



# LHS

The Lackawanna  
Historical Society  
Journal

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Summer 2011

## EAST MOUNTAIN, MY NEIGHBORHOOD

By Donna Adler

Scranton's East Mountain neighborhood sits above South Side on Moosic Mountain, east of I-81 and about three miles from center city. It is bounded on the east by Dunmore Borough and Roaring Brook Township. Non-residents may be acquainted with the area because Lake Scranton, Waldorf Park, the Irish Cultural Society, the Friendship House, Linwood Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, Geisinger Medical Group, the Marine Corp League Museum, Robinson Park, Mountain Lake, Lutherwood, the Salvation Army store, Holy Name of Jesus Church, and Temple Hased are located in this neighborhood. Most traffic into and out of the neighborhood is via River Street which crosses I-81 at Exit 184, or the Scranton/Pocono Highway (Route 307) which extends from Moosic Street eastward past Lake Scranton. Public transportation is provided by COLTS buses.

When I moved to Scranton in 1991, I rented an apartment on East Mountain and when I married, we bought a house here. Part of the appeal of this residential area, past and present, is its "country-like", suburban aspect. It is close to the city, but less crowded; with cooler temperatures in the summer and great views. We can see across the Lackawanna Valley to the West Mountain, south to Taylor and north to Dickson City as well as down into center city. (One trade-off is snowier, colder winters and icy roads.) The terrain is rugged, rocky and hilly, with wooded areas scattered throughout. It's not unusual to see deer or turkeys in our backyard, and sometimes a bear.

This article is my first attempt to share historical facts and stories of the neighborhood and its people. There is limited space for detail in this overview, but I hope to elaborate in future articles.



Kids line up for free ice cream at Stange's Store on Froude St., circa 1945. Photo owned by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Barry.

### Early History

Before Scranton began its industrial development, I assume East Mountain was valued primarily as a source of lumber and game, but it was soon affected by the developing iron and coal industries. In 1841 the Scranton's purchased 3,750 acres of East Mountain land to gain an additional supply of iron ore for their furnace. At first oxen hauled ore from the mines which were located a short distance south of present day Lake Scranton. A narrow gauge railroad was built in 1848-49 to haul the ore to the furnaces. According to a census taken by E. G. Coursen in 1854, 18 families (2 Welsh, 2 Irish, 14 American) were at the Ore Mines. These mines were abandoned by 1860 due to the poor quality of the ore (25% iron content).

The Pennsylvania Coal Company built a gravity railroad from Port Griffith (Pittston) to Pau-pack Eddy (Hawley) in 1847-50 to haul coal to New York markets via the Delaware & Hudson Canal. This railroad crossed the lower section of East Mountain. The top of Plane

See *East*, pg. 6

## A Word from the President...

**H**ello Everyone,

*In the coming weeks final plans will be completed for the 2011 edition of the Historic House Tour on the Hill. This event, being presented to the community on Sunday, June 26th, is a great project to benefit the Lackawanna Historical Society. It has become a day that is both looked forward to and enjoyed by hundreds of guests given an opportunity to see inside unique and interesting homes. The owners of each site on the tour are very generous to and supportive of the LHS by sharing their property in this way. At each location, as described in the tour guide booklet, you will have an opportunity to enjoy a bit of history as well as interior design. One of the tour locations will also offer lunch options. Spending a few hours in East Scranton's Hill Section is a step back in time as revealed for your enjoyment while you move from one tour site to the next (trolley service provided). Be sure to stop at the Catlin House and browse the yard sale (great books and atlas maps), have tea or coffee with something sweet, and see our "new neighbor"!*

*I would like to thank Mary Ann, Executive Director, the staff and my fellow trustees for their help with this fundraising event. Most importantly, thanks also to the many volunteers both in the homes and behind the scenes that day who make the tour happen. Above all, my sincere thanks to the property owners of all the locations on the Historic House Tour on the Hill 2011.*

*More information about times, tickets and cost are found in this issue along with the many other activities and happenings of the Historical Society. All and all good stuff for the eye, the mind and the heart.*

*Enjoy, Michael Gilmartin*

**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 _____

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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.

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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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# At the Catlin House...

## Second Annual

### *You Live Here, You Should Now This!*

#### A Great Success

Congratulations to all the contestants who participated in the Society's second annual local history game show, *You Live Here, You Should Now This!* On April 29 and 30 and a special nod to this year's champions Margo Azzarelli, Evie Rafalko McNulty, and Joe Daley.

The event was a tremendous success due to the great work of the student planners and their teachers from valley View and Riverside High Schools. We look forward to next year's competition and have already started planning new questions!



## New Members

### Individual

Lewis de Witt Davis, Scranton  
Barbara Jean Jones, Clarks Summit  
Tom Werner, Chester Springs  
Alex Molfetas, Scranton

### Family

Susan Keating, Scranton

## Memorials

In Memory of Lucinda Redington Cawley  
From Dottie and Conrad Bosley

In Memory of Gary F. Mead  
From Marilyn Wentland

## Fund For The Future

### Breaker Boys

Lynn H. Nichols, Waverly  
Patricia Marion, Clarks Summit

We are delighted to report that as of April 12 we have received \$10,517 for the Fund for the Future. Donations continue to come in and we are truly grateful to everyone for their continued interest and support. If you have not yet had an opportunity to make your donation, please use the form below:

Please Print	
Name(s):	_____
Address:	_____
City:	_____
State:	_____ Zip: _____
Phone (day)	_____ (eve) _____
<b>Levels of Giving</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Barons	\$1,000 and over
<input type="checkbox"/> Engineers	\$ 500 - \$999
<input type="checkbox"/> Miners	\$ 275 - \$499
<input type="checkbox"/> Iron Puddlers	\$ 175 - \$274
<input type="checkbox"/> Silk Throwers	\$ 75 - \$174
<input type="checkbox"/> Breaker Boys	under \$75
YES!! We will help.	
Amount of Tax-deductible Gift* \$ _____ Check Enclosed	

Make checks payable to The Lackawanna Historical Society

\*Contributions are tax-deductible within the limits of the law. A copy of the official registration may be obtained by calling the Bureau of Charitable Organizations, PA 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

## Volunteer corner

In this edition of the newsletter the LHS would like to recognize two volunteers, Barry Wolborsky and Joe McTiernan.

Barry has been volunteering with LHS since April. He primarily provides technical support, but also helped organize and archive an exhibit of trolley photos and supervised a group of University of Scranton students as they sorted out historical newspaper clippings. A native of Brooklyn, NY, Barry worked in technical support for a nationally circulated magazine for 14 years before recently moving to Scranton with his fiancé. While continuing to search for a tech support job here in Scranton, Barry decided to join the LHS because of his love of history, his positive experiences as a docent at a New York synagogue, and his desire to get involved in his new community.

Joe has been helping with cataloguing, organizing, and developing the LHS library since last September. Born and raised in Scranton's Hill Section, he visited the Catlin House many times as a child. Joe is a graduate of Scranton Central High School and Johnson College, where he studied electronics. He worked in theater, as an electrical engineer, and taught electronics technology at Johnson College for 8 years. He currently owns his own electronics design business. His years of volunteer experience in local theater groups, coupled with a desire to utilize his professional skills in research and development to benefit his community, led Joe to join the LHS. Joe is also a published poet and proud father of two.

Thanks to Barry and Joe for all their hard work at LHS!

## *Look Up Look Out, We're Out and About!*

### Three New Tours on the LHS Summer downtown walking tour series:

On June 3rd, LHS volunteer Dr. R. Guy McGinnis introduced the first of three new tours offered by the LHS. The June 3<sup>rd</sup> tour began in front of Lackawanna College at Washington Avenue and Vine Street at 5 pm, taking participants on a five-block journey through the downtown with special focus on Education, Culture, Socialization, and Government.

Two more tours are planned this summer:

**July 1, 5 pm...** The July tour will start from the Radisson's Lackawanna Station Hotel parking lot. It is also a five block tour that runs 1 1/2 hours traveling along Lackawanna Avenue to Washington Avenue and ending on Courthouse Square. In addition to providing architecture information about the buildings along the tour route, volunteer guides will cover Industry (primarily energy and railroads), Business (banking and retail), Entertainment Arts, (theater and movie houses) and the multiplicity of ethnicities in the labor pool.

**August 5, 5 pm...** The August tour begins from the Bosak Bank Building at the corner of Lackawanna Avenue and Washington Avenue. This five block tour also runs 1 1/2 hours and covers Lackawanna Avenue from Washington to Wyoming Avenue to Linden Street before once again concluding at Courthouse Square. It concentrates on Retail, Commerce, the Electric City, and Religion with additional discussion of local Banking, Entertainment and Education.

### HISTORIC ATLASES FOR SALE

Over the years the Historical Society has acquired many atlases from the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, thus we have duplicates. We are offering these for sale to our membership first and later to a wider audience. All the volumes are usable but have dirty covers and the first few plates are dirty and have chipped and torn edges. They show the effects of use. Call the society's office at 344-3841.

**One Copy: 1888, The City of Scranton and Borough of Dunmore**, published by L. J. Richard & Co., Philadelphia. Missing Plate E, the Green Ridge Section, Delaware Street to Ash and Lackawanna River to Washington Avenue. All plates are separated from the spine. **\$250**

**Several Copies: 1898, Atlas of the Surveys of the City of Scranton and Borough of Dunmore**, published by Graves and Steinbarger, Philadelphia. All have tight bindings. **\$350**

**One Copy: 1918, City of Scranton and Borough of Dunmore**, published by Volk and Kuehls, Philadelphia. Missing index map and part of the title page. Good binding. **\$340**

### A Snapshot from Lackawanna History



Pictured above is the first graduating class of Lackawanna State Hospital in 1895. They are (left to right) Margaret Cummings, (Mrs.) Margaret Quintin Swingle, Edith Van Dervoort, Jennie Haggerty, Caroline Shaffer, Anna Moon, Grace Miller and Annie Redden. Nursing and teaching were the two professions open to women at the time but many schools required a teacher to resign upon marriage. Photo courtesy of Dennis Martin.



### Historic House Tour Returns

On **June 26th**, the Lackawanna Historical Society will once again host its very popular Historic Hill House Tour from 11 am to 4 pm. This year, confirmed sites include **612 Jefferson Avenue, 624 Jefferson Avenue, 844 Clay Avenue, 714 Taylor Avenue and 630 Jefferson Avenue**, where a lunch menu will be available for purchase.

The Catlin House will also be hosting a **Marketplace** and offering sweet treats for sale throughout the day. And we are delighted to report that **Lolly the Trolley** will be returning to provide shuttle service from site to site. The planning committee is also working on details for a **pre-tour cocktail party** on Friday, June 24 at a special location to be announced!

### Ticket Information

*Tickets will be available starting on June 5th at the Catlin House and Nada & Co., Wyoming Ave.*

#### Prices

Tour-Only Ticket:  
\$25 in advance or  
\$30 on the day of the tour

Pre-Tour Cocktail Party:  
\$45

Combo Ticket:  
\$60



## **Alan Sweeney Portrait Unveiling**

Thanks to everyone who joined us on May 20th at the Oppenheim Building Atrium for the unveiling of the Alan Sweeney Portrait painted by Marylou Chibirka.

Special thanks to the Sweeney Family for their cooperation in planning the event. The original portrait has been purchased as a gift to Judy Sweeney by her family and friends and a reproduction has been purchased for the collection of the Society through a donation from Schiff's Food Service. Additional proceeds from the event will be placed in the Society's Alan Sweeney Memorial Fund to be used for future educational programs.

# Community Calendar

## **Commemoration of the 125th Anniversary of Scranton's Electric Trolley**

**Sunday, June 19th, 11am  
Electric City Trolley Museum  
300 Cliff Street, Scranton**

This event will mark the official Kick-Off of what we hope will be a year-long celebration to culminate on November 30th, the official date of the 125th anniversary. Join us for this special event which will include a proclamation by Scranton Mayor Chris Doherty and remarks from many of our partners on this project. As part of the celebration, the Trolley Museum will be offering free admission to the Museum until Noon and will also be hosting special Father's Day Trolley rides where Dads ride free when accompanied by their families.

## **LHS Members-Only Tour of the Marine Corps Historical Museum**

**September 18th, 2pm  
1340 Alder St., Scranton**

LHS members are invited to take an exclusive tour of the Marine Corps Museum. Attractions include Marine Corps memorabilia, hand-crafted dioramas depicting Marine Corps accomplishments throughout America's military history, and a Korea M-41 tank. Visit [www.mclmuseum.com](http://www.mclmuseum.com) to learn more. RSVP for tour by calling LHS at 570-344-3841

## **Civil War Encampment Weekend Planned!**

*A Civil War encampment will take place in Scranton from June 24-26 to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Civil War. Plans include a weekend encampment at Nay Aug Park, a Friday evening reception at the Everhart Museum, and Saturday Meet and Greet with President Lincoln (aka James Getty) and the Civil War Generals, plus a free concert on Courthouse Square. On Sunday, June 26<sup>th</sup> at 11 am, a brunch will be held at the Radisson with guest speaker, James Getty as Abraham Lincoln, and musical performance by the Philadelphia Brigade Band. Tickets for the brunch are \$15 and can be purchased through the LHS until June 20th. After the brunch, be sure to take a Historic Hill House Tour only a short drive or walk away!*

**Thanks to the Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority for supporting this event.**

### Friday, June 24:

**7pm** - Wreath laying ceremony by SVR and Allied Orders at Dunmore Cemetery

**8pm** - Reception at Everhart Museum's Civil War exhibit (RSVP to LHS, 344-3841)

### Saturday, June 25:

**8am** - State Encampment of Allied Orders of the GAR the Hilton Hotel (Call 457-8438 for details)

**9am....**Civil War Military Encampment at Nay Aug

**3:30 pm....**Arrival at Nay Aug Camp by President Lincoln and a Meet & Greet with Union Generals

**6pm** - State Encampment Banquet of Allied Orders of the GAR at Hilton Hotel (Call 457-8438 for details)

**9pm** - Torch-light parade from Hilton Hotel to Courthouse Square for Philadelphia Brigade Band concert

### Sunday, June 26:

**11am** - Brunch at the Radisson Hotel, with music by the Philadelphia Brigade Band, and an address by President Lincoln. (\$15 per person, call 344-3841 for reservations)

**East** (continued from pg. 1)

Number 5 incline was located in the vicinity of Blucher Avenue & Palm Street. The Number 5 heavy track carried loaded coal cars toward Bunker Hill while the light track (part of Number 21) returned empty cars towards Rocky Glen and Pittston. John Mack, Ulysses Campbell and William Seigel were engineers at Number 5. The Pennsylvania Coal Company Gravity Railroad operated until the Erie and Wyoming Valley Railroad built a steam railroad in 1885 also running through East Mountain (just west of the old gravity tracks). Much of the construction of the Erie line was done at night using the new technology of electric lighting.

Many families moved to the Mountain in the 1880s. Some were German immigrants such as the families of Richard Lucke and George Ludwig on E. Elm Street; Richard Helbing on Beech St. and the Grunwald family on Birch St. By 1894 a 2-room elementary school (John Bartram, No. 37) was built to accommodate the growing population. Kathryn Mitchell was one of its principals; Andy Cronkey, a respected custodian. Not all students attended No. 37. North of East Mountain Road students went to Whittier (No. 2) and Audubon (No. 42) and there was even a 1-room "portable" school (McKinley) during 1918-1935 when the city population was high and schools overcrowded. Other students attended parochial schools such as St. Mary's on River St., and older students went to high schools downtown.

Lake Scranton was created during 1895-98 by damming Stafford Meadow Brook-- a major construction project. The dam was built by Timothy Burke who worked on the Croton Aqueduct in NY as well as the Elmhurst Reservoir. Steam shovels and railroads were used in the construction. A system of scenic roads (approximately 14 miles) were built at the same time, opened to the public, and the Lake became a popular destination for city folk as well as folks already on the Mountain. The Elmhurst Boulevard, completed in 1894, also improved access into and out of the area.

### **Twentieth Century**

By the summer of 1902 many societies and organizations held picnics and outings near Mountain Lake which was "fast becoming a popular pleasure resort". According to the Scranton Tribune, employees of William Blume (the carriage maker), the Junger Maennerchor Singing Society, the Sunshine Bowling Club, and an or-

ganization of former German soldiers known as the Krueger Verein each gathered during 1902 at Baldner's Park for entertainment, clam bakes and boat rides.

Mountain Lake was home to the Girl Scout "Camp Laurel" for many years. Miriam McBride was one of the leaders. The lake was set up for swimming in summer and ice skating in winter. Fred Bonnert, a medic in World War 1, was a popular but strict caretaker at nearby Robinson Park (given by Mina Robinson to the City in 1911).

Waldorf Park (German-American Federation) with Fred Wagner as first president was organized in 1906. Peter Stipp built a rathskeller and dance pavilion that were replaced by a clubhouse completed in 1939. Waldorf Park grew rapidly in number of members and added acres of land. Many clam bakes and "ethnic days" were held at the park. It is still very active.

The Laurel Line established service to the Mountain via its Dunmore line by 1905. The Waldorf Station was located near the present entrance ramp for I-81 north, near the parking lot of the Salvation Army store. In 1930 trains were running at least once every hour from early in the morning until 11 p.m.; with half hour intervals at morning and evening rush hours.

The Scranton Municipal Hospital for Communicable Diseases was built about 1912 on Florida Ave., at that time the outer edge of the residential area. Patients suffering from infectious diseases such as diphtheria, scarlet fever, smallpox, typhoid fever, and influenza could be isolated and cared for at the facility. Many polio patients were treated there in the 1940s and 1950s. It was sold by the City in 1958 and became a nursing home.



Marine Corps League Museum wall, formerly part of the Mattes Community Center, constructed by WPA in 1936.

Coal was mined commercially in the area of Mountain Lake from at least 1893. Spruiks Coal Company shipped out 17,177 tons of coal on the Erie RR in 1916 and employed 48 men. There was a track down Willow St. to meet the Erie and you can still see coal on the "Bridle Path" that led from the Mattes Community Center to Mountain Lake. Production declined after World War I.

In spite of the Depression (or because of it), the 1930s were years of building. The Scranton/Pocono Highway, promoted by the Lackawanna Motor Club, was constructed with federal funds and dedicated in September 1935. The Mattes Community Center (now the Marine Corp League Museum) was a WPA project, dedicated in 1937. Boy Scouts Troop #1 met at the Community Center and Hank & Donald Sayers showed movies on Tuesday nights—a very popular event. The Holy Name of Jesus Church formed under the leadership of Father Philip Rader. (It is now part of the St. John Neumann Parish.) The church building was dedicated in Nov. 1939. The Blucher Ave. Baptist Church and Trinity M. E. Church on Brook St. formed during the 1930s (neither are in existence today). John Bartram School added 2 rooms and could then accommodate 120 students. Jack and Dora Strange opened a grocery store on Froude Ave.; Alf Schommer operated a German Butcher shop on Blucher Ave.; the Frable Economy Store was located at 630 Moltke Ave. and the Waldorf Store at 401 Moltke Ave. was just a short block from the Waldorf Station. Also on Moltke Ave. was the Cox Sheet Metal Company, founded by James W. Cox in 1922. A noteworthy but sad event in 1937 was the destruction by fire of Pen-y-Bryn, the castle-like home of Colonel Louis A. Watres, located just north of the new Scranton/Pocono Highway.

As recently as the 1930s and 1940s, there were few paved roads or public sewers on the Mountain. Families picked blueberries and huckleberries for their own use or to sell for extra money. There were small farms and still a few horses. Residents used paths, such as the Bridle Path and the 100-Steps Path to get around the neighborhood. Many older residents

continued to speak German.

The 1950s and 60s brought another spurt of growth. The Laurel Line stopped running but more folks owned automobiles. The Printcraft Card Company which started on E. Elm Street in 1940, relocated to Maple St. during the 1950s. It became part of Herff Jones about 1970. The former Watres land was mined and then sold for development. The Oakmont Garden Apartments and many new homes were built in this desirable location. To the south of Route 307 homes were added including the brick houses of the Yesu Development about 1957. In 1964 a firehouse was estab-



"Bridle Path" at the Mountain Lake Dam

lished between Seymour and Peller Avenues. The Friendship House relocated from downtown to Derby Ave. in 1960 and the Elks Club also left the downtown (N. Washington Ave.) to the former Stoehr residence on the Scranton/Pocono Highway (now the Geisinger Medical Group). Interstate 81 was built in the mid 1960s—a modern successor to the Gravity, Erie, and Laurel Line systems. The interstate reduced access between South Side and East Mountain, eliminating paths and streets that used to tie the sections together.

### **Recent History:**

Temple Hased and Grace Reformed Episcopal Church relocated to the Oakmont area North of Route 307. Lutherwood senior housing was built across from Lake Scranton. John Bartram School closed around 1975 and became the home of the Irish Cultural Society. The Community Center became the Marine Corp. League Museum. The Robinson Park facilities were updated. The Friendship House expanded into the former Herff Jones facility on Maple St. Many new houses were built on upper Cherry Street. East Mountain Road was re-designed. New drainage pipes were installed eliminating open ditches at the side of the road and sidewalks were added. This was a major and long-awaited improvement for a significant and historic road which separates the 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Wards and divides the mountain into "sides".

I hope you enjoyed this overview of East Mountain history. Please consider sharing your memories and memorabilia about this area or other neighborhoods of Lackawanna County.

# Upcoming Programs and Events

June 24-26

*Civil War Encampment Weekend* (see pg. 5)

June 26, 11 am-4 pm

*Historic Hill House Tour* (see pg. 4)

July 1, 5 pm

**"Look Out, Look Up, We're out and About!"** (see pg. 4)  
at the Radisson Hotel

August 5, 5 pm

**"Look Out, Look Up, We're out and About!"** (see pg. 4)  
at the Bosak Bank Building

September 18, 2 pm

*Members - Only tour of Marine Museum* (see pg. 5)

September 25, 2 pm

*History of Carbondale*  
presented by James J. Racht at the Catlin House

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