

The Lackawanna Historical Society BULLETIN

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STAFF CHANGES

On October 30, 1973, Mrs. Marie G. Vellela joined the staff of the historical society as secretary. She brings to her new position a wealth of experience in the business world. Mrs. Vellela is the wife of Gene Vellela, an instructor at Dunmore High School, and resides in Dunmore. She succeeds Miss Patricia A. Watch, who served as staff secretary from May 22 to September 30. In welcoming Mrs. Vellela to her new position, the officers and director wish her every success. At the same time, they commend Miss Watch for her untiring efforts as secretary cum librarian cum jack-of-all-trades par excellence. Miss Watch is continuing her education at the University of Scranton on the master's level.

Another recent addition to the staff is Michael O'Malley, a student at the University of Scranton. Mr. O'Malley's employment has been made possible by the Federal Work-Study Program, and he will assist both Dr. Feller and Mrs. Vellela at the society's headquarters.

ROBERT MATTES RETIRES

On September 12, 1973, Mr. Robert Mattes retired as Curator of the historical society, after serving in that capacity for close to thirteen years. Bob, as he is affectionately known to the membership and his many friends, was a mainstay of the Catlin House during his years of service. He shared those years with his sister, Miss Dorothea Mattes who herself only retired in November 1972 after fourteen years as secretary. Together, the Matteses brought a breath of fresh air into the society, and the results of their efforts will remain for many, many years. Regrettably, Bob's health would not permit him to continue his considerable curatorial duties, even on a part-time basis. Like his sister, Bob has indicated that he will try to remain "on call", whenever he can be of assistance to the society and its members. A grateful organization takes this opportunity to wish Bob many enjoyable, retiring years.

GROUNDS BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT

During the latter part of September, several members of the Laurel Garden Club and the regional 4-H Club spent two days in planting dozens of floral varieties on the grounds of the Catlin House. Particular credit is given to Mrs. Caroline Feldman, Life Member, who conceived the project. Mrs. Feldman

is anxious to obtain a number of Evergreen plants for the grounds in order to complete the project. Any member wishing to contribute plants should contact either Mrs. Feldman or Dr. Feller.

LIBRARY RENOVATION AND DEDICATION

On Wednesday evening, October 10, the Reverend William P. Lewis, Society President, dedicated the renovated library room at the Catlin House before a small gathering of forty-two members. The library is dedicated to the Life Members of the society, whose continuing interest and support of the organization have made their multifold contributions invaluable over the years.

The library walls have been painted a warm yellow and the floor has been covered with a large commercial carpet in forest green. Appropriate hangings for the windows are being secured. Two walls of the library have been covered by built-in shelving and a large, modern sectional bookcase with glass doors has been placed on a third wall. The library will contain approximately 2,700 volumes, including bound and unbound periodicals, with additional space for expansion. A small library table, finished in mahogany, was recently donated for the room.

It has been suggested by several members that the library be named in honor of Helen Walsh Catlin, the second wife of George Henry Catlin. It may be appropriate at this time to commemorate the second Mrs. Catlin, who died on April 15, 1942, at the beautiful home which she shared with her husband between 1912 and 1935, and which has served as the headquarters of the county historical society since 1943. The Officers and Executive Director would welcome the members' opinions on this or any other suggestion.

GENEOLOGY COURSE

Mrs. Raymond Champagne, who together with her husband recently joined the society, plans to offer an introductory course in geneological research if enough interest is shown. Tentative arrangements call for a three-hour class that will meet once a week for eight to ten weeks beginning in January. If you are curious to answer the question - Who's hiding in my family tree? - please telephone Mrs. Champagne at 346-0203 for additional details.

PARIAN COLLECTION EXHIBIT

A special exhibit of some forty pieces of Parian ware will be placed on display at the Catlin House during the month of November. The exhibit will open

on Tuesday, November 20 and continue through January 19. This display is being made possible through the courtesy of Mrs. Paul Uhl, Society member and Co-chairperson of the Accessions Committee, who has collected Parian during the past five years.

One of the most popular Victorian wares, Parian is a distinct type of hard porcelain that bears a close resemblance to parian marble. Called both "statuary ware" and "poor man's marble," it was first manufactured about 1842 in England by Copeland.

The Uhl collection is a small but select study collection including many unusual forms and several outstanding pieces. Of particular merit is a grouping which portrays the Biblical Naomi and her daughters-in-law. Also of interest are a Bennington inkwell surmounted by an eagle and a small teapot decorated with vines whose cover has a squirrel finial.

FURNISHINGS BEING SOUGHT

Visitors to the Catlin House are frequently heard to remark on the poor condition of several of the oriental carpets and a number of pieces of furniture. All too often, members of local historical societies are oblivious to the defects caused by wear and tear that are apparent to the occasional visitor.

Fortunately, the society has benefited from the efforts of an active House Committee, ably chaired for the past several years by Miss Margaret Briggs. Through her initiative and the assistance of her committee co-workers, beautiful drapes have been secured for the living and dining rooms on the main floor during the past three years.

Unfortunately, there have been few major contributions to the society for the important rooms on the main floor since Mr. Catlin's original bequest. The following represents the beginning of what will become a periodic listing of appropriate antiques being sought for the house-museum:

- Two small oriental carpets
- One large oriental carpet
- Crystal chandelier
- Breakfront in medium to dark wood
- Buffet or pair of servers
- Pair of Victorian side chairs
- Pair of brass or silver candlesticks
- Large silver tray
- Hurricane shades or globes
- Porcelain jardiniere

The donation of any such item or items is tax-deductible, and appropriate credit will be given the donor(s).

MEMBERSHIP CHRISTMAS GIFT

Do you have a relative or friend who may be interested in becoming actively involved at the historical society? If so, you may wish to consider a gift membership for Christmas. Individual rates remain at \$5, while family rates are \$8. Please contact either the President or the Executive Director, who will be happy to send a Christmas greeting and letter of welcome to the recipient of your gift.

NEW MEMBERS

Mrs. Raymond W. Champagne
Mrs. Patrick Nappi
John Reddington
Mrs. Irene S. Smith
Mr. and Mrs. David J. Thomas

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS FOR SALE

Society members wishing to fill in those glaring gaps in their library collections on local history may be interested in knowing that the following publications are still available:

"The Biography and Ancestry of George Henry Catlin," by S. Fletcher Weyburn (fifty cents)

"Following the Connecticut Trail — from Delaware River to Susquehanna Valley," by S. Fletcher Weyburn (three dollars)

"Early Land Titles of Northeastern Pennsylvania," by William A. Wilcox (fifty cents)

"History of a Distinctive Family of Scranton and Lackawanna County," by S. Fletcher Weyburn (fifty cents)

"Memorial of the Fiftieth Anniversary of Lackawanna County," by S. Fletcher Weyburn (fifty cents)

"Origin and History of the Famous Archbald Pot-Hole," by S. Fletcher Weyburn (seventy-five cents)

"A Story of Lackawanna County and Lackawanna Historical Society," by S. Fletcher Weyburn (fifty cents)

Members ordering these publications by mail are requested to include twenty-five cents for postage and handling.

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