

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

Closed:
Sunday & Monday

Vol. 3 No. 2

The LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Bulletin

November - December 1968



RAILROAD TREASURES IN THE SOCIETY LIBRARY

Members of the Lackawanna Historical Society are already well acquainted with the fine quality and the broad range of memorabilia at the Catlin House. But how many are aware of the small, growing and superb library that is available to them there?

Four of the relatively new books are of particular interest to the railroad buff -- and, for that matter, to the amateur historian, to the nostalgic old-timer and to the curious youngster.

An important part of the Scranton economy in the latter part of the 19th century was the Dickson Manufacturing Company, producer of heavy-duty locomotives. Founded in 1856, the Dickson Company constructed about 500 locomotives in all, with half ordered for the anthracite coal traffic. Built for hard usage, the engines were used by the D&H Canal Company's Railroad, the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western Railroad, and the New York, Ontario and Western Railroads.

Plants of the Dickson Company were located in both Scranton and Wilkes-Barre, but the main foundry and offices were in Scranton, on Penn Avenue, extending to the corner of Vine Street -- where they may still be seen. When the company incorporated in 1862, it employed 150, had a monthly payroll of \$7,500, melted three tons of iron daily, and had annual sales of \$200,000. Within three years both the number of employees and the sales had tripled. In 1883, sales reached \$1,400,000 and 25 tons of pig iron were heated daily.

This information is compiled in Gerald M. Best's *Locomotives of the Dickson Manufacturing Co.*, published in a limited edition of 1,000 in 1966 by California Golden West Books. Mr. Best presents a complete roster of the locomotives built by the company between 1862 and 1902, and there are numerous full-page sketches of locomotives made by the Dickson Company.

Delaware & Hudson by Jim Shaughnessy, published in 1967 by Howell-North Books, is a profusely illustrated and detailed history of the remarkable railroad which had imported the Stourbridge Lion, the first steam locomotive in the United States; had transported anthracite out of the hard coal regions to major distribution centers; had carried vacationers on its Steamers at Saratoga Springs and Lake Champlain in those golden, romantic days. Mr. Shaughnessy has also included in this monumental volume a complete roster of D & H locomotives used from 1951 to 1967.

It is also of interest to Society members that Mr. Shaughnessy has made use of photographs and sketches selected from Manville Wakefield's book, *Coal Boats to Tidewater*. Mr. Wakefield was a featured speaker at a Society meeting last year when he discussed his own book in depth.

Wheels Across America by Clarence P. Hornung, published in 1959 with a 3rd printing in 1962 by A. S. Barnes & Co. encompasses more than a history of trains. Mr. Hornung goes into horse-drawn carriages, bicycles (unicycles

and tricycles), cars and anything and everything else that utilized wheels for transportation. The collection of sketches and photographs is so profuse that one can capture the image of an era just by looking. The discomforts of early rail travel are depicted as graphically as the lavish luxury of the later-day parlor car and the private rail car. The history of this country--social, economic, and political--is interwoven in the history of transportation. Pangs of nostalgia hit you hard in this publication.

Lance Phillips has brought together in one immense volume, *Yonder Comes the Train*, published in 1965 by A. S. Barnes and Co. a remarkable compilation of the history of the steam engine abroad and in the United States, and the growth of early roads in this country.

One incident Mr. Barnes cited has much local color and concerns a "wheezing engine," "Old Puff," built in 1836 for the Ithaca & Owego. The 27 mile run from Ithaca to Owego was supposed to take four hours, but Old Puff made it on time on only three occasions. The last time she was actually ten minutes ahead. "She must have been in fine fettle on this run, for to celebrate the event she wouldn't be stopped and went right on through the depot."

Mr. Barnes continues, "Old Puff must have become tired and decided to end it all after she went through the station, for a little later she went through a bridge near Candor, killing her engineer and wrecking the bridge. She was dragged from her watery grave in the creek, put under a shed, and replaced with a horse. . ."

At this point, George Scranton came into Old Puff's life. He had her floated on a raft

down the Susquehanna from Owego to Pittston, "where she was hauled over a coal company's gravity road to Scranton. After several major operations the old girl was put to hauling ties and rails on the new construction of the Liggett's Gap." The Liggett's Gap Railroad would operate the fifty-three miles from Scranton to Great Bend when its roadbed, begun in 1847, was finished in 1850. Old Puff helped on this construction until 1850.

GIFTS TO THE LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A number of interesting items have been graciously donated to the Society.

Tin Lunch Box. Gift of Nellie Speke.

A typical coal miner's lunch box, made by local tinsmith Fred Pitt, it is oval in shape, much larger than today's lunch box. A removable top section held the beverage and a cup was used as a stopper, much as today's models.

Baby Carriage. Gift of Willard Carpenter.

Now on display in the front hall of the Catlin House. With a bamboo frame, it is 39 inches high, three feet long and has wheels 21½ inches in diameter.

High Chair. Gift of Mrs. Murrington Ort, custodian of the Catlin House.

Used by Mrs. Ort's family when she was a child, this high chair is uniquely designed to convert into a stroller.

Oliver Typewriter. Gift of Carl Mills, Jr.

This is an early model typewriter featuring a roller and rendering the type visible as the operator presses each key. In previous models, one couldn't read his typing until he was through and pulled the paper out of the machine.

Small 18th century trunk. Gift of Dorothy Dunning Cohan.

As a youngster, Mrs. Cohan used the trunk for her doll's clothes. It belonged to her great grandmother, Elizabeth Hornbaker, but it had been used by another ancestor during the Revolutionary War. The trunk is covered with hide, using hobnails for decoration. A secret compartment in the bottom held coins of eight different sizes. Seventy separate circular chambers had been drilled to hold the coins.

PROGRAM NOTES

Monday, November 18. "Local Water Transportation in the 18th Century." Mr. W. Curtis Montz 8:15 p.m. (The following notes were prepared by Mrs. T. Archer Morgan.)

Two members of our Board of Directors last winter heard a paper on early transportation in this region at the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society by William Curtis Montz who serves on the Board of Directors of the Society. It was not only well documented but also most interesting. So they suggested to Mr. McGurl that the Lackawanna Historical Society be given the privilege of hearing about the railroads and canals of this region in the early 19th century.

Mr. Montz's interest may stem from the fact that he is the fourth generation of his family to be interested in this subject, the first two by vocation and the next two by avocation. He is a graduate of Pennsylvania State University, served in the Navy in World War II and is currently Advertising Manager for the Boston Store of Wilkes-Barre. Mr. Montz resides with his wife and three children in Kingston.

Tuesday, December 17. "East of the Moosic Mountain" Rev. William P. Lewis and Mr. Robert Mattes. 8:15 p.m.

Rev. Lewis, a member of the Society's Trustees, and Mr. Mattes, Curator, are preparing an illustrated slide lecture, giving particular attention to the Jay Gould tannery and the Henry Drinker property.

NEW MEMBERS

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Uhl
Mr. Garland R. Quarles

* * *

The Society would be most grateful for any issues of *The Board of Trade Journal*. However, they are particularly anxious for copies from 1912.

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

LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
CATLIN HOUSE
232 MONROE AVENUE
SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA 18510