

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 Cassese, Joseph, House

other name/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 1000 Clay Avenue

not for publication

city or town Scranton

vicinity

state Pennsylvania

code PA

county Lackawanna

code 059

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.)

Dr. B. Glass, Exec. Dir. 9/11/97

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

PA Historical and Museum Commission

State of 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 certifying official/Title

Date

State of Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet

determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Cassese, Joseph, House
Name of Property

Lackawanna County, 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	
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
Anthracite-Related Resources of
Northeastern Pennsylvania, 1769-1945

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS:

Italian Renaissance

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

walls BRICK, STONE

roof CERAMIC TILE

other WOOD

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See Continuation Sheets 1-3.

Cassese, Joseph, House
Name of Property

Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania
County and State

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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See Continuation Sheets 3-8.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.) See Continuation Sheets 9-10.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36CFR 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 Hist. Soc.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

ETHNIC HERITAGE: EUROPEAN

Period of Significance

1911

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cassese, Joseph

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Hancock, Lewis Jr.

Carlucci, Frank

Cassese, Joseph, House
Name of Property

Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Less than one acre.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 445960 4584600
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.) See Continuation Sheet 10.

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.) See Continuation Sheet 10.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Alison McDowell, Cultural Resources Specialist

organization Kise Franks & Straw date August 1997

street & number 219 N. Broad Street telephone (215) 561-1050

city or town Philadelphia state PA zip code 19107

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 Rosemary Gallagher

street & number 1718 Capouse Avenue telephone (717) 347-8428

city or town Scranton state PA zip code 18059

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 Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Cassese, Joseph, House
Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania

Description

The Joseph Cassese House is located at 1000 Clay Avenue in the Hill Section of Scranton, Pennsylvania. The property meets the registration requirements established for housing in the *Multiple Property Documentation Form: Anthracite-Related Resources of Northeastern Pennsylvania, 1769-1945* because the house was constructed by an individual associated with an ancillary service industry within the anthracite region. The three-story Italian Renaissance style house is centrally located on the corner lot at the intersection of Clay Avenue and Ash Street. The second building, located behind the house in the east corner of the property, is the one-story masonry garage with a low hipped roof. A random coursed ashlar retaining wall, measuring approximately three feet high and topped with a hedge, borders three sides of the steeply sloped lot. A second, stepped retaining wall of similar construction bisects the lot approximately twenty feet in front of the house. The retaining walls have been counted as two contributing structures. A pair of brick piers on concrete foundations at the south corner of the property flank the semicircular driveway. A roughly cast, concrete wall demarcates the rear boundary of the property. Several specimen trees grace the terraced front lawn, and mature foundation plantings screen the lower windows of the front facade.

The five-bay, center-hall plan house is frame construction finished with a veneer of ochre brick. It rests on a granite foundation and has a full basement. The low, hipped, terra-cotta tile roof has open projecting eaves with brackets. Shed roof dormers project minimally over paired six-over-six sash on the front and side facades. Two porches with low limestone balustrades flank the main block of the house. Although a port-cochere was part of the original design for the house, it was never executed. The north porch is open, and the south porch was enclosed as a sun room by the Fiorani family shortly after they purchased the property in 1947.

The most prominent exterior feature of the Cassese House is an elaborately carved limestone porch on the front facade. It is composed of two tiers of arcades ornamented with tracery and diminutive caryatid-like figures. A decorative iron railing with simplified anthemion detailing is set between the columns of each tier. The overall effect is that of a late medieval Venetian palazzo. Although the house has been compared with the Doge's Palace and Ca D'Oro in Venice, it replicates neither. The arcaded porch is centered on the front facade and shelters a recessed entryway. Carved urns, sphinxes, foliage, and festoons embellish a pair of limestone pilasters on either side of the double doors. The pilasters support an entablature depicting a bacchanalian scene. According to Joseph Cassese Jr., a sculptor by the name of Dioello designed the work around the doors. Frank Carlucci, the founder of the largest stonework company in northeastern Pennsylvania, was the general contractor for this project and oversaw the design and installation of the stonework in the house.

Carved limestone quoins, door and window surrounds, and beltcourses on all four facades complement the detailing of the porch. Both the quoins and the window surrounds for the main windows of the front and side facades exhibit a twisted rope detail. The central, second floor windows on the side facades are even more elaborately detailed with a gothic arch surround. Six-over-one double hung sash predominate, although a few windows have been replaced with one-over-one sash. The dormers lack stone detailing, and the rear windows have simple squared limestone lintels and sills. Windows on either side of the arcaded porch also possess narrow limestone balconies with arched balusters and bases that are incorporated into the lower beltcourse. The upper beltcourse, which separates the second and third stories, is deeply coved with a thick, twisted rope detail at the top, and a thin, twisted rope detail at the bottom. Enclosed sleeping porches with large casement windows were probably added to the rear of the house in the 1920s.

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Cassese, Joseph, House
Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania

Description (continued)

The interior of the house displays a center hall plan on the first floor, with a large, central reception hall flanked by double parlors, and a kitchen, bathroom, and laundry located to the rear of these public spaces. The double front doors open into a narrow vestibule, with inset mirrored panels, that leads to the reception hall. Pocket doors open onto this wide hall, which has a fireplace at the far end, from four flanking rooms. The music room and dining room are located on the north side of the hall, and the parlor and library are located on the south. The dining room retains its original wood wainscoting, plate rail, and coffered ceiling, while the library retains its original limestone mantel, which was carved by the sculptor Joseph Calatrone. The rope detailing visible on the exterior of the house is reflected in Calatrone's mantel design, which also incorporates bold festoons and foliage motifs displayed on paired pilasters and an entablature that surround a rectangular marble panel. All five of these public rooms possess robust plaster cornices, painted wood base moldings, and oak flooring.

The public rooms on the first floor were not altered by the house's conversion into apartments. They retain their original configuration and many original details. However, conversion of the house into apartments between 1926 and 1933 resulted in removal of the original main stair and the reconfiguration of the rear third of the first floor and the two upper floors. After the conversion, the first floor became the owner's residence and the second and third floors were rented. Two apartments are located on each of the upper floors, which previously contained bedrooms and a third-floor ballroom. Access to the apartments is by a circa 1931 stair centrally located on the rear elevation. A straight flight of steps leads to a second floor landing, where there are entry doors for two apartments, one occupying the north half of the floor and one the south half. A similar configuration exists on the third floor.

Members of the Fiorani family have resided on the first floor of the house since their purchase of the property in 1947, and they continue to rent the four upstairs apartments. Each apartment contains its own bathroom and kitchen. With the exception of upgraded appliances, the units have not been significantly altered since the early 1930s. Access to the private apartments was restricted by Mrs. Gallagher, the owner, due to concerns for her tenants' privacy. Therefore, additional written and photographic documentation cannot be provided at this time.

The rear third of the first floor has experienced more alteration than the floor's public rooms. In the early 1930s, the main stair in the house was removed from its original location (possibly behind the reception hall), and a new stair, as previously noted, was added to the center of the rear facade. This new stair provided exterior access to the upstairs apartments.

The Fiorani family added a new kitchen in the area beneath the second- and third-story sleeping porches shortly after they purchased the property in 1947. They converted the original kitchen and butler's pantry into a bathroom, laundry, and closet. This is the current configuration of these spaces. The bathroom and kitchen fixtures have not been significantly altered since this initial renovation. The family constructed an exterior entrance to the basement. Brick walls and asphalt shingle roofing were used in the alterations, except for a small area of tin roof above the projecting eating nook, thereby maintaining the integrity of the building's exterior materials. The Fiorani's also constructed a non-permanent porch enclosure of dimensional lumber and plastic sheeting on the third floor, above the existing stone porch.

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Cassese, Joseph, House
Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania

Description (continued)

Behind the house is a one-story, two-car garage built into a slight rise in the rear yard. The garage, which originally contained its own gas pump, was built in 1913 to house the Cassese family's Buick and Corbin sports roadster. A poured concrete foundation with a scored surface supports the upper brick section of wall, and asphalt shingles cover the low hipped roof. The sides and rear walls contain double hung windows, and the original garage doors have been replaced with a modern metal security door. A simple brick cornice line runs above the doorframe, and centered on the front wall is the carved stone face of a jester. According to Cassese family tradition, this head was carved by John Carlucci, another brother-in-law of Mr. Cassese's. Evidently, Mr. Cassese had admired the design, and Mr. Carlucci installed the carved head above the garage door to commemorate Joseph Cassese's sense of humor. Unfortunately, Mr. Cassese was in the hospital at the time and did not live to see the garage completed.

Statement of Significance

The Joseph Cassese House is an elegant, Italian-Renaissance revival style mansion that contributes to the *Multiple Property Documentation Form: Anthracite-Related Resources of Northeastern Pennsylvania, 1769-1945*. It was constructed by an individual associated with an ancillary service industry within the anthracite region and retains physical integrity as specified in the registration requirements for the associated property type: housing. The property is locally significant under National Register Criteria B and C. The significance of the Joseph Cassese property under Criterion C lies in its embodiment of distinctive characteristics that illustrate the exuberant, eclectic, and diverse nature of revival architectural styles that proliferated during the first quarter of the twentieth century. The property is significant under Criterion B for its association with Joseph Cassese, one of the most locally prominent Italian-American businessman, who provided goods and services to Italian immigrants working in the mines surrounding Scranton. The property's location and setting still evoke the feeling of opulence achieved by Mr. Cassese when he originally designed the house, which served as a physical manifestation of the material success he had attained.

Cassese began his career as a shoemaker, and eventually his business acumen helped him build a diverse portfolio of commercial enterprises in Scranton's service sector. His significance lies in the pivotal role that his commercial ventures played in helping Italian immigrants settle in Scranton, Pennsylvania at the turn of the century. Italian immigrants provided much of the labor pool that helped drive the city's economy during that era, and Cassese played a key role in meeting the multi-faceted needs of these laborers.¹ Ultimately, Cassese was able to capitalize on his ethnic connections to create a marketable niche for himself and secure a place for his family among the prominent citizens of Scranton.

The Joseph Cassese House is also an exceptional example of Italian Renaissance revival design, a relatively uncommon style seen primarily in architect-designed houses prior to World War I.² Louis Hancock Jr. served as architect on this project. The use of Venetian details in this residential design enhances its architectural distinction

¹ Additional information about Italian immigrants and other nationalities who were part of the second wave of immigration to the anthracite region is discussed in the *Multiple Property Documentation Form: Anthracite-Related Resources of Northeastern Pennsylvania, 1769-1945*, Chapter V "The Rise of Unionism: A Second Wave of Immigrants."

² Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide To American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984), 398.

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Cassese, Joseph, House
Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania

Statement of Significance (continued)

and makes it a unique structure in the region. This type of design was particularly appropriate for Cassese, who emigrated from Italy around 1880. According to Frederick Hitchcock's 1914 *History of Scranton and Its People*, Cassese was originally from Pescopagano, Italy in the province of Potenza. Cassese's future wife, Rose Carlucci, likely immigrated from Naples, the documented birthplace of her brother, Frank Carlucci, who was responsible for the stonework on the house.

In 1910, Joseph Cassese hired architect Lewis Hancock Jr. to design a mansion for a lot he had purchased in the affluent Hill Section of the city. Hancock was an established local architect whose practice remained active through the 1930s.³ Mr. Cassese's lot was adjacent to the lot owned by his brother-in-law, Frank Carlucci, who had erected an enormous classically-detailed residence for his family the previous year.⁴ At that date, Carlucci's property encompassed the north half of the block, and Cassese's property comprised the south half of the block. The land between the two homes was later subdivided. The *Scranton Republic's* 1916 "Semi-Centennial 1866-1916" publication presented a sampling of representative homes of prominent Scranton citizens including E. H. Ripple's and David Boies's neoclassical mansions, W.W. Scranton's chateausque design, W. C. Connell's shingle-style house, and H. M. Boies's elaborate elaborately-detailed Queen Anne home.⁵ Cassese did not follow any of these established trends. Instead, he chose a Venetian design that outwardly expressed his Italian heritage. According to a friend of the family, Joseph Cassese even sent Hancock to Venice in order to obtain the most accurate rendering possible.⁶

Estimated construction costs for the Cassese House were \$60,000, as published in the November 23, 1910 issue of *The American Architect*.⁷ The equivalent is \$850,000 in 1991 dollars. The extravagance of this sum can only be fully appreciated when compared to the appalling tenement conditions faced by many of Cassese's fellow countrymen at that time.⁸ During that period there was a profound national resentment of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. The first wave of Italian immigrants endured extremely harsh work practices and poor living conditions, a compelling counterpoint to the luxury of the Cassese household. The family spared no expense in furnishing their home. Venetian chandeliers, imported mantels, and murals graced the public rooms of the house.⁹ Ornate limestone carvings and a pair of regal stone lions flanking the front entrance endowed the exterior with an equally elaborate appearance. The Cassese House presented a striking counterpoint to the neighboring Carlucci House on the other end of the street. Both were flamboyant; however the Carlucci house achieved this quality through the use of traditional classical elements, while Cassese's inspiration was decidedly more exotic.

³ Scranton, Pennsylvania city directories list Lewis Hancock Jr., architect, between 1923 and 1940. The notice in *The American Architect* states his address in 1910 as the Coal Exchange Building. "Building News - Pennsylvania - Scranton," *The American Architect* 98, no. 1822 (1910): 14.

⁴ Frank Carlucci Genealogy File, Lackawanna County Historical Society, 929-C197.

⁵ "Scranton's Semi-Centennial 1866-1916," *The Scranton Republic*, 10 September 1916, Magazine Section, mounted in scrapbook form, vol. 2, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.

⁶ John Von Batch Elder, telephone conversation with Joseph Cassese Jr.'s law partner and long-time friend, 26 April 1996.

⁷ "Building News - Pennsylvania - Scranton," *The American Architect* 98, no. 1822 (1910): 14.

⁸ Eliot Lord, *The Italian in America* (New York: B.F. Buck Company, 1905), 70-78.

⁹ Letter, Joseph Cassese Jr. to Rosemary Gallagher, Scranton, 30 December 1983, Possession of Rosemary Gallagher.

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Cassese, Joseph, House
Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania

Statement of Significance (continued)

Frank Carlucci, an Italian immigrant from Naples, was the general contractor for his brother-in-law's house and played a key role in executing the carved stonework that is an integral part of the design. Carlucci owned the largest stonework company in northeast Pennsylvania and is known to have worked on the construction of the Emigrant Station at Ellis Island.¹⁰ He achieved widespread recognition for his work on commercial, ecclesiastical, and civic commissions throughout the region.¹¹ Included among these were: the County Savings Bank in Scranton, the St. Joseph's Slavonic Church in Hazleton, the Commonwealth Building in Allentown, and the Luzerne County New Courthouse in Wilkes-Barre.¹²

Joseph Cassese's business success enabled him to commission a house of this stature. Large numbers of Italian immigrants arrived in the Scranton area in the 1880s seeking economic opportunities that were closed to them in their homeland.¹³ Many of these workers were unskilled and took jobs in the city's rail yards or nearby coal mines, while others sought employment in the construction industry.¹⁴ Joseph Cassese's fate, however, lay in another arena. Over the course of twenty-five years he parlayed a small initial investment into a prosperous local business conglomerate offering financial services, short-term housing, and steamship booking services to recent immigrants.

Joseph and Rose Cassese married in 1886, after both had arrived in the United States from Italy.¹⁵ Mr. Cassese initially settled in Pittston, PA, a small town south of Scranton, but moved into the city shortly thereafter and started a shoemaking business, which was located in the basement of the St. Charles Hotel.¹⁶ In the early 1880s he opened a grocery store on Linden Street, which he operated until 1887. At that time, Mr. Cassese established a hotel and restaurant on Lackawanna Avenue.¹⁷ He advertised the Cassese Italian Restaurant as being "The Best in Town" with "Unexcelled Cuisine" in the 1914 edition of the *Scranton Board of Trade Journal*.¹⁸ Mr. Cassese gradually expanded his business holdings beyond the hotel and restaurant sector and became a partner in a food and produce importing business.¹⁹ All of these enterprises were located in the one hundred block of Lackawanna Avenue in downtown Scranton.

¹⁰ Joseph H. Young, "Columbus Day 1892 and a Tribute to Frank Carlucci," (paper presented for the Scranton UNICO, 28 October 1969).

¹¹ *Portrait and Biographical Record of Lackawanna County Pennsylvania: Containing Portraits and Biographical Sketches of Prominent and Representative Citizens of the County Together with Biographies and Portraits of all the Presidents of the United States* (New York: Chapman Publishing Co., 1897), 669.

¹² Joseph H. Young, "Columbus Day 1892 and a Tribute to Frank Carlucci," (paper presented for the Scranton UNICO, 28 October 1969).

¹³ Eliot Lord, *The Italian in America* (New York: B.F. Buck Company, 1905), 41.

¹⁴ Italian File, Lackawanna County Historical Society, 445-ITA 1. Also: Eliot Lord, A.M., *The Italian in America* (New York: B.F. Buck & Company, 1905), 99.

¹⁵ 1910 United States Census, Scranton, Pennsylvania, Joseph Cassese, Roll 1360, Enumeration District 109, Family No. 3.

¹⁶ Col. Frederick L. Hitchcock, *History of Scranton and Its People*, 2 vols. (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1914), 2:491.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Cassese Genealogy File, Lackawanna County Historical Society, 929-C272.

¹⁹ Ibid.

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Cassese, Joseph, House
Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania

Statement of Significance (continued)

Cassese also established his own local bank named Banca Cassese in 1898 and began acting as an Official Correspondent with the Banco di Napoli in 1907.²⁰ According to contemporary sources, the position of banker was a particularly powerful one in the Italian-American community at the turn of the century.²¹ Bankers found employment for newly-arrived immigrants, held their money, and forwarded their savings to their relatives overseas.²² Acquiring a position as a correspondent with an Italian bank would have made Mr. Cassese a particularly influential person within the community. Local tradition also holds that Cassese's business connections in Italy enabled him to recruit workers to immigrate to Scranton. As might be expected of a man of his status, Cassese was heavily involved in civic and philanthropic activities.

In 1910, Joseph Cassese was 56 years of age and had eight children, three of whom worked in the family businesses; one as the manager of a wholesale grocery and the other two as bank clerks. The entire family, including a young Russian-Polish servant, lived in a relatively modest house at 312 Mifflin Avenue.²³ In 1911, the Cassese family moved into their opulent residence at 1000 Clay Avenue on the outskirts of the city. The property was located near the border with the suburb of Dunmore where a large number of Italian-Americans settled. Unfortunately, just as Mr. Cassese reached the apex of his career, he became terminally ill. He died at a hospital in Philadelphia in the summer of 1913.²⁴ The estate was unable to cover the debts he had incurred, and in 1918 the house was auctioned at a sheriff's sale. It is very likely that Mr. Cassese overextended his finances in acquiring additional businesses, and after his death his family could not meet those obligations. Rose Cassese and the three youngest children initially moved to Dunmore and, several years later, to Detroit, Michigan where one of their daughters had married an Italian diplomat.²⁵

A year after Joseph Cassese's death, Frederick Hitchcock's publication *History of Scranton and Its People* provided a profile of Cassese that summarized his significance in the Scranton area. Hitchcock stated:

He was much interested in the welfare of the city and its charitable work, and gave liberally of his means. He was a member of a number of Italian Societies and took an active part in church work. He was one of the oldest of the Italian residents, one of the most successful, and was consulted by his fellow countrymen whom he was willing to help in any way.²⁶

After the Cassese's period of occupancy, the house was then divided into apartments and the empty land to the north of the house was developed with single family dwellings. The exact date of this conversion is unclear; however, evidence from local directories strongly indicates that Paul Ondrykovitch, whose family occupied the

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Philip M. Rose, *The Italians in America* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1922), 70.

²² Ibid.

²³ 1910 United States Census, Scranton, Pennsylvania, Joseph Cassese, Roll 1360, Enumeration District 109, Family No. 3.

²⁴ Joseph Cassese Jr. to Rosemary Gallagher, Scranton, 30 December 1983, Possession of Rosemary Gallagher.

²⁵ Cassese Genealogy File, Lackawanna County Historical Society, 929-C272.

²⁶ Col. Frederick L. Hitchcock, *History of Scranton and Its People*, vol 2 (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1914), 491.

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Cassese, Joseph, House
Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania

Statement of Significance (continued)

property between 1923 and 1930, converted the house from a single-family residence into a rental property between 1930 and 1931. Polk's Scranton City Directory for 1931 indicates that four families resided at the house

that year, an occupancy level that continued at least through 1940 as indicated by other available directories. In 1933, the house was sold to the National Slovak Society of the United States at a sheriff's sale. Apparently, their organization continued to use the house as a commercial investment. Angelo and Rose Fiorani, parents of the current owner, Rosemary Gallagher, bought the property from the National Slovak Society in 1947.²⁷ They resided on the first floor and continued to rent the second- and third-floor apartments. The Fioranis were another prominent Italian-American family in Scranton who gained regional fame through their radio broadcasts of "The Italian Hour," a weekly program which ran during the 1930s and was the only Italian language program covering the entire anthracite region at that date.²⁸

Shortly after moving into the Cassese House, the Fioranis founded a new regional radio station WPTS, which was known as the "Family Station of Northeast Pennsylvania" and the "Golden Oldie Station." WPTS was run as a family enterprise with Angelo Fiorani serving as general manager and his wife Rose acting as business manager and announcer. Mrs. Fiorani was lauded in many circles as the first female radio announcer in Pennsylvania, and according to contemporary sources, she was also "known to thousands as the Dean of Lady Announcers."²⁹ According to their daughter, Rosemary Fiorani Gallagher, Sunday broadcasts were done out of the living room, so that the family could spend the rest of the day together.³⁰

The Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania recognized the significant contribution that the Fiorani family made to Italian-American culture when it decided to acquire and catalogue the WPTS manuscript collection in the late 1980s. According to R. Joseph Anderson, director of the library, "The Fiorani family itself represents a case of an immigrant family using a popular new technology to create both a thriving business, and a recognized position to the community."³¹ The WPTS documents have already provided researchers with considerable insight into aspects of ethnic radio broadcasting. The Fioranis, like the Cassese's, were actively involved with Scranton's Italian-American community. They founded the Scranton Civic Opera Guild and supported many philanthropic causes, especially those affiliated with the Catholic Church, since Mrs. Fiorani's brother and uncle were both monsignors.³² The property has remained in the Fiorani family since 1947. Rosemary Gallagher currently owns the property and rents the apartments on the upper floors. The building has a

²⁷ Lackawanna County Courthouse, Deed Books 480:117, 395:90.

²⁸ Carla Zimmerman, "Register of the Fiorani Radio Productions Records 1931-1975" (Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, June 1986, photocopy), 2. and Letter, Angelo Fiorani to Mr. Alfred S. Moss, 19 May 1937, Fiorani Radio Productions Records, Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, MSS 49, Box 1.

²⁹ "Fiorani's 'Musical Varieties' Will Be Presented Daily and Sunday Over Station WSCR," *The Scranton, PA Tribune*, 10 May 1947, 3a, Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, Fiorani Manuscript Collection, MSS. 49, Box 1, Folder 2.

³⁰ Rosemary Fiorani Gallagher, Interview with Alison McDowell, The Cassese House, Scranton, PA, 1 May 1996.

³¹ Gene Brislin, "Balch Institute Acquires Fiorani Records," *Scrantonian Tribune*, 30 October 1988, C12, Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, Fiorani Manuscript Collection, No. 91-82, Scrapbook.

³² Alice Heinecke, "Alice's Page," *SESAC MUSIC* 14, no. 10 (October 1955). Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, Fiorani Manuscript Collection, No. 91-82, Box 1.

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Cassese, Joseph, House
Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania

Statement of Significance (continued)

long association with the Italian-American community through the Cassese family and the Fiorani family and serves to illustrate the varied contributions made by this ethnic group to the anthracite region.

The Cassese House contributes to the *Multiple Property Documentation Form: Anthracite-Related Resources of Northeastern Pennsylvania, 1769-1945* as a significant example of the associated property types of housing. The Cassese House is significant under National Register Criterion C as a unique example of early 20th century Italian Renaissance revival design in the anthracite region. The property is also significant under National Register Criterion B for its association with Joseph Cassese, an immigrant businessman who made significant contributions to the Scranton area through his business enterprises that catered to the needs of Italian immigrant laborers. The property retains considerable architectural integrity and successfully conveys its association with Mr. Cassese, a member of the local elite who owned and operated ancillary service industries in the anthracite region, and consequently meets the specified registration requirements established in the multiple property documentation.

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Cassese, Joseph, House
Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania

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Verbal Boundary Description

Tax Map 14618, Block 1, Tract 9.

Boundary Justification

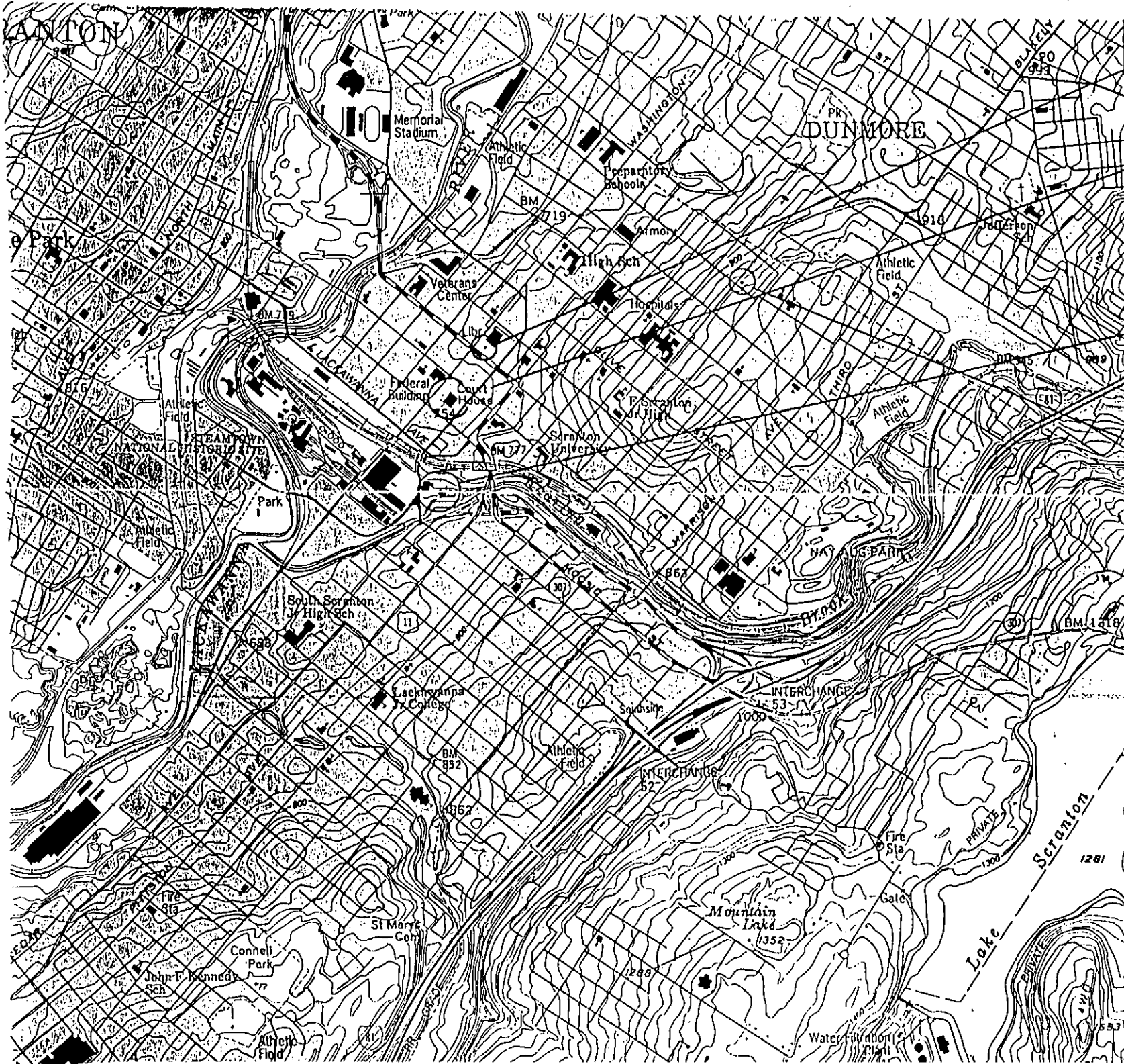
The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Joseph Cassese House.

List of Photographs

1. Joseph Cassese House
2. Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania
3. Alison L. McDowell
4. May 1996
5. Kise Franks & Straw Inc., Philadelphia, PA
6. View of property from intersection of Ash St. and Clay Avenue. View to the east.
7. # 1

1. Joseph Cassese House
2. Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania
3. Alison L. McDowell
4. May 1996
5. Kise Franks & Straw Inc., Philadelphia, PA
6. Rear view of Joseph Cassese property. View to the northwest.
7. # 2

1. Joseph Cassese House
2. Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania
3. Alison L. McDowell
4. May 1996
5. Kise Franks & Straw Inc., Philadelphia, PA
6. Views of northwest and southwest facades. View to the east.
7. # 3



MASONIC TEMPLE AND SCOTT
RIE CATHEDRAL (MNL)
SCRANTON, LACKAWANNA CO
UTM: 18/444800/4584

LACKAWANNA COUNTY CO
and JOHN MITCHELL
MONUMENT
25'
SCRANTON, LACKAWANNA
UTM: 18/444600/45840

LACKAWANNA IRON AND
COMPANY FURNACES (C
SCRANTON, LACKAWANNA CO
UTM: 18/444625/4583

4584
JOSEPH CASSESE HOUSE
SCRANTON, LACKAWANNA
COUNTY
UTM: 18/445460/45846

4583

4582

4581000m.N