

PROGRAMS & EVENTS

- SEPT. 23/27 CEMETERY LECTURE AND TOUR
LECTURE BY MINISINK VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY DIRECTOR: SEPT. 23, CATLIN HOUSE 7:00 PM
TOUR: SEPT. 27, DUNMORE CEMETERY 2:00 PM
- OCT. 18 THE ITALIAN COMMUNITY IN SCRANTON IN THE 1890'S
PRESENTED BY UNIVERSITY OF SCRANTON HISTORY PROFESSOR, WILLIAM PARENTE, PH. D.
CATLIN HOUSE 2:00 PM
- 23 WINE TASTING DINNER CALL THE SOCIETY FOR DETAILS
- NOV. 22 TOUR OF COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CELEBRATION OF ITS 150TH ANNIVERSARY 2:00 PM
- DEC. 2 THE ART OF THE HANDMADE WINDSOR CHAIR
PRESENTED BY FREDERICK B. DUCKLOE
CATLIN HOUSE 7:00 PM
- 5 DECORATION DAY AT THE CATLIN HOUSE
JOIN STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS AS WE DECK THE HALLS AND TRIM THE TREE.
9:00 AM TO NOON
- 10/11 HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE
MEMBERS ONLY NIGHT: DEC. 10 OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: DEC. 11
CATLIN HOUSE 6:30 PM TO 8:30 PM

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

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The History of Graveyards and Cemeteries in America

On Sunday, September 27 at 2:00 pm, the Society will present its annual tour of the Dunmore Cemetery. Back by popular demand, the tour will feature a look at the gravesites of some well known Lackawanna County residents and city founders. This year, the Society will also focus gravestone art and symbols. As a preview to the tour, a slide lecture: *Silent Cities: The History of Graveyards and Cemeteries in America* will be presented by Minisink Valley Historical Society Director, Stephen Osborne on Wednesday, September 23 at 7:00 pm at the Catlin House. Mr. Osborne's program will tell the story of how graveyards and cemeteries developed in America, from simple family plots to the cemeteries like the Hillside Cemetery in Middletown, New York and the Laurel Grove Cemetery in Port Jervis.

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Happenings

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*The
Last Vicissitude*

Remembering
the Hotel Casey
- part two

6

Grants



Windsor Chair Raffle

In August, the Society began a raffle to raise funds to make much needed repairs to the Catlin House. To date the project has raised over \$2500.

With such a great response, the Society has decided to feature Frederick Duckloe Jr., of Frederick Duckloe & Bros. Inc. to present a program to our members on Wednesday, December 2 at 7pm.

Frederick Duckloe & Bros., Inc. was founded in 1859 when master craftsman Frederick Duckloe fashioned by his own hands the spokes, rims, hubs, frame and the entire carcass of his first passenger carriage. After several years of filling demands for his carriage customers, Duckloe began to manufacture Windsor

Chairs from available sketches and drawings of the great English masters. Soon the chairs replaced his carriage sales.

By the 1900's his skills were employed in the restoration of many foreign Windsor Chairs and settees, and he began to train his only son, W. J. Duckloe, to assist him in the craft.

In 1938, Frederick Duckloe, W.J.'s first son, moved full time to his father's shop, and by the 1950's had established a staff of wood workers who specialized in the making of Windsor Chairs and settees.

Today, the 139 year tradition of handcrafted furniture manufacturing continues as private and commercial customers continue to request a favorite chair or settee for exact duplication.

The raffle drawing is scheduled for December 11th at the Catlin House and tickets continue to sell fast. Members who does not wish to purchase or sell the tickets that were sent to them should return them to the Catlin House so that they can be sold.

Support the Lackawanna Historical Society while you learn more about antiques.

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Yes, I would like 16 issues of The New York-Pennsylvania Collector for only \$21!

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The Lackawanna Historical Society 1998-99

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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. It is supported in part by the Catlin Memorial Trust, Lackawanna County, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, and membership dues.

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At the Book Store **

Don't miss these new titles for sale!

From Scranton the Cadosia...
Along the NYO&W Ry. Co.
by Stephen Marder. 1998\$25.00

Toponyms and Trivia
of Northeastern Pennsylvania
by Tom Klopfer. 1998.....\$10.00

These popular items are still available.

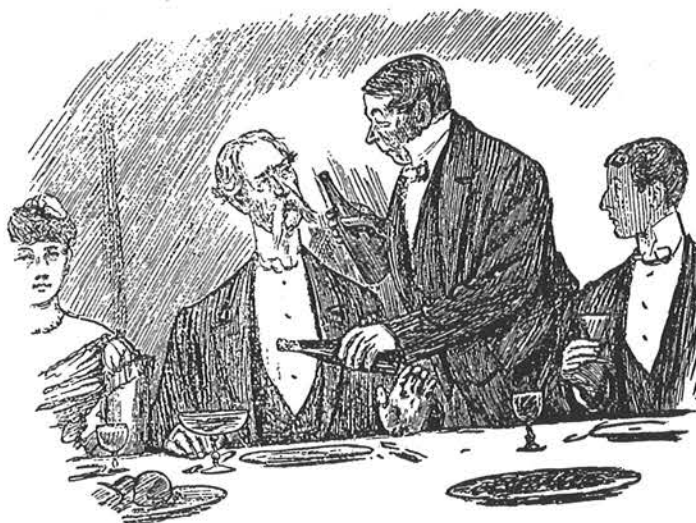
Wish You Were Here... A Picture Postcard
History of Lackawanna County
by Maryellen Calemno & Jack Hiddlestone.
1998.....\$22.95

Anthracite Traction Video.....\$39.95

Looking for something completely different?

Promenade Patterns - a pattern of a 1912
evening gown modeled after one in the
Society's collection.....\$30.00

** The prices listed above are the non-member cost. Members receive 10% off all items for sale. Call or write to the Society to receive a complete list of items for sale and an order form. Please note that tax is not included on prices listed above.



Wine Tasting Dinner

On October 23, 1998 the Lackawanna Historical Society will host a wine tasting and dinner at the Scranton Country Club. Wine will be provided courtesy of California's Chalon Winery. The cost of the dinner is \$90 per person and space is limited to 48 guests. Interested members should call the Society for additional details.

Dance Hall Days

The following is a list of Dance Hall Rules taken from the 1923 Scranton Times Almanac. They were adopted at the Conference of Council of Church Women with Scranton City Officials on Dec. 11, 1923.

- Young women who dance with each other will be closely watched. Any suggestive dancing on their part, in order to attract attention will be cause for removal from hall.
- Men are not allowed to dance with each other.
- Cheek-to-cheek dancing prohibited.
- Dancing in one spot forbidden; dance in the line of direction
- All suggestive dancing, hugging, etc. during dances prohibited.
- Young men and women will not demonstrate any signs of affection during intermission, such as placing of arms around those standing close by, sitting on laps, etc.
- All dance halls shall be brightly illuminated at all times.
- Possession of intoxicating liquors in any dance hall shall be cause for removal from hall.
- Attendance of disorderly persons, procurers, or persons known to be immoral by the person in charge of police department, is prohibited.

Welcome New Members

Individual

Mary Carruthers	Scranton
Muriel Devereaux	Scranton
Julie Esty	Scranton
Donald J. Fredrickson	Moosic
Yvette M. Gaynon	Scranton
John Gianacopoulos	Scranton
Joan Glowinski	Scranton
Linda L. Jewett	Columbus, OH
Marie J. Kaneski	Scranton
Rev. Michael Kerwin	Old Forge
Michael Lucas	Dunmore
Jean Duffy Makai	N. Collins, NY
Madeline Sallis	East Aurora NY
Isadore Steckel	Scranton
Anita L. Traber	Eldersburg, MD

Family

Mr. & Mrs. Michael Bufalino	Scranton
Catherine Chamoni	Scranton
Mr. & Mrs. Louis DeNaples	Dunmore
Martha Rodney	Moscow

Contributing

Cemetery Association of Dunmore	Dunmore
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REMINDER: Please note that any 1997 memberships that are not renewed by September 30, 1998 will be removed from the Society's mailing list after that date.

when the old copper cornice was removed, exposing the steel framework beneath it. Pieces of the cornice had been falling for years. A large section was missing along the building's Adams Avenue front.

In the early 1990's a few last studies were done in hopes of returning the hotel to its former glory. These too failed, and the Casey sank further into decay. The last restoration estimates were in excess of \$15,000,000. In 1997, a site plan of a different type was proposed. Sentry III, a development group, announced plans to demolish the hotel, along with four neighboring buildings on the block, to build the "Scranton Hotel and Conference Center." Banners, heralding the end of the great hotel were suspended over Lackawanna Avenue. The end seemed at hand.

In February, 1998, an engineering survey found that the building's upper floors had deteriorated to

the point that the steel superstructure was no longer stable. A strong wind or heavy snowfall, according to the report, could bring the building down. Now, in its 87th year, the old Hotel Casey waits patiently for the wrecking ball.

Today, this great hotel, which for so long was the jewel of the Scranton skyline, sits in ruins. Its last guest has long since departed. The last meal was served years ago. The great public rooms lie in total darkness. Penetrating the once awe-inspiring space has been likened to exploring the *Titanic*. It is difficult to imagine that only 37 years ago, it seemed as though the Hotel Casey would stand forever. It is almost impossible to picture throngs of people being turned away because every room was booked. One can scarcely conceive that a crowd ever filled the bar, let alone one four rows deep as was often the case. "When the hotel first opened," the

Tribune reported, "a newspaper had this to say, 'An epoch in hotel designing has been set by the Casey Hotel. It is a 20th Century product. The present owners are hopeful that epoch extends into the 21st Century and beyond.'" A year later, "the present owners" ended a 51-year legacy with their hotel.

The Casey was the embodiment of this city. To many thousands of travelers, the Casey was Scranton. The Casey played host to athletes from Babe Ruth to Lou Gehrig; entertainers from George Burns and Gracie Allen to Bud Abbott and Lou Costello; band leaders and musicians from Glenn Miller and Vaughn Monroe to Rudy Vallee and Nat King Cole; politicians from Jimmy Walker and Gifford Pinchot to Harry Truman and John Fitzgerald Kennedy. Samuel Gompers, Eleanor Roosevelt, Will Rogers, Eddie Rickenbacker, Hubert Humphrey, The list of no-

tables who stayed at the Casey could easily fill several pages.

And so the Hotel Casey still stands. The letters "HC" still adorn the masonry at the ninth floor. Atop the building, the letters, "Casey" still proclaim to all the valley the name of those ambitious Irish immigrants who gave Scranton half its gateway. The late afternoon sunlight sometimes reflects off the empty neon tubes, giving the illusion that the sign is lit once again. But the sun sets, and the glass tubes fall dark once more. With the Casey, Scranton will lose a great memorial of its best days. To Scrantonians, it is as much a family heirloom as mother's wedding gown. Let us look to it now as a teacher. From its doomed walls, we can learn a valuable lesson. We must remember the Casey when the next historic building begins its descent to oblivion. Then the destruction of this irreplaceable relic of our past be justified.

HAPPENINGS AT THE CATLIN HOUSE

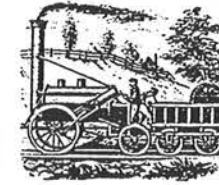
RESEARCH AT THE CATLIN HOUSE

In July, the Society welcomed Roger and Angela Tiley to the Catlin House. The Tiley's were visiting from Wales to conduct research on a photographic publication of Welsh interests. Their main interest was to learn about some of the current activities of Scranton's Welsh. LHS members who can offer them any assistance are asked to write to them at:

Roger and Angela Tiley
Celynen de Ynys Uchaf
Ystradgynlais
Swansea Valley SA91RP
Wales, UK

SOCIETY COLLECTION TO BE FEATURED AT SYMPOSIUM

On November 7, 1998, the D&H Transportation Heritage Council will host a celebration and symposium to mark the 100th Anniversary of the Delaware and Hudson Company at Hunts landing in Matamoras, PA. Among the presenters will be Michael Kneis of the University of Scranton. Mr. Kneis will discuss the Lackawanna Historical Society's James



research purposes. The Symposium will feature several presentations throughout the day, and a schedule of planned events can be obtained by contacting Peter Osborne at the Minisink Valley Historical Society (914) 856-2375.

BULLY FOR SCRANTON

Actor John Davidson recently contacted the Lackawanna Historical Society to discuss his upcoming performance at the Scranton Cultural Center in *Bully!*, *An Adventure with Teddy Roosevelt*, a play by Jerome Alden. Mr. Davidson said that "playing Teddy Roosevelt . . . is more fun than I ever had on stage" and is sure that the Society's members will be entertained and inspired. The event is scheduled for November 5-8, 1998.

Grants Awarded

The Lackawanna Historical Society received \$5000 in August from the Margaret Briggs Foundation to complete a Library Improvement Project. The funds will be used to install better lighting and ventilation systems, purchase additional storage units and continue organization and conservation of the collections through a book rebinding project.

In August, The Society also received a matching grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and from the Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority for the manufacture of two missing historical markers in Lackawanna County noting the Pennsylvania Gravity Railroad and the Delaware and Hudson Gravity Railroad.

The Italian Community in Scranton during the 1890's

On Sunday, October 18th at 2 pm, the Society will present a lecture on the Italians in Scranton by Professor William Parente, Department of Political Science at the University of Scranton. In the year 1890, the city of Scranton had an Italian population of seven. By the 1900 census, the Italian population of the city had grown to 1,312. Professor Parente will look at the fortunes of this community during this decade and the attitudes of non-Italians in the community towards the newcomers.

Volunteer Corner

We Love a Parade!

The Lackawanna Historical Society was represented in August at the Moscow Country Fair Parade by volunteers, Michael Bufalino, Bridget Conlogue, Doug Forrer and Mark Cruciani. They were driven in a 1929 Model A car belonging to Frank Regan. The Society was honored with First Place in the Judges Award.

Watch for us in March at the St. Patrick's Day parade.

New Faces

The Society welcomes new volunteers Lindsay Brown, Joan Caffrey and Barbara Spott.

Lindsay, a junior at Scranton High School first learned about the Society as a Penn Serve volunteer at our annual dinner in May. She has been working with LHS tour guides to learn the ropes and will be guiding

tours this fall.

Barbara and Joan, both Marywood graduates who taught in the Scranton School District, are assisting the staff with filing.

Tours, Tours, Tours

Society tour guides Michael Bufalino, Rita MacNamara, Leo Walsh, Doug Forrer, Ann Marie O'Hara, Marion Dunleavy, and Mark Cruciani were busy this summer conducting weekly tours of Court House Square. The tours were given every Saturday. The Society will continue to offer the tours to pre-scheduled groups throughout the fall. Thanks to all who participated.

This fall, the Society will be offering costumed tours of the Catlin House to interested school groups and social organizations. To find out more, call the Society.

RECENT DONATIONS

The Historical Society has recently received a portrait of Charles S. Weston, painted by Niccolo Cortiglia from the Windsor Studio in 1935. It can now be seen on exhibit at the Catlin House.

Charles S. Weston was born on August 25, 1860 in Carbondale, Pennsylvania to Edward W. and Susan Moore Weston. His paternal grandfather was Jason Torrey from Honesdale.

The family relocated when Charles was still a child to Providence. Charles attended Scranton Public schools and the Granville Military Academy. In 1882, he graduated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute with an engineering degree, taking on the profession of his father and grandfather. When he returned to Scranton, he was elected an officer of Company H, Thirteenth Regiment.

In 1883, Weston entered the Engineering department of the Delaware

and Hudson Canal Co. He quickly moved up in the company to become Assistant General Agent of Real Estate. In 1888, he took over his father's position as General Agent of all Delaware and Hudson Real Estate.

C. S. Weston also replaced his father on the board of the First National Bank of Scranton. Edward W. Weston was one of the original organizers of the bank and acted as the bank's third President before his death in 1891. C.S. continued to follow in his father's footsteps when he succeeded him as President of the Northern Coal and Iron Company, a Delaware and Hudson company which controlled coal production under Scranton. It was said that "The Weston Association with the Delaware and Hudson . . . goes back in practically an unbroken line to within a decade and a half or so of the founding of the road, a record which it is doubtful can be equalled by any other family."

C.S. married Grace Storrs on September 2, 1881. She was the daughter of W.R. Storrs, General Coal Agent of the Delaware Lackawanna and Western Railroad Company. The Westons resided at 420 Monroe Avenue and had no children.

C.S. was interested in recreation and acted as director of the National Recreation Association. He presented a thirteen acre tract of land with improvements to the city of Scranton, today known as Weston Field. One year later, C.S. and his sister, Mrs. Caroline Bird donated the field house, and ten years later, they provided

C.S. remained in the employment of the Delaware and Hudson for twenty-two years, leaving in 1904 to pursue other business interests.

In 1905, Weston was elected a director of the First National Bank of Scranton and preceded James A. Linen as president of the bank in 1913. He held the position for twenty-three years and then became chairman of the board until he retired in 1936.

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\$150,000 for an addition. Upon the death of Mrs. Bird, C.S. established another recreation area in North Scranton on the property of the House of the Good Shepherd, known today as Weston Park.

C.S. Weston's other business interests included the Chamber of Commerce, the Community Chest, the Scranton Lace Curtain Co., the International Correspondence Schools, the Kanawha and West Virginia Railroad Company, the Cherry River Boom and Lumber Company, and the Country Club of Scranton.

Grace Storrs Weston died March 20, 1946 at Moses Taylor Hospital. C.S. passed away at home on October 13, 1947. Since they had no children, the remainder of the estate went to Mrs. Weston's niece, Janet Littel. They are buried at the Dunmore Cemetery. Mr. Charles S. Weston will be best remembered as a banker and philanthropist in his city of Scranton.

-- by Alan Sweeney

The Last Vicissitude

Part 2

The Summer newsletter contained the first half of an article on the Hotel Casey written by Tom Rinaldi, a University of Scranton student. Mr. Rinaldi's article continues in this issue with an account of the Hotel's final years and its closing:

In 1934, P.J. Casey passed away, marking yet another sad moment in the history of the grand Hotel Casey. While both founders were now gone, the hotel would continue to stand as a monument to their grand ambition. P.J.'s eldest son, Joseph G. Casey, took over the presidency, insuring the future of the dynasty, but the Casey's best days had already come and gone.

Even as the great hotel celebrated its silver anniversary in 1936, business at the Casey was post-peak. At one time, the hotel relied on the Lackawanna Railroad for 95% of its business. By the thirties, the automobile had begun its assault on passenger trains. This, combined with the greatest depression in American history, did not work wonders for the hotel's business.

Still any decline in business was far from notable. The 25th anniversary banquet was celebrated with a highly optimistic spirit. Over 500 people attended. Speakers from the Pennsylvania Hotel Association hailed the grand hotel, which, they said, was still ranked with the country's best. The Hotel Casey, said the Association's president, was a nationally recognized tribute to the House of Casey.

In 1938, the cafe/grill was extensively remodeled. It was redecorated with an oval bar in the center of the room, and a night club atmosphere now prevailed. While the room's new art deco lines contrasted sharply with the rest of the Hotel's Edwardian splendor, it was still a handsome space, and

would remain popular for years to come. In the same year, the cafeteria that had 19 years before replaced the Baronial Palm Court was now replaced with a coffee shop. Change in decor was minimal here. The 1930's also saw the hotel's largest function ever--2,400 people were somehow served at one time. It was also around this time that pre-recorded music replaced the live string ensemble that played in the Dining Room.

In 1947, to combat old age and the rise in popularity of the "motor-inn," the Hotel Casey underwent a \$1,000,000 renovation. Every bathroom was completely re-done. Radios and televisions were added to the rooms, as well as air-conditioning. New entrance marquees were installed, creating more of the discordant modernization seen in the bar. Perhaps the most notable toll of this renovation was the "rebuilding" of the lobby. The atrium was closed off to allow for the expansion of the banquet hall, which became the "Crystal Ballroom." The front desk was replaced, while arched doors and windows in the ballroom were "modernized," or eliminated. While this renovation facilitated the installation of some much-needed updating, it also meant that the most dramatic feature of the hotel--its sky-lit rotunda--was destroyed. While the lobby failed in comparison with its former glory, it still remained an impressive room.

In 1956, Joseph G. Casey died, and P.J.'s son Eugene took the presidency. Meanwhile, Eugene's brother Al was named treasurer. A.J.'s daughter Mary Pauline Casey had served as first Vice President for some time, and another of P.J. Sons, Jerome P. Casey, served as chairman of the board. As the Hotel Casey approached its golden jubilee, it seemed there were more Caseys aboard than

ever.

As the Casey's 50th anniversary neared, the air filled with excitement of the kind of celebration not seen since the hotel's opening in 1911. The Casey's semi-centennial was, after all, something to celebrate. Not only had the hotel served Scranton for 50 years, but it had done so under the same ownership. Scrantonians, virtually all of whom had had at least one occasion to visit the hotel, were anxious to show their appreciation for so many years of faithful service from their proud gateway. The treasured reception from 1911 would be replicated.

The Hotel Casey's golden anniversary celebration was scheduled for Tuesday, January 31, 1961. Some idea of the scale of this celebration can be gained simply from the newspaper coverage of the event. The *Scranton Tribune* devoted the better part of five full pages to the Casey in its January 31st edition. The *Scranton Times* devoted six full pages to the Casey in the previous day's edition. Of course, text alone did not fill these pages. Advertisements wishing the Casey well on the occasion of its golden anniversary had been taken out by almost every business in the city.

Perhaps the general tone of these advertisements was best expressed by the one issued by the Hotel Jermyn:

Congratulations, Hotel Casey, on your fiftieth! We are proud to have been with you all the way! It is typical of you, Hotel Casey, that while thousands of our citizens are looking back today over your tremendous first fifty years of success, you are much more interested in the 60's ahead! We at the Jermyn wish you well and promise we'll be right with you in always providing Scranton with the two fine hotels the city deserves! The Jermyn had celebrated its fiftieth several years ear-

lier.

More than 600 attended the gala banquet, at which C.J. Neal Mack, President of the American Hotel Association was principal speaker. Preceding the dinner was a cocktail hour in the "Gold Room," as the hotel's dining room was now called. "Last night's gala," said the *Scranton Times*, "was one of the most glittering social events of this or any other year and probable matched in splendor and feeling the celebration that touched off by the opening of the hotel back [on] Jan. 21, 1911." Flowers sent by well wishers filled the lobby. Richard Nixon, a recent guest at the Casey, was among the many to send telegrams of congratulations.

A prominent place in the minds and hearts of all was reserved for the founders, A.J. and P.J. "I am thinking of how proud A.J. and P.J. would be if they were here today," said Scranton Mayor James T. Hanlon. He went on to express his wish that the Caseys "be here on the 100th anniversary." Eugene Casey was presented with a plaque, wishing the Caseys continued success and a long life in "our friendly city."

In his "thank you" speech, Eugene Casey remarked that the great turnout for the Hotel Casey was yet another tribute to his father and uncle. The Casey seemed to be at the pinnacle of its career. Everyone, it seemed, fully expected their children to one day attend the centennial celebration in that same great banquet hall. When the Casey opened, its motto, "Per Varios Casus," had been translated from Latin to "Through Many Changes." No one read into Eugene Casey's reinterpretation of the motto as meaning "Through Many Difficulties." No one suspected that this glorious reception would in actuality mark the beginning of the end. It was to be the Hotel Casey's last hurrah.

In March of 1962, just over a year later, the Caseys announced the sale of the hotel to Benjamin Minsky, of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, for almost \$900,000. Negotiations had continued in the hotel's executive offices until the later hours of the previous night. Rising costs and falling business had taken its toll. After the deal with Minsky fell through, the Caseys worked out a second arrangement that summer, this time with Lloyd Rackmill of Milford, Pennsylvania. Rackmill did his best to keep the hotel running as it always had, keeping the "Hotel Casey" name and retaining Eugene Casey as its manager until 1965, when Rackmill himself took over the position.

In 1968, Rackmill abandoned his attempt to make the hotel a success. Control of the building, but not ownership, was transferred to Mr. Albert Soma. But Soma's best efforts could not save the hotel either. On July 8, 1969, the Philadelphia Life Insurance Company ordered the hotel's bar and restaurant to cease operations for lack of payment on the mortgage. Several days later, the Hotel Casey took its last "transient" guest. The end came on July 17, 1969, when Philadelphia Life foreclosed, and some 40 permanent guests were told to seek lodging elsewhere. For the first time in 58 years, the doors of the Casey were closed. Special locks had to be fabricated--the keys had been thrown away when the hotel opened in 1911.

On Thursday, August 21, 1969, a sheriff's sale was held in the lofty main lobby. When selling the hotel's contents in separate lots proved not to garner the desired bids, it was decided to sell all of the hotel's furnishings as one lot. The sale price amounted to \$55,000. The buyer was Philadelphia Life, the insurance company that had seized the hotel the previous month, seeking \$228,000 from owner

Rackmill. Rackmill also owed \$126,000 in back taxes.

The Hotel's future looked grim. Business just wasn't what it had been. The last passenger train would roll through Scranton on January 5, 1970. With it, a service that once provided 95% of the Casey's guests would disappear. The headline of the August 23, 1969 *Scranton Times* labeled the Casey's "Possibility of Reopening Remote." The hotel's assistant manager, Michael Angelisanti, was as pessimistic as anyone: "Whatever people suggested, we tried. We reopened the Gold Room, we put back the dinner music. But the people who made the suggestions never appeared. We tried. Oh, how we tried. I even got out there and washed every window myself--also the marquees. But it was no use. I doubt if it will ever be used as a hotel again."

One of the men who expressed interest in the now vacant hotel was Joseph A. Petriello of Dunmore. He owned the Laurel Hill Nursing Home, and expressed interest in using the hotel as another home for the elderly. Then, in early November, 1969, Petriello cofounded the prophets. With Albert Frangell and Samuel Scrimalli, both of Scranton, Petriello formed the Aljosam Corporation, which made a lease/purchase agreement with Philadelphia Life. A purchase price of \$425,000 was agreed upon for the future. They immediately announced their intention to reopen the grand hotel to serve, by and large, its original purpose. Retaining the Casey name, the new owners simply moved the giant letters "CASEY" from the bottom to the top of the huge neon sign that had replaced the older incandescent ones some years before. Beneath "Casey" were affixed the letters "INN."

Their plans were to transform the Casey into a modern inn. They worked towards those ends. A second \$1,000,000 renovation

was begun. The restaurant and lounge were reopened, as were 50 rooms. Their long term goal was to convert three floors into "ultra-modern" apartments, and then to redecorate and open the remaining 200 rooms. It was estimated that when in full swing, the Casey Inn would employ 40 to 50 full time employees, a far cry from the 200 who found work there 60 years earlier.

The Casey's new career as an "modern inn" had just taken off when a fire that started in the ball room made an ominous mark on the building's future. Although damage was minimal, this was not good for business. In 1972, the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick, an organization whose annual banquet had been held at the Casey for decades, and that had once attracted Robert F. Kennedy as main speaker, moved their function to the newly constructed St. Mary's Center. By the mid-1970's, the oval bar, which had for a time been known as the "coal mine cafe," was turned into the Mai King Chinese Restaurant. The room's 1938 decor was left intact. It was in this old bar that political fortunes were said to have been made and broken. Some referred to it as the Democratic Party headquarters. Each year on Holy Saturday, a crowd that had given up alcohol for Lent would gather in the bar to count down the seconds until Noon, when together they would dive off the wagon. The hotel soon reopened most of its rooms and for a time, it appeared as though the Aljosam Corp. had done the impossible. But their efforts too would fall apart.

As the Casey neared its 70th birthday, Aljosam began to run out of steam. In 1980, 100 permanent guests were asked to leave. Then, in June of 1982, the 60 remaining guests were notified that the hotel would close in thirty days. With it would go the Parisian Coffee Shop (originally the Baronial Palm Court) and the

Mai King Restaurant. Citing the rising cost of heat and utilities, as well as several mortgages and \$350,000 owed in back taxes, Petriello said that he could no longer keep the business going. On July 7, 1982, after 71 years of almost continuous operation, the Casey closed its doors for the last time. The city of Scranton had seized the building. Sixteen years of limbo and uncertainty lay ahead.

After the Casey was seized, its owners gutted the entire building in an attempt to pay the overdue taxes. Great chandeliers were removed from the ball room, and furniture and kitchen equipment were sold. Plumbing fixtures were also removed, often destroying the walls to reach the old copper pipes. The hotel was then left to waste. On New Year's Eve, 1983, a \$13,000,000 renovation of the former Lackawanna Railroad Station was completed; the Casey's former counterpart took its place as Scranton's foremost hostelry. The Casey was officially dethroned.

Proposals continued to be made for the building's future. Some suggested simply reopening, while others suggested using the building as a motor lodge. Still others proposed converting the Casey into office space. Ideas also included using the building for condominiums, or subsidized housing. In the late 1980's, the University of Scranton even considered converting the former hotel into a giant dormitory. But none of these ideas materialized. As windows were broken, and the roof began to leak, the hotel's old plaster ornamentation quickly deteriorated and fell to the floor.

In 1992, the city spent \$12,000 to have the rotting structure secured against intruders. Part of the sidewalk was closed off, and all accessible entrances were sealed. The greatest humiliation to the once grand hotel came later that year,