John Walter Harden (the dad) was a member of the North of England Institute of Mining & Mechanical Engineers and a friend of Prof. J. Peter Lesley, who later would become the PA State Geologist. In 1866 Harden brought his four sons to Wilkes-Barre to establish a large professional engineering practice. Edward, Oliver, John Henry, and their dad would all be members of AIME and be active contributors to Transactions. The sons would also become proteges of Lesley and part of the 2nd PA Geologic Survey.
Before coming to America, John Henry had worked as a mining engineer for five years at the Nerudda Coal and Iron Co., in a 25 sq. mi. coal field in central India. In Wilkes-Barre he performed surveying and shaft sinking work, was the mining engineer for the Empire Mine and was chief engineer for the Lehigh & Wilkes Barre Coal Co. and oversaw the sinking of the 6-compartment Hollenback Shaft, one of the largest shafts in the anthracite region, the work conducted by William Kenrick.

In 1874 Harden took over his father’s practice, now in Philadelphia, and joined his mentor Lesley at Penn as an instructor in geology and mining, staying until 1879.
From 1879 until about 1904 Harden was the General Mining Engineer of the Phoenix Iron Works. Phoenix had several mines and quarries, including the Boyertown and Jones mines in Berks County PA. In 1888 he sent a sample to John Birkinbine, who was working with the Edison Ore-Milling Company. Jones Mine ore had sulfur and Harden hoped to remove it with Edison's magnetic concentrator located at his NJ mine. Harden, Birkinbine and Edison met January 19, 1889. Apparently, the results were poor because in 1894 Edison paid some money back to Phoenix. Edison shut it down in 1899, commenting about his losses, "it's all gone, but we had a hell of a good time spending it."
The Fishing Waters of Lower Schuylkill.

As you doubtless are aware, we have the finest stretch of bass water on the Schuylkill River, and I believe there is no finer stream than the deep slack water of the two miles forming the Black Rock Dam of the Schuylkill Canal Navigation Company, from the P. & R. R. R. tunnel bridge to Black Rock. Limerick Dam, Palsings' Dam and Black Rock are all within easy distance and close to railroad stations.

During the season of 1892 a number of large fish (bass) were caught at odd times, up to six pounds weight. They are rare fish, at least rarely caught, and might be counted on the fingers of one hand. Of course good strings of ordinary-sized fish are caught, always with bait. We have only one or two fly fishers; it is too much labor to wade the stream, and the fish are not generally, when caught, as heavy as those caught with bait.

During the season, and late into the fall, many carp have been taken, some with hook and line, but mostly with the pig (spinning at night), when the fish are found in the shallows feeding. Our "Dead Man's" an old sport, has taken them up to nineteen pounds in weight. This location is very favorable to these fish, and I suspect the large dams are full of them of immense size, or at least they bid fair to become equal to those big fellows we read about in foreign lands, where they are much more esteemed as a food fish. We shall appreciate them for table use as we learn more about them and the season when in the best condition. At present no one makes a specialty of angling for carp. Their habitat is not well understood.

Phoenixville, Pa.

John H. Harden.

Photos Courtesy Chester County Historical Society