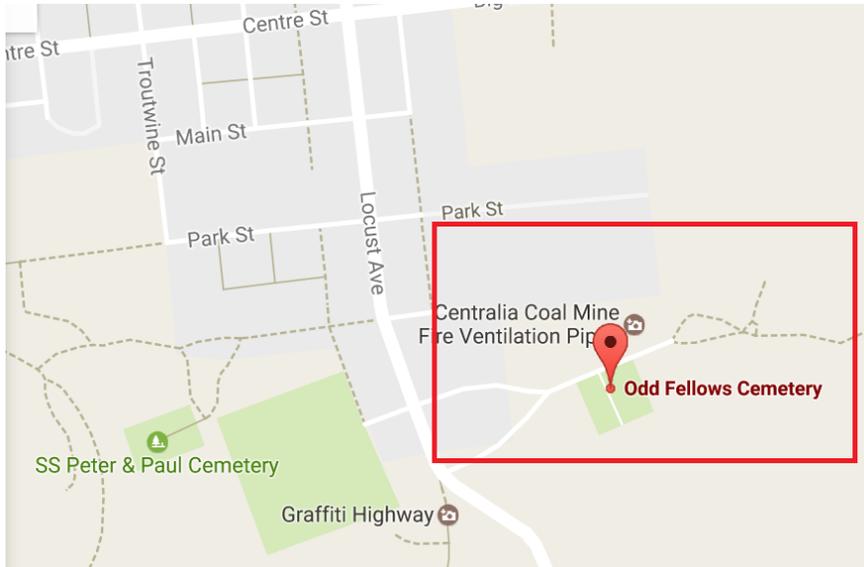


# Investigation Centralia, Pennsylvania March 11, 2017

## Odd Fellows Cemetery

After visiting the Fire Ventilation Pipes, we realized it was too dark and potentially icy to travel the path we had originally intended so, as we were headed to the SS Peter & Paul Cemetery, we stopped at a Cemetery along the way: Odd Fellows Cemetery. This Cemetery is closest to where many believe the fires originally began and, in 2000, the fires spread into the Cemetery.

### Who are the Odd Fellows?



### [Independent Order of Odd Fellows](#)

“The Independent Order of Odd Fellows was founded on the North American Continent in Baltimore, Maryland, on April 26, 1819 when Thomas Wildey and four members of the Order from England instituted Washington Lodge No. 1. This lodge received its charter from Manchester Unity of Odd Fellows in England. At that time, the city was suffering both a yellow fever epidemic and mass unemployment so they dedicated the organization to “Visit the sick, relieve the distress, bury the dead and educate the orphans.”

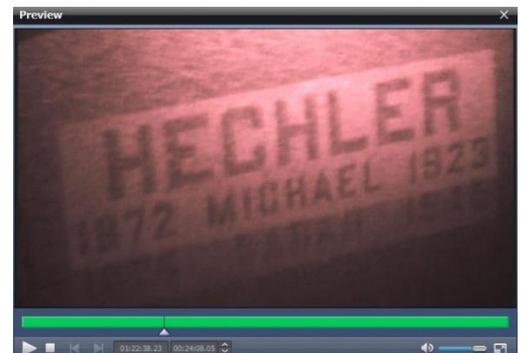
1851. This degree is based on the teachings found in the Holy Bible, and was written by the Honorable Schuyler Colfax who was Vice President of the United States during the period 1868-1873. Odd Fellows and Rebekahs were also the first fraternal organization to establish homes for our senior members and for orphaned children.

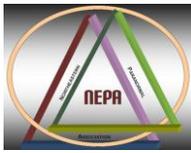
Such altruistic and friendly society came to be known as "Odd Fellows" because it was odd to find people organized for the purpose of giving aid to those in need and of pursuing projects for the benefit of all mankind. It was believed that they were "an odd bunch of fellows" who would behave in such a selfless and seemingly impractical fashion. Odd Fellows are also known as "The Three Link Fraternity" which stands for Friendship, Love and Truth.”

### [Who is buried in Odd Fellows Cemetery Centralia PA](#)



During the investigation in the cemetery, there was an “A” Name that very much wanted us to leave. When Trish pushed for her to tell us who she was, she directed Trish to Emily for Emily’s middle name. This has happened on many other investigations with Emily. Emily is often the “holder” of the information. Emily’s middle name is Sarah. The Spirit also gave us the name of Henry and mentioned her whole family was buried there. After researching further, this was what we found:





[Sarah](#)

## Sarah Whitaker Hechler

Birth: Jan. 6, 1875  
Pennsylvania, USA  
Death: Jan. 23, 1945  
Philadelphia  
Philadelphia County  
Pennsylvania, USA

### Family links:

#### Parents:

[Henry Whitaker \(1850 - 1914\)](#)  
Mary Jane *Black* Whitaker (1849 - 1913)

#### Spouse:

Michael Alexander Hechler (1873 - 1923)

#### Children:

Michael A. Hechler (1904 - 1904)\*  
Mary Jane *Hechler* Hamilton (1906 - 1935)\*

#### Siblings:

David Whitaker (1872 - 1956)\*  
[Sarah Whitaker Hechler \(1875 - 1945\)](#)  
Mary Jane *Whitaker* Mayer (1878 - 1954)\*  
Fanny *Whitaker* Payne (1880 - 1939)\*  
Rebecca *Whitaker* Price (1884 - 1915)\*

\*[Calculated relationship](#)

#### Burial:

[Odd Fellows Cemetery](#)  
Centralia  
Columbia County  
Pennsylvania, USA

Maintained by: [Ed Wood](#)  
Originally Created by: [Star Kline](#)  
Record added: Dec 23, 2008  
Find A Grave Memorial# 32364481

## Mrs. Hechler Dies In Phila.

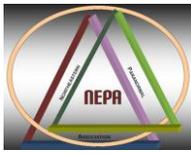
Mrs. Sarah Whitaker Hechler, 69, a former resident of Centralia, sister of David Whitaker, 24 north Hickory street, Mount Carmel, died at her home, 4547 north Gratz street, Philadelphia, at 8:30 o'clock last night.

In failing health several years and bedfast three months, she succumbed to a complication of ailments.

The body will be sent to Centralia where the funeral will be held Saturday afternoon from the home of her sister, Mrs. Mary Jane Mayer. Rev. J. Harold Wolf, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Mount Carmel, will officiate in a service in the Mayer residence at 2 o'clock. Burial will follow in Odd Fellows' cemetery, Centralia.

Born and reared in Centralia, Mrs. Hechler was a daughter of the late Henry and Mary Jane (Black) Whitaker. She had been a resident of Philadelphia 35 years or more. Her husband, Michael A. Hechler, originally of Oakland, near Ashland, was killed 22 years ago in an accident in connection with his work as a railroader.

Other than the brother and sister already named, she leaves a son, George Hechler, of Philadelphia, and two grandchildren.



[Sarah's Death Certificate](#)



Blank press  
Blank hair  
Chiseled features  
Strong jaw  
blue eyes  
tall  
wide hips



G+1  
★★★★★  
0 Reviews  
[Write review](#)

**Catastrophe: A Guide to World's Worst Industrial Disasters**

By Terra Pitta

in May 1962, the Centralia Borough Council hired five members of the volunteer fire company to clean up the town landfill, located in an abandoned strip-mine pit next to the Odd Fellows Cemetery.

This had been done prior to Memorial Day in previous years, when the landfill was in a different location. On May 27, 1962, the firefighters, as they had in the past, set the dump on fire and let it burn for some time. Unlike in previous years, however, the fire was not fully extinguished. An unsealed opening in the pit allowed the fire to enter the labyrinth of abandoned coal mines beneath Centralia.

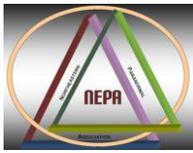
LIFESTORY    FACTS    GALLERY

When Anna Mayer and her twin sister Mary were born in 1912 in Pennsylvania, their father, William, was 38 and their mother, Mary, was 34. She had three brothers and four sisters.

No known children

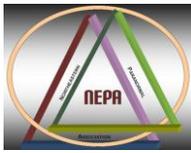
- Anna Mayer
- Edward Williams
- William O. Mayer
- Mary Jane "Mame" Whitaker Mayer

Sarah's sister Mary Jane (buried in Centralia) had a Daughter Anna. There is no record of her burial. Centralia?



Sarah's sister Mary Jane. The woman in the cemetery, "A", looked like this man in the face (who would be her Father). The high check-bones.





## St. Ignatius Cemetery

<http://militarybruce.com/the-town-that-was/>

"By 1992, Pennsylvania governor Bob Casey's government invoked the right of Eminent Domain, which revoked the ownership of all remaining buildings and homes from the residents and condemned them. All of the approximately 60 remaining residents were ordered to vacate their homes and leave town but some still refused to leave.

Lawsuits filed by the remaining residents occupied the next 2 decades, culminating in Governor Ed Rendell issuing a formal eviction notice to the remaining residents of Centralia. Among those evicted in this round was John Lokitis, who was prominently featured in the 2007 documentary film "The Town That Was", which profiled the decline of Centralia.

Prior to his eviction, **John Lokitis** became the unofficial **caretaker** of the town after the State of Pennsylvania stopped cutting grass in town and otherwise maintaining the town. He cut the grass of several vacant lots along Park Street West near his house, which included the land once occupied by the American Legion Post 608, a property that once contained a memorial bell, park bench and a

time capsule buried in 1966, scheduled to be opened in 2016, but opened 2 years earlier due to threats of vandalism.

Lokitis also cut the grass along the west 200 block area of Locust Street (the main north-south road through town), **unlocked and re-locked the cemetery gates at St Ignatius Cemetery every morning and night** and repainted the American Legion bench on Locust Street as needed. He even refurbished several of the town's Christmas decorations, at his own expense, and mounted them on the hydro poles near his house at Christmas time."

George

→ 5 ft tall

→ Seemed to lean on the right side

→ narrow eyes

→ Brown suit / clothing

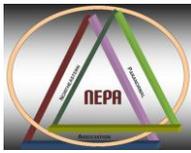
→ Care taker

→ BIG HANDS

George

St. IGNATIUS

Caretaker



[Find A Grave - St Ignatius](#)

## George P. Lokitis

MemorialPhotosFlowersShareEdit

[Learn about sponsoring this memorial...](#)

**Birth:** Dec. 3, 1917  
**Death:** Jan. 6, 2002  
Centralia  
Columbia County  
Pennsylvania, USA

**Family links:**  
**Spouse:**  
[Catherine M. Lokitis \(1919 - 1981\)](#)

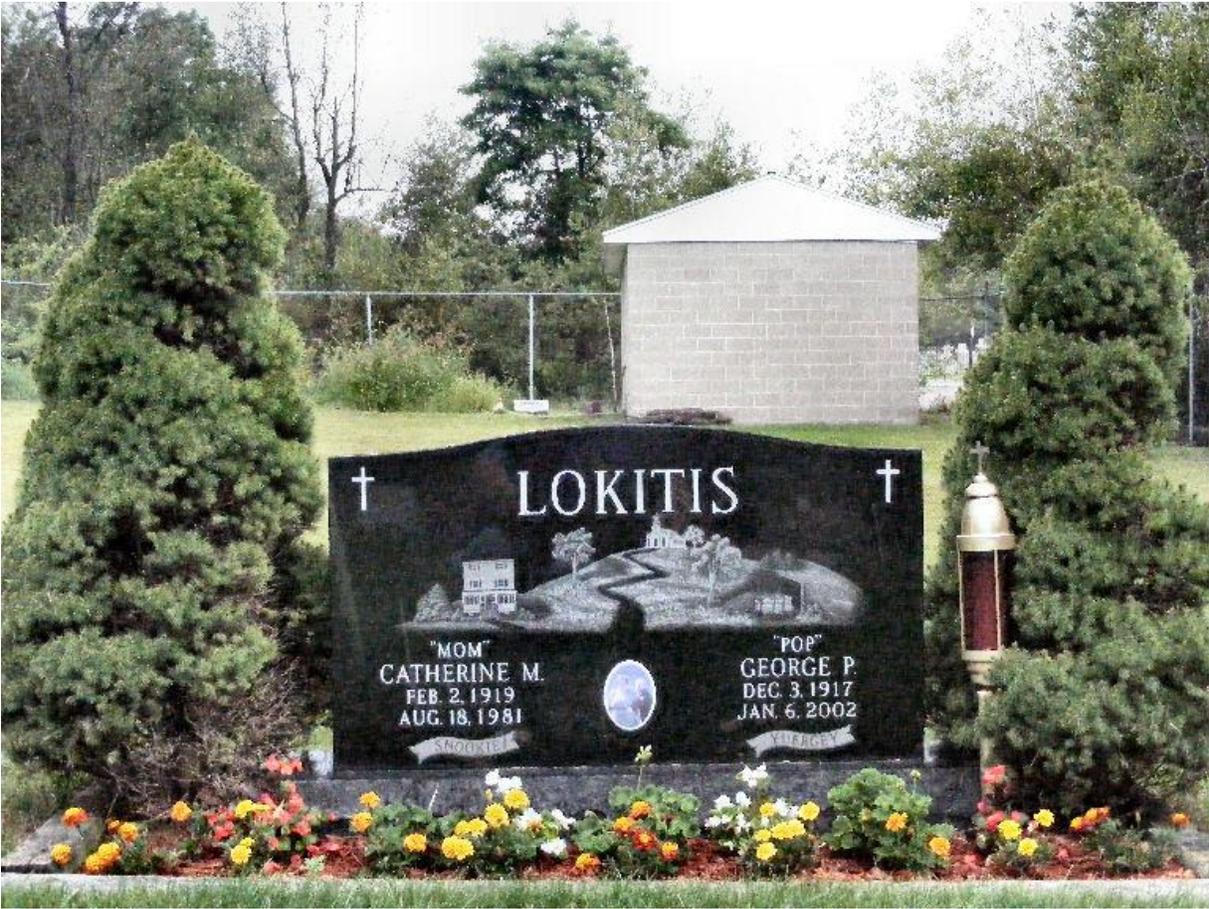
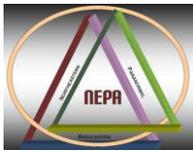
**Burial:**  
[Saint Ignatius Cemetery](#)  
Centralia  
Columbia County  
Pennsylvania, USA

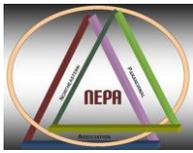
Created by: [Carolyn Martienssen](#)  
Record added: May 21, 2010  
Find A Grave Memorial# 52686137



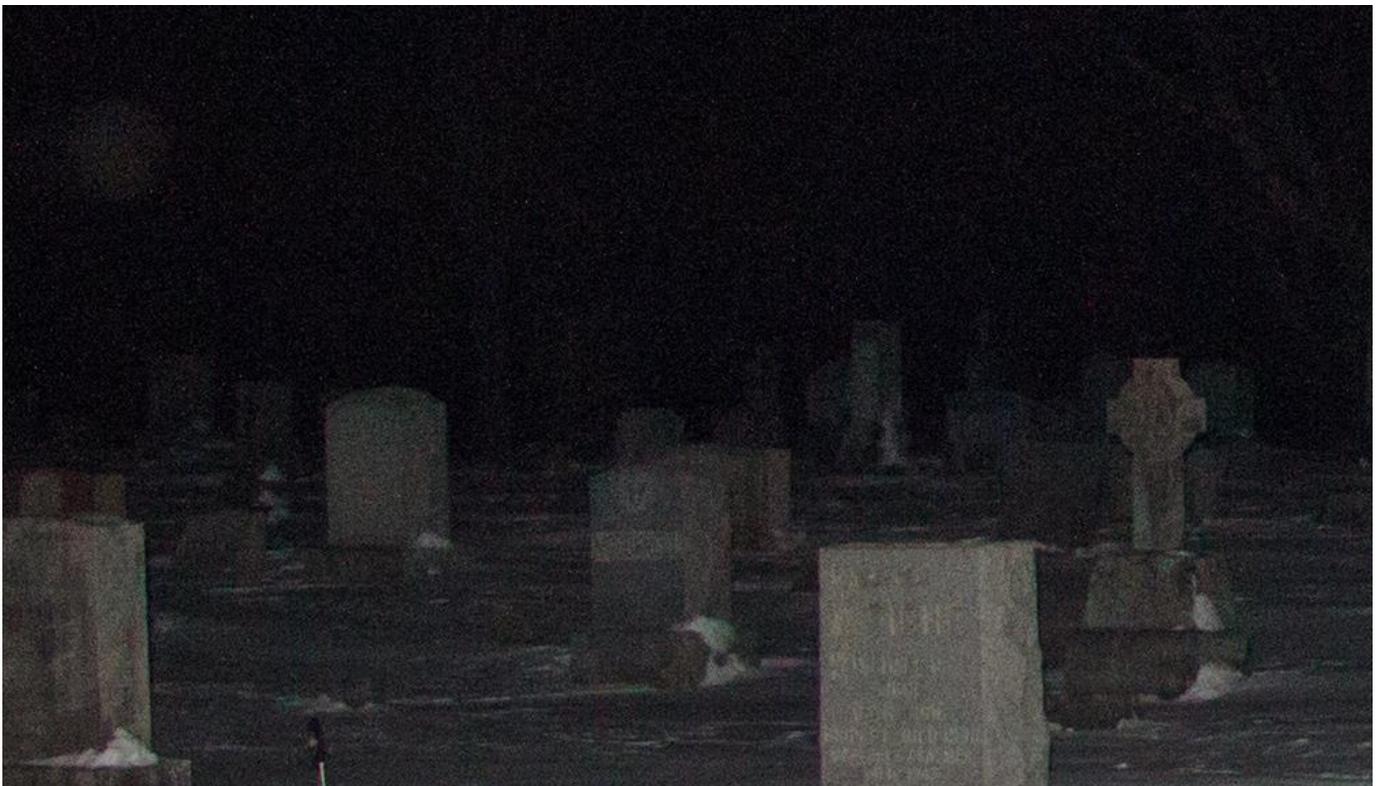
Added by: [J.G.B.](#)

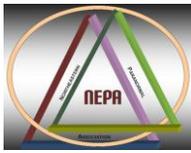






On the other side (near the entrance) of St. Ignatius Cemetery





## Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church



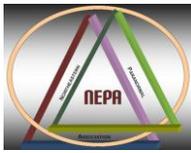
[Nun](#)      [Buried](#)

<http://www.centraliapa.org/saint-ignatius-church-centralia-pennsylvania/>

“St. Ignatius Church was one of the earliest Catholic churches in Centralia, Pennsylvania. It was built just three years after the town was incorporated. The cornerstone for Saint Ignatius was laid by Bishop Shanahan on July 18, 1869. The church was constructed of beautiful native stone and other local materials. It was completed in under five months and was dedicated in November of the same year.

**Near the end of the 19th century, the church had also added a cemetery and convent. In 1896 a parochial school was constructed across from Saint Ignatius to accommodate students.**

Like other buildings in Centralia, Pennsylvania, St. Ignatius Church could not escape the mine fire that had begun in 1962. By 1981, the school had to be closed as parents feared carbon monoxide and other gases were sickening their children. The priest also left around this time and moved to Mt. Carmel out of concern for safety.”



## Sister Frances Assia in the 1940 United States Federal Census

| Name:                              | Sister Frances Assia  |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
|------------------------------------|---|------|-----|------------------------------|----|--------------------------|----|----------------------------|----|------------------------------|----|-------------------------------|----|--------------------------|----|-----------------------------|----|--------------------------------|----|-------------------------------|----|
| Age:                               | 32  |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| Estimated birth year:              | abt 1908  |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| Gender:                            | Female  |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| Race:                              | White   |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| Birthplace:                        | Northern Ireland  |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| Marital Status:                    | Single  |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| Relation to Head of House:         | Boarder   |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| Home in 1940:                      | Norristown, Montgomery, Pennsylvania  |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| Map of Home in 1940:               | <a href="#">View Map</a>  |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| Street:                            | East Marshall Street  |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| House Number:                      | 362   |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| Inferred Residence in 1935:        | Centralia, Columbia, Pennsylvania   |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| Residence in 1935:                 | Centralia, Columbia, Pennsylvania   |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| Resident on farm in 1935:          | No  |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| Sheet Number:                      | 14A   |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| Occupation:                        | Teacher   |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| Attended School or College:        | No  |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| Highest Grade Completed:           | College, 1st year   |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| Hours Worked Week Prior to Census: | 25  |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| Class of Worker:                   | Wage or salary worker in private work   |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| Weeks Worked in 1939:              | 40  |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| Income:                            | 300   |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| Income Other Sources:              | No  |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| Neighbors:                         | <a href="#">View others on page</a>   |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| Household Members:                 |   |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
|                                    | <table><thead><tr><th>Name</th><th>Age</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td><a href="#">Eufrasia Sam</a></td><td>61</td></tr><tr><td><a href="#">M Romana</a></td><td>55</td></tr><tr><td><a href="#">M Aurelian</a></td><td>46</td></tr><tr><td><a href="#">M St Anthony</a></td><td>39</td></tr><tr><td><a href="#">Frances Assia</a></td><td>32</td></tr><tr><td><a href="#">M Salvia</a></td><td>36</td></tr><tr><td><a href="#">Ianta Clara</a></td><td>32</td></tr><tr><td><a href="#">M Jean Baptist</a></td><td>28</td></tr><tr><td><a href="#">Miriam Berand</a></td><td>28</td></tr></tbody></table> | Name | Age | <a href="#">Eufrasia Sam</a> | 61 | <a href="#">M Romana</a> | 55 | <a href="#">M Aurelian</a> | 46 | <a href="#">M St Anthony</a> | 39 | <a href="#">Frances Assia</a> | 32 | <a href="#">M Salvia</a> | 36 | <a href="#">Ianta Clara</a> | 32 | <a href="#">M Jean Baptist</a> | 28 | <a href="#">Miriam Berand</a> | 28 |
| Name                               | Age   |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| <a href="#">Eufrasia Sam</a>       | 61  |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| <a href="#">M Romana</a>           | 55  |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| <a href="#">M Aurelian</a>         | 46  |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| <a href="#">M St Anthony</a>       | 39  |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| <a href="#">Frances Assia</a>      | 32  |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| <a href="#">M Salvia</a>           | 36  |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| <a href="#">Ianta Clara</a>        | 32  |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| <a href="#">M Jean Baptist</a>     | 28  |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |
| <a href="#">Miriam Berand</a>      | 28  |      |     |                              |    |                          |    |                            |    |                              |    |                               |    |                          |    |                             |    |                                |    |                               |    |

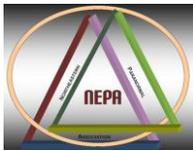
### Source Citation

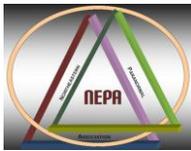
Year: 1940; Census Place: Norristown, Montgomery, Pennsylvania; Roll: T627\_3582; Page: 14A; Enumeration District: 46-154

### Source Information

Ancestry.com. 1940 United States Federal Census [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012.

Original data: United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1940. T627, 4,643 rolls.





1932 Bast Colliery Coal Fire

Mary Beth  
 Mary Elizabeth

MARGIN RESERVED FOR BINDING. DO NOT WRITE IN THIS MARGIN. PHYSICIANS should state CAUSE OF DEATH in plain terms, so that it may be properly classified. Exact Statement of OCCUPATION is very important. See instructions on back of certificate.

Form V. S. No. 5 CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

1. PLACE OF DEATH  
 County of Schuylkill  
 Township of BUTLER  
 City of ASHLAND, PA.

Registration District No. 250  
 Primary Registration District No. 54-01-81

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
 BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS  
 File No. 69483  
 Registered No. 195

2. FULL NAME Mary Hogan  
 (a) Residence, No. Syracuse, Penna. St. \_\_\_\_\_ Ward. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Length of residence in city or town where death occurred yrs. mos. ds. How long in U. S., if of foreign birth? yrs. mos. ds.

PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS

3. SEX F 4. COLOR OR RACE W. 5. SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED OR DIVORCED Single.

5a. If married, widowed, or divorced HUSBAND of (or) WIFE of \_\_\_\_\_

6. DATE OF BIRTH (month, day and year) March 12, 1926

7. AGE Years 6 Months 4 Days 13 IF LESS than 1 day hrs. or min.

8. OCCUPATION OF DECEASED  
 (a) Trade, profession, or particular kind of work \_\_\_\_\_  
 (b) General nature of industry, business or establishment in which employed (or employer) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (c) Name of employer \_\_\_\_\_

9. BIRTHPLACE (city or town) Centralia, Pa. (State or Country)

10. NAME OF FATHER John Hogan  
 11. BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER (city or town) Syracuse, Pa. (State or Country)

12. NAME OF MOTHER Catherine Hogan  
 13. BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER (city or town) Centralia, Pa. (State or Country)

14. Informant (Address) John Hogan

15. Filed July 27 19 32 A. T. House Registrar

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

16. DATE OF DEATH July 25 19 32  
 (Month) (Day) (Year)

17. I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from July 24 19 32 to July 25 19 32, and that I last saw him/her alive on July 24 19 32, and that death occurred, on the date stated above, at 2:45 P.M.  
 The CAUSE OF DEATH\* was as follows:  
Shock 179

CONTRIBUTORY (Secondary) Stomach, drunk, opium, whiskey & etc.  
Bush fire (duration) \_\_\_\_\_ yrs. \_\_\_\_\_ mos. \_\_\_\_\_ days

18. Where was disease contracted at home  
 if not at place of death? \_\_\_\_\_ Date of \_\_\_\_\_

Did an operation precede death? \_\_\_\_\_ Date of \_\_\_\_\_

Was there an autopsy? \_\_\_\_\_

What test confirmed diagnosis? Autopsy  
 (Signed) Dr. Mary Jenkins M.D.  
July 25 19 32 (Address Ashland, Pa. D.O.)

\* State the DISEASE CAUSING DEATH, or in deaths from VIOLENT CAUSES, state (1) MEANS AND NATURE OF INJURY, and (2) whether ACCIDENTAL, SUICIDAL, or HOMICIDAL. (See reverse side for additional space.)

19. PLACE OF BURIAL, CREMATION OR REMOVAL Centralia, Pa. DATE OF BURIAL July 27 19 32

20. UNDERTAKER Burke Bros ADDRESS Ashland, Pa.  
 (OVER)