

Upcoming Programs and Events

- September 9/10** **Petersburg Church Chronicles**
7 p.m. Myrtle Street United Methodist Church *Tickets: \$10 (See page 4)*
- September 22** **Annual Dinner**
A Musical Tribute to Ned Washington
6 p.m. Radisson Lackawanna Station Hotel *Reservations Required: \$30*
- October 3** **On Doing Local History Well**
Lecture by Carol Kammen, Cornell University
2 p.m. Catlin House
- October 24** **Dunmore Cemetery Tour**
2 p.m. *This year includes special guest appearances!*
- November 13** **Regional Book Fair**
11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Lackawanna County Visitors Center *Details TBA*

July 31, Aug. 14 & 28, and Sept. 11 & 25 **Courthouse Square Tours**
11 a.m. at the Columbus Monument, Washington Ave. and Spruce St., *donation: \$2*

Aug. 7 & 21, Sept. 4 & 18, and Oct. 2 **Downtown Walking Tours**
11 a.m. at Lackawanna College, Washington Ave. and Vine St., *donation: \$2*

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #56
SCRANTON, PA

LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
332 MONROE AVENUE
SCRANTON, PA 18510

The Little Favorite By Anna Davidson Lewis

A very special picture now graces the walls of the Silkman House in the Providence section of Scranton. It is the likeness of Master Bertram Silkman, son of Henry C. and Frances Gardner Silkman of Lake Henry and Scranton.

In early March of 1875, Bertie's parents made the decision to send him to the fine classical school, Gilbertsville Academy & Collegiate Institute, in Gilbertsville, New York—about a hundred miles from their home in Scranton. Bertie would be in the company there of two slightly older friends from Providence—Henry B. and William B. Rockwell—who were also students at the same school. Within two weeks of his arrival, Bertie became gravely ill with scarlet fever. As his condition continued to worsen, his parents rushed to his bedside and were with him when he died on Sunday, March 28, 1875. Bertie was nine years and twenty-three days old.

Three Scranton newspapers carried accounts of Bertie's death and of his Memorial Service. One obituary follows:

Very many of our readers who are wont to frequent the halls of the Wyoming House will remember a bright eyed little fellow about nine years old, whose quick perception attracted all who met him. This was Bertie Silkman—only son of Mr. H. C. Silkman—whose death is recorded under our obituary head this morning. He died yesterday of scarlet fever at Gilbertsville, Otsego Co., N.Y., whither he went only two weeks ago to attend school. Mr. and Mrs. Silkman went to him on Friday, were with him when he died and the remains will arrive here with them this afternoon. The time of the funeral will be announced tomorrow.

The Morning Republican added:
His little playmates will be startled at the very sad news, for he was a favorite, so robust and hearty and full of life and fun.

Bertie's Memorial Service was conducted by his pastor, A.A. Marple, from the home of his uncle, William M. Silkman, on Penn Avenue in Scranton. "The mourned little favorite" - as the newspaper called Bertie - was buried high on a hillside in the Dunmore Cemetery, alongside his grandfather William Silkman whom Bertie out-lived by a year.

One hundred twenty-nine years have passed, since Bertie's untimely death. About three years ago, G.W.

Beardsley, a native of New Berlin, N.Y., sat in his Colorado law office scanning the daily offerings on E-Bay. New Berlin is near Gilbertsville in New York State, and Bertie's sepia picture and obituary immediately caught Attorney Beardsley's attention.



He quickly sent an email, explaining his discovery, to Mrs. Leigh Eckmair, Historian and Archivist of the Gilbertsville Free Library, who, in turn, expressed great interest in having a copy of the treasured find, thinking that purchasing the original from the dealer might be beyond the resources available to the Library. The antique dealer who had posted Bertie's picture on E-Bay was Mr. Larry Norton of Bedford, Texas. Upon hearing of Gilbertsville Academy & Collegiate Institute, and of the interest in Bertie's picture in Gilbertsville, Mr. Norton sent the obituary and picture as a gift to the Library. In the package was a note saying, "This little boy needs to be closer to home."

Before many days passed, Mrs. Eckmair called a friend in Scranton,

In Memoriam
LHS Member Leaves Lasting Legacy

Society member Martha Bartron Holman died on March 25, 2004. A member since 1980, Mrs. Holman devoted many hours to tracing her family history and provided the Society's library with much of her research. We are grateful for her contributions and extend our sincerest sympathy to her family.

Memorial Contributions have been received by the Lackawanna Historical Society in memory of Martha Bartron Holman from Margaret Abraham, Peggy L. Bankowski, Mary B. Dailey, Pat and Don Dogmantis, Mrs. John Hein, Rose Kirkovsky, Sally Matteo, The Miles Family, Daniel and Thipwimon Morgan, Sarah Polizzi, The Price Family, The Reynolds Family, Stephen M. and Debra Vidumsky, Goldy E. Weller, Sue Youtz, and Capital Blue Cross Activities Association Members: Beth Burdick, Robin Burke, Marcia Freed, Mary Leberknight, Michele Lebo, Brooke Nordai, Marie Ronas and Stacy Pritchard

Society Loses a Dear Friend

On June 15, 2004 the Society lost a dedicated member and a true friend with the untimely passing of John O'Hara. John was an active member of the Society for many years and chaired the extremely successful Roof Restoration Campaign in 2001.



A well known leader in the region, he served our community in many ways and was always willing to lend his support and share his talents. He will be greatly missed.

Memorial Contributions have been received in memory of John O'Hara from Barbara Mears, William I. Pentecost, Ella Rayburn, and the Sweeney family.

About Memorial Gifts to the Society

Contributions to the Lackawanna Historical Society in the name of individuals are placed in a Memorial Fund and are not used for general operations. If you would like to make a contribution to the Society in the name of an individual, please send your check payable to the Society including name and address of person(s) for whom memorial is made. All contributions to the Lackawanna Historical Society are tax deductible to the fullest extent that the law provides.

The Lackawanna Historical Society 2004-05

OFFICERS
 Alan Sweeney President
 Richard Bovard 1st Vice President
 Eileen Pocius 2nd Vice President
 Douglas Forrer Treasurer
 Mark Cruciani Assistant Treasurer
 Arlene Devereaux O'Hara Secretary

TRUSTEES
 Ellie Axford
 Richard Bovard
 Laurie Cadden Foley
 Joseph F. Cimini, Esq.
 Mark Cruciani
 Douglas Forrer, CPA
 Marc Fournier
 Donald Frederickson, Esq.
 Thomas Horlacher, AIA
 Kathleen Keating
 Richard Leonori, AIA
 Arlene Devereaux O'Hara
 Eileen Pocius
 Paul H. Price, Esq.
 Ella S. Rayburn
 Elaine Shepard
 Alan Sweeney

EMERITUS
 Leola Collins
 Joseph Levy
 Barbara Mears
 Edward Miller
 William Pentecost

STAFF
 Mary Ann Moran Executive Director
 Mary Ann Gavern Museum Assistant
 Marian Yevics Receptionist
 James Gavern Caretaker

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.

The Lackawanna Historical Society Journal is published by the Lackawanna Historical Society, 232 Monroe Avenue, Scranton, PA 18510 Tel. (570) 344-3841.

Members of the Society receive this publication. Membership contributions are \$22 and up for individuals, \$30 for Families, and \$125 for organizations. Special Silver and Gold Corporate memberships are available.

The Lackawanna Historical Society Journal is printed in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Entire contents copyrighted © 2004 by the Lackawanna Historical Society. Questions or comments can be addressed in writing directly to the Society.

Continued from page 1

requesting more information about Bertram Silkman. The Silkmans had come to America from Germany in 1740, and Bertram was the sixth generation of his family to call this country their homeland. Bertie was born in 1866, the first child of his parents, who lost an infant son in 1867, and an infant daughter in 1868. Bertram was their only surviving child, and held all his parents' love and hopes. They desired only the best for him, which is why they endured the personal pain and sacrifice of sending him away to the best of schools for his life preparation. As Saint Paul said so well, in our inadequate mortality, we are able to see only "through a glass, darkly." Oh, the grief!

Deilsie Heath Kulesa, who works with the Lackawanna River Corridor Association, with offices on the second floor of the Silkman House at 2006 North Main Avenue in Scranton, wants Bertie to be even nearer home. Delsie has facilitated the hanging of Bertie's picture in the hall of the Silkman House in Providence.

Bertie may have been the child who, with the sharp end of a compass or with a ring, scratched the word "Silkman" on the glass window in the tiny playroom upstairs in the Silkman House. Or, the signature may have been executed by Bertie's father, or one of his aunts or uncles—for these are the only persons who ever found haven in this house as children. Whatever the case, Bertie knew well the place where his picture now rests.

Welcome back, dear Bertie. Welcome back into your grandfather's home.

Crossing Sullivan's Trail 225 Years Later

Residents of eastern Pennsylvania may have heard of Sullivan's March, but very few know the detail about this astonishing Revolutionary War event. On August 28-29, 2004 that will change when a partnership between Luzerne County Historical Society and the Luzerne County Convention & Visitors Bureau will host an eye-opening bus tour to commemorate the 225th anniversary of General Sullivan's March. The tour seeks to give a historically accurate and politically inclusive overview of the events of the Revolutionary War campaign, and is the result of an unprecedented, regional collaboration of historical societies, visitors bureaus, heritage regions, and many other organizations along the eastern length of what came to be known as "Sullivan's Trail."

Tickets for the two day event and additional information can be obtained by calling project coordinator, Kim Glemboski at (570) 942-4656

Barbara Mears Appointed Trustee Emeritus



At the June 9th Trustee's Meeting, the Board regretfully accepted the resignation of Barbara Mears. Upon receiving her resignation, Mrs. Mears was unanimously elected Trustee Emeritus in gratitude for her years of service as a dedicated member since 1983 and Trustee since 1986.

About Membership:

Membership privileges include unlimited access to the Society library, 10% discount in our bookstore, advance notice and invitations to all Society activities, special members-only programs and the quarterly newsletter.

Please use the form below to renew your membership or give to a friend or neighbor who is interested in joining. Please return it to:

The Lackawanna Historical Society
232 Monroe Avenue, Scranton, PA 18510

LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

- Student \$10
- Individual \$22
- Family \$30
- Contributing \$75
- Sustaining \$150
- Silver Corporate \$250
- Gold Corporate \$500

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE _____



Tell us what you think...

In our last newsletter, we asked our members if they knew anything about a marker discovered in Dickson City. Mr. William I. Pentecost responded by sending our query to his daughter, Mrs. Ann Woodland who lives in Lancaster. Mrs. Woodland guessed that the marker may have come from a local brick yard. At her current residence, there is a brick marked WOODLAND in her front walkway. Mr. Pentecost also informed us that the Senior Mr. Woodland came

to Scranton from Virginia and is buried in Dunmore Cemetery. All Woodland descendants left the Scranton area so there are no local Woodlands still living here.

Did you know...

From our article on Captain Johnston Blakely, LHS member Joe Caterina noted that a small engraving of the captain hangs in the entrance foyer of Springwood, the home of Franklin D. Roosevelt in Hyde Park, NY. On your next trip to Hyde Park, check it out!

Another mystery...

In June the Society received interesting inquiry from Mr. Jack Hirschler who is searching for issues of the old Scranton newspaper, "The Scranton Sun" from 1929 to 1932. If anyone can assist him in locating this newspaper, please contact the Society at 344-3841.

vision of the 109th Commander by the name of Willard D. Brown, effectively and bravely leading the men on a battle-scarred field in France mounted on a gray mare horse. Undoubtedly, Brown and his mount made a lasting impression on those who witnessed the great spectacle.

After the Great War ended in a triumphant conclusion for the allies, and upon the return of the gallant 109th to Scranton and other communities of Northeastern Pennsylvania, the exuberant citizens found themselves singing the words to "The Old Gray Mare" as the local soldiers marched in victory parades. Almost from its inception, the 109th Infantry Regiment has carried the designation: "The Old Gray Regiment." Army Regulation AA 220-305 provided for this honored designation.

The spirited history of the 109th Infantry Regiment is one of unwavering honor, bravery, and hard earned distinction. Initially, this unit was the 13th Regiment, which was the Scranton City Guard. Its first call to federal service came during the Spanish-American War. The unit was activated

for a period of six months but served its tour in the United States. Some years later, it once again was summoned to another call to arms. This occurred when they responded to President Wilson's call to duty during the Mexican Border Campaign in 1916. Along with the other 75,000 National Guard Troops that came from different parts of the United States, the mission of the 13th was to help quell the border raids that were being instigated by the infamous "Pancho Villa". War with Mexico at the time was averted primarily because of the bitter and costly struggle that was being waged in Europe. It was during that Border Campaign that the spirit of "The Old Gray Mare" gave rise to its humble and fledgling beginnings. In addition, at the conclusion to this military operation, the 13th Regiment evolved into the 109th Infantry. There was an interlude of peace, but world events eroded and as a result, a World War erupted. This was in 1914. President Wilson was able to keep us out of the fray... at least for a while. Unwittingly in 1917, Americans were drawn into the war.

To be continued in next issue

**Windsor
Chair Raffle
with a
twist...
or should we
say "rock"!**



Yes, the Society is once again offering its members a chance to win a hand crafted Windsor Chair but this year, it's a rocking chair. Tickets were mailed in July and returns have been pouring in!

The winners will be announced at the December 3rd Holiday Open House. Additional tickets are on sale until the Open House and we have also added some very interesting 2nd and 3rd prizes so be sure to purchase your tickets soon.

SCRANTON-MADE GUN DONATED BY CALIFORNIA OWNER

By Society Collections Committee Chairperson, Ella S. Rayburn

This past winter William Manly of Santa Rosa, CA, donated a circa 1870 muzzle loading cased rifle made by Scranton



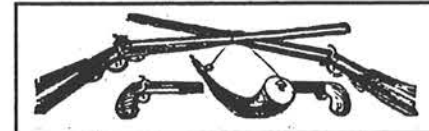
gun maker Luther W. Tisel. Manly is breaking up his gun collection and returning several guns to their point of origin. Although guns made by Tisel do exist, they are somewhat rare and the Society did not have one.

Used for target shooting, this gun comes apart; the barrel separates from the stock and lock for storage and transportation. All parts of the gun slip into a fitted case made of pine and lined with rose-colored velvet. After 125 years, this rifle is in fine condition with even accessories still in the case: false muzzle, ramrod, nipple wrench, and peep sight. Target rifles were made individually with the gunsmith following his own designs. The breech of the Society's newly acquired gun is stamped "L. W. Tisel, Scranton, Pa."

Luther W. Tisel, born July 25, 1829 in Lake Ariel, Wayne

County, first appears in the Scranton City Directories in 1861 with his job listed as a machinist. He disappears until 1867. By 1870 he had built a home at 925 Slocum Alley and lived there with his wife, Anna, and children, Theodore, Jennie, Frank, and Arthur. He died February 19, 1906 and was buried in Washburn Cemetery. Sons Frank and Arthur intermittently worked in their father's business but neither went into gunsmithing.

Tisel moved his gun shop sev-



eral times but was always just off Lackawanna Avenue's commercial district. The addresses were: 104 Penn, 112 Franklin, 120 Franklin, 118 Franklin, and 92 S. Wyoming. His advertisement in the 1880 City Directory read: "L. W. Tisel, Manufacturer and Dealer in Guns, Pistols, Ammunition, etc. Repairing of all kinds promptly attended to and satisfaction guaranteed." Under the text was a drawing of a pair of crossed rifles with a powder horn hanging by a strap from the rifles' cross point and a pair of pistols were placed one of each side of the powder horn.

The gun muzzle is stamped "Recut by John Gardner." Gardner was a contemporary of Tisel and maintained a gunsmith shop in the same section of the

business district. The stamping indicates that Gardner sharpened the worn rifling to improve the accuracy after some period of use. Stamped with both Tisel's and Gardner's name, the gun was worked on by both of Scranton's gunsmiths. When Bill Manly contacted the Lackawanna Historical Society, we had little available information. Dave Westpfahl and Chuck Coccodrilli were of immediate assistance, both are local collectors and knowledgeable in county history. When initially contacted and asked about Tisel and the opportunity to acquire the target rifle, Mr. Westpfahl responded succinctly, "Grab it." He then contacted Mr. Coccodrilli who provided a more detailed opinion. Photographs of the gun and case were the final piece to confirm the Scranton connection of this nineteenth century firearm. Although we have more information about Luther Tisel, and even John Gardner, than when this offer was first extended, the Society is always looking for additional sources and additional information.

New Members

Individual

James Dougher, Scranton
John Dziak, Pittston
Mrs. Alfred Golo, Scranton
Christopher Graff, Moosic
Linda Koons, Clarks Summit
Cynthia Marturano, Taylor

Family

Mr./Mrs. Robert Bonczek, Clarks Summit
Mr./Mrs. Hans Burchardt, Clarks Summit
Mr./Mrs. James DeStefano, Scranton
Mrs. Michael Germano, Jr., Dunmore
Mr./Mrs. Michael Germano, III, Dunmore
Charles Maden, Covina, CA



What's New at the Catlin House

Society receives Moffat Grant

The Society is pleased to report that on May 25th we received a grant in the amount of \$10,000 from the Robert Y. Moffat Family Charitable Trust for general operating support. This funding will assist us in continuing our mission to promote and preserve local history through our programs and activities. We are extremely grateful to the Moffat Family for their interest and support.

Walking Tours Scheduled

On July 17th, the Society began offering tours of Scranton's Court House Square and the Downtown on alternating Saturdays. Tours begin at 11:00 a.m. and upcoming dates are:

Courthouse Square:	Downtown:
July 31,	Aug. 7 & 21,
Aug. 14 & 28,	Sept. 4 & 18,
Sept. 11 & 25	Oct. 2

Don't miss this exciting opportunity to learn more about local history!

Volunteer Corner

Welcome to Melissa Bertha. Melissa is a Scranton High School student who first learned about the LHS when she worked with her teacher Joe Paradise on our educational garden project a few years ago. She is volunteering three days a week this summer at the Catlin House to increase her community service activities. Melissa's other interests include music and soccer and she is also letting her hair grow to donate it to Locks of Love. We are grateful to Melissa for her time and interest and commend her for her dedication to serving the community.

Welcome also to Ann Marie Tulley who's been sprucing up the Catlin House gardens. Ann Marie, an LHS member since 2002, approached the Society director at this year's Taste of History to offer her time and talents to improve our gardens. If you haven't been at the Catlin House, be sure to stop by to check out her fine work!

Busy Season at the Catlin House

This Spring and Summer were jam-packed with exciting activities: *The Taste of History*, *Dunmore Cemetery: Under the Lackawanna Moon*, *Scranton Dines at Gemma's Back Door*, *The Petersburg Church Chronicles*, *Baseball Night with the Red Barons*, and an evening performance by the *Crystal Band*. These were all very successful and we are grateful to everyone involved in planning and thank all who participated.



The premier of *Dunmore Cemetery: Under the Lackawanna Moon* was a tremendous success. 500 people attended the play and were so impressed with its professionalism that we have had numerous requests for additional dates. We are pleased to announce that we will be meeting with playwright and director, Nancy Hasty soon to schedule more performances! We will keep you posted as plans develop. View photos of the June performance at www.dunmorecemetery.com.

In the meantime, be sure to attend Part Three of the *Petersburg Church Chronicles* on September 9th and 10th at Myrtle Street United Methodist Church. Tickets are on sale now at the Catlin House, Petersburg Churches, and the East Scranton Branch of Penn Security Bank. Call 342-9101 for additional details.

Fall Events Scheduled

We have some great things planned this Fall including the Annual Dinner on September 22nd with a musical tribute to Scranton's own Ned Washington and a regional Book Fair on November 13th. As a lead-in to the Book Fair we have invited Carol Kammen, Senior Lecturer in History at Cornell University to present *On Doing Local History Well* on October 3rd. Details will be announced soon.

"The Old Gray Mare"

by Sgt. Daniel Goldek (Retired), 109th Infantry and 103rd Armor
Pennsylvania Army National Guard

Recently, Society Treasurer Doug Forrer was asked if he knew anything about "The Old Gray Mare". He responded by asking if they were referring to the Historical Society's Executive Director! After a somewhat awkward moment, the Executive Director explained to him that "The Old Gray Mare" was actually the official marching song of the 109th Infantry Regiment. To further explain the history of this song and its relationship to the 109th, the Society is pleased to print part one of an article written by Member Dan Glodek.

What member of the 109th Infantry Regiment, both past and present, has not marched with a proud and lively cadence to the strains of their official marching song: "The Old Gray Mare"? The origin and history of this stirring tune dates back several generations and has a fond and strong affiliation with our local guardsmen. The legacy behind this lively march is unique and fascinating. One would naturally assume that the basis of this initially evolved around a revered and legendary mascot, but surprisingly, that was not the case. It has nothing to do with that what-so-ever.

The introduction and use of "The Old Gray Mare" came into being during the Mexican Border Campaign prior to our involvement in World War One. At that time, the 13th Regiment was stationed at Camp Stewart which was located in El Paso, Texas. During that tour of duty, for some strange reason or another, the army in its infinite wisdom, issued the men of the unit an assortment of musical instruments along with some band equipment. However no provisions were made to recruit some experienced musicians. This could have developed into a frustrating and insurmountable hurdle, but this was an example of where improvisation and field expediency came into play. Meeting the awesome challenge, a "makeshift" band was organized through the efforts of a Lieutenant Hayes.

According to the story, the regimental officers pooled their money, "chipped in", and were successful in collecting enough funds to obtain some sheet music that was purchased from the Panella Music House that was located in Pitts-

burgh, Pennsylvania. With the receipt of the music, the "makeshift" and fledging band was ready to take its first, uncertain and wobbly steps. The mission, challenge and responsibility was delegated to Sergeant Peter F. Samony. Hayes became his willing and able assistant.

Needless to say, this was truly a tough assignment. Due to the apparent lack of proficiency on the part of the amateur and inexperienced bandsmen, the only tune that they were able to master to an appreciable degree was "The Old Gray Mare." The original song was based on an old African American spiritual in which the first line read: "The old gray mare came tearin' out of the wilderness." This spiritual was included in Carl Sandburg's "Song Book." The version of the song that gained popularity was written in 1915 and was copyrighted in the same year by the Panella Music Company.

After much practice and more improvisation, the regimental band began to perform at various functions such as parades, concerts, and a host of other military gatherings. Before long, "The Old Gray Mare" became an integral part of their repertoire, and it became very popular among the men of the Regiment.

The history of this march coincides with that of the 109th Infantry of the 28th Division. In September of 1917, the tune was played as the units reveille march. A short time afterward, it became the unofficial marching song. During the annual encampment at Mt. Gretna in 1923, the 28th Division was reorganized. It was at that time that Brigadier General Edward Martin made a suggestion to the Regimental Commander (Colonel Robert M. Vale) to the effect that an official marching song should be adopted. In response, "The Old Gray Mare" was proposed and ultimately accepted. Ever since then, "the Mare" earned a legendary and traditional Affiliation with the 109th Infantry of Northeastern Pennsylvania.

During the crucial and tenuous days of World War One, an awe-inspiring incident took place that enhanced and perpetuated the legend of the march. This was the stirring and exemplary