William Dwight Zehner (1844-1908) The Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company owned some 8,000 acres of mine property between Mauch Chunk and Tamaqua Pennsylvania, the Panther Creek Valley.

In 1871 Zehner was the Superintendent of the Room Run and Lansford mines of the LCN and by 1881 he had advanced to General Superintendent of the Company’s ten collieries which employed 3,350 men. He might not have been the president of the company, but the company owned Lansford and the Valley and Zehner was the boss of everything. When he “retired” in 1906, he was superintendent of the collieries and the Lanford-Tamaqua railway, the electric light works, the water company, the railroad, and the car shops.
You can’t get away from a talk about the anthracite region without a story about the “Molly Maguires,” and Zehner’s is a pretty good one. Morgan Powell, killed by the Mollies in 1871 and John P. Jones, killed in 1875, were both Assistant Superin tendents under Zehner. Both murders were supposedly done to get him to “run away.” In 1871, Powell was on his way to Zehner’s office when he was shot. Zehner later was warned that Mollies planned to murder Jones and himself. Charles Parrish had given instructions to spare no expense to secure their safety, and Jones had been sleeping at Zehner’s house guarded by Coal and Iron police. On September 2nd, 1875, Jones, slept in his own house for the first time in several weeks, and was shot as he returned to Zehner’s home.