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HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

### National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

#### 1. Name of Property

historic name Century Club of Scranton

other names/site number N/A

#### 2. Location

street & number 612 Jefferson Avenue N/A  not for publication

city or town Scranton  vicinity N/A

state Pennsylvania code PA county Lackawanna code 069 zip code 18510

#### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Brent Glass*

Dr. Brent Glass  
Exec. Director 2/21/96

Signature of certifying official>Title Date  
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official>Title Date  
State or Federal agency and bureau

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

checked, certify that the property is	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
entered in the National Register see continuation sheet	_____	_____
referred to the Register see continuation sheet	_____	_____
deemed eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
not listed in the National Register	_____	_____

Century Club of Scranton  
Name of Property

Lackawanna, Pennsylvania  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	_____ buildings
_____	_____	_____ sites
_____	_____	_____ structures
_____	_____	_____ objects
_____	_____	_____ Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

-0-

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social - Clubhouse

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social - Clubhouse

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Brick

Limestone

roof Asphalt

other Wood

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Social History
- Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1913 - 1946

**Significant Dates**

1913 - 1914

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Blackwood, Harvey J.  
Nelson, John

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Lackawanna County Historical Society

Century Club of Scranton  
Name of Property

Lackawanna, Pennsylvania  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18	44	5	18	0	4	58	4	4	50
	Zone	Easting			Northing					
2										

3										
	Zone	Easting			Northing					
4										

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Marion T. Spellman, Chairman of National Register Project

organization The Century Club of Scranton date November 13, 1995

street & number 612 Jefferson Avenue telephone (717) 342-0204

city or town Scranton state PA zip code 18510

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name The Century Club of Scranton

street & number 612 Jefferson Avenue telephone (717) 342-0204

city or town Scranton state PA zip code 18510

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Century Club of Scranton  
Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania

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The Century Club of Scranton is a three-story freestanding building on less than one acre of land in the Colonial Revival style. Construction was begun on November 15, 1913 and completed October 5, 1914. It is located on the fringe of the central business district at 612 Jefferson Avenue, Scranton, Pennsylvania. Although the neighborhood consists mainly of residential properties of the Victorian Era it was built as a social clubhouse. Across the street is the Jewish Community Center of more recent vintage, and diagonally across is the American Red Cross Chapter House in one of the homes of the Victorian Era. The clubhouse is a flat-roofed rectangular building measuring fifty-four feet six inches by ninety-two feet four inches. It features exterior finishes of red brick, white painted wood and limestone. Built on a stone foundation with an asphalt roof, it has a three-bay symmetrical facade which features a projecting central pavilion with a brick and wood trimmed pediment. Balustered parapets cap the flanking bays.

In 1989, in compliance with new guidelines for service to the handicapped, an addition of an exterior elevator was made to the north side of the building. From the court at the back of the building an outside wooden ramp was installed to provide access to the first floor elevator lobby. The elevator opens to the basement, first and second floors. Care was exercised to match the brick exterior and the top balustered parapet with the design of the original building.

The first-floor level of the building is elevated several feet above landscape grade, which is five or six feet above the sidewalk on Jefferson Avenue. Two broad flights of stairs lead from the sidewalk to the entry portico, one in stone to grade, the other is wood with wood balusters from grade to the first floor level. The exposed foundation wall of the building is also rock-faced cut stone, and simple limestone water table separates ashlar and brick. There are no belt or string courses between the first and second stories. Projecting brick quoining accentuates all outside corners. A simple wood frieze runs below a projecting eave with wood soffit at the roof line below the balustrade. At the corners the frieze is ornamented with triglyphs.

A central entry is projected by one-story wood portico that is carried by groupings of three Doric columns at the two front corners. Flat wood pilasters occur at the brick face beyond and enframe the doorway composed of double six-panel doors with leaded-glass side-lights and a semi-elliptical fanlight. Triglyphs decorate the entablature of the portico.

The central three-part window at the second floor is made up of one 12/1 and two 6/1 double-hung windows with Corinthian-capped engaged columns between. The entablature carries a half-round sunburst within a semi-elliptical panel.

The flanking bays on the first floor display pairs of french doors with side lights capped by leaded-glass semi-elliptical fanlights. The upper story on each side has two 12/1 double hung windows separated by narrow brick panels. All windows feature limestone keystones. Small limestone festoons mark the second floor line at both bays. The side elevations are also of brick and are largely underdecorated. Double-hung windows occur at fairly regular intervals. Close neighboring buildings obscure these facades.

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The first floor is reached from the central porch through double doors to a small vestibule, and on through another set of double doors into a large stairhall. Both the first and second floors have a height of sixteen feet. The woodwork throughout the building complements the height and size of the rooms. On the right is a large room ("library" on architect's rendition) used now as an office and cloakroom. On the left is a similar sized reception room with a marble fireplace surrounded by a mantel that reflects in detail the architecture of the period. Over this is an ornate mirror. Adjacent to this room is a powder room and beyond the powder room, in what was once a pantry with stairway leading to the kitchen in the basement, is now located a hall that leads to the new elevator and an exit to the outside approached by a handicap-accessible wooden ramp.

At the far end of the central hallway, flanked on the left by the elevator hall and on the right by the triple width winding stairway to the second floor, is a large auditorium that seats at least 300 people. It is complete with a raised stage, two dressing rooms and a back stairway to the basement. At the rear of the stage, double doors give access to a loading area and alley.

At the top of the wide staircase is the second floor stairhall behind which is a serving area with a dumbwaiter to the basement kitchen. On the left is a large assembly room, that stretches across the entire width of the front of the building. A wooden fireplace is located on one end of this room.

To the right of the stairhall and up four steps are located the following: a small lounge on the right and the left a powder room and second floor access to the new elevator. (On the attached blueprint these rooms are listed as committee rooms.) A very large lounge behind, complete with marble fireplace, extends across the entire width of the rear of the building. Ahead and up two steps is a sunroom of equal width, but narrower. At one end of this room is an emergency exit to the outside.

The winding mahogany staircase off the stairhall leads from the basement area to the third floor. In 1924, renovations to the third floor attic were made to create an apartment to be used as living quarters for a custodial couple, thereby ensuring the proper maintenance of the clubhouse and its contents.

The basement area consist of the following rooms: to the left of the stairwell is a small room used for executive committee meetings, a large room used by the junior members as a meeting room. This room has a tile fireplace. Facing the stairway is a men's lavatory, entrance hall to the elevator, a utility room and kitchen. On the right is a men's cloakroom and a large room used by our Bulletin Staff, with an attached powder room. The remainder of the basement floor is devoted to utility and storage rooms and an access stairway to the ground level.

To the best of our abilities the club has been maintained by frequent redecorating, and the addition of an elevator and ramp to facilitate access by the handicapped, always keeping in mind the appearance inside and outside of the original building.

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**Statement of Significance**

The Century Club of Scranton meets Criterion A for social history as a strong example of an early 20th century middle and upper class private women's club founded for civic improvement and social interaction in Scranton. The Club also meets Criterion C as a strong architectural example in the community of the Colonial Revival style.

Early in the 20th century, the city of Scranton, Pennsylvania experienced great prosperity and growth. Coal was king, the iron industry flourished and Scranton's lace products were world-renowned. It was during this era that women of the prosperous families in the community, having the luxury of time, felt the need to explore outlets for civic activities and educational pursuits. As a result, a remarkable women's club, The Century Club of Scranton, came into existence.<sup>1</sup> Within the time span of two years, the need for a large space to hold meetings initiated the building of a clubhouse - the first women's clubhouse in Scranton. Funding for this building came from various sources. The primary one, by William Worthington Scranton,<sup>2</sup> was used to secure a property, in the city, at 612 Jefferson Avenue. Work began on November 15, 1913. This was the beginning of a dream come true for these women and prophetically foreshadowed the important work that was to follow. The Century Club of Scranton was completed on October 5, 1914 and since its dedication the building has been used continuously as a clubhouse. Throughout all those years, its meeting rooms, lounges, auditorium as well as its exterior facade have retained their integrity. You have only to enter its double doors with leaded glass sidelights and semi-elliptical fanlight and glimpse the lavish woodwork and curving staircase to experience the flavor of its past glory.

During the significant period of The Century Club's history (1914-1916), the minutes of meetings reflect the flourishing membership and programs that existed.<sup>3</sup> Many outstanding guest speakers made appearances, a few of which were: James Michener, Carl Sandburg, Janet Rankin, Robert Frost and Norman Vincent Peale.<sup>4</sup> It was during this period also that the city of Scranton was greatly enriched by activities sponsored by the Club's membership. Even a partial list of the social, civic and cultural work joined, fostered or accomplished is impressive: The Shade Tree Commission, the garbage collection system, Community Concert Association, Visiting Nurse Association, West Mountain Tuberculosis Sanatorium, Parent Teacher's Association, The Drama League, Big Sister Organization and Playground Association.<sup>5</sup> On a national level the Club received recognition for its humanitarian efforts during World War I. Its Surgical Dressing Center was cited for the quality and quantity of its dressings. During World War II, the Club's building served as headquarters for the Red Cross. Over 500 volunteers were organized for the local chapter. Continuing this concern for better healthcare, the Club established a Nurse's Scholarship Fund in 1943 and, to this day continues to award scholarships to deserving high school graduates.<sup>6</sup> The Century Club of Scranton has served the community greatly throughout the period of its existence.

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The Clubhouse was built in the Colonial Revival style from plans submitted by Harvey J. Blackwood and John Nelson of the Scranton architectural firm of Blackwood and Nelson located at 424 Lackawanna Avenue. Since the majority of the Club members were descendants of the early settlers who came to the Scranton area from Connecticut, they chose a familiar style of architecture, the colonial style in its Revival form. The Century Club of Scranton is a distinctive example because of the interior and exterior elements and craftsmanship representing this style and, although modest, it retains high integrity and highly representative detailing and appearance. The Clubhouse is nestled among mature trees which frame its sparkling white colonial entrance and classic brick construction. Its clean lines provide a contrast to the ornate Victorian homes that are prevalent in the area. Although recent construction in some sections of the city resulted in many early 20th Century buildings being torn down, there still are Colonial Revival style buildings to be found. Outstanding examples are the Bosak Bank, 434 Lackawanna Avenue, Jefferson Hall, 243 Jefferson Avenue and the Scranton Club, 404 North Washington Avenue. These buildings share the classic formal and symmetrical arrangement, the brick and stone construction and a combination of colonial and early 20th century elements. The Scranton Club (a men's social club) is comparable to The Century Club of Scranton in its scale, date of construction, architectural style and usage.

In retrospect, we could say that the history of The Century Club of Scranton mirrors the history of Scranton. Its founding members were the wives, mothers and daughters of the city's founding fathers. Many of the civic developments can trace their beginnings to programs initiated in its clubrooms. The Century Club of Scranton is a well preserved example of Colonial Revival architecture that supports a history that is clear, concise and an interesting view to the past.



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NOTES:

1. On May 11, 1911, The Ladies Reading Club of 1886, The Women's Club of 1909, The Tuesday Art Club of 1919 and The City Improvement Association met and voted to form one club, The Century Club of Scranton.
2. William Worthington Scranton was the father of Ellen Warren, a founding club member, and also grandfather to William Scranton, former governor of Pennsylvania and ambassador to the United Nations.
3. Club records and documents have been preserved as well as bound editions of a publication, The Century Club Bulletin.
4. Names taken from entertainers and lecturers guest book.
5. From a publication History of The Century Club, 1936, by Clara Squires.
6. Total number of nurse's scholarships awarded by 1995 is 1000.

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THE CENTURY CLUB OF SCRANTON

612 JEFFERSON AVE.

SCRANTON, (LACKAWANNA COUNTY), PENNSYLVANIA 18510

## BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION - Deed Book Number 273 Page 443

Building is on Lot No. 3, and the southwesterly one-half of block no. 65 on the Lackawanna Iron and Coal Company's Plot of Scranton (duly registered and recorded); said lots being sixty (60) feet in front, and one hundred and fifty (150) feet in depth, and rectangular with an alley sixteen (16) feet in width for public use; with the privilege of using ten (10) feet in front of the front line of the said lot for yard, vault, porch, platta, cellarway, and bay windows for no other purpose, the top of the outside of said vault in no case to be higher than the sidewalk. Coal and minerals reserved in the same manner and to the same extent as the same are excepted and reserved in former deeds in the chain of title to said premises. Being the said premise conveyed by Augusta T. Merrill to W.W. Scranton, grantor herein, by deed dated April 26, 1913 and intended to be duly recorded.

Together with all and singular, the buildings, improvements, woods, ways, rights, liberties, privileges, hereditaments, and appurtenances, to the same belonging, or in any wise appertaining and the reversion and reversions, remainder and remainders, rents, issues and profits thereof: And of every part and parcel thereof: And also all the estate, right, title, interest, property, possession, claim, and demand whatsoever.  
recorded April 30, 1913.

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Boundary Justification

The boundary is the historic property line of The Century Club of Scranton and contains the historic building and associated grounds.

