

NEWS AND COMMENT

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ASSOCIATION NEWS

While the attendance at the recent annual meeting in Harrisburg was not so large as in less critical years, the meeting was successful enough to justify the decision to hold it. Local interest and attendance were affected by the fact that October 30-31 was pre-election week-end in Harrisburg. The excellently planned program included several outstanding papers.

Every member of the association will regret the end of Mr. Gipson's able administration; it is felt, however, that Mr. Bining will take over with skill the leadership of the organization, even under what may be difficult wartime conditions. The calibre of the men chosen to occupy the presiding officer's chair exemplifies the advantage of having a succession for a post that numerous Pennsylvania historians are capable of filling with honor.

Whether there can be a meeting in 1943 is uncertain. If one is held, Harrisburg will probably be the most likely place for it because of its accessibility by various means of transportation. However, the increasing influx of various branches of the armed services threaten to overtax the city's hotel facilities.

It is encouraging to note that association membership has not yet been affected seriously by the war. This does not mean that it may not be in the future, since it depends largely on the college and university group for support. Every effort must be made to overcome this potential decline by building membership in other quarters. The growing number of schools offering courses in Pennsylvania history as well as sponsoring junior-historian clubs should be an excellent source. It might not be unorthodox to consider junior membership for students with special provision for club membership. The publication of contributions from the juniors in the school department of the magazine might provide a good means of securing interest.

HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

It still appears doubtful that a state-wide meeting of the Pennsylvania Federation of Historical Societies will be possible in April 1943. The success of the federation meetings is dependent on a rather widespread representation from constituent societies, and under present travel conditions such an attendance would be difficult to secure. A canvass of officers has been undertaken with a view to reaching an early decision.

The same problem confronts the junior federation. A series of regional meetings is under consideration as a tentative substitute for a session at Harrisburg. Southeastern Pennsylvanians are already planning a meeting of clubs in their area to be held sometime in March. One of the sessions will probably be at Independence Hall. The network of interurban transportation facilities in the region is such that a meeting of this type in Philadelphia would be entirely feasible.

The war does not appear to have crippled the historical societies in the state. Meetings are being held with usual regularity and are rather well attended. The fact that the typical county society always has been centered in membership and activity at the county seat has precluded a lapse of activity which might otherwise have occurred. Many societies are devoting programs to reviewing local history in terms of wars of the past with emphasis on war conditions of former days as contrasted with those of the present.

Throughout the country the various state historical organizations and agencies have accepted the war as a challenge to expand rather than contract services, and the same spirit appears to be dominant among the local societies in Pennsylvania and elsewhere. There are many ways in which the historical society, however small, can contribute to the war effort. One of the most significant is active participation in the solution of problems connected with protecting cultural resources against the dangers of scrap drives. Another service is presenting programs at meetings and furnishing speakers for public gatherings with a patriotic motif or morale appeal based on historical backgrounds. Attention to preparation of special museum displays for schools and the public with an eye to war backgrounds is a third avenue open to the alert historian who seeks to keep alive a realization that local history has its value even in the present emergency.

The historical society can be of real assistance in the war-history preservation program. The Historical Commission is anxious to enlist as large a number as possible of interested individuals and organizations to assist in creating local consciousness of the importance of conserving contemporary material which will be of value as an historical record of Pennsylvania's part in the war. At least one principal depository is sought in each county of the state. This does not mean that this single depository can do all the work of collecting information. Every active historical society should have a war-history committee; in fact, several already do. This committee could coöperate with other agencies in the county in preserving local war history. The commission will be glad to advise any society on methods of procedure and contacts to be followed up in such a program. The Dauphin County society has arranged for a monthly diary of the local war effort to be prepared by Mr. A. Boyd Hamilton. This is read at each meeting, and each successive report becomes a part of the society record.

The City History Society of Philadelphia has had several excellent meetings at the Widener branch of the free library. On October 21 Mr. Albert Mordell addressed the organization on "Northern Liberties," and on November 18 the secretary, Mr. David I. Moore, delivered an illustrated lecture on "Two Centuries of Philadelphia Travel," in the course of which many rare lantern slides were utilized. The series of excursions to points of historical and cultural interest in the Philadelphia region conducted by the society during the fall months was exceptionally successful.

The distinguished Friends' Historical Association, founded in 1873, held its annual meeting at the Atwater Kent Museum in Philadelphia "on Second-day, Eleventh Month 30th, 1942, at 8 P. M." Mr. Arthur Edwin Bye spoke on "Edward Hicks (1780-1849), Quaker Artist," of whose paintings a loan exhibition was an added attraction.

The story of china seems to have been a subject of common interest with Frankford and Chester County historians in November. On November 10 the Frankford society featured Mrs. J. Bertram Hervey in an illustrated lecture on "The Romance of

Sarah and Josiah Wedgwood." The Chester County society seven days later heard a talk by Mr. Francis W. Pennypacker on "Majolica and its Makers." Special exhibits were arranged for each of the meetings. At the October gathering of the Chester Countians a paper was read by Wayne Morris on "Dr. George A. Spratt, Chester County Inventor, and his Work in Early Aeronautics."

The Adams County Historical Society met in the law library of the courthouse at Gettysburg on October 6 for a splendid discussion by Mrs. Elsie Singmaster Lewars on "Thaddeus Stevens at Caledonia." At the regular monthly meeting on November 3 an open forum was held on recently acquired historical material.

On November 20 the Montgomery County society met at Historical Hall in Norristown. "Charles Heber Clark" was the theme of a paper by Mr. Frederick L. Clark of Germantown, and "Some Facts about Plymouth Township" were related by Mr. George K. Brecht of Norristown. New display cases and the beginning of a general renovation of the building have resulted in a great improvement in the appearance of the society's rooms and a new usefulness for its museum. A rare collection of old Norristown views, a gift of the Norristown Public Library, is a valuable addition to the museum. The September meeting celebrated the Muhlenberg bicentennial.

The annual meeting of the Delaware County Historical Society was held on October 29 in the Chester Y. W. C. A. building. Mr. L. Norris Hall of Ridley Park read the principal paper of the evening, "Historical Sketch of Ridley Park."

Mr. Edward Reimer, secretary of the Northampton County Society, staged another of his very well-planned and highly successful meetings at the Hotel Easton on November 13. Mr. William Plank of Lehigh University, president of the group, presided. Music was provided by the Lafayette College choir. The principal address, by the Reverend George A. Creitz, was entitled "The First Church Looks at Colonial Easton." The gathering was attended by two hundred and fifty-one members and friends.

Mr. John Scull, principal leader in the activities of the Somerset County Historical and Archaeological Society, has been running a column at regular intervals in his weekly *Somerset County Times* of "Contributions to the History of Somerset County." There are numerous societies which could profit by paying attention to this type of material. A survey by the Historical Commission revealed that many local papers are carrying some sort of state- or local-history column and that many not doing so could be interested. If local history is to be used in the schools and as a morale resource to intensify public patriotism, the newspaper should be sought as one of the best mediums for making it available. One of Mr. Scull's recent columns contains in full the description of the county given in Harris' *Pittsburgh Directory* for 1837.

The Lycoming society is devoting its programs for the year to a study of the county's part in the several wars. At the October meeting the revolutionary history of the region was discussed by Mr. Bruce A. Hunt, and a dramatic skit, "Fort Antes—Spring of 1778," written by Miss Katherine Bennet, was presented before a large audience, which included twenty new members.

At near-by Sunbury the Northumberland County society had its annual meeting and election of officers on December 4 under the direction of Mr. Frederic A. Godcharles at the First Presbyterian Church. Mr. S. K. Stevens gave an address on "The Historical Society in War Time."

The November meeting of the Old York Road Historical Society was held at the Abington Library on Wednesday evening the eighteenth. A paper on "John T. Wanamaker" was presented by Mr. G. Gilbert Abel. The meeting was well attended, and some very interesting and worth-while papers are in prospect for the winter season.

The Pottstown Historical Society met on September 28 in Library Hall at the Hill School. A fine address on "Your Pennsylvania German Neighbors" was delivered by the Honorable James F. Henninger. Mrs. Marjorie P. Wendell has been continued as secretary, and Mr. Jesse R. Evans is serving as presi-

dent for the year. The membership of the society is growing steadily.

The historians of Pike County, of whom Mr. K. M. Depuy is president, gathered together at Forrest Hall in Milford to commemorate the birth of William Penn. The next meeting, on March 26, will celebrate the anniversary of the founding of the county.

"Old Trails in Indiana County" was the theme of Mr. George Hill's address before the meeting on October 2 of the Indiana County Historical Society. Mr. Hill, a member of the faculty of the local high school, has done extensive research in this subject. The society is expanding its collection of lantern slides and motion pictures on local history. The pictures are available for all types of meetings and have served to enlarge greatly the usefulness of the society and its work. The column of historical and genealogical information in the weekly paper is continuing as a public service. The society dedicated a new historical marker on October 4.

The Mifflin County society, whose rooms in the Lewistown Municipal Building are open each Monday and Thursday evening, is organizing a war-history program for the county. It has also been assisting the county morale program of the Unity Committee. Attendance at meetings is reported to be less than usual because of transportation problems. A considerable membership outside the county seat at Lewistown makes the society susceptible to such difficulties.

The anniversary of the Mayflower compact was celebrated on November 22 at a service in *Gloria Dei*, Old Swedes' Church, Swanson and Christian Streets, in Philadelphia. The commemoration was sponsored by the Pennsylvania Society of Mayflower Descendants (Mr. A. Reed McIntire president), which customarily participates annually in such a service on the Sunday nearest November 21, the anniversary date. The sermon was delivered by the Reverend Melville Brooks, elder of the society and pastor of St. John's at Cynwyd.

The Reverend Edward J. Joyce, assistant at St. James' Church in Wilkinsburg, was the speaker at a meeting on September 28 of the Catholic Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, held in the assembly room of the chancery at 125 North Craig Street, Pittsburgh. The society is planning now for the observance in 1943 of the centenary of the establishment of the diocese.

Potter County historians held their first meeting of the season on October 31 at the home of Mrs. Mary L. Burt, Coudersport. A brief business meeting was followed by a paper on the Hollenbeck family, the story of which is an interesting illustration of the value of family history. The Hollenbecks were Hollanders who first settled in Cortland County, New York, and then, like many others, came into Potter County in 1837 as pioneers in what was the last frontier in Pennsylvania. Sixteen children, twelve of whom lived, were born in the hills of northern Pennsylvania. Members of the family took up the trek to the West after the Civil War and provided a mayor and a state legislator for Colorado and a chief justice for the supreme court of Nebraska, in addition to filling other responsible positions both in and out of the home county in Pennsylvania.

The theme of the meeting of the Dauphin County Historical Society on November 16 at the John Harris mansion was the origin and spelling of the names of numerous towns and localities in the county. Several county historians took part in the discussion, which is a continuation of a series to familiarize the members with the history of the communities which form a part of this important central county. Mr. A. Boyd Hamilton presented a monthly report on the history of the present war.

The Muncy Historical Society has succeeded in arranging another significant winter program. A paper on the "History of Clinton Township, Lycoming County," was read on November 13. A unique program on December 11 consisted of reproduction of old Muncy family albums on a screen by means of a slide machine. Mr. Eugene Bertin of the State Teachers College staff, Mansfield, continues as president of the society.

OF MEN AND MANY THINGS

The annual meeting of the Daughters of the American Revolution in the state was held at York on October 13-16 with delegates from a hundred and thirty chapters in attendance. Mrs. William Stark Thompkins of Wilkes-Barre presided as state regent, and five local chapters served as hostesses. The central motif of the meeting was the role of the D.A.R. in the national war program. Visits to local historic shrines were made, and a tablet commemorating the ratification of the French Alliance while Congress was sitting at York was unveiled at the old courthouse. Resolutions were adopted commending the Pennsylvania Historical Commission on its intensive program for promoting public understanding of the contributions of the state to democracy.

On November 22 United Lutheran churches throughout Philadelphia joined in commemorating the two-hundredth anniversary of the arrival in the city of the founder, the Reverend Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. Muhlenberg united the Lutheran churches into the ministerium of Pennsylvania, which in turn became the mother synod of the United Lutheran Church in America.

The American Philosophical Society held its autumn general meeting in the Hall of the American Philosophical Society, Independence Square, Philadelphia, on November 20 and 21. Among the multitude of learned papers presented were several of especial interest to historians of this state. Mr. Ales Hrdlicka, curator of the Division of Physical Anthropology of the National Museum, discussed the "History of Physical Anthropology in America with Special Reference to Philadelphia." Mr. Julian Boyd, librarian of Princeton University, spoke on "Horatio Gates Spafford, Precursor of Bessemer." Mr. J. Bennett Nolan, prominent attorney and historian of Reading, talked at the Saturday-afternoon session on "Benjamin Franklin's Mortgage on Daniel Boone's Farm." Mr. Richard H. Shryock of the University of Pennsylvania presented a paper on "American Historical Writing in our Earlier and Later History; a Critical Analysis."

Scranton is very proud of the fact that it has its first member of a President's cabinet in the person of Mr. Frank C. Walker, for some time Postmaster General in the present administration succeeding Mr. Farley. Mr. Walker was born in Plymouth, Pennsylvania, and his family moved to Arizona when he was but three. He later returned to his native state and took up residence at Scranton. Attention may be called to the fact that Pennsylvania is playing its usual distinctive role in national affairs so far as supplying men for high national posts is concerned. Justice Owen Roberts and Attorney-General Francis Biddle are of course well known. A fact not very familiar is that Justice Robert Jackson was born in Warren County, Pennsylvania. Secretary of the Interior Ickes is of Perry County stock, and the Wallace family is Pennsylvanian in background. In the armed forces the head of the entire American military organization, General Marshall, is a native of Uniontown, while the Deputy Chief of Staff, Lieutenant-General McNarney, was born and educated at Emporium. In the air force the names of Arnold and Spaatz, both Pennsylvanians, are synonymous with our growing air power. In the naval department Admiral Stark, in charge of naval operations in the European theater, is still fond of returning to his boyhood haunts near Wilkes-Barre and Tunkhannock.

The Historical Commission through its war-history division made available on December 7 a special news story widely circulated throughout the state summarizing the extent of Pennsylvania's contribution to the war effort since Pearl Harbor. The commission is releasing in January a more extensive bulletin on "Pennsylvania's First Year at War," which is the result of the gathering of extensive information by the commission office in coöperation with the War Service Program of the WPA. Special stories on various phases of the war and its effects on the state were secured with the help of different agencies and individuals. The Pennsylvania release is the first war-history compilation prepared by any state war-history agency in the country.

The Independence Hall Association is making real progress in its effort to provide for the proper development of this historic section of old Philadelphia. The City of Philadelphia has agreed to enter into an understanding with the Department of the

Interior which will designate the area as a national historic site under the Historic Sites Act of Congress. While the department is known not to favor the establishment of any new park areas for the duration of the war, it is believed that the overwhelming significance of Independence Hall as a world liberty shrine will overcome this objection to further expansion of the national-park program. The association is meeting with success in its efforts to secure private funds to finance its initial activities, which will necessarily include considerable research and planning. Interested persons desiring to assist are advised to contact Judge Edwin O. Lewis at City Hall, Philadelphia.

The American Association for State and Local History held its second annual meeting at Richmond, Virginia, on October 27-28 in conjunction with the Society of American Archivists. The problems of the local historian and archivist in regard to the present conflict provided the main theme for the several discussions and papers. A symposium on the relation of the historical society to the war effort was participated in by the state historian, Mr. Stevens, who analyzed the war activities of the state Historical Commission. War-history programs were discussed from several angles, and their importance as a function of the local history and archival agencies was detailed. There is every indication that the commonwealth's historical societies and commissions are assuming an important role by assisting the morale effort as well as taking a lead in the preservation of war records.

At the recent meeting of the Pennsylvania Historical Association the attention of many persons was directed to the commission publications on display. Numerous requests for various items were made, and some individuals asked why they had not received certain volumes. As a usual policy the commission does not desire to send out gratis all such material according to an unrestricted mailing list. In fact, this procedure is contrary to state regulations, though it has been followed on occasion in past years. The commission believes that not all people whose names might appear on a general mailing list would be equally interested in all publications and that to continue to give each new book to everyone on the list would result in considerable

waste. The pursuit of this course in the past has dissipated the supply of several important books (most notably Mr. Bining's study of the eighteenth-century iron industry), which are now no longer available for distribution. The commission now endeavors to place material only with libraries and with schools and individuals planning to make public use of it. Notice of all new books is given in *PENNSYLVANIA HISTORY* and elsewhere so that anyone who wishes to secure specific volumes may request them from the commission. Members of the association are asked to watch for the appearance of publications which would be of particular value to them in their work instead of expecting to receive all publications.

The junior-historian program is steadily gaining momentum. During October and November hundreds of teachers were contacted by Miss Cauley and Mr. Stevens through the medium of teachers' meetings and institutes. Over two-thirds of the counties of the state have been visited and several hundred teachers contacted in person and furnished with material suitable for school use. Week by week organized clubs are becoming members of the Pennsylvania Federation of Junior Historians. In a recent issue of the *Sunday New York Times* the Pennsylvania program for utilizing local history in the schools was commended as one answer to current problems on the teaching of history. In Philadelphia the Historical Society of Pennsylvania is planning to coöperate in the program by offering an opportunity for publication of outstanding products of junior-historian research in local history and providing special facilities for encouraging such work. The society also expects to present an award in the form of a certificate for outstanding individual and club activity during the year.

A recent survey of the newspapers of the state by the Historical Commission in connection with its war-history service reveals that as a result of labor shortage and other adverse circumstances a number of the small weekly newspapers are faced with extinction. Some have already been forced to suspend publication. There are about three times as many weekly as there are daily papers in Pennsylvania, and many portions of the state are served almost entirely by them. Some of these papers are of ancient vintage,

and their files are invaluable sources of local and state history. When a paper ceases to operate, the question of what will become of the files immediately comes up. Wherever possible these files should be preserved and placed in safe storage; otherwise one of the best sources of local history may be lost.

The Pennsylvania Committee on Conservation of Cultural Resources held a meeting in Harrisburg on the evening of October 30. In addition to Mr. Lingelbach, who presided as chairman, Messrs. Haas, Selsam, Keator, Nichols, and Stevens were present. Mr. Merle H. Deardorff of Warren has just completed for the committee a survey of space available for safe storage with particular reference to banks. His conclusions, which are very significant, run counter to some early ideas on the subject. According to his report there is little genuinely safe storage space anywhere for complete protection of cultural materials because of the presence of many indeterminable factors. With the help of bank-insurance experts Mr. Deardorff arrived at the conclusion that the best protection against bombing is to be found in the safe-deposit storage facilities of the largest and most modern banks. While these institutions naturally are in the larger population centers most apt to be attacked, French and British experience reveals that nothing of value in such storage is apt to be seriously damaged by even the most savage bombings. People who hasten, often with some hysteria, to remove works of art, documents and other material to the interior of the country are acting in contradiction to advice; fully as dangerous as possible war injury are the hazards to which they subject their valuables—damage through transportation over long distances, fire, flood, sabotage, and similar dangers, protection from which is not afforded in many so-called safe storage points in the small towns and cities of the interior.

One of the most important steps in Pennsylvania in the preservation of the records of the state has been taken by the Department of Internal Affairs. As every historian knows, this department is charged with the care and the use of the records in the Land Office of Pennsylvania, which are basic sources telling the story of the settlement and the development of the state in terms of the disposal of land. Fundamentally every real-estate transaction in

the commonwealth since the day of William Penn has rested on them. With the coöperation of the Historical Commission and the Committee on Conservation of Cultural Resources the department has arranged for the microfilming of the collection, to be done by the war-service division of the WPA, which has taken over the large microfilm unit previously utilized to film the WPA records of the state. The fine historical consciousness of Mr. Livengood, secretary of internal affairs, and Mr. Gus Steinmetz, director of information for the department, is to a great extent responsible for insuring the success of the project.

The American Association for State and Local History has recently made available another in its valuable bulletin series, *The Local History Museum and the War Program*, by Mr. Arthur Parker of the Rochester (New York) Museum. The publications of the association, including the bimonthly *News Letter*, are of great value to everyone interested in local history and its problems. There is a special subscription rate for libraries and institutions, and the membership fee for societies which are members of a parent society already having membership has been reduced. A forthcoming bulletin of the association, by Mr. J. Martin Stroup of the Mifflin County Historical Society, will present methods of securing publicity for historical societies.