



# LHS

The Lackawanna  
Historical Society  
Journal

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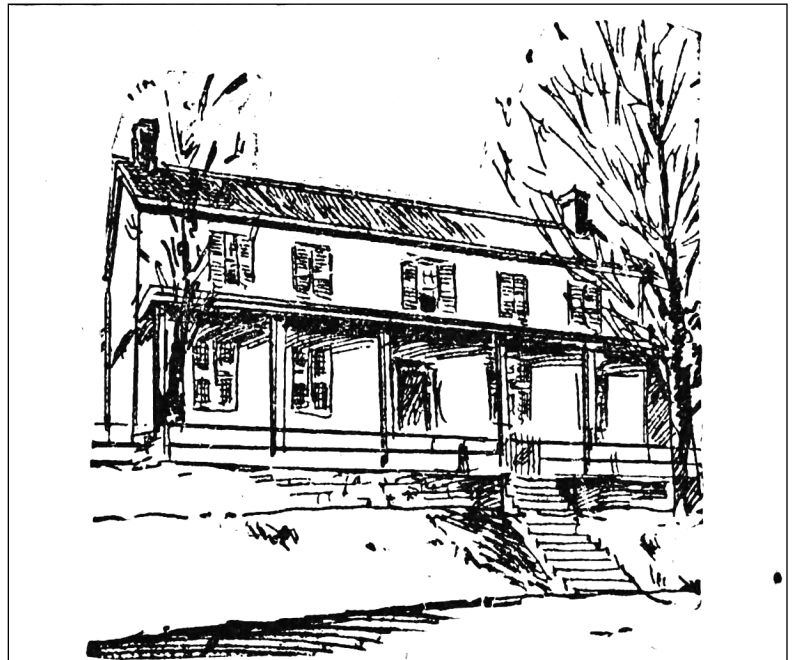
## Musings and Meanderings from Mary Ann

by Mary Ann Moran Savakinus

Recently, our president, Michael Gil-martin, and I were discussing LHS activities and our plan for the rest of this year. In our conversation he mentioned his second favorite historic residence in Scranton, the Tripp House, and wondered if anyone had ever determined what other families or individuals lived in the house after the Tripp family had moved on. He knew that Rosanna, the widow of Col. Ira Tripp had passed away in the late 1890s but was not sure what happened next. Well, I don't need to tell you that I was intrigued by his question and that it sent me down what Assistant Director Sarah Piccini fondly refers to as this week's "rabbit hole"!

It is very interesting how a person can sometimes find themselves on a journey of discovery because of one simple suggestion, but on that day, I found myself completely immersed in Newspapers.com searching for any clues about anyone who ever lived at the Tripp Family Homestead.

My first clue was a March 26, 1902 Scranton Republican headline "*A Landmark Burned - The Historic Old Tripp Homestead Totally Destroyed by Fire Last Night*". No worries, that was the other Tripp Homestead. The article explained that it stood in West Park on North Main Avenue and was not to be confused with the home of the late Col. Ira Tripp. This one, owned by Stephen Tripp, was built in 1800 and was noted as the first frame building to be erected within the city's



*The other Tripp House: Stephen Tripp Homestead*

borders. There was even a drawing of the building, which I thought looked very much like Col. Tripp's home but as distracted as I was (Where on earth was West Park?!), I pressed on and turn my attention to the Tripp House at 1011 North Main Avenue.

Next I found an obituary for Rosanna Tripp, showing her date of death as April 29, 1899. It listed two grandchildren, Mrs. John Broadbent of Scranton and Walter Tripp of San Diego, CA, as her nearest living relatives and further research revealed that her executors were Col. Ezra Ripple and Everett Warren, two rather notable Scrantonians. It was they who were responsible for managing the homestead property.

*Cont. on pg. 6*

## *A Word from the President...*

*Hello Everyone,*

*I have in the past frequently thought of the words of an LHS friend and supporter who pointed out one evening that we are making history every day and every hour. That is why, he remarked, we should make it the best possible. His thought has often helped me to continue and sometimes complete an effort or responsibility I faced. This challenging time we face now, a global pandemic, brings his words home again with meaning. We are confronted daily by complications and frustrations that really do force us to heed his words to be at our best every hour of every day.*

*Serving as a prime example are our staff, volunteers and supporters who are making history in a very positive way. They continue to be available, energized and always helpful, and they make local history interesting, thoughtful, and fun. I make it a point to tell them they are appreciated and encourage you to do the same.*

*Please join me in saluting and thanking the individuals identified on the pages of this newsletter (and in past issues). A note, a call, or a donation to the annual fund drive in honor of their work would be an excellent way to recognize their accomplishments and contributions to the LHS.*

*I hope you are enjoying the beauty of the fall season. It is especially attractive here where we live. Like you I'm sure, I miss seeing people in person, but we need to continue wearing our masks and following CDC guidelines to stay well and safe. Please do, and remain involved.*

*Best Regards,  
Michael Gilmartin*

### ***Consider Giving a Gift Membership this Season!***

**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**

<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$10	NAME	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$35		
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$45	ADDRESS	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing	\$75		
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining	\$150		
<input type="checkbox"/> Silver	\$250	TELEPHONE	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Gold	\$500		
<input type="checkbox"/> Platinum	\$1000	EMAIL	_____

### ***The Lackawanna Historical Society 2020***

#### **OFFICERS**

Michael Gilmartin	President
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Sarah Piccini	Assistant Director
Olivia Bernardi	Creative Director
James and Gay Clifford	Caretakers

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.

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Members of the Society receive this publication. Membership contributions are \$35 and up for Individuals, \$45 for Families, and \$125 for Organizations. Special Silver, Gold, and Platinum levels of memberships are also available.

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# At the Catlin House...

## More than Forty People Joined the Search!

In October, LHS introduced  
*Valley Quest: Scranton Safari!*

The competitive app-based scavenger hunt was held in October to invite people to explore local landmarks to discover animals and other whimsical creatures in the architecture. It was created and implemented by the staff with Trustees **Chris Posly** and **Liz Boeth**, and our 2018 Volunteer of the Year, **Joyce Hatala**. Joyce wrote the clues. **Olivia Bernardi** and **Sarah Piccini** developed a link for our website where

players could register and access the clues. All participants were then entered in a drawing to win a *Basket of Family Fun*, provided by the LHS Trustees. The winner will be announced at a Zoom Happy Hour on November 7. All players will also receive a commemorative Valley Quest pin.



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

### Individual

Mary Bohan, Scranton  
John Canavan, Newton Square  
Louise Kumpson, Hampton VA  
Harry McKay, Scranton  
Clifford A. Melberger, West Pittston  
Michael Ruane, Dunmore  
Patricia Vail, Jacksonville, FL

### Family

Leandra Barbuti Ayala, Scranton  
Joseph & Karen Barrett, Scranton  
Thomas & Erica Romanowski, Scranton  
Denis Yanashot, Scranton

### Contributing

Susan Poulson, Ph.D. & William Houser,  
North Abington Twp.

### Sustaining

Edward Leone, South Abington Twp.  
Rebecca Lewis, Winchester, VA

## Virtual Annual Dinner Program Planned

This year, the Society will offer its annual dinner virtually. Our concept is simple: On Thursday, November 12, order take-out of one of our the *Dine Lackawanna* supporters listed below, and mention LHS when placing an order, then tune into for a very special video tour of one of Scranton's most impressive sites, the Watres Armory. The armory is currently used by renowned artist and collector Hunt Slonem as his personal museum, and the tour will include a peek at some of his treasures. The Zoom link can be obtained by calling the Society at (570) 344-3841 no later than November 10. We know this will be different but hope everyone will consider joining us for a great program including announcement of the 2020 LHS Volunteer of the Year!

### **Dine Lackawanna Take-Out Venues\***

The New Café at Greystone Gardens  
829 Old State Rd., Clarks Summit  
(570) 319-9111

Sidel's Restaurant  
1202 N Main Ave., Scranton  
(570) 343-6544

Café Classico  
1416 Mulberry St., Scranton  
(570) 346-9306

POSH At the Scranton Club  
404 North Washington Ave., Scranton  
(570) 955-5890

Pasquale's Pizzeria & Family Restaurant  
485 Main St., Eynon  
(570) 521-4671

Frank's Place  
57 Jefferson St., Simpson  
(570) 282-0159

Mansour's Market (Lunch /Breakfast)  
969 Prescott Ave., Scranton  
(570) 341-6673

Stirna's Restaurant (Dine in/Take-out)  
120 W Market St., Scranton  
(570) 343-5742

State Street Grill  
114 S State St., Clarks Summit  
(570) 585-5590

Armetta's Restaurant & Pizza  
329 Northern Blvd., Chinchilla  
(570) 586-5492

### **And More!**

\*The venues listed here were confirmed as of the print deadline. For complete list of participating restaurants, please call the LHS or visit [lackawannahistory.org](http://lackawannahistory.org)

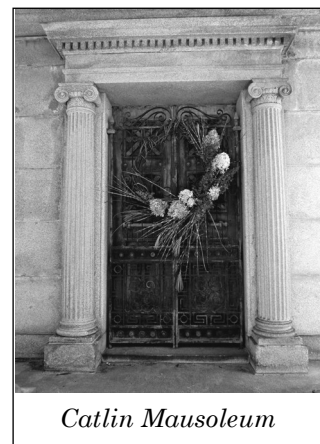


## A Fond Farewell and Note of Gratitude

In August, the Society received word from Trustee John Farkas, PH. D. that he would be leaving the board for employment outside of the area. John first joined the board in 2015 and has been a member since 2012. In his time with us, John has been instrumental in steering us through our Let's Get Wired campaign, establishing an excellent example of planned giving when he named LHS as a beneficiary for a life insurance policy he opened, celebrating our cultural and arts history in establishing Nancy's Corner (next page) and taking the lead in implementing this year's strategic plan "Looking Back and Moving Forward" John will continue to be an active member and plans to visit whenever he is back on our region. We thank John for all he did as a Trustee and will miss John's leadership but wish him the best in his new position.

## VOLUNTEERS

This year the Society has relied on its volunteers more than ever, and they have definitely come through for us. **Ella Rayburn & the Martins** continue to work on organizing and cataloguing the Society's collections. **Ronnie Mead** discovered a new Slocum Hollow portrait and assist us in acquiring it. **Don McKeon** has been invaluable in answering genealogy research inquiries from around the world. **Barbara Spellman Shuta** and **Tom & Cyndie Price** have organized and led the new Genealogy Forum. **Madlyn Yuschovitz** and **Rich Jenkins** are close to completing an inventory of the Col. John Jenkins archive. **Marleen Cloutier** joined us in August to assist with our library cataloguing. Our volunteer gardeners, **Tom Cipriano, John Ochman, Bridget Conlogue** and **Leni Piasky** led by **Chris Ewasho** recently returned to clean up the grounds for the winter. After a busy summer tour season, guides **Leni Piasky, Juliana Piccini** and **Joyce Hatala** joined **Richard Leonori** to shoot a tour for a 2021 Scranton feature by Pennsylvania Cable Network (PCN). Plus Leni and Joyce continue to lead our SOLD OUT Scranton After Dark haunted tours this month. **Michael Gilmartin** and **Jeff Kiefer** stepped up to decorate the Catlin Mausoleum for the October 4th Dunmore Cemetery tour. Thanks to **Julie Esty** and **the Departed Players** for inviting us. We are so grateful to these individuals for sharing their time and talents.



Catlin Mausoleum

## LHS Trustee Election

At the end of this year, the current term for the Lackawanna Historical Society Trustee Class of 2020 will expire. Normally, we nominate the new class during our Holiday event but, due to the pandemic, this event has been cancelled this year. Therefore, we will be inviting members to vote virtually. If you wish to participate, please email [lackawannahistory@gmail.com](mailto:lackawannahistory@gmail.com) no later than December 6 so that we can share the full slate and provide a link where you can submit your vote. If you prefer to vote by telephone, you can call on December 9th or 10th between 11 am and 4 pm to hear the slate and cast your vote. *The 2021 Officers will be elected by their fellow trustees at the January meeting.*







## Nancy's Corner

# Discovering Moritz Eisemann

Recently, Christian Repkewitz of Germany contacted us for help in locating a burial. For more than 16 years, Mr. Repkewitz has been doing research on former Jewish residents of his hometown Altenburg, a town of 32,000 residents in the state of Thuringia, Germany (about 22 miles south of Leipzig). He has written four books and has received the "German Jewish History Award" of the Arthur Obermayer Foundation and a local medal of the County Commissioner for his work. He is currently working on a book about Jewish actors who performed at the Altenburg Theatre for the site's 150th anniversary next year and to mark "nine centuries of Jewish life in Thuringia". Repkewitz explains that Jews were not allowed to settle in Altenburg until 1869 because of expulsions that occurred during the 14th-17th centuries, and because of this, there is little information on former Jewish residents. Moritz Eisemann was a Jewish artist at the Altenburg Theatre and Repkewitz was able to track him from Germany to Poland and then to the US where he found work at several German-based theaters in cities across the country. It is here where Repkewitz' research stalled because he needed to find a death date. We forwarded his request to LHS volunteer Don McKeon who has been tremendously helpful this year in conducting these types of searches. Don found the answer and was so intrigued with Eisemann's story, he suggested we include his story in our newsletter.

Moritz was born on March 4, 1860 in Heidelberg, Baden-Württemberg, Germany. His parents, Hermann Eisemann and Amalie née Rehfuss, moved to the US before 1884 but Moritz stayed in Germany performing on stage as early as 1879 in Eisenach (Thuringia). The next year he came to Altenburg for one season and was then employed at the theatre of Liegnitz (Legnica, now Poland). On June 25, 1884 Eisemann married actress Louise Marie Elisabeth Kirschner in Königsberg (Kaliningrad, now Russia, then Germany) but it does not seem to have lasted very long, because Louise remarried in 1892. By that time, Eisemann had left Germany for the US, and by 1886, was performing at the Germania Theatre in Philadelphia. The 1890s saw him move from one German theater to another in Milwaukee, Kansas City, San Francisco, Cincinnati, Newark and Buffalo before finally turning up in Scranton in June 1899 as a director of the play "Heimat" ("Homeland") by Hermann Sudermann. It was also around this time that he remarried, this time to actress Johanna Iffland. By the following season he was on the road again appearing in Cincinnati, Detroit and Cleveland, before taking a position as theater director at the Metropolitan Opera House in St. Paul, Minnesota. Don McKeon was able to find a "Morris Eisemann" from Heidelberg buried in the columbarium at the Fresh Pond Crematory on Long Island and deduced that Eisemann passed away in 1911. At the time he was still working as a theater director in Rochester, NY.

NOTE: 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.

### Deutsches Theater.—Winterfaçon 1898-99.

Wie wir schon in der letzten Nummer unserer Zeitung berichtet, ist es dem trefflichen Manager Eisemann gelungen, im Verein mit seinen Freunden der deutschen Muse in unserer Stadt Scranton ein festes Heim zu gründen, so daß die deutsche Theater-Saison am Sonntag, den 9. Oktober, eröffnet wird. In erster Linie war es Hr. Eisemann, der es durch unermüdblichen Fleiß dahin gebracht hat, sich eine gewisse Garantie zu sichern, indem die zahlreichen Freunde der deutschen Kunst durch Unterschriften sich verpflichtet haben, das Theater regelmäßig zu besuchen. Es unterliegt mithin keinem Zweifel mehr, daß die deutsche Kunst in unserer Stadt blühen und gedeihen wird. Anstandslos wurden die circulierenden Listen unterzeichnet, denn jeder Subscriber war im Voraus überzeugt, daß Herr Eisemann im kommenden Winter nur Gutes bieten wird, da er es ja den Sommer über so vortrefflich verstanden hat, dem Geschmack des Publikums gerecht zu werden; aber noch circulieren die Listen und sollte Jemand übersehen werden, so wende man sich an die Adresse des Herrn Eisemann, 517 Pittston Avenue, um ein Abonnements-Buch.



Director M. Eisemann.



Johanna Eisemann-Iffland.

Translation by Mr. Repkewitz & Mary Ann Krisa:

German Theatre - Winter Season 1898-99  
... the splendid manager Eisemann succeeded with his friends of the German muse to found... a home in ... Scranton ... the German theatre season will open Sunday, October 9. ... it was Mr. Eisemann who ... guaranteed though his tireless diligence ... (that) the numerous friends of German art ... visit the theatre regularly. There is no doubt that German art in our town will bloom and flourish. Without further ado the circulating lists were signed because every subscriber was convinced in advance that Mr. Eisemann will only show something good this winter because he succeeded this summer to fulfil the audience's taste. But still the lists are circulating and if someone has been overlooked you can turn to Mr. Eisemann's address 517 Pittston Avenue to get an subscription book. Director M. Eisemann ... the bustling director of our temple of the Muses .. engaged a ten-person group of artists for the winter season, these are excellent actors."

Portion of article and photographs  
from Scranton Wochenblatt, Sept. 29, 1898

*Cont. from pg. 1*

One aside: When I checked Lackawanna County's website for Rosanna's will, I found a very detailed list that itemized everything she left in house at the time of her death, and I mean everything, from furniture to flatware right down to the number of cows in the barn!

I continued digging, and next came across the name Mary Shamrock, who, according to a No-

vember 25, 1915 article, purchased the property in 1903 for \$25,000. She paid \$100 but nothing more, and this led to her eviction from the property by a court order. Several articles about her battle to remain in place and one fascinating story about her belongings being taken out of the house and left on the lawn led me to search the deeds on the county's website in order to learn the chain of ownership.

I started with the present owners, the Junior League, who acquired it in 1980 from the Scranton Redevelopment Authority. The SRA had owned it since 1972 when it was purchased from Dominick Landi and his wife Iacopa. The Landi's purchased the home in 1947 from Mary Barbuti, the widow of R. M. Barbuti, and it was they who purchased the Tripp House from West Side Bank in 1921. The bank purchased it at a Sheriff's Sale which resulted from Mary's eviction but according to the deed search, the Sheriff acquired it in 1910, eight years before Mary Shamrock was evicted. The deed revealed that Mary purchased it in 1906 (not 1903 as she stated at the hearing about the eviction in 1915) from Jared Kistler and Charles

## NUBS OF NEWS

**Mrs. Shamrock Loses**—Mrs. Mary Shamrock, former owner of the Ira Tripp homestead on North Main avenue, was refused a new trial yesterday by Judge C. B. Witmer in Federal Court, against the West Side Bank and Ben S. Phillips, former sheriff of Lackawanna county. Judge Wihtmer, however, granted an exception so that the matter can be appealed to the United States Circuit Court of Appeals.

Raine, who were acting on the part of August Robinson. Unfortunately I could not find anything dating back to Rosanna and her heirs but some newspapers articles published at that time reported that Walter's children, Rosanna's great grandchildren, disputed the way the estate was managed by Warren after the death of Ripple.

But there were some other intriguing discrepancies I found as I perused the online newspapers that really piqued my curiosity. It seems that, according to a few pieces

## TO BUY THE OLD TRIPP HOMESTEAD

Option on It Secured by Canon  
Hodoby, Head of the Greek  
Catholic Church in America.

that the homestead was also initially sold in 1902, by the Rosanna Tripp estate to Rev. Andrew Hodoby, head of the Greek Catholic Church in the United States, who planned to make it the headquarters for his church. His real estate agent was a gentlemen named Julius Ezreczky. Later there would be a law suit filed by Hodoby against Ezreczky, who as it turns out, was a cousin of Mary Shamrock! And yes the plot does thicken from there.

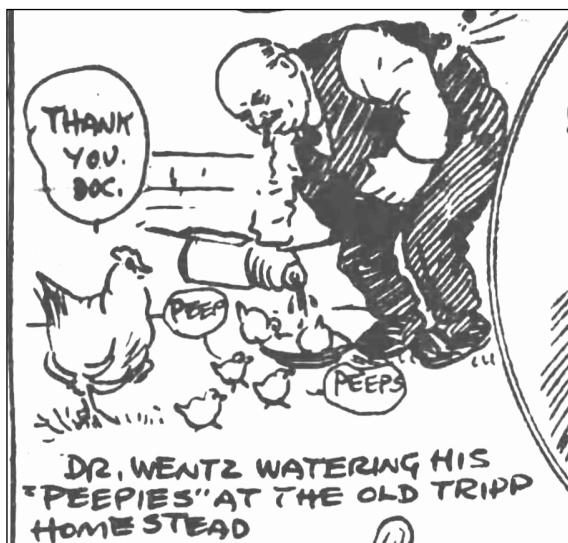
Mary seemed to find trouble everywhere.

## A REMARKABLE STORY BY MRS. MARY SHAMROCK

**She Tells Why She Had a Warrant Issued for Dr. Robinson's Arrest—Says He Wants to Charge Her for Being Her Tenant.**

An article entitled "A Remarkable Story by Mrs. Mary Shamrock appears in the Republican on June 10, 1904 and details a wild story about her struggle with a Dr. Arthur Robinson, although he may not have been an actual doctor. She explained in the article that Dr. Robinson entered into an agreement with her to rent the Tripp Homestead for the

purpose of opening a sanitarium but that the good doctor also explained to her that he was short on money and needed to borrow from her in order to get started. Then, when she visits on the day the sanitarium was to open, instead of patients she finds that his entire family has moved in, and to add insult to injury, the doctor then demands that she pay him and his relatives a salary for working in the house. This leads to further shenanigans and Mary faces more time in court, in one instance for assault against a female acquaintance of Dr. Robinson. At one point Mary comments that she still wants to establish a sanitarium and she does eventually bring in Dr. Wentz to set it up and in 1914, he is featured in a Steinke cartoon (above).



At the end of this, I somehow found myself with more questions than answers but still fascinated with the series of historical drama that seems to have played out in one of our most treasured landmarks. We often say

that local history is really just gossip 100 years too late, and in this instance, I think we are correct. Perhaps I will revisit this topic at some point in the future but, as of this moment, I have received another inquiry and now find myself on a new path to learn more about the notorious Rev. Peter Roberts, the much-beloved pastor of the Plymouth Presbyterian Church who was involved

in a scandalous law suit with a Miss Annie Husaboe for breach of promise in 1890. But that's a tale for another time!

## Fund for the Future

In October the Society kicked off its annual fund drive. Members received a letter from Chairperson **Elaine Shepard** discussing the year's accomplishments and asking our members and friends to consider offering support to help us continue to plan new and exciting programs to inspire the exploration of Lackawanna County history. More than \$4500 has been raised so far! We thank you in advance for your participation and also ask that you help spread the word. If you know someone who loves local history, suggest that they make a donation to the Society, or better yet become a member! Feel free to email us or call the Catlin House and we will be happy to send a application or a Fund for the Future form to any perspective donor you suggest. Thanks for your support.

## Holiday Shopping Ideas

Did you know that our gift shop is online? Go to [lackawannahistory.org/FeaturedItems.html](http://lackawannahistory.org/FeaturedItems.html) to browse titles of featured items and special offerings. Explore other tabs on that page to find souvenirs, toys & collectibles, audio and video items, the Sweeney Collection and other local interest titles. Once you have selected items for purchase, simply add them to your cart and proceed to check out. The Society will then prepare your purchase and ship it directly to you. It's that easy! So why not shop online this year to find the perfect gift (of gifts) for the history lovers in your life!



LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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SCRANTON, PA 18510

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## ***UPCOMING EVENTS & VIRTUAL HAPPENINGS***

*We're excited to see you!*

*The Catlin House continues to be open for small group tours and research by appointment only.  
Facemasks must be worn and social distancing is required. Thank you.*

### **VIRTUAL TOUR OF THE WATRES ARMORY** with Special Take-Out Dine Lackawanna

November 12 - In place of this year's annual dinner, the Society will host a special Zoom Meeting to show a video tour of the armory and the collections of Hunt Slonem. Participants can register to receive the link, choose a restaurant of their choice to order take-out, then tune in for the program. See page 3 for details.

### **LACKAWANNA PAST TIMES** Bimonthly Fridays at 2 pm via Zoom meetings.

November 6 - *Anthracite Photographers* by John Fielding, Curator, Anthracite Heritage Museum

November 20 - *The Clarke Brothers Stores* by Devereaux Clarke, Clarke Family Descendant

December 4 - *What's New at the Everhart Museum* by Francesca Saldan, Curator, Everhart Museum

December 18 - *D&H RR Research Update* by S. Robert Powell, President, Carbondale Historical Society & Museum

### **GENEALOGY FORUM** Monthly Wednesdays at 1 pm via Zoom meetings.

*Local genealogists are invited to share ideas, research tips, and local resources. Please call or email to register.*

November 4 - John Fielding: *Resources at the Anthracite Heritage Museum*

January 13 - Barbara Spellman Shuta /Tom Price: *Researching Civil Birth & Death Records in Lackawanna County & Pennsylvania*

February 10 - Evie Rafalko McNulty: *What and How to Research Records at the Lackawanna County Recorder of Deeds Office*

March 10 - Barbara Spellman Shuta/Tom Price: *The U.S. Census: What to Know & What to Look For*

## **Are you receiving History *BYTES*?**

Please send your email address to [lackawannahistory@gmail.com](mailto:lackawannahistory@gmail.com) to make sure you are on the list.