

**ANNUAL DINNER MEETING**

**Wednesday, May 12, 1982 — Catlin House - 6:30 P.M.**

The Annual Dinner Meeting of the Lackawanna Historical Society will be held at the Catlin House on Wednesday evening, May 12 at 6:30 o'clock with a roast beef dinner catered by the Dippre. Members and friends are welcome; cost of the dinner and program will be \$7.50 per person and reservations may be made by calling the Catlin House 344-3841. Election of Officers and Trustees as well as Installation will take place briefly followed by our guest speaker Dr. Larry Tise, new director of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg. His topic will be "Public History in Pennsylvania Today". Dr. Tise is a native of North Carolina, a graduate of Duke University, and has a doctor's degree in history from the University of North Carolina. He served as Director of the North Carolina Division of Archieved and History from 1975 until last year when he became Executive Director for Pennsylvania's Historical Commission. He has written and spoken extensively on historical subjects and his talk promises to give us a keen insight into what is going on in the historical field today.

**CATLIN HOUSE NEWS**

The Catlin House continues to be a busy place with visitors and researchers coming in every day. Attendance for the first four months of this year has been as follows: January 136 visitors with four groups; February 221 visitors with four groups; March 288 visitors and seven groups and April 338 visitors and nine groups. Among the groups coming for tours of the museum are; Boy and Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, North Pocono and Lackawanna Trail High School students, Deborah Hospital Foundation, Daughters of the American Revolution, Lackawanna County Cultural Affairs Seminar, local chapter of the American Institute of Architects, Keystone Junior College history class, Mid-Atlantic Historians Conference and the Singers Guild Concert reception. Your Trustees at their recent Board meeting adopted a Budget of \$39,800.00 for the 1982-83 year and voted to install insulation and a new heating system for our custodian's apartment. The House Committee hopes to have a volunteer worker organize our extensive antique fashion collection this summer; she is Miss Kathy Jung, a graduate student at the University of Maryland. Our monthly program series, especially the past three on ethnic awareness, have been so successful that they have drawn overflow audiences. In fact we will need to purchase more chairs and cups and saucers for use next year. William P. Lewis gave an interesting slide lecture on the Welsh in Lackawanna County on Feb. 17; Dr. Charles Connor gave a rousing and amusing lecture on the Irish on March 10 and Richard Fenstermacher gave an informative talk on the Germans on April 14. We had visitors present from Germany for the April program and Dr. Douglas Bassett, Director of the National Museum of Wales, was a visitor here in March. The Catlin House is open every day Monday thru Friday 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. for visitors and researchers. We now have a total of 453 members; 71 of them are Sustaining, Contributing and Life Members; 53 are students members and the remainder are individual and family members. One of our members, Dr. Michael DeMichele, history professor at the University of Scranton, has recently published a facinating book entitled "The Italian Experience in America, A Pictorial History". We have copies here for sale at \$15 each.

**HISTORY OF THE GERMANS IN LACKAWANNA COUNTY**

This year marks the 300th anniversary of the coming of the first German immigrants to America; they came to Pennsylvania at the invitation of William Penn and located at "Germantown" in 1682. Increasing numbers of

German settlers came to Pennsylvania from then until the Revolutionary War so that Benjamin Franklin estimated that perhaps one third of Pennsylvania's colonial population was German. This number was increased when over 5000 Hessian soldiers remained here after the end of the Revolutionary War. These settlers founded many of the well known "Pennsylvania Dutch" communities in southern part of the state. Large scale immigration of Germans was renewed after 1820 and during the following century German contributed more immigrants to the United States than did any other nation over 6.9 million came to this country. A recent survey showed that about 12 percent of all Americans identified themselves as of German descent. Germans located in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and heavily in the mid-west. They enjoyed a reputation for industry, frugality, orderliness, family values and religious faith, their churches being of the Lutheran, Reformed, Moravian, Mennonite, Amish and Roman Catholic denominations. The German language was freely spoken in all of their communities up until the time of World War I when anti-German prejudice caused many to abandon it and become thoroughly Americanized.

Scranton was founded in 1840 with the beginning of the iron furnaces here by the Scranton brothers; ten years later they had also built the D.L. & W Railroad and opened the first coal mines. These new industries needed skilled workers to man them so that it was natural for Germans to begin to come here early, especially from West Germany with their mining and industrial skills. The first Germans to locate in Scranton arrived in 1845; they settled chiefly in South Scranton and East Scranton or Petersburg. By 1854 when the first census of Scranton was taken there were already 154 German families here or a total of 795 persons. At the same time Irish and Welsh immigrants were also coming here in increasing numbers.

Other German settlers began to locate in the mining town of Archbald by 1848 and in the farming community of Ransom township in the early 1840's. Later on Germans located in West Scranton, Central city, North Scranton, Blakely and Carbondale. There was also a group of German Swiss who settled in Taylor and a good number of German Jews in central city. These early Germans soon found work in the iron furnaces, coal mines, on the railroads and many began their own businesses. They left Germany during periods of political and military oppression, coming here for social and economic reasons for almost a century, some arriving even after World War I and up until the Great Depression. They seem to have come from all parts of Germany; from the provinces of Prussia, Saxony, Hannover, Westphalia, Rhine, Hesse-Cassel, Wurtemberg and Bavaria. It is estimated that a total of 30-35 thousand native-born Germans located in Lackawanna County during the period from 1845 to 1930. They brought with them not only their language and skills, but also their religion and culture as well so that soon a number of German churches- Catholic and Protestant- were organized and German societies were formed. The German language was freely spoken in South and East Scranton and used in church services up until the time of World War I when it was dropped because of Anti-German feelings generated by the War. From the German communities a number of notable citizens developed, among them judges, mayors, county commissioners, doctors, lawyers, contractors, bankers, funeral directors and other prominent businessmen. The Germans indeed have made significant contributions to the industrial, business political religious and cultural life of this area and have always displayed the strong German characteristics for industriousness, thrift, neatness and ordnliness as well as honesty, persistence and stubbornness. They have also shown strong attachments to their churches and music and families; these traits have made them welcome citizens wherever they have settled.

**GERMAN CHURCHES** - The Germans who came here were deeply religious and in time they organized a total of twenty churches in the county where the German language was used for their services. Seven of these were founded in South Scranton which has always been the strongest German section. The first and largest of these churches was the First German Presbyterian Church which began services in 1852, was organized in Jan. 1856 with 60 members and is now the Hickory Street Presbyterian Church, still

the strongest church of German origin in the county. A year later in 1853 the German Roman Catholics began their services, dividing from the growing Irish parish and by 1864-65 they were strong enough to build a brick church on River Street where they are still located, the St. Marys Roman Catholic Church, also a large and active parish. German Baptists organized the Hickory Street Baptist Church in 1874 and the Lutherans of South Side founded Christ Lutheran Church in 1887 which was located on Cedar Ave. until it merged with St. Johns Lutheran Church in 1971. Other German congregations founded there are St. Pauls Methodist Church, Prospect Ave. founded 1885 and Trinity United Church of Christ which is the result of a merger of two Evangelical and Reformed congregations in 1928 which were established respectively in 1889 and 1895.

Petersburg or East Scranton was first settled by Germans about 1850 and named for one of them, John Peters. Two German congregations founded here are Petersburg Presbyterian organized in 1858 and St. Peters Lutheran Church organized in 1868. Public School No. 5 located at the corner of Prescott and Ash Sts. was built of brick in 1879 and named the "Muhlenberg School".

Germans also located later in West Scranton and North Scranton, coming to those sections after 1880, organizing three churches in each section where German was used in the worship services. In West Scranton there are the St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church established in 1884 on South Main Ave.; The St. Marks Lutheran Church organized 1891 on Washburn Street and the First Evangelical Church of Hyde Park founded in 1886, which is now the First United Church of Christ located on Bromley Avenue. In North Scranton or Providence section we find St. Pauls Lutheran Church on Wood Street begun in 1893; Immanuel Lutheran Church on Reese Street organized in 1895 and the Peace Lutheran Church on North Main Avenue founded in 1916.

In Central city, German Lutherans have organized four different churches, the first of which was Zion Lutheran Church on Mifflin Avenue founded in 1860. Holy Trinity Church was organized in 1886, building a brick chapel on the corner of Mulberry St. and Adams Ave. and Grace Lutheran Church was established in 1894 building a large structure at Mulberry and Prescott in 1901. These three congregations all merged in 1928 to form the present St. Johns Lutheran Church and purchased the former Second Presbyterian Church building at 425 Jefferson Ave. where it is now located.

Other German churches in Lackawanna County include St. Pauls Lutheran Church, Carbondale organized 1896; St. Lukes Lutheran Church, Archbald founded in 1852; St. Stephens Lutheran Church, Blakely 1894; and Trinity Lutheran Church, Clarks Summit organized in 1926. In Ransom Township there is a small frame church which was built by German Lutheran farmers in 1847. It still stands near the Ransom Home although no services have been held in it for years. German Jews organized the first Jewish synagogue in Scranton in 1860; it still continues as Temple Hesed and is located near Lake Scranton.

Germans also established a number of fraternal and musical organizations here. Residenz Lodge of Odd Fellows No. 513 was founded in 1854 and built a German Odd Fellows Hall on Lackawanna Ave. Schiller Masonic Lodge No. 345 dates from 1864 and still meets in the Masonic Temple. The Scranton Liederkrantz, a singing society, was founded in 1869 and the Junger Mannerchor organized in 1893, were formerly large and active musical organizations here as was Bauer's Brass Band founded as early as 1876. For many years there were two German weekly newspapers here, the Scranton "Wochenblatt" established by E.A. Ludwig in 1865 and the "Scranton Herald" begun in 1874. Both ceased publication about the time of World War I. And the Germans even had several cemeteries for use by their own congregations. German Presbyterians began their "Gottesackre" on Pittston Avenue in 1869; German Lutherans began a cemetery on North Washington Ave. beside the County Jail in 1870; Petersburg residents began a cemetery on Paul Avenue in 1853 and German Catholics had a cemetery first on William Street about 1855 and later established St. Marys No. 5 Cemetery in South Side in 1885. All of these cemeteries are no longer used except the Pittston Ave. and St. Marys No. 5 ones.

## LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The Scranton German community has produced a number of influential and prominent citizens who should be mentioned briefly; among them Judges Frederick W. Gunster and Otto P. Robinson of the Lackawanna County Courts; Scranton Mayors John VonBergen, Fred J. Heuster and William T. Schmidt, Conrad Schroeder, well known contractor and builder, the Robinson family who began the first brewery here in 1854; Dr. Isaiah Everhart who founded our very fine museum here in 1908; Prof. Theodore Hemberger who organized the Scranton Symphony Orchestra here in 1894 and many others too numerous to mention.

German influence is still strong here in South Scranton where a number of German churches and businesses still are thriving; among them the Miller-Bean and Strauch funeral homes; the Gutheinz and Schumaker's Meat markets, Kaltenbach's Bakery and in West Scranton the Burschel's Dairy Co. The German American Society is an active organization with two yearly functions: an October-fest and Fasching Party before Lent.

The foregoing record of the German history and influence in Lackawanna County was compiled by W. Richard Fenstermacher and William P. Lewis for a lecture to the Lackawanna Historical Society in April 1982.

William P. Lewis  
Executive Director