

The Lackawanna Historical Society BULLETIN

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September 1979

SEPTEMBER PROGRAM MEETING Wednesday, September 19, 1979 8 P.M. Catlin House

Our first Fall program meeting will feature a film entitled "The Canalier" and color slides of early Carbondale and the Delaware and Hudson Gravity Railroad - narrated by Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Shifler, Waymart. Mr. Shifler is a well known Carbondale funeral director and Mrs. Shifler is a past president of the Carbondale Historical Society and a director of the Wayne County Historical Society. The film tells the interesting story of the D. & H. Canal which ran from Honesdale to Kingston, N.Y. while the slides tell the fascinating story of how Carbondale was founded and how the D. & H. Gravity Railroad was built and ran from Carbondale to Honesdale for 70 years from 1829 until 1899. The purpose of the Gravity and the Canal was to transport anthracite coal from the mines to New York City and eastern markets. Our program coincides with the Sesquicentennial celebrations of the "Stourbridge Lion" - the first steam railroad engine to run in America - which are being held at Honesdale this weekend. This program is sure to be an interesting one and as usual refreshments will be served.

FORTHCOMING PROGRAMS

Tuesday, October 16 - Prof. William Frassanito of Gettysburg College will show and narrate slides of the Civil War with special emphasis on the Battle of Gettysburg.

Wednesday, November 14 - Atty. Robert Munley of Scranton will give a stirring account of the famous March of General John Sullivan's Army which took place just 200 years ago. The expedition was part of a Revolutionary War campaign to drive the Iroquois Indians out of Pennsylvania and New York state.

Wednesday, December 5 - Our Holiday program will feature Christmas music and a nostalgic trolley ride with films and slides of the Laurel Line and Scranton Transit Co. It will be given by Edward Miller, Pittston, an enthusiastic train and trolley buff.

CATLIN HOUSE NEWS

Mrs. June Wech has been working here since June 12 as our cheerful new Hostess-Secretary. She is a valuable addition to our staff which also includes Mr. and Mrs. James McLane, our efficient custodians and William P. Lewis, our executive director.

The Fashions Committee has worked many hours this summer organizing and cataloguing the large collection of period clothes and accessories we have been given. They have assembled a new "receiving line" exhibit of ladies in costume in the drawing room. The mannequins are wearing gowns which belonged to five well known area ladies: Miss Helen Keisling, Mrs. Christy Matthewson, Mrs. Frederick J. Platt Jr., Mrs. William W. Scranton and Mrs. John R. Simpson. Mrs. R. Archer Morgan is head of this active committee and is ably assisted by Mrs. William Horger, Mrs. Russell Ohoro and Mrs. H. R. Van Deusen, Jr.

The Building and Grounds Committee of which John Cognetti is the new chairman, has completed several needed repairs and improvements to the house and grounds this summer. Two brick chimneys has been rebuilt, all of the trees and shrubbery have been trimmed and roof leaks are being repaired. Two third floor storage areas have been cleaned and organized by the Executive Director.

Catlin House visitors registered during the summer included 194 visitors in June with seven groups; 126 in July and 91 in August. Among the many people who came to do historical research was Richard Healy, a graduate student from Cambridge University, England, who worked here for three weeks on the large collection of D. L. & W. Coal Co. records we have stored on the third floor.

A number of valuable donations have been given to our collections during the summer, including the wedding dress of Anna Salsberg Rubinow - 1915 given by her daughter Mrs. Sidney Katz; a framed photo of the Scranton Oratorio Society Choir conducted by John T. Watkins; a number of antique clothes as well as a large collection of books on area history and county atlases from the Estate of Mrs. James K. Peck Sr.; 25 large photographs of Scranton buildings erected by contractor Edwin S. Williams from the estate of Forreest Fritz; five lovely lady mannequins from the Mayfair store given by Mrs. Ted Lonstein; five volumes of maps of Scranton and Pittston given by the Pennsylvania Power and Light Co. courtesy of Miss Florence Gillespie; a typed genealogy of the Richard Knight family given by Mrs. Ruth Carpenter Adair; a bound volume of "The Stars and Stripes" - World War I Army newspaper 1918-19 given by the Scranton Public Library; the Biographical Record of the Wyoming and Lacka-

wanna Valleys 1906 given by Miss Helen Moffat and 16 articles of lovely period clothes, books and photos given by Mr. and Mrs. F. J. Platt, Jr. We are very grateful for all of these donations as well as memorial contributions given by Mrs. Ralph Bosley, Mrs. Alfred Scott and Atty. and Mrs. H. R. Van Deusen, Jr. in memory of the late Mrs. James K. Peck.

Three long time members of the Society have passed away since our last Bulletin. They were Miss Helen Coon, Mr. Charles P. Davidson and Mrs. James K. Peck, Sr. Mrs. Peck "Rebecca" was an active member of our Board of Trustees and did notable service as the head of the Fashions Committee for many years. This gracious lady will be greatly missed.

The Trustees of the Lackawanna Historical Society will hold their bi-monthly meeting at the Catlin House on Wednesday, September 26 at 4:15 P.M. with Dr. John L. Earl presiding.

SULLIVAN'S MARCH

The Bi-centennial of the famous General Sullivan's March through Northeastern Pennsylvania was commemorated with several celebrations along the route of his Army during this past summer. Although our area had no notable Revolutionary War battles like Bunker Hill, Lexington, Saratoga, Monmouth, Brandywine or Yorktown, it did have the Wyoming Massacre in July 1778 and General Sullivan's March in the summer of 1779 as its part in the struggle for American Independence.

A majority of the New York state Iroquois Indians sided with and furnished food and warriors for the British troops during the Revolutionary War. They made repeated raids on frontier settlements such as the Wyoming and Minisink valleys in Pennsylvania and Cherry Valley in New York state which shocked the whole country. It was because of these atrocities that General George Washington urged the Continental Congress to send an army expedition to wipe out this ever-present Indian menace. Washington's plan, drawn up at Valley Forge during the bitter winter of 1778, called for a three way invasion of the Indian territory. The main army would start from Easton, Pa. and move northward to Wyoming, and thence up the Susquehanna River to Tioga Point (now Athens, Pa.) A second force would leave the Albany, N.Y. area, proceeding westward along the Mohawk River and then south to join the main army. A third force would leave Fort Pitt (now Pittsburgh, Pa.) and proceed north to join the combined forces near the present Genesee, N.Y. The Continental Congress adopted the plan and on February 25, 1779 authorized funds and troops to send such an invading force. General John Sullivan of New Hampshire was chosen to lead the campaign which has ever

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since been called "Sullivan's March". Sullivan was a native of New Hampshire and a lawyer before he joined the American cause and became a major general in the patriots army. His perseverance and brilliant leadership ability during this campaign was responsible for its ultimate success. After the War he served three terms as Governor of New Hampshire and finally as District Judge for the state, before his death in 1795 at Durham, N.H. Brig. General James Clinton, father of Gov. Dewitt Clinton, led the New York force and Col. Daniel Broadhead was in charge of the western Pennsylvania forces.

Sullivan established headquarters at Easton, Pa. in May 1779 where he began collecting troops and supplies for the expedition. On June 18 his army of 2500 troops, horses and baggage wagons began to march, proceeding up through Wind Gap, Sciota, Tannersville, Pocono Summit, the Great Swamp finally arriving at Wyoming (Wilkes Barre) on June 23rd. The journey took six days because a road had to be cut thru rough terrain and an almost trackless wilderness over the Pocono Mountains.

At Wyoming Sullivan was forced to wait a whole month while additional troops and supplies were assembled. It is reported that many of his bored troops got drunk while waiting for the army to move! Finally Sullivan gave the order to move northward up the Susquehanna River to Tioga Point. The artillery and heavy supplies were loaded into 214 flatboats to be poled up the river. The remaining supplies were loaded into wagons and on 1200 pack horses. At noon July 31 the Sullivan's army began to move up the river. They followed an old Indian trail and formed a line about six miles in length. The Indian scouts watching from the hills likened the advancing army to a long blue snake and for years the Indians referred to Sullivan's expedition as "The Long Blue Snake". The Army made encampments along the way at Pittston, Falls, Tunkhannock, Wyalusing, Standing Stone and Sheshequin reaching Tioga Point on August 11, where they erected a fortification which they named Fort Sullivan in honor of their commander. It stood on the point where the waters of the Susquehanna and Chemung Rivers flow together. From here the army proceeded northward where they destroyed the Indian town of Chemung. On August 22 General Clinton's force of 1500 men arrived on 212 boats having floated down the east branch of the Susquehanna from Otsego Lake at Cooperstown. Several Indian towns were destroyed along the route, including towns at Windsor and Owego, N.Y. In August 26 the combined forces numbering close to 5000 men left Tioga Point and marched up the Chemung River towards the Indian village

of Newtown located just south of the present city of Elmira, N.Y. Here an enemy force of about 1500 British and Loyalist troops and Seneca, Mohawk and Cayuga Indians were entrenched behind breastworks. As the opposing armies met, a hotly contested battle took place. Known as the Battle of Newtown, it occurred on Sunday, August 29, 1779 and resulted in a complete victory for Sullivan's army. The defeated Tories and Indians fled up the valley or took to the hills. While only 15 men on both sides were killed, the red men's fear of the Colonial's "thunder trees" (cannon) was so great that they could not be induced to make another stand.

From this point Sullivan's forces moved throughout the entire Indian territory destroying towns, cornfields and food supplies at Horseheads, all along Seneca Lake, Geneva, Canandaigua, Ithaca, finally reaching Genesee Castle, the largest Indian village they had seen on the whole expedition. After destroying this site, now Geneseo, N.Y. Sullivan made a decision not to go on to attack the British at Fort Niagara. It was late in the season and his men were not equipped for the colder weather. Accordingly after complimenting his men on a successful expedition, he ordered a return march. The returning armies lay waste all Indian towns on the way. Sullivan's army reached Wyoming again on October 10 and returned to Easton on the 15th from where they hastened to join Washington's forces in New Jersey.

Thus ended the Sullivan expedition. It was of great importance to our country because the Iroquois Confederacy was so crushed that they lost their confidence in the British and never made war again; the food supply of the British was cut off, the campaign gave new vigor to the war on all fronts and it won for the American cause a great new western territory which opened for settlement following the end of the Revolutionary War. While it was a punitive movement against the hostile tribes of the Six Nations and assured protection for Frontier settlements thereafter, it succeeded in driving the Indians westward and northward out of Pennsylvania and New York state and was one of the largest offensive movements of the whole War of Independence. As a triumph for the Colonial cause, it awakened tremendous interest and captured the imagination of all Americans. The 200th anniversary of this famous campaign was commemorated with celebrations at various points along the line of March and with a re-enactment of the Battle of Newtown on the actual anniversary August 29, 1979.

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