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The LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Bulletin

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 1971



FEBRUARY MEETING TO PRESENT MARY LOU NAPPI

Miss Mary Lou Nappi, a local girl who was a recent guest of President Nixon's at the White house, will give members of the society a first hand report on it at the February Meeting, which is to be held on Wednesday, February 17, at the Catlin Home.

The purpose of her trip to the White House was to attend, with other leaders, a conference on Health and Welfare of Our Children. She will speak on the conference and its impact on the children of Lackawanna County.

Miss Nappi is a graduate of Keystone Junior College and of Millersville State College with a B.S. Degree in Special Education. She is a member of the Keystone Board of Trustees, of the National Youth Association Board and president of the Penna. Youth Association Board for Retarded Children. In 1970 she was selected for the Joseph P. Kennedy Achievement Award. Associated with the Lackawanna County School System, she is doing special work with retarded children.

GEORGE CATLIN, BANKER AND PHILANTHROPIST

For the January-February Bulletin, I looked up some of the history of George H. Catlin, a founder of the Third National Bank of Scranton in 1872 and a founder of the Lackawanna Historical Society in 1885. Since I knew very little about him, I assume that other members of the society may be in the same position and find it interesting to find out something about the man whose home we use as headquarters for our society.

George Catlin was born in Shoreham, Vt., on Aug. 26, 1845, son of Lynde Catlin and Amelia Harriet Moore, daughter of Samuel Moore. Lynde Catlin died Feb. 27, 1899, surviving his wife, who died Oct. 10, 1872, in her fiftieth year. Lynde Catlin was born Aug. 19, 1813.

George Catlin died at his home, June 8, 1935, a few months short of his 90th birthday.

His education began in Newton Academy, Shoreham, was continued at Vermont Episcopal Academy and at Phillips Andover Academy and he graduated at Union College, Schenectady in 1866 with the degree of LLB. He received the degree of MA at Lafayette College in 1867, following which, he was admitted to the New York state bar at Albany and became a member of the New York City law firm of Pope, Thompson and Catlin, 17 Nassau St.

In the same year which saw him enter a law firm, he married Mary Woodrow Archbald, daughter of James Archbald, Sr., on Sept. 4, 1867.

The couple made their home in New York City until 1870, when, for reasons unknown to us, they moved to Scranton and made their home with the Archbalds. Catlin, after moving here, gave up the practice of law and devoted his energies to financial matters.

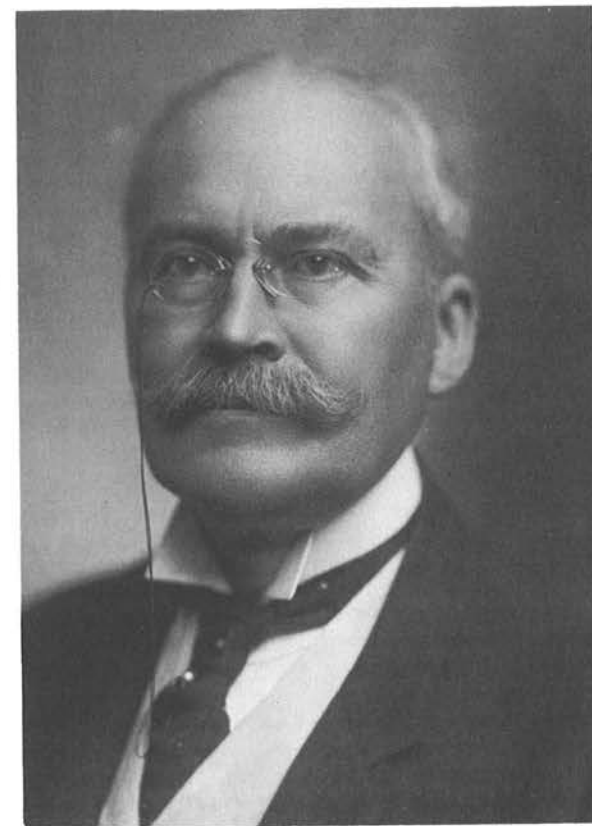
In 1872 he proposed the establishment of a new national bank in Scranton and was an organizer and director of the Third National Bank, which, for some years, he served as vice president. He remained as a director until the day of his death, serving for 63 years as a director, perhaps a record for the United States. He was also a director of the Scranton Savings Bank, later the Dime Bank; was a director of the Scranton Street Railway Co., the Erie and Wyoming Valley R.R., of the Crown Point Iron Co. and at various times of other business enterprises.

Mary Archbald Catlin died in 1902 and on January 10, 1904, he was remarried to Helen Walsh of Carbondale, Pa. Neither marriage was fruitful.

Mr. Catlin died at his home after a short illness on June 8, 1935, at 2:15 and was buried from his home at 11:30 on June 10. Rev. Peter K. Emmons, pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church officiated.

In his will, probated on June 12, it was directed, among other things, that on the death

of his wife, their home built in 1912, was to be given to the Lackawanna Historical Society together with the "furniture, furnishings, books, paintings, bronzes, bric-a-brac and other works of art therein" in trust for the benefit of the people of Scranton and to be known permanently as the George H. Catlin Memorial.



GEORGE HENRY CATLIN

The Historical Society was directed to keep the building open at such reasonable time and under such reasonable regulations as it "may from time to time prescribe for visit and enjoyment of the people of Scranton."

In order to support and maintain the building, Mr. Catlin also directed that a fund of \$50,000 in securities was to be set up and held in trust by The Third National Bank of Scranton, Pa. The income of the money, according to the will, was to be used for such things as taxes, if any, insurance, repairs or salaries and if a balance existed, might be used for acquisition of additional objects of art.

The will was dated Sept. 8, 1930, and the codicil relating to the gift of his home was dated Nov. 8, 1934.

A clause in the codicil states "It is my hope and expectation that the Lackawanna Historical Society and my trustee shall work in close harmony in the administration of the George H. Catlin Memorial and the George H. Catlin Memorial Fund" and provides that, in case of disagreement, the matter shall be decided by the Orphans Court.

The Historical Society was given a year in which to accept or reject the gift and it was formally accepted on Dec. 3, 1935, by L. A. Watres, president, and attested by J. Fletcher Weyburn, secretary.

Mr. Catlin named his widow and the Third National Bank as executors and directed that various colleges were to receive income from his estate after the death of Mrs. Catlin.

Mr. Catlin's widow, Mrs. Helen Walsh Catlin, died April 15, 1942, at the home of her sister, Mrs. A. F. Swartz, Carbondale, at which time, the provisions of the will respecting the gift of 232 Monroe Ave. and a memorial fund for maintenance came into effect. J. Curtis Platt, president of the Lackawanna Historical Society at the time, began the work of appointing committees to make arrangements for supervising the property.

An undated clipping gives an editorial opinion as follows: "The gift of the late George Catlin to the Lackawanna Historical Society has been appreciated. In leaving his beautiful home on Monroe Avenue to the organization he has so long supported with enthusiasm, Mr. Catlin rounded up many years of generous contributions in an appropriate manner. The Lackawanna Historical Society, which was organized many years ago through the efforts of Col. Price and other leading citizens, has for some time past lagged for the want of support and an appropriate home. The documents and relics owned by the society have been stored in the cellar of the Everhart Museum and in the cramped quarters Secretary Weyburn has looked after the interests of the society. While the Luzerne County historical society has spacious rooms the Lackawanna

organization has been in name only. When in possession of the splendid Catlin residence the Lackawanna Historical Society will be able to live up to its name."

Mr. Catlin was descended from Thomas Catlin, of Leyburn, County of Kent, England, who settled in Hartford, Connecticut in 1644-45 and married there in 1646. His son, John, had a son, Samuel, whose son, another John, was the common ancestor of George H. Catlin and of George Catlin, the famous painter of American Indians.

The painter was descended from John's son, Eli, and George H. Catlin was descended from John's son, Ashbel. Ashbel's son was also named Ashbel and the son of the second Ashbel was Lynde, who was the father of George Henry, whose home has become the Catlin Memorial, housing the Lackawanna Historical Society. Lynde was one of a family of five boys.

The Catlin family during the early years in America, lived in Litchfield, Conn., for some generations and was of hardy New England stock which produced many prominent descendants in various fields from art to finance.

George Catlin, who painted Indians on the Great Plains and was celebrated for preserving information about them as well as for his work with the brush, was born near Wilkes-Barre in 1794 and when two years old was taken to Brooklyn, near Montrose by his father, Putnam Catlin, who was a school teacher. As a young man, he studied law and was admitted to the Susquehanna Bar in 1820.

Law did not appeal to his inclinations and he abandoned it, moving to New York City, where he began his famous career as an artist.

George H. Catlin was proud of his relationship to painter George Catlin and possessed many of his paintings. The famous "London Portfolio" was a gift of the banker to the Wyoming Valley Historical and Geological Society.

H.H.N. III

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LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CATLIN HOUSE

232 MONROE AVENUE
SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA 18510

Mrs. T. Archer Morgan
717 Monroe Avenue
Scranton, Pa. 18510