

PROGRAMS & EVENTS

- AUG 6 SOCIETY'S ANNUAL ICE CREAM SOCIAL 2-5PM See p. 7
29 PUBLIC MEETING: THE AGE OF ANTHRACITE 6PM See p. 3
- SEPT HATS OFF TO FASHION: ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF HATS
An exhibition from the Society's collection
- OCT READINGS AT THE U: TIME & DATE TBA
Multi-media presentation focusing around poetry read by native authors
To Benefit "Frogs in the Beer Pail" Documentary Project

THE LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
at THE GEORGE H. CATLIN HOUSE
232 MONROE AVENUE
SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA 18510

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The Catlin House, ca. 1920's

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NEW MEMBERS

Dear Members:

As the Steamtown excursion train blows its whistle this afternoon while passing by the the Catlin House along Ridge Row, I am reminded of the area's illustrious past and the history that we proudly preserve and interpret today through our historic sites.

In this quarter's journal we've reprinted an address by William Withuhn, of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, who we were privileged to have as our guest speaker at the Society's Annual Dinner in May. In his remarks Mr. Withuhn says of the Lackawanna Historical Society, "Among your members, you have the depth of knowledge and enthusiasm for the Valley's history to help broaden the interpretation at Steamtown -- to help the site make the linkages to the rest of the human history that is here.... It is, I think a marvelous opportunity." - I believe Mr. Withuhn it right, it is a marvelous opportunity.

Through the years we've been fortunate to have assisted in the development of Steamtown. We've opened our collections to archeologists, planners, architects and consultants. And, it is most gratifying to see materials, primarily photographs, from the Society's collection, incorporated into permanent exhibits at the Park. Now, visitors from around the globe can also appreciate our collections in a context which makes them far more meaningful. The collections of the Lackawanna Historical Society are invaluable - as evidenced at Steamtown National Historic Site. They exist only through the support of our friends and members. Your support allows us to continue the important work of preserving these collections. So, at this time I wish to express my gratitude to those who contributed to the Society's 1994-95 Campaign which underwrites the cost of archives preservation and special projects of the organization. In addition, my thanks to members who continue to support our heritage through their interest and membership in the Society.

In the future, we will continue to assist and work closely with the newest of our Country's national parks as well as the many historic sites throughout the region. We've come so far, yet, there is so much still to be accomplished. Thank you for making it possible.

Maryellen Calemno, Executive Director

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The Lackawanna Historical Society is a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization which is dedicated to keeping vital the history of Lackawanna County.

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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Caroline Jurosky	Dickson City
George W. Gula	Pittsburg
Msgr. E. Sullivan	Dunmore
Daniel Cotton	Old Lyme, CT
Carmella Todaro	Clarks Summit
Charlotte Tadlock	Richland, WA
Linda Loscig	Lake Ariel
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Barbara Sardella, Esq. & Stephen Barton, Ph.D.	Scranton

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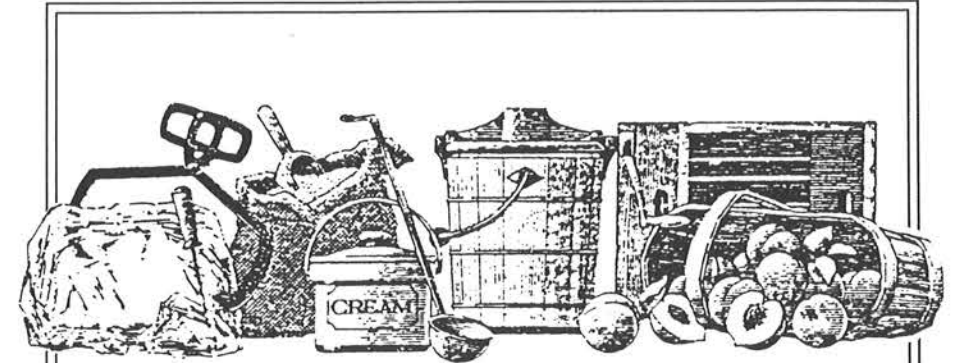
John J. Foley	Scranton
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GIFTS RECEIVED

From Leola Collins to Congratulate Mrs. Susan Robinson
From Leola Collins for the Anniversary of Mr. & Mrs. Edward T. Wells
From Mr. & Mrs. Conrad Bosley for the 50th Anniversary of Mr. & Mrs. Cyril Bosak
From Mr. & Mrs. Conrad Bosley In Memory of Donald J. Fendrick, Esq.
From Central High School Class of 1928

***All contributions to the Lackawanna Historical Society are tax deductible to the fullest extent that the law provides. Memorial contributions are placed within a Memorial Fund which is not used for general operations.*

Thank you.



You're Invited to An Old Fashioned Ice Cream Social August 6th 2 - 5PM Catlin House

- Traditional American Music performed live
- Antique Car Display
- Big Wheel Bicycle Riding
- Old fashioned Frog-Jumping Contest
- Guided Tours of the Catlin House

...and of course lots of homemade Ice Cream & Lemonade

\$3 per person to benefit Archives Preservation Program

Don't miss the Fourth Annual Old Fashioned Ice Cream Social Bring your friends, we need your support!! Call for further details 344-3841.

trains. Future plans call for the railroad crew members at Steamtown to team with the park rangers, to help with the actual interpretation -- to interact directly with visitors, so they can better appreciate railroad work in the steam era. A railroad museum that I know recently completed a survey of its visitors, and it found that 94% of its visitors were not railroad fans at all and had no special interest in the subject. But they were attracted to a high-quality historical experience, and their number-one interest was in what people on the railroad did -- what their jobs were, what the specific skills were in those jobs, and how those jobs related to other jobs. I think the same general finding, about the key interest in jobs, has been true at Lowell and at other industrial history sites across the country.

For many visitors, the human connections can be made personal. Most Americans have a rail-roader somewhere in their family trees -- a parent, a grandparent, or a distant cousin. With a little help from an interpretive ranger, that connection can be illustrated and made personal at Steamtown. Part of one's own family history can come to vivid life here.

People do have an interest in how things work -- how machines work, such as locomotives, and how systems work, such as railroads and textile mills. But an essential truth is that most people are interested in people, not in machines. If one seeks to tell an industrial story, one must tell it in terms of people in order to succeed. At Steamtown -- in its operations and in its two museums -- the accent is on people, and rightly so. The combination of resources at the Steamtown site -- the site defined broadly as I have suggested -- with its ranger-

guided, personal interpretation, its roundhouse activities, its museums, and its trains in the yard and out the line to Moscow, make Steamtown an exemplar as a 'living history' railroad museum and interpretive site, unequaled in the world.

I mentioned train operations as part of the whole, and I think its worth underlining -- Steamtown is not 'just another train ride.' There are, of course, plenty of train rides around for tourists to take. Some of the best are in Pennsylvania: the Strasburg Rail Road near Lancaster, and the New Hope & Ivyland, in Bucks County are two fine operations. The interpreted train ride on Amtrak, between Altoona and Johnstown, guided by National Park Service staff and volunteers from the Allegheny Portage Railroad Historic Site is another. To me, the commercial, tourist-oriented, steam train rides are practically worthless as historical experiences. To borrow a phrase from columnist George Will, most steam-train rides are "all nostalgia and no history." They entertain, but they do not educate. Worse, they often paint a false picture of railroading and its role. At Steamtown, on the other hand, a park ranger accompanies every car, and he or she provides the interpretive context to give the train-ride experience real meaning, by explaining the city-and-town connection and its economic and social importance. At Steamtown, the train ride fits into its broader context -- of the railroad as industrial system -- and thus becomes the capstone experience at the site.

To me, much of the debate about Steamtown in Congress illustrates how backward our nation often is, in things cultural. Elsewhere in the world, and especially in Europe, the 'living history' museums are

well established. In Britain, two of the finest living-history sites are industrial: the Ironbridge Museum near Birmingham, and the Beamish 'open-air' industrial museum near Newcastle. In concept, Steamtown is little different from those well-established cultural sites. Political and business leaders in the US often have trouble understanding that our industrial life is -- profoundly -- a part of our culture, and maybe the most important part.

Steamtown is about to open for full operation, in a little over a month. How can its use as a cultural resource continue to grow and prosper? Along with many in the Park Service, I see partnerships as the answer.

Already, there is a partnership with the Johnson Technical School, which Superintendent Gess sealed, for use of the Steamtown site in training for industrial-museum conservation and restoration. Another partnership with the University of Scranton, for museum- and cultural-resource management training, is also in place. Down the road, Terry tells me that there will be more public-private partnerships, such as for the restoration of individual pieces in the collection. For example, the operating Canadian locomotives can one day be supplemented by restoring one or more of the fine American-built loco-

motives in the collection, through partnership arrangements to secure the needed funding. From what I can see, The July 1st Grand Opening will mark just the beginning in Steamtown's maturity, growth, and enthusiastic acceptance by visitors from across the nation.

I believe that the Lackawanna Historical Society could play a key role in the interpretive use of Steamtown for the public good. Among your members, you have the depth of knowledge and enthusiasm for the Valley's history to help broaden the interpretation at Steamtown -- to help the site make the linkages to the rest of the human history that is here. The railroad is only a part of that history, and Park visitors need to understand the wider context, and to find out about other historical sites, places, and buildings in the Valley. It is, I think, a marvelous opportunity.

And the fight to secure Steamtown's long-range future is far from over. There are those in Congress who still want to see Steamtown fail. Aside from that, federal budget limitations will of course become more stringent, affecting all our cultural sites. Steamtown's long-term future rests with you, and with the citizens of the Lackawanna Valley. Thank you.



Annual Dinner: From left: Terry Gess, Superintendent, Steamtown National Historic Site, guest speaker William Withuhn, Curator of Transportation, Smithsonian, Maryellen Calembo, LHS Director, and Joseph Cimini, Society President.

HAPPENINGS AT THE CATLIN HOUSE



photo: Timothy Butler

update: "Frogs in the Beer Pail"

The first substantial shoot at the end of April included the Huber Breaker in Ashley, the Lackawanna Historical Society and other historically significant locales around Scranton, and the title re-creation scene of two breaker boys slipping a frog into a tipsy miner's lunchpail at Rep's Place on Jackson Street. These clips were edited together as a work-in-progress that was presented at the Historical Society's Annual Dinner in May.

For the past several weeks we have been conducting pre-interviews of men and women throughout the area who remember "when coal was King." Msgr. Hrunuck at S. S. Cyrils's in Olyphant and Tony Koveleski, among others, educated and entertained the crew with their remembrances. Two major shoots are scheduled for August and early September.

We are proud to add Murray Insurance, Gertrude Hawk Chocolates, Munley, Mattisse,

Kelly & Cartwright P.C., The Robert Y. Moffat, Jr. Charitable Trust, BlueCross of NE PA, Dixon Sealer & Supply, Inc., Bloomsburg Metal Co., PDQ Instant Print Center, Inc., and Sne & Sunday to our list of contributors. In addition to local businesses and institutions, many individuals have made Commemorative Contributions to the film in honor of their ancestors and friends who lived and worked in the hard coal region. We have reached the half-way point of the \$93,000 budget, and are continuing fund raising efforts throughout the Valley.

A number of events to benefit and raise the awareness of FROGS are in the planning stages and will be announced in the early fall. Thank you to all of the Lackawanna Historical Society members who have generously contributed their time and expertise, as well as their financial support to the film.

PUBLIC MEETING:

The Age of Anthracite: the Anthracite Coal Resources of Pennsylvania

August 29th - 6PM open reception
7PM presentation

*Hyland Hall, Rm 102 University of Scranton
Hosted by the Lackawanna Historical Society

To further the goals of the "Plan for the Lackawanna Heritage Valley," a cultural resource context/theme study is being developed for Pennsylvania's Anthracite region.

The purpose of this meeting is to inform and to gain public input on preliminary project findings. A half hour slide presentation will highlight significant cultural resource types in the region. A one hour discussion will follow on the cultural resources context/theme study and how the study can be used to provide information and guidance for the identification, evaluation, and designation of cultural resources associated with the Anthracite region.

The study will be prepared according to the National Park Service's Multiple Property Documentation Format and will provide information and guidance for the identification, and designation of cultural resources associated with the theme, "The Age of Anthracite: the Anthracite Coal resources of Pennsylvania." Supported in part by the Architectural Heritage Association, Anthracite Heritage Museum, the Lackawanna Historical Society, and Lackawanna Heritage Valley. For more information, call us at 344-3841.

* Corner of Linden Street and Jefferson Avenue. Parking available at the Elm Park Methodist Church lot on Linden Street, between Jefferson & Madison Aves., across from the church.

CATLIN HOUSE UNDERGOING FACELIFT:

The Catlin House is currently undergoing some much needed repair work. Through the City's Office of Economic and Community Development, the Society received a \$25,000 grant to repair and restore the main porch roof of the Catlin House. Included in the project will be the removal, restoration and some fabrication of custom iron railing along the porch and porch roof. Also, the complete removal and replacement of roof materials including built-in copper gutters. One of the most time consuming jobs will be the hand-crafting of new decorative wooden brackets along the roof-line.

Next time you visit the Catlin House take a good look at the detail of the building - "...they just don't make 'em like they used to."

STEAMTOWN IN CONTEXT:

The Historic Site and Public History

by William Withuhn

Curator of Transportation, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution
Delivered to the Lackawanna Historical Society, May 24, 1995 at the Lackawanna Station Hotel, Scranton.

Thank you for inviting me here tonight. I would like to thank especially Maryellen Calemmo, your Executive Director, and Joe Cimini, your President, for giving me this opportunity. And I'd also like to thank Trustee Alan Sweeney for the hospitality earlier this evening.

Before beginning, let me share something I believe about the importance of local and regional history. Societies such as yours are the very bedrock upon which the documented history of our country is built. In the US, we have no centralized, governmental 'culture authority,' such as in many European countries, to dictate cultural and historical priorities. We depend overwhelmingly on grassroots, home grown efforts, such as those of the Lackawanna Historical Society, to build and care for most of the record of American achievement and growth. From the private society that maintains Mount Vernon, to the volunteer historical group in a prairie town in Kansas, to the various historical groups here in Lackawanna Valley -- America's historical legacy depends on local effort. You should feel proud of what you have accomplished in the last 109 years, and proud of the work and accomplishments that surely lie ahead.

As many of you know, I was an early critic of Steamtown. In my view, its very earliest planning was not well done. But it has now been 9 years since the park's formation, and the Grand Opening is here. The public investment has been made, and the public will

now be accessing the return on that investment. I believe it is time to get on with the business of helping make Steamtown one of the jewels in the National Park Service system.

Two years ago, I began coming up to Steamtown as a volunteer. I came on my own time, at my own expense. I got to know John Latschar, and now Superintendent Terry Gess, Cal Hite, Ella Rayburn, Mark Brennan, Doug Burkhard, and others

"Steamtown is now the premier interpretive site in the country for the interpretation of railroading -- and its meaning to our national heritage."

on the park staff, and I also got to know the volunteers who help make Steamtown run. Before long, I gained a picture of Steamtown that is, I think, better informed than most of Steamtown's critics. I'd like to share some of that picture with you tonight.

First, let me clarify some terms. I promised to talk about 'public history,' so let me explain what I mean by that. To me, the most important thing an historian can do -- any historian -- is to reach the general public. Most good scholars agree. Barbara Tuchman, who wrote The Guns of August and other bestsellers and who was a Smithsonian trustee, is an example of a scholar passionate about public history. Shelby Foote, who

appeared repeatedly in Ken Burns' "Civil War" television series and who provided those gritty insights into the character of the war's leaders, is another. Public history means bringing good scholarship down to earth, making the fruits of historical scholarship accessible to the widest possible audiences. And I would take that a step further: the best public history excites an audience, intrigues people with insights into their own

lives, and gives ordinary people a sense of continuity, renewal, and fresh understanding about themselves.

In the context of public history, I see Steamtown as a national cultural asset. Steamtown is about industrial history, about one of the core industries that built the very basis of our economic livelihood. Steamtown is also about the history of working people and their all-important contribution to our Nation's growth. Steamtown is one of those rare places in this country where the history of working life is interpreted and celebrated on an appropriate scale. For that alone, Steamtown is an important cultural asset. In this country, we in fact do a

very poor job of interpreting and celebrating blue-collar history; by its very nature, Steamtown is now one of the premier places in the country where that can be done.

There has been a lot of debate about whether or not Steamtown is an 'historic site.' Well, of course it is. Scranton was the headquarters-city of one of America's important railroads, and the home of that railroad's main heavy-repair shop complex. Scranton bears the imprint of its railroad era more clearly than most American cities, and a great deal of the railroad's built environment exists. It is nonsense to assert that Scranton is not an historic railroad site, on any measure. It has also been argued that there has been too much change to the site, as if -- to be historic -- an industrial site must stand embalmed from some previous era, unchanged. That argument I also find defective. Industrial sites, before they are anything else, are business assets, and change at such sites is always going on. To argue that there has been 'too much' change at the Scranton site to permit it to be historic betrays a fundamental misunderstanding of industrial reality -- and of industrial history itself.

First and foremost, however, I see Steamtown, today, as an unrivaled interpretive asset for the public. And not just for Scranton ... or for the Northeast ... but for the Nation. Steamtown is now the premier interpretive site in the country for the interpretation of railroading -- and its meaning to our national heritage.

Scranton is one of

the very few cities in the country where the relationships of railroad to city are still visible. A railroad -- or any industry -- does not exist in isolation. A railroad without its connections -- physical connections, social connections, demographic connections -- can't exist. Those interconnections, themselves, I would argue are the heart of the successful interpretation of any industrial site. The buildings, the locomotives and cars, the visitors' experiences at the site -- all are missing their essential meaning without those interconnections.

Let's look at the site in that way. And I don't mean just the site within the official park boundaries. I mean the site in terms of its historic, functional relationships. At Scranton, first of all, you have a medium-size Eastern city with its railroad yard still within the city's core, right by the downtown. That in itself is rare today. Along with the yard, you have one of the finest beaux-arts urban railway stations that still stands, intact. And this station, along with being the city's main travel center, was also the headquarters office for a major railroad company. Across the street from the park boundary is the vast Chamberlain Works, once the central repair shops for that same railroad -- the heart of the railroad's physical plant. From this interrelated core -- of railyard, railroad repair works, and station -- the rail line itself departs. And where does the line go? Into the hinterlands and to a small, rural town ... the most significant kind of connection of all for a railway. When I think about it, I see Scranton as ideal for its interpretive mission -- Scranton has not only a 'site' in the usual, limited sense of that term, but a site-complex ideally composed to tell the real story of the meaning of the



photo: Joe Cimini

railroad in American life.

Scranton has become, for me, an industrial Williamsburg. Scranton's very reason for existence -- its early iron-making, its coal mining, and its railroad -- are still on full view. The city itself is full of buildings that are architectural gems, reflecting Scranton's diverse heritage. The economic and social relationships of Scranton to the small surrounding towns -- such as Moscow -- are apparent. The NPS site is, in reality, a compliment to the history that was already here long before the Park Service came. Williamsburg for its part, is almost entirely a re-creation. Almost no part of its buildings are original. Yet we understand Williamsburg as one of the best places in the country for the understanding of 18th-century life. Steamtown is now a place where we can go to understand 20th-century life -- in its complex industrial and relational reality.

So what can you, here in Scranton, make of this unparalleled national asset for public history? There are some historical themes which I believe tie the Steamtown site and the region together, themes

which the Park Service staff, under chief interpreter Doug Burkhard, is already working on, and themes which many of you have thought of, as well. Let me review a few of them.

The tight relationship between the railroad and the coal industry is, of course, a central theme. Railroads move people and goods -- and the 'goods' that Scranton's railroads moved, before all else, was coal. That relationship, then, goes on to explain the patterns of human migration in this region. The immigration and settlement of this region is, to me, the most important story of all. I have a whole lecture on the 19th- and 20th-centuries as comprising one of the primary agents by which we became the diverse nation we are today. There could be no better example than the migration history of Scranton, and the Lackawanna Valley, to illustrate our country's cultural diversity, and the role railroads played.

I spoke earlier about 'blue-collar' history. That is where Steamtown can be as good, or better than, any other museum or historic site in the land. The Park Service already has some stellar industrial

historic sites, including the Lowell Mills National Historic Site in Lowell, Massachusetts, and the Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site, near Boston. The working lives of textile workers are especially well treated at Lowell. In addition, the Park Service has two other railroad historic sites: the Golden Spike National Historic Site at Promontory, Utah, and the Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site -- where a railroad first crossed the Alleghenies -- near Altoona. Both these sites have developed into first-class interpretive sites for the public.

But Steamtown can be not only first-class. It can be world-class. I already spoke of the relational interconnections between city, railroad complex, and country town that distinguish this site. In addition to understanding those, visitors to Steamtown can see real railroad jobs being performed, with all the skill that has always characterized railroad work. Visitors can safely tour a working roundhouse, and see locomotives being serviced. And people can see, first-hand and up close, real railroad jobs being performed on the