Beyond an astonishing bravery, nothing would seem to link these five men and women, isolated so irrevocably by time and distance. What they and nearly 9,000 more people do share, however, is a hard-won medal from the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission, founded in 1904 by Andrew Carnegie (1835–1919) to honor outstanding acts of selfless heroism.

The commission has been described as an organization “without parallel in the history of human benevolence.” Conceived by a complex, multifaceted man and organized by his handpicked associates, it offers a direct link to Carnegie and a unique window on Pittsburgh innovation. More broadly, the Pittsburgh-based commission represents a pivotal step in the development of philanthropy in America. At a time when no large foundations existed as we know them today, and when charity consisted mostly of poverty relief on local levels, its founders made the Carnegie Hero Fund a model for large-scale, “scientific,” attitude-changing, yet still surprisingly personal giving. Around a democratic ideal of heroism that few in 1904 shared or understood, and that some in fact ridiculed, Pittsburghers built an organization that continues today to revere the extraordinary courage of ordinary people.

Today, 21 volunteer members make up the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission, which meets regularly to evaluate and recognize acts of heroism performed throughout the United States and Canada. The commission awards the Carnegie Medal and $3,500, and offers tuition assistance, to people who knowingly risk their own lives in the effort to save another. If a rescuer sustains disabling injuries, the commission may award a supplemental continuing...
On May 19, 1912, Henry J. Lutz, 51, fell into the Niagara River and was being carried rapidly toward the American Falls. Although he could not swim, Kevorkian, 24, laborer, entered the river and waded out about 18 feet to a point in knee-deep water about 150 feet from the brink. Having been handed a pike pole, Kevorkian attempted to snag Lutz as he approached, but the attempt failed. Kevorkian waded farther out into deeper water and on his second attempt the hook on the pole caught on one of Lutz’s shoes. Others formed a human chain and helped them to safety.

The Hero Fund Commission began in earnest on a winter day early in 1904, when Carnegie summoned two Pittsburghers to his New York mansion at 2 East 91st Street—today the Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum. One was Charles Taylor (1857–1922), innovative steel chemist and metallurgist. A former Carnegie partner, Taylor had enriched the Carnegie Company by formulating lighter and stronger steels for railroad-car construction. The second visitor was Frank Wilmot (1872–1930), young and energetic, and a gifted administrator. The two were now chairman and manager, respectively, of the Carnegie Relief Fund, and they had come prepared to discuss the terrible explosion that had occurred just days ago at the Allegheny River town of Harwick, Pa. On January 25, 1904, in one of the worst accidents in U.S. coal-mining history, 179 men had lost their lives. Two more had died while heroically trying to rescue those underground.

Carnegie had created his $4 million Relief Fund in 1901, immediately after selling the Carnegie Company and receiving bonds worth $225,639,000 par value of the new United States Steel Corporation. He intended the fund to aid workers injured in “his” mills and provide small pensions for needy, aged employees. The “industrial Napoleon” had then set off on a new campaign: the distribution of a massive fortune, as Carnegie wrote, “in the manner ... best calculated to produce the most beneficial results for the community.” Although not the first to do so, he aimed to provide “ladders upon which the aspiring can rise.”

The difference between him and earlier philanthropists, though, was the scale and strategy of Carnegie’s giving. He would disburse approximately $350 million, much of it designed to advance opportunity throughout society. Grappling with the
could “improve the general condition of the people” and even “some day solve the problem of the Rich and the Poor.”

Whether through research, public libraries, technical schools, or museums, Carnegie preached that philanthropy could promote ideas and alter (he would say improve) public attitudes. Only the millions accumulated by a few men like himself and John D. Rockefeller made possible such a vision of giving.

Now, early in 1904, Carnegie was about to reveal his plan for a gift that would be “absolutely unique among the world’s philanthropies of modern or ancient times.”

A secretary ushered Taylor and Wilmot into Carnegie’s library-study, a personal room full of awards, medals, and autographed photos of kings, great writers,
Edna Joyce became a hero on January 25, 1936, despite her physical and mental disabilities. The 43-year-old woman was a patient at Passavant Memorial Homes in Rochester, Pennsylvania. Like the seven other women who lived with her in one of the facility’s two-story, brick cottages, Joyce suffered from epilepsy, although less severely than the others. A long-term patient, Joyce was judged generally rational and able to function independently, except when actually in the throes of a seizure.

That is why when a smoky fire broke out in the basement of the cottage that winter night, the women’s attendant asked Joyce to gather the other residents and get them out while she went for help. The attendant returned to the rear of the burning building a few minutes later and found Joyce by the back door with five of the other patients. Only 57-year-old Maude Miller was unaccounted for. When the attendant asked Joyce to find Miller, Joyce immediately turned back into the building. That was the last time she was seen alive.

Three days later, after the fire had been extinguished, the burned bodies of Joyce and Miller were discovered near each other among the charred ruins. In recognition of her intent and subsequent sacrifice, Joyce was posthumously awarded a Carnegie Medal.

Andrew Carnegie chose one of his former partners, the innovative Charles L. Taylor, to organize his first Hero Fund Commission. Taylor served as the commission’s first president.

THE COMMISSIONERS

When Carnegie finished outlining his plan to Taylor and Wilmot, he produced a list of 21 Pittsburghers he had chosen to serve as his Hero Fund’s first commissioners. Nearly all would meet for the first time on April 15, 1904, in the Carnegie Building in Downtown Pittsburgh. It seems fitting that they gathered in one of the city’s first steel-framed skyscrapers, for the structure they forged around one altruistic idea has endured solidly for a century.

Carnegie admired his original commissioners as big-minded, pragmatic “men of affairs.” He could trust them to manage his idea and his philanthropic capital, just as he had counted on his “young geniuses” to advance his business. Among them were:

- James H. Reed (1853–1927), Carnegie lawyer, U.S. Steel director, and business organizer;
- Edwin H. Anderson (1861–1947), first director of Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, who shaped the library into a multifaceted resource to serve the community, a new ideal for libraries at the time;
- William L. Abbott (1852–1930), who, as chairman of Carnegie, Phipps & Co., had organized its first system of salaried salesmen; and
- Edward M. Bigelow (1850–1916), Pittsburgh’s first director of public and political leaders.
To the Hero Fund Commission

Gentlemen,

We live in a heroic age. Not seldom are we thrilled by deeds of heroism where men or women are injured or lose their lives in attempting to preserve or rescue their fellows; such the heroes of civilization. The heroes of barbarism maimed or killed theirs.

I have long felt that the heroes and those dependent upon them should be freed from pecuniary cares resulting from their heroism, and, as a fund for this purpose, I have transferred to the Commission five million dollars of First Collateral Five Per Cent. Bonds of the United States Steel Corporation, the proceeds to be used as follows:

FIRST. To place those following peaceful vocations, who have been injured in heroic effort to save human life, in somewhat better positions pecuniarily than before, until again able to work. In case of death, the widow and children, or other dependents, to be provided for until she remarries, and the children until they reach a self-supporting age. For exceptional children, exceptional grants may be made for exceptional education. Grants of sums of money may also be made to heroes or heroines as the Commission thinks advisable – each case to be judged on its merits.

SECOND. No grant is to be continued unless it be soberly and properly used, and the recipients remain respectable, well-behaved members of the Community, but the heroes and heroines are to be given a fair trial, no matter what their antecedents. Heroes deserve pardon and a fresh start.

THIRD. A Medal shall be given to the hero, or widow, or next of kin, which shall recite the heroic deed it commemorates, that descendants may know and be proud of their descent. The Medal shall be given for the heroic act, even if the doer be uninjured, and also a sum of money, should the Commission deem such gift desirable.

FOURTH. Many cities provide pensions for policemen, firemen, teachers and others, and some may give rewards for acts of heroism. All these and other facts the Commission will take into account and act accordingly in making grants. Nothing could be further from my intention than to deaden or interfere with these most creditable provisions, doubly precious as showing public and municipal appreciation of faithful and heroic service. I ask from the Commission most careful guard against this danger. The Medal can of course be offered in such cases. Whether something more can not judiciously be done, at the request of or with the approval of the city authorities, the Commission shall determine. I hope there can be.

FIFTH. The claims upon the Fund for some years can not exhaust it. After years, however, pensioners will become numerous. Should the Commission find, after allowing liberally for this, that a surplus will remain, it has the power to make grants in the case of accidents (preferably where a hero has appeared) to those injured. The action taken in the recent Harwick Mine accident, where Heroes Taylor and Lyle lost their lives, is an illustration. The community first raised a fund of forty thousand dollars, which was duplicated by me after waiting until the generosity of the community had full scope. Here again the Commission should be exceedingly careful, as in this case, not to deaden, but to stimulate employers or communities to do their part, for such action benefits givers themselves as well as recipients.

SIXTH. It seems probable that cities and employers on this continent will ultimately be placed under similar conditions to those of Britain, Germany, and other European States, and required to provide against accidents to employees. Therefore, the Commission, by a two-thirds vote, may devote any surplus that accrues beyond providing for heroes and their dependents (which provision must never be abandoned) to such other modes of benefiting those in want, chiefly caused through no fault of their own, (such as drunkenness, laziness, crime, etc.) but through exceptional circumstances, in such manner and to such extent as the Commission thinks advisable and likely to do more good than if such sums were given to those injured by accident, where the latter may be suitably provided for by law, or otherwise.

SEVENTH. The field embraced by the Fund is the United States of America, the Dominion of Canada, the Colony of Newfoundland and the waters thereof. The sea is the scene of many heroic acts. No action more heroic than that of doctors and nurses volunteering their services in the case of epidemics. Railroad employees are remarkable for heroism. All these and similar cases are embraced. Whenever heroism is displayed by man or woman in saving human life, the Fund applies.

EIGHTH. No personal liability will attach to members for any act of the Commission. The Commission has power to fill vacancies.

NINTH. The Commission has full power to sell, invest, or re-invest all funds; to employ all officials, including Secretary, traveling agents to visit and oversee beneficiaries, etc., and to fix their compensation. Members of the Commission shall be reimbursed all expenses incurred, including traveling expenses attending meetings. The President shall be granted such honoraria as the Commission thinks proper and as he can be prevailed upon to accept.

TENTH. An annual report, including a detailed statement of sums and medals granted, and the reasons therefor, shall be made each year and published in at least one newspaper in the principal cities of the countries embraced by the Fund. A finely executed roll of the heroes and heroines shall be kept displayed in the office at Pittsburgh.

Andrew Carnegie
New York, March 12th, 1904
Witness, Louise Whitfield Carnegie
Two days before Christmas 1959, Manuel Corral hung by his ankles inside an abandoned well, hoping to save a little boy's life.

Three-year-old Randy McKinley had been playing near his family's farm when he slipped through the well's casing, a pipe just 15.5 inches in diameter. Although the shaft was 300 feet deep, water filled it to about 68 feet below the top. McKinley fell into the water, then held to the sides of the well, his head just out of the chilly water. Friends heard his screams and rescuers responded rapidly, but soon realized the only way to save the child was to lower someone into the shaft.

Only Corral was small enough to fit into the tight opening. With a rope tied around each ankle, the 43-year-old farm worker and father of four was lowered head down and hands first into the dark hole. Twice getting stuck inside the rusty pipe, he finally wiggled down far enough to find the child. Grabbing McKinley's wrists, Corral held on while the men above pulled them up. Despite Corral's having been upside down for 15 minutes, his grip never failed, and both he and McKinley were saved with only minor scrapes and bruises.

In 1904, at age 17, Louis A. Baumann, Jr., dove into Sulphur Pond in Wilkinsburg and saved Charles Stevick from drowning. The first medal recipient was pictured in American Illustrated Magazine.

This diagram was drawn by a field agent to document the 1959 J. Manuel Corral well rescue of three-year-old Randy McKinley, who was stuck below ground.

Far ahead of his time, "the father of Pittsburgh's parks" tried to engineer a greener, more livable city. Also prominent was William J. Holland, D.D. (1848–1932), "churchman, educator, artist, traveler, scholar, scientist, and public-spirited citizen." As director of Carnegie Institute, Holland oversaw the expedition to Wyoming to excavate Diplodocus carnegii, the world's first "celebrity dinosaur." Each commissioner in his way was an innovator who had demonstrated unusual ability in managing a business or advancing the new endeavors of his time: steel, railroads, electricity, and such civic improvements as universities, museums, urban parks, a symphony orchestra, and scientific societies. Two had risen with Carnegie from impoverished boyhoods. Six had been his partners in building the largest steel operation in the world. Two were related to him through blood or marriage. Ten — almost half — already served as trustees of Carnegie Institute, his first major philanthropic endowment.

Men who dealt in facts and numbers, the commissioners were nonetheless captivated by Carnegie's vision of the heroic potential in every individual. Developing a new, large-scale organization to promote a very personal ideal, they became innovators in advancing the systematic analysis, administration, and distribution of great wealth in America.

Even before the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission could begin to reward heroes and take care of their dependents, its "shrewd" members first had to make a Solomon-like decision. What in fact was a heroic act? "One great difficulty in carrying out Mr. Carnegie's wishes lies in the fact that the enterprise is so new," claimed American Illustrated Magazine. "And when it comes to deciding whether an act is really heroic or not, one is a little in doubt as to whether a poet or an actuary should be called upon to determine it."

Meanwhile Carnegie was pushing for publicity, firing off hastily penciled notes.
from his castle in Scotland. “It does not do to have such new ideas fall still born – I regret the delay,” he chided Wilmot in April 1904. “The idea being new, to create an interest in it and let all men feel the Heroes are to be taken care of must be widely known.” Carnegie had a very modern understanding of the media’s power to shape public opinion, and he knew that the daily papers’ appetite for news could quickly date a fresh idea.

The Hero Fund did indeed attract widespread attention in the United States and abroad, and most journals praised the new concept. But Carnegie’s “robber baronetcy” and the labor confrontation at Homestead in 1892 had made him a controversial figure. A number of voices ridiculed his new philanthropy. Quite a few criticized what they misinterpreted as the “commercialization” of heroism. Another later dismissed it as a branch of Carnegie’s “peace propaganda.” By no means everyone understood its purpose: letters even arrived at the Hero Fund office seeking venture capital.

THE HERO HUNTERS

Not until October 19, 1904, did the full commission vote to reward only “acts, in which conclusive evidence may be obtained showing that the person performing the act, voluntarily risked his own life in saving, or attempting to save, the life of a fellow being.” The commissioners struggled next with the realization that they could not by themselves verify hundreds of reported acts of heroism taking place throughout the United States, Canada, and “the waters thereof.” Yet only by rigorous documentation of the facts could the elusive nature of heroism be proved to a skeptical public. The solution came in January 1905, when the commission hired its first “special agent”: George A. Campsey, formerly a reporter for the Pittsburgh Times.

Ten such agents would work for the commission by 1912, all college-educated former journalists. A 1909 magazine article claimed that the commissioners found journalists’ training “conducive to thoroughness of investigation and lucidity of statement.” Another writer singled out the educated reporter’s ability “to detect fraud and exaggeration.” And, thanks to sensational newspaper crusades against social injustice and exposés of political and economic corruption, journalism appealed to adventurous, idealistic men and women – just the sort of eyes and ears the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission needed.

Later known as “field representatives” and now “case investigators,” these traveling agents were in some ways pioneer program officers. They became the paid experts on whom the commissioners relied to guide their policy. The commission provided each with the latest in equipment: a pocket Kodak camera, instruments for measuring distances, and a typewriter. Traveling for as many as 11 months each year, the “hero hunters” studied, measured, and photographed the site of each act, read all related documents, and interviewed everyone connected to the

Herbert W. Eyman, a Carnegie Hero Fund Commission case investigator for 25 years, believed that a “sacred trust” existed among heroes, commissioners, and investigators. He was profiled in The New Yorker in 1970.
On November 7, 1960, Joseph Buttice, a 34-year-old factory hand at an H. J. Heinz Company food plant, had climbed down through the small, circular hatch of a railroad tank car from which tomato paste had been unloaded. Several inches of paste remained in the bottom of the 19,880-gallon tank, along with nitrogen used as a preservative during shipping. Just after Buttice reached the bottom of the ladder, he began to suffocate and collapsed backwards into the soupy paste. His supervisor, at the top of the ladder, immediately climbed off the car and ran to a nearby building to report the accident.

Stephen Jagusczak, a 34-year-old cook’s helper, ran back to the accident scene with the supervisor. While the supervisor got an air hose, Jagusczak climbed up on the tank car, squeezed through the hatch, and started down the ladder. The supervisor called out a warning, but though Jagusczak hesitated an instant, he continued climbing down. The supervisor scrambled to the top of the tank car and looked into the hatch in time to see Jagusczak also slump, face forward, into the paste.

The supervisor inserted the hose into the tank and began feeding in fresh air. Other men arrived. One supervisor put on an air mask but was unable to squeeze through the hatch, only 20 inches in diameter. Then Peter P. Smoley, a 25-year-old preparation helper, put on a mask and, after being instructed to leave if he felt affected by the gas, he climbed down the ladder. At the bottom, he was able only to turn Jagusczak’s head so it was out of the paste before he himself was overcome, collapsing across Buttice.

A man from the plant’s safety department arrived. Donning an air mask, he climbed down, secured with a rope around his waist and carrying a second. He was able to get the second rope around Smoley and Buttice, and each was hauled out of the tank. A fireman entered the tank for the rescue of Jagusczak.

Although Buttice had been in the tank car the longest, he was resuscitated and, though hospitalized for a time, eventually recovered. However, neither Smoley nor Jagusczak could be revived. In addition to accepting a posthumously awarded Carnegie Medal for their son’s heroic act, Smoley’s parents were granted money to help defray his funeral expenses. The commission also awarded Jagusczak’s widow a monthly grant, which she continues to receive 44 years later.

incident. “Facts, and facts only” became their Sherlock Holmes-like mantra.

“An experienced investigator quickly scents a case that amounts to nothing,” Harper’s Weekly informed its readers. “But on a genuine case he spends anywhere from two to three days to as many months.” After a day in the field, the investigator used the evening hours to type his daily log and detailed report, as required by the commissioner-managers. The report included (and still includes) the time, place, and circumstances of the act, along with pertinent facts such as weather conditions or tidal stages. If, for example, the investigator discovered that the tide had been out at the time of a supposed near drowning, he might doubt that a “rescue” had taken place in six feet of water.

Each report had to include statements from all those interviewed and information about the witnesses’ reputations. Were they honest, reliable people? How old was the rescuer (always listed as RR)? How much did the RR weigh? How much did the rescued (QD) weigh? Exactly how many feet from the approaching train did the QD fall? Exactly how fast was the train traveling? How far from the riverbank was the QD? How many miles per hour was the current flowing? “When possible,” stated an early investigator’s manual, “current speeds should be measured by timing a floating object over a measured distance.”

Every question and every measurement led toward one goal: can it be conclusively established that an ordinary man or woman, going about his or her daily life, knowingly risked that life in the attempt to
save another human being? In the words of Herbert W. Eyman, a 25-year investigator who became the subject of a New Yorker profile in 1970, "Essentially field work is a quest for truth."33

The investigators' job would eventually carry them by hay wagon, motorcycle, jet plane, "from a roomette in a luxury night train to ... the bow seat of a small outboard motorboat, from the generally ubiquitous taxicab to self-propelled shoe leather."34 Suburban growth, highway construction, and the decline of public transportation led to the use of rental cars in the 1970s. By the mid-1980s the investigators came in from the field. In the Carnegie Hero Fund’s centennial year, the commission’s three case investigators work entirely from the office, relying on telephones and computers and fax machines to conduct their diligent, far-flung research.

THE COMMISSION CASTS A SAFETY NET

"I have long felt that the heroes and those dependent upon them should be freed from pecuniary cares resulting from their heroism," declared Andrew Carnegie’s 1904 Deed of Trust to his Hero Fund Commission. And in remarkably personal ways, the commissioners and staff have carried out this trust. Beyond distributing financial awards, tuition, funeral expenses, and ongoing aid – sometimes lasting over decades – they often have formed long-term, life-changing relationships with the beneficiaries.

The commission announced its first nine heroes on May 24, 1905. Three – Gideon King Marshall of Springdale, Pa.; Seymour J. Leighton of Lawrence, Mass.; and Thomas McCann of Portland, Maine – had died in their rescue attempts, leaving behind widows of very small means. The commission granted monthly support to these women until they remarried. Another of the first heroes, Ernestine F. Atwood, received money to continue her education.

Over time the commissioners specified three categories of pecuniary awards: Death Benefits for heroes’ dependents, Disablement Benefits for surviving heroes, and Betterment Benefits – a particularly "Carnegiean" way of helping those who would help themselves. Such benefits have helped the heroes establish businesses, obtain educations, improve their health, buy homes, liquidate debt, and keep their families together. "Case files reveal a continuum of vigilant support that can carry the beneficiaries forward through the life passages of childhood, education, marriage, the birth of children and grandchildren, elderly parent care, and into burial planning," writes Eliza Smith Brown, in a new book about the Hero Fund.35 One widow, whose young husband drowned in 1916 trying to save two women and an infant in a Tennessee lake, remained on the beneficiary rolls for 71 years.

Just as Carnegie had closely monitored his business costs and profits, his Carnegie Hero Fund Commission kept track of the personal activities and finances of its beneficiaries. "We are at all times interested in your well-being," wrote David Oliver,
Daniels Stockwell, Phippsburg, Maine, and East Swanzey, New Hampshire

Steven L. Quattropani, a 20-year-old college student, was swimming off the rocky shore of Maine in 1963 when waves four to six feet high carried him seaward. From shore, Dale Arnold Hatch, 18, another student, attempted to toss Quattropani a lifeline made from articles of clothing, but a large wave swept Hatch into the ocean.

At this point Daniel Stockwell, also 20 and a student, ran to a small beach almost directly opposite the two men in the water. He tied a rope around his waist, entered the surf, and swam to Quattropani, who was by then unconscious. Others towed both to shore. Hatch had submerged, and his body later washed ashore. Hatch and Stockwell each received the Carnegie Medal, Hatch posthumously.

Twenty-eight years later, on October 15, 1991, Stockwell became a hero for the second time. Now the principal of a high school in East Swanzey, NH, he learned that in the school's cafeteria, crowded with 900 students, a 16-year-old boy armed with a .30-caliber rifle had shot and wounded two students, then ordered 15 others into a classroom. When Stockwell reached the classroom door, he saw through the window that the armed student was reloading the rifle.

Stockwell knocked on the door and entered. The boy pointed the gun at him, but Stockwell calmly talked him into letting the other students leave the classroom in exchange for his becoming the boy's hostage. For nearly 40 minutes, all the time with the gun pointed at him, Stockwell discussed the boy's demands with him. Positioned outside the doorway, the chief of police then entered the classroom and ordered the student to put the rifle down. Stockwell left the room, another officer entering to subdue the student.

Daniel Stockwell is one of only four men to be awarded a second Carnegie Medal.

Commission manager from 1957 to 1978, to a widow with five children who received support for nearly 20 years, "and therefore suggest that you keep us advised promptly of any undue hardships that you are undergoing, either through impaired health or financial difficulties."36

Carnegie's Deed of Trust had specified, "No grant is to be continued unless it be soberly and properly used, and the recipients remain respectable, well-behaved members of the community." In 1931, the commission informed a beneficiary widow with three young children, "We shall expect you to live an upright life and ... to avoid even the appearance of evil; to bring up your children well and send them to school regularly; to keep out of debt ... and to accept in a kindly spirit such suggestions as we may make in the best interests of you and yours and to be guided by them."37

Such "suggestions" could range from treatment for a goiter to investment advice, career guidance, and emotional support.

Five years after a 12-year-old North Carolina girl rescued another child from drowning in 1928, the commission wrote to remind her she was eligible for scholarship aid. The young heroine accepted eagerly and went on to earn a Ph.D. Fifty years later she would describe the commission's manager as "truly a guardian angel, piloting me through my undergraduate years and continuing to counsel and advise me. It was on his recommendation that I entered graduate school, choosing the University of Michigan because he felt that this was the school best suited to my needs."38
The Harwick Mine, soon after the 1904 disaster that inspired Andrew Carnegie to action.

On January 25, 2004, the 100th anniversary of the Harwick Mine disaster, people gathered to honor those who died, including two who died in rescue attempts.

Left to right: At the mass grave site, Springdale, a couple miles from the mine site, are Bruce Gunia, Grace Gunia Abbs, and Mark Laskow. Gunia and Abbs are the grandchildren of Adolph Gunia, the sole survivor of the Harwick Mine disaster. Adolph's father and brother are buried at this mass grave site. Laskow is president of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission.

Left to right: At the Harwick Miners Memorial, Harwick, are Emilio (Chummy) Saldari, Bruce Gunia, Clarence (Chink) Schreckengost, Grace Gunia Abbs, Mark Laskow. Saldari and Schreckengost were coal miners; Chummy worked in the Harwick mine, and Chink in the Harmarville mine.
www.carnegiehero.org/History.shtml for more about the fund and the Harwick disaster.

The February 2004 newsletter of the Homestead & Mifflin Township Historical Society is filled with stories about the Harwick disaster. Copies are $2 postpaid, check payable to H&MTHS and sent to H&MTHS, c/o Carnegie Library of Homestead, 510 Tenth Avenue, Munhall PA 15120-1910.

The Virtual Museum of Coal Mining in Western Pennsylvania at http://patheoldminer.rootsweb.com is a comprehensive source for regional mining information.

The Coal & Coke Heritage Center www.coalandcoke.org documents the history of the Connellsville Coke Region.

Artifacts and illustrations from the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission will debut in the History Center's Points In Time exhibit in April 2004.

While today's case investigators seldom make personal visits to the homes of beneficiaries, and while the paternalistic tone has modulated, the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission continues to create ripple effects in the lives of heroes, their families, and society. A number of altruistic awardees have in turn leveraged their grants by donating the money to worthy causes. One surviving hero created his own foundation to help build character in North Carolina high school students. It funds speakers who have overcome dramatic obstacles in their own lives.

THE HUNGER FOR HEROES

Neither case investigators nor commissioners judge why some people risk their lives for others. For a century, their loyalty has focused on heroes, and they maintain a deep-seated respect, even reverence, for human potential. Agent Eyman believed that a "sacred trust" existed among the Carnegie Hero Fund heroes, commissioners, and investigators. He would write, "The establishment of the case ... must be pursued to the conclusive level. This can be achieved only if the field representative holds conviction that anything less is a betrayal of his responsibilities to the commission, the individuals recommended for rewards, and just as importantly, himself.

Heroic in its own way, this trust continues to define the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission in its centennial year. A hundred years ago, Andrew Carnegie hoped to change the world with large-scale, systematically distributed philanthropy. The Hero Fund was one of his first attempts to do so. And although his later gifts eclipsed it in size, the Hero Fund remained his cherished "ain bairn" – his "own child" – perhaps because he recognized the unchanging nature of humanity's hunger for heroes.

"Much has changed since 1904," says current commission President Mark Laskow, "including many of our values. Yet, through all that change, it is remarkable that in our modern society we still need heroes, we still find them in our midst, and we still honor their acts and spirits."

This article was written by Mary Brignano based on research by her, David Bear, Carol Bleier, Eliza Smith Brown, Douglas Chambers, and Walter Rutkowski. It is adapted from A Century of Heroes, the forthcoming history of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission.

Mary Brignano has written histories of more than 30 organizations, among them Reed Smith, the Richard King Mellon Foundation, Shadyside Hospital, The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, Duquesne Light Company, The Hillman Foundation, Mc Carl's Inc., the Pittsburgh CLO, and the East Ohio Gas Company in Cleveland, Ohio.
3 Carnegie's 64-room mansion was as innovative as its owner, who was famed for seizing on any new technology that would push his mills to produce ever more steel at ever-lower cost. Built far from New York's then-fashionable neighborhoods, 2 East 91st Street was the country's first private residence with a structural steel frame and also one of the first in New York with its own push-button passenger elevator. In the sub-basement, a miniature coal car ran on its own railroad track carrying coal from the bin to the furnace. Information from Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum web site: http://ndm.si.edu.


5 In 1911, the Carnegie Relief Fund would merge into and become the nucleus of the U.S. Steel and Carnegie Pension Fund.


8 Ibid., 663.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., 664.

11 John D. Rockefeller (1839–1937), Carnegie's philanthropic "rival," gave away $540 million during his lifetime, according to www.rockefeller.edu/archive the Rockefeller Archive Center.


13 Today this room is the gift shop of the Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, located in the Carnegie mansion since 1976.

14 The Carnegie Relief Fund ultimately matched $50,000 raised in Hanwic for relief efforts.

15 Frederick Lynch, D.D., Personal Recollections of Andrew Carnegie (New York: F.H. Revell, 1920), 144. Carnegie was not, however, in favor of peace at any price, nor did he shrink from supplying steel for wartime use. When Congress declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917, he congratulated President Woodrow Wilson: "You will give the world peace and rank the greatest hero of all." (Wall, 1034).


19 For biographical information on these commissioners, see "Thread for a Web," in A Century of Heroes, the forthcoming centennial history of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission.


22 Pittsburgh Gazette Times (December 7, 1916).

23 Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (December 14, 1932).


26 Ibid.


28 "Certified Heroes," The Independent, V. 70 (May 11, 1911), 969.

29 Arbuthnot, 37.


32 Ibid., 10.


36 Carnegie Hero Fund Commission Archives.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.