

THE ARMORY ... ITS FADING GLORY

By Daniel J. Glodek

Throughout more than a century, thousands of “citizen soldiers” and a countless number of ordinary citizens have graced the portals of the Watres Armory, one of the local homes of the Pennsylvania National Guard. The castle-like structure bore witness to several conflicts both in peace and war. Over the course of many generations, the Armory opened its welcoming doors to presidents, a vice-president, presidential hopefuls, professional boxers and their exuberant fans. In its primary function as a training facility, the Armory also served as a “big top” for circuses, and as a rink for enthusiastic roller skaters.



The Watres Armory on Adams Avenue and Myrtle Street in Scranton has remained a visible constant for Scranton's post Civil War history. At left, Col. Henry Boies, a Civil War



Even before the cornerstone was laid in 1877, the Scranton City Guard was organized to counter some of the labor unrest that had begun to boil over in the region. This was the initial step by Colonel Henry Boies, a veteran of the Civil War, in establishing a military presence in Scranton. Eventually the City Guard evolved into the 13th Regiment and it became the home of the 13th Regiment upon completion of the armory.

The Watres Armory was erected on the 600 block of Myrtle Street between Jefferson and Adams Avenues on land donated by the Lackawanna Iron and Coal Com-

pany. It was built at a cost of \$250,000 and became one of the city's architectural treasures. Planners reached out to New York City to procure the services of the Lansing Holden, and the Armory was built by city contractor Conrad Schroeder. The new and modern facility was named in honor of Colonel Louis Watres, the fifth commander

Continued on page 6

UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

ONGOING	THE LITTLE BLACK DRESS EXHIBIT CATLIN HOUSE THREE GENERATIONS OF HYDE PARK CATLIN HOUSE TOOLS THAT BUILT SCRANTON WILLIAM J. NEALON FEDERAL COURTHOUSE AND POST OFFICE SWING FOR THE FENCES, BASEBALL IN NORTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA WILLIAM J. NEALON FEDERAL COURTHOUSE AND POST OFFICE
SAT. APRIL 12	ANNUAL APPOMATTOX DAY LUNCHEON* THE CLARION HOTEL, 1:30 P.M., \$20 PER PERSON, CALL 457-8438 FOR RESERVATIONS
SAT. APRIL 12	SOLDIERS & SAILORS MONUMENT RE-DEDICATION* COURTHOUSE SQUARE, 4 P.M. RECEPTION FOLLOWS AT THE CATLIN HOUSE.
WED. APRIL 16	GETTYSBURG LECTURE* FEATURING GARY ROCHE, 7 P.M., CATLIN HOUSE
SAT. APRIL 19	GRAND CIVIL WAR BALL* VINTAGE DANCE WORKSHOP WILL BE HELD FROM 1 P.M. TO 3 P.M. (ADDITIONAL LESSONS OFFERED ON WEDNESDAYS MARCH 26, APRIL 2, AND APRIL 9.)
SAT. APRIL 26	CLEAN UP DAY AT THE CATLIN HOUSE BEGINS AT 9 A.M.
SAT. MAY 10	ANNUAL PLACES OF WORSHIP TOUR , SEE PAGE 11 FOR DETAILS.
FRI. MAY 16	A NIGHT AT THE THEATER: THE ODD COUPLE PRE-RECEPTION AT NADA & COMPANY, WYOMING AVENUE, 7 P.M., SEE PAGE 4
SAT. JUNE 7	SUMMER DOWNTOWN WALKING TOURS BEGIN TOURS BEGIN AT THE CATLIN HOUSE.
SUN. JUNE 8,	FOREST HILL CEMETERY TOUR SPONSORED BY THE TAYLOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 2 P.M.
SAT. AND SUN. AUGUST 23, 24	JERMYN HISTORICAL PLAY DETAILS TBA.

*GO TO WWW.SCRANTONCIVILWARDAY.COM FOR INFORMATION ABOUT CIVIL WAR EVENTS.

FROM OUR PRESIDENT...

Dear Friends,

Your Historical Society is moving forward in completing the Phase II Catlin House Restoration project. To bring you up-to-date, repairs and replacements to the windows, wood trim, and stucco have all been completed. As soon as Spring weather becomes more constant, we will begin painting so that all stucco and wood exteriors match. The large stained-glass window in the stairwell has also been conserved and it's absolutely gorgeous. We encourage all members to stop in, even if its only to see this wonderful improvement. Once the contractors have completed their work, we will make the much needed repairs to the driveway and lawn from the wear and tear of the project and the usually winter damage. We are fortunate to once again have volunteers from Friendship House scheduled to work this Spring and Summer to plant and maintain our flower beds.

In other activities, I am pleased to report that our *Share the History Campaign* to double our membership is doing very well. As of this printing we have received 16 new members and more than 30 renewals promising additional new members. Kudos to Trustee Ellie Axford and her committee for their efforts to bring in new members, which are vital to the Historical Society's success. Please join us in *Sharing the History* and invite a friend to join today!

Thanks also to all our dedicated volunteers for their countless hours of service to the Historical Society. We truly appreciate their efforts and willingness to share their time and talent.

In closing, please use our upcoming events calendar on page 12 and plan to join us for some great programs to Bring a Friend to share the history. Remember, interesting speakers and local history can always be found at the Lackawanna Historical Society.

Sincerely,
Alan Sweeney

About Membership... Membership privileges include unlimited access to the Society library, 10% discount in our bookstore, advance notice and invitations to all Society activities, special 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

<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$10	NAME _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$25	
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$35	ADDRESS _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing	\$75	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining	\$150	
<input type="checkbox"/> Silver Corporate	\$250	TELEPHONE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Gold Corporate	\$500	EMAIL _____

*The Lackawanna
Historical Society 2008-09*

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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 Catlin Memorial Trust, Lackawanna County, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and membership dues.

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 Mary Ann Moran-Savakinus at maryann@lackawannahistory.org.

Members of the Society receive this publication. Membership contributions are \$25 and up for Individuals, \$35 for Families, and \$125 for Organizations. Special Silver and Gold Corporate memberships are available.

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Baseball contin-

William Kashatus (available at the society) details the biographies and careers of the 21 Hall of Famers from the anthracite region.

When Ed Zipay played for the Scranton Red Sox in the Eastern League, he played in the stadium on Monroe Avenue where Price Chopper now stands. Zipay took an interesting career turn when he became a Lackawanna County Commissioner in the 1960s and 1970s.

Mike Gazella, from Olyphant and a player for the 1927 Yankees, was the godfather of Hall of Fame umpire Nestor Chylak, also from Olyphant. The families attended St. Cyril's Church. Gazella had a brief career but Chylak's was long and respected.

About 120 years ago, tobacco companies began putting cardboard images of baseball players into cigarette packs to enhance sales and stiffen the package. In 1914, Cracker Jack released a set which was red with a white border. Chewing gum companies took

For Your Information:

Check out these interesting programs planned at the Abington Community Library:

Women's Victorian & Edwardian Fashion Accessories

Wednesday, May 21 at 7 p.m.

Hosted by LHS volunteers

Bridget Conlogue and Jennifer Ochman, this presentation includes shoes, fans, gloves, hats, and more from the LHS collection.

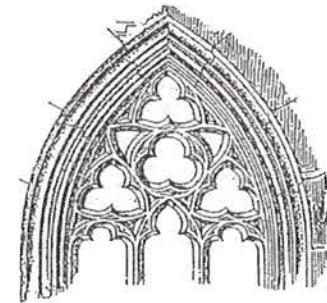
Historic Preservation Lecture

Wednesday, April 23 at 7 PM

Bryan Van Sweden, PHMC

All events are free to the public, but reservations are required.

Call 587-3440 for details



2008 Places of Worship Tour

Join the Lackawanna Historical Society on May 10, 2008 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. for the 15th Annual Places of Worship Tour.

This year, the Society will conduct a WALKING tour focusing on Olyphant places of worship. Each church will present its historical background and Society Trustee Richard Leonori, AIA, will discuss architectural styles and designs.

The tour will begin at 10 a.m. at St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church

Members \$8 Non-Members \$10
(includes boxed lunch)

Space is limited, so reserve early.

PLACES OF WORSHIP TOUR 2008 REGISTRATION FORM

Please detach and return with your payment to:

Lackawanna Historical Society
232 Monroe Avenue
Scranton PA 18510

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Number of persons attending:

_____ Members \$8 _____ Non-members \$10

Amount enclosed: \$ _____

Continued from club ball dating back to the beginning of baseball, just after the Civil War. A number of teams played through the 19th century. Nick Petula's book, A History of Scranton Professional Baseball, 1865 – 1953 (available at the society) was helpful with the early history. The Scranton Miners played in the early part of the 20th century, followed by the Scranton Red Sox (farm team for the Boston Red Sox) from 1939 to 1952. During this time Wilkes-Barre hosted the Barons who fed players to Cleveland, Detroit and New York until 1955. When minor league ball returned in 1989, the Scranton - Wilkes-Barre Red Barons honored local history by combining the former team names.

Not to detract from the skill level of today's players, the players before 1960 are just more interesting. They were truly "the boys of summer" as they worked off-season jobs in their hometowns and made as much money as their fans. A newly published book by Jack Smiles is titled Big Ed Walsh – The Life and Times of a Spitting Hall of Famer relates the story of your typical ball player of the time. Ed Walsh was born in 1881 and earned his miner's certificate before age 20. He played for his mining company's team and any other team when possible. During a strike, scouts saw him pitch in Downingtown,

PA. He was recruited in 1904 for the Chicago White Sox and played for 14 years. Walsh is credited (along with another pitcher) for developing the spit ball, outlawed in 1920.

Hugh "EE-YAH" Jennings, the great, great grandfather of present Scranton Mayor Chris Doherty, was a red-headed firebrand who rose from breaker boy to attorney. Off-season, Jennings built up a Scranton law practice. He stood on one foot and yelled "EE-YAH" - hence the nickname. Recruited for the Louisville Colonels in 1891, he later transferred to the Baltimore Orioles, where he batted a career high .401 in 1896. Through his career he compensated for a lame right arm which finally forced him off the field and into a successful managing career with the Detroit Tigers. He moved to the Giants as a third base coach and lead the team to four straight National League pennants. A 1925 nervous breakdown ended his career. He died in Scranton of spinal meningitis in 1928.

About 40 cards of players and umpires from our area are displayed. Not every player is here but it is a good representation. The exhibit has Hall of Famers to men who, as Joe Butash said, had a "cup of coffee" then went on to other careers. Diamonds in the Coalfields by

Continued next



Remember to Share the History
as we celebrate the 100th years of the Everhart Museum and the historic Lackawanna Station! Invite a friend to join the Lackawanna Historical Society today.

NEW MEMBERS

STUDENT

TARA HERDT, SCRANTON

INDIVIDUAL

ALICE WITKOSKI, CLARKS SUMMIT
BENJAMIN BARTOLI, THROOP
MARGO TOMLINSON, BLAKELY
NEIL ANTHONY TRAMA III, SCRANTON
MARGARET SPENCER HORGER, MOOSIC
NATALIE SOLFANELLI, MOOSIC
CAROLYN CLARK, LAKE ARIEL
EDITH PASETTI, LAKE ARIEL
SUSAN JEFFREY, HAWLEY

FAMILY

LORRAINE DURKIN, CLARKS SUMMIT
JOSEPH AND CATHERINE KLOSS, SCRANTON
ANGELA AND TUCKER EGAN, SCRANTON
MARY ANN TOMASETTI, DANBURY, CT
JOSEPH AND SUZANNE SHEA, CLARKS SUMMIT
SALVATORE W. AND MARY ANN MECCA, DUNMORE

CONTRIBUTING

SCRANTON SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF, SCRANTON
LAURA MOORE, CLARKS SUMMIT

SUSTAINING

JANE G. MCGOWTY, SCRANTON

MEMORIALS

ANNIVERSARY GREETINGS

MR. AND MRS. FRAN MCMULLEN FROM ELLEN ALEXANDER

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

MRS. CAROL MCMULLEN FROM ELLEN ALEXANDER

VOLUNTEER CORNER

In 2007, volunteers at the Lackawanna Historical Society donated over 2800 hours of service to the Society. Congratulations to our 2006 Volunteer of the Year, Bob Booth for donating a record number of hours, 553, and special mentions to Dennis and Sharleen Martin for their contribution of more than 300 hours each. It is only through the continued work of dedicated volunteers like these that the Society is able to achieve its mission to preserve Lackawanna County history. We thank all of our volunteers who dedicate their time and talent to make our organization such a success.

Thanks also to our Trustees who serve countless hours overseeing the Society's operations and setting policies for the Society. Their unwavering commitment to the Society is most appreciated.

Welcome to new LHS volunteers: Anthony "AJ" Cerra, Chris Bambach, Patrick Coughlin, and Lauren Propst.

AJ is a student at Abington Heights Middle School. He has been working at the Catlin House on Saturday afternoons to complete required volunteer service hours for his Confirmation and has been most helpful as an office and research assistant. His work has included copying Scranton City Directories, helping with mailings, and filing library materials.

Chris and Patrick are volunteering at the Catlin House as Interns from the University of Scranton. Pat, a senior from High Bridge, NJ, is working with Society Trustee and Collections Committee Chair Ella Rayburn to catalogue incoming donations. Chris, a Scranton native and U. of S. senior, is organizing the Society's postcard collection including creating a

classification for newly donated postcards.

Lauren, an Archbald native and recent graduate from Lehigh University with a Masters in History, is working with Ella, Pat and the Collections team, in order to gain some practical experience.

Welcome back to LHS volunteers Joan Caffrey and Barbara Spott. They returned to the Catlin House in February after a four-month period for health issues. We are delighted that they have returned to continue their important work of filing local history articles.

And finally, a special word of appreciation must be expressed to LHS volunteer Bob Morrisette and his wife Linda. Bob began volunteering for the Society last year and has made great strides in organizing the map collection. A New Jersey resident, Bob, who was joined by Linda during school vacations, traveled to Scranton for three days each month to volunteer for the Society. He and Linda spent more than 170 hours inventorying maps, determining which ones were inappropriate or duplicative in the collection, compiling maps for de-accession, then sending these to more appropriate repositories or preparing list for sale to our members (in recent issues). The project resulted in a well-organized local map collection, which is sorted by subject and provides a usable inventory from which to conduct a search. We look forward to phase two of Bob and Linda's project to locate additional maps in the Society's collections and add them to the map inventory.

***National Volunteer Week
is April 27th through May 3rd***

Swing for the Fences, Baseball in Northeast Pennsylvania

By Ella S. Rayburn

A baseball card exhibit has been installed in the lobby of the Post Office on Linden and Washington in four cases in the corner of the building. The exhibit should be up until the 2008 World Series.

Baseball and ball players have long occupied an iconic position in Lackawanna County. Today the power hitters and quick fielders are admired for their skills and year-round pay checks. In an earlier, more ram-bunctious, more personal time, baseball players returned home at the end of the season and worked winter jobs.

With the melting snow as a harbinger of opening day, Joe Butash approached the historical society with the idea of an exhibit based on baseball cards that he and his son Joe have collected. In a discussion with Joe, we learned he also had a few mementoes of local players from the All-American Girls League, the Scranton Miners, and the Red Barons.

The All-American Girls Professional Base-

ball League existed from 1943 to 1954. Begun when Philip Wrigley, owner of the Chicago Cubs, thought men's pro ball would close due to World War II, the League attracted top-flight women players from the U.S. and Canada. Attendance peaked in 1948 when ten teams attracted 910,000 paying fans. Over 600 women athletes played in the League at a level never before attained. The League represents a unique aspect of our nation's baseball history when baseball was, indeed, the All-American sport. Four women from our area played in the League: Jeanie Marlowe, who died in April 2007, played from 1948 to 1954 in several positions; Ruth Heverly pitched from 1947 to 1953; Joyce Steele played outfield and first base in 1953; Lillian Hlavaty's stats are not listed. The League has an informative website at www.aagpbl.org.

In 2007, the Scranton - Wilkes-Barre Yankees inherited a tradition of long standing support of minor league and

Continued on Page

In Appreciation

The Lackawanna Historical Society extends a *special thank you* to the Architectural Heritage Association for its \$1,500 donation in support of the continued Catlin House restoration work

On Friday, May 16th the Lackawanna Historical Society is proud to present the return of

"A Night at the Theater"

This year we will host a pre-reception at **Nada and Company**, on Wyoming Avenue in downtown Scranton at 7 p.m. followed by the Northeast Theatre's production of **The Odd Couple** at 8 p.m., just around the corner on Spruce Street in the old Hotel Jermyn building.

Tickets for this special event are \$30 and can be purchased through the Society.

Come join your fellow LHS members for an evening of good cheer and fine entertainment.

1871 in the 500 block of Lackawanna Avenue. Known as Klein's Opera House, it met a growing need for higher-quality entertainment. The 1200 seat theater had good success but burned down in 1876. The gap it left was quickly filled the next year with the opening of the Academy of Music. It was located at 235 Wyoming Avenue, cost about \$40,000 to build, and seated more than 1900 patrons.

For many years it offered the best available in music entertainment. In later years it also featured local stage productions as well as the best touring shows and biggest stars of the time. Plays ranged from Shakespearean productions, musicals, and comedies, to dramas featuring the most famous entertainers of each era. The theater closed in 1930 and stood abandoned for several years before it was torn down.

With the success of the Academy, many more theaters followed. In 1894 the Frothingham was constructed. It was the first theater of its time and lasted for more than 20 years before falling victim to flames in 1916. Throughout the early 1900's it attracted top-flight road shows and it was not unusual for the ticket lines to be an entire city block long.

Vaudeville came to Scranton with the Dixie Theater in 1902. Even though the price was right - you could see seven acts for ten cents, the Dixie didn't do particularly well and closed in 1905. It was later known as the Court Square Theater. However, in 1908 vaudeville

came back to Scranton with the building of the Poli Theater

at 220 Wyoming Avenue. The Poli was a first-class theater with 2000 seats. Scranton became a major stop on the vaudeville tour leading to the famous statement *If you can play Scranton, you can play anywhere*. Among the stars that appeared here were Mae West, W.C. Fields, Houdini, Will Rogers, Fred Astaire, the Marx Brothers, Fanny Brice, Buster Keaton, Ed Wynn, Fred Allen, Jack Benny, George Burns and Gracie Allen. In 1930 the Poli became the Ritz but was destroyed in a 1937 fire. The Comerford Theater was built on its site in 1938.

In 1910 another form of entertainment

Scranton became a major stop on the vaudeville tour leading to the famous statement *If you can play Scranton, you can play anywhere*.

Welcomes and Farewells

Welcome and good luck to **Amanda Clare**, who served as Office Assistant since January. Amanda, who currently resides in Peckville, holds a History degree from Lycoming College and has been quite helpful in the short time she has been with the Society. She designed several brochures, organized this year's Places of Worship Tour, coordinated the office computers, and assisted in general office duties. Unfortunately for the LHS, Amanda will leave us at the end of March for a new position at Tobyhanna Army Depot. We wish her much success in her new career

and hope to see her soon as she has promised to return as a volunteer once she is settled. The Society is also excited to welcome **Lindsay Zrudlo** to our staff. Lindsay first joined us as a volunteer at the Catlin House as part of the Yellowwood program, an alternative learning program of the Scranton School District. In March she was officially hired to serve as the new housekeeper at the Catlin House. She will be working two hours per day to keep our home tiptop. Her work includes not only general housecleaning, but she is also working closely with our Collections

Continued from

of the 13th Regiment and the driving force behind making the Armory became a reality. The Watres Armory replaced its obsolete predecessor, which was located in the 300 block of Adams Avenue, but the outmoded structure proved its worth by being used as a makeshift hospital during the worldwide influenza epidemic of 1918.

The 13th Regiment was in service for thirty-nine meritorious years (1877—1916). During that time, the unit was mobilized into active duty on five separate occasions. Three of those tours were served within the borders of the commonwealth when labor disputes erupted in Homestead (1892), Latimer (1897) and Olyphant (1902).

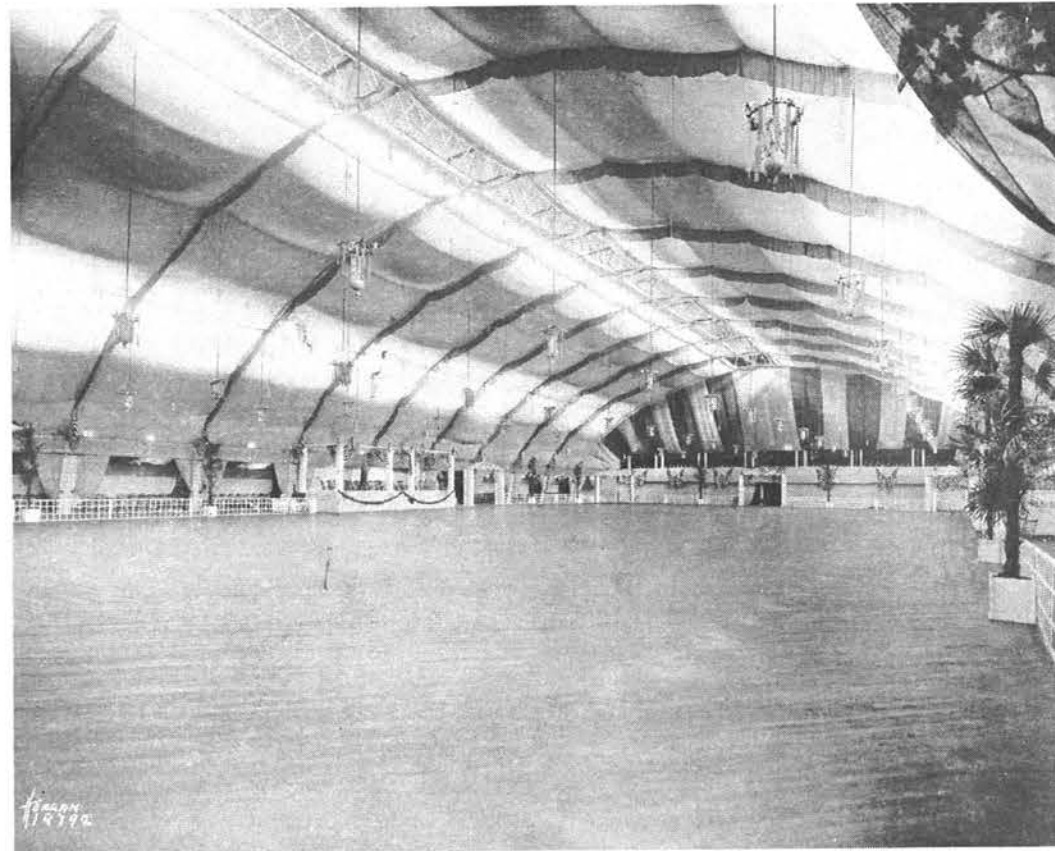
The other two call-ups were for national events. The first came in 1898 when the call to arms was issued by President McKinley during the Spanish American War. Prior to American involvement in World War I, the 13th Regiment was stationed at Camp Stew-

art, which was located in El Paso, Texas, as part of the Mexican Border Campaign. It was during this deployment that the tradition of the "Old Gray Mare" was born. Through the determined efforts of a Lieutenant Hayes and Sergeant Peter F. Samony, a makeshift band was organized. The fledgling band became proficient in playing the "Old Gray Mare" thus giving birth to the 13th's - and later the 109th Infantry Regiment's - traditional marching song.

Before the United States entered the Great War, the 109th of the 28th Division was reorganized at Camp Hancock, Georgia, in 1917. The 1st and 13th Regiments of the Pennsylvania National Guard were incorporated into a new unit. Because of the stubborn tendency displayed by the 109th and her sister regiments in the 28th, the Germans respectfully referred to these soldiers as the "Iron Division" - the "Men of Iron."

The "Men of Iron" were tempered by a fierce, fighting spirit that passed on the seeds of valor and fortitude, the same intrinsic drive that inspired the Keystone doughboys to soundly defeat the Kaiser's elite forces in infamous battles such as the Marne, Meuse-Argon, Champagne-Marne, Aise-Marne, and Ypres-Lys.

During World War II, the Germans once again paid tribute to the virtues of the 28th, referring to it as the "Bloody Bucket", both for its blood-seeped gallantry, and for the red keystone



The Watres Armory Drill Hall - Dressed for a Dance

patch they proudly wore. The men of the 28th contributed to the ultimate defeat of a fanatical enemy, engaging him under the most trying conditions in the battles of Schmidt, the Hurtgen Forest and the Bulge. The 28th was the oldest division in the



*Conrad Schroeder
built the Watres Armory*

Army and earned its share of medals, but the greatest distinction bestowed upon it was leading the liberation parade down the Champs Elysee in Paris. The unit then went directly into combat and became the first American Division to enter Germany. Five years later, the 28th was called to serve during the Korean Conflict, but served in Germany for the duration of this call to service.

For many years the Watres Armory was the bustling terminal from where men departed to and returned from war. Sadly, many men found their final resting place in foreign soil. Between wars, the Armory served as a base of operations during civil disturbances and as a control center during

times of flood and other emergencies. It stood the test of time for many years, but even the mightiest fortresses are not invincible. Often, progress and proclaimed obsolescence are the greatest spoilers and are the reasons why historical architectural treasures fall into the realm of obscurity. The artistry, craftsmanship and symmetry of the past have been diminished. Architectural masterpieces such as the Armory have been denigrated by "cookie-cutter" substitutes.

Old and viable memories cannot be erased by the wrecking-ball or hastily-built alternatives. If aging walls could talk, the echoing voices of scores of veteran guardsmen would proudly sound off throughout the halls and chambers. Whether the "old castle" fails to meet muster in the future or if it quietly passes into oblivion, it will live on for those who passed through its doors and those who drilled on its spacious floors. Through changes of organization, uniforms, and purposes of mission the Armory served as the hub from where progress flowed. Today it faces the reality of inevitable extinction. Its fate seems sealed, but like good soldiers "Ours is not to reason why, ours is to do and die". As soldiers, we must accept high echelon decisions whether we like them or not.

Don't forget Scranton's Civil War Days. More information about the events is available on the back.

Appomattox Day Luncheon, Soldiers and Sailors Monument Rededication, Gettysburg Lecture, and the...

**ANNUAL CIVIL WAR BALL
www.ScrantonCivilWarDay.com**

