

The Lackawanna Historical Society BULLETIN

Vol. 8, No. 3

Summer 1974

IMPORTANT MEETING NOTICE

On Thursday evening, October 3rd, at eight o'clock, the Society will hold its first meeting of the 1974-75 season. Scheduled speaker will be John B. Trussell of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Mr. Trussell's topic will be "Pennsylvania Regiments in the Continental Army During the Revolutionary War." As the nation prepares to celebrate its Bicentennial, the county historical society begins its own three-year program in commemoration of the nation's 200th birthday.

This notice will serve as a reminder of the forthcoming October meeting, in lieu of the postal cards normally sent. Please try to attend this first meeting of the society's program year, and make this year one in which you participate fully in the affairs of your organization.

Thursday, October 3rd 8 P.M.

NEWSPAPER COLLECTION REORGANIZED

As part of long-term master plan to reorder the society's various holdings, which began with the renovation of the library, the extensive newspaper collection at the Catlin House has been transferred from its inaccessible third floor location to a storage room in the basement. The work has been carried out by Sean Creegan, employed by the society during the summer under the Federal government's Work-Study Program, and Thomas Loven, a hard-working volunteer member.

Five large, metal shelving units were carried from the third floor to a large storage room in the basement, where 112 bound volumes of the *Scranton Times* were already located. After the relocation of the metal shelving, approximately 183 bound volumes of newspapers were carried to the basement facility, arranged chronologically, and shelved. The area newspapers include, in addition to the *Scranton Times*, the *Scranton Republican* and *Republican-Tribune*, the *Providence Register*, the *Scranton Truth*, and the *Daily Times* and *Evening Times*.

For the first time in the society's history at the Catlin House, the newspaper collection is centrally located. A large double desk, constructed so that two persons may study the large bound volumes simultaneously, was also relocated from the third floor to the basement.

Sean and Tom deserve a great deal of credit for the back-breaking effort involved in this important project. Prior to moving the shelves and newspapers, they cleaned and renovated the largest of seven basement storage rooms. The room itself had been given a new plaster ceiling and cement flooring several years ago, and had served as a general storage area for the loan collection of costumes, the bound volumes of the *Times*, a large picture collection, as well as several dozen cartons of miscellaneous material.

Sean and Tom reorganized all of the material in the room and, in the process, catalogued for the first time the society's picture collection. The miscellaneous material was also examined and catalogued.

It is anticipated that in the near future arrangements can be made for the removal of the loan costume collection to another storage room in the basement, suitably renovated for this purpose.

In effect, the summer project has resulted in the creation of a much-needed, workable newspaper room, which also contains the society's picture collection. Several dozen bound atlases have also been transferred to the newspaper room, and eventually the entire atlas collection will be relocated in this area. At the same time, space has been provided for serious researchers where they can work in a suitable atmosphere (in the summer months, the third floor is unbearable) apart from the daily visitors who tour the Catlin House.

LIBRARY NEWS

The readers of the *Bulletin* will recall that news items concerning the renovated library facilities at the Catlin House have been reported from time to time. The library renovation project began a little more than a year ago - the brain-child of Dr. Feller, then newly appointed Executive Director.

To the surprise of many who openly said it was not possible, Dr. Feller cleared the office and storage area to the rear of the secretary's office. The room was then cleaned thoroughly for the first time in years. Plaster repairs and painting followed, and lastly, built-in shelving was installed.

During the latter part of last summer and the early fall, the society's book collections were installed in the library. The books were arranged according to general topic areas.

In a sense, the most important job remained to be done - recataloguing. The books at the Catlin

House, or at least about sixty percent of the collection, had been catalogued at some time in the past. The system made little sense because it did not permit for topical classification. In reality, the old system was an inventory rather than a catalogue.

Sometime during the winter of 1972-73, according to what Bob Mattes once said, some work was begun on the recataloguing of the library by a young man named Joe Wassell, who was filling in part-time to handle the society's secretarial work after Dorothea Mattes' retirement.

Shortly after the appointment of Michael O'Malley as a student helper under the Work-Study Program, work began in earnest on the typing of title and author cards for a card catalogue. During the months of May and June, Sean Creegan completed the work after he replaced Mr. O'Malley at the Catlin House.

With the termination of Sean's part-time job here at the end of July, Tom Loven volunteered to complete the project "by mid October". Tom underestimated himself. Together with Sean, who came back Labor Day weekend to help out, Tom Loven assigned the books numbers using a modified Dewey decimal system.

All of the books in the library room on the main floor have been assigned appropriate numbers within their respective topical classifications. Still remaining to be catalogued are several hundred volumes on the third floor, some of which are duplicates (and will remain in storage or be sold). As these latter books are processed, they will be relocated in the main floor library.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Sean Creegan, who joined the staff of the Catlin House last May under the Work-Study Program, has taken a position with the legal firm of Munley and Pieski effective August 1. Sean, a political science major at the University of Scranton, enters his junior year this fall and plans to go into law school after graduation. His new position will undoubtedly prepare him for graduate studies. He has the society's congratulations on the occasion of his recent appointment. At the same time, both Dr. Feller and Mrs. Vellela wish to express their warm appreciation for the many hours of service Sean gave the society during the months of May, June, and July. He will be sorely missed.

Mrs. Gloria Caputo has been working with Mrs. James K. Peck, chairwoman of the Fashions Committee, on the society's extensive collection of apparel and related articles. Mrs. Caputo is being groomed to succeed Mrs. Peck as chairwoman, and together these two hard-working members are completing the costume catalogue and are formulating

a definitive loan policy. In the Winter 1974 issue of the **Bulletin**, it was announced that new storage facilities had been provided for the fashions collection. The bulk of the collection has been transferred to the renovated closet adjacent to the Fashions Room.

Mr. Searle H. VonStorch has resigned as a member of the Board of Trustees. His resignation was accepted, with regret, by the Board at its spring meeting. Attorney Philip V. Mattes, chairman of the Nominations Committee, is accepting nominations for a successor to Mr. VonStorch, to be approved at the Board's Fall meeting.

The Accessions Committee held a meeting on Tuesday, August 20, chaired by Mrs. Paul Uhl. In attendance were Mrs. A.M. Cigarran, Mrs. Robert Dymond, and Dr. Feller. The committee approved the future use of several forms to regulate the acceptance of unrestricted gifts to the society, as well as the loan of objects to and by the Society. The committee plans to prepare in conjunction with the House Committee, a list of furnishings that are needed for the Catlin House to replace broken and inappropriate articles as part of an active accessions program. At the same time, the committee will prepare from time to time listings of furnishings and other memorabilia that may be disposed of with the approval of the Board.

Four manikins were recently added to the collection of the Fashions Committee as the result of an auction attended by Dr. Feller and Mrs. Vellela. The manikins, referred to affectionately by the staff as "dollies" (and irreverently as "dummies"), are of little girls. The society is still eager to obtain manikins of men and boys to round out the collection.

DRIVEWAY RESURFACED

At the spring meeting of the Board of Trustees, President William P. Lewis proposed that the Dixon Coal Blacktopping Co. be awarded a contract for the resurfacing of the circular driveway and rear parking area at the Catlin House. The Board approved the proposal, and work was completed in mid-August. The parking area at the rear was extended to include two additional parking places.

NEW MEMBERS

Michael J. Metrisko
Adolph W. Oschmann
Thomas R. Kline
John S. Palumbo
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Douaihy
William J. Murray, Jr.

MEMBERSHIPS

Last January, when the Board of Trustees adopted a necessary dues increase, the membership

of the society stood at approximately 355 persons. A number of those listed in the secretary's roll, however, were individuals whose dues were as much as two years in arrears. Subsequently, these names have been dropped from the roll, as well as the names of several dozen persons who failed to reply to three notices mailed this past spring.

Consequently, paid memberships presently total 301, a figure which is considerably below the society's budgetary requirements for the coming year.

Once again, therefore, a concerted effort should be made to attract additional members. If each member would contact a single friend who he or she feels would be interested in joining the society, we could increase our membership significantly. This is the society's problem, and you can help. Please try.

For convenience, a facsimile of the "Application for Membership" has been printed on the bulletin which may be cut out and used by a prospective member.

LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

232 Monroe Avenue, Scranton, Pa. 18510

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

I hereby present my application for _____ membership in
the Lackawanna Historical Society and enclose \$ _____ in payment
of dues for one year.

Signed _____

Address _____

Membership: Individual and Family, \$10.00 per year
Contributing, \$20.00 per year Sustaining, \$30.00 or more per year

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CATLIN HOUSE
232 MONROE AVENUE
SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA 18510