

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name West End Wheelmen's Club

other names/site number Franklin Club

2. Location

street & number 439 South Franklin Street not for publication N/A
city or town Wilkes-Barre vicinity N/A
state Pennsylvania code PA county Luzerne code 079
zip code 18702

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this _____ nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide _____ locally. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====
4. National Park Service Certification
=====

I, hereby certify that this property is:

_____ entered in the National Register _____
(See continuation sheet).

_____ determined eligible for the _____
National Register
(See continuation sheet).

_____ determined not eligible for the _____
National Register

_____ removed from the National Register _____

_____ other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

=====
5. Classification
=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
1	buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
1	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Social

Sub: Clubhouse

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic

Sub: Multiple Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian/Shingle Style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation

Sandstone

roof

Ashpalt

walls

Shingle/weatherboard

other:

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See attached sheets

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

- X B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Social History
Recreation/Entertainment
Architecture

Period of Significance ca. 1897-1946

Significant Dates 1897
1913

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Architect: Olds, Frederick L.
Builder: O'Malley, William

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

X Other

Name of repository: Wyoming Historical & Geological Society

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.5

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	424880	4565560	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Larry Newman

organization Joel Zitofsky date 12/03/96

street & number 155 West River Street telephone (717) 821 7522

city or town Wilkes-Barre state PA zip code 18702

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Joel Zitofsky and Ronne Kurlanceek Zitofsky

street & number 743 Sutton Road telephone (717) 696-4440

city or town Shavertown state PA zip code 18708

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

West End Wheelmen's Club
Luzerne County, PA

Description:

The West End Wheelmen's Club, constructed in 1897, is a grand three-story frame Shingle Style clubhouse, roughly rectangular in plan. The property retains integrity, it is in relatively good condition, and its exterior and most significant interior features are still intact and unaltered, despite almost a century of use by three different social organizations. The building stands on the west side of South Franklin Street, a block and a half south of the River Street National Register Historic District, in the midst of a neighborhood which, at the turn of the century, enjoyed popularity with members of Wilkes-Barre's managerial class.

The building's foundation is rock-faced ashlar with a cut stone water table, all constructed of Laurel Run Red Stone, an extremely popular local building stone. A rambling, arcaded one-story porch, clad in shingles, wraps around the northeast corner of the building. The porch thrusts towards the street, terminating in a large, shallow arch which contains the front stoop. The front steps are a relatively recent modification. The first floor is clapboarded, while the building's upper two stories are shingle-clad. Large double-hung one-over-one windows, either used singly or ganged into bays, provide fenestration throughout the building. A steep pyramidal hip roof tops the central mass of the building. The roof's deep soffit features exposed rafters and very simple cornice detailing.

As is common with Shingle Style designs, the building's primary interior spaces are expressed on the exterior. The location of several public rooms are marked on the south side of the front facade by a three-story semicircular bay, tucked under the deep roof overhang, which punches through the roof to terminate in a gabled dormer. This dormer is balanced by an eyebrow dormer on the north side of the roof. A brick chimney, which rises along the center of the front facade, is flanked by the two dormers where it pierces the roof.

On the north wall, the end of the porch widens into a porte-cochere. Behind the porte-cochere, a broad, shallow bay rises two stories to provide fenestration to the building's two largest public rooms. Other public rooms are expressed by the building's tallest element, a round tower with conical roof, which is placed just behind the structure's northeast corner. The tower's surface is modulated by shingled semicircular piers rising to the roof.

Alterations have been made to the building over the years; many early in its history. Seven feet of water filled the club basement during a 1902 flood, destroying its furnishings. In addition, renderings made at the time of the building's construction show that a high hip roof also surmounted the clubhouse's north elevation. However, a 1913 fire heavily damaged the rear of the clubhouse, and the alterations which followed included the replacement of this hip roof by a boxlike third floor. A second-floor porch which

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**West End Wheelmen's Club
Luzerne County, PA**

Description (continued)

originally extended across the rear of the building was removed at this time, and a kitchen replaced a number of smaller second-floor social rooms. These changes, while extensive, did not affect the building's most significant interior spaces. In addition, the changes, which occurred at the height of the building's period of significance under Criterion A, can themselves be considered historic, for they were made by the Wheelmen's successor organization, the Franklin Club.

The Wheelmen's interior is typical of Shingle Style designs featuring a flowing, open sequence of major spaces. It is organized around a three-story open stairwell, and the building's significant rooms open widely onto this dominant interior feature. In general, the public rooms on the east side of the stairwell, facing South Franklin Street, are more intimate and scaled to smaller groups, while the clubhouse's larger spaces are stacked atop each other to the west of the stairwell.

From the porte-cochere, one enters a vestibule. A second doorway, embellished with cut glass transoms, opens onto the main stairhall. This stairhall, illuminated by a art-glass skylight, is the building's most significant interior space. The stair itself is almost completely intact, and features an elaborate red oak balustrade and a bench built into its base.

Two rooms are to the east of the stairwell; the first, described as a reception room in 1914, occupies the northeast corner. It opens onto another parlor, located in the building's southeast corner, which served as a reading room in 1914. The reception room contains most of its original historic fabric, including a fireplace finished in glazed brick and two quartered oak Corinthian columns which frame the entrance to the room from the stairhall. The reading room, most recently used as a bar, is separated from the reception room by a set of large pocket doors. Heavily modified, this space retains only its original window and door surrounds and its large semicircular bay.

The club's former general assembly room, occupying the full width of the building, is located to the west of the stairwell, and is reached by a separate flight of stairs, 30" above the front portion of the first floor. This room has changed considerably from its original appearance; its oak floors and wainscoting appear to have been removed in the 1960s, and the windows on the south wall were also been covered. Originally, smaller social rooms were located to the west of the general club room; after the 1913 fire, this area was rebuilt to house a kitchen. A second stairwell at the rear of the building is constructed around a hand elevator which runs from basement to third floor.

The social room in the northeast corner of the second floor was later dubbed "the Grill Room" during the tenure of the Franklin Club. This room, which occupies the second floor of the tower, is separated from the stairhall by a fretwork entranceway. A 1914 article on the building describes the grill room as being "finished in mission . . . [and] of old Holland style, with many fancy electric lights and dozens of beautiful

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West End Wheelmen's Club
Luzerne County, PA

Description (continued)

steins on the plate rail." The grill room still possesses most of its original detailing, including its Mission-style wainscoting. It once opened onto a balcony which extended 26 feet across the clubhouse's front facade; the balcony was removed, apparently early in this century. A semicircular balcony still exists, however, to the west of the grill room; it is reached through an alcove off the stairhall.

The remainder of the second floor front is occupied by the library, which later served as the Board of Governor's Room, and the club office. The library, which mirrors the plan of the reading room downstairs, features an art-glass window incorporating the initials of the League of American Wheelmen on the south wall. A billiard and pool room, in the rear of the second floor, is described in the 1914 article as being "quite large and . . . papered in paneled effect with light brown draperies to match, the woodwork being white." This room still maintains some original pine paneling and moldings, as well as a large bay window on the north wall. The remainder of the room's original detailing has been removed, apparently in conjunction with the renovations to the general assembly room downstairs.

The third floor front is occupied by smaller rooms, including one with a semicircular porch in the building's northeast tower, which were the domain of the building steward and his family. The tower porch features a latticework balustrade, and has been winterized with large operable windows. A space which traditionally served as a banquet hall sits to the rear of the stairwell, along with several rooms originally used as kitchens. The woodwork throughout the third floor is pine.

The building's basement originally contained a gymnasium boasting an 17-foot ceiling, a locker room, a lavatory, two 80-foot long bowling alleys, and a concrete-floored bicycle storage room, 60 feet in length, which could be accessed directly from the driveway by bicycle-riding members. The ramp and doors to this storage room, tucked below the entrance vestibule, still exist. The majority of the basement featured 11-foot ceilings, and once boasted pine wainscoting. Club histories state that alterations were made continually over the years; this was due both to the regular flooding which bedeviled the club, and to shifts in the club's interests from bicycling to other activities, which resulted in the addition of more bowling alleys. The 1972 flood which devastated Wilkes-Barre resulted in the destruction of the alleys, along with most of the basement's furnishings; the basement has been essentially devoid of furnishings ever since.

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West End Wheelmen's Club
Luzerne County, PA

Statement of Significance:

The West End Wheelmen's Club, built in 1897, is a locally notable monument to the recreational bicycling craze which swept the United States at the turn of the century. From the date of its construction through 1946, the building served as the home of the West End Wheelmen and their successors, the Franklin Club and the Knights of Columbus; consequently, it is significant for its long-standing role in the civic and social life of the Wyoming Valley. These factors make the Wheelmen's Club eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for Entertainment/ Recreation and Social History. As a strong local example of Shingle Style architecture, designed by one of Wilkes-Barre's most important turn-of-the-century architects, F.L. Olds, it is also eligible for the National Register under Criterion C.

Recreation/Social history significance (Criterion A)

The early growth of bicycling was paralleled by the development of clubs where like-minded individuals could pursue the sport together for recreation and entertainment. At the time, the bicycle was a daring novelty, utilized primarily by dashing young men whose "high wheels," often up to 64 inches in diameter, were constructed in small local bicycle shops. Six of these men organized the West End Wheelmen's Club on September 1, 1889. All but one worked for the Vulcan Iron Works, one of Wilkes-Barre's largest employers. The club quickly grew in membership, adding individuals such as the Peifer brothers, who built many of the club's bicycles in the Connor & Peifer shop. Needing meeting space, the club rented a series of rooms in South Wilkes-Barre.

The "West Enders" served as the focal point for the fledgling sport in the Wyoming Valley, organizing club races and larger regional race meets, as well as a three-day meet of the League of American Wheelmen during the first half of the 1890s. To popularize cycling, they held nighttime "Lantern Processions"; newspaper accounts tell of the Wheelmen's largest procession, on October 4, 1891, when 300 bicyclists wheeled through Wilkes-Barre, led by the Ninth Regiment Band. The club also ran excursions in which members and their bicycles would take the train to distant points of interest, picnic upon arrival, and then ride home to Wilkes-Barre.

By 1896, flush with income from racing events and increasing membership, the club was ready to build its own home. In January, 1897, the Wheelmen voted to accept the plans submitted by F. L. Olds, "a rapidly rising young architect of this city"; it is unclear how Olds was selected to undertake the design. With great fanfare, the plans were announced to the public, with one newspaper account stating that "the club house will possess ... quarters which will be adequate for the needs of the club during its existence, and which will ever stand as a monument to their energy, enterprise, and progressiveness." The completed building, described at the time as being "of Swiss architecture," was opened to public inspection on November 25, 1897.

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West End Wheelmen's Club
Luzerne County, PA

Statement of Significance (continued)

Unfortunately, public interest in club bicycling and racing fell off only a short time after the new clubhouse was completed. A Wheelmen-sponsored racing event early in the century proved to be a financial disaster. Soon after, a 1902 flood caused extensive damage to the clubhouse, and the West Enders found themselves in trouble. The property was foreclosed upon in 1902, and the group reorganized as the Franklin Club of Wilkes-Barre in April, 1903.

The demise of the Wheelmen was caused, in part, by the bicycle's evolution from novelty to utilitarian object; the institution of an annual Bowling Dinner as the new club's social event of the year illustrates the rapid decline in bicycling as an organized recreational activity. In contrast, the Franklin Club was intended to emphasize general social pursuits, rather than bicycling alone. The differences between the two organizations were further described by Franklin Club historian Howard Geddes, who noted that, "as an association designed for sociability, it [the Franklin Club] had no call on the public as did the West End Wheelmen, who were continually engrossed in the production of some demonstration or spectacle that would publicize their organization, attract new members, or promote added attendance at their race meets."

As a social organization, however, the Franklin Club was also significant. The club's rise parallels the growth of clubs and fraternal organizations throughout America. True to its counterparts across the country, the Franklin Club provided more than recreation for its members — it also acted as a forum for business networking and civic boosterism. According to an 1914 profile of the club in the *Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce Journal*, "the history of The Franklin Club would be the history of the development and progress of the city itself."

For local businessmen, the club provided an alternative to the Westmoreland Club, which was, at that time, the exclusive province of Wilkes-Barre's anthracite elite. Presidents of the Franklin Club included "self-made men" such as Frederick J. Weckesser, an executive with the F. W. Woolworth Company retail chain; Charles F. Huber, president of the Glen Alden Coal Company; and Malcolm Burnside, president of the Boston Store, Wilkes-Barre's largest department store.

The Franklin Club's role in the community is illustrated by the story of the Wilkes-Barre Auto Club, which was formed at the Franklin Club in the fall of 1905. A number of Franklin Club members took the lead in developing this group, which exists today as the Valley Auto Club — Wilkes-Barre's American Automobile Association affiliate. The automobile aficionados then used their new group to develop an auto race which would also serve to promote Wilkes-Barre. In May 1906, along with the fledgling Matheson Automobile Company of Forty Fort, they staged a hill climb along Giant's Despair Road, which winds to the top of Wilkes-Barre Mountain. The Franklin Club, "filled with a merry, enthusiastic, auto-talking throng," served as the race headquarters. The Giant's Despair Hill Climb quickly evolved into a very significant early auto racing event — one which continues to be held annually.

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West End Wheelmen's Club
Luzerne County, PA

Statement of Significance (continued)

The Franklin Club flourished through the Depression years, boasting at one point a membership of three hundred men. The Club successfully rebuilt its home after a June 1913 fire which destroyed a portion of the roof, second, and third floors of the clubhouse. However, time, social changes, and the economic collapse of the Wyoming Valley all took their toll on the Club. It lingered, however, until 1979, when, suffering from the effects of the 1972 flood, it was forced to disband.

The building was sold that same year to the Knights of Columbus, which, for a decade, continued its tradition of fraternal service by using it for their clubhouse. When, in 1992, they built a new facility elsewhere in the city, the Knights sold the old building to a private owner, who operated it for a time as a banquet facility and nightclub, before it was acquired by the present owner in 1995.

Architectural Significance (Criterion C)

The West End Wheelmen's Club is architecturally significant as one of the few Shingle Style buildings constructed in Wilkes-Barre, and, of these, it is certainly the most prominent. The architect was Frederick L. Olds, and the contractor was William O'Malley. The club was Olds' first major work in Wilkes-Barre, and it garnered a tremendous amount of local attention.

F. L. Olds (1851-1912), a native of Circleville, Ohio, came to Wilkes-Barre after designing a number of buildings in central Pennsylvania, such as Pennsylvania State College's Romanesque Revival Old Botany Building (1887) and the Romanesque Revival J.C. Blair Building (1889) in Huntingdon. Olds joined F. Willard Puckey to form one of the city's most prominent architectural firms at the turn of the century. They were responsible for a number of fraternal buildings in the city, including the elaborate 1906 Moorish Revival Irem Temple and the Classical Revival Odd Fellows' Building (now demolished), along with several significant residences, such as the 1909 French Renaissance Henry Lazarus house at 120 South Franklin Street and the 1910 Georgian Revival Franck Darte house at 37 North River Street. Olds embraced the City Beautiful Movement with a proposal for a monumental bridge across the Susquehanna River at Market Street, a grand city park on the river's west bank, and an elaborate boulevard reaching to Kingston Corners. Though he died in 1912, his plan was realized in the 1920's with the construction of Carrere and Hastings' Market Street Bridge, the development of the Olmsted Brothers' F.M. Kirby Park, and the extension of Market Street in Kingston.

Like many architects of his time, Olds designed in an eclectic array of styles; for this commission, he seems to have been interested in the relaxed, festive associations represented by the Shingle Style. The style was never particularly popular in Wilkes-Barre; store owner Bernard Long was the only local business leader to construct a Shingle Style home in the elite residential neighborhood adjacent to downtown. The architect of the Long house, which was demolished in 1983, is unknown. The other notable Shingle Style dwelling

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Section number 8 Page 7

West End Wheelmen's Club
Luzerne County, PA

Statement of Significance (continued)

in the city, located at 117 West River Street, was built in 1898 by architect Clark Wright Evans as his personal residence; it is interesting to note that, while Evans felt comfortable using the Shingle Style for his own house, his other major work of that period – the 1898 Dr. Levi Shoemaker residence at 59 South Franklin Street (now the Westmoreland Club) – was an extremely formal double-bowfront Georgian Revival mansion. Olds himself turned back to the Romanesque Revival for his next residential commission, the 1895 Maria Dunning house at 251 South River Street. On the other hand, a number of Shingle Style cottages were constructed in summer colonies like Glen Summit and Bear Creek, which nestled into the surrounding mountains.

It is clear that, in Wilkes-Barre, as elsewhere, the Shingle Style represented a free, informal style of living which, for better or for worse, represented a departure from Victorian residential proprieties. As a result, the playful Wheelmen's Club, like its adventurous early tenants, stood out in a city dominated by red masonry Queen Anne, Victorian Gothic, and Richardsonian Romanesque buildings. Olds' thoughtful planning extended to the building's interior, and his organization of these spaces has allowed the clubhouse to serve several different generations and types of users with minimal alterations.

Features such as the bold massing, the tower and porches, and the paired, tripled, and eyebrow windows make this an excellent example of the Shingle Style. Even if it were not one of the few Shingle Style buildings extant in Wilkes-Barre, its scale and historical function would make it one of the most prominent local exemplars of its type.

The West End Wheelmen's Club is locally significant not only for its architecture and its architect, but for its association with groups which played prominent parts in Wilkes-Barre's changing social history. The building can first be seen as a symbol of the enthusiasm and energy which surrounded bicycling at the turn of the century; later, as the Franklin Club, it was a focal point in Wilkes-Barre for the twin goals of civic betterment and fraternal fellowship which characterized the phenomenon of the "city club" in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century. Consequently, the West End Wheelmen's Club is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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West End Wheelmen's Club
Luzerne County, PA

Major Bibliographical References:

Geddes, Howard. *Historical Sketch of the Franklin Club*, Wilkes-Barre, PA.: Privately published, 1940.

"The Franklin Club." *Chamber of Commerce Journal* (January, 1914): pp 12-13.

Smith, Harrison. "Valley Views", *Wilkes-Barre Times Leader* (February 10, 1968, January 13, 1968, January 20, 1968, January 27, 1968, February 3, 1968).

"The West Enders' New Club House." *Wilkes-Barre Times* (January 7, 1897): p 1.

"The West End Wheelmen's Club House." *Wilkes-Barre Times* (January 8, 1897): p 1.

"Wheelmen's New Home." *Wilkes-Barre Record* (November 23, 1897): p 3.

Verbal Boundary Description

City of Wilkes-Barre Assessment Map Volume 2, page 23, Lots 5, 109A, and 33A .

Verbal Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire city lot that has been historically associated with the property.

Location of the West End Wheelmen's Club:

439 S. Franklin St., Wilkes-Barre

(NOTE: USGS is currently reprinting the Wilkes-Barre West quadrangle; therefore, originals are not available at this time)

WILKES-BARRE WEST QUADRANGLE

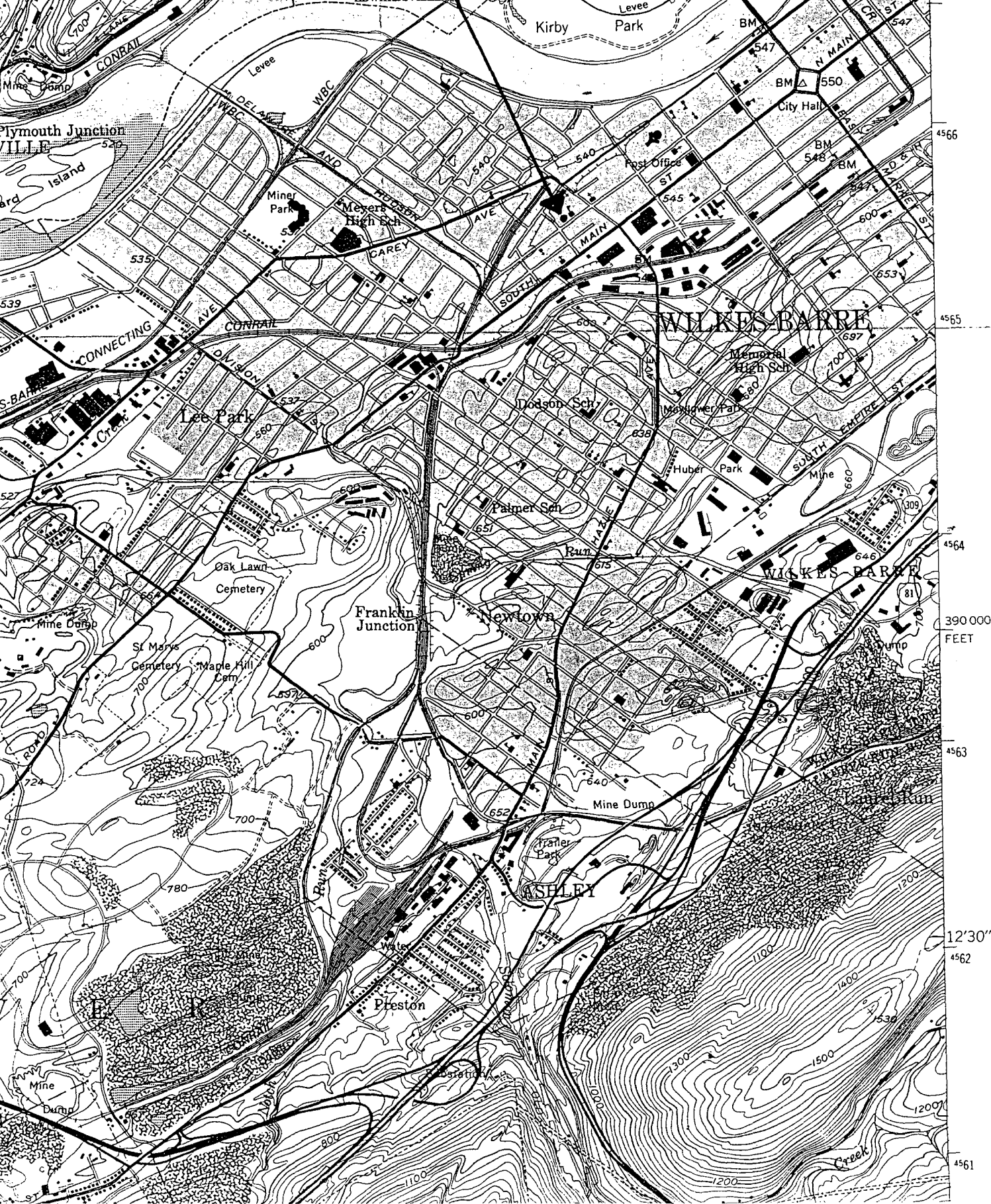
PENNSYLVANIA-LUZERNE CO.

7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

NW/4 WILKES-BARRE 15' QUADRANGLE

5866 IV SE
(PITTSBURGH)

SCRANTON 19 MI. KINGSTON 1.9 MI. 155' 424 2510 000 FEET KINGSTON 1.5 MI. 75°52'30" 41°15'



4566
4565
4564
390 000 FEET
4563
4562
12'30"
4561