (James) Watt, ex sheet roller

Jno. (John) Walters, straightener,
10 inch

J. Diebold (Debold), rougher up,
bar mill