

LEGACY: PLANNED GIVING

A simple bequest is relatively simple, but so is procrastination. Most of us don't want to think about our own mortality, so we do little to plan for the future. In fact, a fairly recent Harris Poll survey suggested that 64 percent of Americans do not have a will!

A bequest can be unrestricted or restricted. An unrestricted bequest can be used for the general purposes and operations of the Society. A restricted bequest can only be used in the way the donor intended. Bequest language can be as easy as this:

I give and devise the sum of _____ dollars (or x%) to the Luzerne County Historical Society, 49 S. Franklin Street, Wilkes-Barre, Pa. 18701, to be used for its general purposes or to be used for (stated purpose: e.g. museum, collections, facility or program.)

Please, take a few minutes and consider including the Society in your planning with your financial advisors, tax accountants or estate planning attorneys. You can make an important contribution to the future of the Society!



SEPTEMBER 2020

DISCOVER ^{LC} _{HS}

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF LUZERNE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Finalizing plans for our Swetland restoration project. From left to right: Tish Last, Past President; John Panzitta, Panzitta Enterprises; Carl Goeringer, Treasurer; Sherry Emershaw, Vice President; Molly Hinkin, President.

MULTIPHASE RESTORATION PLANNED FOR HISTORIC SWETLAND HOMESTEAD

The historic 1803 Swetland Homestead (Wyoming Avenue, Wyoming) will soon be returning to its former glory!

Read more about this exciting undertaking on page 5.



VIRTUAL AUCTION ANNOUNCED

We are excited to announce that LCHS' first-ever Virtual Auction will take place in November.

Read more about it on our Calendar of Events (page 3).

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**LUZERNE COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**
49 South Franklin Street
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701



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A NOTE FROM OUR INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Let me begin by stating the obvious: The past few months have been a challenge. As is the case with many businesses and organizations large and small, we continue to face new hurdles due to COVID-19; however, there have been some evident bright spots, too, and we are looking forward to our fall events!

One bright spot is that many of you generously donated to our COVID appeal that kept us working while we had to cancel several planned events. Thank you all for your support.

My No. 1 task while working from home was writing grant proposals. And yet another bright spot: We received grant awards from the National Endowment for the Humanities to support digitizing our collection! The Pennsylvania Humanities Council awarded us \$4,500 to help with operating expenses. Grants from private foundations include \$5,000 from the Nesbitt Family Charitable Foundation to upgrade our computer hardware and software; \$2,500 from the Edith Reynolds Trust to support exhibitions; and \$5,000 from the A.P. Kirby, Jr. Family Fund and the Community Foundation of New Jersey for support to the Society. These funds are providing LCHS with an opportunity to work on some important behind the scenes collection maintenance. A big "thank you" goes out to Eileen Cipriani for her help with the foundation grants.

Other bright spots for us included our Second Annual Road Rally (thank you, everyone, especially the Citizen's Voice, WBRE-TV and Fox 56!) and our summer intern, Nicole Kolessar, whose research you can read on page 4.

Please note that we are sending our membership reminders via mail and email, as memberships expire. Thank you for supporting us during these challenging times. You are all "bright spots" for me and the Society at large!

Mary Walsh
Interim Executive Director



FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

As I begin my term as president of the board, I want to first thank my predecessor, Tish Last, for the outstanding service she gave the Society during her term and, especially, during the recent COVID-19 crisis response. Your contributions are so much appreciated, Tish!

A special shout-out also goes to the staff of the Society who have been working through very challenging times but have managed to keep the operations functioning. Although the COVID-19 crisis has cancelled or curtailed many of our planned activities and special events, we remain committed to our core mission of preserving the history of Luzerne County.

Recognizing the need to be available to members through electronic means, we are undertaking a major technology upgrade which will allow us to continue serving members and the public in spite of the inability to interact in person. We're excited for you to read more about this undertaking on page 5.

Your Board of Directors has been meeting virtually throughout the past few months. A special welcome to our new officers and board members: Sherry Emershaw, Vice President; Carl Goeringer, Treasurer; and Molly Shaughnessy, Secretary. Incoming board members include: Richard DeHaven, Dr. William Lewis, the Honorable Jennifer Rogers, and Constance Wynn. All board members can be found on the left.

Looking forward to our upcoming fall events and the opportunity to meet and greet each other again!

Molly Hinkin
President



COLLECTING ORAL HISTORIES SURROUNDING COVID-19

It's no secret that we are experiencing a historic moment in time due to COVID-19. Despite the closing of local businesses and groups' inability to gather, we are committed to living our mission: To preserve and promote the history of Luzerne County in all its forms.

While it's often left unsaid, we do not always need to reach far into the past to reflect on or even experience historic events. History is made daily. With this in mind, LCHS is actively collecting oral history submissions from Luzerne County residents as to how they are dealing with the pandemic and how it has affected their daily lives. Stories from all individuals—with unique occupations, backgrounds and experiences—are appreciated, as these will help us create a rounded database of stories from which future generations can learn.

Recently, we received a donation of 19 recorded interviews focusing on the pandemic. The interviews, conducted by Alan K. Stout, discussed how COVID-19 has affected the local arts, entertainment and musical community. Stout is a radio show host with The River. The Indian American Association of Northeastern Pennsylvania also donated a video, outlining their efforts to help their community and support local businesses during the outbreak. These items now reside in the Society's audio/visual archives.

"We so much appreciated this donation," said Mark J. Riccetti Jr., director of operations and programs at the Luzerne County Historical Society. "It will be a great impetus for future donations. It also shows that you don't necessarily have to be on the frontlines of the pandemic to tell your story. We want to know how this affects everyone in the Valley."

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Mark J. Riccetti Jr., director of operations and programs, LCHS

HELP US ADD TO OUR COLLECTION!

Interested in submitting a story? Please send us an email at info@luzernehistory.org. Stories can be text documents, audio recordings or video interviews. Submissions can be made through email, Dropbox, or Google Drive. Stories will be compiled and added to our archives as a research aid for LCHS members and the general public to use going forward once the outbreak is over.

UPCOMING EVENTS

FALL 2020

OCT 22 **PORTRAIT WALK & DINNER**
WESTMORELAND CLUB, WILKES-BARRE
 We're excited to announce that we will be hosting another Portrait Walk at the Westmoreland Club this fall. Mix and mingle with LCHS members and friends as you learn about the artwork that adorns the Club's walls and reflects our local history.

Times, prices and more fine details will be forthcoming. Follow us on Facebook (@LuzerneHistory) for more information.



Scenes from our last Portrait Walk

OCT 23/24 **GHOST WALKS**
DOWNTOWN WILKES-BARRE
 Ghost Walks are back! This October, we invite you to join us for a walking tour of the historic district and learn about true ghosts, murders and hidden graveyards, all right in the Diamond City.

Times, prices and more fine details will be forthcoming. Follow us on Facebook (@LuzerneHistory) for more information.

VIRTUAL AUCTION
LUZERNE COUNTY AND BEYOND — OPEN TO ANYONE WITH INTERNET ACCESS
 While we were not able to hold our Annual Gala as planned, we invite you to join us for a virtual auction during the first week of November! The auction is a perfect way to support the Society and find that unique holiday gift (or multiple!) for someone special.

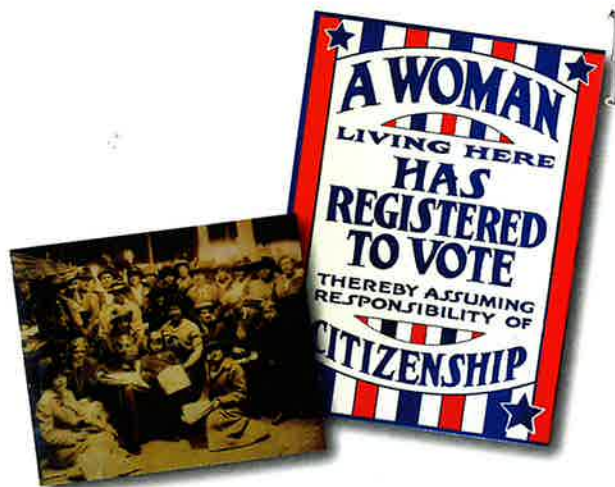
More information will be forthcoming, including details on how to log in and place your bid(s). Follow us on Facebook (@LuzerneHistory) for more information.

If you are interested in donating an item for the auction, or if you know someone who is, please reach out to Mary Walsh: mwalsh@luzernehistory.org and Alyssa Ellsworth: alyssaz@ideaworks.marketing.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE/19TH AMENDMENT EXHIBIT

Have you heard? Our newest exhibit focuses on the 19th Amendment, entitled "It Was 'We, The People'; Not 'We, the White Male Citizens.'" Our team, along with our summer intern Nicole Kolessar, worked hard to bring this exhibit to life.

Please note that the Museum is open, with by-appointment visitation only. Given the ever-changing nature of the pandemic, it is best to call us at 570-823-6244 to inquire about our latest safety precautions and procedures, and to make your appointment.



Members of the National Association of Colored Women. National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN AND THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COLORED WOMEN IN THE WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT

African American women played significant roles throughout every stage of the women's suffrage movement in the United States, from the beginning of the movement in the antebellum period to the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920. In the mid-nineteenth century, African American women had little opportunities to join in women's suffrage organizations due to exclusions from their white counterparts. They instead often focused on anti-slavery organizations that concentrated on educational and relief reforms. For example, Harriet Forten Purvis and Margaretta Forten founded the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, which later organized to become the Philadelphia Suffrage Association. However, after the Civil War, African American women's suffrage mobilizations expanded on a national level with the development of a Black women's club movement. While some of these clubs made women's suffrage their primary goal, others had the suffrage cause as one of several departments in their organizations. Nevertheless, this club movement for African American women progressed as a vehicle for change that would promote racial "uplift" and improve African American communities as a whole for its people. Therefore, by the end of the nineteenth century more Black women's voices began to emerge that not only reflected the growing number of organizations, but also new strategies of suffrage that identified with African American women's status as women of color.

In 1896, African American women decided to unite the smaller clubs that were formed, most prominently the National Federation of Afro-American Women and the National League of Colored Women, to form the National

Association of Colored Women (NACW). The founders of the organization included Mary Church Terrell, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper. The NACW became the largest federation of African American women's clubs in the nation. The NACW also encouraged African American women to work in order to improve the conditions of both their communities and race. Women involved in the NACW contributed to many positive developments for Black communities, such as providing services to the poor and enhancing the standards of living, especially for other African American women. Additionally, the NACW had a "Suffrage Department" in which they distributed information about women's suffrage in order to educate club members about the benefits of supporting the movement. Members of the NACW understood their fight for suffrage in terms of both gender and race. Many African American women wanted suffrage to give women the right to vote as well as African American men who were still disenfranchised. Thus, the NACW adopted the motto "Lifting as We Climb" and advocated for inclusive women's rights along with the "elevation" of the status of all African American people.

As hundreds of Black women rallied for the vote into the twentieth century, these women continued to be excluded from white women's clubs and some dominant suffrage organizations. While there were African American women who refused to accept this exclusion from white organizations and continued to participate in the National American Woman Suffrage Association, their contributions to the movement were frequently overlooked. Also, segregation laws still persisted, thus prohibiting African American women from speaking

at several suffrage conventions. African American women were also frequently forbidden from partaking in activities alongside white suffragists, forcing them to be separated during events such as suffrage parades. Despite this lack of support from white suffragists and organizations, African American women and the NACW continued to fight for both civil and women's rights. When the woman suffrage movement was victorious and the Nineteenth Amendment was officially ratified, African American women would remain disenfranchised in the United States until 1965. Black women played active roles throughout the entirety of the women's suffrage movement, gaining more support by the end of the nineteenth century with the creation of the National Association of Colored Women. African American suffragists understood their unique roles with gender and race and embraced strategies that would uplift both of these features. Even though they faced exclusion and backlash from multiple white suffragists in the movement, African American women continued to struggle for their right to vote, and their contributions should not be disregarded.



Written by Nicole Kolessar
 Luzerne County Historical Society
 Summer Intern

Sources available upon request.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES AWARDS \$30,000 GRANT TO LCHS

In case you have not yet heard, the Society has been in the process of a large-scale, incredibly exciting undertaking: We are replacing our old database with a web-based app. Although we did transfer information into the new database, there was limited information about our beloved collection, a key differentiator of our organization. When we closed during COVID-19, with no opportunity for people to use our resources, we asked ourselves, "What better time than now to start to photograph, scan and record our archives and artifacts?"

Because we did not have the necessary funds required for digitization, we submitted a proposal to the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). We were awarded a grant for \$30,000!

PUTTING THE GRANT TO USE

Below are some of the ways we hope to use the NEH grant:

- Recording a tour at Nathan Dension House
- Creating videos for the exhibition of the 100th Anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment and lectures (will be available in-person and on our website)
- Digitizing/preserving our audio collection

In addition to the NEH, The Nesbitt Family Charitable Fund has awarded a \$5,000 grant to purchase computer and recording equipment for our COVID-19 Oral History Project.

SWETLAND HOMESTEAD TO BEGIN RESTORATION

Soon after you read this, the historic 1803 Swetland Homestead on Wyoming Avenue in Wyoming will begin a radical, multi-phase restoration! This has been in the works for some time, as it was originally supposed to have begun in mid-to-late April, but needed to be, of course, pushed back due to the outbreak of COVID-19. However, local contractors and friends of the Society, Panzitta Enterprises, will soon be erecting scaffolding around the site, and then will begin removing and replacing the wood shingle roof. That is just the beginning step.

PHASE 1 RESTORATION PLANS INCLUDE:

- Sill, gutter and downspout work
- Stripping and painting the Homestead's exterior
- Wood siding repairs and replacement
- Chimney and stucco work
- Window and shutter repairs
- New ADA-accessible ramp

Once Phase 1 is completed, the Society hopes to begin Phase 2, covering the inside of the home, within the following 12-18-month window.

HISTORICAL ACCURACY

The restoration is being done to the historic standards and recommendations of the recently completed Capital Assessment Program (CAP) Report as well as to the ideas outlined in the completed Museum Assessment Program (MAP) Report, both conducted by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) on behalf of the Society. The funding was secured by a combination of the legacy gift of former board member Henry Johnson and Community Bank.

Keep your eyes peeled and watch as the house returns to its former glory!



THANK YOU,
Panzitta Enterprises
and all those who are
helping to make this
restoration possible!

THANK YOU

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The A.P. Kirby, Jr. Family Fund
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Gerald M. Matcho
Robert L. Milford
Joseph and Rose Marie Panzitta
James A. Wert
Patrick M. Young

MEMORIAL GIFTS

Tish and Michael Last

YOUR GENEROSITY IS APPRECIATED!