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Open:  
Tuesday - Friday  
10 - 4:30  
Saturday: 10 - 12

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Sunday & Monday

# The LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY Bulletin

November - December 1966



CATLIN HOUSE  
Home of the Historical Society  
232 Monroe Ave., Scranton, Pa.

## NEW AND OLD, SIDE BY SIDE.....

New buildings of brick and steel have sprung up on the University of Scranton campus during the past ten years, and the face of this part of the Hill Section has changed greatly. Unchanged, however, is the Catlin House, home of the Lackawanna Historical Society. Its next door neighbor is Saint Thomas Hall, an imposing structure which contains modern classrooms and administrative offices of the local university. The proximity of the Catlin House and Saint Thomas Hall is a pleasant indication of the fact that Yesterday and Today can coexist in mutual harmony and respect.

The three-story home that serves as the headquarters of the Lackawanna Historical Society was built in 1912 by George H. Catlin, a prominent official of the Third National Bank during his lifetime. Mr. Catlin, who died in 1932, generously specified in his will that his home should ultimately be turned over to the Historical Society, and following his widow's death in 1942 this was done.

The architecture of the home can be classified as modified Tudor. One of the outstanding features of the interior is the magnificent woodwork, much of which was handcrafted by Spanish woodcarvers who had been employed by the Bingham Company of Dunmore. Their skill is quite evident, for instance, in the intricate scrollwork of the walnut fireplace mantles. The parquet oak floors, containing feature strips along the edge of each room, were hand fitted. One shudders to contemplate the material and labor costs of such woodwork in 1966.

Much of the furniture and many of the rugs in the first floor drawing rooms and the dining room belonged to Mr. Catlin, and these rooms probably look somewhat as they did during the time the Catlins occupied the home. Mr. Catlin's den is now the

office of the executive secretary of the society, Miss Dorothea Mattes. The former dining room of the Catlin servants now serves as the Society library and the headquarters of our indefatigable curator, Mr. Robert Mattes.

Historical artifacts abound in the second and third floor rooms, as well as volumes of old newspapers and the voluminous papers of the late Dr. D. E. Jones, long time music critic of the *Scranton Tribune*. The filing cabinets in the secretary's office are a research "gold mine" of clippings, photographs, and documents, and the library houses many volumes that could not possibly be found anywhere else. The importance of the Catlin House to the field of historical research is well testified by the frequent visits made to it by scholars.

Man, with his eye ever on the future, still feels the need to delve into the past in order to glean its precious lessons. We are therefore fortunate to have a gracious place such as the Catlin House in which to preserve the memorabilia of the region's yester-years.

## NOVEMBER MEETING

On Monday evening, November 28, Professor Frank C. Brown, Chairman of the Department of History of the University of Scranton, will discuss the fascinating career of Terrence V. Powderly, a former mayor of Scranton, who became nationally famous as the guiding genius of the Knights of Labor. Mr. Brown, who has been a college professor for twenty-nine years, is an exceptionally gifted lecturer. In addition to his wide knowledge of the field of history, he is also noted for his extensive familiarity with the techniques and equipment which are used in fire fighting.

## DECEMBER MEETING

Have you ever been transported back to some event in your past merely by hearing the strains of a song that had become particularly identified with a specific year? Yes, music does have an unusual capacity for conjuring up the past. This theme will be followed on Tuesday, December 13, when a group of talented vocalists will present a program of songs of long ago.

The group will include the following singers: Lena Solomon, Rita Betti, Barbara Barrett, Joan Dell'Amico, Jane McGurl, Charles Graham, and Edward Kabacinski. Marilyn Coar will accompany them at the piano, as they sing the songs that were familiar to the people of this area one hundred years ago.

## MEETING OF HISTORIANS

On October 15 the Lackawanna Historical Society played host to the semi-annual meeting of the Historical Association of Northeastern Pennsylvania. The meeting, which was presided over by the Association president, Dr. Alfred Sumberg of East Stroudsburg State College, featured a workshop titled "The Historical Society and Educational Television." Panelists were Mr. George Strimmel, general manager of Station WVIA-TV, and Mr. Ralph Hazeltine, director of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society.

The luncheon speaker was Professor Kenneth Merryman of the Department of History at Mansfield State College. Color slides of the Magee Transportation Museum at Bloomsburg were shown by Mr. Edward Miller of Pittston, who certainly qualifies as one of the most knowledgeable of experts on the subject of transportation.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

It has been suggested that members of the Lackawanna Historical Society might be interested in knowing something about the backgrounds of the dedicated people who serve on the Board of Trustees. Biographical sketches of three trustees will be presented in each issue of the Bulletin until all members of the Board have been covered.

**William L. Connel, Jr.** — The president of the Lackawanna Historical Society is a great-grandson of James Connell, Sr., who came to Scranton in 1849 by way of Nova Scotia and Aberdeen, Scotland. His grandfather, James Connell, Jr., was an early coal operator in Minooka, and his father, William L. Connell, Sr., was twice mayor of the city of Scranton. Our President's interest in matters cultural can best be indicated by listing the organizations which he has served as president: Community Concert Association; Everhart Museum Association; Community Opera Society; Singers Guild; and the Lackawanna Arts Council. He is currently a member of the Arts Council of the State of Pennsylvania. Mr. Connell resides on Pippin Hill Farm in Dalton.

**Everett D. Thomas** — If you ring the doorbell at 214 South Main Street, Scranton, at the proper time you may be greeted by this gentleman whose infectious grin and keen sense of humor have brightened many a meeting. Currently the treasurer of the Lackawanna Historical Society, Mr. Thomas is also its past president. A member of Thomas Brothers, a general insurance agency, he is also secretary and director of Traders Building and Loan Association, and secretary and director of the Wesel Manufacturing Company. Mr. Thomas' grandfather, Daniel J. Evans, was the editor and publisher of *Y Baner America*, a Welsh newspaper which was sold in Scranton and vicinity in the 1870's.

**Alfred E. Breen** — A native of Dickson City, Mr. Breen now resides at 520 Clay Avenue, Scranton. He has been a member of the Board of Trustees for over ten years. A coal broker by profession, Mr. Breen is associated with the Automatic Filtration Corporation and has offices in the Scranton Loan Association Building on Adams Avenue.

## ARTIFACT CORNER.....

Do you know what a Geneva fluter is? If your guess is a Swiss who plays a wind instrument, you are wrong. Actually, it is an iron with a corrugated surface which was used to press ruffles into material. Ours was made in Geneva, Illinois, in the 1860's.

Color television is now so commonplace that the novelty has worn off, but back in the 1880's when colored slides were projected onto a white sheet the projector was called a Magic Lantern. We have one on display in the Library, complete with colored slides and its source of illumination—a kerosene lamp.

## NEW MEMBERS.....

Miss Ethel Bradican  
122 Prospect Avenue

Miss Hannah T. Buckley  
122 Prospect Avenue

Miss Mary Gilgallon  
1120 Ash Street

Mrs. Harriet A. Hames  
1512 Ash Street

Mr. & Mrs. Paul D. Horger  
231 Arthur Avenue

Mr. D. T. Roper  
730 Taylor Avenue

Mrs. Mildred S. Williams  
814 Prescott Avenue



Rev. Wm. Phelps Lewis  
1118 Division Street  
Scranton, Pa. 18504

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232 MONROE AVENUE  
SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA 18510