

FEBRUARY PROGRAM

Wednesday, February 17, 1982 — Catlin House - 8 P.M.

Our February program will be the first in a three-part ethnic awareness series highlighting the history and contributions of the first European groups to emigrate to the Lackawanna Valley i.e. the Welsh, Irish and Germans. Among the first to arrive here were the Welsh who came to open and work the anthracite coal mines. The first Welsh settlers to arrive in Northeastern Pennsylvania were 20 families who came to Carbondale in June 1830. After the opening of the mines in Scranton, a continual flow of Welsh emigrants arrived every year from 1840 to 1930 until the Lackawanna and Wyoming Valleys had the largest concentration of Welsh people in the United States. They and their descendants have made significant contributions to the religious, industrial, musical and civic life of our area. Our Executive Director William P. Lewis, himself of Welsh ancestry, will detail this story with slides and a lecture on "The Welsh in Lackawanna County". You are invited to hear the lecture and a social hour which will follow on Wed. February 17 at 8 P.M.

FORTHCOMING PROGRAMS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10 - Dr. Charles Connor, University of Scranton professor and insurance agent will tell the story of "The Irish in America, Lackawanna County's Friendly Sons".

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14 - W. Richard Fenstermacher, Scranton school teacher, will lecture on "The Germans of Lackawanna County."

WEDNESDAY, MAY 12 - Our Annual Dinner meeting and Installation of Officers when Dr. Larry Tise, new Director of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg, will be our speaker.

CATLIN HOUSE NEWS

Your Director and Secretary have been busy these past few months welcoming a continually increasing number of visitors and researchers to the Catlin House. During the Fall months we had 216 visitors in September, 216 in October, 238 in November and 155 in December, including a total of 17 groups, among them Brownies, Cubs, Boy and Girl Scouts, school and church groups. Visitors for the year 1981 totaled 3589, which was over 800 more than the year before. Our Society now has 428 members.

Our interesting program series continues to draw good attendance and support with often 75 to 100 in attendance. The September program featured Dr. Burton W. Folsom, Murray, Ky. author of the new book "Urban Capitalists" who gave a fascinating lecture entitled "Scranton and Wilkes Barre - A Tale of Two 19th Century Cities." Lt. Col. Louis Franche, Carlisle Barracks, Pa. gave a lively lecture in October on Cornwallis' Surrender at Yorktown and the End of the Revolutionary War. Our November program was held in Court Room No. 1 of the County Court House when Federal Judge Richard Conaboy gave a very interesting talk on the "Judges of Lackawanna County 1878 to 1981". Our Christmas program was held Dec. 9 with holiday music by the University Singers and a delightful talk on "The Rebellious Boys of the Anthracite" by Prof. Perry Blatz of Princeton University.

Your trustees have had a heating survey of the Catlin House made and we have recently installed a thermal drapery at the foot of our open staircase to conserve heat during the winter months. A number of valuable donations have been received including memorial gifts, books, photographs, portraits and antique clothes for which we are deeply grateful. Notices of 1982 membership dues have been sent out and will be gladly received here.

HISTORY OF THE LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(Continued from the last Bulletin)

S. Fletcher Weyburn was the first full-time director of the Lackawanna Historical Society, beginning his services in 1921 and continuing until 1939 when advanced age and poor health compelled him to give up the work he loved. A native of Geneva, N.Y. he came to Scranton in 1898 and for many years was a well known and successful insurance agent. His long-time interest in local history and a considerable literary talent made him a natural for the position. For several years he housed the Society's library in his own office in the County Bank Building, then when the Everhart Museum was enlarged in 1928-29, he moved the library and collection to a basement room there. He worked closely with Col. Lewis A. Watres, the Society's president in planning interesting programs and promoting the interests of the organization. He was the author of a series of "Historical Notes", written for the local press and also published eight excellent booklets on area history, the best known of which was the book "Following the Connecticut Trail" printed in 1932. He was active in a number of civic organizations and lived at 832 Madison Avenue. Perhaps his greatest achievement was his persuading George H. Catlin to devise his beautiful home to the Society for a permanent headquarters. Weyburn retired in 1939 and died two years later on Feb. 21, 1941 at the home of his daughter in New Jersey. Unfortunately he did not live long enough to see his dream of a home for the Society come to fruition.

George H. Catlin was a native of Shoreham, Vermont, a graduate of Union College and a successful young lawyer when he married Mary Archbald of Scranton in 1867. They located in Scranton in 1870 where he became one of the founders of the Third National Bank and served as a Vice President and Trustee of that bank for a period of 63 years. Catlin was also a charter member and long-time friend of the Historical Society. He and his second wife Mrs. Helen Walsh Catlin had no children and wanted to see their handsome home at 232 Monroe Avenue preserved and used by future generations so he drew up a Will and Trust bequeathing his residence to the Society upon the demise of himself and his wife. He died June 8, 1935 at the advanced age of 89; his wife lived seven years beyond him passing away on April 24, 1942. At that time his Estate including the Catlin House, all of its furnishings and a generous Trust Fund of \$50,000 was turned over to the Society.

Mrs. Foster D. Keese (Ethelyn) had been employed as the Secretary in October 1939 and it was she along with the House Committee under the directions of Mrs. William H. Peck who directed the move of the Society's collections from the cramped quarters in the Everhart Museum to the first permanent home of the Society. The house had to be thoroughly cleaned and renovated and was first opened to the public in June 1943. With greatly expanded facilities and under the direction of a new President Thomas F. Murphy, the Historical Society took on renewed interest and vitality. The lovely home was opened for tours, the library made available for study, a series of interesting programs was inaugurated and an occasional bulletin helped to increase membership and interest. Since then the Catlin House has been preserved in much of its original state with period rooms and antique furnishings on the first floor and museum exhibits of donated materials on the second and third floors. Live-in custodians were secured to care for the house with an apartment being made for them in the former servant's quarters.

In this House the Historical Society has successfully functioned ever since, serving Scranton and Lackawanna County as a private, non-profit educational and cultural institution. We operate a historic house museum with an extensive research library of materials relating to the history of northeastern Pennsylvania and offer an active program of lectures, exhibitions, tours and historical publications.

However, the Society is more than the story of a historic house; it is also the story of all of the dedicated people who have been involved through the years as officers, trustees and employees of the organization. We have been fortunate in having the services of a number of prominent Scranton citizens who have served as President of the Society. Following the death of Col.

L. A. Watres in June 1937; Attorney Joseph F. Gunst er was President from 1937 to 1943. He was succeeded by Thomas F. Murphy who served as a very capable president for 13 years from 1943 to 1956. "Tom Murphy" was the Associate Editor of the "Scranton Times" for many years. He did much to further the interests of the Society such as securing new membes and donations, publishing a bulletin and planning a series of entertaining programs. He is best remembered for his two-volume "History of Lackawanna Count" published in 1928 at the time of the county's 50th anniversary. He was succeeded in the presidency by Everett D. Thomas, a Scranton Insurance Agent who served from 1956 to 1958 and was followed by Daniel W. Williams, the genial long-time County Court Reporter, who promoted a series of enjoyable programs and charter bus tours. He was President from 1958 to 1962 and was succeeded by Dr. John O. MacLean, a well known physician and chief surgeon at the Moses Taylor Hospital. Dr. MacLean was President from 1962 to 1966 and was followed by William L. Connell Jr., Scranton businessman and arts connoisseur who was President 1966 to 1969 and began the publication of this present Bulletin in 1966. Rev. William P. Lewis, pastor of the Jackson Street Baptist Church and long-time local historian was President from 1969 to 1976, when he resigned to become the present Executive Director and was succeeded by Dr. John L. Earl III, History professor at the University of Scranton, who has served as presiding officer since 1976.

Assisting the President have been the other officers and members of the Board of Trustees. The Board is now composed of 27 members, all interested and involved local citizens. Among prominent former trustees who should be mentioned are: Worthington Scranton, W. A. Wilcox, James A. Lansing, Homer F. Cox, Fred L. Moore, William H. Peck, Michael J. Martin, J. Curtis Platt, T. Archer Morgan, Philip V. Mattes, Mrs. C. S. Weston, Mrs. John H. Brooks, and Mrs. G. Barrett Littell. Treasurers who have given wisely of their time and talents have been R. N. Davis 1918-30; J. Elmer Williams, Dudley Atherton, Everett D. Thomas for 16 years and the present incumbent Albert J. Freas since 1977. The Work of the Society is financed by the Catlin Trust, membership dues and an annual contribution by the Lackawanna County Commissioners. House Committee chairmen who have lovingly cared for the house and its treasures have been Mrs. Wm. H. Peck, Miss Margaret Briggs, Mrs. Robert Y. Moffat and at present Mrs. T. Archer Morgan.

The Society also has been fortunate in its employees, especially with a succession of competent and faithful Directors and Secretaries. S. Fletcher Weyburn worked for the organization from 1921 to 1939 - 18 years - and was followed by Mrs. Ethelyn Keese who gave 19 years of loyal service from 1939 until her retirement in 1958. She was succeeded by Miss Dorothea Mattes who served as the gracious hostess and secretary from 1958 until 1972 and was very ably assisted by her brother the late Robert C. Mattes who worked here as the knowledgeable Curator from 1961 to 1973. Dr. John Q. Feller, History professor at the University of Scranton, served as Executive Director from 1973 to 1975 during which time he was responsible for renovating the library, finding and framing the Catlin Indian prints and rearranging the first floor rooms. Mrs. Eugene Valella - Marie - was Staff Secretary from 1973 until 1979 and during that time she was responsible for arranging several new exhibits on the second and third floors with the help of students assistants - Sean Creegan, Michael O'Malley and Ronald Breenie. William P. Lewis, the present Executive Director, began his work in November 1976 and has promoted a very popular series of program meetings, given local history talks and publications and increased the use of the house by visitors and outside groups. He is ably assisted by Mrs. June Wech who has been the friendly secretary and hostess since 1979. Last year the exterior of the House was carefully restored under the direction of the Building Committee.

We have also been fortunate in having a series of conscientious live-in Custodians. Martin and Margaret Kearney were the first secured and lived here until 1951 and have been followed by Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Reed, Mr. and Mrs. Leon Decker, Murve and Marie Ort and the present custodians James and Marie McLane who came to us in 1975.

A number of significant and valuable donations have been made to the Society since the original bequest by George Catlin. He gave us not only his

LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CATLIN HOUSE
232 MONROE AVENUE
SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA 18510

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Scranton, Pa.

home but also a collection of beautiful antique furnishings. Since then the Society has been the recipient of a unique collection of coal fossils by Edward S. Jones, the music library of Dr. D. S. Jones, Scranton family heirlooms and wedding dresses by Mrs. G. B. Littell, generous gifts by Mrs. Robert Y. Moffat, a sizeable financial award by the County Courts from the old Scranton Protective Association as well as numerous valuable and fine items for our library and museum such as antiques, artifacts, period clothes, books, photographs, newspapers, etc. given by interested members and friends. The Scranton City Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution have made the Catlin House their headquarters since 1954 and other community organizations use our gracious facilities from time to time.

The Society has assisted and been involved in commemorating the 50th Anniversary and Centennial celebrations of Lackawanna County in 1928 and 1978 as well as the Diamond Jubilee (1941) and the Centennial of the City of Scranton (1966). In fact this venerable Society will celebrate its own centennial in four more years-1986. Thus for almost a century we have been involved in preserving, interpreting and promoting the long and varied history of Scranton and Lackawanna County. The Society has grown from a small struggling and very conservative organization to the present strong, vibrant and involved institution serving to tell the past and help the future of Lackawanna County. We welcome you to join us in this important task.

William P. Lewis
Executive Director