



WOMEN'S HISTORY OBSERVED - See page 3.

THE LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
at the GEORGE H. CATLIN MEMORIAL
MONROE AVENUE
SCRANTON, PA 18510

**Get ready to mark
your calendars!**

*Final plans for The
Lackawanna Historical
Society's Annual Dinner
are being completed as
you read this message.*

*This event will be
held within the last week
of May. Watch your
mailbox for your individ-
ual invitation which will
include everything you
need to know about this
spectacular event!*

U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 56
SCRANTON, PA

The LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL

Founded 1886

Volume 23, No. 1

ISSN 0895-1802

SPRING 1992



Lackawanna Avenue - Circa 1916



**IN MEMORIUM
Marion Scranton Isaacs
1902 - 1992**

The Lackawanna Historical Society grieves the recent death of Marion Margery Scranton Isaacs, an honored and respected member of the Board of Trustees since 1969.

During her long association with the Society, Mrs. Isaacs actively served on the Finance, Long Range Planning, and Centennial Celebration Committees.

Portrait above is an oil painting by J. Jacobs, it is displayed with family portraits at the Catlin House.

NOMINATIONS TO BE PRESENTED

Persuant to Article VI of the By-Laws of the Lackawanna Historical Society, the election of Officers and Trustees in the Class of 1995, shall be conducted at the April 29th meeting. The Board of Trustees has approved the following nominations:

Officers:

- Joseph F. Cimini, Esq. - President
- George Houck, Esq. - First Vice-President
- Kenneth A. Rhodes, Esq. - Second Vice-President
- Kathleen Keating - Third Vice-President
- M. Constance Sheils - Treasurer
- Peter Moylan - Assistant Treasurer
- Janice Patterson - Secretary

Class of 1995

- George A. Broadbent
- Joseph F. Cimini
- Florence Gillespie
- Willard Henkelman
- Mrs. John Mears, Jr.
- Edward S. Miller
- Peter Moylan
- Mary Mc Nulty
- Mrs. Roswell Patterson

The Lackawanna Historical Society Journal, is published four times a year for the benefit of the Members of the Lackawanna Historical Society. It is produced in house by the staff. Additional materials supplied by Jack Hiddlestone. Any inquiries should be addressed to the Director of the Society. MC.

**1991-1992
STAFF and OFFICERS**

- Maryellen Calemno
Executive Director
- Mary Ann Moran
Administrative Assistant
- Mary Ann Gavern
Museum Receptionist
- Jack & Nancy Hiddlestone
Caretakers

- Joseph F. Cimini, Esq.
President
- George Houck, Esq.
1st Vice President
- Kenneth A. Rhodes, Esq.
2nd Vice President
- Kathleen Keating
3rd Vice President
- M. Constance Sheils
Treasurer
- Mr. Peter Moylan
Assistant Treasurer
- Mrs. Roswell Patterson
Secretary of the Board

Board of Trustees

- Mrs. Frederic Birmingham
- Mr. Norman P. Brauer
- Mr. George A. Broadbent
- Joseph F. Cimini, Esq.
- Mrs. Edgar A. Collins
- Rev. Charles Connor, Ph.D.
- Miss Jane Dakin
- Miss Florence L. Gillespie
- Willard M. Henkelman, Esq.
- Mr. Thomas Horlacher, AIA
- George Houck, Esq.
- Mrs. Kathleen Keating
- Mr. Charles Kumpas
- Mrs. John F. Mears, Jr.
- Mr. Edward S. Miller
- Mr. Peter Moylan
- Mr. William Nasser, Sr.
- Mrs. Russell Ohoro
- Mrs. Roswell Patterson
- Paul H. Price, Esq.
- Kenneth A. Rhodes, Esq.
- Miss Margaret Richards
- M. Constance Sheils
- Miss Marie S. Smith
- Mr. Michael F. Washo

Emeritus

- Miss Margaret S. Briggs
- Mr. Albert F. Fries

and sprocket system that still allowed the rider to achieve a high speed while peddling. With the introduction of these "safeties," that closely resemble today's bicycles, women could now participate in the sport.

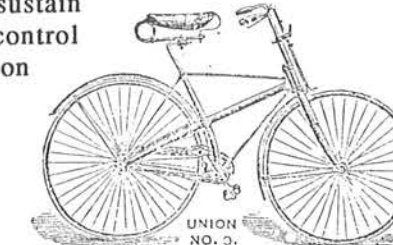
In this country, the popularity of bicycling continued to grow and businessmen predicted that the country was on the verge of an economic collapse due to bicycles. Between 1890

and 1896, Americans spent \$100,000,000 on bicycles. In 1895 the price for a bike was about \$100. Men and women were depriving themselves of necessities in order to own a bicycle. In 1899, 312 factories were producing bicycles, but the demand still outran the supply.

In today's society, almost everyone knows how to ride a bike, but how many of us would have even attempted the feat in the

1880s, when bicycling was seen as more than a recreational activity but as a challenge to the individual who could sustain the balance and control necessary to stay on top of a big-wheeled bike?!

The Historical Society has some early bicycles in its collection, including a Velocipede,



The Safety of Safeties.
The Handsomest and Finest Finished, High-grade Wheel in the market. See it at
422 Lackawanna Avenue.

the "ordinary," and some examples of early "safeties". Come and view this exhibit.

VolunteerCorner

The Lackawanna Historical Society welcomes two new interns from Marywood College, Candice Ciborosky and Joseph Kazmierski. Candice, a Moscow native, is a junior studying Art Administration. She is currently assisting the Director in developing educational programs. Joe, a full-time student pursuing a degree in Advertising/Public Relations, has lived in Scranton all his life. He has been doing some public relations for us as well as helping to produce a new brochure. Both students are doing a great job and we appreciate their time and assistance.

The historical society volunteers have been very active in the last few months. Michael Corbett has assisted

us by keeping the vertical files up-to-date. He spends his volunteer time clipping pertinent information from local newspapers. Jennifer Bauman, a sophomore at the University has been very helpful assisting Mary Ann Moran in organizing the map collection. She has spent several hours cataloging and filing maps.

Judy Donaldson has continued her work indexing the numerous scrap books in our collection. While doing this, she has come across many interesting stories.

Hats off to the fashions committee for most recently cataloging over 100 women's hats. - A special "Happy Birthday" wish is extended to committee member Esther Horger.

MEMORIALS

Memorial donations have been made to the Lackawanna Historical Society in memory of the late **Marion Isaacs**, former long time member of the Board of Trustees of the Society by the following members:

- Mr. and Mrs. Roswell Patterson
- Mrs. H. R. Van Deusen, Jr.

Individuals may make contributions to the Historical Society's Memorial Fund at the Catlin House.

EDUCATIONAL

HISTORI-CITY PROJECT

The Lackawanna Historical Society recently assisted the eighth grade class of St. Mary's School in South Scranton, in a research writing project sponsored by the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce.

The project known as Histori-City which was conceived by Sr. Claire King, required students to develop a project focused on some facet of the city of Scranton's unique history while gaining a knowledge and appreciation as they researched their subjects.

LHS Board member Jane Dakin has been assisting, along with other local professionals, as a writing mentor to the students. Mentors frequently use writing in their jobs and have been corresponding with a student to help them develop their project.

The LHS Director led the students on walking tours throughout the city to acquaint them with the city's early development. The students also toured the Catlin House and learned how to utilize the LHS's library.

We are sure there will be many interesting projects in the future to come from this innovative program.

MINES, MILLS, RAILROADS, & PEOPLE

Mines, Mills Rail Roads and People, is a collaborative educational effort of the Anthracite Heritage Museum, Eckley Miners Village, the Historical Society, the Scranton School System and Steamtown. This curriculum has been geared toward fourth grade level students as a guide to visiting each historic site.

This curriculum is a pilot project. Educators interested in evaluating this guide please contact the Society for a copy. We would be interested in your comments.

WELCOME

The Society wishes to acknowledge the recent visit of Pennsylvania Governor Robert P. Casey to the Historical Society's Catlin House. Scranton natives, Governor Casey and sons unexpectedly visited and took a brief tour of the Catlin House.



LET'S GO FOR A RIDE

Spring is here and soon the neighborhood streets will be busy with children playing and adults trying to get into shape. Sure to be included in these activities is bicycling. Bicycles have been around since the 19th century and through the years they have gone through many changes.

The forerunner to the bicycle first appeared on the scene in 1816, when Baron Von Drais invented a machine to make his job as a landscape gardener easier. It was described as a seat upon two wheels propelled by the rider's feet acting upon the ground in a similar motion to skating. These two-wheeled "walkers" were later called Draisines. With this invention, Von Drais

was able to get around the grounds more quickly.

Over the next forty years many attempts were made to create a machine that could be propelled without having to contact the ground. Finally in the mid-1860's, inventors produced a vehicle that used a system of cranks and pedals to propel the wheels. This velocipede, as it was called, became known as the "boneshaker." Creator,

Pierre Lallement of France met a Mr. Carrol in New Haven, Connecticut, who convinced him to get a patent. Together, they were granted a patent in 1866. At first, the boneshaker was a great success in Amer-

sized wheels of the Boneshaker for a 50-inch front wheel and a backbone that followed the curve of the wheel to a rear fork which held a 14-inch wheel. This style was commonly referred to as the "ordinary"

the bike, was the main reasons why women at this time were excluded from riding. Men saw this risk as an added excitement in that it was a challenge to ride it and not have a "header" occur.

The ordinary reached a height of popularity in the 1880's. People who could not afford a horse and carriage realized that the bicycle was an excellent alternate form of personal transportation. Bicycles at this time were so popular that in most major cities, special clubs were formed. These bicycle clubs were social organizations that planned parades, outings and many other activities. The Scranton Bicycle Club, see photo, was founded in 1881 and lasted for over 50 years. The Scranton Bicycle Club House, located at 545 Washington Avenue, was formally opened on February 25, 1889, with a reception and

dance. On May 2, 1941, it was destroyed by a fire. On a national level, The League of American Wheelmen was formed. This club, boasting to be the "Greatest Athletic Organization in the World" reported over 15,000 members across the nation.

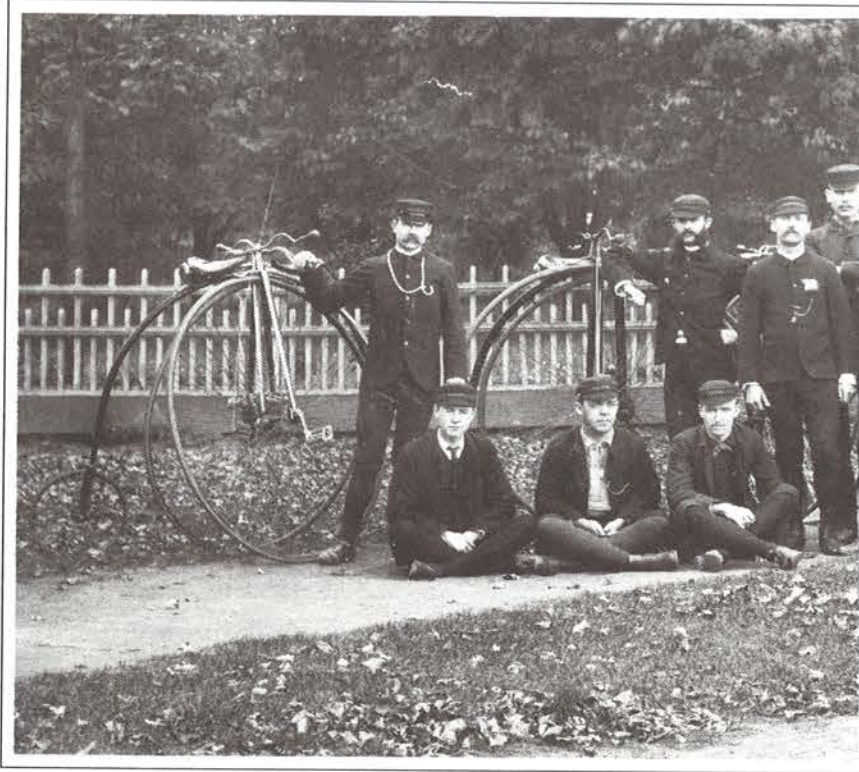
The late 1890's saw the decline of the big-wheeled bikes with the development of a safer version using an effective chain

ica, but its popularity declined due to the fact that it was so heavy and difficult to ride, especially on the very poor road conditions of that time. In fact, by the 1870's, very few were left.

In 1870, the Ariel bicycle was introduced from England. This was the first all-metal bicycle and the first to use tension wheels. The Ariel was also relevant because it abandoned the traditional equal-

because it was the bicycle that was most commonly used. The ordinary was rapidly accepted and enjoyed strong popularity for the next twenty years.

The high wheel of the ordinary, however, was extremely dangerous and caused numerous accidents referred to as "headers." Headers occurred when the rider was thrown forward over the handlebars. This danger, plus the height of



Bicycle Club of Scranton at the corner of Ridge Row and Monroe Avenue. Circa 1880's



Oral History - "primary source material obtained by recording the spoken words- generally by means of planned tape recorded interviews - of persons deemed to harbor hitherto unavailable information worth preserving".
- Louis Starr

This photograph depicts school teachers at Scranton High School in 1900. At this time, women were only employed if single.

IN HER OWN WORDS:

THE WOMAN'S ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OF NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

The Historical Society continues working on "The Women's Oral History Project," which is an attempt to record first hand "life experiences" of older women throughout this region of Northeastern Pennsylvania. The goal is to establish a record and to have a fuller understanding of women and their roles in the history of our communities.

The project was funded in part through a grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission's Local History Grant Support program, and will terminate in June. When completed, this collection of taped recorded interviews will be available to you through our research library.

Thus far we have gathered many fascinating stories from a variety of ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds. We've recorded memories of family traditions and

celebrations, ethnic recipes, home remedies, life on the farm, early working conditions, birth and death, school days, and many, many, humorous and informative stories.

Working closely with the Historical Society on this project has been Rosamond Peck of the Waverly Community House, and Sharon Cardamone. Rosamond's interest in assisting us, stems from another project for the Waverly Community House; a sequel to the book, "The Flavor of Waverly." This book will focus on ethnic traditions, celebrations, and recipes, in an historical context throughout the Anthracite region.

We encourage your participation in helping us establish this collection. Please call the Historical Society at 344-3841, or Rosamond Peck at 587-2616, if you have information to share.

Home Remedies

TO CURE A SORE THROAT:

- take several teaspoons of melted butter and vinegar
- sleep over night with a cold cloth wrapped and pinned around neck
- take one or two tablespoons of turpentine and sugar

"Remedies" come from several women's recollections of their mother's practices.

"Oral History is a very powerful tool for integrating the history of ordinary people into the historical records as we attempt to restore the voices of those we commonly do not hear.

It is important for us today to understand who we are, what we are, where we came from, how and why we came here, and the choices we made and the options we were given.

Through the process of taped interviews, we are now given the opportunity to meet an individual through his or her story. In her own voice, choice of words, inflections and emphases.

Because Oral History relies on the human memory, we must be mindful of the limitations of these recollections as well as the subjectivity of the interviewer and interviewee".

- from a lecture given by Linda Shopes, Associate Historian
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

This article extracted from,

INDUSTRIAL LANDSCAPES: THE ANTHRACITE COAL BREAKER PAINTINGS of John Willard Raught (1857-1931)

by Richard Stanislaus

Scranton landscape painter John Willard Raught wrote in 1922,

"In a short time the (anthracite) coal breaker in this locality will only be a memory." 1

At that time he was sixty-five years old and had been painting the coal processing plants for over a decade at his downtown studio.

While a young man, the painter left his home in Dunmore in pursuit of fine art instruction, first to the National Academy of Design in New York City, then onto the Academie Julian in Paris, France. Completion of studies in a European capitol was an accepted practice of many young Americans who sought artistic training in the late nineteenth century. He was to remain away from the coal regions intermittently for several years. Sometime in 1911, the industrial buildings became subjects of artistic expression for the artist.

He painted the coal breakers during the period in which Scranton was proudly titled, "The Anthracite Capitol of the World." This golden era for hard coal industry was ushered in by the end of the 1902 long strike and the establishment of the anthracite board conciliation.

The coal breaker



buildings were familiar to the artist since he was a youth. (The coal and railroad corporations began erecting them shortly after the civil war.) The Pennsylvania Coal Company in 1866 built the Gypsy Grove Breaker at Dunmore, Raught's hometown. The huge, black, rambling, multi-windowed structures developed as a necessary technological means for processing run-of-mine coal into marketable sizes. The structures were unique to the hard coal region of northeastern Pennsylvania and became prominent features of the landscape during the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Within the massive buildings there existed an elaborate network of chutes, conveyor belts, metal rollers, machinery and picking tables. Young boys and old men were positioned at the chutes and tables to pick out the impu-

rities from the passing streams of sized coal.

Gravity was the manner of conveying the coal through the system and this factor made necessary the lofty height of the building. They appeared everywhere, in the small isolated 'patch' villages and about the city environs. Journalist Rosamond Rhone, visiting the area in 1902 stated,

"The breaker is a feature of the landscape, - its size, its uniform black color, softened to grey by distance; its peculiar shape, unlike any other building in the world, and the long hill of refuse called the culm pile, make it an object that challenges attention." 2

The wooden buildings after years of use, exposure to the elements and accumulated coal dust and oil, became standing flammable kindling. Only

a spark or glowing ember tossed from a passing steam locomotive was necessary to ignite the brittle structure into a blazing inferno. This was the case with the deadly and tragic fire that engulfed the Gypsy Grove Breaker. The event made front page news and the structure was destroyed.

This dramatic event, with the physical loss of so familiar a structure, effected Raught's view of them. He realized that the important and towering structures were not permanent, but rather transitory and vulnerable to destruction. After the loss of the Gypsy Grove breaker he wrote,

"At no distant day the coal breaker will have passed forever-" 3

The burned structures did not pass into complete oblivion. In some instances a corporate deci-

sion called for the continuation of coal processing operations. The remains of the destroyed structure were speedily cleared and a new processing plant built upon the ashes of the old. These new buildings were impressive in design and equipped with the most modern technological coal processing machinery. Their exteriors were different from the earlier structures as Raught noted in 1927,

"Of late years the coal companies are concentrating their efforts on much larger breakers with an enormous output, equal to half a dozen of the older buildings. The immense piles of steel, glass and concrete are vastly different from the old black wooden structures." 4

The artist favored the wooden structures of his youth, with their peculiar design and distinct forms. The variety of erratic forms and huge masses composing the structure, appealed to his artistic sensitivity. He stated,

"The old style (breakers) were more picturesque in outline and in certain light resembled strange, wierd, oriental masses that would puzzle any architect to classify." 5

The nineteenth century buildings trembled while in operation due to the operation of the immense cleaning machinery. This visual, animated characteristic was noted by Raught when he observed the working plants,

"as we pass the huge structures and hear the roar

of machinery and see the clouds of black coal dust pouring from every window and opening, we realize that coal is being prepared for our use by those who are destined for that work,".

In the collection of the Lackawanna Historical Society is a charcoal drawing Raught did in 1927 of an unidentified coal breaker. It is a sensitive rendering in black and white of a nineteenth century industrial structure. A winter snowfall has covered the ground. The artist contrasts the highlights of snow against the dense, penetrating black of the building. The greys of the creek bed serve as a middle ground to balance the soft whites and rich blacks. The coal black structure, lacking detail seems to absorb the light from around it. This graphic illustrates the artist's ability in draftsmanship which he had obtained in the rigorous training at the academy. It is a carefully rendered study done in preparation for an oil painting.

Man is not shown, only the effects of his activity. The giant structure which rises above the landscape is a symbol of a technological system and the means for the processing of an energy source. An insignificant creek, depository for sulfur and acid mine water, appears poisoned and uninviting. The ragged stumps of white pine trees appear as lifeless remains of a once virgin forest.

Clearly, the scene is disturbing for what the artist has depicted. The effects of industrial activ-

ity and its manipulation of natural resources by a technological system is sobering. The coal mining industry extracted and utilized what the land could offer- wood for building, water for processing, and anthracite coal for energy.

Our view is from a distance and we are only spectators of this uninviting scene. This is coal country and the terrain appears dismal and oppressive. Raught acknowledged this condition,

"-yes, there is an air of tragedy always hovering over the coal lands wherever they are located." 7

The painter stopped depicting coal breakers in paintings after 1927 and none appear in his annual April exhibitions after 1926. By then, many of the wooden, nineteenth-century structures had burned and been replaced by newer plants, or simply abandoned. Once symbols of Scranton's industrial rise to world importance, they steadily disappeared with the decline of the Anthracite Coal Industry.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Richard Stanislaus is a Scranton native currently pursuing art historical research on the Anthracite area. He has been a guest lecturer at the Lackawanna Historical Society on several occasions, most recently speaking on "The Anthracite Coal Subjects of George Benjamin Luks."

Individuals with inquiries or relevant information on the subject of John Willard Raught may contact Mr. Stanislaus through the Historical Society - Tuesdays through Fridays 10AM - 5PM

END NOTES

1. Tech Monthly, Scranton, Pa., May, 1922 pg. 6.
2. Rhone, Rosamond, "Anthracite Coal Mines and Mining", Review of Reviews, New York, May, 1902, pg 59.
3. Exhibition catalogue, Anthracite Coal Breakers, by John Willard Raught, October 9, 1911.
4. Raught, John Willard, "The Tragedy of Coal Mining", The Scranton Republican, February 6, 1928, pg.8.
5. Ibid. pg. 8.
6. Tech Monthly, pg. 5.
7. The Tragedy of Coal Mining, pg. 8.