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The LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Bulletin

March-April 1967



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

ALL ABOARD!

The steam locomotive has almost completely disappeared from the American scene. Now it is a curiosity, and people drive miles to areas where these locomotives are operated on short-line roads for the tourist trade. The recent publication of a book was a forceful reminder that once upon a time the city of Scranton was the location of the Dickson Manufacturing Company whose specialty was the fabrication of steam locomotives. The book referred to was compiled by Mr. Gerald M. Best of Beverly Hills, California, and contains a reproduction of the locomotive catalog which was issued by the Dickson Company in 1885. The following facts were garnered from this fascinating book:

The Dickson Company operated from 1862 to 1909. During this period they produced a total of 1,762 engines, most of which were designed to stand up under the hard usage of the anthracite coal traffic. Nearly one-half of the Dickson output was ordered by three railroads which served the local mining area: the Delaware and Hudson; the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western; and the New York, Ontario and Western.

Many of the small steam locomotives (familiarly referred to as "Lokies" by area residents) which drew mine cars on a narrow gauge track from the head of a mine shaft to a coal breaker, were of Dickson manufacture. These small locomotives with their shrill steam whistles were often given distinguishing names, such as, "Dorothy," "Nanna Sturges," "Daisey," and "Uncle Sam." Quite a number of the small locomotives were made to order for the foreign trade, and it is interesting to note that "Maria Cecelia" went to Costa Rica; "Juan Felipe," to Santo Domingo; "Redjo Agoong," to

Java; and "C. Birkenstock," to South Africa. "Myrtle," was manufactured for the Hawaii Railway Company and probably worked in the sugar cane fields. As recently as 1962, one of the "Lokies" was still in service in the Central American country of Honduras.

All that now remains of the Dickson Company is a large brick building that stands on the northwest corner of Penn Avenue and Vine Street. In recent years the building has been used as a warehouse by various business firms.

APRIL MEETING

On Tuesday, April 25, our speaker will be Mr. Manville B. Wakefield, of Grahamsville, New York, author of "Coal Boats to Tidewater," the story of the canal on which was shipped the coal hauled over the mountains by the Gravity Railroad. Mr. Wakefield's lecture will be illustrated. This is fitting, since he is an excellent artist. He is County Historian of Sullivan County, and an instructor in art for Sullivan County Community College and Tri-Valley Central School.

ARTIFACT CORNER

On the second floor of the Catlin House is an unusual collection of wedding dresses of members of the George Scranton family. These dresses, which are in perfect condition, span five generations and 114 years. In addition to their historical value, they provide a graphic picture of the constant change of style in women's dresses. Since the editor of this Bulletin felt at a loss to provide

an accurate description of the dresses, he prevailed upon Miss Dorothea Mattes to do so.

1. **Jane Hiles:** married to George W. Scranton, January 21, 1835 French Empire style of white figured satin with square neck line, and short net-trimmed sleeves, no waist line. There is a lace ruffle near the bottom of the floor-length skirt.
2. **Elizabeth Scranton:** married to George Augustus Fuller, October 5, 1859 White satin with tight fitting waist laced up the back. Short, full gathered sleeves, low neck trimmed with net and lace. Full, trained skirt heavily pleated and padded. There is a foot-long pocket under the front pleat.
3. **Jane Scranton Fuller:** married Arthur Hovey Storrs, June 2, 1886 Cream colored satin dress. Waist laced up the front; no sleeves and low neck. Draped skirt with large bustle and a very long, heavily padded train. Neck line and skirt elaborately decorated with artificial lilacs.
4. **Elizabeth Scranton Storrs:** married Charles A. Belin, April 25, 1916 Gold thread embroidered white net over off-white satin. Long net sleeves and deep V-neck. Long satin train with sectional metal band in the end to keep it lying flat.
5. **Elizabeth Littell** (granddaughter of Jane Scranton Storrs): married McLeod Lightburn, July 23, 1949 White satin dress with long train. No sleeves. Trimmed with Rose Point lace. The lace on the veil was worn by her great grandmother, Elizabeth Scranton Fuller. The lace on the dress had belonged to the Weston family and was given to the bride by her great aunt, Mrs. C. S. Weston.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

Margaret Young Richards: Miss Richards is a native of Moosic. Her father, the late Dr. Oren B. Richards, was a dentist, and his family came to America in the 17th Century from Newton, England. They settled in New Jersey and named the settlement Newton. When some of the members of the family moved to Pennsylvania, they purchased land in what is now Newton-Ransom Township, thus continuing the tradition of perpetuating the name of their native English town. Miss Richards, a graduate of Grove City College, also pursued graduate studies at Columbia, University of Pittsburgh and the University of Pennsylvania. She taught Latin at Aliquippa High School, did welfare work in Philadelphia, and helped to found the Rohrbach Hardware Company in Scranton. She was vice president and treasurer of this company from 1945 to 1961. Miss Richards is a past president of the Scranton Community Concert Association and a member of the Advisory Board of the Salvation Army.

Victor A. Wenzel: Mr. Wenzel, who recently celebrated his ninetieth birthday, served as secretary for the Scranton Building Association No. 10, for thirty-three years, prior to his retirement. In his youth he was a member of the Scranton Turnverein, an association of gymnasts and athletes. He is a 50-year member of Shiller Lodge No. 345, Free and Accepted Masons, and a member of the Scranton Chamber of Commerce, St. John's Lutheran Church, the Scranton Liederkrantz, and the Odd Fellows.

Dr. J. Norman White: Dr. White was one of the most prominent of area surgeons prior to his retirement from active practice. A native of Albany, New York, he graduated from New York State Normal School and taught school for five years prior to pursuing studies at Jefferson Medical College, where he received his M.D. degree. In addition to serving as chief surgeon at Moses Taylor Hospital, Dr. White was also on the staffs of the State, Mid-Valley, and West Side Hospitals. At one time he was coroner for Lackawanna County. He is a member of the Kiwanis Club, and is a 32nd degree Mason.

HISTORICAL MISCELLANY

A parlor game which is currently popular in America is called "Trivia," and consists of trying to obtain information which has no practical value, but is illustrative of non-essential information which people often accumulate. If you should ever get involved in such a game here is an item which is guaranteed to stump the players:

- Q. What is the longest name in the 1865 City Directory?
- A. Godel Gunderschovenherzer, a laborer who lived at Pittston Avenue, near Alder Street.

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