The practice of using local and state history for introducing various aspects of American history has in the past received too little consideration from educators. To study the history of Pennsylvania is to study the history of the nation. Like a vast panorama the scenes unfold, revealing the great forces that have made us a united and powerful people. There are few epochs in the nation's history in which the state has not played an important and dramatic role.

The Pennsylvania colony, first in size of population and variety of ethnic groups, furnished the opening scene in the struggle for empire between the French and the English. When the revolutionary movement which was to separate the colonies from England broke out, it was in Philadelphia that the first Continental Congress met and the Declaration of Independence was written. It was on Pennsylvania soil that the battle which proved to be the turning point in the war between the states was fought. Since that war the mines and oil fields have been important in the advancement of the United States as a world power. From colonial days to the present, Pennsylvania has reflected the political, economic, and social movements of the United States. This fact provides the teacher with points of contact between the immediate environment of the child and the history of his country.

Educators have agreed that the best procedure is to move from the near to the remote and from the present to the past. As a result in most primary social-studies courses the child is first introduced to the study of his community. He becomes acquainted in the early grades with many facts about the clothes he wears and
the food he eats. He visits with his teacher the post office and the fire station. By the time he has reached fourth grade he has some well-rounded concepts concerning the community in which he lives and is ready to acquire new concepts and to comprehend the development of his locality from long ago to the present and to compare “then” and “now.”

Before the class explores the past, there should be a study of present conditions which are in accord with the interests of the individuals in it. These center around fundamental activities in the community within the pupils’ own range of experiences such as the kinds of houses people live in, the means of transportation, and the various ways of earning a living. Children nine or ten years old soon begin to ask questions as to who were the first settlers in the community, what kind of houses they lived in, and whether the children went to school. Searching for the answers to these and similar questions leads to the evolution of a picture of the frontier life of the community. It is essential that this picture be complete so that it may serve as a basis for a clear concept of the development of the community through the various eras.

There are many ways of providing meaningful learning experiences. Among these are trips to historical points during which the children can make comparisons between “now” and “then,” use of visual materials, stories told by teachers and others, and written accounts. In providing for reading experiences the teacher meets her greatest problem, for it is obvious that she will need teacher-made materials.

Indubitably every Pennsylvania community, even the most remote hamlet, has available material of historical interest. In many places it has been assembled and organized, while in others it is waiting to be brought to light. Already prepared material often is unsuitable for use because its style and vocabulary make it “dry as dust” if not impossible for children to understand. Local history for the classroom should be written by one who understands children, knows their vocabulary limitations, and realizes that they demand fast-moving, graphic stories that are full of adventure and human experiences at least partially familiar to them.

Where will the teacher find her materials? There are many
published state, county, and local histories. Pennsylvania has several good historical magazines. In many communities there are members of historical societies who will be glad and even anxious to help, and in every community there are some who have old diaries, spinning wheels, dishes, clothes, and newspapers and appreciate any interest shown in these possessions. Visits to the attics of old inhabitants may yield surprising results, and the treasures discovered may extend the teacher's knowledge of the community perceptibly. Not everyone, perhaps, will succeed in such a venture, but many who make the effort will be happily rewarded by the outcome.

Is a unit on local history worth while for the fourth or the fifth grade? In any course the center of interest should be the child. It is the effect of the study on his behavior that supplies justification for the teaching.

From the study of local history, associated with community study in the elementary grades, the following outcomes may be expected: first, since history is put on a level that a child can understand and is associated with localities and objects that he sees daily, we may assume that history will become a source of pleasure to him and that a genuine interest in and fondness for history may result; second, the pupil will acquire historical concepts that are meaningful, for he will see the past in terms of his own life experiences; third, he will obtain a concept of the present as evolving from the past; fourth, he will see that development is change, and thus a changing world will become intelligible to him; fifth, he will note that modifications in environment tend to modify modes of living; sixth, he will gain an understanding of man's constant endeavor to improve his living conditions; and seventh, he will realize that man's inventions and use of power have improved his home conditions, augmented his earning capacity, and facilitated his work.

The placing of a combined course in civics and history of Pennsylvania in the ninth grade opens the way for effective and realistic teaching of local, state, and national government. Democratic government is not a fixed set of beliefs but an evolving, fluid, adaptive instrument by which men learn to govern themselves. The teaching of government in connection with state history clarifies the concept of a changing government in response to the shifting needs of society. It enables the boys and girls
to grapple with contemporary problems in the understanding of their position in a growing world.

As these areas are familiar and therefore real, the actualities of government are best introduced to the student through the community and the state. Through the use of vital educative materials, projects, and social experiences the skillful teacher enriches his instruction. The pupils gain clearer understandings if they have had some participation in planning their activities, which should include individual or group research problems, trips to points of historical interest, and study of supplementary material in addition to a good basic text.

Trips stimulate the imagination and vivify the past. Surely the pupils who have stood where Lincoln made his immortal address or have had recreated for them the westward movement as they gazed up at the Tuscaroras will have had the national scene interpreted and humanized. They will have seen how in the past events taking place in Pennsylvania have helped to shape the destiny of the entire country and even the world.

One of the greatest needs for courses in local history is more reference books. It will be necessary for much of the written material to be teacher made. Not enough books on the interest and vocabulary level of fourteen-year-olds have yet been written on topics dealing with the history and growth of the state. It is to be hoped that in the near future some books will appear, including historical fiction and short, perhaps paper-bound books, each dealing with some one phase of the social, political, or economic developments within the state.

In the senior high school the English teacher can profitably use local history as the subject for themes. I know one young English teacher who in a new position started out the year by having her pupils get acquainted with the historical background of the community largely through talking with interested residents and reading county histories. She not only gained a wealth of information but also made many excellent contacts. Her pupils found the assignment interesting, for it provided them with the necessary stimuli for writing. Some who had previously disliked writing on account of their paucity of experiences about which to write found in their local environment a fullness of subject matter that amazed them, and they became concerned with the problem of learning how best to say what they wanted to say. Thus the advantages gained were fourfold; first, writing interest
was increased; second, as a by-product the mechanics of the inter-
view were taught; third, the pupils discovered how to compile
source materials; and, fourth, in many cases the foundation for
an abiding interest in the past and its influence on the present
were laid.

It is obvious that in teachers colleges state history is an im-
portant part of the professional preparation of future teachers.
There should be included not only a rich informational back-
ground of subject matter but also training in compiling historical
materials and an opportunity to become acquainted with the best
historical sources of state and local history. An essential feature
because of its educational values and its inspirational qualities is
the historical tour. The success of such a tour depends primarily
on two factors: the participation of the students in intelligent
planning under the guidance of the instructor as to what they
wish to see, and the write-up and discussion when the trip is over.

It is largely to students with this professional background that
the teachers of the middle grades and the high schools must look
for compilation of supplementary books and materials. A work-
shop in Pennsylvania local and state history for teachers who
are taking summer courses or doing graduate work could render
a real service to the public schools. This would be conducted
by individuals with keen insight into the interests and vocabulary
range of boys and girls. Not all, perhaps, would have the
ability to produce supplementary readers, but all could help in
the compilation of source materials that could be mimeographed
and placed in the hands of the pupils. The source units might
be simply descriptive as is an ordinary textbook, or they might
include activities and in addition graphic statistics, maps, pictures,
charts, and so on. Only those areas in which there is a dearth of
suitable material available need be treated. If such workshops
were developed by the teachers colleges, they would prove in-
valuable to the average teacher who thinks that she does not have
sufficient reading material for effective teaching but at the same
time feels that she lacks the ability or time to do the tremendous
amount of work involved in preparing such material.

There is a place for local and state history also in the area of
adult education. When the war is over, numbers of our people
will once more have increased leisure. This will be true of young
and old, of educated and uneducated, of rich and poor alike.
Increased leisure is a component part of our highly industrialized
age. Industry will no longer have a place for the older men and women. The benefits of social security may help to feed and shelter them, but what help will there be for the far more baffling problem of how to spend leisure hours? For many the days will be dreary and colorless. The women may find activity in the home, but many men will have no outlets. Surely society, which has produced this problem, will find some way to make leisure during the declining years of life a source of happiness. Everyone knows the joy of the old man in his reminiscences. As the future shortens, he turns his mind toward the past and identifies himself with it. Classes in state and local history as a part of the program of adult education would attract many who have not realized the resources to be found in these subjects. In some cases they might aid men and women in becoming contributing members of historical societies.

It is not intended that the inclusion of state and local history in the educational program of the public schools should promote provincialism. Indeed, the contrary is true. In this day everyone, even though he lives off the improved highway and may be miles from a village, must have some degree of world consciousness. His boy or his neighbor's boy may be serving his country on an island in the South Pacific. When he enters the house, he has only to tune in on the radio to hear news from Australia or Algiers that may directly affect him. Each time he looks at his automobile tires, he is reminded that the capture of the East Indies by the Japanese has brought about a shortage of rubber in the United States. Closer and closer all parts of the world are being tied together. Therefore the main objective of all education should be to produce good world citizens. Unquestionably the person who understands and appreciates his own heritage is inclined to sympathy toward the traditions of other peoples.

The schools have the solemn responsibility of producing the kind of citizens and leaders that a democracy must have to survive. They can fulfill it only through comprehension of the relationship of the past to the immediate environment, to the state, to the nation, and to the world.

We made it,
And we make it and it's ours
We shall maintain it. It shall be sustained.
The boy or girl for whom the past has been revitalized to the extent that he can share in the feeling expressed in these words of Stephen Vincent Benet will have vision beyond the borders of his own land and will develop a sense of world responsibility and interdependence which is necessary if we as a people are to live in happiness and security.

THE COMMITTEE OF SAFETY IN NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

By William Hummel
Private, United States Army

Whenever a nation declares war, one of the first precautions taken is the organization of a system of civilian defense that will give warning and protection against raids, attacks, and all the other dangers that come with war. A few months after the battles of Lexington and Concord the provincial assembly of Pennsylvania provided for a Committee of Safety, which had as its responsibility the protection of the frontier against groups of Indians engaged by the British to molest the forts and outlying settlements. On June 30, 1775, the provincial assembly appointed twenty-five men, who met on July 3, with Benjamin Franklin as president. The United States has felt the need of a similar provision during the present war. The German air raids over Britain and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor indicated that an effective means of defense for the protection of the civilian population was necessary. The main difference between the Committee of Safety and the present civilian-defense system lies in the fact that the former intervened time and again to minimize attacks which would have otherwise been disastrous, while the latter, fortunately, has had only to carry out test raids and black-outs. Otherwise there are striking parallels between the two organizations. Basically the same set-up was used for both.

The present civilian-defense system is nation wide, but the population is directly affected by the state and local divisions. In a country the size of the United States air raids naturally would affect only certain objectives rather than the whole nation, and

therefore an air-raid warning would apply only to the vicinity of the point of attack. For this reason the state and local organizations have the greatest responsibility in the protection of the civilian population. The situation is comparable to that in regard to the Committee of Safety. The organization set up by the provincial assembly operated over the entire state; since Indian raids were made only at local points along the frontier, however, the county organizations were almost entirely responsible for the defense of the settlers. Thus many local committees were operating constantly, while others were inactive throughout the war.

Northumberland was one of the first counties in the state to organize subsidiary branches under the Committee of Safety. On June 8, 1776, representatives from the various townships met at the house of Richard Malone on the Chillisquaque Creek to consider the problem of county defense. The committee consisted of John Weitzel, Alexander Hunter, and Thomond Ball from Augusta Township; William Cook, Benjamin Alison, and Thomas Hewet from Mahoning; Captain John Hambright, William McKnight, and William Shaw from Turbut; Robert Roble, William Watson, and John Buckalew from Muncy; William Dunn, Thomas Hewes, and Alexander Hamilton from Bald Eagle; Walter Clark, William Irwin, and Joseph Green from Buffalo; James McClure, Thomas Clayton, and Peter Mellick from Wyoming; John Livingston, Maurice Davis, and Hall from Potter’s; and Walter Clarke, Matthew Brown, and Marcus Hulings from White Deer. The immediate election of John Hambright as chairman of the meeting indicates that no time was lost in getting under way with the business at hand.

After electing a chairman the representatives began to draft plans for organizing a volunteer regiment for civilian protection. It was decided to divide the county into two parts, each of which was to raise a battalion consisting of six companies. Forty or more privates constituted a company. Officers were appointed to command the battalions—Samuel Hunter (colonel), William Cooke (lieutenant colonel), Casper Weitzel (first major), and John Lee (second major) for that of the lower division and William Plunket (colonel), James Murray (lieutenant colonel), John Brady (first major), and Cookson Long (second major) for that of the upper. When the plans were completed, the repre-
sentatives went back to their respective townships to begin the work of enlisting men, for they knew well that attacks would come sooner or later.

Between the early part of 1776 and the summer of 1778 the system set up in the county was relatively inactive; many times it was on the verge of complete disintegration. As the Revolution moved from New England to New York, New Jersey, and eastern Pennsylvania, most of the able-bodied men of Northumberland County enlisted in the Continental Army. Meetings were held less and less often and attendance fell lower and lower. Only the threat of Indian hostilities in 1778 revived the new organization to its former efficiency.

In May, 1778, Lieutenant Moses van Campen was placed in charge of a group of men and ordered to proceed to a point three miles above the mouth of Fishing Creek (Columbia County) and build a fort for the protection of the settlers in that vicinity. He selected as a site a parcel of ground on the south side of the creek protected by the surrounding hills. The hastily constructed post, commonly known as the "Mud Fort" because of the large quantities of mud used to fill the openings in the walls, later became known as Fort Wheeler in honor of the man who owned the land. Several minor attacks were made on it before its completion, all of which were put down with little difficulty. Throughout the summer small groups of Indians were seen moving westward over the trails traversing northeastern Northumberland County (now Columbia County). Each time warnings were issued by the branch Committee of Safety operating out of Fort Wheeler, but the settlers were not overly concerned. After the terrible Wyoming massacre of July 3, 1778, raids increased in frequency and intensity. When the Sullivan expedition forced many tribes to leave eastern Pennsylvania, the Indians migrating westward down the valley destroyed property and murdered whole

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3 John Freeze, *History of Columbia County.*
4 The three great Indian trails in the northeastern part of the county were: first, along Fishing Creek in a northern direction through Sullivan County and finally to Muncy; second, the Tunkhamock Trail joining the Muncy Trail just above Orangeville in Columbia County, and, third, the trail along Catawissa Creek coming into Columbia County from Schuylkill County.
5 The Indians attacked many of the settlements to divert the attention of the people and prevent them from intervening in the Wyoming and Sugar-loaf massacres.
families. News of the troubles had soon reached the patriot soldiers; Peter Mellick, a representative to the meeting of June 8, 1776, left the Continental Army in the spring of 1778 and returned to his home near Espy in Wyoming Township, Northumberland County, to aid in the protection of the frontier against raids.

Early in September, 1778, numerous reports reached Fort Wheeler that a large band of Indians was coming down the valley and preying on isolated settlements in their path. Mellick on the advice of the Committee of Safety brought his family and a small amount of household goods to the fort in great haste. About three days later the Indians ravaged and burned his home. He and his family remained at Fort Wheeler until the Indian trouble subsided, at which time they moved to Fort Augusta, where they lived for six years. This is only one of the many incidents in which the alertness of the Committee of Safety prevented total disaster and reduced damage to a minimum.

*In 1778 most of the territory in present Columbia County was included in Northumberland County. Espy is now in Scott Township, Columbia County.*