Frackville Anecdotes
1890-1950
plus the 1976 Old Frackville Tales article on how Frackville got its name
compiled by Lorraine Stanton
A Herald representative was sent to Frackville this morning to see what was in the “horse shoe” and “green shutter” rumpus that is now agitating that usually quiet little borough. Rumors of all sorts concerning the matter have been flying about thick and fast within the past few days and it was the mission of the Herald man to ascertain the bone of contention. The result of the inquiry was startling indeed, evincing a queer regard for public morals in the town and an undercurrent of resentment which promises a row of lively proportions.

The casus belli is the discovery of a “joint”, or more properly speaking a house of ill-repute, on a farm just over the borough line but within easy walking distance for those inclined to pay their devoirs to the frail inmates of the establishment. This fact is patent to the self-respecting ladies of Frackville and there has been wailing and gnashing of teeth ever since the ranch opened up for business. The place is familiarly known as the “horse show” and “the house with the green shutters,” which are open-sesame sobriquets bestowed upon it by the initiated who wink at each other and pass around the countersing.

In any event, the gentlemen having the matter in charge are determined to oust the vermin, bag and baggage, and they state that an earthquake will occur in Frackville and surrounding towns about next grand jury time. Numerous threats of separation and divorce have been made by wives claiming to have been ignored for these harlots and in a few cases lawyers have already been consulted to that end. Other indignant citizens went so far as to suggest the policy of setting fire to the “dive” as the quickest way to rid the community of the pasts, but the counsels of cooler heads prevailed and the law will be allowed to take its course.

The Herald is anxiously looking forward to the next move of the friends of good order in Frackville and it sincerely hopes that the people of the peaceable town soon will avenge the putrescent insult to their morals.
1891

The reported find of a large deposit of potter’s clay at Frackville has already attracted the attention of capitalists in the western part of the state. If the clay upon test, proves as the discoverers hope it will, the industrial affairs of the county will be revolutionized. The Herald received the following letter from the office of the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad Company at Washington County: “A notice of the discovery of a fine vein of potter’s clay at Frackville, Schuylkill County, has attracted the attention of the Crescent Tile Company and other tile men here. Will you kindly have the owners or operators of the mine ship one barrel of the clay here so that the tile men can see if they can use it. If they find they can, it may lead to the opening up of a good trade. All charges for the clay will be paid at this end.”

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Little Patrick Cantwell, 14 years of age, residing at 203 South Gilbert street, had a tape worm removed by the Indian doctor now located at Frackville. This doctor guarantees to remove the head and all, or no money will be asked.

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The voting citizens of Frackville have approved a $40,000 bond issue by the margin of 370 to 25. Much credit for the favorable vote is due to Solicitor Roy Hicks and the other borough officials for the manner in which they presented the necessity of the bond issue to the citizenry. The money will be devoted to borough improvements, with part of it going toward paving Lehigh avenue and repairing other streets. Frackville is the fastest growing town in the anthracite and already is larger than Tamaqua and Ashland.

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FRACKVILLE: Sanner’s new store will be occupied inside of two weeks. Pavements are being laid by the Episcopal and the Evangelical churches. The new park Theatre held a $300 house on its opening night Saturday last. Chanfrau in “Kit” was the attraction. Electric lights are blazing on the Mahanoy Plane and in parts of our town and Gilberton. The wire stringers are still at work. Our schools numbered 545 pupils last month.
1892

John Bachman, aged 37 years, a single man residing with his sister in Frackville, was fatally injured when run over by the locomotive on which he was the engineer. The train was running from Shenandoah to Mahanoy Plane when Bachman allowed his fireman to take over the controls while he started to step from the cab to the tank car. At that moment the engine lurched on a switch and Bachman fell down between the engine and tank car. The wheels cut off his leg and crushed his head. He was delivered to the home of his sister and died shortly afterward.

1896

The new Catholic church at Frackville, of which Rev. John Prendergast has been appointed pastor, was crowded on Sunday, and $110 was taken up during the mass. After the services were over, a committee presented the priest with $100 to purchase vestments, etc., and $125 as a present.

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A distressing accident occurred on the P&R Railroad at Gilberton by which Charles Fisher, aged 20 years, residing at Frackville, lost his life in saving that of a young woman.

He, along with John Burns and William Ryan of Frackville, went to visit friends in Gilberton and stopped to chat with a Miss Mary Williams, and all started to walk along the tracks.

After a few minutes, Passenger Train No. 7 came along and the party stepped to the other track, but hardly had they done so when they discovered an engine approaching from the rear.

Burns and Ryan were in front of Fisher and jumped from the track and down an embankment. Fisher seized Miss Williams and gave her a push that sent her rolling down the embankment, but before he could save himself he was run down. His body and limbs were actually minced and presented a sickening sight. The remains were sent to the parents in Frackville.
1902

A lot of angry people live in Frackville just now because the Haupt Brothers, John and Frank, owners of the water works, cut off the supply, giving as their reason a break in one of the mains which they say will not be fixed until the spring. It was thought for a while last night that the presence of the militia would be needed to restrain the indignant people, but the cooler ones prevailed and a meeting was held at the house of former squire J. C. McGinnis to take legal measures to compel the turning on of the water again.

The Haupts say the charter of their company lapsed some time ago and they cannot be compelled to run the water works if they don’t want to. On the other hand it is argued that the consumers have been paying fifty cents a month for a one spigot supply and fifty cents for every thousand gallons where a meter is employed, and that they have some legal rights.

Water boilers and water backs on stoves have been damaged and the citizens are carrying water from the aqueduct spring and some wells. The Haupt supply comes from two artesian wells which are pumped to a reservoir. They have been urging the borough council to buy the water works and it is believed the move was made to force the issue. The citizens are demanding that the council declare the rights of the Haupt Brothers forfeited and their water mains be removed from the public streets. The sentiment at the meeting was strong for the formation of a new water company and it is likely that an effort will be made to have the Reading Railway Company supply the town from its Mud Run Dam.

1914

Frackville can boast of a fire engine house that was built with the explicit instructions that no intoxicant should enter therein, and the same has never been violated. Well, the little town on the summit was always known as a great pure water storehouse, for its supply has never been exhausted even in the most prolonged droughts.
1916

The Frackville Borough Council had one of the stormiest sessions in years, which occupied three hours, caused by an uproar over the liability of the Frackville Water Company to lower water stops which project above the pavement and create a menace to pedestrians. Council notified the company to place the stops or water boxes level with the grade. The company refused, stating the stops belong to the property owners and the company is not liable. In the discussion that followed, the borough administration was characterized as a hotair council, a hotair police force and everything hot air. A councilman was told to “Sit down before you’re knocked down” and he replied “I defy any man in this room to make me,” which brought the rejoinder “I’ll tell you to your teeth to shut up and sit down.” One councilman left the room and threatened to bring suit against another for certain charges. When the temperature dropped, the street committee was finally empowered to establish the grade and private residents must lower their own stops.

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The tract of land at the west side of Frackville was formally accepted by the borough council at its November session. The issue has been pending for two years, and upon the owners signing a release and repairing the streets, council assented to the acceptance and the dedication of the streets and alleys. More than 300 people reside in this plot. Only those streets in good condition will be opened in the near future. These include Second and Third streets, and Spring Street west to Fourth.

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April 22 will mark the opening of the new trolley line from Frackville to St. Clair. The management of the Schuylkill Railway Co. calls attention to the ride from Maizeville to Frackville which affords a birdseye view of the Mahanoy Valley anthracite pocket. The track is constructed with heavy ballast for high speed and all who have seen the new line pronounce it an engineering feat. Though running up the mountain side north of Frackville at 300 feet in elevation in less than a mile of track, the grade rises to a maximum of 61/2 per cent at only two places. From Frackville to St. Clair, a distance of over five miles, the maximum grade is 5 per cent. The cars are the most modern with electric heat, no vestibules and automatically closing doors with folding steps. Until the new short line from St. Clair to Pottsville opens about June 1, the cars will transfer passengers to the Pottsville trolleys at the St. Clair terminal. The short line will afford a high speed route direct to Pottsville from Mahanoy City, Shenandoah or Ashland, the trip taking one hour to the center of Pottsville.
**Will you help to make this Christmas a Merry Christmas for our boys in France?**

Yes, it’s costing you a lot to live these days—every-thing’s gone up in price, ‘way up—it’s hard enough for a fellow to “break even.”

But wait a minute; thousands of young fellows from all over these United States are now in France. They’ve gone over to a strange country; among strange people and given up everything -- mothers, fathers, wives, money, jobs, everything just so that you, another human being they probably never saw or never will see, can continue to live right here in peace and comfort.

Don’t you owe them something for all that? Don’t you? Isn’t it up to you--isn’t it your duty to make some little sacrifice for them?

The Golden Rule is still a rule, you know.

Well, then, here’s the one thing our boys in France want probably more than they want any other one thing --they want “smokes”! And they can’t have them--just can’t have them--not unless you dig down right now and see that they can have them.

**All Christmas Contributions must be in by 12 noon, November 3d.**

If you knew what comfort and pleasure and satisfaction that tobacco bought with your quarter, or your half-dollar, or your dollar, or your five dollars (go as high as you like) would give to some American boys in France this Christmas, you’d forget the money, or the little sacrifice, or anything else. Dig down—deep and quick!

25c buys 45c worth of “smokes.”
$1.00 buys a month’s supply of tobacco.
$5.00 buys enough to keep 5 men in tobacco for a month.

And remember: Every package of tobacco sent to our boys in France contains a return post card, addressed to you, which he’ll mail to you if can possibly do so. That’s a war souvenir worth having!

So that your tobacco can get to France by Christmas and say “Merry Christmas” to our boys--all remittances must be received not later than November 3rd.

Send your subscription direct to

**The Herald’s Campaign for “Our Boys in France Tobacco Fund.”**
1918

Great excitement prevailed in Frackville when the patriotic citizens decided to take action against Wilhelm Rousch because he refused to buy a liberty bond. When visited by the Liberty Loan Committee he stated that he bought a bond in Girardville, but the committee called up the bank there and learned that no purchase had been made. When confronted with this, Rausch said he would buy a bond from them another time but this did not satisfy the patriotic people.

At about 9 o’clock, three men entered Rousch’s saloon and before the slacker knew what was happening, his wrists were handcuffed and a lasso was around him. His daughter ran into the saloon and clung to him as he was being led out, but she was pushed aside by the crowd and fainted.

A U.S. flag was placed in Rousch’s arm and he was led in his shirt sleeves, with the flag-waving over his shoulder, to the First National Bank, followed by a large crowd. When inside the bank he expressed willingness to take a bond for his daughter out of her savings, and took one for $50. Then he was asked how many he would take for himself and he subscribed for $100.

As he came out of the bank, he was asked how much he would give to the Red Cross and the YMCA, and he pledged support to both. Then, with a liberty bond button on his chest, his subscription paper in one hand and flag in his right hand, he was ordered to give three cheers for the flag. He did so, but, it was not enthusiastic enough for the crowd, and he had to repeat the performance to the satisfaction of the spectators. He also had to place a liberty bond poster in his window and keep the flag posted in front of his house.

The demonstration was intended to warn people of foreign extraction that as long as they are prospering in this country, they are expected to join the patriotic citizens in loaning the government money to carry it through the war.

The Frackville Council of National defense has a corps of 20 women to canvass the town and have registration cards filled out by every young unmarried woman who can volunteer for government service. Seven young women have already signed cards as student nurses. They are Elsie Christ, Marie Wagner, Martha Blackwell, Jennie Richards, Oliyoke Ferguson, Myrtle James and Lorette Richardson.
Frackville is still in a patriotic mood over the armistice. During the weekend the Good Will Band played at Lehigh avenue and Frack street, and citizens started to gather in large numbers. The demonstration turned into a parade in which hundreds marched twice around the town. A number of children carried a huge service flag which contained 187 stars and one gold star in the center for Harry Marsh, who was killed in France. The flag was taken to the office of the Madeira Hill Coal Company where it was raised on the staff. An effigy of the Kaiser made by boys was dragged through the streets on the back of a wagon and burned after the parade.

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The Spanish influenza conditions are very serious throughout the county and one of the worst places is Frackville. One family has been afflicted by three deaths in two days, they being Nicholas Irwin, his daughter Mrs. Wood and his granddaughter Margaret Irwin, aged 14 years. Another death was that of Mrs. John Alexo, 19 years. Undertaker W. A. Nice also is afflicted and forced to seek outside help to bury the victims. An emergency hospital has been set up and is crowded, but excellent work is being done by three first said teams sent by W. J. Richards, president of the Reading Company.

In Shenandoah, all saloon keepers and other places of business are ordered to close at 6 p.m., the exception being bakeries and drug stores which may be open until 9 o’clock but cannot sell cigars, ice cream or candy. Barbers and clergymen also were asked to discontinue services.

In Minersville, 17 people have died and the emergency hospital has 100 cases, many with pneumonia. Eight saloon keepers have been arrested for disregarding orders to close.

The Spanish Flu epidemic continues to rage through Schuylkill County, and the situation in Minersville is so severe that the borough authorities issued a plea to undertakers all over the county to help the town bury its dead.

Frackville also is suffering heavily, with at least 17 more deaths in the last two days, the victims being John Dubritsky, 12 years old, Jessie Rudd, three, Mrs. Joseph Parrish, 48, John DeLuse, 12, John Yetcilla, 45, Mrs. Lulu Kline, 34, Sister Joachim of St. Joseph’s Parish, Victor Reed, 27, Fred Shumber, 38, an infant of Mrs. Peter Cedar, jacob Pauley, James Irvin, John Green, Mrs. Harvey Heimley, Harry Houser, 17, a ten-month-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Jones, and Harvey White, 30, one of the town’s best known young men.

Among the victims are two priests. Father Daniel Kennedy, 29, a curate at St. Joseph’s Church in Ashland and native of Lansford, died at the rectory. Rev. Edward Gallagher, 30, a curate at McAdoo, was stricken while traveling to visit in Ashland and stopped at St. Mary Magdalen’s rectory in Lost Creek, where he died.

Reports from Mahanoy City state that placards have been placed on 108 houses, and 45 patients are in the emergency hospital. At Morea, 100 persons are afflicted and many of the cases are serious.

Shenandoah is not as widely affected as other towns but there have been a number of deaths, among them the Malone brothers of the brewery family, Charles, 23, and Daniel, who died at their home at 114 South Jardin street.

Gilberton reports 400 cases and emergency hospitals operating in the Continental Fire House and the Methodist Episcopal Church. An appeal has been made to the state for blankets and cots, and to physicians from neighboring towns. Among the latest deaths were the Symmock brothers, George, 24, and Joseph, 25.

Girardville has issued an urgent appeal for druggists, as the physicians are handicapped in getting supplies of medicine for the many sick people. The emergency hospital on East Main street is equipped with 150 cots, 150 blankets, 150 pillow cases, 300 sheets, three tents, towels and night shirts sent by the state and county authorities. Citizens have donated gas stoves and Harry Leonhardt has agreed to donate bread and cakes. Volunteer nurses on duty are Catherine McDonald, Lizzie Mallams, Margaret Bracey, Jennie and Bella Dougherty, Mary Tallet, Marie Erwin, Anna Quinn and Anna Gaughan.
WAR IS ENDED; HUNS SIGN THE ARMISTICE; ENEMY SURRENDERS

WASHINGTON, Nov. 11.—Germany has surrendered to the terms of Marshal Foch. The greatest war of history virtually ended at five o'clock this morning when the German plenipotentiaries signed the United States-Allied armistice terms, according to an official dispatch to the State Department made public at 2.48 a.m., Washington time. Hostilities officially ceased at eleven o'clock this morning, Paris time.

The terms of the armistice will not be made known until later.

GREATEST WAR IN HISTORY ENDED AT 6 O'CLOCK THIS MORNING; TERMS STOP HUNS FROM RENEWING FIGHT

Washington, Nov. 11.—At six o'clock this morning (United States eastern time) the greatest war in history came to an end.

The State Department officially announced early today that German plenipotentiaries signed the United States-Allied armistice terms at Foch's headquarters at five o'clock this morning, and that hostilities ceased at eleven o'clock (Paris time).

While an armistice merely halts war and does not end it, the terms laid down by Foch are such as to make Germany's renunciation binding.

The war, therefore, may be regarded as definitely over. There remains, of course, no way to obviate the great problems of the peace conference and the gigantic work of returning the fighters to their homes and lands. As to the first, Gen. Pershing has maintained at the most likely points for the peace negotiations, and as for the second, the General Staff already has completed its plans for demobilization.

Throughout the nation today celebrations were held. President Wilson, awoken from his bed at an early
1919

Stating that he was in this section to organize a new bank at Frackville under auspices of the American Securities Company of Harrisburg, a man who gave his name as C. A. Robins has left the area with the money of some prominent Mahanoy Valley physicians, lawyers, merchants and even some bank men. Robins was at work for two weeks when Peter Shadel of Frackville become suspicious and hired a detective to shade the man. However, Robins got away before the detective could close in on him.

1920

While attempting to discourage a Bolshevist meeting at Frackville, Rev. Joseph Rashutis was pushed from the platform and for a time his life was threatened before his friends succeeded in getting him out of the hall. He is pastor of the St. Clair Lithuanian parish, which includes Frackville, and when he heard of the meeting he made an attempt to discourage it.
1920

After the first of May, Frackville residents will have their mail delivered free. Two carriers, Mrs. Laura Bankes and John Eisenhart, have been appointed to make the deliveries. This is good news for residents who found it inconvenient to call at the post office.

1923

Frackville was visited by one of the worst fires in its history on Monday evening when the factory of the American Overall and Shirt Manufacturing Co. Inc. was destroyed. The fire raged for almost three hours, and for the first hour and a half, flames shot out the windows of the plant and threatened frame structures close by.

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Among the interesting places in this section today, the most outstanding is Frackville. One might think, if not informed by sign and conversation, that you had dropped into Spotless Town.

This was the first impression of the “Morning Paper” Insurance Department when they made a whirlwind campaign last week.
1925

Squire Purnell’s office in Frackville was the scene of a rather noisy time when several of the actresses in the Tom Waters Musical Comedy Show appeared to demand payment for their work, or at least enough money for transportation to New York City. The show had been playing in the Hampton Grove in Frackville for several days and the stories told by the actresses would make a good first reader lesson for ambitious young girls who tire of the quiet life in their little home towns and chafe at motherly restraint that, if listened to, would keep them off the rocks that are often found in the bright pastures that look so alluring. The girls claimed they were almost starved, having 75 cents or less each day for meals. One day they had nothing to eat all day, they said, and when they appeared for the evening performance and announced they were hungry, they were promised sandwiches, which never materialized. After the show they were given 75 cents to get something to eat. The mother of one girl, Flossie Creig, arrived from New York City to look after her and will take her back home. After a lot of noise and talk, the show manager promised to furnish transportation for the girls, after which the show pulled out for Shenandoah.

1926

The continual growth in popularity of the Tuesday night dances at Lakewood was shown by the large crowd present to hear C. Lloyd Major and his Tallo-Ho Ten.

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The Friendship Fire Company of the Englewood section at Frackville announced that the J. J. Kehler Estate donated a plot of ground at West Pine and 7th streets on which to locate a firehouse. Mr. Geating, architect for the George Haupt Jr. Lumber Company, stated that he will draw plans for an up-to-date building.

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The Frackville police went in search of Clarence Parnow to serve him with a disorderly conduct warrant and he was located at his boarding house at Oak and Balliet streets. However, before the officers could get him, Clarence jumped from the third floor window onto a roof and made his escape. The police gave up their search for the moment but a few hours later they checked inside a hootch joint in another part of town and there was Clarence, who now has a place in the jail from which he cannot leap.
1927

Harry Wellman, a boarder at the home of Hippo Iwanzkiewicz, East Oak street, Frackville, had an experience last night that will likely mark an epoch in his life, as well as landing him in the State Hospital at Fountain Springs. Harry must have a thrifty side to his make-up, for he worked a double shift yesterday at the Bear Ridge Colliery. Whatever brand of lubricant he took after working hours, it certainly not only had quick action but also continuous speed, for it kept him going. About 2 a.m. Harry was running through the boarding house dressed in nighties and made a dash for a window on the third story. A fellow boarder, who knew that Harry could not fly, grabbed him by the shirt but Harry’s momentum was too great and he went through the window, glass and all. A search outside failed to locate him but he turned up four hours later at the corner of Lehigh and Frack street on the running board of a Ford taking a miner to work. Harry’s sudden appearance scared the miner, who quickly parked his “Lizzie” outside the office of Squire Purnell, and yelled at the top of his voice while tooting the horn in a frantic effort to save himself. Harry on the running board contributed his share to the chorus also. Just then John Allen happened along and captured Harry, while the miner lost no time in making his escape. Dr. Mengel examined Harry and advised a trip to the hospital, which was provided by Policeman Hodgert.

Napoleon Bonaparte McGriff, a colored gentleman employed on the Maizeville hill paving job with the Christiano company, had some trouble last night which landed him in the Frackville bastile and somewhat ruffled his otherwise good nature. It seems that he, being tired of singled blessedness, brought a young lady, also colored, from Newark, N.J., with the understanding that they would be married with due ceremony as soon as they could get ready. In the meantime, she being without chaperone, they took up quarters in the Hippodrome to await the happy day. All went lovely until last night when a difference arose and he beat her up. With her love dream shattered and a few other scratches, she went to Squire Purnell and had Napoleon arrested. At the hearing he admitted that he had a little too much hootch and probably was a little rash. She also relented some and he, anxious to forgive and forget, turned to her with, “Look here, honey...” but this got her flashing: “Don’t honey me,” and the war was on again. Finally they patched up a truce and he agreed to pay her fare back to Newark. They left together but before they got far he beat her up again and this spilled the beans for good. She returned and had him locked up for the night. This morning he bought her the ticket for Newark—one way.
The Spirit Of Frackville

The Spirit of Frackville is awakened on the Mountain Top and the live wire boosters of the town in a friendly spirit of help and co-operation, with best wishes, and kind assistance to all and malice toward none, are going ahead, pleased and thankful with the substantial progress of the town during the past year, and while rejoicing at the advancement, yet are already on the way with the New Year’s work ahead to redouble their efforts and start the next year’s work with vim and energy.

This evening at six o’clock the large curtain on the G. A. Haupt, Jr., display window, that had been lowered for the past couple of days will be lifted and a large, cleverly constructed, handsomely painted, electrically lighted building model will be displayed, which all must admit, shows a sentiment of town progress and reflects the vanguard of the town’s boosters.

It is aiming high, no doubt, but the men who are making Frackville are used to working on a large scale.

“Frackville in 1940,” is one of the prominent signs in the window. Other signs are “The Spirit of Frackville.” “Eventually the largest city in Schuylkill County.” “Can Be Accomplished by Every Man, Woman and Child Boosting For Frackville.” “Its Central, Solid, Growing, Healthy, Easy to Reach, and On Top With a Down Hill Pull in All Directions.”

The model building shows the new court house they expect to have at Frackville in 1940, with a landing field for airplane traffic and all conveniences modern to that year.

While the display is in the Haupt window, yet the sentiment behind it in favor of Frackville is actively backed by all the town boosters who have been ever ready to support all movements to help the town. No doubt, the window will be an attraction in town over the holidays and an incentive to boost the town.

Frackville is enthusiastic today over the election of its native son, Roy P. Hicks Esq., as a judge of the county courts, and held a mammoth demonstration and parade in his honor. Many beautiful and comic floats were in the line, along with more than 200 vehicles bearing cheering people with red flares and lights. The Eagles Band of Mahanoy City and Frackville Lion band furnished music, and the famous Kitchen Cabinet Band of Frackville was transported on a truck from which they played melodies on kitchen utensils. Among the most beautiful floats was that of the Alexander Store featuring Santa Claus and the Spirit of Christmas. The Craftsmen Club, senior high school students and Lawrence Colliery employees were marching in force, and the new judge with his family had the position of honor. Dan Frack was the chief marshal.
A cable from Russia reported the death of Arthur Garrett of Frackville, who contracted typhus fever while working in an engineering position in the government mines of the Bolshevistic nation. Mr. Garrett formerly was an engineer with the Madeira Hill Coal Company at Frackville and his wife, the former Mona Gregory of Pottsville, is also in Russia with their daughters, Anna and Catherine. His father, George, is cashier at the Orwigsburg First National Bank, and a brother Carl, has a similar position at the Frackville First National Bank.

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Frank Haupt, aged 84 years, one of Frackville’s earliest residents, died at the home of his niece, Miss Mae Haupt, 32 North Nice street. Mr. Haupt was ten years old when his family brought him to Frackville in 1884. They were the second family to locate there and played a prominent part in the development of the community. Frank and his brother John kept a general store for many years and established the Frackville Water Company. The water firm was sold in 1904 and the brothers moved to Bellefontaine, Ohio. They remained there until John’s death six years ago, when Frank returned to Frackville to reside with his relatives. His only survivor from the family is a brother Henry in Reading. Surviving nieces are Mae, Ida, Mrs. H. C. Kalbach, Mrs. James Taggart, Miss Lily Nice, Miss Alice Haupt, Miss Ida Haupt, Mrs. Edward Pugh Frackville. Surviving nephews are G. A. Haupt Jr., J. Harvey Haupt, C. C. Haupt, D. F. Haupt, G. A. Haupt Sr., W. C. Haupt, all of Frackville, Caris and Clarence Haupt of Reading.

1928

Patrolman Walter Speidel of Frackville had a narrow escape from death when called to a home on Broad-Mountain avenue where a fight erupted among a group of negroes. As Officer Speidel entered the home, Clarence Coade fired a shot which went through the policeman’s coat and grazed his back.

To protect himself, Speidel whipped out his revolver and shot Coade in the arm, then fired a second shot that grazed the back of James Preston. Coade escaped and was seen going toward Pottsville where he was later picked up at the home of his sister and taken to the State Hospital at Fountain Springs under guard by a state policeman.

The negroes have been in Frackville for two years and the authorities said they would investigate their activities, as several gunmen and gangsters are believed to be among them.

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Mike Kushwara, the Morea Mauler, scored his seventh one-round knockout in as many fights when he defeated Roland Henning of Palmerton in the bouts at Pottsville.
1929

Woodward A. Nice, prominent undertaker, real estate agent and lumber dealer who built practically all of the Altamont section at Frackville, died at the age of 54. His father-Walter, died when Woodward was 16 years old, leaving the undertaker and furniture business which the son helped his mother to operate. Eventually the furniture business was dropped and Woodward organized the Frackville Lumber and Supply Company to become a major builder. Surviving are his wife Minnie and children, Wilda, Florence, Winn and Harvey.

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There were some stirring events at Frackville yesterday when a difference arose between the huckleberry pickers and the buyers over the price to be paid. The price had been 23 cents but the buyers refused to pay it and the pickers refused to sell for less. The parleys became loud at times until the dealers departed and 300 pickers were left with their berries. After a while the dealers returned and made an offer of 17 cents which was accepted.

1930

Frackville was visited by one of the worst fires in its history which caused $100,000 damage in the first block of South Lehigh Avenue. The fire was discovered at 8 a.m. in the cellar of the William Norbitz shoe store at No. 22 South Lehigh. Mrs. Norbitz said she was preparing breakfast and heard an explosion in the cellar. She opened the door and was driven back by smoke and flames. She quickly aroused others sleeping in the house, including her husband and two children, also her sister and infant visiting from New York. They had difficulty escaping but made it safely out a rear door. The flames spread quickly to the adjoining business places, including The Hub clothing store operated by Victor Smith and Harry Norbitz, the John Tenenholtz clothing store, Mrs. S. Baron dry goods store, Edward Zemaitis drug store, and Fowler Fruit Market.
Stephen Bobiak and Stanley Rakowsky of Frackville were elected to replace Charles Dunkleberger and Charles Miller as coaches at Frackville High School. Bobiak, a coach at Gilberton the past several years, will teach physical education and biology. Rakowsky will teach social science and health.

1936

The Wagner Brothers Ice House at Lehigh and Chestnut streets, Frackville, burned to the ground despite the efforts of the Good Will and Englewood Fire companies who were at the scene quickly and saved adjoining homes from destruction.

A cow and a car tangled on South Lehigh Ave. in Frackville with the result being one dead cow and one car damaged to an extent of $150. The animal was being led across the street by John Keysock, son of Mrs. Andrew Keysock, and the car was driven by Earl Thomas.

Governor George H. Earle announced the appointment of John Tatusko of Frackville to the position of justice of the peace vacated by the death of Samuel T. Purnell. Mr. Tatusko is a well known barber with a shop on North Lehigh Avenue and also serves as a special borough police officer.

The Frackville Taxpayers Association is filing breach of contract charges against George W. Haupt Jr. and his Frackville Sewerage Company. The taxpayers stated that when Haupt’s company started the sewage system with permission from borough council four years ago, the property owners signed contracts to connect with the system for $100 and pay a yearly rental fee of $3. Later Haupt incorporated the company and said the old contracts are no longer valid, which permits him to raise the yearly sewer fees to $24. A delegation of 125 property owners asked borough council to set up a borough sewage system.

The proposed Frackville High School stadium is rapidly taking on the appearance of a playing field as a score of WPA workers are on the job daily clearing away debris and leveling the ground. A large steam shovel has been removing a forest on the west side for parking purposes.

Two attempts by the Frackville Sewerage Company to dig up a street and disconnect the sewers of two delinquent customers at John and Balliet streets were halted when women and children threw stones and compelled the workmen to leave. After two property owners claimed that the company did not have the proper permits to open the line, George W. Haupt, president of the company, applied for additional permits with the names of the residents and the house numbers to insure the legality. The workmen again appeared only to find children wrapped in U.S. flags defying them to resume the excavation, and the women stood by ready for any emergency. Haupt appealed for police protection and said he would call the state police if necessary. In the meantime, the Frackville Taxpayers Association has started a drive to collect money for a lawyer to sue the sewerage company over the contract dispute. The citizens claim they paid $100 each to tap into the Haupt lines and were charged a yearly fee for sewerage rental, but later Haupt advised them the contracts were no longer any good as he had incorporated the company and was increasing the rentals. When residents refused to pay, Haupt started disconnecting lines, but the borough council stepped in and refused permits for street excavations so that the company could not disconnect. Haupt took the next step by halting sewage pumping, stating that the company lacked funds. This resulted in sewage overflowing at the pumphouse and entering Little Mahanoy Creek, endangering the Ashland reservoir. Ashland got a court injunction ordering the company to keep sewage out of the creek. The sewerage company and borough were in court several times, the last time resulting in an order to settle the differences. The citizens are pushing to have the borough take over the sewerage system.
1937

The sit-down bug hit Frackville yesterday. Two women carried chairs to a ditch, sat down and refused to allow the excavation of a street by workmen of the sewage company. The company claimed it attempted to disconnect the service to families in default of payments. The workmen gave up but returned in the morning, only to be greeted by a crowd of men and woman who not only prevented the work but escorted the workers back to the door of the company office. Three days ago the county court issued an order upon Chief Burgess George Miller forbidding him to interfere with the company digging up streets to disconnect sewers.

JUNE 1937

A freak storm passing over Frackville pelted the community with a rain of small frogs. Hundreds of the amphibians were found on the sidewalks and roofs.

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Four collieries operated by the Madeira Hill Company plus the Natalie Store in Frackville were closed indefinitely amid reports of bankruptcy, leaving 1200 men on the idle list. Closed are the collieries at Morea, New Boston, Kehley Run and Lawrence. The area was stunned by the announcement, which has cast gloom over the communities where the collieries meant bread and butter for the miners’ families.

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The Schuylkill County Election Board was unable to recount the ballots in the first precinct of the south ward in Frackville because of the filthy condition of the box. The board had intended a recount because of a discrepancy which showed 87 more votes on the return sheet than were listed on the tally sheet. When the box was opened it gave off a stench that filled the room and the ballots were found to be covered with tobacco juice and other fifth that made counting impossible, and the board was forced to accept the 87 vote total on the return sheet.

George Haupt Jr. president at the Frackville Sewerage Company, was found guilty of contempt of court by President Judge Henry Houck and committed to prison until he purges himself of the contempt by complying with the court’s order to repair a sewage line and prevent the sewage from entering the Little Mahanoy Creek which runs through the Ashland Borough Watershed.

The action came during a long hearing on the latest complaint filed by Ashland Borough, and it marks the second time Mr. Haupt has been found in contempt. On the previous occasion he was fined $100.

Mr. Haupt maintained in court that the breaking of the 12-inch line was done by someone outside his company. He stated that it would take only five minutes for anyone who doesn’t like the company to do this. A section of the 12-inch pipe was removed and found in a nearby field, he said, and inserted into the opening to replace it was an 8-inch pipe. The fittings between the two sizes of pipe was improper and the raw sewage flowed from the opening only eight feet from the creek, he said.

The broken line served only three properties, he added, carrying sewage to the sump, and was in good condition when last inspected.
Several more strongholds of high-powered beer fell to the long arm of the federal prohibition agents. In Frackville the raiders visited a garage near on North Nice street and confiscated 200 barrels of the illegal brew, then went to a garage near Spring and Nice, where they found 75 barrels ten days ago, and picked up another 31 barrels.

In Mahanoy City they entered a garage at 8th and Railroad streets and confiscated 18 barrels of beer and a lonesome bottle of whiskey. Four more half barrels were seized at the Andy Stosphitis Saloon.

Next they headed down the valley to Ryan Township and added four halves and a bottle of wine to their bounty at the Log Cabin Inn, Park Crest.

However, Agent Ward and his men had a fast one pulled on them at the Castle Gardens, formerly the State Highway Hotel, near the railroad crossing between Lakewood and Lakeside. They seized a half barrel of beer and a bottle of red wine, but when they got to the hearing before U.S. Commissioner Streigel the dry agents were asked by the defendant, Gilda Vadala, owner of the place, to produce the illegal booze. When the barrel was brought in and tested it was found to be beer of legal alcohol content, and when the “dago red” wine was sampled it was found to be nothing more than water with red dye and flavoring. The agents were left with faces as red as the “wine.”

Frackville Borough is the new owner of the Frackville Sewerage Company system over which there has been considerable legal difficulty during the last several years. Because of these difficulties and the company’s problems collecting rent from some property owners, the county court ordered sale of the assets at public auction to satisfy the company’s financial obligations. The highest bidder was Frackville Borough Council at $52,350. Other bids were from the Sewerage Company, the Pennsylvania Power and Light Company which is trying to collect a pumping bill from the company, and the Ashland Borough Council which has been in court on several occasions seeking injunctions to prohibit Frackville sewage from entering the Little Mahanoy Creek which runs along the Ashland Borough Watershed. In cases where property owners refused to pay the sewage fees, the company took action to dig up the lines and disconnect the homes. When the people protested, the borough authorities refused to give the company permission to dig up the streets, which resulted in a number of appearances in court. When the company went into the red and didn’t pay its power bill, the PP&L cut the lines to the pumping station and the raw sewage started spilling into the creek, which brought Ashland into the picture. It is assumed that the difficulties are solved now that the borough will operate the system.

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While many Frackville folks do not approve of the current fad of long dance marathons, all admire the grit and perseverance of Miss Mildred Bobbin, the Frackville girl, who with her partner Luke Mack of New Philadelphia, stayed on the floor for 144 hours at the Schuylkill Park dance hall. The marathon ended with one other couple, professionals from Houtzdale, on the floor. They had won four out of six previous contests and had to be satisfied with a tie in this one. A large delegation from Frackville went down to the hall with a goulash band to cheer Miss Bobbin and her partner and keep them going. While not of heavy build, Miss Bobbin is athletic and noted as an excellent swimmer. Her photograph was on display and attracted much attention in the window of the Bohard Quality Shop.
1940

George Burchill, one of Frackville’s leading citizens, died at his home, 110 South Nice Street, two days before his 84th birthday. He was president of the Burchill Lumber Company which he founded two years after locating in Frackville in 1920. Before the turn of the century he was also a co-owner of the Lawrence Colliery with Simon Moore. Mr. Burchill was born in Pottsville and spent his youth in the Lykens Valley where his father, Morris, conducted a mining operation. He got his start in the lumber business in North Carolina in the early 1900s and had several branches of the business in the South. He has three brothers in Frackville, Samuel, Howard and William, also three daughters, Mrs. Grace Ebbs, Mrs. Richard Bevan and Mrs. John Habel.

Six adventurous Frackville youths visited the world of tomorrow with the help of the world of yesterday when they made a trip to New York World’s Fair in a 1915 four-cylinder Oakland sedan.

The driver and owner of the automobile was Francis Heine, 17, a student at Shenandoah Catholic High School. His companions were Charles Navin-17, Carl Wagner, 17, Max Hoffman, 16, Dick Wonn, 18, and Jack Kieffer, 17.

Lady Luck was not with them on the way out as they were delayed by four flat tires, brake trouble twice, and a few rain storms which added a cooling touch. At one point near New Jersey border the vehicle balked on a hill and they had to back up and make a new start three times before they made it over. The trip took 14 hours.

Heine stated they didn’t mind the trouble and were the center of much attention, as every time they parked somebody wanted to know the history of the cream and maroon car. While in New York they stayed at the YMCA and parked the car on a lot at 33rd Street and 10th Avenue. The cops got a big kick out of it and crowds gathered around it.

While in the big city the boys turned to modern transportation — buses and subway — because they felt the auto would attract too much attention and they might get into too many traffic jams.

They left New York Sunday at 3 p.m. and got back in Frackville at 11 p.m., making the better time because they had no trouble. The cost of the trip for each rider was about $5. The machine used about $3 in gas and oil and averaged 18 miles a gallon.

The car has been in the Heine family since 1915 when Frank’s grandfather, Philip, one of the town’s early residents, purchased it in Hazleton. He used it for several years and parked it in the garage, where it stood until two years ago when it passed on to the grandson. Francis reconditioned the car and purchased new tires and has been using it regularly. He makes numerous trips about the county and people are attracted by the snappy paint job. “There’s still plenty of life in her,” Heine said.

1943

Daniel Frack, aged 57, son of the pioneers after whom Frackville was named, died suddenly while taking a walk. He had been ailing but was improving and decided to take a walk. When about three squares from his home he collapsed. His parents were the late Daniel and Sarah Frack. For many years the deceased conducted a gas station at Catawissa and Lehigh streets and later ran the Frackville trucking service for Railway Express. A great lover of horses, he kept riding horses in the stables at the rear of his home and was always a familiar figure atop his mount as grand marshal of all parades in his home town. His son, Lt. Jesse Frack, an aviation instructor at West Point, N.Y., recently was in the news when a training plane crashed and he parachuted to safety.

1945

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1945

Almost 100 former servicemen in Frackville met in the borough building to discuss formation of a Veterans of Foreign Wars Post. Temporary officers elected were commander Joseph Engle, Vice Commander Michael Andruchisin and Adjutant Herbert Gibson.

1946

A new band to be known as the Frackville Veterans Military Band is being organized by Staff Sgt. Harold Hahn, a Frackville boy stationed at Valley Forge. He has arranged a rehearsal in the Natalie building at Lehigh and Frack streets for about 25 musicians who expressed interest.

1947

One of Bing Crosby’s famous hats will help raise funds for the Frackville Memorial Park Pool. The hat, which is bright yellow with a green feather, was worn by Crosby during the filming of his movie “Blue Skies.” Blaire W. Egge, secretary of the Frackville Park Association, wrote to Bing and asked for one of his hats to auction off for the pool fund. The famous crooner responded immediately, and the chapeau is on display at the Levi Bohard’s store window on Lehigh Avenue. It is hoped that $12,000 can be raised to complete the pool, for which the foundation was dug but not finished for lack of money.

1948

An unmasked bandit walked into the lobby of the Victoria Theatre, 52 South Lehigh avenue, Frackville, and approached the ticket booth where Miss Helen Drula was on duty. He pointed a gun at her and demanded money. She pushed $22 out to him and he fled with it.

1949

Parking meters are coming to Frackville. After receiving the results of a survey showing that the borough council realize $3,000 a year in parking fees on Lehigh Avenue, the borough council voted to proceed with plans for meters.

1950

Dr. William J. Dougherty, a physician in Frackville since WWI, died at the age of 58. Born in Mahanoy Plane in 1872, son of the late and Annie (Holland) Dougherty, he was graduated from Medico Chi College, Philadelphia, in 1910 and interned at Scranton State Hospital. He enlisted in the army in WWI and served as a captain with the British Army until the end of the conflict, after which he settled in Frackville. He was a community leader and helped to establish a youth center there. He also promoted the medical and dental health of children by serving as medical examiner for the school district many years before the state provided for such a program. Surviving are his widow, Ann Gray, a brother James and a sister Mrs. Martin Condron, all in Frackville.
Webster defines legend as an unauthentic story, especially one handed down by tradition from early times and popularly regarded as historical though not verifiable.

For many years the legend of how Frackville was named has been written and handed down from generation to generation. Quote: “When the time came for the incorporation of the Borough, there was much discussion as to its name. Mr. Frack desired it to be called Frackville, and Mr. Haupt wished it to be called Planefield. The discussion continued until the time when the town wished to have a post office. The government refused to provide a post office until a name had been given to the town. Consequently, a decision had to be made. Mr. Frack and Mr. Haupt were in a tavern one evening, and they decided to toss a coin to settle the question. Mr. Frack won, and so the borough bears the name Frackville.” That is a legend.

Webster defines fact as what has actually happened or is the case; truth attested by direct observation or authentic testimony.

These are the facts:

On November 22, 1875, a group of 190 residents of the area known as Frackville signed a petition to be incorporated into a borough to be named Mountain City. This petition was headed by Daniel Frack, the first resident of this area, who owned 166 acres of land east of Birch Street. This petition was one day short of the required thirty days by law to be advertised before being presented at the January Sessions of the Grand Jury.

On January 3, 1876, a group of 147 residents of the area known as Mountain City signed and presented a petition to the court in Pottsville to be incorporated into a borough and to be named Mountain City. This petition and court records of this period cannot be located, but it is presumed to be headed by Samuel Haupt. When Mr. Haupt first moved to this area, he called his section Planefield, and it was so called until 1874 when he changed the name to Mountain City. This group was represented by Attorney Little.

When the Grand Jury saw both petitions, they and Judges Pershing and Green realized that all of the residents living in the Frackville-Mountain City area wanted to be incorporated — but a difference developed as to the name.

In 1875, Pottsville, a borough built on seven “mountains,” was often referred to as the “Mountain City,” and one of the banks was called “The Mountain City Bank of Pottsville” in addition to several lodges using the name Mountain City.

Judge Pershing felt that the naming of a borough was the responsibility of the Court and, because several businesses in Pottsville were already known as Mountain City, it would be confusing to name the proposed area “Mountain City.” He felt that the area was known as Frackville for several years and should be so named!

An anonymous letter sent to Judge Pershing, probably from a resident of the Frackville-Mountain City area mentioned that a town should not be named after a man who is still living, and Daniel Frack was still living in Frackville. In Ohio, a town named in honor of William W. Bellknapp, who was Secretary of War under General Grant, was in the process of changing its name because “Mr. Bellknapp had accepted bribes and short changed the Indians — using the money for his two wives who were very extravagant. He resigned before the Senate could impeach him.

Regardless of any legend, we now know Frackville was named by Daniel Frack, and this name was upheld by the court.

Here is the Grand Jury report of January 8, 1876. Resolved: That we recommend to consolidate Frackville and Mountain City with the continuous territory into a borough under the name and title of the Borough of Frackville.

Here are several newspaper clippings taken from the newspapers one hundred years ago.

Daily Miners Journal, April 11, 1876
A petition was presented to the Grand Jury at the January Sessions, 1876, from a number of residents of Frackville, asking for the incorporation of that place into a borough under the name of Mountain City. Another party who also desired the place to be incorporated, but who desired the present name to be retained, got up a petition to that effect, but as they failed to comply with the law enforcing advertisement beforehand, they could not present their petition to the Grand Jury. They did, however, protest against the name of Mountain City and to such a purpose that the Grand Jury recommended the incorporation of the place under its present name.

The matter was then in the hands of the Court, where it has been ever since. It is contended by the Frackville party that the name which has been associated with the place for so many years should be retained. Beside the name Mt. City has been for years commonly applied to Pottsville. A number of its institutions bear that name as for instance The Mountain City Banking Company. The opposition of the Frackville party seems to have nelted the original petitioners, for yesterday they endeavored through their attorney, Mr. C.Little, to execute a flank movement. Mr. Little asked the court to make the following order:

In the Court of Quarter Sessions of Schuylkill County:
In the matter of a petition for the incorporation of a borough, to be called Mountain City, presented to the Grand Jury at the January sessions of 1876.

And now, to wit, April 3, 1876, on motion of the petitioners, the Court grant leave to withdraw the petition above referred to.

The Court at first granted the order, but Mr. George B. Kaercher and Mr. Brumm for the Frackville party objected that the Court had no right to grant it. After the Grand Jury had passed on the matter, they claimed the Court only had to fix the name. The Judges seemed to think otherwise, but consented to hold the matter over until next Monday, the parties to cite authorities meanwhile.

Daily Miners Journal April 11, 1876
Yesterday Mr. Charles N. Brumm called on the matter of the incorporation of a borough, to be named either Frackville or Mountain City. He said the original petition was presented on the 22nd of November, 1875, asking for the incorporation under the name of Frackville, and was signed by 190 names. There was presented, on the 3rd of January, 1876, a petition signed by 147 names asking that it be styled Mountain City. This was sent before the Grand Jury and they returned it to Court with a recommendation.

Both petitions were published, but the first was one day short of the thirty days fixed by law. The consequences was that a remonstrance was gotten up and signed by 100 citizens of Frackville, to which was attached an affidavit by seventeen of them, in which they alleged that they signed the latter petition under a misapprehension of the facts.

Mr. Little represented the petition presented on the 3rd of January, and asks now to withdraw it. To this the original petitioners object, and in support have a petition signed by 80 of the 147 signers to that petition, in which they set out that they have not authorized its withdrawal. To this there is an affidavit as to its truth and correctness. They also have a general petition in which it is stated that it is the unanimous desire that the place should be incorporated, that the only difference between the parties is that of the name.

This is signed by two hundred and forty-two citizens, eighty of whom signed the petition of the 3rd of January. This matter of the incorporation was talked of long before anything was done and a meeting was called to discuss it. The question of incorporation was decided upon and the name of Frackville proposed, discussed and almost unanimously decided upon.

All the parties were present and took their chances, and the petitioners had no idea that any one was dissatisfied until they saw the notice in the paper. Under these circumstances with the eighty signers objecting to the withdrawal of their petition, Mr. Little who presented it cannot withdraw it.

In reply Mr. Little said his side would like to have something to say because they will have to foot the bill. There is nothing in this application or contest but the matter of discretion — whether or not parties presenting petitions shall have the right to withdraw them.

Judge Green suggested that the only difference was the matter of the name. Mr. Little thought not. He said he did not know what his clients could do in the matter of getting up petitions. These people seem to sign everything promiscuously and he didn’t know but what his clients could get these eighty signers to sign a remonstrance for them. The petition he presented was in bona fide earnest, but these gentlemen fought it. When the time came they fell asleep and did not get before the Grand Jury in that shape. He said he did not know how many persons he represented in this matter. He never consulted one tenth of them. The parties he spoke to about presenting the petition now asked him to have it withdrawn. This had always been the practice and he did not see why it should be otherwise in this case.

George B. Kaercher suggested that the petition of Mr. Little was irregular. It contained the name proposed, whereas it should only contain the boundaries. The fixing of the name is within the discretion of the court. He spoke of the confusion which would follow naming the borough Mountain City. There is a bank here of that name and several lodges (meaning Pottsville).

Judge Pershing said he had a consultation with his colleagues, and they were unanimous in incorporating the borough. The court does not think they ought to permit the withdrawal of the petition. They think the wishes of the people and the Grand Jury should be carried out in this matter. It would be a misnomer to call a borough Mountain City, and the unanimous resolve of the bench is to name the place Frackville. The only objections he had was form an anonymous letter, in which it was stated that a town in Iowa had called Bellknapp, and the people were about having it changed. That no town should be named after a man who is living, and it ended by saying that “old Frack is still living, a fact which he had not known before. “However, the Court was unanimous in calling it Frackville. The petition for time and place will lay over until next Monday.