

# WHEEEEEEE!! LET'S RIDE!

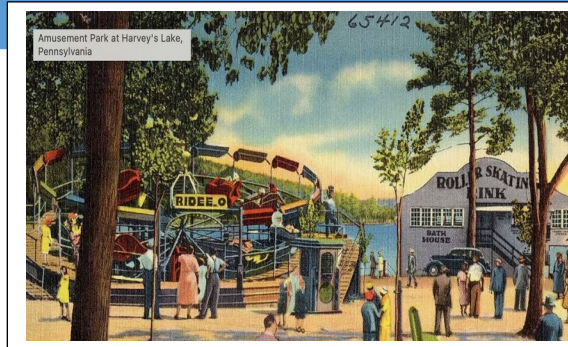
## Hanson's Amusement Park

**WHEN? 1891 - 1984**

**VOCABULARY**  
 Ferris wheel  
 Dodgem

**WHERE?**  
 Harvey's Lake, Pennsylvania

**EVENT: Picnic grounds to amusement park**



Ferris wheels, roller coasters, merry-go-rounds, dodgem cars—people loved to go to amusement parks in our area. The picnic areas, cotton candy, win a stuffed animal if you could knock over 3 bottles were thrills for those able to visit. Thousands of visitors rode the rides and ate their fill of food in one of the more than 30 parks in the NEPA (NEPA <http://nepalostparks.com>.) One of the busiest parks as well as one of the largest was Hanson's Park at Harvey's Lake.

It began as a simple picnic area in 1891 as part of the Lehigh Valley railroad's plan to increase the number of riders on the railroad. The park proved to be popular, but the railroad didn't realize enough profit and leased it to John A. Redington, Sr. in 1906 (Petrillo, 2002). He updated and added different attractions such as a Minature Railroad and a steam Merry-Go-Round installed in 1910 with 40 wooden horses operated until the park closed (Petrillo, 2002).

Throughout the 1920s crowds enjoyed the shooting gallery, dodgems, and a new game called Bingo (Petrillo, 2002). By late 1929 John Hanson entered into the management of the park. By 1934, he and a partner had acquired the beach and bath houses. Petrillo writes the boardwalk at this time was over 200 feet long with a forty-foot high diving board, one thirty-foot high, and another at twenty-foot high. Another person had a small area where patrons could rent rowboats and canoes. Most kids spent a lot of time at the Penny Arcade where they could test their skills at the games for just a penny. Speedboats were added in later years as were pontoon boat rides. A drive-in movie theater was added, and the ever-popular dance pavilion was renovated. According to Petrillo, national acts such as Chubby Checker, Bobby Goldsboro, and the McCoys played to crowds up to 2,000 strong along with local groups Joe Nardone and the All-Stars and Eddie Day who was with two groups: the Starfires and TNT (Petrillo, 2002). Joe Nardone opened for national acts such as



Neil Diamond, Gary Puckett and the Union Gap, and Danny and the Juniors (Petrillo, 2002) though that occurred at Sans Souci Amusement Park—more on that park elsewhere.



#### ONLINE RESOURCES

<https://harveyslakebook.org/hansons-amusement-park/>

written by F. Charles Petrillo 1983, e-edition 2002