IT IS my opinion after several years of experience as a high-
school teacher of history and allied subjects that neither the
state course of study nor textbooks used in American history,
civics, and problems of democracy in secondary schools give
sufficient consideration to “things at home.” Because of the
breadth of the subject and the great number of states in which
the text is intended to be used the colonial period necessarily is
usually dealt with in a somewhat general manner. In nearly every
textbook the tradition of giving greater emphasis to the New Eng-
land colonies than to the middle and southern colonies is followed.
The same pattern applies also to the Revolutionary period. The
overshadowing influence of the New England historians, however,
is gradually fading, and it is hoped that in the future the true
contribution of the middle colonies will be taught in its proper
relationship to the history of the nation as a whole. During the
period of the colonial and early national government far-reaching
events occurred in Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and
Maryland.

Because of its central location Pennsylvania drew a large num-
ber of important meetings. Philadelphia played host to the com-
mittee that drafted the Declaration of Independence, the First and
Second Continental Congresses, the Congresses that convened
under the Articles of Confederation, and the Constitutional Con-
vention. Within the Keystone State the ablest constitutional
lawyers and statesmen of the time conceived and set in motion
the government which means so much to us today. Pennsylvania
was second to no other state in the Union in contributing able
leadership from her own ranks; Benjamin Franklin, Gouverneur
Morris, Robert Morris, Thomas Mifflin, James Wilson, Thomas
McKean, John Dickinson, George Clymer, and Benjamin Rush were only a few of her prominent sons.

In peace and in war Pennsylvania has always had a significant role. The purpose of this paper is not to list her contributions but rather to point out the fallacy of considering at length events which are remote from the thinking of pupils without at the same time giving place to closely related institutions and events in our own communities and state.

More fortunately located than many other teachers from the standpoint of historical resources, I have attempted to develop in my pupils a just pride in their community through a study of local history. When my classes were small, each student was required to work on a local-history project of his own choice. Since the interests of the individual pupils were varied, the projects included a wide range of studies. Old historical buildings, churches, lodges, political, and cultural life, maps, early land grants, local government, and religious, political, and cultural leaders furnished fascinating fields for research. Pupils were directed to be original in their work and not to expect to find all their material in bound volumes. Some of the finished projects revealed intensive study and brought to light valuable historical information. The importance of this work from the point of view of understanding and appreciating the social heritage of the community was unquestionable.

The region is rich in places and people of historical significance. Students particularly interested were organized into a club to study local history as a group. Their activities do not reach every pupil in the school, but among those who have joined there is evident a noteworthy concern with civic and national affairs. Pilgrimages are no small part of the program. The annual journey to the Priestley Museum, for instance, is anticipated with considerable enthusiasm. The house in which Dr. Joseph Priestley spent the last ten years of his life is in an excellent state of preservation. The museum erected on the premises contains some of his laboratory equipment and a part of his library.

Another interesting pilgrimage is to the site of Fort Augusta on the Sunbury side of the Susquehanna River. The fort no longer exists, but the powder magazine remains intact. Here stands the home of the late Colonel Hunter, which includes a lecture room (now occupied by the Northumberland County His-
torical Society), a museum, and a radio broadcasting station. In front of it is a model of the early fort which was completed a few years ago.

Trips to the county jail and the county courthouse acquaint club members with certain features of local law and government. Informative as well as interesting, they help to build attitudes which it is the aim of teachers of the social studies to develop.

At present a junior-historian club is being organized. Several projects are being planned. The Northumberland County Historical Society and many individual citizens in the community will give their undivided support to the undertaking.

Surely in such stirring times as these youth should be imbued with an appreciation of our great social and civic heritage and a desire to participate in bettering their communities. In the achievement of an enduring peace leadership will come from communities and individuals possessing social understanding. Observation of the transfer of school interest in the study of history into creative community life is to the teacher of social studies a reward worth every effort which may be expended.