

MAN
OF
CONNECTICUT

*Legend of Wilkes-Barre
Town on the Susquehanna*

By
ALFRED S. GROH

With acknowledgment to
THE DIARY OF LUKE SWETLAND

CAST

Narrator.....	Joseph Salsburg
Settler.....	Bruce Phair
Pioneer Wife.....	Karen Phair
Miner.....	Alfred Groh
Immigrant's Wife.....	Charlotte Lord
Students & Townspeople.....	David Frey
	Nancy Frey
	Christine Patterson
	Wallrina DeFrantz

Presented at the Dedication Celebration of the
F. M. Kirby Center for the Performing Arts
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
September 16, 1986

NARRATOR

When you live in a town
You want to stay
And put down roots
Along the way.

When you grow up in a town
You know its name.
You give it pride
And you bring it fame.
And you see it change,
As it must and will,
But the town remains
Your town still.

SETTLER

I was born in the Connecticut hills
And I slept in a river bed,
I followed the Susquehanna trail
Wherever the river led,
And it brought me to Pennsylvania
And the woman I won and wed,
And I settled down to farm the land
With a musket, loaded, close at hand,
And there I found the golden fleece,
There, where the river ran,
And my family prospered and lived in peace,
There, where the town began.

PIONEER WIFE

We didn't have much, and we stayed put.

We traveled by horseback or on foot.

We helped our neighbors with their chores.

Evenings we read and talked indoors.

I mended clothes till the wool was worn
Or worked in the barn when a calf was born.

We sent our sons to learn a trade
And support themselves on what they made.

Not that we didn't help them some—

TOWNSMEN

But we always knew where we started from.

TOWNSWOMEN

And in time what we could become.

NARRATOR

But they soon forgot, like yesterday's breeze.
They forgot the Connecticut man,
They forgot the tall oak trees
On the bank where the river ran.
They forgot the rich, unspoiled ground
There where the town began.
In their haste to push ahead
They forgot the trees and the clean river bed.

TOWNSMEN

But we remembered where we started from.

TOWNSWOMEN

And we dreamed of what we could become.

NARRATOR

Somehow, when coal is mined
The town is sadly left behind
To wait for the next generation to find,
And it waits and waits for someone to come
And discover what it could become.

MINER

I was born in a company shack
With the stench of the river at my back.
Into the ground I dug by hand
And piled a culm bank on the land.
The sulphur fires burned in the rain,
And I, buried, in the fuming vein,
There, where the river ran.
And my family mourned and lived in pain,
There, where the town began.

IMMIGRANT'S WIFE

We didn't have much, and we stayed put.

We went to church on foot.

Winters were cold and all alike.

We helped each other during a strike.

I mended clothes or scrubbed floors
In houses that were warm indoors.

We sent our sons to learn a trade.
What we borrowed we repaid.
Not that they didn't help us some—

TOWNSMEN

For we knew where we started from

TOWNSWOMEN

And what, in time, we could become.

NARRATOR

But they soon forgot, like yesterday's snow.
They forgot the mining man.
They forgot the pillars unfilled below,
Wherever the river ran.
They forgot the dark, spoiled ground
There, where the town began.
In their haste to push ahead
They forgot the trees and the clean river bed.

TOWNSMEN

But we always knew where we started from

TOWNSWOMEN

And to dream of what we could become.

NARRATOR

You grow up in a town
And you want to stay.
It's not unnatural
To feel that way.

1ST STUDENT

We were born in post-war years
Into beautiful deadly traps.
We inherited a bountiful background of fears
And were expected to collapse.

2ND STUDENT

We grew up in silent rage
Against the betrayal of an age
That masked beneath a pious face
Contempt for the human race.

3RD STUDENT

We were born in post-war years
In a time of global threats and fears,
Of a generation that was not made
To be intimidated or afraid.

4TH STUDENT

We grew up in the years of hate
In bitterness and shame—
Who among us is to blame—
Pardon us.

We could not wait
In silence until freedom came.

NARRATOR

When a town stirs
And shakes its crust,
A change comes
As change must.
Perhaps the dream
Is not unreal
And not unlike
What others feel.

Let me speak
As strangers do
Who live in your town
For a day or two:

"I like it here. I don't know why,
Maybe it's all that open sky
That floats on the mountain three miles high."

"Maybe it's a lake or some Indian trail
Where you ambush deer or quail."

"Or see the stars in an orchard pail."

"Maybe it's something in my mind
I'm simply looking to find."

It may be factories, churches, schools, trees—
But I'm inclined to think it's more than these—

Something that encourages a man
To improve a town others began
And gives him freedom so he can.
Something born in the Connecticut hills
And in a company shack,
Something that put down roots
One day a long time back.

SETTLER

I was born in the Connecticut hills,
And I followed the river bed
Along the Susquehanna trail
Here, where the river led.
It was here I found the golden fleece,
And the woman I loved and wed.

TOWNSPEOPLE

We've come back to where we started from.

And the dream of what we could become.

I am a member of the
Board of Directors of the
American Red Cross

and I am proud to
be a part of the
organization.

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DEDICATION CELEBRATION
OF

THE F.M. KIRBY CENTER
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

- Prelude The Kirby Center Orchestra
- Master of Ceremonies Monsignor Andrew J. McGowan
- Benediction Reverend Anita Ambrose, Executive Director
Wyoming Valley Council of Churches
Rabbi Herbert Rosenbloom, Temple Israel
Monsignor Thomas Bannick, Pastor, St. Mary's R. C. Church
- Welcome Stephen L. Carr, Executive Director, Kirby Center
- Excerpts from "As You Like It" Martin Shell, The Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble
- Greetings Thomas McLaughlin, Mayor of the City of Wilkes-Barre
- "Don Quixote" — Pas de deux
The Wilkes-Barre Ballet Theatre Company
Dancers: Nancy Latszewski and Jerry Noone,
Members of the U.S. Team, 1986 International Ballet Competition, Jackson, MI
Choreography: Mary L. Hepner, after Petipa
Music: Minkus
- Greetings Frank Trinisewski, Chairman, Luzerne County Commissioners
- Remarks Jack Palance, Film Star and local resident
Excerpts from "Shane",
for which Mr. Palance was nominated for an Academy Award
- Greetings Paul Kanjorski, U.S. Congressman, PA 11th District
- "Man From Connecticut" Joseph H. Salsburg, Narrator
Settler: Bruce Phair
Pioneer Wife: Karen Phair
Miner: Alfred S. Groh, Director of the Dorothy Dickson Darte
Center for the Performing Arts
Immigrant's Wife: Dr. Charlotte Lord, Professor Emeritus, Wilkes College
Students: Nancy Frey, David Frey, Christine Patterson
- Remarks Fred M. Kirby, II, Friend of the Community
- Musical Selection "Up With People"
- Recession The Kirby Center Orchestra

SAMICK is the official piano of the F. M. Kirby Center for the Performing Arts. Three SAMICK
pianos have been donated to the Center by Moratto & Lesante.