DO YOU REMEMBER?

Among the Valley news events we realized occurred prior to the founding of The Daily Item on July 1, 1937, and a look at some of those afterward:

**Oct. 7, 1925**: Baseball Hall of Famer and former Bucknell University student Christy Mathewson dies, laid to rest at age 45 in Lewisburg Cemetery.

**November 1927**: Cowboy humorist and movie star Will Rogers, a passenger in his first trans-continental flight from San Francisco to New York, and his pilot make an emergency landing in a field near what would later become the Beaver Adams Elementary School in western Snyder County. The plane narrowly missed two fences. Neither Rogers nor his pilot, Thomas Nelson, were injured.

**Jan. 23, 1928**: Leon Scovem, Northumberland County murderer, dies in electric chair at Rockview in Bellefonte.

**Jan. 31, 1936**: A speeding passenger train hit a broken rail on a curve leading to a bridge over the Susquehanna River in Shamokin Dam, killing three passengers, injuring 33, and sending derailed cars onto a riverside highway in what was called one of the most spectacular American railroad accidents in recent years.

- Survivor Lewis Zlotkin, a 19-year-old Bucknell University sophomore, was on his way home to Brooklyn on the Reading Co.’s “Williamsporter.”
  - He said he felt rumbling “underneath my car just before the crash. The car sort of shimmied and then it felt as though the engine was coming straight through our car. I understand that two wheels of the locomotive hit the side of our car, but to tell the truth, I couldn’t tell what happened.”
  - Mary M. Packer Hospital in Sunbury was a scene of confusion as injured passengers, bandaged, disheveled, their clothing torn and stained, lay on cots, stretchers and other improvised beds, even in the halls.

**July 22, 1935**: A 29-year-old Snyder County farmhand who murdered his boss during a robbery that netted $77 to buy a wedding dress for what would have been his third wife, a 16-year-old girl, was executed by electrocution today at Rockview in Bellefonte.

  - Before dying in the electric chair at 12:35 a.m., Sherman L. Strawser read from the Bible and prayed.
  - He calmly walked into the death chamber, walked around the massive oak chair with wide arms and a high back, and sat down at 12:31 a.m.
  - Executioner Robert Elliott, who stood directly behind the chair, threw the switch a minute later, sending 2,000 volts through Strawser’s body, which stiffened as 12 witnesses in the death chamber looked on.
  - Strawser killed Charles Gable on Feb. 12 with a hammer in Gable’s barn near Middleburg. Strawser had hoped to use the robbery proceeds to purchase a wedding gown for his young sweetheart, Zella Gill.
  - His last words: “You know, women can be a blessing and again, they can be a curse.”

**Jan. 31, 1938**: Antonio Peronace, Northumberland County murderer, dies in electric chair at Rockview in Bellefonte.

**Feb. 7, 1938**: Walter Strantz, Northumberland County murderer, dies in electric chair at Rockview in Bellefonte.

**Feb. 26, 1940**: Andrew Schurtz, Northumberland County murderer, dies in electric chair at Rockview in Bellefonte.

**1947**: Construction of Sunbury floodwall begins.

**1951**: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completes Sunbury floodwall and dike system.

**December 1963**: Euell Gibbons moves to Troxelville in a house he had owned for a number of years. He found it advertised in the “Friends Journal.” The ad offered a farmhouse on 11 acres with a peach orchard and a stream. The price was $5,000. Gibbons went on to become a famed naturalist, known for his television commercials for Grape Nuts cereal and appearances on “The Tonight Show” with Johnny Carson and “The Sonny & Cher Comedy Hour.”

  - He died on Dec. 29, 1975, at age 64, in Beavertown.

**1965**: Sunbury, Northumberland school districts merge.

**1969**: At 2,100 feet, world’s longest inflatable dam created on Susquehanna River near Sunbury.

**Sept. 18, 1970**: Ceremonial blast opens I-80 in state’s heartland.

**1972**: Rolling Green Park in Hummels Wharf, a hot spot created in 1908, closes, ending 65-year amusement park run.

**1976**: Packwood House, Sliker House museums open in Lewisburg.

**1978**: Mifflinburg Buggy Museum founded.

**1985**: The 2,908-foot Veterans Memorial Bridge at Sunbury opens to traffic.

**July 4, 1997**: Lewisburg Area High graduate Michael Beck is commander of USS Constitution as it sails for first time in 116 years, in Boston Harbor.

**June 21, 2000**: Walnut Acres Organic Farms, Penns Creek, announces it will close after 56 years.

July 5, 2000: Valley raises $60,000 for National World War II Memorial, the third-highest community contribution in the United States, following The Daily Item’s 37-day series titled, “Our Heroes, Their Stories.”

April 2, 2003: Former JPM site halts work; jobs going south.

July 7, 2004: TRW splits, ending 50-year run and 140 jobs.

Aug. 9, 2004: Pennsylvania House closes; 425 jobs lost.


Oct. 11, 2008: Fleetwood moves work to Ind.; 325 jobless.

Aug. 28, 2010: $10M Barnes & Noble at Bucknell University bookstore opens with only Valley escalator.