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# The Horseshoe Curve

## Sabotage and Subversion in the Railroad City



**DENNIS P. MCILNAY**  
AUTHOR OF THE BESTSELLING  
*JUNIATA, RIVER OF SORROWS*

***The Horseshoe Curve: Sabotage and Subversion in the Railroad City***

In this riveting book, Dennis P. McIlnay brings history alive with the stunning tale of three inter-connected — but little-known — events in American history:

- The Nazi plot during World War II to destroy the Horseshoe Curve, the Mecca of American railroading near Altoona, Pennsylvania
- The FBI's search of the homes of 225 Altoonans on July 1, 1942 as "alien enemies" — suspected Nazi sympathizers — and the internment by the United States of 15,000 German and Italian Americans during World War II
- The personal and organizational drama of founding the Pennsylvania Railroad and building the Horseshoe Curve.

The Nazi plot to destroy the Horseshoe Curve — a mission that 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 war machine and changed the course of history.

Most Americans know of the internment of Japanese Americans in World War II, but few know that this nation also interned 15,000 German and Italian Americans during the war. Even fewer people know that on July 1, 1942, the Federal Bureau of Investigation searched the homes of 225 residents of Altoona, Pennsylvania, home of the Horseshoe Curve, suspecting that these "alien enemies" were Nazi sympathizers.

***"Captures the reader's attention in the best tradition of spy novels....  
A must-read for history enthusiasts...."***

**—David W. Seidel, Horseshoe Curve Chapter  
National Railway Historical Society**

***"At midnight on Saturday, June 13, 1942, a German submarine,  
concealed by fog, prowled the eastern coast of Long Island,  
one hundred five miles from New York City."***

So begins *The Horseshoe Curve: Sabotage and Subversion in the Railroad City*, Dennis P. McIlnay's thrilling tale of three inter-connected — but little-known — events in American history:

- The Nazi plot during World War II to destroy the Horseshoe Curve, the Mecca of American railroading near Altoona, Pennsylvania
- The FBI's search of the homes of 225 Altoonans on July 1, 1942 as "alien enemies" — suspected Nazi sympathizers — and the controversial internment of 15,000 German and Italian Americans in the United States
- The human and organizational drama of founding the Pennsylvania Railroad and building the Horseshoe Curve.

***"Fascinating and suspenseful"***

**—Bill Brady, J. Edgar Thomson Foundation**

***"Timely....splendid....McIlnay has done a service  
to our nation in bringing to light these events...."***

**—Cummins McNitt, Founding Director  
Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum**

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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* seamlessly 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 to tell the thrilling story of these three inter-connected but little-known events.



Dennis P. McIlnay is author of *Juniata, River of Sorrows* (2002), one of the bestselling regional books in the United States. He is Professor of Management at Saint Francis University 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, ten miles from the Horseshoe Curve.

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