

FIRST FALL PROGRAM

Wednesday, October 12, 1983 — Catlin House - 8 P.M.

Because of the increased interest generated by our Ethnic Awareness series last year, we have scheduled two more programs this year. Our first Fall program will feature a lecture on "The History of the Italians in Lackawanna County" given by Matthew Garafalo, well known local barber, on Columbus Day. A native of Hyde Park and son of an Italian immigrant, Mr. Garafalo is a graduate of Central High School, studied at the University of Scranton, served in the U.S. Air Force during World War II and has been a barber and hair stylist in Scranton since 1937. Long involved in the local Italian community, he has served as local president, district governor and national vice-president of UNICO, was co-chairman of this year's Lackawanna County Italian festival, is a member of the Victor Alfieri Society and has been active in local cultural and musical events for many years. He will trace the interesting story of Italian immigration to Lackawanna County which began in the early 1880's. Coming principally from southern Italy, the Italians located in Hyde Park, Dunmore, Old Forge, Jessup and Carbondale as well as north and south Scranton. Most of them began work here in the coal mines but many became masons, construction workers, barbers, musicians as well as doctors, lawyers and civic leaders. Our area today has a number of Italian parishes, festivals, societies and well known restaurants. Come to hear this interesting lecture on Wednesday, October 12 at 8 P.M.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE for the YEAR 1983-84

- Wednesday, November 16 Slide illustrated lecture by George N. Hart, Director Emeritus of the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, entitled "The Anthracite Carrying Railroads of Northeastern Penna."
- Wednesday, December 7 Annual Christmas Program with holiday music by the Baptist Bible College Ensemble. Color slide program on Railroad Museums by Edward Miller, Pittston.
- Wednesday, February 22 Slide illustrated lecture on the History of the Abingtons given by William P. Lewis, Executive Director.
- Wednesday, March 21 Slide illustrated lecture given by David Salay, Director of the Anthracite Museums on "The Taylor Breaker and Coal Collieries"
- Wednesday, April 11 Slide lecture given by Francis Bosak on "Michael J. Bosak, my Father, a Man of Destiny, Philanthropist, Patriot, Merchant and Banker"
- Wednesday, May 9 Annual Dinner Meeting. Slides and lecture on Dr. Isaiah Everhart and the Everhart Museum given by Robert Schweitzer, Museum curator.

CATLIN HOUSE NEWS

The summer months have been busy ones for the Staff here as our attendance showed an increase over the same period last year. During the month of June we had seven groups and 333 visitors; July we hosted four groups and 181 visitors and August, one group and 181 visitors. Many of these were out-of-town researchers from places like New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Maryland, Virginia, Georgia, Florida, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Oklahoma and California. Among the tour groups were the D.A.R. Flag Day program, senior citizens from White Beauty Inn, University of Scranton Alumni Day, Penn State University Trustees and Elderhostel groups.

At the Trustees meeting in June a Long-Range Planning Committee consisting of John Cognetti, Norman Brauer, Atty. Joseph Cimini, Albert Fries, Dr. Elizabeth Jewell, Miss Jane Durkin, Mrs. Albert G. Isaacs, and Mrs. Domonick Keating, was appointed to study the Society's needs for increased funding and memberships, trustee participation, staff duties, etc. Work has been completed on the renovation of a room in the basement to house our loan collection of period clothes. So far we have added 34 new members to this year for a total of 463. We are looking forward to increased activity with the coming of "Steamtown USA" to Scranton this fall.

SCRANTON LANDMARKS BEING RESTORED

1983 will be marked as a significant year in the history of Scranton. This past May the Mayor, City officials and members of the Chamber of Commerce signed an agreement with the Board of "Steamtown USA" to move their valuable museum and collection of steam railroad stock from Bellows Falls, Vermont to Scranton. This transfer will begin this fall and continue into next year and will make Scranton the headquarters for one of the finest collections of steam railroading equipment in the na-

tion. Scranton will become an important tourist center. This action has already begun a renaissance of Scranton's center city, including the restoration of two important landmarks. These are the former Lackawanna Railroad Station which is being transformed into a luxury Hilton hotel and convention center and the Finch Building which has been transformed into a senior citizens housing complex. A review of the history of these handsome and important structures will prove of current interest.



LACKAWANNA RAILROAD STATION

When the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad was first organized and built in 1850-51, the terminus of its road was Scranton. The first passenger and freight station, a wood frame depot, was erected in 1851 at the corner of Lackawanna and Wyoming Avenue. In 1854 it was moved farther down Lackawanna Avenue to the block between Penn and Franklin and stood where the Pennsylvania State Office Building now is. This first depot was replaced in 1864 by a large brick Victorian style station and office building which served the railroad for the ensuing 44 years. Nearby were located two large hotels and many of the cities stores and businesses.

However by the turn of the century the business district had moved further east to Wyoming and Washington Avenue. William H. Truesdale became President of the D.L. & W. Railroad in 1899 and served as such until 1925. He soon determined to remodel the entire line of the railroad from Hoboken to Buffalo in order to run faster trains and carry more coal trade. Accordingly he rebuilt the Hoboken, N.J. terminal and the entire eastern end of the road from 1903 to 1908, including the erection of all new stations along the line and straightening out and widening the roadbed the entire distance. Later from 1912 to 1915 he directed the complete rebuilding of the line from Scranton to Binghamton including the construction of the famous Nicholas Viaduct. The first stage of the remodeling program included plans for an entirely new passenger station and offices at Scranton. A triangular plot of land at the juncture of Lackawanna and Jefferson Avenues was secured and following an competition, Kenneth Murchison, a prominent New York City architect, was selected to draw up the plans. The fact that Murchison was a son in law of President Truesdale probably helped in the selection as well. Ground was broken in Sept. 1, 1906 and slowly but surely the magnificent structure began to rise. Built 240 by 88 on a steel and brick frame, the five story building was entirely faced with carved Indiana limestone in French Renaissance architectural style. The front was relieved by six engaged columns and an entablature with an ornamented clock graced the front. Built at a cost of over a half million dollars, it was felt to be one of the most complete passenger stations at the time. F.D. Hyde of New York was the contractor and Edward Langley of Scranton, the supervising architect. A 20 foot marquee extended around three sides of the terminal while on the track side of the station a 600 foot long trainshed was constructed of steel trusses, concrete roof and glass skylights. Designed by Lincoln Bush, it enabled the passengers of the twelve east and westbound daily trains to board the cars in all kinds of weather. Inside the waiting room concourse of the station was two and a half stories high, richly ornamented with Italian marble columns and walls of brown, pink and green Italian marble and also decorated with 36 faience color tile panels depicting actual scenes along the Lackawanna executed by artist Clark G. Voorhees. There was a gallery with a bronze railing running around the mezzanine floor, the ceiling was lighted by leaded glass panels and the floor was of Italian terrazzo with inlaid mosaic designs. It was and is a very imposing waiting room. Surrounding it were ladies and mens retiring rooms, a large dining room, the ticket office, a news stand and the mail and baggage rooms. The upper floors of the building contained the offices of the freight, coal mining, legal, claims, bridges and buildings divisions of the railroad.

The completed station was formally dedicated on Wed. November 11, 1908 when a trainload of dignitaries headed by President Truesdale arrived from New York at 11 AM and were met by Scranton's Mayor E.B. Dimmick, Judge H.M. Edwards, members of the Board of Trade and 300 other leading citizens. Following the ceremonies, a luncheon was served in the waiting room and then the station was thrown open for inspection by the thousands who had waited to see the magnificent structure.

The station was a very busy fixture in the life of Scranton for over 60 years with twelve passenger trains stopping there daily, including the famous "Pheobe Snow Special" as well as constant flow of coal trains going east and west. Through the doors of the station also passed a continual flow of European immigrants who came to work in Lackawanna County and who had landed only days before at Ellis Island in New York harbor. The station was a proud structure and the center of a prosperous anthracite carrying railroad.

However following the days of the Great Depression and World War II, America turned to other energy fuels such as oil, gas and electricity. Slowly but surely the coal trade fell off until the railroad was in trouble. The D.L. & W. merged with the Erie Railroad in 1960 to become the Erie-Lackawanna but even this could not save the road. Bankruptcy was declared in 1972 and the road became part of a new conglomerate called "Conrail". Passenger service fell off with the advent of buses and cars; in January 1970 the last passenger train stopped at the station; after that the once busy terminal was closed and shuttered. The offices had all moved to Cleveland in 1960. The station stood empty and forlorn for over ten years with a number of schemes being promoted to put it into reuse. None however succeeded until J. Campbell Bryce and the Hilton Hotel chain came forward with the idea to transform it into a luxury hotel and convention center. Last year negotiations with Conrail were completed transferring the station to the developers and a \$13 million dollar renovation project is now in process and expected to be completed in time for a gala New Years Eve party on Dec. 31 of this year. The new hotel will include 130 guest rooms, bar, ballroom and restaurant facilities and a banquet hall to be called the "Pheobe Snow Room". Thus once more the station will become a showplace and asset to the business and social life of Scranton.



THE FINCH BUILDING

Scranton has been famous for a number of institutions, among them the International Correspondance Schools which were founded in Scranton on October 16, 1891 by Thomas J. Foster.

Foster was born in 1843 in Pottsville, Pa., served in the Union Army during the Civil War and in 1870 established a weekly newspaper "The Shenandoah Herald". In his paper he early advocated mining safety measures and soon began to print little pamphlets for miners, in simple understandable language, teaching improved mining methods. His paper became so successful that he changed it into a daily and renamed it "The Colliery Engineer". Largely through his efforts the Pennsylvania Legislature passed a law requiring mine foremen to pass state examinations. In 1890 Foster moved his paper and business to Scranton where a number of friends persuaded him to draft a correspondance course on coal mining. He advertised the course in his paper and the first student enrolled in October 1891. The first offices of the school were in the Coal Exchange Building. The venture was an immediate success and by the end of the first year over 1000 students were enrolled.

Within six years the school had become such a prosperous business that new offices were needed. W. Scott Collins, an architectural professor in the school, designed a Handsome four store stone office building with twin turrets in French chateau style which was erected at 434 Wyoming Avenue in 1898-99. The school which was a pioneer in correspondance education was incorporated in 1901 as the International Correspondance Schools with a Board of Directors. Foster continued to serve as the leader and president until his retirement in 1916. A forceful character, he coined the phrase "We Teach the World" and was held in esteem and affection by all who knew him until his death in 1936 at the advanced age of 93. Also in 1901 the school entered the printing business to publish their own courses and textbooks by the formation of the International Textbook Co., which is now Haddon Craftsmen, one of the largest book publishers in the nation. A huge printery was erected in 1908-10 in the 1000 block of Wyoming Avenue. By 1918 the school was offering over 300 courses in all subjects and the volume of business had become so large that the offices also were moved to printery building out on Wyoming Avenue. In 1957 the institution erected new headquarters at Keyser Avenue and Oak Street in North Scranton where they still direct their world-wide activities that have carried the name of Scranton to the four corners of the earth.

In 1918 the handsome office building at 434 Wyoming Avenue was sold to the Hudson Coal Company and became their headquarters for over 40 years. The Hudson Coal Co. was incorporated in

LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CATLIN HOUSE
232 MONROE AVENUE
SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA 18510

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

1909 as the coal mining operation of the Delaware and Hudson Canal and Railroad Co. which had been shipping anthracite coal from the Lackawanna Valley since 1829. The company operated 15 collieries, mining and marketing coal for over 130 years. However the same fate that overtook the Lackawanna Railroad, the decline of the coal trade, caused the decline and closing of the Hudson Coal Co. It dissolved on Nov. 21, 1960 and all assets were transferred to the Blue Coal Co. The offices were closed and the once-busy building stood empty and unused for over 20 years. A firm took title to the structure, renamed it the "Finch Building" and tried to rent it for office space but with the decline in business and population in Scranton there were no takers.

Finally last year the Finch Towers Associates took title to the building and has been in the process of renovating its interior to make 48 one bedroom and efficiency housing units for senior and handicapped citizens to be administered by the Allied Services. The striking structure has been completely restored and put back into adaptive reuse. Both the Finch Towers and the Lackawanna Station was listed on the National Register of Historic Places and are part of the continuing renaissance which has been coming in Scranton.

William P. Lewis.