

FEBRUARY PROGRAM

Wednesday, February 23, 1983 — Catlin House - 8 P.M.

You are cordially invited to our February program which will feature a slide-illustrated lecture on the Life and Work of the late Col. Louis A. Watres, presented by William P. Lewis, executive Director of the Society. Col. Watres, a most remarkable individual, was for many years a prominent citizen and businessman of Scranton. He served successively as an attorney, Lackawanna County solicitor, State Senator, Lt. Governor of Pennsylvania, president of the Scranton-Lackawanna Trust Co., Owner and publisher of "The Scranton Truth", then owner and publisher of "The Scranton Republican-Tribune", president of the Scranton Chamber of Commerce, Colonel in the National Guard as well as being involved in a score of other local organizations. A man of tremendous energy and commanding personality, he made a significant contribution to the life of our area. His life, work, family and famous home "Pen-Y-Bryn" will be traced in a slide lecture you will not want to miss. We hope to see you on Wed., February 23.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23 - Lecture on "The History of Entertainment in Scranton" given by Ms. Nancy McDonald, social studies teacher at West Scranton High School and author of the book "If you can Play Scranton. . ."

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13 - Lecture of "The History of the Ukrainians in Lackawanna County" given by Rev. Nestor Koval, pastor of St. Michael's Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Scranton. Also included will be a group of Ukrainian dancers in native dress.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11 - Annual Dinner Meeting and Installation of Officers, also a slide illustrated lecture on "The Delaware Indians of Pennsylvania" will be given by Dr. Eugene C. Cook, associate professor of Anthropology at Community College of Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania.

CATLIN HOUSE NEWS

Visitor attendance at the Catlin House continues to increase; during the Fall of 1982 we had 331 visitors and 8 groups in September; 211 visitors and 6 groups in October; 280 visitors and 11 groups in November and 254 visitors and 3 groups in December. Total attendance for the year 1982 was 3167 visitors and 75 groups, an increase over the preceding year. Our program meetings during the Fall were all well attended. Several memorial gifts were received in memory of former Trustee Alfred Breen and longtime members Mrs. Caroline Feldman and Mrs. Irene S. Smith. Significant donations of valuable antique items have been received from the estates of the late Mrs. Frances Acker Platt and Mrs. Ruth Rymer Spencer. Mrs. John DeFraine presented the Society a beautiful oriental rug which now graces the dining room floor. New gas-fired heating has been installed in the apartment of our efficient custodians Mr. and Mrs. James McLane. The Fashions Committee under the direction of Mrs. David Brooks has been busy changing exhibits and cataloguing our large collection of period clothes. Mrs. T. Archer Morgan, who was the faithful Chairman of the House Committee for many years, has had to resign for reasons of health. Your Executive Director has been busy with researchers, programs, publicity and gave a total of 25 lectures and talks on historic subjects during the last year. Our personable Secretary and Hostess Mrs. June Wech reports that we now have a total of 466 members, including 92 new members who joined during 1982. We would like to remind you that your 1983 dues are payable now and will be gratefully received. The Society's Board of Trustees which is composed of 27 local citizens, meets periodically to direct the work of the organization under the capable direction of President Dr. John L. Earl.

THE HISTORY OF SOUTH SCRANTON

South Scranton is a large residential and industrial section of the City, bordered by the East Mountain and Lake Scranton on the east, the Lackawanna River on the west, Roaring Brook on the north and the Moosic Borough line at Davis Street on the south. Interstate Highway 81 traverses it north and south with Exits at Davis Street,

River Street and the Central City Expressway. Highway 11 goes south along Cedar Avenue and Route 307 heads east up Moosic Street Hill. While it is chiefly a residential section, there are business districts along Cedar and Pittston Avenues, Meadow Avenue and the South Washington Avenue Plaza. There are also large industrial areas off Davis Street in Minooka and below South Washington Avenue. As nothing has ever been compiled, I have endeavored to research the subject and trace the history of this interesting part of Scranton, the whats, wheres and whens of its past.

One of the oldest sections of the City, it was originally part of the old Slocum family farm. Up until 1840 South Side was entirely covered with a dense forest except for the old road to Pittston, now Pittston Avenue and the Slocum farm on what is now the South Washington Avenue Flats.

Development of the area began in the year 1840 with the coming of the Scranton brothers to the Lackawanna Valley to build the Iron Blast Furnaces. They needed workers for their new iron industry and soon Irish immigrants located here, followed after 1845 by German immigrants, both of whom settled principally in South Side. Soon the hillsides were cleared of timber and small frame houses were built for the iron workers which gave the section its first name "Shanty Hill". The new community grew rapidly so that by 1850-51 a plan for the infant city of Scranton was drawn and the streets laid out, including the South Side section. The streets here were chiefly names for trees: Cedar, Hemlock, Hickory, Alder, Willow, Birch, Beech, Maple, Elm, Locust, Cherry, Fig, Palm and Pear. Not only did the first Irish and German immigrants settle in this section, but here also the first Roman Catholic Church in Scranton was founded, the first German Protestant Church established and the first brewery and silk mill built. Iron ore for the Blast Furnaces was mined from the East Mountain in the vicinity of Mountain Lake and Lake Scranton. The first Polish immigrants to come to the Valley also located in South Scranton.

Two early railroads helped to develop the locality. The first was the Pennsylvania Coal Company's Gravity Railroad which was built from Pittston to Hawley in 1848-49 and ran adjacent to the present Interstate 81. It operated until 1885 and had Plane No. 5 at the east end of Palm Street. This was followed by the Susquehanna and Wyoming Valley Railroad which was built 1855-56 to open the National coal mines along the Lackawanna River below Cedar Avenue. From the National Breaker, built in 1856 and the Meadow Brook mine opened in 1870, the Minooka section grew up as a mining patch. The Pawnee Coal Co. opened a mine near Cedar and Brook St. in 1866; these three mines were later all owned and operated by William Connell & Co.

Other early industries which began in South Side include the first silk mill established in Lackawanna County. It was the Scranton Silk Co. founded in 1873 by Alfred Harvey and purchased by the Sauquoit Silk Co. in 1879. William Connell the coal operator, founded two important industries here; The Scranton Button Co. in 1883 and the Lackawanna Knitting Mills in 1887. These busy mills gave employment to hundreds of women and girls in this city for many years. The silk mills still continue as Sauquoit Fibers Corp.; the Button mill later became the Consolidated Molded Products Co. and Capitol Records Co., both of which have gone out of business. William W. Scranton founded the Scranton Steel Co. in 1881 which built and operated the powerful South Mills off South Washington Avenue. That firm moved from the city in 1901. Years later the Murray plant was constructed on the same site; today the Elliott Corp. operates in the same facility. The Lackawanna and Wyoming Valley Railroad was constructed from Scranton to Wilkes Barre through South Side in 1902. An electrical railway line well known as The "Laurel Line", it gave excellent service until it ceased operations in December 1952.

The growth of the coal and iron industries naturally caused the section to expand, South Side was first settled by Irish and German immigrants, later Poles and Italians also came here. They brought with them from Europe their deep religious faith and a desire for a better life in America. The first Roman Catholic Church in Scranton was built on Hemlock Street in 1848. This was followed in 1853 by the organization First German Catholic Church - now St. Marys on River Street and in 1856 by the First German Presbyterian Church, now Hickory Street Presbyterian Church.

As time went on other ethnic churches and parishes were established here. Hickory Street (German) Baptist Church in 1874; St. Paul's United Methodist Church in 1885; Bethany Baptist in 1904; Blucher Avenue Baptist in 1931 and Trinity United Church of Christ in 1928 which was a merger of two German Evangelical and Reformed congregations formed in 1889 and 1895. Sacred Heart of Jesus Church was formed by the first Poles here in 1885 and St. Stanislaus Polish National Church, the Mother Church of that denomination, was founded in South Scranton in 1897 by Bishop Francis Hudor. St. John the Evangelist Church, an Irish Catholic parish was formed in 1887 and the Church of the Nativity, another Irish parish, was begun in 1904 and

built its magnificent edifice 1904-14. St. Francis of Assisi, an Italian parish, was formed in 1920 and Holy Name of Jesus Church, a German parish on the East Mountain, was begun in 1938. Christ Lutheran Church, another German congregation, was formed on Cedar Ave. in 1887 but was closed and merged in 1971. And St. Joseph's Church in Minooka, another Irish parish, was established in 1874, but is located in Moosic Borough. Eight Protestant, six Roman Catholic and one Polish National, a total of 15 churches, all with strong ethnic origins, have been organized in South Scranton. As parishioners died, the churches established cemeteries for their members: Pittston Avenue Cemetery began in 1869, St. Marys No. 5 Cemetery in 1885 and a whole block of nine parish cemeteries off Davis Street in Minooka was begun in 1885.

South Siders have not only been strongly religious but also concerned with the education of their children. The first public school here was old No. 3 located on River Street near St. Mary's Church. As the area grew a total of eight public schools were built in this section. Today there are four grade schools in South Side: Whittier No. 2, Kennedy No. 7, Monroe No. 8 and the new McNichols Plaza School as well as South Scranton Junior High School, built in 1937, which now has 547 students. There are also two parochial schools: St. Mary's and Nativity. South Catholic High Schools formerly Bishop Klonowski, was merged with Bishop Hannan High School last year and the building was sold to Lackawanna Junior College. There is even a new Hebrew High School - Yeshiva Beth Moshe - which moved into the former Mercy Heights Hospital in 1981.

South Scranton had its own hospital for many years; the St. Marys Keller Memorial Hospital at Hickory and Crown Ave. was established in 1915 and a three story brick facility built in 1916. It was merged with the Mercy Hospital in 1965 and closed in 1978. The old Scranton Contagious Hospital on the East Mountain is now the Mountain Rest Nursing Home.

Many of the industrious Germans in South Side worked in the iron furnaces, steel mills and in the D.L. & W. Railroad shops. Other enterprising businessmen founded firms in South Side; among them the first brewery in Scranton founded by the Robinson family in 1854; Citizens Savings and Loan Co. begun in 1902; The South Side Bank founded in 1905; now the Penn Security Bank and Trust Co.; Scheuer's Bakery begun in 1874; the Pennsylvania Baking Co. Casey and Kelly's Brewery, the Lackawanna Pants Mfg. Co.; the Anthracite Bridge Co. and many more. Several old South Side business firms continue to this day; among them Gutheinz Meats Inc. begun in 1879, Schumakers Meat Market established in 1911, Kaltenbach's Bakery since 1927; the Miller-Bean Funeral Home in business since 1885; the Strauch Funeral Home begun in 1902 and the Musso Funeral Home established in 1910.

As the area grew and prospered and changes came from the horse and buggy days to the automobile era, so changes came in public improvements. Lake Scranton was constructed by the Scranton Gas and Water Co. from 1883 to 1898 giving the city its excellent water supply. Harrison Avenue Viaduct was opened in 1922 followed by the Scranton-Pocono Highway No. 307, constructed from Moosic Street over the East Mountain toward the Poconos in 1934-35. After the disastrous 1955 Flood the Roaring Brook and Lackawanna River was given a safe course by a U.S. Flood Control Project and the South Side Flats area redeveloped. In 1969 the new Spruce Street Bridge complex was constructed, replacing the old Spruce Street Iron Bridge which had been built in 1895.

Concerned citizens have given residents of South Side some fine recreation areas including Connell Park in 1891, Robinson Park and Mountain Lake in 1911 and the Mattas Community Center in 1933. And Col. L.A. Watres mansion "Pen-Y-Bryn" was a local show place before its tragic destruction by fire in 1936.

Among South Scranton natives who went on to make significant contributions in the City and county were Fred J. Huester, Mayor of Scranton from 1938 to 1942; Henry T. Klonowski, pastor of Sacred Hearts Church and Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Scranton 1947-73; Otto J. Robinson, Judge of Lackawanna County Courts for thirty years 1947-77; as well as many others.

Following World War II whole new residential sections were opened and new homes built all over the East Mountain area. Also public housing for lower-income families was built in lower South Side; Valley View Terrace with 240 family units was opened in 1941; Hilltop Manor with 250 units in 1955 and ten years ago another project, Sky View Park with 188 units, opened in the same section. Another residential district, Minooka, had been first settled in 1856 as a mining town by Irish and Welsh coal miners. Early known as Davis Patch, Needhams Patch or Carrs Patch, the community grew into a village called Minooka, named after an Indian maiden. Originally located in Lackawanna Township, the Minooka section was annexed by the City of Scranton in January 1950.

LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CATLIN HOUSE
232 MONROE AVENUE
SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA 18510

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 56
Scranton, Pa.

In more recent years a number of industrial firms have located plants in South Scranton. Among them are Fitchburg Coated Products, Philmont Steel Co., McKinney Mfg. Co., Suckle Electronics and Compression Plymers. All of these are situated in the South Side Industrial Park off Davis Street. Others include the Goldstar Manufacturing near I-81 and Lomma Enterprises, Sauquoit Fibers, the Elliott Corp. etc. located in the South Washington flats section. These firms give daily employment to over 2500 workers.

Other developments in the East Mountain area in more recent years are the Oakmont Garden Apartments opened in 1950, Friendship House Children's Home in 1960, the Scranton Elks Club on Moosic Street in 1965, the Sheraton Motor Inn and Bellefonti Apartments both opened in 1969, Temple Hesel dedicated in 1974, the new Young Womens Christian Association center on Saginaw Ave. opened in 1979 and the Lutherwood Senior Citizens Apartments which will open this year. Two Scranton banks have opened Branches in South Side: Scranton National on Moosic Street and Third National on Meadow Avenue. On the South Side Flats the Scranton Sewer Authority Treatment Plant was built along the Lackawanna River 1968-70 and the South Washington Avenue Shopping Plaza about 1960. Just last year the Scranton U.S. Postoffice opened a spacious new facility off Davis Street. All of these industries, businesses and residential areas make South Side an important part of the City of Scranton.

South Siders are generally hard-working, industrious, thrifty and law abiding people. They are, for the most part, conservative, religious, friendly and neighborly, committed to their institutions, organizations, churches and ethnic heritages. They keep their homes in good repair and their yards in neat order and are dedicated to the best of American ideals. This brief record is presented in order to preserve something of the past for future generations.

William P. Lewis, 1983