THE USE OF A GUIDE BOOK IN THE STUDY OF A COUNTY

By William W. Carling

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The Study Guide of Northampton County was compiled to fill a need for specific material upon which to base a study in both the history and geography of Northampton county. It was begun in 1932 when the writer, dissatisfied with poor results and inadequate teaching facilities at hand, decided to set up a plan of study utilizing the problem-study method of approach. It was first used in manuscript form in the author's own school, but later, upon the request of neighboring schools, it was multigraphed and distributed so that all children could have copies to use as workbooks. In 1933 it was printed for the first time, and then, in 1936, it was completely revised, enlarged, and published in its present form.

The Guide is dependent upon reference material for subject-matter, but the problems are so written and arranged that with the help of such material ordinarily available in the public school, the children are able to work out these solutions with little difficulty. There are good histories of Northampton county, but usually they are too voluminous or too costly for use in the elementary grades. The materials for the study of the geography of the county are not found in one volume, but scattered in textbooks upon the state and nation and in various books of statistical nature. Thus, by using all available books, texts, and pamphlets and by supplementing these with the local newspapers, field trips when practicable, and with special reports by children who have visited
Due to the nature of the subject matter of the *Guide*, it is being used to best advantage in the eighth grade where a general knowledge of Pennsylvania and the United States has been attained and where there has been developed the ability to search out information from a mass of material and facts. The author has tried it with fair success in the sixth and seventh grades of his school, but, for the reasons mentioned, he has found it most successful in the eighth. It constitutes a regular course in the Forks Township Consolidated School and in other schools of the county.

The general objectives of the *Guide* are: (1) to awaken in the children an interest in their county and to create in them a desire to become familiar with its history, its geography and its government, and (2) to furnish a background for this awakening by acquainting these children with some of the more important men and events in the county's history, with its past and present importance in industry, with its government, and with its place in the world today.

To illustrate, the following examples have been selected from the *Guide*:

(1) Tell what lands are included in the term "Forks of the Delaware."
(2) Tell why Northampton county is today smaller than when it was laid out.
(3) Tell who named Northampton county and why it was so named.
(4) State briefly the ways in which men of the county have developed and used advantageously the county's natural resources.
(5) Can you complete the following statements?
   (a) George Washington visited Bethlehem and Easton in July, 17—.
   (b) The Marquis de Lafayette, after he was wounded at Brandywine, stayed in the Brethren's House of the Moravian Seminary at—.
   (c) In Northampton county, the Walking Purchase followed the —— River.
   (d) The Sullivan Trail begins at ——.
   (e) The Treaty of 1756 was made with the Indians at ——.
(f) Benjamin Franklin was sent to Northampton county to build frontier ——.
(g) The proprietor of Pennsylvania sent William Parsons to lay out the town of ——.
(h) Audubon lived in Northampton county while he was making some of his famous paintings of ——.
(i) The Wolf Academy is located at ——.

(6) Tell what you can about the Liberty Bell (from Independence Hall) in Northampton county.
(7) Explain why Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Easton are important historically.

In actual use, the Guide is very flexible. Essentially, it consists of specific problems, questions and leading statements for discussion, the purposes of which are to encourage, as far as is practicable, research into available printed materials, and, when these are insufficient, to seek the desired information at first hand. The problems are classified under fourteen topics, namely, Size and Shape; Surface; Plant Life; Animal Life; Soil and Rock; Climate; Agriculture; Minerals; Manufactures; Settlement and Growth; Important Men, Events and Places; Population, Education, and Recreation; Transportation and Communication; and Present Communities. Each topic serves as a background for itself. Included in the “Study” are a list of suggested subjects for volunteer reports, a bibliography, and several outline maps of Northampton county to be filled in as directed under the section on “Map Activities.” These outline maps when completed show the historical places and events of the county, as well as its present geographic divisions, and its topography.

The approach to the study of Northampton county uses the well-known method of discovering the unknown from the known. After having completed a study of Pennsylvania and the United States both in history and geography, the children are ready under the proper guidance to select that material which pertains to their county and to set down the information as the foundation upon which to build the story of Northampton. For this purpose loose-leaf notebooks are kept into which answers to problems, the conclusions reached through discussions, reports, pictures, and specimens gathered for use in class, are placed. A separate museum case or shelf is kept for rocks, soil, Indian relics or other
specimens gathered by the children or loaned to the school for a short time.

After becoming familiar with the physical features of their county, the pupils next study its resources. Its plant and animal life is already familiar to them through nature study courses or, in the case of rural children, through their actual out-of-door life. Likewise, with their preparation in geography, they are ready to take up the study of the human uses of the county, and then to make a comparative study of their county as it fits itself into the world of man.

Why their ancestors found it convenient to settle at the "Forks of the Delaware" is at once apparent to most pupils from the geographical location and from the types of industries which are seen in their communities today. Their Pennsylvania history provides the names of the early settlers of the county and why they came. Their own parents, friends and classmates can tell when and why others came to build homes in Northampton. The more important men and events in the history of the county are found in the histories of Pennsylvania and the United States, while the lesser important are made the subjects of reports to the class after a visit to the shelves of the Easton Public Library, to the County Court House, or to recent issues of newspapers of the county. In some cases, it is expedient for the teacher to give these reports; others may be presented by the pupils.

In the author's school, field trips throughout the county by the class as a group have been impracticable in the past, but through the kindness of the owners of the school busses, the eighth grade each year has been able to visit the county seat. Photographs, moving pictures, and word pictures by pupils who have visited other interesting places have brought the remainder of the county to the schoolroom.

This study leads naturally to the present time, and to the study of the county's population, education and recreation. Each of these is taken in its turn and related to the other studies; and then the place and importance of transportation and communication is discussed. Finally, the study reveals the kinds and locations of the communities of the county, their relative importance, and closes with a brief discussion of the government of Northampton county and its present officials and their duties.
Very interesting and quite often flattering to the author has been the decided interest shown by his pupils in their desire to study their county through the medium of the Study Guide. Their pleasure is evidenced by their desire to work as rapidly as possible, individually and in groups, and by the amount of work they accomplish outside of the usual class periods and on their own initiative.

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORY IN EAST HUNTINGDON HIGH SCHOOL

BY ELLA MARIE SCHMUCK

Student President, East Huntingdon Township High School History Club

The success that the East Huntingdon High School History Club has achieved in the past several years is due in a great measure to a striking incident which took place several years ago. This event brought about the inspiration which later developed into the establishment of the club by Mr. Lloyd E. Davis, our present leader. While entering a garage in his native state of Ohio, he was confronted by a gentleman who was desirous of knowing where the first capitol of the state was formerly located. Being unable to answer this question, he accompanied his inquirer to a source of information where he found, to his great astonishment, that this seemingly unimportant structure, which was now an ordinary garage, was at an earlier date, the building around which all the governmental affairs of the state once centered. It had been the state capitol.

His ignorance of this information concerning his own state, and the fact that he had just been graduated in the field of history, brought the realization that young people do not know their own locality thoroughly enough. The vast wealth of knowledge they possess of American history cannot be tied up to their own lives; thus, it means little to them. He decided measures must be taken to remedy this situation.

This tiny spark kindled the organization and the establishment of a history club of thirty members in the fall of 1931 at East Huntingdon High School. With the beginning of the school term in the autumn of 1932, what we believe to be the first high school
local history class in the state of Pennsylvania issuing full academic credit for the completion of a year's work, was organized by Mr. Davis. This class, which meets five times weekly, consists of students from the senior class and only those who have a B standing or above. This set-up makes for a class that is willing to render service in doing detailed research work in both state and local history. It is around this class that most of the club's endeavors are centered.

In October, 1932, the club presented as its part in the bi-centennial celebration of the anniversary of the birth of George Washington, an historical pageant, "First In War," in which 200 students participated. Grounds just south of the high school furnished an ideal location for the re-enactment of Indian wars and frontier life. A scene showing Washington accompanied by his Virginia troops entering "Great Meadows" was the first presentation. There he received a message from Half-King informing him that the French forces were near. A second message from the same source persuading Washington to bring some of his men was received also. He obeyed, rejoined Half-King on his way, and both groups marched to the camp site of the sleeping French. The result was Washington's victory over Jumonville in his first military engagement.

Immediately the troops began to construct a fort which was almost completed when a sentinel appeared warning Washington of the approach of a large French force. In a short time the firing of cannon and small arms was very rapid. But, soon the ammunition supply became low. Several men were dispatched to the supply wagons. Reaching the fort none too soon, they were well in the stockade when a wagon was struck with a direct blow from the French batteries on the hill. Fearing the Indians might leave them because of the lack of immediate success, the French called for a parley. It was refused by Washington who was afraid the object was to ascertain his condition.

Rapid firing followed, then a second messenger appeared. All firing ceased, a truce was signed, the dead were buried, and the recession of the Virginians began. The Virginia troops, with beating of drums and flying colors left the fort and began the march for their own homes. The raising of the "Stars and Stripes" brought the pageant to a close. Some 2,000 spectators
witnessed the pageant. No admission was charged, but a collection was taken to defray the expenses of a Braddock’s Trail marker that had been erected by the club previous to this occasion. The Peters Ammunition Company graciously furnished the club with 2,500 rounds of blank shells for a realistic performance.

Later in the same year a number of members of the club made a trip to Dunbar’s Camp where they unearthed many valuable relics of the ill-fated Braddock expedition. With the help of Mr. Ray Martz of Scottdale, the club located the stone which was used to mark Washington’s victory at Jumonville. As a final celebration of the bi-centennial in honor of Washington, two short plays were given by the club in a special chapel program.

In 1933, efforts were put forth to clear Braddock’s Trail. Receiving the permission of the landowners, the members worked each Saturday removing trees and undergrowth until the task of making a roadway from Bridgeport to Hunker in East Huntingdon township was completed. With the cooperation of the late Professor John K. Lacock and the Warranty Surveys our goal was achieved.

During the following year, the club located Captain Jacob’s hunting cabin in which Washington stopped on his journey from the French forts in 1775. Later in the same year an Indian camp site which contained many valuable relics was located. A trip to Point Marion where inspection and excavation of a mound site concluded the program for 1934.

The discovery in 1935 of what we believe to be an Indian mound in East Huntingdon township added to our triumphs. With some outside assistance, the organization hopes to excavate this mound in the near future. The compilation of a “School History of East Huntingdon Township,” a record of all the important and historical events of our own township and community, was begun in 1935 and its completion is looked forward to with great interest.

The year 1937 brought for the club another discovery, a rock resembling the Standing Stone Rock in Huntingdon county. It is located on the exact spot of Jacob’s hunting cabin. The importance of this find has not been fully determined.

A day’s tour each year of places of historical interest is an item of great interest to the members. One tour included Jumonville’s Grave, Fort Necessity, Washington’s Mill, and Gist’s
Plantation. On another journey, the group visited Moundsville and Wheeling, W. Va., the site of Fort Henry, Lou Wetzels birthplace, the historical town of Claysville, Pennsylvania, and West Alexander. Still another trip through the Ligonier Valley took the group to St. Clair's home, Fort Ligonier, St. Clair's grave in Greensburg, and to the Bushy Run battlefield. To make each year's program complete, its schedule includes a trip to the West Overton Historical Museum, the birthplace of Henry Clay Frick. It is located near Scottdale, Pennsylvania.

Another annual feature sponsored by the club is the History Project Show. Each history student is required to enter a project of his own workmanship depicting a time, place, and event, or an object of historical significance. This is accompanied by an essay which gives the origin, history, use, etc., of the object on display. A number of blue and red ribbons, and gold seals are awarded for first, second, and third prizes, respectively, for both projects and essays. At the close of each school term a special chapel program is held for the presentation of medals to the best and second best students of American and Modern history.

Among the most enjoyable of the club's activities are the semiannual banquets at which we have been privileged to hear such well known speakers as Attorney James M. Gregg; County Superintendent of Schools Charles H. Maxwell; Mr. C. M. Bomberger, author and publisher; Dr. Randolph C. Downes, professor of history at the University of Pittsburgh; Reverend Charles W. Mauss; Mr. Lewis C. Walkinshaw, writer and attorney; and others.

Several of our members accepted the invitation to become junior members of the Westmoreland-Fayette branch of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. Thus we were given an outlet for our local history endeavors. As a contribution of our work to this branch of the society, we made and presented them a map of Westmoreland county containing spots of historical interest and those things in which this county ranked first.

As a result of the past year's research work in the local history class two publications were completed: "Know Your State" and "Pennsylvania 101 Times First."

With the help of a good library (50 books), many pamphlets, magazine and newspaper articles, our students further their
knowledge beyond the limits of an ordinary history class. In addition to these activities, this organization has had charge of all school chapel programs dealing with history. One such program was the celebrating of Founders' Day, April 8, 1938. Still another item of which we are proud is our club pin which was designed by our members. Our club is growing each year, and we hope to raise our enrollment above that of this year which was approximately one-third of our senior high school enrollment. We wish all other similar organizations success in all their undertakings.

SAMUEL MEREDITH

BY JOHN OBELENUS

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SAMUEL Meredith (1740-March 10, 1817), patriot, financier, and the first treasurer of the United States, was born in Philadelphia, Pa., the son of Reese Meredith, a merchant, and Martha (Carpenter) Meredith. He attended private schools in Philadelphia and Chester, and then entered his father's business. He took an active part in ante-Revolutionary affairs, was one of the signers of the non-importation resolutions adopted in Philadelphia on Nov. 7, 1765, and attended, as a deputy from Philadelphia, the Provincial Convention held in that city from January 23 to 28, 1775. During the Revolution he served as a major and as lieutenant-colonel of the Third Battalion of the Associators, known as the Silk Stocking Company. He distinguished himself in the battles of Trenton and Princeton and on April 5, 1777, was promoted to brigadier-general of the Pennsylvania militia for gallant services in the battles of Brandywine and Germantown. He resigned from the army on January 9, 1778, and resumed his business. Meredith gave much silver to carry on the war and was exiled from Philadelphia when the British occupied it. He served two terms in the Pennsylvania Colonial Assembly (1778-79, 1781-83) and on Nov. 26, 1786, was elected to the Congress of the Confederation, serving until 1788. In August of the following year he was appointed surveyor of the port of Philadelphia by President Washington. He resigned the post to accept an
appointment, urged upon him by Alexander Hamilton, as treasurer of the United States, the first appointed under the Constitution.

Meredith entered upon his new duties on September 11, 1789, at a time when the treasury needed conservative management. While in office he advanced the government $20,000 and later $120,000, which it was unable to repay upon his retirement from office. He remained in office until October 31, 1801, when, owing to the state of his health and finances, he retired.

Meredith in company with his brother-in-law, George Clymer, Robert Morris, Benjamin Rush and Henry Drinker made large purchases of wild lands in western Virginia, eastern Kentucky, Delaware and Sullivan counties, New York, and in all the northeastern counties of Pennsylvania. In 1796, Meredith made an individual purchase of 50,000 acres of land in Wayne county and in the adjoining Susquehanna county, and named it Belmont Manor. It extended from the Moosic Mountains northward to the New York state line, a distance of twenty-two miles, being two miles wide. It was almost unbroken wilderness, but he cleared away, in present Mount Pleasant township, Wayne county, about 100 acres and began to make improvements, putting up a dwelling. In 1802 he moved there and devoted the last years of his life to the management of his land, dying in the manor house of the estate, March 10, 1817. He was interred in the little cemetery on his estate, which also contains the graves of his wife and grandson, Henry Meredith Read.

Meredith married, on May 19, 1772, Margaret Cadwalader, daughter of Dr. Thomas Cadwalader, chief medical director of the Pennsylvania Hospital, Philadelphia. To this union was born seven children; among whom, one son Thomas, later became a Chief Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, another daughter, Anne later received the lands located in Susquehanna county, which turned out to be the most northern end of the anthracite coal region, terminating at Forest City, “The Northern Gateway to the Anthracite.”