



LHS

The Lackawanna Historical Society Journal

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Autumn 2025

A Summary of St. Luke's National Register Project

In 2018, Patricia Pongrazc, PhD, a Louis Comfort Tiffany scholar, visited St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Scranton to consult on the church's Tiffany pieces. It was during this visit that a discussion began to determine why St. Luke's was not on the National Register of Historic Places. The Rev. Rebecca Barnes, St. Luke's Rector at the time, realized that this listing would be a good way to acknowledge the church's significant role in Scranton's history, and began working with LHS Trustee and St. Luke's volunteer archivist Ella Rayburn to submit the required documentation for federal recognition.

The National Register of Historic Places

is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, it is administered by the National Park Service, an agency within the U.S. Department of the Interior. The program is managed through partnerships between the National Park Service and State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs).

Church member Carol McMullen and members of the Women of St. Luke's had recently moved several dozen cardboard boxes of records into a front room on the 3rd floor so that Ella Rayburn, a museum curator and historian familiar with professional archival methods, could organize them to make them more accessible for future research. She began removing the documents from the acidic, crumbling boxes and putting them into a coherent order. Sadly, only a few of these records pre-dated 1905 which was concerning because, although the enhancements by Louis C. Tiffany were done at that time, the current church structure was actually constructed three decades earlier in 1871. But the committee was able to find additional information using early minutes from the Vestry, Women of St. Luke's and other organizations. At a merciful juncture, the handwritten minutes became typewritten and the documents were put into a searchable finding aid as

they were being used for research for the National Register. Secondary sources were also references including the 1926 book "Seventy-Five Years in Saint Luke's Church, in the Heart of Things" by The Rev. Robert Kreidler, which proved to be of great value.

St. Luke's history dates back to the 1850s when the Scranton brothers and their partner Joseph Platt donated two lots on the east side of Penn Avenue between Lackawanna Avenue and Spruce Street (now Biden) on which to build a church. To plan for its construction, St. Luke's first rector, Rev. John Long, reached out to NY architect Richard

Portion of 1852 letter to Richard Upjohn from Rev. Long

...Scranton, where a few years ago there was nothing but a farm house, now numbers 3500 inhabitants...and judging from the past, the place in five years will contain at least ten thousand inhabitants. There is now in that vicinity a respectable congregation of Episcopalians, the majority of whom are miners or iron workers. A parish has been organized and a lot of ground, central and pleasant, has been given for a church lot by the Messrs. Scranton who are Presbyterians. The vestry is very anxious to build an economical and convenient church to cost \$2,000 with accommodations for 250 or 300 persons...they want a design for a building of wood ...if you ever prepare and furnish gratuitously I feel that you cannot find any point presented so needy and so worthy of your regard...

Upjohn to ask him to design a small wooden church. Upjohn was a leading church architect in the country at that time, best known for designing New York City's Trinity Church at the head of Wall Street in 1840. He was also one of the 13 original organizers and the first president of American Institute of Architects from 1857-1876.

It appears that Upjohn did not reply to Rev. Long's initial request because, in 1852, construction for the first church began using plans prepared by

Continued on page 9

A Word from the President...

Hello Everyone,

As I am writing this letter on Veteran's Day, I am thinking of the need for all of us to show our appreciation to the veterans living in our community for the benefits we have due to their efforts. More importantly, this holiday also makes us mindful of those who are no longer with us. We all benefit from the sacrifices they made to provide and protect the freedoms we enjoy.

One such gentleman who sacrificed a great deal for our well being was Mayor David Wenzel, who sadly passed away on November 5th. Beyond the hardships he endured during his service in Vietnam, he continued to work on our behalf in his many accomplishments as mayor of Scranton and later as an active volunteer in the community. He will be missed.

I am sure that we have all been touched by someone who has demonstrated a strong commitment to service and strive to honor their work and memories. The historical society often receives items that represent the lives and stories of individuals who have made a lasting impact and we are pleased to preserve their legacies. If you want to learn more about the people who came before us, I suggest you plan a visit to explore the stories captured by our collection.

Sincerely,
Michael Gilmartin, President



Honorable David Wenzel (June 18, 1945 - November 5, 2025)
Recipient of Bronze Star and Purple Heart for service in Vietnam
Mayor of Scranton: 1986-1990
Member of the Lackawanna Historical Society: 1975-2025

Invite a friend to join us!

About Membership... Membership privileges include unlimited access to the Society library, 10% discount in our bookstore, advance notice, special discounts and invitations to all Society activities, members-only programs and the quarterly newsletter. Attached is a membership form you can use to renew your membership or give to a friend or neighbor who is interested in joining. Please return it to:

The Lackawanna Historical Society at 232 Monroe Avenue, Scranton, PA 18510

LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

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<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$40		
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<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing	\$100		
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining	\$150		
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The Lackawanna Historical Society is a 501(C) (3) non-profit organization which is dedicated to keeping vital the history of Lackawanna County. It is supported in part by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the Catlin Memorial Trust, Lackawanna County, and membership dues. Regular hours are Tues. - Fri. 10 am to 5 pm and Saturdays noon to 3 pm.

The Lackawanna Historical Society Journal is published by the Lackawanna Historical Society, 232 Monroe Avenue, Scranton, PA 18510 Tel. (570) 344-3841. Address questions to lackawannahistory@gmail.com

Members of the Society receive this publication. Membership contributions are \$40 and up for Individuals, \$60 for Families, and \$150 for Sustaining levels. Special Silver, Gold, and Platinum levels of memberships are also available.

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Thanks for your Support...

History Makers



Some thoughts from LHS Member Raymond Pilch, Esq.

The Society has received a lot of objects of historical value from donors - both small and large. It also gets a lot of donations in the form of cash and other equivalents which often will keep the bills paid and LHS in business.

Unfortunately, people often do not think about other forms of gifts that can help the organization and its members keep in touch with local history. For example, when a member passes away, the LHS usually loses someone who has regularly donated to the Society but that is now gone.

In response to that dilemma, the group has a Planned Giving Committee which has often helped people and their advisors with perfect gifts of *future* gifts. Wills and trusts can be drafted in ways that can benefit LHS. Another way that you can benefit the Society

is if you properly and efficiently name the group as the beneficiary – even partially – of your IRA, 401k or other qualified money. As a bonus, those amounts to properly named charitable beneficiaries are not subject to income, estate or inheritance taxes – federal or state.

One often overlooked item by members is their valuable life insurance policies. LHS has been named as the beneficiary of life policies in the past. A policy owner can usually change a beneficiary at any time. If ownership of the policy is passed to the group or it is named as irrevocable beneficiary there might be a tax deduction involved! Your tax advisor can tell you about the details.

Another benefit of life insurance is its cash worth. Whole and universal life policies often have a stated value. Term policies often have no “cash value” but are usually as little as ten percent as less expensive. However, the more expensive insurance often has cash value. This can be accessed while you are alive. It acts like a savings account and you can even borrow the money. If you give a new or existing policy to the LHS, the organization gets a valuable asset and you get a tax deduction. Usually, the value of the policy is often greater than the available cash – **true even about term policies!** Only your advisor knows for sure.

DINE LACKAWANNA

November 19: **Stirna's Restaurant**
120 W. Market St, Scranton (570) 343-5742

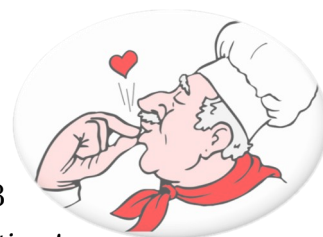
January 21: **Mangia Bistro & Bar**
127 W. Market St., Scranton (570) 800-5116

February 18: **Abbiocco**
639 Northern Blvd., Clarks Summit (570) 319-9633

Enjoy a night out & help support the Society by dining out at supporting locations!



Thanks to Lamar Advertising for its ongoing support of this program.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!



Individual

Sara Benedict, Scranton
 Eileen Foley, Florham Park NJ
 Carl McGuire, Scranton
 Lois Grimm, Wilkes Barre
 Bob Haggerty, Kingston
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 Rosemary Termini, Mountain Top
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Contributing

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Sustaining

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MEMORIALS

In Memory of Tom Spott

Robert & Mary Ann Savakinus

In Memory of Billie Jean Jeffrey

& Marjorie Lyons Jeffrey

Sharon Burnham

Sarah Piccini

Robert & Mary Ann Savakinus

In Memory of Hon. David Wenzel

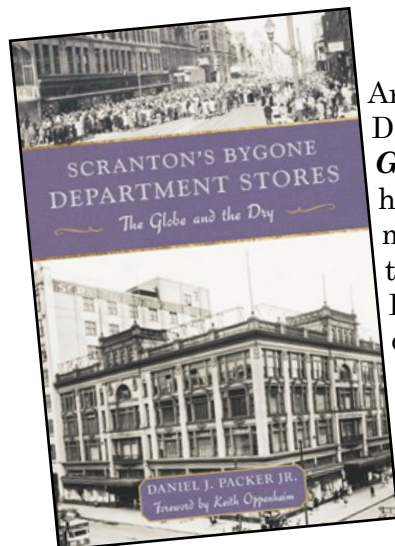
Robert & Mary Ann Savakinus

In Memory of F. Charles Petrillo

Robert & Mary Ann Savakinus

Contributions made in the name of individuals are placed in a Memorial Fund and are not used for general operations. To make a memorial donation, please send check payable to the Society with the name and address of person(s) for whom memorial is made. All contributions to the Society are tax deductible to the fullest extent that the law provides.

Book Signings at the Catlin House!



This winter, the Society will host book signings for two new publications from Arcadia Publishing's History Press. On **Sunday, December 7 at 2 pm**, meet Daniel J. Packer, author of *Scranton's Bygone Department Stores: The Globe and the Dry*. Mr. Packer is a Northeastern Pennsylvania resident who has a lifelong passion for the history of local retail, especially the major department stores that once graced the area's downtowns. For generations, Scranton's two big department stores, the Globe Store and Oppenheim's Scranton Dry Goods Company dominated retail in the Electric City. Facing each other on Wyoming Avenue, they created special memories for those who walked their sales floors and admired their attractive displays and elaborate Christmas decorations. Together, the two stores brought the best the world had to offer to Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Then on **Sunday, January 25, at 2 pm** we will host Brian W. Kincaid, author of *Murder in Old Forge, Pennsylvania: The Tragic Death of the Ziemba Children*. On July 26, 1981, eight-year-old Cheryl Ziemba and her four-year-old brother, Christopher, disappeared from their backyard in Old Forge. Within hours, hundreds of neighbors, police and firefighters were engaged in a frantic search. Two days later, firefighters discovered the bodies of the children in an abandoned strip-mining pit. Pennsylvania State Police arrested their fifteen-year-old neighbor, Joey Aulisio, who was tried as an adult and sentenced to death by electric chair. Forty-three years later, Joey Aulisio still sits in prison. Kincaid is a trial attorney who, for the past thirty-five years, has tried criminal and civil cases before the courts in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. He has devoted much of his law practice to crime victims' rights. In December 2019, Mr. Kincaid served as a witness during Aulisio's resentencing hearing. This is his first book.





Nancy's Corner

The Lackawanna Historical Society is pleased to offer "Nancy's Corner" celebrating our musical history and dedicated in memory of LHS member and friend Nancy Farkas. Nancy was a true lover of the arts, especially music, and we hope that by sharing stories about our rich musical heritage, we will honor her memory and inspire others.

The Nutcracker: a free gift for 50 years!

In the 1940's, Constance Reynolds, a native of Edinburgh, Scotland came to Northeastern Pennsylvania and began teaching ballet in her back yard in Moscow. Eventually, as she taught more students, she moved to the YWCA in downtown Scranton and, as her business grew, she moved to her own studio in the heart of downtown. In 1958, as her students reached a level of proficiency, Mrs. Reynolds created the not-for-profit ballet organization, Ballet Theatre of Scranton. Throughout the following years, BTOS flourished and, in 1976, Mrs. Reynolds decided that she wanted to give something back to the community that had embraced her so warmly. She approached the then-president of Marywood College (now Marywood University), Sister Coleman Nee, with an idea of partnering to give a joint holiday gift to our community.

The Nutcracker ballet was a perfect choice, as dance was Mrs. Reynolds passion and the holidays were a perfect time to give a gift. It was decided to perform the ballet on the three days after Christmas...free of charge to the NEPA community. The scenery and costumes were meager but the love of giving back was strong from all involved. Through the years the production and its theatrical elements were enhanced and, in 1991, Joanne Arduino took the helm as Artistic Director and continued to present six performances yearly in the spirit in which it was intended... as a gift. Mrs. Arduino had been trained by Constance Reynolds and danced in the original 1976 performances and consecutive productions until her retirement from performing in 1991.

Educational performances were added and offered to NEPA regional school districts and recently a sensory friendly performance was

added for the neurodiverse population.

In 2019 the production was moved to Goodwill's Theater at North. After the pandemic, it was decided to move the dates of the production to kick off the holiday season and perform during the Thanksgiving weekend. How appropriate to "give thanks"!



Constance Reynolds and Joanne Arduino

To date over 5,000 cast members have graced the stage and 1,000 stage crew as well as 2,500 volunteers have all contributed their talents. The scenery, costumes, and production values are all top notch. The costs have risen from a very small budget in 1976 to currently \$200,000 per year, which includes many in-kind donations.

We are grateful to so many who have helped us reach this milestone! The media, government agencies, talented designers and technical theater experts, volunteers, public support, **and the dancers...** all who believe in the gift and *the dream of one woman*.

Thank you!

The Photo Archaeologist

The Season of Stories: Where Memories Become Legacy

By Cheryl T. Kaiser, The Photo Archaeologist & Photographer

It's holiday time. While your mind may be racing with lists of gifts to buy, parties to attend, and end-of-year plans to manage, I'd like to invite you to picture something different—a quieter, more intentional scene. The one that often slips by in the flurry of all the plans and preparations: the brief, precious moments when your family gathers, hugs, stories, and jokes are shared, and laughter fills the air.

Those moments may seem fleeting, but they are the heartbeat of the season. They're opportunities to create chapters in your family's story that will outlast the wrapping paper, yummy food, and holiday lights. The holidays naturally bring opportunities to share memories, and winter itself—with its slower rhythm and reflective spirit—invites us to finally tackle the projects we've put off all year. Combine the two, and you have the perfect time to both tell and preserve your stories and those of your loved ones.

There's an old proverb that says, "When an elder passes away, a library burns to the ground." Like many of you, I've reached the point where I'm now the eldest of my line. My parents, even my aunts and uncles are gone as well, and I often wish I had listened more closely when they had stories to tell and wisdom to share (whether I wanted to hear it or not!). I'm grateful for the traces that were left behind—Family Christmas letters, Mom's notebook of memories she wrote out, her laptop full of old emails, the happy birthday voice mail she left me just weeks before she passed, and even some old cassette tapes I found that as a kid I recorded my father talking, and another was an interview I did with my grandfather for my Girl Scout badge! Hearing their voices again—whether in a recording or in an old movie—feels like a hand reaching through time.

This holiday season, I encourage you to not only take photos of family, the traditions, the fun, but to record the stories behind them. With permission, capture conversations as you ask family members—young and old—questions like, "What is your favorite holiday food?" or "Growing up, what traditions did your family have?" Simple questions open doors to laughter, storytelling, and connection. Recordings matter because memories fade, but voices and stories endure.

A Season for Stories

The holidays have a way of bringing us back to our roots and traditions, but do you know where those traditions began?

In my house growing up, Santa always left one gift under our tree in our bedrooms that we could open on our own when we woke up. I found out later that this tradition, which we continued with our daughter, was simply to give my parents 10 extra minutes of sleep! But to share that tradition with our daughter as she grew up, was precious because it was special to her.

The season, the aroma of favorite recipes, the sound of familiar laughter, the warmth of shared memories—all invite us to remember. For those of us who treasure family photo-

graphs and the stories they hold, this season offers the perfect backdrop to do more than reminisce. It's a time to share, record, and preserve today's memories for tomorrow – the ones that matter most.


cheryl kaiser

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The Power of Listening

Storytelling is a two-way gift. The person sharing the story offers a piece of their life, and the one listening gives something just as valuable—their full attention. When we truly listen, we help people feel seen and remembered. We become witnesses to their experiences and emotions. And when we record those stories—whether by jotting notes, recording their voice, or saving their laughter—we give those moments a chance to live on, long after the season ends.

Storytelling Prompts & Recording Tips Story Prompts:

- *What's a favorite holiday tradition from your childhood?*
- *Who cooked the best meal or had a signature dish?*
- *What's the funniest or most unexpected thing that ever happened during a holiday gathering?*
- *What's one piece of advice or wisdom passed down in your family that still rings true?*

Recording Tips:

- *Keep it casual—record short snippets during natural conversations.*
- *Ask open-ended questions and let silence invite reflection.*
- *Always ask permission before recording.*
- *Label and save your recordings right away, while the memory is fresh.*
- *Store your recordings safely alongside your digital photos or in your Forever account.*

Capture the Stories as They're Told

The technology in your pocket is all you need to preserve the magic. Record short voice memos or videos as family members share memories. Capture the laughter, the pauses, and the tone of their voice, and even those bad jokes Uncle Joe is famous for telling, or the funny face your brother always makes when the camera is pointed at him—even as an adult. These moments—imperfect, unrehearsed, and real—become priceless treasures for the future, for generations.

You don't need fancy equipment or hours of editing, just intention. Title or label the recordings (even on your phone you can add a short description), upload them to your digital archive such as a permanent Forever account, and pair them with photos or written notes. Share them with family today and preserve them for the day your grandchildren could hear those voices and feel as if they've met the people who came before them.

This is the heart of family preservation — not just the photographs, but the voices, emotions, and stories that bring them to life.

Winter: The Perfect Time to Begin

Winter offers the gift of stillness (I know, and snow too). It's the perfect season to start small: fifteen minutes a day sorting, labeling, or scanning photos; or simply selecting your 2025 holiday photos and writing down or recording your memories; or recording a simple conversation with a loved one. Turn this quiet time into your own reflection project and record YOUR life story too! Every detail you include brings your family's history to life for generations.

This isn't about technology; it's about care and intention. It's about creating a legacy of your family's memories and stories for the future and share now.

The Legacy of Passing It On

At some point, the responsibility of remembering shifts to us. Maybe you've already felt it—the moment you realize you are now the one who remembers the most. You become the keeper of the names, the memories, the photos, and the love that ties them all together. Preserving and sharing these stories isn't just about organization—it's about legacy. When we connect the faces to the names and the stories to the photos, we give the next generation more than images; we give them identity and belonging. We show them where they came from, and in doing so, we help them understand where they're going.

In Closing

So this winter, as you gather with loved ones or enjoy moments of solitude, remember that building a legacy isn't only about organizing photos—it's building each chapter of memories through stories. You're capturing the warmth of connection, the sound of memory, and the spirit of legacy.

One photo. One story. One conversation. That's how legacies live on.

LACKAWANNA PAST TIMES

Friday, Nov. 21 at 2pm

Scranton Architects Part2
with Mary Ann Moran Savakinus

Friday, Jan. 30 at 2pm

*Our Common Home:
Scranton and the Environment*
with Bill Conlogue, Ph.D.

Friday, Feb. 27 at 2pm

Carpatho Rusyn Sports
with George Pawlush

Friday, March 27 at 2pm

NEPA Language and Life Project
with Lewis Esposito, Ph.D.

Our monthly Lackawanna Past Times virtual lecture series presents local history programs via Zoom; email us at lackawannahistory@gmail.com for the link. Catch up on 70 past episodes on our YouTube channel at: <https://tinyurl.com/y5hbsufx>



START A NEW TRADITION!

CHRISTMAS PYSANKY

**LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
SAT., NOVEMBER 22 @ 11 AM**

**The Catlin House
232 Monroe Ave., Scranton**

Join our Christmas pysanky workshop to create new holiday decor! Not just for Easter, this traditional Ukrainian craft uses wax to draw patterns on eggs before applying dye. The workshop will be led by Tammy Budnovich, a member of S.S. Cyril & Methodius church, who has been teaching the craft for several years. Not confident in your artistic abilities? Tammy's pysanky art will be available for sale as well!

**\$30 PER PERSON, INCLUDES SUPPLIES
CALL 570-344-3841 TO REGISTER**



Anthracite Mining Heritage Month

Join us on **Saturday, January 31 at 2 pm** at the Catlin House when LHS member Charlie Kumpas discusses *Anthracite Breaker Boys* as part of the 2026 Anthracite Mining Heritage Month (AMHM). AMHM marks its 25th anniversary in 2026. According to program founder, Robert Wolensky, it began in 2001 as Mining History Week in the northern anthracite coalfield's Scranton/Wilkes-Barre areas and has steadily expanded since, with 27 different events presented last January in more than two dozen communities across all three anthracite fields (northern, middle, and southern). This annual event has met

the public's ongoing interest in the social, economic, and cultural history of the hard coal region and the Lackawanna Historical Society are pleased to participate. For full schedule and planning updates, or to submit a program, go to <https://www.anthracitemuseum.org/amhm/>

Continued from page 1

Scranton's civil engineer Joel Amsden. While there is no evidence that Upjohn responded at all to Rev. Long's letter, it is entirely possible because 14 years later, in 1866, his firm P. & R.M. Upjohn did design the second church for St. Luke's.

The second church was completed in 1871, and is the one that still stands today on Wyoming Avenue between Spruce Street (Biden) and Linden Street on the edge of what was then a swamp. It was the first large structure to be erected in this part of the downtown and the first building of any size to be built on one of the swamp lots. The Upjohns designed an Elizabethan Gothic building that cost \$150,000 with \$20,000 going to the foundation.

In the years that followed, from 1892 until 1905, Louis C. Tiffany and his artisans made several changes. With a gift from the John Jermyn family, Tiffany moved the altar back ten feet onto the Forest Court property line thus creating an apse. The entire altar, Ascension window, and nave chandeliers all figured into the renovation. At this same time, Mary Throop Phelps gave the Tiffany mosaic on the left side of the nave. The artist's skill with the 7000 tile pieces of Christ being baptized by John the Baptist is very evident as Christ's foot is seen in the transparen-

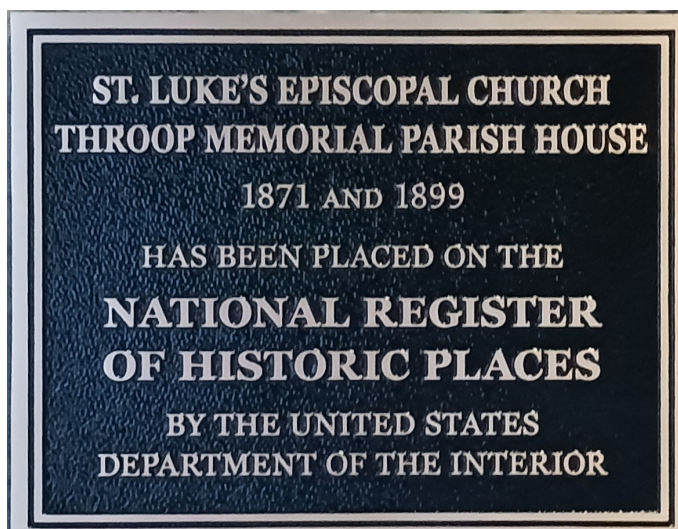


cy of the River Jordan. Mrs. Phelps also gave the Throop Memorial Building in memory of her parents. The Parish House was completed in 1899.

Mother Barnes and Ella Rayburn continued to conduct research and prepare the St. Luke's National Register nomination, and were joined by Jayashree Shamanna, AIA, then a local architect. At the time, Shamanna served on the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC), PA's official Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and reviewed National Regis-

ter submittals as part of her duties. She provided much guidance at the beginning of the project and accompanied Barnes and Rayburn on a visit to the New York Public Library to review the Upjohn Archives.

When Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority (LHVA) provided a grant for the purchase of shelving and archival quality storage materials, it was matched by the Women of St. Luke's. A subsequent grant from the Architectural Heritage Association provided funds for the church to hire Martina Bacarella's architectural firm to complete the project and formally submit the nomination the PHMC. On April 10, 2025, after public review by the PHMC, St. Luke's was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The Throop Memorial Parish House, which opened in 1899 and was designed by Scranton architect Frederick Brown, is also included in the National Register recognition. The state forwarded the document to the Keeper of the Register, National Park Service, and St. Luke's was officially listed among the nation's properties recognized by the federal government to be of historic importance. St. Luke's joins 65 other properties in Lackawanna County as an enduring example of the nation's heritage for events, people and achievements. Nationwide, the National Register recognizes about 100,000 properties worthy of historic preservation.



BEYOND THE CANVAS WITH RONNIE

SCRANTON'S SOAP BOX DERBY RACES

When you are an 8 to 10-year-old boy in the early 1950s growing up in a relatively small town (Scranton), there just isn't anything more exciting than the annual Soap Box Derby Race, the *Derby Downs*...especially when all those homemade cars come flying down the hill, only to stop directly in front of your family's corner grocery store! WOW.



Although I will admit I haven't thought about the races all that much as an adult, it all came flooding back recently when a long-lost family photo album turned up at a very unexpected place – our very own Lackawanna Historical Society!

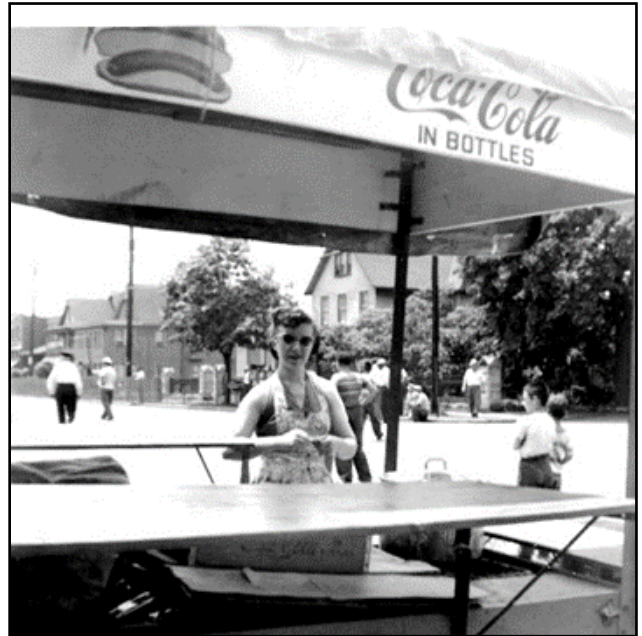
(The picture of the cute little guy in the big hat sitting in one of the cars is none other than yours truly, sitting in front of our store, the Soap Box Derby's starter's jeep in the background in front of the neighborhood gas station (small town America at its long-lost best)!

As I am wont to do, I immediately started to think that there is an article in this story somewhere. Actually, I assumed it would be a fairly easy article to write as I imagined

the local papers would have covered the races extensively. The coverage proved to be mixed.

I grew up in South Scranton aka South Side; the race I was familiar with was the one in South Side that started at the corner of Ripple St. and Cedar Ave., and ran down the Cedar Ave. hill, thru the finish line at Pear St. with the cars finally stopping at the corner of Cedar Ave. and Palm St. (in front of our store), a distance of 900 feet, about 3 city blocks. The average time for this run was 26-27 seconds. (900 feet was critical as it is the same distance as the national race held annually in Akron). The winner of the race received two trophies, a new bicycle, an Elgin wristwatch, and a free trip to Akron to compete in the National Finals, where the winner receives a 4-year scholarship to any college/university in the county!

Snow fences were erected on both sides of the road, bleachers were erected and police patrols were present. It is funny, but I don't remember any police presence at the races, or any streets being blocked off! I do remember lots of people in the streets and that is supported by some of the pictures in our recently discovered family album – the pictures in the album were actually taken by my late mother!



Above is a picture of our store – DiVecchia's market, a typical 1950s neighborhood grocery store (to us kids, it was home to limitless comic books, soda pop and cheap candy). The picture of the woman at the food cart is my Aunt Ada [Bisignani] DiVecchia, my mother's twin sister – she and her husband, Uncle Tom, owned and operated the store. (It is Ada's daughter, Ann Marie, who is my main researcher extraordinaire for these articles)!



These two pictures show scenes of some of the cars being worked on, and of people in the street surrounding a local clown, who showed up every year to provide additional entertainment for the kids.

The Cedar Ave. races started in 1950-1951. The average race consisted of about 50 home-made wooden "racers", built by the participants themselves. 11 and 12 years-old boys participated in Class B with 13 and 15 years-old boys in Class A. Approximately 50 prizes were awarded. How big a deal was the race locally? It was even broadcast on WARM radio! Attendance was normally in the 12,000 range.

The races started with test runs at 11am. The first race started at 2pm, the second at 3pm

Continued on page 12

Continued from page 11



formation on these South Side races, is asked to contact the Historical Society or the author directly at raymead@comcast.net

NOTE: *The first 5 pictures are of the 1953 race. The final picture is the 1951 race.*

and the final race at 4pm.

This final picture shows Scranton Mayor James T. Hanlon at the starting line of the 1951 race. Also shown is the specially made "starting gate" used to release the cars down the hill. (This particular race was won by Richard "Dick" Boes of Duryea, PA.).

Soap Box Derby racing actually started in Scranton on the Luzerne Street hill, in West Scranton in 1935, running for over 10 years. That story is to follow and is still being researched. Anyone having any information on the West Side races, or additional in-

New Exhibits in the Catlin House

A Colorful Fashion Show Continues, and a "Celebration" Kicks Off



Do you remember your "bold choices" in **1960s-70s fashion**? Revisit that colorful closet with pieces from our fashion collection currently on display in our second-floor fashion gallery. Relatively tame by the standards of the day, we've highlighted elegant minidresses worn by Mary Scranton, as well as some bolder choices in fashion and pattern, from a psychedelic homemade dress to bright and unusual hats!

As 2026 approaches, a new exhibit in the Catlins' library kicks off our *America250* observation. **"Celebrate!"** features items and photos from past anniversary celebrations across Lackawanna County, from Scranton's 1916 semicentennial to "Old Home Week" festivities in Providence and Archbald, and the 1976 visit of the "Freedom Train." Do you remember these celebrations?





Sharon's Bookshelf

The Anthracite Coal Industry is the theme for the Fall 2025 newsletter.

The following gently-used publications are available for purchase at the prices listed:

Binder, Frederick Moore, **Coal Age Empire: Pennsylvania Coal and Its Utilization to 1860**, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1974. (Condition: Fair) An examination of pre-Civil War coal industry's socio-economic factors, particularly the influence of railroad innovation on the growing anthracite industry. **Price: \$10.00**

Dublin, Thomas, **When the Mines Closed: Stories of Struggles in Hard Times**, Cornell University Press, 1998. (Condition: Very Good) Based on interviews of patch residents, labourers, and immigrants, an award winning historian has written a powerful story of men and women who worked in the anthracite industry and their adjustment challenges when the mines closed. This work is also an examination of local traditions and values. **Price: \$10.00**

Freeman, Aileen Sallom, **Anthracite Trust**, FOSI, Ltd, 1994. (Condition: Very Good) Noted historian Freeman is the author of this master-class in nineteenth century coal and railroad businesses headquartered in Scranton. Monopolies created by these businesses led to early 1900s major antitrust suits. **Price: \$10.00**

Hudson Coal Company, **The Story of Anthracite**, Hudson Coal Company, 1932. (Condition: Good) A comprehensive story of the anthracite industry from management's perspective; a must-read for understanding top-down profit motives that often clashed with the well-being and rights of labor. Fascinating illustrations, photos and diagrams **Price: \$40.00**

Parsons, Floyd W., (ed) **Coal Mining: A Supplement Published by the Engineering and Mining Journal**, Engineering and Mining Journal, 1908. (Condition: Poor) A detailed study of anthracite mining includes charts, diagrams, topographic maps, photos of mining operations, and - most interesting - a chapter authored by Dr. Matthew J. Shields, a Scrantonian who pioneered the development and implementation of first aid training used by miners nationwide. His work improved safety and emergency response in the collieries and resulted in popular First Aid Contests for miners in Northeastern Pennsylvania. **Price: \$15.00**

Poliniak, Louis, **When Coal Was King: Mining Pennsylvania' Anthracite in Picture and Story in the Land of the Mollie Maguires**, Applied Arts Publishers Publishers, 1987. Two copies (Condition: Good) An overview of the life of Northeastern Pennsylvania mine workers who toiled, and were victims of accidents, in breakers, shafts, mines, canals, and railroad cars. Lots of detailed photos of several area mines. **Price: \$10.00**

Roberts, Ellis, **The Breaker Whistle Blows: Mining Disasters and Labor Leaders in the Anthracite Region**, Anthracite Museum Press, 1984. Two copies (Condition: Good) When the breaker whistle blew, everyone stopped in fear. The whistle was the town crier for many Northeastern Pennsylvania mining patches and villages. "A NEPA saga when immigrants were heroes." **Price: \$20.00**

Salay, Edward, (ed), **Hard Coal, Hard Times: Ethnicity and Labor in the Anthracite Region**, Anthracite Museum Press, 1984. (Condition: Good) Salay's select articles combine ethnic studies with labor history during the peak of the coal industry in NEPA. The selections describe clashes and cooperation among various ethnic groups who endured anti-labour mine policies and intimidation from the Coal and Iron Police. **Price: \$10.00**

Stevenson, George E., **Reflections of an Anthracite Engineer**, printed for private distribution by the Hudson Coal Company, 1931. Rare, Two copies (Condition: Good) The author offers his personal account of a career in the anthracite coal industry. He describes major problems faced by the Hudson Coal Company, to include labor relations, safety, mine subsidence, mechanization, and waste disposal. **Price: \$50.00**

Thiessen, Reinhardt, **The Origin and Constitution of Coal**, The E. B. Yordy Company, 1924. (Condition: Fair) Thiessen, a pioneer U.S. Bureau of Mines research biologist, is responsible for laying the foundation for modern classifications of coal and the assertion that the coal is composed of organic material. **Price: \$5.00**

Wolensky, Robert P and Keating, Joseph M., **Tragedy at Avondale: The Causes, Consequences, and Legacy of the Pennsylvania Anthracite Coal Industry's Most Deadly Mining Disaster**, September 6, 1869, Canal History and Technology Press, 2008. (Condition: Good) An interesting read for historians and general readers. Was the 1869 Avondale Mine Disaster's catastrophic fire in Plymouth, PA an accident or caused by arsonists? Wolensky's and Keating's investigation includes testimony from historians, oral history accounts, preservationists and a bit of lore. Yet, the disaster remains an open cold case. Don't miss reading about this absorbing investigation. **Price: \$10.00**

Books will be sold first come, first served.

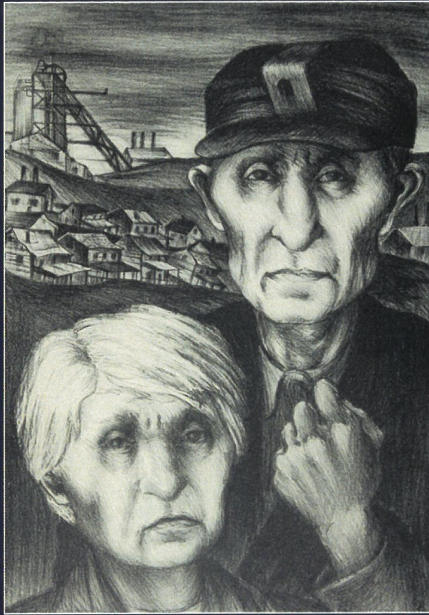
To make a purchase, stop by the Catlin House, call 570-344-3841, or email lackawannahistory@gmail.com

Welcome NET Credit Union Members!

LHS is proud to be a NET Credit Union Preferred Partner Group, allowing credit union members to become LHS members and LHS members to become credit unions members. Welcome to these new members:



Gene Altieri, Dalton	Katrina Hludzik, Dickson City	Steve Phillips, Jessup
Brielle Ankenbauer, Dalton	Winston Hollister, Laceyville	Teresa Pitoniak, Wyoming
Peter Arvonio, Mayfield	Jessica Hubal, Mayfield	Carlton Preate, Clarks Summit
Emma Aukema, Montrose	Ian Hubbard, Jim Thorpe	Thomas Proctor, Tunkhannock
Michele Baker, Waymart	Brett Jayne, Laceyville	Steven Pshyboski, Mountain Top
Hollie Birk, Monroe Twp.	Bart & Stella Jerauld, Nicholson	Michael Pucilowski, Spring Brook Twp.
Melissa Blandon, Buskill	Melissa Jones, Wilkes Barre	Victoria Rivera, Avoca
Ayla Bonnewell, West Pittston	Sam Jordan, Archbald	Jason Roman, Jessup
Kai Boxer, Wyoming	Joseph & Kelly Jordan, Carbondale	Frank Rossi, Harveys Lake
Tanner Brooks, Lake Ariel	William Joyce, Avoca	Kristen Ryan, Archbald
Lesco Brouille, Kingston	Megan Kalmanowicz, Dalton	Giovanni Sacco, Scranton
Patrick Brown, Peckville	William Kaschak, Olyphant	Leonard Sanguedolce, Pittston
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Valerie Burton, Mayfield	Robert & Joanne Ladner, Montrose	Lisa Schultz, E. Stroudsburg
Thomas Callaghan, Kingsley	Nicholas Lamberti, Dalton	Mary Theresa Seeley, Archbald
Douglas Clark, Peckville	Bryttanie Lewis, Throop	Sierra Shaffer, Honesdale
William Clark, Bear Creek	David Longacre, Scott Twp.	Jacqueline Shaver, Dallas
Blaise Cleveland & Ali Canfield, Meshoppen	Samantha Lopera, Scott Twp.	Ryan Sopp, Montrose
Nicholas Condon, Sweet Valley	Audrey Lose, Dallas	Sarah Sosa, Carbondale
Emmit Coolbaugh, Harding	James Lunger, La Plume	Joseph Spear, Old Forge
Shawn Cosenza, Peckville	Donna & Arthur Machler, Dunmore	Scott Stefanski, Harding
Jeffrey Daniels, Hallstead	Luciene Marcinkevich, Dickson City	George Stoss, Pittston
George Dobson, Gouldsboro	Edward Marion, Peckville	Harold Strickland, Old Forge
Jeremy Dominick, Nanticoke	Jeffrey May, Hunlocks Creek	Howard Sweeny, Dunmore
John Donahue, Hazelton	David Maynard, Rome	David Teetsel, Meshoppen
John Downs, Hunlocks Creek	Scott McCloud, Scranton	Frederick Thomas, Thornhurst
Kyle Drake, Bear Creek	Amanda McCollum, Lake Ariel	Hazel Torres, Dickson City
Rebecca Dufendach, N. Abington Twp.	Michael McHale, Dunmore	Michael Trichilo, Roaring Brook Twp.
Shaun Dunn, Kingston	Hayley Mericle Swingle, Archbald	Jessie Tunis, Harveys Lake
Briana Eld, Dickson City	Erin Miller, Montrose	Craig Ulitchney, Pittston
Christopher Eversley, Dickson City	Rebecca Montross, Tunkhannock	Annette Van Wert, Lake Ariel
Amanda Faux, Waverly	Genevieve Munkatchy, Noxen	Gloria & James Vasky, Clarks Summit
Charles Figlow, S. Abington Twp.	Carlene Musselman, Dallas	Anthony Virbitsky, Equinunk
Thomas Fralick, Factoryville	Robert Naegele, Clarks Summit	Jody Viscomi, Scranton
Rhiannon Gaus, Spring Brook Twp.	John Natichak, Nicholson	Michael Wagner, Greenfield Twp.
Gary Geldhof, Archbald	Andrew Nealon, Mountaintop	Joseph Wahy, Childs
Michael Gervasi, Dalton	Vincent Neira, Stroudsburg	John Michael Wasko, S. Abington Twp.
Michael Gleason & Mary Ann Uptain, Springville	Charles Oehler, Pocono Lake	Deborah Watson, Harding
Edward Golanoski, Mountain Top	Stefan Ogonosky, Scranton	David Wheeler, Clarks Summit
Wendi Gordon, Great Bend	Marjorie O'Malley, Hawley	Anthony Whitney, Montrose
Aubrey Guitton, Montrose	Wayne Owen, Archbald	David Williams, Forkston Twp.
My Ha, Pittston	David Pacchioni, Exeter	Edward Williams, Swoyersville
Theresa Haggerty, Eynon	Anthony Pacifico, Dunmore	Kimberly Yablonski, Jefferson Twp.
Patrick & Kateri Harding, Moscow	Brenda Payne, Kingsley	Curt Yenchik, Mountain Top
Deborah & Walter Harrison, Mt. Pocono	Bernard Phillipe, Roaring Brook Twp.	Cierra Yonchik, Wyoming
	Kelly Phillips, Plains	



Riva Helfond. *Miner and Wife*. Lithograph on paper. 1937. The Stanislaus Collection.

FEBRUARY 2 THROUGH MARCH 13, 2026 at the Hope Horn Gallery
The Anthracite Coal Industry of Northeastern Pennsylvania
Selected Prints, Drawings, and Watercolors from
The Stanislaus Collection: 1933-1946

Organized by Richard Stanislaus, past curator of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission Anthracite Heritage Museum, this second exhibition in a two-part series features coal-themed art from the New Deal era, on loan from The Stanislaus Collection. The project is supported in part by grants from the "armature" initiative of the Northeast Educational Intermediate Unit 19 and the Lackawanna County Office of Arts and Culture.

SPECIAL EVENTS

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2026

Depictions of the Anthracite Coal Industry in Prints of the 1930s

Richard Stanislaus, *Guest Curator*

Chester Kulesa, *Past Director, Anthracite Heritage Museum*

Peter Hoffer, *Printmaker/Professor Emeritus, Marywood University*

Panel Discussion at Pearn Auditorium, Brennan 228 • 5:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Public Reception at Hope Horn Gallery, Hyland 405 • 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

\$20 Scranton is Looking Up!

Scranton is Looking Up!



2026 Calendar



Chamber of Commerce
426 Mulberry Street

The Scranton Board of Trade reorganized in 1923 as the Chamber of Commerce. Dedicated in May 1926, their new headquarters on Mulberry Street was designed in the Modern style with Art Deco details by architect Edward Langley. The first floor banquet room featured a Karball organ, donated by L.A. Watson public bathroom dance classes were held there in the 1960s. The chamber moved into new offices on Mulberry Street in 1986; the building was converted into retail space and apartments in 2012.

POSH @ the Scranton Club
404 North Washington Avenue

Built for members of the Scranton Club, a private men's club, this Colonial Revival style building was designed by architect Edward Langley and opened in 1906. Today, the building is shared by three tenants: the Scranton Club is open to members on the lower level, Balaban, restaurant offers upscale dining on the first floor, and POSH offers special events on the upper floors.



January

2026

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

To order your calendar, send payment of \$20 (plus \$4 for S/H) to LHS or use this QR code to order.



The calendars are the brainchild of Susie Connors and are dedicated to her late husband, former Scranton Mayor Jim Connors, who was the city's biggest cheerleader. It offers images of architectural details from Scranton's downtown buildings that can only be seen by "looking up!" All purchases benefit the Lackawanna Historical Society.

LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
232 MONROE AVENUE
SCRANTON, PA 18510

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EVENTS & VIRTUAL HAPPENINGS

Email lackawannahistory@gmail.com to receive History *BYTES*

- Wed., Nov. 19 ***DINE LACKAWANNA*** at Stima's (See pg. 3)
- Fri., Nov. 21, 2 pm ***LACKAWANNA PAST TIMES*** via Zoom *Scranton Architects Part 2* (See pg. 8)
- Sat., Nov. 22, 11 am ***PYSANKY MAKING WORKSHOP*** at the Catlin House (See pg. 8)
- Sun., Dec. 7, 2 pm ***SCRANTON'S BYGONE DEPARTMENT STORES*** book signing at the Catlin House (See pg. 4)
- Wed., Dec. 17, TBA ***LHS HOLIDAY GATHERING*** (invitations coming soon)
- Thurs., Jan. 22, TBA ***JANUARY BLUES*** at the Catlin House
- Sun., Jan. 25, 2 pm ***MURDER IN OLD FORGE*** book signing at the Catlin House (See pg. 4)
- Sat., Jan. 31, 2 pm ***ANTHRACITE BREAKER BOYS*** at the Catlin House (See pg. 8)
- Wed., Feb. 18 ***DINE LACKAWANNA*** at Abbiocco (See pg. 3)
- Fri., Feb. 27, 2 pm ***LACKAWANNA PAST TIMES*** via Zoom *Carpatho Rusyn Sports* (See pg. 8)
- Fri., March 27, 2 pm ***LACKAWANNA PAST TIMES*** via Zoom *NEPA Language and Life Project* (See pg. 8)

SAVE THE DATE: July 12, 2026 at 11 am for a special brunch with President Thomas Jefferson!