

NEWS AND COMMENT

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ASSOCIATION NEWS

PLANS for the October meeting at Erie have developed rapidly under the direction of Dr. Alfred P. James, chairman of the committee on program, and Dr. Richard Beyer, chairman of the committee on local arrangements. Both the Erie County Historical Society and Gannon College at Erie, co-hosts for the occasion, have co-operated to the fullest extent in making the meeting a complete success. Since this is the first meeting held by our Association in this region, it is hoped many "easterners" will make an especial effort to attend. Erie is easily reached overnight by sleeper from Philadelphia or Harrisburg, and from way points. It can also be reached by train or bus by way of Pittsburgh. The drive to Erie at this season of the year by car should be enjoyable to anyone interested in the scenic and historic attractions of the region.

The tentative program, as released by Dr. James, provides for a luncheon session of the Council on October 22, at Gannon College Cafeteria, followed by the opening general session in the afternoon. The story of the building of Perry's fleet on Lake Erie and a paper on the Pennsylvania Population Company form a part of this program. Mr. Jacob Evanson, director of music in the Pittsburgh Public Schools, will present "Western Pennsylvania Folksongs."

The annual dinner meeting will be held at the Commons Room in Gannon College with the feature address on "Cornplanter and His Indians" by Merle H. Deardorff. The Saturday morning papers will be three in number: Dr. Anna Quattrocchi will discuss "Thomas Hutchins in Western Pennsylvania;" Mr. Herbert R. Spencer will talk on "The U.S.S. Michigan;" Dr. Theodore Parker will trace the story of "Western Pennsylvania and the Naval War on the Inland Rivers."

The luncheon session will be devoted to a report on the biennial research program of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, and a presentation by Dr. Paul H. Giddens on "The

Early Days of the Petroleum Industry in Western Pennsylvania." An historical tour will be conducted in the afternoon.

HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

The pilgrimage to points of historical interest is a traditional historical society activity, especially during the interim between regular meetings in the spring and the resumption of activities in the fall months. News from societies throughout the state indicate that there may have been a smaller number of such tours this year, but that those conducted covered a wider area. It is becoming more and more common for such tours to cover several neighboring counties. This is a healthy trend and helps to broaden the scope of local historical society activity. It is a way of becoming acquainted with the history of neighboring areas, and is often accompanied by a visit to museums and headquarters of other societies which can result in an exchange of ideas between society groups.

In June, for example, the Berwick Historical Association was invited by Dr. T. Kenneth Wood to visit the Muncy Historical Society. The two town historical societies found this visit of mutual benefit. Eighty members of the Lycoming County Historical Society visited French Azilum in Bradford County in June. There, they were treated to an interesting review of the history of this romantic colony and its influence in northeastern Pennsylvania through an address by Leo Wilt, president of the Bradford society. A dinner concluded the expedition of the Lycoming countians.

On August 4, the members of the Northumberland County Historical Society, to the number of about fifty, traveled to Harrisburg and visited the John Harris Mansion, headquarters of the Historical Society of Dauphin County. Refreshments were served, and an enjoyable and instructive tour of the building formed a part of the visitation. While en route to Harrisburg, the Northumberland countians visited Fort Hunter, Girty's Notch, the site of Fort Halifax, and other points of historical significance. Col. Henry W. Shoemaker spoke to the group at Girty's Notch.

On August 4, a group of some forty members of the Clinton County Historical Society, under the direction of Mrs. Mack Ricker

of Lock Haven, toured eastern Clinton and neighboring Lycoming County. Among the points visited were John Brady's grave, the site of Fort Muncy, and the Pine Tree Declaration site, located near Jersey Shore and the junction of Pine Creek and the broad Susquehanna. Included in the tour were visits to the museum and headquarters of the Lycoming County Historical Society in Williamsport, and the Muncy Society building at Muncy. Incidentally, while visiting the Tiadaghton Elm, the Clinton countians witnessed the "fogging" of the famous old tree to protect it against elm blight. The tree has been in need of treatment for some time, and the Eskay Company volunteered to undertake the task without charge as a patriotic gesture.

Mentioning that perhaps "this is the wrong time to put out Historical Society Notes," Thomas Murphy, president of the Lackawanna Historical Society, nevertheless released in July an issue of the mimeographed bulletin published by the society "from time to time." Justification for making an issue available at this time was found in the need to report on the annual meeting in June and to call attention to progress in society activity revealed by annual reports. All officers of the society have been re-elected as an expression of confidence in the advances the society has made in recent years. The annual meeting drew a capacity crowd which listened to Leo Wilt's interesting presentation of the story of Azilum on the Susquehanna. The secretary's report showed substantial increases in membership and accessions, and increased use of society facilities. Improvements have been made to the building and its furnishings, and plans for further improvement include new museum cases. A feature of recent issues of the Lackawanna Society's *Notes* has been a series of "History Teasers," or quiz questions, on local history. One of interest to us in the July issue was the fact that Anna Dickinson, anti-slavery advocate, was a sister to Susan Dickinson, who was a newspaper-woman in Scranton.

The hot summer days, common to Washington, D. C., did not bring any pause in the monthly meetings of the Pennsylvania Historical Junto. On July 9, the meeting was addressed by Herbert Seversmith on "Connecticut and Long Island Settlers in Pennsylvania." On August 13, Leo Pascal of The National Archives staff presented "Readings from McGuffey: A Reminder of Nine-

teenth Century Elementary Education." Meredith B. Colket, Jr., also of The National Archives, spoke on "The Growth and Development of Historical Society Libraries in Philadelphia and Washington: A Study in Contrasts." On October 8, Dr. St. George L. Sioussat, honorary consultant in American historiography at the Library of Congress, and former head of the Manuscripts Division of the Library, discussed "From Westover to Independence Square: The Story of the Migration of Some Books from Colonel William Byrd's Library." Future programs of the Washingtonians include addresses by two visiting Pennsylvania historians. On November 12, Dr. Henry Pleasants, Jr., of West Chester, will speak to the Junto on "General Howe's Philadelphia Campaign: New Viewpoints on the American Revolution." The December 10 meeting will listen to Dr. Paul A. W. Wallace on "Valley Forge: An Episode in the History of the Muhlenberg Family."

The thirteenth annual meeting of the Pennsylvania German Folklore Society convened at historic Ephrata Cloister on June 19. The meeting was opened at ten o'clock with the Rev. F. B. Gibble in charge. Dr. Arthur D. Graeff presented his annual chronicle of events in Pennsylvania German history. Dr. Russell W. Gilbert read a paper on "Pennsylvania German Wills." Feature attractions for the meeting, however, were the lecture on the Ephrata restoration, by G. Edwin Brumbaugh, architect in charge of the current work at the Cloister, and a tour of the buildings. The increasing national vogue enjoyed by Pennsylvania German folklore and folk art, as evidenced in the numerous books and articles appearing on these subjects, makes the scholarly work of this society in the preservation and cultivation of Pennsylvania German folklore of more than ordinary importance.

The recent annual meeting of the Perry County Historical Society, at the Louise Beard Memorial in Newport, resulted in the re-election of Lt. Col. E. L. Holman as president, and Mrs. Edith B. Barton of Newport as secretary. Numerous and miscellaneous accessions were reported. Surveys of historic sites in the county are under way.

Professor Lawrence Thurman, of the department of history at the University of Pittsburgh, assistant director and curator of the

Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, was the speaker before a recent meeting of the Westmoreland County Historical Society. Pennsylvania's rich historical heritage was his theme.

The regular spring meeting of the Westmoreland-Fayette Historical Society was held the evening of April 16 at the White Swan Hotel in Uniontown. Richard F. Darsie of Greensburg is the secretary. Dr. William Blake Hindman, well-known local historian, and Dr. John W. Oliver, head of the department of history at the University of Pittsburgh, were the speakers. Dr. John W. Oliver was the speaker also at the annual meeting on June 24. His subject was "Dig Deep in the Soil of History." The University of Pittsburgh historians are deserving of praise for their keen interest in, and support of, the cause of local history in the southwestern Pennsylvania counties.

The June 1 meeting of the Adams County Historical Society was devoted to a tour of historic points in the region to the west of Gettysburg. Several historic churches and Black's Cemetery were visited. William L. Meals and Dr. Frederick Tilberg, historian at the Gettysburg National Military Park, were in charge of arrangements.

The Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania conducted another of its historical tours on June 26. Bushy Run Battlefield and the Historical House at West Overton were the major points visited, followed by a luncheon session at Greensburg. Regional tours of this type can do much to knit together scattered historical interests. The Pittsburgh society is renovating and redecorating the interior of its building, developing new and co-ordinated museum exhibits, and otherwise showing signs of a renaissance of activity. Henry Siebeneck, long a benefactor of the society, is generously providing reproductions of portraits of famous figures in early western Pennsylvania history. These will be exhibited in the lecture hall of the building.

The Chester County Historical Society, on June 22, held special commemorative exercises in recognition of the one hundredth anniversary of the Horticultural Hall in West Chester. Dr. Francis Harvey Greene, president of the society since 1937, presented

"Rhyming Reminiscences About Memorial Hall." Dr. Arthur E. James spoke on "The Great Green Arch," while Berenice M. Ball presented "Sparks From Speeches Heard in the Hall." Horticultural Hall was designed by Thomas U. Walter (1804-1887), one of the most accomplished architects of his day. Historic Chester County Court House is another of his buildings. In the same year that Walter designed Horticultural Hall, he was commissioned to do the north and south wings and rotunda of the Capitol in Washington.

The Friends Historical Association has issued the Spring Number of its *Bulletin of Friends Historical Association*. The leading article, by Francis W. Pennell, is devoted to "Quaker Botanists." An account of the sixth annual mid-winter dinner meeting of the association on "Second Month 25, 1948" is also contained in this issue together with a report on the annual business meeting in 1947. The annual membership dues of the association have been increased from two to three dollars. Those interested in the work of the association are invited to contact Anna B. Hewitt, Haverford College Library, Haverford.

The Adams County historians have been successful in securing action from the county commissioners regarding celebration, two years hence, of the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of the organization of the county. Upon recommendation of the society, the commissioners have appointed a planning committee, headed by Leighton C. Taylor of Bendersville, with Hugh C. McIlhenny of Gettysburg as secretary. This committee has decided already that a new county history should result from the observance. An historical pageant is also under consideration. Dr. Robert Fortenbaugh is chairman of a sub-committee on publication of the county history. It certainly seems that the Adams countians are going at this task in the proper spirit, both in terms of advance preparation and the decision to provide some constructive contribution to local history.

The Reading Bicentennial reached its climax in August with the visit of the Mayor of Reading, England, and other officials of the English city. The exchange of greetings of the two cities received nationwide publicity, and certainly was an omen of inter-

national good will. Citizens of Reading were made conscious of the bicentennial by historical markers throughout the city streets, daily programs, and parades, and by an industrial and historical exposition at the Reading fair grounds. There the industries and institutions of Reading, England, were represented by exhibits sent over for the purpose. The Historical Society of Berks County had a special exhibit, and sold copies of its bicentennial history of Reading and of the pictorial bicentennial issue of its magazine.

Coudersport, county seat of Potter County, celebrated its centennial during the last week in July. While the Potter County Historical Society did not participate too much in the planning for the event, it was able to make important contributions to the celebration. Several floats were prepared under society direction for the parade, and these depicted the evolution of the county town since its founding. Much of the research for a booklet on Coudersport's history, made available through the courtesy of local advertisers, was done by Mrs. Mary Welfling, secretary of the society.

An adequate observance of the birth of a community or county can be a stimulant to historical consciousness and produce constructive additions to historical information. On the other hand, it can produce a frothy and exuberant affair, which attracts little interest beyond a few days of semi-carnival proceedings, and leaves nothing of permanent value. From our observation of such affairs in the last few years, viewed both within and without the state, we are strongly inclined to feel that sound, long-range planning is necessary to organize such an endeavor. Every possible use should be made of local talent in pageants and ceremonies, in publicity, and in any publications connected with the event. It is also important that the great body of the people be successfully interested in the observance; and that lasting lessons in citizenship, based upon increased understanding of local backgrounds, are taught to the people. Properly viewed, such an important historical observance belongs to all the people and should result in their participation and benefit.

The Lehigh County Historical Society now has a curator at Trout Hall in Allentown in the person of Mrs. Armand J. de Rosset, Wilson College graduate. The summer pilgrimage of the

society, on August 21, visited the neighboring Historical Society of Berks County and its headquarters building at Reading. Dr. Arthur D. Graeff welcomed the visitors and spoke to them.

The regular quarterly meeting of The American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia, on June 20, at its headquarters at 715 Spruce Street, was favored with an address by Mr. James McGurrin on "Burke Cockran, Promoter of the Faith." Mr. McGurrin is president of the American Irish Historical Society.

The May 24 meeting of the Westmoreland Historical Society featured a round-table conversational type of program devoted to the story of the last fifty years in the history of Greensburg. Participating in the discussion were Alex Eicher, Joseph Cherry, Joseph Wentling, and Dr. C. E. Snyder, all leaders in the development of the town. Questions on various aspects of the economic and cultural history of Greensburg were asked from the audience and answered by the round table. This is an interesting variation in society programs and worth consideration by those planning society meetings elsewhere. It is good to get away from the traditional paper or address and to inject more interest and wider participation into meetings.

The death of Mr. Ralph Smyser Cannon, treasurer and leader in the work of The Historical Society of York County for four decades, was announced by the Hon. Ray P. Sherwood, president of the society, at a special meeting of the trustees on August 9. Mr. Cannon's death came suddenly on August 6. Since 1937 there had been scarcely a day when Mr. Cannon was not at the society building, or elsewhere engaged in giving, without compensation, to the development of the organization. His death is a great loss to the cause of York County history and will be mourned by all who knew him and his work.

OF MEN AND MANY THINGS

Dr. Stevenson W. Fletcher, retired dean of the school of agriculture at The Pennsylvania State College, has completed the manuscript for a history of agriculture in Pennsylvania, from 1640 to 1840, together with another manuscript on farm life during the

same period. Plans for publication are under consideration. Such a work is much needed and should fill a gap in the state's history.

Dr. Lewis E. Theiss contributed a series of historical articles to *Grit*, appearing in July issues of this famous American weekly, published at Williamsport. The articles dealt with central Pennsylvania frontier days and were written in a lively and interesting style.

Commonwealth, the Magazine for Pennsylvania, published by the Pennograph Publishing Company, Harrisburg, continues to feature numerous articles with a distinct historical slant which are well worth attention by students and teachers.

Friends of James MacFarlane Phillips, outstanding Pennsylvania conservationist of recent times, erected a marker at Glenhazel in Elk County, on August 1, which commemorates the first purchase of State Game Lands in 1920, and which pays homage to Phillips as the founder and moving spirit of the land acquisition program. At that time the Game Commission acquired a tract of 6,288 acres under powers conferred by Act of Assembly in 1919. This marked the beginning of this pioneer program. Incidentally, the history of the Pennsylvania Game Commission and various phases of its work would provide a good thesis subject. Much material is readily available, and much more valuable information could be collected now from those who have helped develop the program in the last few decades. The key importance of Pennsylvania in various phases of the conservation movement in the nation needs one or more writers to develop the history of this endeavor.

Your Family Tree is a mimeographed bulletin, published at Indiana, Pennsylvania, by Frances Strong Helman and Beulah Heffelfinger. Volume I, Number 6, was issued in August. The emphasis is largely genealogical, but much historical information is necessarily included in the publication, the price of which is \$2.00 a year.

New light on the aboriginal history of northeastern Pennsylvania was revealed this summer by excavations on the Sick and the Cass farms in South Towanda, Bradford County, directed by John Witthoft for the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

Indian burial remains and Indian village sites were unearthed which carry the Indian history of the region back for more than five centuries. Mr. Witthoft considers this section of Pennsylvania of the utmost importance to new knowledge of the early Indian habitation of the state.

Visitors to Pennsbury Manor, restored country home of William Penn, situated on the banks of the Delaware a few miles from Bristol or Morrisville, and under the administration of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, are in for a real treat. Pennsbury now competes with Monticello, Mount Vernon, and Colonial Williamsburg as a site of beauty, full of historical associations. Completion of the restoration of the original gardens as planned by Penn himself, and the furnishing of the Manor House proper, carried through in the most authentic manner under direction of a committee headed by Miss Sarah D. Lowrie of Philadelphia, have made Pennsbury one of the nation's major historical shrines. Pennsbury Manor is not a museum. The furnishings are in keeping with the occupant and his time and are not marred by labels or acknowledgment cards of donors. As one strolls through the buildings and spacious grounds, the spirit of the original Manor, as it existed at the time of William Penn's last visit to his province, is captured in its entirety.

On August 6, the historic past and the promise of the future blended at Bushy Run Battlefield Park, near Harrison City and Jeannette, as the one hundred eighty-fifth anniversary of this historic engagement between the forces of Col. Henry Bouquet and the Indians engaged in the Pontiac uprising was commemorated. Over a thousand local citizens and visitors turned out for the occasion, which was marked by the dedication, at Flour Bag Hill, of a new flagpole provided by the local American Legion. Descendants of Andrew Byerly, the pioneer settler, who, according to the story, carried water for Bouquet's little band, dedicated a memorial tree in his honor. Those who have not visited Bushy Run will find it an interesting experience. The topography is much the same as in 1763, and the site is one of few such locations where one is able to visualize the past in terms of the present.

The New York State Historical Association pioneered again in

holding at Cooperstown, from July 11 to 17, Seminars on American Culture devoted to the improvement of the local historical society, museums, folklore, and related interests. Approximately one hundred and eighty were registered for the seminars, more than justifying the faith of the Association in the basic idea behind such a series of meetings. Sessions were held daily on such subjects as the gathering and writing of local history, the teaching of local history, the history museum, early American arts and crafts, and the collection of folklore. A director and a few consultants were selected to head each panel. Sessions on the gathering and writing of local history were directed by Dr. Albert Corey, New York State Historian, and the writer participated as a consultant; Mrs. Constance Robertson, prominent historical novelist, was the second consultant. Considerable attention was devoted to problems of writing and publishing good, sound county histories. The entire series of meetings was conducted in a most informal manner. While New Yorkers predominated in the registration, there were several Pennsylvanians and New Englanders and a sprinkling of mid-Westerners in attendance. The Farmers Museum and Fenimore House provided the New York Association with unusual facilities for such sessions, to say nothing of the charm and quiet of Cooperstown itself. The writer feels that the meetings were not only a great success but also point the way toward further achievement in improving the standards of local history and related activities. The seminars will be repeated next year, and as many Pennsylvania local historians and leaders in historical activity as possible should by all means attend. It will be a profitable and rich experience and of practical value to all such persons.

The problem of securing a record of historic sites and buildings, with a view to proper consideration of problems of preservation, is receiving attention in both New York and Pennsylvania. In our state, the Joint State Government Commission, in co-operation with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, was authorized at the last legislative session to compile a list of historic sites and buildings, and to present the same to the General Assembly. An advisory committee has been appointed, headed by Judge Edwin O. Lewis of Philadelphia, to further assist in the work, and especially in development of any policy recommendations.

In New York, the state historian's office has started a somewhat similar survey. With the aid of the historical societies and local historians, a documented file of information on sites and buildings will be accumulated at Albany. Photographs are included in the New York file, with one copy retained at Albany and a duplicate at a local depository. Livingston County in New York already has been covered, and the work has been partially completed for Saratoga County.

During the meetings of the Seminars on American Culture at Cooperstown, mentioned previously, the writer was much impressed by the expressions of common need for county histories and county historical maps. The need for such material in the schools is basic, and there is also much individual and institutional interest. The Cortland County Historical Society (New York) has started a survey designed to lead to a historical atlas of the county. Early place names, present residences and names of owners, sites and properties of historical interest, industrial and institutional establishments will be recorded on military quadrangle base maps, which already contain topographical information and portray roads. Each base map is then to be mounted on durable material and bound. This is a type of project well worth copying. Leo Wilt of Towanda has made a contribution in this state with his series of county history maps, of which some thirty already have been completed, though they are not the final answer to the need for a county atlas of the type projected in New York.

The membership campaign of the American Association for State and Local History has garnered some three hundred new members in the past few months. The annual membership fee for individuals is three dollars. *History News*, in its new format, and with its wide coverage of local historical activities throughout the United States and Canada, is most useful to those working in the field and is becoming more valuable with each issue. The association will hold its annual meeting at Raleigh, North Carolina, October 27-29, in conjunction with the Society of American Archivists. Pennsylvania is second to New York in total number of memberships in the national organization. The writer would like to see it first.

Dr. Paul A. W. Wallace was a speaker at the July annual meeting of the New York Historical Association at Syracuse, New York. This reminds us that the idea of a joint meeting of the New York and Pennsylvania historical associations should be re-considered. It was suggested some years ago, but the war and other factors interfered. Such a meeting would need to be scheduled and planned well in advance. The history of New York and of Pennsylvania overlap materially in both northwestern and northeastern Pennsylvania, and these might be good locations for a joint meeting.

The celebration of Pennsylvania Week, from September 26 to October 2, resulted in considerably increased emphasis upon the state's historical backgrounds. Previously, the emphasis has been more largely upon contemporary Pennsylvania in terms of its resources and opportunities. Historical societies found their services in demand for speakers, in supplying information for the press and schools, and in planning historical tours. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission co-operated with the Gimbel Brothers in Philadelphia in arranging a series of fifteen window displays in Gimbel Brothers store, devoted to "Pennsylvania's Heritage of Freedom."

September and October mark the return of the Freedom Train to a number of Pennsylvania cities not visited earlier. There are two major Pennsylvania documents on the Train—the Charter of Privileges of 1701 and the Pennsylvania Ratification of the Constitution. Many others, such as the manuscript from which Lincoln read the immortal Gettysburg Address, have Pennsylvania implications. No person interested in American history should fail to see the Freedom Train.

This is time also to remind Pennsylvanians that the Historical and Museum Commission still has on display in the State Museum an outstanding collection of the fundamental documents connected with the evolution of Pennsylvania's government, ranging from the Charter of King Charles II down to the manuscript copy of the Constitution of 1874. The Great Law, the First and the Second Frame of Government, and the Declaration of Rights are among these historic charters of our liberties. A majority of these will be permanently displayed in modern, protective cases which are now being built.