

Beyond Black Lung: Managing Healthcare and Pandemics in Pennsylvania's Anthracite Region
October 13, 2020 7:00 pm
Moderator/commentator: Cynthia Drazenovich, Penn State Schuylkill

Speakers:

Bode Morin: Welcome and introductions

John Fielding

Title: The Company Doctor: Early healthcare in the Anthracite Region 1890-1980

Abstract: My talk briefly discusses the four main medical collections within the Anthracite Museum Complex and how medicine and healthcare played an important part of the daily lives of the region's inhabitants. The collections center around Dr. Alexander Armstrong (practiced 1895-1932); Dr. Herman H. Feissner Jr. (practiced 1936-1984); Dr. Louis Christian Druffner (practiced 1918-1992); and Dr. Robert D. Spencer (practiced 1915-1969). The brief talk will examine the professional and private lives of each of the doctors as well as the most significant items in the collection used by each doctor.

Sarah Puccini

Title: "A Scarcity of Caskets:" The 1918 Spanish Flu in Scranton
Presented by Sarah Piccini, Lackawanna Historical Society Assistant Director

Abstract: The Spanish flu pandemic hit Scranton in October 1918, closing schools and bars but opening emergency hospitals. Learn more about the city's response and the stories of some of the flu's victims.

Sarah Sporko

Title: A Repeat of History: Comparing the Management of the Spanish Influenza with the Management of the COVID-19 Crisis in Hazleton, Pennsylvania

Abstract: Despite much of the United States being shut down as a result of the Spanish Influenza Pandemic in the early 1900s, many industries that were essential to the economy such as coal mining continued operations despite the risks posed to the workers of contracting the deadly illness. In Hazleton, Pennsylvania, where there was a social divide between the immigrant workers and mine owners, the Spanish Influenza ravaged and killed many. Flash forward over one hundred years to the present, a lesson has not been learned in the handling of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Although the coal industry has long been gone, new industries and factories grew and bringing more immigrants and more division into the city. The combination of social and economic division within the city has made it difficult for city leaders to grasp the deadly COVID-19 outbreak. Over one hundred years after the end the Spanish Influenza, the city of Hazelton, Pennsylvania has not learned the lessons from the past when managing the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Kyla Cools

Title: Material Culture and Structural Violence: Reframing Evidence of the Social Gradient in Industrial Contexts

Abstract: Coal mining is an industry which has historically exposed laborers to a variety of environmental and occupational health hazards which resulted in injury and/or physical disability. These health hazards however, did not impact all laborers involved in coal mining equally. As a coal mining company town built with four distinct housing areas that correlate with grade (ie the socio-economic status of the job held at the colliery), Eckley Miners' Village provides an ideal case study to explore how these health disparities were lived with and treated by residents of the industrial company town. This presentation addresses the historical impacts of health inequality and explores how they relate to modern health inequalities. Additionally, I highlight the implications of socioeconomic status on access to and quality of treatment materials.