

# The Lackawanna Historical Society BULLETIN

Vol. 6, No. 1

January - February, 1972

**FEBRUARY** — The February meeting is to be held at eight p.m. at the Third National Bank on Wyoming Ave. The bank is celebrating its one hundredth year, and since it has and has had many close ties with the society, will provide speakers who will recall for us some events in the bank's past. Date is Tuesday, February 22.

**MARCH** — Back to the Catlin House on Thursday, March 16, at eight p.m. The subject, "Irish Immigration Into Our Area," will be handled by Dr. J. U. Rudechko, of the Wilkes College faculty.

**APRIL** — On Thursday, April 20, local attorney, Robert Munley, will speak on "Indians of Our Region."

**MAY** — Our annual meeting will take place on Tuesday, May 23. Time and particulars of our annual dinner will be given later. Speaker will be Ralph Hazeltine, Curator of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society, Wilkes-Barre. His subject is "George Catlin, Artist and Indian Painter of the Nineteenth Century." The famous painter of American Indians and their customs was a relative of the gentleman who provided our present headquarters.

## NEW MEMBERS

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Hallet	—	Factoryville
Helen B. Warman	—	Scranton
Richard C. Marquardt	—	Waverly
Anna Parker Davidson Wright	—	Richmond, Va.
Mrs. Rose Stuckart	—	Scranton
George A. Broadbent	—	Scranton
William K. Nasser	—	Scranton
Albert Nicholas	—	Scranton
Carleton Upright	—	Scranton



H. HOLLISTER.

## BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Horace Hollister, historian of early Scranton, like many of our early settlers, came from an old New England family. He was a descendant of John Hollister, who emigrated from England to Wetherfield, Connecticut in 1642. His father, Alanson Hollister, seventh in descent from John, came to what is now Wayne County from Warsaw, Connecticut in his 20th year, joining his father, Amasa, who preceded him in 1797. When Alanson arrived, he found that his father was in an invalid condition, so he took over and built a log cabin, thereby founding Hollisterville.

Alanson married Sally Goodrich in 1819, the wedding taking place in Salem, where his father had settled. Sally was born near Portland, Connecticut and came to Wayne County with her father in 1803. She was one of eight children, a brother being Phineas Grow Goodrich, a writer and early historian of Wayne County. Doubtless this flair for writing and history was inherited by Dr. Hollister and his sister, Harriet, who became the wife of L. A. Watres and wrote under the pen name of "Stella of Wyoming."

Horace Hollister, the doctor and historian to be, was born in Salem, November 30, 1822 and died in

Scranton, December 29, 1893. He had as siblings, Harriet (Mrs. Watres); Sarah Ann (Mrs. Stevens); Erastus B., Honesdale; Hershel H., Scranton; Mrs. Arian Hull, Mrs. Angeline Whitney, both of Rochelle, Ill., and Mrs. Emeline Hamlin, of Philadelphia.

Horace spent one year at Bethany Academy, Wayne County, but in the summers of 1837 and 1838, he "went boating" on the North Branch and Schuylkill canals as "Captain Hollister," transporting cargo between Pittston, Wilkes-Barre and Philadelphia. He then studied medicine with Dr. Charles Burr, of Salem; afterward with Dr. Ebenezer T. Losey, Honesdale and still later he came to Providence and studied with Dr. Benjamin H. Throop, who was one of the earliest physicians in what is now Scranton and whose name was given to the town of Throop. In 1846, Dr. Hollister graduated from the medical department of the University of Pennsylvania and at once returned to Providence to take over the medical practice of Dr. Throop, who had, at that time, temporarily removed to Carbondale. Dr. Hollister, in 1847 married Mary E. Goff, of Luzerne County. Their children were Mrs. H. C. Albright of Utica; Mrs. Gertrude Lackey, Minneapolis and Mrs. W. E. Anderson, Scranton.

Most of the above biography was taken from "Portraits and Biographical Record of Lackawanna County" published in 1897 by The Chapman Publishing Co. "The History of Luzerne, Lackawanna and Wyoming Counties," published in 1880 by W. W. Munsell, N. Y., which contains Dr. Hollister's portrait as reproduced in this Bulletin; also adds the following apparently written by someone who knew the doctor personally: "Dr. Hollister, early in life took an interest in people still living who had witnessed the early Indian atrocities. He amassed a collection of 20,000 Indian artifacts of every sort."

"In the latter part of his life, he became paralyzed and unable to practice medicine, but continued his literary labors. He revised his history and contributed to magazines articles on professional and medical subjects."

His first history was completed in 1857 and its revision in 1869. Titled "History of the Lackawanna Valley" it is a rather rambling and disjointed sort of a work, but his material, gathered from old settlers, some of whom were still living, makes his book authoritative for most of Scranton's early history.

Something of the doctor's character can be

gathered from remarks about him after his death, apparently written by some one who had known him personally. They are contained in the 1880 history published by Munsell and run as follows:

"He was of an original and somewhat eccentric character, blunt and even rude, yet kind, true and benevolent.

"Dr. Hollister affiliates with no church, accepts no creed or doctrines recognized by the majority, believes in the Golden Rule and looks carefully and gratuitously after the physical needs of all ministers of the gospel, indigent widows and children living within his precinct."

The article also mentions that Dr. Hollister was proprietor of "Dr. Hollister's Family Medicines" which have "great local reputation."

Also, that Dr. Hollister and Dr. Silas B. Robinson were the only doctors practicing in what is now Scranton as late as 1846.

Also that at that time Dr. Hollister was engaged in preparation of a history of the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company.

## INDIAN RELIC CONTROVERSY

Perhaps the most entertaining passages in Dr. Hollister's work are to be found in the Second Edition, taking up 23 pages in the Appendix. Entitled "Indian Relic Controversy between Steuben Jenkins and H. Hollister, resulting from the following editorial in the Scranton Register, June 22, 1865."

It would be desirable to reprint the whole bit in the Bulletin, to give everyone who does not have access to Hollister a chance to savor the spirit of an old-fashioned newspaper "feud," but that is plainly impossible. The best that can be done is to pick out passages here and there with the hope that some will be interested enough to read it for themselves.

The editorial states in part, "We would note here that there appears a sort of rivalry between the doctor and Steuben Jenkins, Esq., of Wyoming, who is said to possess a large collection, but the doctor says it is hid away in old boxes and barns in such a manner that no person can imagine what a glance would reveal. Now, if these gentlemen will unite their collections and place them alternately at Wilkes Barre and

Scranton, they will enable thousands to see their interesting collections, and by that means determine what the parties themselves cannot do; which is the richest, the rarest, and the best ... We hope they will consent to the proposition."

Then there came a Letter to the Editor from Mr. Jenkins, which must have delighted the editor's heart, because nothing sells newspapers like a good controversy. Prefacing the reprinting of the letter, the editor comments "The following letter explains itself. It will be seen that friend Jenkins is not to be stumped out of the belief that his collection is THE collection. — Ed. Register"

Mr. Jenkins letter is rather long and closes with the following: "I shall want it fairly understood, before entering into competition with the doctor, that the judges selected shall be free from prejudice against my collection, because it has been kept in boxes, sheds and barns, for the reason that it was too large to be kept in a pill shop. The fact is, I never kept my collection for show; never made a show of it nor do I intend to do so very soon, unless there is a point to be gained by it or a purpose to be observed, etc."

Mr. Jenkins letter apparently got the good physician's dander up because in a reply letter to the Register he says, among other things that "We occasionally visit Steuben ... He goes to a drawer, unlocks and exhumes a rare tomahawk or two, watching closely lest you might swallow a pestle or a hatchet, and then he takes you to some secluded corner, and from an old box, guarded by cobwebs, gives you a half-glimpse of some memento of the departed race, and then to the shed where he draws out of barrels many relics, as the angler draws the sturdy bullhead from the sluggish stream."

Steuben's reply letter is long and full of barbs, toward the end stating, "The fact is, Indian relics disappear when the doctor is around, in a wonderful manner."

You will have to imagine the reply of Dr. Hollister to this innuendo and read it in full to get the final disposition. It is recommended reading.

H.H.N. III

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Scranton, Pa.

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