

# THE COLLIER'S OF BRECKNOCK TOWNSHIP, BERKS COUNTY

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Most people are aware that the traditional economy of Brecknock Township was based on agriculture. However, for some, their livelihoods were based on lesser known professions, one of which was the practice of burning wood to produce charcoal.

Due to an abundance of trees in the hills of the township, tradesmen known as colliers cleared large amounts of woodland to organize controlled burns of wood stacks in order to create carbon charcoal. This resource was a primary fuel for local iron furnaces and blacksmith forges.

This industry thrived in Brecknock Township for most of the 1800s and eventually dying out by 1920s. The talk will examine the production and lifestyle of the hard life of the colliers that once existed here.



PRESENTED BY:  
CHRISTOPHER WITMER

## THURSDAY, MARCH 5, 2026 7:00PM

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INCLEMENT WEATHER DATE 3/12/2026

AT THE BRECKNOCK TOWNSHIP BUILDING,  
889 ALLEGHENYVILLE ROAD  
MOHNTON, PA 19540

REGISTER FOR THIS FREE PRESENTATION  
BY CALLING THE BRECKNOCK TOWNSHIP  
OFFICE AT 717-445-6683. SPACE IS  
LIMITED, PLEASE BE SURE TO REGISTER.



LAFAYETTE HOUCK, C. 1936 COLLIER, HOPEWELL FURNACE

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ORGANIZED BY THE BRECKNOCK TOWNSHIP RECREATION BOARD