

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

Closed:
Sunday & Monday

VOL. 2 — NO. 3

The LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Bulletin

January - February 1968



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

RING IN THE NEW!

Well, a new year is upon us, and you will soon get used to the idea, after a few times of writing 1967, instead of 1968. This seems like an appropriate time (at least it does to the Editor, who is quite bereft of other ideas.) to delve into the pages of yesterday's newspapers for some random extractions.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 1, 1868 (SCRANTON MORNING REPUBLICAN)

"The idea of making the rounds of one's acquaintances on the first day of the year—brushing up old friendships, giving token of a continuance of kindly feeling during the opening twelvemonth, exchanging congratulations or condolences over the events of the year just closed—is certainly one conceived in a good spirit and deserving continuance.

"Let the New Year's calls be kept up then! Let Young America don his glossiest broadcloth and beaver, and sport the handsomest of horses and sleighs. Let the fair young citizenesses proffer the choicest cakes and their most exquisite—cold water, and smile their sweetest on the callers. So shall this our American custom be honored and perpetuated."

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1, 1899 (SCRANTON REPUBLICAN)

"A blinding snow storm and a chilling blast heralded the last but one of the years of the Nineteenth century. Owing to the inclement weather, the attendance at the various old year gatherings was not large. The leading event of this kind was the organ recital at Elm Park church, given by Mr. J. Alfred Pennington, assisted by Miss Magdalen Perry, contralto, and a selected chorus."

TUESDAY, JANUARY 1, 1901 (SCRANTON REPUBLICAN)

"A reception that was overwhelmingly enthusiastic was given the new century in Scranton. New Year's demonstrations are not lacking in enthusiasm, but the demonstration of last night 'capped the climax' and eclipsed those of previous years in the Electric City. Judging from the street scenes but few boys were in the arms of Morpheus. Steam whistles vied with each other in speeding the old and welcoming the New Year.

"Church bells furnished an accompaniment which, at least, was refreshing amid the din and tumult. All the locomotives and stationary engines within the city limits joined in the chorus which was maintained with vigor for fully 25 minutes."

SATURDAY, JANUARY 1, 1910 (SCRANTON REPUBLICAN)

"The night was cold and sharp. It was mighty good sleighing, and everybody one met was trotting along at a reasonable gait, and greetings were generally shouted on the fly, as it were.

"The big social event of the year took place last night at the Lyceum, where the Bachelors held forth and to the gliding of the dancers was the old ushered out and the new ushered in.

"There were comparatively few on the streets of the central city, and were it not for the tooting of automobiles, the Bumperknickle band, and the young people tooting horns, one would hardly realize that it was New Year's Eve."

J. D. Williams' Restaurant at 111-117 North Washington Avenue served New Year's Day dinner at the fantastic price of seventy-five cents per plate. And this included music by Bauer's Orchestra!

Vaudeville was available at the Poli Theatre and the Academy of Music.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 1, 1918 (SCRANTON TIMES)

Nearly 1,600 people attended the New Year's Eve Charity Ball at the Armory. It was for the benefit of the American Red Cross.

"So that the guests would not in the brilliancy of the party entirely forget the object behind it, kindly in itself but made necessary only by the grimness of war, the flags of the allies hung draped at the rear of the ballroom.

"Here and there, too, among the dancers, were to be seen the uniforms of Uncle Sam's Army and Navy."

MONDAY, JANUARY 1, 1923 (SCRANTON TIMES)

The Times listed as the biggest event of 1922 the opening of the Lackawanna Trail, a new highway from Clark's Summit to New Milford, which followed an abandoned roadbed of the Lackawanna Railroad. In the early 1920's a popular auto trip was one that went to Nicholson to see the Tunkhannock Viaduct.

The Times described the Lackawanna Trail as "... a road that took three years to build, but which is now one of the most scenic highways in the world. It should yearly attract thousands of tourists to this section."

No one talks about the Lackawanna Trail now. It has been superseded by Interstate Highway 81.

The movies were popular in 1923. The Strand featured Harold Lloyd in "Grandma's Boy." Mabel Normand was in "Molly O" at the State, and Tom Mix in "Arabia" at the Regent. Vaudeville was in its heyday at the Poli and the Capitol. Burlesque was available at the Majestic.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 1, 1929
(SCRANTON TIMES)

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was inaugurated as governor of New York State, succeeding Alfred E. Smith.

Calvin Coolidge was in the White House. This was the year that he said, "I do not choose to run."

The James K. Thatcher Players (a repertory company) were at the Academy in "The Trial of Mary Dugan."

Films featured "synchronized sound," and the movies were about ready to become the "talkies." The Riviera (now the Center Theatre) featured a short subject that was to become historic. It was Walt Disney's first animated cartoon, "Steamboat Willie." Willie was a cute little rodent who later became world-popular as Mickey Mouse.

Events often make liars of editors. Among other things the Times editorial said, "American business men say that the greatest of all periods of good times is immediately ahead."

The loud noise that was heard some months later was the Stock Market crashing!

MONDAY, JANUARY 1, 1934
(SCRANTON TIMES)

Stanley J. Davis was inaugurated as the 21st mayor of Scranton. New faces on the City Council were those of John B. Rader, Peter J. O'Donnell, and Russell Armbruster.

The Volstead Act (Prohibition) which ostensibly kept America dry for a 13-year period, was repealed in 1933. This factor had something to do with causing spirits to be raised on New Year's Eve.

"Cradled to the song, 'Happy Days Are Here Again,' the new year bounced into life last night. Legal liquor flowed as in the days of old, and the din created by whistles, horns, and canon was the most powerful in many years.

"Not since the new year welcome of 1920 was there a more general reception to the new year than last night. Champagne, wines, fancy drinks, and beer were consumed openly for the first time since that year."

FRIDAY, JANUARY 1, 1937
(SCRANTON TIMES)

"The coming out party of Miss 1937, who made her debut amid most auspicious hopes for her future, was attended by more merrymakers than the city has mustered at a New Year's Eve celebration at any period since the depression struck the nation. There were signs aplenty that old-time prosperity, if not actually here, is on the way."

A popular feature of the Times in 1937 was O. O. McIntyre's syndicated column, "New York, Day by Day."

As you bitterly complain about 1968's food prices, reflect sadly on the fact that in 1937 chuck roast was 19¢ per pound, eggs were 39¢ a dozen, and bread was 8¢ a loaf!

A VANISHED LANDMARK

For a number of years an imposing mansion stood on a hillside on Poplar Street, between Clay and North Webster Avenues. Because of its lofty situation and its equally lofty facade, it became a landmark in the area. People called it the "Bell Mansion," and assumed that it was extremely old. Actually, it was not old, as such structures go, nor was it properly named.

The stone edifice was built in 1909 by Mr. Frank Carlucci, a mason-contractor. Mr. Carlucci lived in it for four years and then sold it to a stock broker, Mr. P. F. Cusick, who lived there with his sister, Elizabeth, and her husband, Mr. James F. Bell. In 1944 the home was vacated. As time went on, and no new owner appeared upon the scene, vandals began their systematic forays upon the place. When it was razed a few weeks ago, a mere shell was all that remained of what once had been a noble and stately residence.

FEBRUARY MEETING

In the 1920's and 30's the most popular portable musical instrument was the ukulele. This small, wooden instrument, which looked like a midget guitar, was a familiar part of parties and picnics, and traveled well in rowboats and canoes. Most sheet music of the day contained ukulele chords, and when a group of young people gathered around a piano to sing, the chances are that someone in the group strummed a ukulele. In the early days of radio, one of the most popular performers was May Singhi Breen, who was known as "The Ukulele Lady."

Today, with the exception of the Arthur Godfrey program, the ukulele is seldom heard. This sad situation will be rectified to some extent on Wednesday, February 28, when we will present Mr. Anthony Kovaleski in a program called "Ukulele Ramblings." Mr. Kovaleski is one of the most accomplished ukulele virtuosos in the country. His program should be both interesting and unique.

TRUSTEES MEETING

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Lackawanna Historical Society will be held at Catlin House on Wednesday, February 21, at 4:00 P.M. Mr. William L. Connell, Jr., president of the Historical Society, will preside.

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 56
Scranton, Pa.

LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CATLIN HOUSE

232 MONROE AVENUE
SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA 18510