

THE LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
at THE GEORGE H. CATLIN HOUSE
232 MONROE AVENUE
SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA 18510

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FALL 1994



UPCOMING AT THE LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PROGRAMS & EVENTS

- SEPT 22 RECOGNITION RECEPTION
7:30 P.M. Catlin House Join us as we thank our volunteers, contributors, and friends.
- 24 GENEALOGY & COMPUTERS
1:00 - 3 P.M. The Gallery, University of Scranton . Workshop. Local Genealogist, Homer Butler, explores several programs used in genealogical research. \$5 fee
- 28 MONUMENTAL EVENT: S.O.S. in LACKAWANNA COUNTY
7:00 P.M. Highland Hall, University of Scranton. A look at the National Initiative "Save Outdoor Sculpture," and our local effort.
- OCT 12 DOCENT TRAINING
6:30 P.M. Catlin House. The first of our Wednesday training sessions for tour guides.
- 15 S.O.S. TRAINING SESSION 10 A.M. - 12:30 P.M. Place to be determined.
CATLIN HOUSE OPEN 12 - 3 P.M. New hours. Every Saturday
- 22 HIKE MOOSIC MOUNTAIN
Led by Sierra Club Member Bob Mac Neal , 10 A.M. Meet at Nasser & Co. , Dunmore

ONGOING THROUGH NOVEMBER: THE GREAT WHITE WEDDING : Exhibit of Turn of the Century Wedding Garments (Bride & Groom), Including a typical display of Wedding Gifts. The Drawing Room , Catlin House.
GUIDED TOURS: Tuesdays through Fridays 1 P.M. - 3 P.M.

4

NAY AUG PARK
CENTENNIAL

6

EZRA HOYT RIPPLE
REVISITED

9

LOCAL HERO
REMEMBERED IN
FRANCE



In May, the Lackawanna Historical Society held its Annual Dinner at the historic Lackawanna Station Hotel in Scranton. Seated left to right: Leola Collins, Society President Joseph Cimini, Florence Brown, Kathleen Keating, Willard Henkelman, Edward Miller. Standing left to right: Society Director Maryellen Calemno, Charles Kumpas, Richard Bovard, Mary McNulty, Barbara Mears, Marie Smith, Eileen Pocius, Janice Patterson, Thomas Horlacher, Alan Sweeney.

The Society welcomes new Trustee Alan Sweeney. Alan is a sales representative for a local food service corporation. He lives in Green Ridge with his wife and two children.



Joining the Historical Society at the annual dinner was Dorothy Reddington, Pennsylvania's Cultural Advisor to the Governor.

In addition to the staff of Mary, Mary, and Mary, we would like to acknowledge the contributions of Jack Jackson, Mary Theresa Montoro, Jack Hiddlestone, and Leo Walsh to this newsletter.

ON the COVER

This postcard from the collection of Jack Hiddlestone lists the names of its subject on the reverse. The list includes standing from left to right: Frank Austin; Minnie Watrous; Mrs. Albert Arnold; Nellie Scranton; Sadie Stevens; Florence Austin; Eva Ambraz; Mildred Scranton; Lulu Stevens; Curtis White (in window); Mrs. Ruby White; Albert Arnold and Scranton horse, on ground: Mrs. Curtis Brown and Joyce; Mrs. Frank Austin and daughter; Mrs. Frank Watrous and Austin child; Mrs. Jennie Scranton and son; John Watrous; Herbert Wheaton; Walter Ambraz.

If anyone can add to the information regarding the families listed on this postcard or the school, please contact the Historical Society.

The Lackawanna Historical Society 1994-95

OFFICERS

Joseph F. Cimini, Esq. *President*
George Houck, Esq. *1st Vice President*
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Maryellen Calemno, *Executive Director*
Mary Ann Moran, *Administrative Assistant*
Mary Ann Gavern, *Museum Receptionist*
Jack & Nancy Hiddlestone, *Caretakers*

The Lackawanna Historical Society is a non-profit organization which is dedicated to keeping vital the history of Lackawanna County.

The Lackawanna Historical Society Journal is published by The Lackawanna Historical Society, 232 Monroe Avenue, Scranton, Pa. 18510 Tel. (717) 344-3841.

Members of the Society receive this publication. Membership contributions are \$20 and up for individuals, \$25 for families, and \$125 for businesses and organizations.

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RECENT SOCIETY CORRESPONDENCE UNCOVERS SOME INTERESTING LOCAL CHARACTERS

BOOK COMPLETE

Jacqueline Miller Bachar is a writer from Palos Verde, California, who spent a week in our area last summer researching the nineteenth-century correspondence between Mary Lott and her brother, Deacon John Phillips of Clarks Summit.

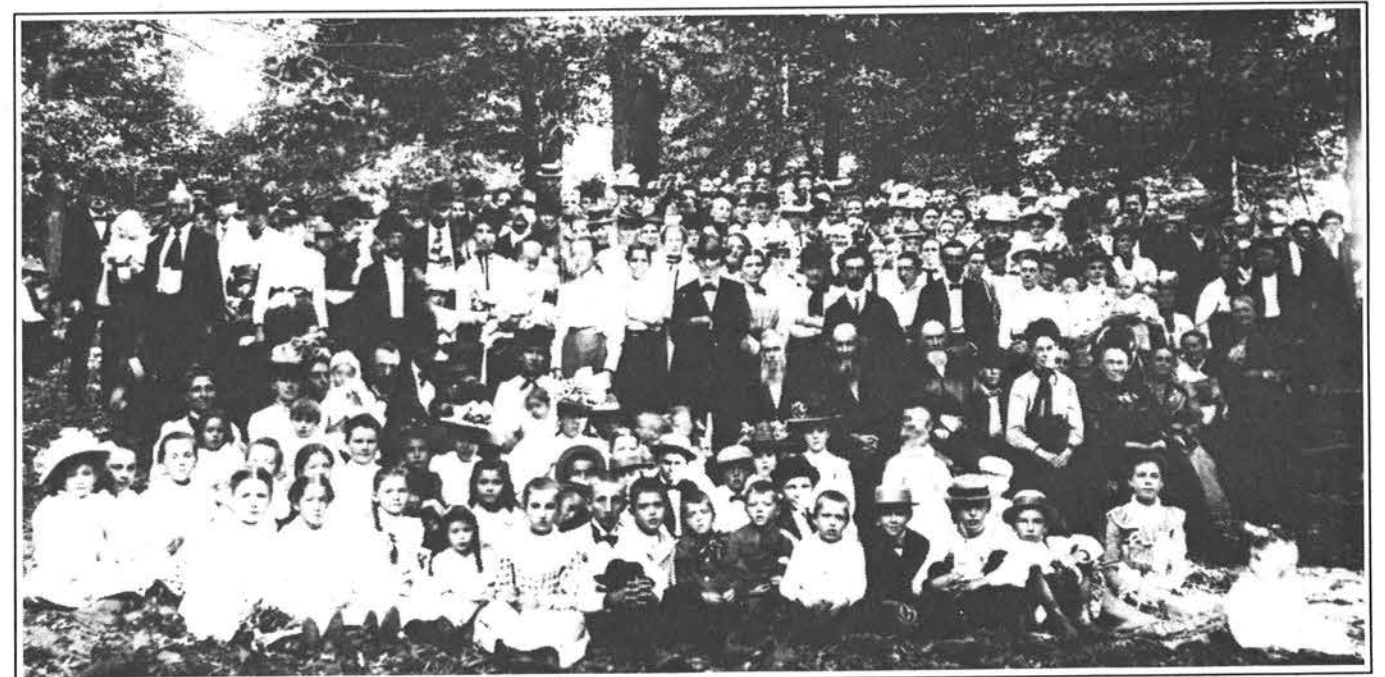
Mary Lott left New York to settle in Ohio when the latter state was considered our western frontier. Her letters to and from John, spanning two decades (1826-1846), are replete with references to many names of local historical interest: Miller, Clark, Trumbull, Tripp, Wilcox, and others. Gateway Press of Baltimore has published Bachar's research as *Life on the Ohio Frontier: A Collection of Letters from Mary Lott to Deacon John Phillips: 1826-1846*. "The letters," says Gateway, "contain a poignant description of life on the frontier. They are written with great expression and include moving exclamations of strong religious faith." The book is scheduled for release on September 15th. Call us to place your order.

LOCAL HERO REMEMBERED in FRANCE

In May, the Society received a letter from Karl Haeuser, a retired Bank of America executive from Cayucos, California. On August 4, 1944, Mr. Haeuser had been aboard a U. S. low-level attack bomber shot down over Pitres, France. He and other crew members survived, but the pilot, Lt. Thomas G. "Jerry" Walsh of Dunmore was killed. Mr. Haeuser tried the Dunmore VFW and located Eugene in Denver, Colorado. Sadly, the Moran-Haeuser correspondence also records that Jerry Walsh probably died unaware of his brother's death just three weeks earlier. Lt. Robert Walsh, a U. S. Army Ranger, was killed in action at St. Lo, France, on July 11, 1944.

After his return from the war, Mr. Haeser contacted Jerry's mother, Mrs. Helen Walsh, to describe the circumstances of her son's death. Now he wanted to notify any remaining Walsh family members that the town of Pitres would be holding a 50-year memorial service and celebration in Jerry's honor on August 7th. Lt. Walsh had been buried for a time in Pitres before his remains were brought home. Karl Haeser and Eugene Walsh were present at the ceremonies in Pitres on August 7th. A granite monument was dedicated to Jerry Walsh, and a letter from President Clinton was read. Members of the French Assembly attended, and a "fly-by" of French Air Force jets was also planned. Mr. Haeser's hope was that other local people might make the trip. But if that did not prove possible, he enjoined all Northeastern Pennsylvanians to "take notice, and place in your history book, the deaths of two, fine local heroes. . . ."

Research by Society staffer Mary Ann Moran disclosed that Walsh's parents, Thomas and Helen died during the 1980's. A brother, Eugene had moved from the area in the 1940's. The family home was sold in 1988.



THE MILLER FAMILY REUNION

Lackawanna Heritage Valley Folklife Resources Survey

The Lackawanna Valley Heritage Authority is conducting the Lackawanna Valley Folklife Resources Survey through October, 1994. The purpose of this project is to document customs, traditions, and community characteristics integral to life in the Lackawanna Valley. The information and materials gathered through this survey will be documented as a resource to aid the development of cultural and educational programs highlighting the rich and varied heritage of the Lackawanna Valley.

The Lackawanna Valley Folklife Resources Survey will bring together information about traditions that are blended and embedded in the routine of daily life at home and at work, in architecture, events, and holidays, and the memories of indi-

viduals and communities. The survey aims to seek out and recognize the most enduring and newly evolving examples of local culture and lore. For instance, specialty grocers provide foods that became popular in this country through traditions brought from other countries. Churches serve as highly visible focal points defining communities, even as some of its members leave the immediate area. At home, garden decorations and home furnishings represent customs rooted elsewhere and refined according to local circumstance and needs.

We want to hear about the traditions of your family and community. Share with us your memories, photographs, recipes, gardens, and family heirlooms. Help fill in a complete picture of life in the Lackawanna

Valley with your accounts about working in local industry. Your stories of holiday celebrations and ethnic traditions will fill the annals of this survey with information for others to experience and enjoy. Call or write today!

Project team members are Tom Jones, Denson Groenendaal, Catherine Jacobs and James Turk. The project team is assisted by an Advisory Committee of local citizens including Dr. Kathleen Munley, Dr. John L. Earl III, Dr. Shalom Staub, Deborah Darden, Maryellen Calemme, Barbara Evontis, Paul Browne, Allen Sachse, Jerry Williams, Dr. Vito Forlenza, Thea Yerke and Chester Kulesa.

For further information:
Lackawanna Valley Herit. Authority
Folklife Resources Survey
1300 Old Plank Road
Mayfield, PA 18433
717-876-6188
Catherine Jacobs
215-790-1590

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

STUDENTS

John Babcock	Scranton
Michael Ezdebski	Duryea
Carol Mohanty	Huntington Beach, CA

INDIVIDUALS

Edward J. Driscoll	St. Paul, MN
Eileen Jay	Wilmington, DE
Carol Jenkins	Clarks Summit
Harriet Johnson	Gaithersburg, MD
Marjorie H. Lloyd	Clarks Summit
Janice F. McClintock	Stewartstown
Michael Miskell	Scranton
Mark Shlanta	Lake St. Louis, MO
James R. Williamson	Clarks Summit

FAMILY

Donna Cleveland & Family	Scranton
Edward Duffy & Family	Saylorsburg
Mr. & Mrs. Russell Frisbie	Dunmore
Timothy P. Mc Gurrin, D.M.D.	Clarks Summit
Mr. & Mrs. Terrence Holmes	Moosic
Dr. & Mrs. Kenneth Savitski	Peckville
Mr. & Mrs. Paul J. Williams	Scranton

CONTRIBUTING

Carol Gala	Cresco
Ann Meehen	Scranton

BUSINESS/ORGANIZATIONAL

University of Scranton Public Relations

HISTORICAL SOCIETY T - SHIRTS FOR SALE



Lackawanna
Historical
Society

100% unbleached cotton t-shirts, designed and produced locally by AEO Printing Co.

The design is from a historic photo in the Society's collection. Membership price \$12. Medium, Large, X-Large.

HAPPENINGS AT THE CATLIN HOUSE

"The Good Ol' Summertime"

On Sunday August 21st, the Historical Society hosted its popular "old fashioned" Ice Cream Social at the Catlin House. Although the weather was uncooperative, the homemade ice cream and lemonade was enjoyed by almost 200 people as they listened to the nostalgic sounds of the KV-4 Barbershop Quartet. Children and adults were also captivated by the talented storyteller/performer Chris Arcangelo, and LHS docents guided tours of the Catlin House. Thanks to all who worked to make the day a pleasurable event.

Genealogists Attend Workshop

On June 4th, the Society conducted its second Annual Genealogy Workshop. This year the workshop consisted of two concurrent sessions which focused on how to begin a genealogy, using local records, problem solving methods and an introduction to the LDS Family Research Center. We hope that the workshop helped answer questions and would appreciate your suggestions on how to make next year's workshop even more successful. Thanks to our speakers Cecile Champagne, Joseph Bryer and Dorothy Dominick for the time and knowledge they donated to the Society.

Upcoming Workshop: Genealogy & Computers

On Saturday, September 24th, LHS member Homer Butler will present a class on Genealogy and Computers. He will discuss "Brother's Keeper," a computer program which is used to organize genealogical information, in addition to several other useful programs which can be utilized by the genealogist. To register, please call the society at 344-3841, or use the form included in this newsletter.

Tour of Moosic Mt. & the Gravity RR

The local chapter of the Sierra Club will join the Historical Society on an exploration of the Moosic Mountain area which overlooks the Lackawanna Valley and Roaring Brook. Sierra Club member Bob MacNeal will be our tour leader and will discuss the history of the Gravity Railroad along the way. This will be a perfect opportunity to enjoy the fall foliage while exploring nature's flora & fauna.

Date scheduled: October 22, 10 A.M. through 2 P.M. Meet at Nasser & Co., across from Holiday Inn, Dunmore. Must bring lunch & water, wear comfortable shoes and jacket.

DOWN the LINE Church Tour '94



Down the Line Church Tour participants outside the Catlin House after an interesting day on the road.

The 1994 Church Tour proceeded as scheduled June 25th despite some early rain. Our itinerary included seven stops in West Scranton, Taylor, and Old Forge, with historical and architectural commentary along the way. Each church evoked special insights and responses among tour participants.

At St. Lucy's, in Hyde Park, we learned that Scranton's Italian Catholics used its basement as a place of worship during World War I as construction could not be completed until after the war. We were reminded that the United Baptist Church of Scranton is the site of a traditional Welsh songfest on St. David's Day (March 1st), and were impressed by the beautifully preserved tin ceiling in the Bethania Presbyterian Church.

During our lunch

stop we visited Taylor Cemetery, and enjoyed a look at the traditional 1848 meeting house on the burial grounds. It was also interesting to note the original iron fencing surrounding many family plots in this cemetery and the symbolic plantings rarely seen anymore.

The Historical Society is grateful to all involved with this year's tour - especially to Joe DeScipio, of the Architectural Heritage Association, for sharing his architectural expertise and to all the representatives of the religious organizations for their time and assistance.

1995's Annual Church Tour will be headed to South Scranton. We welcome your comments and suggestions. Please contact the Society if interested in working with the Planning Committee.

NAY AUG PARK CENTENNIAL

Research by Douglas Heller, currently a graduate student and a former volunteer of the Historical Society

Prior to 1890, the area east of what is now Prescott Avenue was still rugged and wild. Other than the occasional trip to the gorge by boys for a swim, the area was secluded and unvisited.

In 1893, Scranton Mayor William Connell directed the purchase of 15 acres there to develop a park. Bounded on the east by Roaring Brook and on the west by what would become Arthur Avenue, the plot ran north and south along the gorge created by Roaring Brook. The park was called "Nay Aug"--a Native American term meaning deep gorge. On October 23, 1894, Elmhurst Blvd. opened to horse and buggy traffic. Mulberry St. had been extended north and was connected to the new road by a tollbridge crossing Nay Aug Gorge. Scrantonians could now drive up the hill to Petersburg Corners, turn south, and follow the old Pennsylvania Gravity

Railroad tracks to the new park. Over the years, more than a few slid into the gorge itself while negotiating this precipitous route.

The park's centerpiece is Everhart Museum--the gift of Isaiah Everhart, M.D., who had come to this area in 1868 to practice medicine. The Everhart, primarily devoted to natural history

exhibits, opened in 1908, and soon attracted as many as 10,000 visitors a month.

Luna Park, one of the premier amusement parks of its day and among the first to be illuminated entirely by electricity, opened in 1906. It stood opposite Roaring Brook and was connected to the

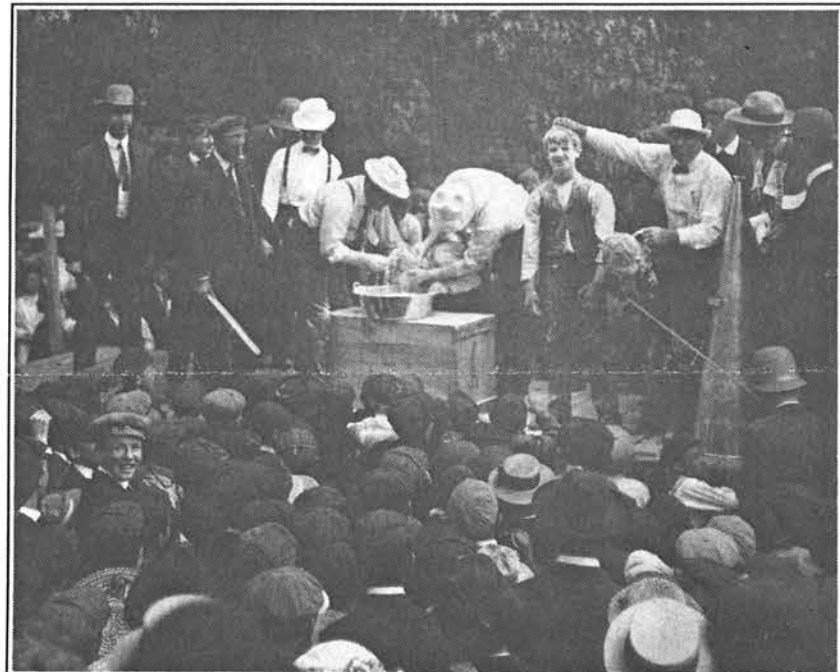
Lake Lincoln opened as the largest man-made swimming facility in the country, boasting one half mile of natural shoreline. Lake Lincoln's bottom was lined with concrete in 1929; in the late Sixties, the lake became the Lincoln-Kennedy swim complex. Water fountains,

Brook's Mine, the Strohl family amusement park, and, of course, the zoo.

Although additional land acquisitions in 1914 and 1920 expanded Nay Aug's original 15 acres to 175, we, in this half of the 20th century, cannot say we have always used that acreage as it was intended to be used. Interstate 81 obliterated much of the grounds, and power lines distort the pristine beauty of Nay Aug Gorge. During the 1960's the park entered a decline from which it has not recovered.

The men and women who gave us Nay Aug Park were motivated by a desire to serve their community. There are signs that a new generation of civic-minded people are following their example: in recent years the pavillon near the original park entrance has been rebuilt; in August, the city of Scranton presented its 2nd Annual Music Festival. The rose garden

has been maintained largely through the efforts of the Audubon School, and students from East Scranton Intermediate are utilizing a 3-year PennSERVE grant for environmental studies, recreation of the park's flora, trail management and other nature-study projects centered around the Nay Aug Greenhouse.



Many of Scranton's turn-of-the-century events and celebrations occurred at Nay Aug Place. This photograph, taken by John Horgan as part of "Souvenirs of the city of Scranton," shows local boys participating in a traditional event called "Honey in Flour."

rest of the park by an elaborate footbridge spanning the gorge. Luna Park was destroyed by fire just a decade later. Today its remains are somewhere beneath the southbound lanes of Interstate 81.

Nay Aug Park's gazebo made its appearance in 1909, followed by the pavilion and the duck pond. That same year,

too, were popular Nay Aug gathering places. One favorite was the Throop Memorial Fountain, whose centerpiece was a boy in knickers and cap holding aloft a boot from which water poured.

Other well-known Nay Aug attractions have included the greenhouse (funded by Globe Store founder John Cleland),



RECENT DONATIONS Society Receives Fashion Accessories

In June, member Leo Walsh donated an interesting collection of fans and handbags to the Society. The collection belonged to his Aunt, Mae Walsh Spier and was found in the Walsh family home in Old Forge. The items were sent to Old Forge when the Spiers moved from New York to Los Angeles in 1943.

Mae Walsh was born in Ireland and came to Old Forge in the 1880's. She was still a young girl when she decided to leave Lackawanna County with her friend Rose Farrell, from Scranton's South Side, to go and work in New York City. At first, she lived in Brooklyn and worked in retail sales in New York City. Mae worked at the Lilliputian Bazaar. In 1914, she married Milton Spier, a linens and domestics buyer at Macy's. After the death of their only daughter, Joy, they moved to Los Angeles where she died in 1956.

The items that Mr. Walsh donated were probably used by Mae for different social occasions when she was living in New York. The handbags are especially interesting in that they are specifically designed to carry various cosmetics. Small compartments shaped for lipsticks or powder puffs are built-in features of these small hand-size bags. Some even include the powder puff. While the bags are useful for carrying make-up, it's interesting to point out that it would be difficult to place anything else inside these tiny accessories.

The Society would like to thank Mr. Walsh for this donation and also acknowledge the donations that we have received recently.

Donors include:
J.L. Atherton, Pebble Beach, CA
John Troy, Scranton
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Stuck, White Bear Lake, MN
Mrs. Barbara Mears, Clarks Green
Mrs. Florence Gillespie Brown, Scranton
Elm Park United Methodist Church, Scranton
George Pfeiffer, Scranton
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Woytanis, Scranton
Irwin Adler, Scranton
Mary A. Kerr, Scranton
Mr. John Hiddlestone, Clarks Summit
Kurt Reed, In Memory of Ronna & Dean Reed, Lake Ariel

Volunteer Corner

NEW
Welcome to our newest volunteer, Mary Theresa Montoro. Mary Theresa is a native of Scranton and mother of eight. She recently graduated from Marywood College with a degree in English Literature. Mary Theresa is active in various community organizations and enjoys research and writing.

UPDATE
The LHS volunteers have been very busy all summer working on ongoing projects and helping to plan special events. Ed Kuchinski has continued to index current obituaries so that future researchers will be able to find the date of death for a specific ancestor simply by checking the name.

Heidi Gambo and Judy Donaldson have been busy all summer working with Fashion Committee member, Sandra Whitlock to plan and prepare the new Wedding exhibit.

Barbara Castanzo has been organizing and cataloguing documents from the collection of personal papers of George Catlin.

Ann Marie O'Hara continues to clip local news articles for our records, which Maurice and Rita MacNamara have been filing in the reference library.

Nancy McNelis has joined the fashion committee and is checking labels and marking locations of catalogued pieces.

Jack Jackson and new volunteer Mary Theresa Montoro assist in various research projects and have been working with the staff to compile this newsletter.

DOCENT TRAINING
Docent training will begin again this fall. Details are on their way to you. If you are interested in being a tour guide at the Catlin House or doing research, contact us.

GIFTS TO THE SOCIETY

Memorial Contributions were received
In Memory Of:

Winifred W. Bell
by: Mary B. OBrien

Edgar Collins
by: Mr. & Mrs. Chester Kulesa;
Mrs. H. R. Van Deusen

Josephine Scott Jones Cornell
by: Mr. & Mrs. Francis L. Dixon

William J. Oliver
by: Mr. & Mrs. William I.
Pentecost

Jessie A. Whitman
by: Mrs. H. W. Kimble;
Mr. & Mrs. James O. Quinn;
Mr. & Mrs. Lyle Anderson

Memorial Gifts are placed within a Memorial Fund and are not used for general operations.

POSTCARD MEMORIES...

Researched by Jack Hiddlestone

The postcard featured in this issue is a marvelous view of South Chinchilla in 1936, from the cliffs overhead. The "Notch" to Scranton is to the left in the photo and the card commemorates the opening of the new State Highway that took place on Wednesday, September 12, 1936.

The event was sponsored by the Scranton Chamber of Commerce, the Lackawanna Motor Club and the Chinchilla Civic Association. At this formal opening a pageant was held at 2 p.m. and the ceremony at 2:30, featuring the WPA Orchestra with remarks by Thomas Murphy (LHS president from 1943 to 1956) and Charles Lewis. The honorary chairman of the event was Honorable Will Leach, President Judge of Lackawanna County. This main highway from Scranton enters Chinchilla through Leggetts Gap, or the "Notch" and is the Lackawanna Trail, originally part of the old Drinker Turnpike.

One of the original settlers of the Abingtons was Ephriam Leach, ancestor of the above mentioned Honorable Will Leach. Ephriam first located at Glenburn about 1800 but after a few years took up residence at the present day Chinchilla. At one time he owned most of the land on which the village now stands and in fact, before 1880, the area was called Leach's Flats.

Since there was already a "Leach's Flats" in Pennsylvania, it was necessary to change the name, for Postal Authority reasons. Two stories relate how the name Chinchilla was cho-

sen. One tells us that the first village postmaster, George Tanner, named it from the fact that his wife owned a beautiful Chinchilla fur coat. The other version has a Mr. Roberts, postmaster at Providence, on the other side of Leggett's Gap, selecting the name at random by opening a dictionary and taking the first word upon which his finger landed. Whatever the origin, a post office was established at Chinchilla on May 10, 1880 that served until July 14, 1919, when Chinchilla was renamed "Pershing" in honor of General John Pershing, Commander of the American Expeditionary Forces in World War I. In 1925, a petition was signed to rename the place Chinchilla. It succeeded and the name *Chinchilla* has remained to this day.

Note that a toll gate operated by the Scranton &

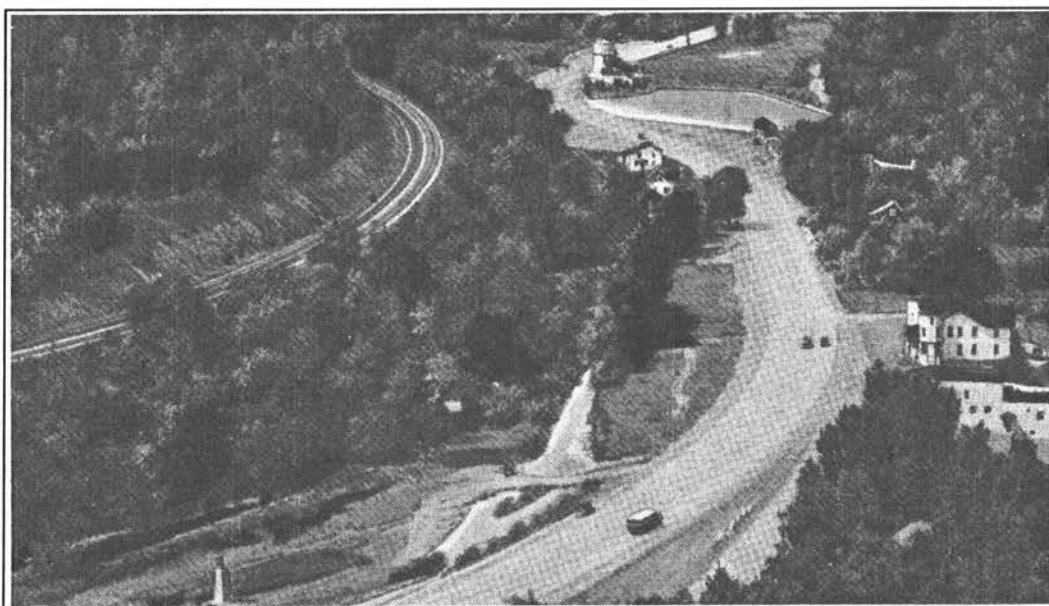
Binghamton Railroad once stood almost in front of the twin-towered building housing the present-day "King's Wok" restaurant. The railroad, commonly called the Northern Electric, operated between Scranton and Montrose, PA., and in addition to passengers it provided a quick trip to the markets for the products of the fertile Abington farmlands. The tolls ended in 1916, when the road was sold to the Pennsylvania Highway Department.

The aforementioned twin tower building has been in continuous use since its erection in 1882 by William T. Jenkins, who operated it as a farmers' hotel for about 20 years. He sold it in 1901 to Morris V. Morris, a well known alderman in Providence. Mr. Morris, as the story goes, made a trip to England and Wales in the early part of this century and

was so impressed with the castles that he saw there, that he had twin towers added to his hotel when he returned. He died in 1918 and the tavern was purchased by Samuel and Morris Tevelin, who sold it in 1923 to Dominick Gianni. At that time it was called the "City Line Hotel" and was a well known "speak-easy" during prohibition days.

In 1942, the hotel was sold to Salvatore and Rose Ciccotelli, who operated it as a hotel and tavern called the "Whiteway" until 1978. Then it became the "La Villa" restaurant, was later changed to the "First Wok" Chinese Restaurant and is presently the "Kings Wok" Restaurant.

NOTE: Thanks to the late Rev. William Lewis for his early research on the twin towers building.



At lower left in the photo, a column can be seen that was once a water fountain that stood in the center of a Scranton Gas & Water Co. reservoir. At extreme right is the famous twin tower building and on the near side of it, the old Northern Electric transformer substation that also still stands today.

EZRA HOYT RIPPLE REVISITED

Readers who recall Ella S. Rayburn's "Col. Ezra Ripple's Life in Confederate Prisons" (*LHS Journal*, Fall, 1989) will be interested to learn of the Society's recent correspondence with Ripple's granddaughter, Susan Ripple Hinkel.

Ezra Hoyt Ripple was born in Mauch Chunk in 1842 and grew to manhood in Scranton. He enlisted in the Union army when Gen. Robert E. Lee invaded Pennsylvania in the summer of 1863 and re-enlisted early the following year. In July, 1864, he and much of his regiment were captured in the North's unsuccessful attempt to take Charleston, South Carolina. For the next eight months Ripple endured harsh conditions as a prisoner of war.

"Had Dante lived in the days of Andersonville," he wrote many years later, "his conceptions of the horror of hell would have been enlarged...."

After the war, Ezra H. Ripple took up an active public life that included his election as this county's first treasurer, a term as Scranton's Mayor, and a presidential appointment as Postmaster of Scranton, an office he held until his death in 1909. During the 1890's, he wrote a lengthy memoir of his prison experiences--a truly fascinating document which remains unpublished.

Last year, Susan Ripple Hinkel visited the Historical Society to examine and exchange Ripple material and to discuss her "efforts to find a publisher for the Ripple memoirs." From that visit a correspondence has grown. In November,

1993, Mrs. Hinkel wrote:

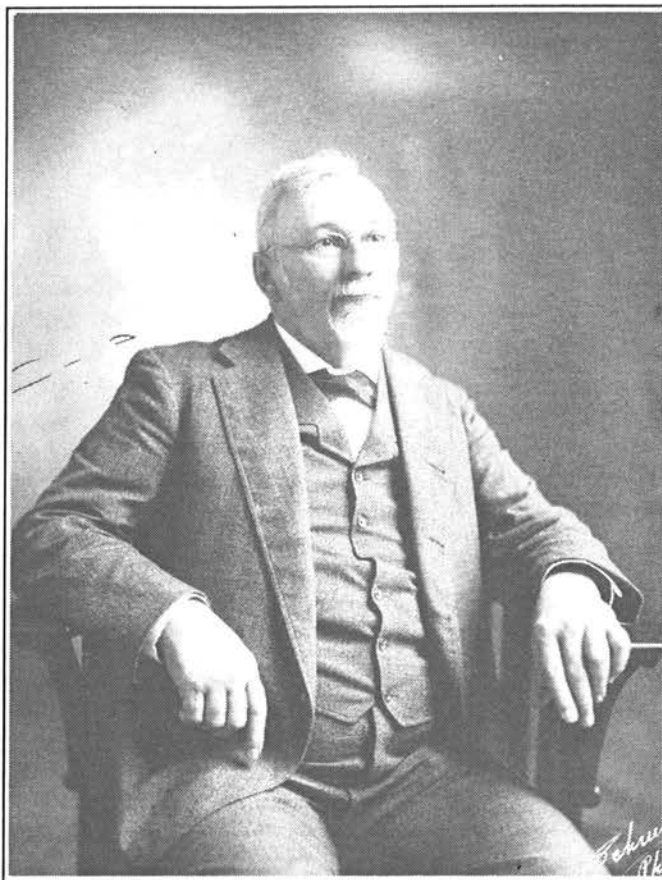
"My mother [Sarah Hackett Ripple] used to delight us with stories not only of her own childhood in Scranton, but of her mother's and father's and even her grandparents' as well, so my own head is full of those borrowed memories as well as plenty of my own making. In fact, during my childhood the life of the Ripple Family from the 1850's to World War I seemed more appealing and often more real than my own hum-drum days."

This spring, Society volunteer researcher Jack Jackson fell under the spell of the Ripple manuscript and wrote to Mrs. Hinkel regarding publication possibilities. Her reply went straight to the heart of the quality that makes these writings so memorable.

"I, too, feel that my grandfather's memoirs are impressive in literary terms as well as historic content, and worthy of publication. It is especially remarkable that he could handle such emotionally charged material without rancor or bitterness--even with gentleness and moments of humor."

In her most recent letter to the Society, dated July 12, 1994, Susan Ripple Hinkel offered some insights into the family history, including her grandfather's namesake.

"Ezra Hoyt Ripple and his sister Mary were the only children of Silas Ripple, who owned and operated a hotel in Scranton in the mid 1800's. Silas's mother, widowed during his boyhood, was left with a family of 14 children--an impossible situation for any but the very wealthy. The older boys took work one place or another, and those who were



*Colonel Ezra Hoyt Ripple
Photographed by Schriever of Scranton*

half-grown were 'farmed out' to foster homes where they worked for their keep. It was a tale straight out of Dickens! Silas landed with a penurious country doctor where he was underfed and overworked and generally abused. When one of his older brothers came by to check on him during the winter he found Silas barefoot and half-starved. The contract was broken and he was next apprenticed to a cobbler named Ezra Hoyt--a kindly man whose name he gave to his only son. Since then there has been an Ezra Hoyt Ripple and, curiously, each has been an only son down through Ezra V."

The Historical Society and Mrs. Hinkel are not alone in our admiration for the Ripple manuscript

and the distinguished drawings (by New York artist James Taylor) that accompany it. Famed Civil War historian Bruce Catton contributed an article on Ripple/Taylor to the October, 1964 *American Heritage*. More recently, the Arts and Entertainment Network, producers of "Civil War Journal," have shown an interest in the illustrated memoirs, and there is a reference to the work and to the Lackawanna Historical Society in Marshall Davidson's 1987 volume entitled *500 Years of Life in America*.

If you'd like to see for yourself what has generated all this enthusiasm, plan to spend an afternoon at the Catlin House with Ezra Hoyt Ripple's historic and revealing legacy.