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For Immediate Use

Pennsylvania Book Wins National Gold Medal

The Horseshoe Curve: Sabotage and Subversion in the Railroad City by Dennis P. McIlnay of Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania recently received the Gold Medal as the Best Regional Non-Fiction Book in the Mid-Atlantic Region from the Independent Publishers Association of America.

The award, called an "IPPY," is given yearly to the best regional books in North America. This year, over 600 regional book entries from the United States and Canada were judged on their quality and regional significance. Gold, silver and bronze medals were awarded to the Best Regional Fiction and Best Regional Non-Fiction books at the organization's twelfth annual awards competition in Los Angeles. The Mid-Atlantic region in the contest includes Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia, Delaware, Maryland, the District of Columbia, and New Jersey.

The IPPY is the third award given to The Horseshoe Curve. In 2007, the book won the President's Award from the Blair County

Historical Society and received a "Reviewer's Choice" citation from Midwest Book Review in Chicago.

The Horseshoe Curve: Sabotage and Subversion in the Railroad City tells the true story of the three inter-connected-but little-known-events in Pennsylvania history:

- The Nazi plot in World War II to destroy the Horseshoe Curve, the Mecca of American railroading, near Altoona, Pennsylvania
- The Federal Bureau of Investigation's search of the homes of 225 Altoonans as "alien enemies"—suspected Nazi sympathizers—on July 1, 1942 as a result of the Nazi sabotage plot against the Horseshoe Curve and the internment of 15,000 German and Italian Americans in camps in the US during World War II
- The personal and organizational drama of founding the Pennsylvania Railroad and building the Horseshoe Curve, two of this nation's most important transportation achievements.

The Nazi plot to destroy the Horseshoe Curve, a mission that Adolf Hitler himself conceived, was one of the world's deadliest terrorist acts. Had the Nazis succeeded in demolishing the Horseshoe Curve, they could have crippled the American transportation system near the beginning of World War II.

Most people know of the internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans in the United States during World War II, but few people know that this nation also interned 15,000 German and Italian Americans during

the war, 75 percent of whom were United States citizens. Even fewer people know that on July 1, 1942, the Federal Bureau of Investigation searched the homes of 225 "alien enemies" in Altoona, Pennsylvania in response to discovering the Nazi sabotage plot against the Horseshoe Curve.

Founding the Pennsylvania Railroad and building the Horseshoe Curve are two of America's greatest transportation achievements. But before the Pennsylvania Railroad was completed, bitter personal, political, and organizational battles threatened to destroy the railroad and halt the westward march of the United States.

Part-spy story and part-historical epic, *The Horseshoe Curve: Sabotage and Subversion in the Railroad City* blends information from 300 sources, including diaries, biographies, military records, histories, engineering studies, court briefs, and FBI files acquired through the Freedom of Information Act.

The book has 456 pages and three parts. Part One, "The Wolf," is named for Adolf Hitler. Using first-person accounts and files from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Part One describes the planning of the Nazi sabotage mission, the recruitment and training of the eight saboteurs, their transport in two submarines to Long Island and Florida, their preparations in Manhattan and Chicago, the betrayal of the plot by one of the saboteurs, and the arrest of the terrorists by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Part One also covers the military

tribunal that convicted the eight saboteurs and two landmark decisions by the United States Supreme Court on the fate of the saboteurs, rulings that are among the legal precedents for the imprisonment and trial by military tribunal of today's Guantanamo detainees. Part One concludes with eyewitness accounts of the execution by electric chair of six of the eight saboteurs.

Part Two, "The Boss," is named for J. Edgar Hoover, the powerful director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and his involvement with the Alien Enemy Control Unit in the Department of Justice, one of the most controversial federal programs in the United States. Using files from the Federal Bureau of Investigation acquired through the Freedom of Information Act, McIlhenny documents the little-known internment of 15,000 German Americans and Italian Americans in the United States during World War II as suspected Nazi sympathizers. Part Two discloses that on July 1, 1942, twenty-five agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, ten officers of the Pennsylvania State Police, and eighteen detectives of the Altoona Police Department searched the homes of 225 "alien enemies" in Altoona.

Part Three, "The Brain," is named for J. Edgar Thomson, the third and most prominent president of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Part Three discusses the founding of the Pennsylvania Railroad and the building of the Horseshoe Curve, historic achievements that created a statewide transportation system and surmounted the previously-intractable Allegheny Mountains. Part Three also recounts the operation of the

failed Pennsylvania Canal, the design and management of the inefficient Allegheny Portage Railroad, and the personal and organizational battles in the earliest days of the Pennsylvania Railroad that led to Thomson's unlikely rise to the presidency of the company.

McIlnay is author of another regional book, *Juniata, River of Sorrows*, published in 2002), which became one of the bestselling regional books in the United States. He also wrote two books about charitable foundations: *How Foundations Work* (1998) and *Foundations and Higher Education* (1987). He is Professor of Management at Saint Francis University in Loretto, Pennsylvania where he received the Distinguished Professor Award, the Outstanding Educator Award, and the Distinguished Faculty Award. He lives with his wife, Kathy, in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania near Altoona.

The Horseshoe Curve: Sabotage and Subversion in the Railroad City costs \$36.99 (\$29.95 plus \$4.95 for shipping and handling and \$2.09 for Pennsylvania sales tax) and is available by check payable to Seven Oaks Press, 826 Walnut Street, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648 or by MasterCard and VISA at www.SevenOaksPress.com. Credit card orders can also be made toll-free at (866) 695-5960. The book is also available at bookstores, gift shops, and museum stores.