

LOCAL AUTHOR MAKES HISTORY

By John Asmonga

On Tuesday, September 10, 2002, Lisa A. Alzo, M.F.A., the author of *Three Slovak Women*, published by Gateway Press Inc., Baltimore, MD, returned to the local area to address the members of the Homestead & Mifflin Township Historical Society. She spoke about the six (6) years of research it took to compile the information on her family's history for her book. Ms. Alzo entertained the members of the Historical Society by using a PowerPoint presentation slide show and selected readings from the book. A question and answer session and book signing completed the evening's entertainment.

Lisa Alzo is currently living in Ithaca, New York, and was formerly of Duquesne, PA. She has written an interesting depiction of three generations of Slovak Women, standing behind their husbands and fathers, who worked in the coal mines and steel mills that allowed our industrial society to grow and prosper. Ms. Alzo said that her inspiration for her book was a similar book about three generations of Slovak men living in Brad-dock during the beginning of the 1900's. This earlier book was titled *Out of This Furnace* and written by Thomas Bell in 1941 and republished by the University of Pittsburgh Press in 1976.

In writing her book, Ms. Alzo depicts the hardships faced by her grandmother, Verona Straka was born on November 11, 1899 in Milpos, Slovakia and was the youngest of eleven (11) children. Verona came to America on her own on July 7, 1922 to find a better life. Verona's father had probably died during the pandemic (influenza) which swept the world in 1918, and she came here to reunite with her sister, Maria, who had been living in the United States.

Veronica Straka married János Figlar in Barton, Ohio. They raised seven (7) children, six (6) of them during the depression.

Their daughter, Anna Figlar married John Alzo, Jr. in 1947. They eventually settled in Duquesne, PA where their only child, born in 1964, was the author, Lisa Ann Alzo. Ms. Alzo attended Duquesne Catholic School. She writes, "Years ago, when my father went there, the school was known as Holy Trinity, or as he referred to it, 'Hunky Tech' because of the predominant number of Slovak children enrolled there." Ms. Alzo has been an instructor of genealogy and family history courses in Central New York and is currently employed by Cornell University.

This special event was sponsored by the Great American Federal Savings and Loan. They were represented for the evening by Carole Ann Schiffman from the Main Street Branch Office in Munhall, and Jack Homoney with the Main Office on Clairton Boulevard. The evening's event, which was held at the Carnegie Library of Homestead's Music Hall, was well attended by members of Lisa's family, H&MTHSociety Members and guests from the community.



L to R: George DeBolt, President; Carole Schiffman, GAF; Lisa Alzo; Jack Homoney, GAF

CARNEGIE LIBRARY OF HOMESTEAD AND MUSIC HALL

By John Asmonga

The Carnegie Library of Homestead was built and endowed by Andrew Carnegie in 1898 and has served the community for over 104 years as an educational and cultural center. It is located at 510 10th Avenue, Munhall, PA, just two blocks up the hill from the recently opened historic 1892 Bost Building on 8th Avenue.

The Carnegie Library of Homestead Music Hall was opened 104 years ago and is still in operation. This elegant and spacious local Music Hall has been used for many different types

of events over the last century since it was constructed. When it first opened, on September 12, 1898, it was with a reading by Agnes McClure, a local professional reader, who gave the first entertainment at the Music Hall to 1,000 local residents in attendance. The staff of ushers who had just recently been appointed were: Dan Purman, J.F. Piper, Chap Shaffer, R. George Rott and Ralph C. Davis.

The Homestead & Mifflin Township Historical Society is looking for more information on some of the earliest settlers to this area and would like to include information on any of the above mentioned individuals in our archives for family histories. Contact one of our members at our office in the Carnegie Library of Homestead by stopping by or calling 412.461.7767.



CLOH
Memorial contributions
help preserve memories

Carnegie Library of Homestead
510 10th Avenue
Munhall, PA 15120-1910
Gifts are Tax Deductible 501(C)(3) Organization