

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORY

VOLUME VIII

JANUARY, 1941

NUMBER 1

NINTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

BY J. PAUL SELSAM
Pennsylvania State College

OVER one hundred members and friends of the Pennsylvania Historical Association gathered at State College on October 18 and 19, 1940 for the ninth annual meeting. Planned for the height of the beautiful fall foliage in this mountainous region, those attending the convention were not disappointed with the scenery and also with the new buildings of Pennsylvania State College.

The program began with a luncheon session on Friday, October 18 at the Nittany Lion Inn with Mr. S. K. Stevens, historian of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission, presiding. A splendid paper was presented by Mrs. Hazel Shields Garrison of Fremont, Ohio. A former Pennsylvanian, Mrs. Garrison spoke on "Cartography—The Stepchild of History." The speaker showed the interrelation between maps and history, stating that as "geographical knowledge is the most important factor in history, the study of maps is essential and of first importance to the historian." She paid tribute to the maps of Thomas Holme, the two Sculls, Fry and Jefferson, Dr. Mitchell and Lewis Evans. Mrs. Garrison urged greater use of maps in the school and also in the home.

The Friday afternoon session was held in the new Liberal Arts Building. Mr. J. Martin Stroup, president of the Mifflin County

Historical Society presided. The first paper was read by Dr. Richard H. Shryock of the University of Pennsylvania on "Medical Progress in Philadelphia, 1750-1850." Dr. Shryock emphasized the social and economic background of the development of medicine, showing that medical history is a fundamental aspect of social development. The speaker also stressed the influence of geography and climate as well as the racial and cultural background of the people, on medical history. The paper was an extremely important contribution to the sociological background of medical history. Dr. Frank D. Kern, dean of the Graduate School and professor of botany, Pennsylvania State College, spoke on the "Contributions of Pennsylvania Botanists." Dean Kern traced the achievements of such great figures as Governor James Logan, who made important contributions in the field of fertilization; Adam Kuhn, the first professor of botany in America; Humphrey Marshall, of Chester county, best known for his catalogue of trees, shrubs and plants. The works of John Bartram and Gottlieb Heinrich Muhlenberg were discussed and a tribute was paid to both for their valuable additions to the field of botanical knowledge.

After the meeting, Professor Harold E. Dickson of the art department of the College gave a talk on the recently completed mural in the Old Main building by Henry Varnum Poor. This is one of the finest murals or frescos in the country and should be seen by everyone interested in Pennsylvania history. Tea was then served to the ladies attending the convention at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Asa E. Martin.

The annual dinner was held on Friday evening in the Nittany Lion Inn with Dr. Asa E. Martin presiding. One hundred people heard the presidential address by Dr. Lawrence Henry Gipson in "Some Reflections Upon the American Revolution." A noted authority on the British Empire, Dr. Gipson stressed the misunderstandings which developed in the relations between the colonists and the mother country, and showed that the break could have been averted by greater sympathy and understanding on both sides.

It was a distinct pleasure to have had with us one of the founders of the Association, Dr. Solon J. Buck, director of publications of the National Archives, Washington, D. C. Dr. Buck delivered

the address of the evening on "The Living Past." It was a forceful presentation of the importance of documents, letters and other materials from which history is written, and was a powerful plea for their better preservation.

The Saturday morning session, presided over by Mr. Floyd G. Hoenstine, secretary of the Blair County Historical Society, was devoted to the Scotch-Irish in Pennsylvania. Dr. Wayland F. Dunaway spoke on "The Pennsylvania Scotch-Irish in Politics." Stressing their "genius for law and government," Dr. Dunaway sketched their influence in the colonial period, dating from 1744. He stated that from this date "throughout the remainder of the colonial era, they headed the opposition to Quaker domination." They were an important factor in the Revolutionary movement and in framing the liberal state constitution of 1776. Mr. Guy S. Klett, research historian of the Presbyterian Historical Society, spoke on "The Presbyterian Church and the Scotch-Irish on the Pennsylvania Colonial Frontier." Mr. Klett mentioned the difficulties and hardships involved in trying to keep the church abreast with the frontier movement and told of the heroic efforts of the missionaries in the wilderness settlements.

The concluding paper was given by Dr. Julian Boyd, another leader in Pennsylvania history who has left the state to take up duties as librarian of Princeton University. He gave an admirable talk on "The Beginnings of Printing in Pennsylvania," and stressed the valuable contributions of our citizens not only in printing, but also in maintaining the freedom of speech and of the press.

The luncheon on Saturday was a great success. One hundred and sixteen people gathered at the Penn-Belle Hotel in Bellefonte for the session sponsored by the Centre County Historical Society. Mr. George R. Meek, president of the society, was the chairman and gave a brief but very illuminating talk on the growth of Bellefonte and some of its problems in the early days. The program was devoted to the "Bellefonte Governors," with the first paper on "The Political Career of Andrew Gregg Curtin," by the Honorable Ivan Walker, president judge of the Centre county courts. Judge Walker stated that Curtin was a very able speaker and entered politics at an early age, becoming leader of the Whig Party. He was interested in education and became secretary of schools under Governor Pollock. He suggested the system

of normal schools which were later established. The speaker then told how Curtin was elected governor in 1860 and the problems he encountered as "War Governor."

"Governor James A. Beaver" was next considered by John G. Love, Esq., a Bellefonte attorney. Mr. Love mentioned some of the difficulties in the early life of Beaver, the loss of his father at the age of three and ill health; his promising law career at Bellefonte, where he was "noted for his self-reliance, attention to detail; and his devotion to whatever tasks confronted him." He then traced his military career in the Civil War, telling about the amputation of his leg at a field hospital. He was elected governor in 1886 and became especially interested in advancing education. He served on the Superior Court of Pennsylvania from July 1, 1895 until his death on January 31, 1914.

J. Thomas Mitchell, Esq., secretary of the Centre County History Society, discussed the life and work of Governor Daniel H. Hastings. Mr. Mitchell was the political secretary of Hastings, so knew him intimately. The governor-to-be was only twelve when the Civil War broke out, but at fourteen he enlisted. His age was soon discovered and he was sent home, becoming a school teacher the same year. He was elected principal of the Bellefonte schools in 1867 at the age of eighteen. He read law in the evenings and was soon admitted to the bar. With the decline of the Cameron machine, Hastings became interested in politics and was nominated by the Republicans for the governorship in 1894, carrying the state by a large vote. As governor he rebelled against "boss" politics, fighting the Quay machine. It was during his administration, the speaker related, that the old capitol burned down, and Hastings fought the dreams of the machine in rebuilding it. Relatives of all the "Bellefonte Governors" were at the meeting and were introduced by Mr. Meek.

After the meeting a tour of points of historical interest in Bellefonte was conducted by members of the Centre County Historical Society. The homes of the governors were pointed out. The visitors were taken to the headquarters of the society to see the building, library, and collection of historical objects; then the guests were shown the home of Miss Mary Linn and Mr. Henry Linn. This is one of the finest old homes in Bellefonte, built in 1810 by Philip Benner, the ironmaster, for the

occupancy of Judge Jonathan Hoge Walker. A son of Judge Walker who lived here, was appointed by President Buchanan as governor of Kansas. Governor Beaver also lived here. The grandmother of the Linns moved there in 1841, and they have a fine collection of antiques, most of which have been in the family for many years.

The annual business meeting of the Association was held on Saturday morning, with President Gipson in the chair. Dr. Richard H. Shryock reported for the Committee on Publications, stating that the committee was considering several important matters, but the one of chief concern was the publication of a bibliography of secondary works on Pennsylvania history. He reported that the work is almost completed and can be finished if funds can be found to employ a qualified person at half time for a year. The nominating committee then reported and elections were held. Miss M. Atherton Leach was re-elected second vice president; Alfred P. James, of the University of Pittsburgh, Frederic A. Godcharles of Milton, Earl W. Dickey, of the Altoona High School, and Oliver S. Heckman, of the Department of Public Instruction, were elected to the Council for three-year terms. Dr. Francis B. Haas, Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Pennsylvania, was elected an honorary member. The death of ex-Governor John S. Fisher, a sustaining member of the Association since its organization, was noted with deep regret.

The Association approved unanimously the efforts of the librarian of the State Library to reorganize and rearrange the library, and went on record as favoring the establishment, on an independent basis, of a department of Public Archives of the Commonwealth, preferably in an Archives Building. The Association also favored a statewide newspaper indexing project under the sponsorship of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission, similar to the Ohio project. This move was taken since the indexing of newspapers is one of the most valuable services which can be undertaken for the benefit of students of history, since it would be an aid to state and local historical enterprise, and since a practical basis for such a project has been provided by the Historical Records Survey in its listing of all Pennsylvania newspapers with locations which has now been practically completed.

President Gipson said a few words about the series of "Penn-

sylvania Lives" which is being published by the University of Pennsylvania Press under the direction of one of our members, Mr. Phelps Soule. A resolution of appreciation was voted to the Program and Local Arrangements committees, as well as to the authorities of Pennsylvania State College, the historical societies of Centre, Blair and Mifflin counties, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and Juniata College for their cordial coöperation.

Upon the invitation of Gettysburg College, the Lutheran Theological Seminary, the National Park Commission, and the Times and News Publishing Company, the Association voted to hold its next meeting in October 1941 at Gettysburg.