

INTERESTING TALE OF A UNION LOCAL BANNER

by **Jim Steinberg**
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Over a year ago, I was offered the opportunity to acquire a union local banner. Eventually, I agreed to the deal and incorporated the banner into my collection.

The fabric portion of the banner is about 30 inches wide and 60 inches tall. Most of the banner is composed of blue felt which is the background color. The lettering on the banner is made of yellow felt and reads:

LOCAL UNION

No. 4583

U.M.W. OF A.

CLYDE Nº 3

CLARKSVILLE

PA

The border band is a glossy (not metal) yellow embroidery ribbon strip and the fringe at the bottom is also yellow. The banner hangs from a brass tube with end caps that is 42 inches wide. A second tube with end caps is also near the bottom of the banner. The entire assembly hangs on a glossy yellow rope which is tied to both ends of the upper tube. The ends of this rope are terminated in elaborate dangling knobby tassels.

In my continued delving into mining history, I discovered that some interesting UMWA events transpired in this little town of about 350 people from which the banner had come.

The date of December 31, 1969, is a date that some of us still remember.

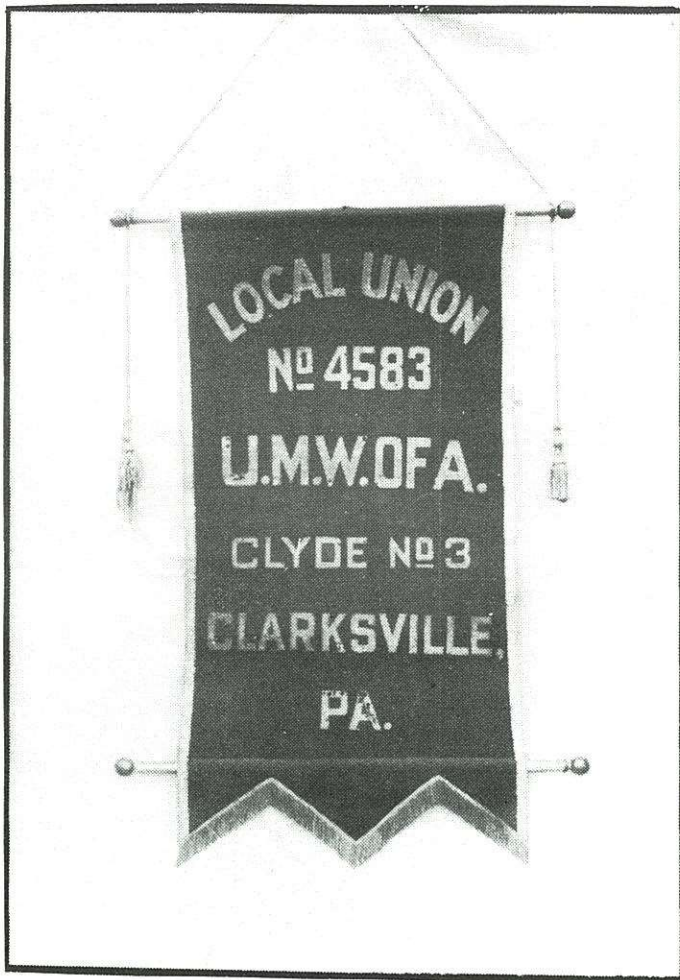
On that day in the town of Clarksville, Pennsylvania, the home of Joseph Yablonski was invaded by three men about an hour after midnight. Two of them proceeded to the bedroom of Joseph and his wife, while the third man snuck down the hallway to the daughter's bedroom. When this man began firing his gun into the daughter, the two men at the master bedroom opened fire on the sleeping forms of Joseph Yablonski and his wife. Joseph and his wife didn't die easily, but with enough bullets, they did indeed die.

The killers engaged in some, but not much pilferage and then left. A few miles away they dumped their guns into the Monongahela River, and disappeared into the Pennsylvania night.

Only a few days before, on December 18th, Joseph Yablonski had encountered two of these men on his front porch. He had a bad feeling about them and remarked to friends, "I believe there were two men here to kill me today."

Joseph (Jock) Yablonski, a long time member, and for many years an officer of the United Mine Workers of America, had spent the previous eight months in a bid for the presidency of the UMWA. The current president at the time was Tony Boyle. Boyle was so angry that Yablonski was running against him that Boyle said to some leaders of District 19, "We are in a fight, Yablonski ought to be killed or done away with."

Tony Boyle did whatever he could to disempower Yablonski within the United Mine Workers of America. Union money moved in strange ways, which Jock Yablonski suspected. Union members loyal or obligated to Tony Boyle made the campaign threatening and dangerous for Yablonski. Still, Jock continued to gain support within the union.



The UMWA presidential election took place on December 9, 1969. Jock Yablonski expected that since the government had refused to supervise the election, he would likely lose. Vote tallies did show a loss, but Yablonski vowed to take the results to court, convinced of massive illegalities on the part of the UMWA president.

Jock Yablonski's efforts to get the assistance of the Federal Government investigating the election were going nowhere. Then, he, his wife and daughter were murdered.

On January 5, 1970, one of Yablonski's sons discovered the murders. Police, newsmen, and finally the FBI went to work on the case. Through an amazingly thorough and persistent effort, the FBI found the killers, the middlemen between them and Tony Boyle. In April of 1974, Tony Boyle was convicted of three counts of murder in the first degree and was sent to prison.

For those of you who would like to know more about these events, read *Act of Vengeance: The Yablonski Murders and Their Solution* by Trevor Ambrister (Saturday Review Press, E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York, 1975).

Collector's Talk

A UMWA Button

Harry Jones of Palmdale, California, sent in this photo of a UMWA button. The button is black and yellow and is shown in actual size. Harry asks if anyone knows what the large 4 over the 1905 means? He's heard that it meant that the miner was hired in the fourth month of 1905, is this correct?

UNITED MINE WORKERS OF AMERICA

