NEWS AND COMMENT

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ASSOCIATION NEWS

The membership campaign has continued to produce results and our membership rolls have continued to grow. It is still imperative, however, to maintain this campaign at a high level of activity. Emphasis will be placed upon it again this autumn.

Dr. Milton W. Hamilton has been granted a year's leave of absence from Albright College to permit him to accept a provisional appointment as Senior Historian of the Division of Archives and History of the State of New York. We are pleased, however, that he will be able to continue to serve as Editor for Pennsylvania History. Communications to him should continue to be addressed to Albright College, Reading.

Plans for the annual meeting at Carlisle, on October 21-22, are now completed and copies of the program will be in the hands of members before receipt of this issue of the magazine. All indications point to a large attendance and an excellent meeting. It happens that the association meeting comes at the end of Pennsylvania Week and Carlisle's observance of the week's events will conclude with some emphasis upon our gathering. This should increase local interest in the meeting.

Dr. Whitfield Bell has returned from abroad and will be able to report shortly on further plans for the special publications series. In the meantime, the three bulletins already issued continue to sell and to attract favorable attention. It appears that larger editions may be necessary in the future.—S. K. S.

HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

Of all the anniversaries celebrated this year the most significant to historians and historical societies will be the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, on December 2, 1949. The society will signalize this event by two important contributions to Pennsylvania historiography. One will
be a special issue of the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, which will appear about the first of January. The other and most important will be the second edition of their *Guide to the Manuscript Collections*. This will describe some four million items in over sixteen hundred collections. The index of the volume will also be greatly improved, so that historians and researchers will find it an even more usable and efficient key to Pennsylvania's richest storehouse of historical manuscripts. The society will, of course, have an anniversary meeting on December 2, but the details have not yet been announced.

The Bucks County Historical Society recently purchased the famous stove-plate, "the Woman of Samaria." It was this stove-plate which first aroused the interest of the late Dr. Henry C. Mercer in the collection of stove-plates, and led to his beginning of the society's collection of 350 plates, the largest in the world. The collection was the basis of Dr. Mercer's book, *The Bible in Iron*, which in 1941 appeared in a second edition under the editorship of the society's curator, Horace M. Mann. Mr. Mann purchased the plate from the daughter of the original owner, John Eells, of Walton, New York.

The Pennsylvania Cavemen's Club, of which Dr. S. K. Stevens, state historian, was recently named president, held a pilgrimage in Centre County on June 11, visiting Sybil's Cave and the newly-identified site of Fort Watson, the long-lost "Middle Fort" in Penn's Valley. The site of the fort has been identified through research by Charles F. Snyder, secretary of the Northumberland County Historical Society, who also took part in this pilgrimage. Other participants included John Carter, president of the Northumberland Society; Dr. Philip S. Klein, professor of history, Pennsylvania State College, and secretary of the Association; John Mitchell, Esq., president of the Centre Country Historical Society; Dr. W. F. Dunaway, of Pennsylvania State College; and Col. Henry W. Shoemaker, chief of the Folklore Division of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Fort Watson was a half-mile northeast of Salem, and three miles west of Millheim.

The Chester County Historical Society published lengthy lists of the donations of books, manuscripts and museum pieces received
during June and July, in the columns of the West Chester Daily Local News. These indicate the widespread interest in that county in the work of this society, and also the manner in which the society is continuously adding to its collections.

The Columbia County Historical Society, of which Harry S. Barton is president, has persuaded the county commissioners to take action to preserve and strengthen a covered bridge over Fishing Creek at Stillwater. The work of placing concrete supports under the wooden trusses is now in progress. The society plans to place a marker on the bridge, which is on a main-travelled highway, but which has been replaced by a modern steel and concrete bridge for vehicular traffic.

The Indiana County Historical and Genealogical Society held its annual tour on July 27, under the leadership of Mrs. Frances Strong Helman, president of the society. Forty-four persons took part in the pilgrimage, which visited numerous historic spots in the county.

Harrisburg’s Keystonians made a historical tour on June 18, visiting the Landis Valley Museum, the Daniel Boone Homestead, Hopewell Village, and Conrad Weiser’s home at Womelsdorf.

Merle H. Deardorff, of Warren, was the chief speaker on the occasion of the fifth annual tri-county dinner of the historical societies of Cameron, McKean and Potter Counties, held in Smethport on August 25, with the McKean County Historical Society acting as host. His entertaining talk was devoted to a discussion of the various misleading or mistaken notions which have become current regarding the history of Pennsylvania’s northern area, particularly those associated with Etienne Brulé, Brodhead, Zeisburger, and LaSalle. Dr. S. K. Stevens, state historian, also spoke briefly. Before the dinner, the historical collections of the McKean Society in the county courthouse were visited.

The Mifflin County Historical Society, in co-operation with the Pennsylvania Railroad, plans to celebrate the centennial of the
railroad's completion to Lewistown in 1849. The chief features of
the event will be held during Pennsylvania Week, as part of the
society's fall and winter program based on the theme, "Water
and Rail Transportation in Mifflin County." On Monday, October
17, there will be an open house in the society headquarters where
the Pennsylvania Railroad will stage an historic display and also
show the motion picture, "Clear Track Ahead," relating to the
history of the railroad. On October 18, the society will meet with
the Kiwanis Club at its regular meeting where there will be a
speaker representing the railroad. On October 19, the society will
hold its annual tour visiting several places of historical interest on
the railroad.

The Monroe County Historical Society, meeting at Buck Hill
Falls Inn on July 16, was addressed by Charles F. Jenkins, presi-
dent of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Mr. Jenkins spoke
on "Buck Hill, Its Beginning and Development." Violet H. Price
also delivered a paper on the Price family of Barrett Township.

The Montgomery County Historical Society and the Secondary
School Social Studies Section of the Montgomery County schools
are co-operating in a project to photograph the significant historic
sites and buildings in the county. They aim to develop 35-millim-
eter Kodachrome slides which may be borrowed by schools and
other groups for instructional activities. The historical society
is to assume responsibility for the care and distribution of the
slides. Statements describing the specific historic places will be
prepared to accompany the slides. A tentative list of the places to
be photographed has been prepared and sent out to school prin-
cipals in order to obtain suggestions, additions and possible cor-
rections. A. N. Sponseller, of Hatboro, is chairman of the com-
mittee, which includes representatives of the school faculties and
of the historical societies.

The Northumberland County Historical Society held its eight-
teenth annual pilgrimage on July 27, visiting Warrior Run
Church, the site of Fort Freeland, and the site of Fort Mont-
gomery, and ending at Otzinachson, country home of Dr. Lewis E.
Theiss.
The Pottstown Historical Society also held a pilgrimage on June 7. Assembling at Pottsgrove Mansion, the group visited the Daniel Boone Homestead, Joanna Furnace, and the Ephrata Cloister. Mr. G. Edwin Brumbaugh, architect of the restorations at Pottsgrove, Boone Homestead, and Ephrata, spoke briefly on the work being done there.

With the co-operation of the Historical Society of Schuylkill County, the Pottsville Journal is publishing a series of pictures of early scenes in the county. The latest is a photograph of the famous Mahanoy Plane, which began operation in 1862 to hoist coal from Mahanoy valley to the top of Broad Mountain at Frackville, and was last used in 1932. The photograph shows it in its heyday, in 1887.

The Westmoreland-Fayette Historical Society observed its Founder's Day on Saturday, June 18, at the Historical House in West Overton, observing the centenary year of the birth of Henry Clay Frick. Among those attending were Miss Helen Frick, of New York City, the daughter of the late pioneer coke operator; Mr. and Mrs. Edgar T. Stevenson, of Titusville; and Mrs. Betty Braddock King, of New Kensington. Mrs. Stevenson and Mrs. King are nieces of Mr. Frick, and Mr. Stevenson is a member of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Directors elected by the society included C. Martin Bomberger, Jess Caldren, Richard F. Darsie, Buel B. Whitehill, and Dr. William B. Hindman. The former officers were re-elected.

The same day, a delegation from the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, parent society of the Westmoreland-Fayette group, travelled from Pittsburgh to West Overton by chartered bus, followed the old Forbes Road, to the extent possible on modern highways. They stopped on the way for luncheon and a program, before proceeding to Historical House. Dr. John W. Oliver, head of the history department of the University of Pittsburgh, and a member of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, spoke on Frick as a pioneer, patriot and philanthropist; Charles S. Wardley, a retired auditor of the company, spoke on the early development of the H. C. Frick Coke Company; and John L. Ruth related anecdotes of Frick’s early life. One hundred and eighty persons were registered.
On July 17, Mrs. H. R. Mathias, president of the Women’s Historical Society of Pennsylvania, presented a plaque to Passavant Hospital in Pittsburgh, in commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the hospital’s founding. The occasion was the centennial program of the hospital, at which Dr. F. Eppling Teinartz, secretary of the United Lutheran Church in America, was the principal speaker. The need to care for two sick soldiers returning from the Mexican War is said to have been the immediate occasion for the founding of the hospital by Rev. William A. Passavant, pastor of the First Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh.

On August 19, York County celebrated the two hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the county. The Historical Society of York County co-operated with the general community committee set up to plan the observance, and held open house on the day of the celebration. All the York radio stations combined their facilities to broadcast a half-hour program, including a dramatic portrayal by a cast from the York Little Theater and talks by Attorney Walter V. Van Baman and Judge Walter I. Anderson. The various department stores featured exhibits of an historical nature. The members of the general committee were Judge Anderson, chairman; Attorney Ralph F. Fisher, co-chairman; Commissioner Harold D. Keller; David Owens, York Chamber of Commerce; John F. Padden, York Manufacturers’ Association; Joe Kindig, Jr.; and Henry J. Young, director of the historical society.

**OF MEN AND MANY THINGS**

The Amos Judson House, on the site of French Fort Le Boeuf, in Waterford, Erie County, was recently acquired by the Commonwealth as an historic property. A plan of the fort sketched by Thomas Hutchins in 1759, which is now in the collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, when projected upon the Waterford town plan, indicates that this house stands on the site of one bastion of the fort. The French fort, built in 1753, as part of the campaign to gain control of the Ohio valley, was visited by George Washington in December of that year, carrying out his first public mission. The French fort was abandoned and destroyed in 1759. A smaller British fort, built in 1760, was burned in 1763 in the Pontiac War. An American fort was built in 1794, to open
the area to settlement. The Fort Le Boeuf Chapter of the Daughters of American Colonists maintains a small park on the site of the American fort, across the highway from the Judson House. Here many of the old foundation walls may be seen, and a bronze statue of George Washington as a young man presenting the letter from Governor Dinwiddie to the French was erected by local citizens and the Pennsylvania Historical Commission, many years ago.

The Judson House, built in 1820, is itself of considerable historical and architectural interest. With Doric pilasters and a pedimented gable front with a lunette window, the house is New England Colonial, yet anticipates the temple motif of Greek Revival architecture. The wing has quaint dormer windows. Amos Judson set up a trading post in Waterford for a Pittsburgh concern in 1795, and was so successful that he bought out his employers and opened his own general store. The story-and-a-half wing of the house was built for the store.

The state celebration of Pennsylvania Week will be held from October 17 to 24. A number of historical societies have scheduled programs, not only to make their own contribution to the celebration, but also to take advantage of the heightened interest in state and local history which results from the widespread publicity. There are several other events which will be of interest to the historically-minded.

As the chief feature of its Pennsylvania Week program, Aaronsburg, Centre County, will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Aaronsburg Lutheran Church, built on land given by Aaron Levy, the Jewish merchant for whom the town was named. An historical and religious pageant, re-enacting the events when the church was built, will be held on October 23, emphasizing the theme of Pennsylvania's tolerance and religious freedom.

In connection with Pennsylvania Week, the Dettra Flag Company, Oaks, Montgomery County, has announced price reductions on Pennsylvania state flags. The three-by-five-foot flag now sells for eleven dollars, and the four-by-six-foot flag for seventeen dollars. Many historical societies have inquired where and how to
obtain such flags, hence this information will doubtless be of interest.

Staff members of the National Geographic Society made a canoe trip down the Susquehanna River this summer, to explore and photograph scenic and historic sites adjacent to the waterway. They began at Lake Otsego, New York, descending the North Branch, and also expected to cover a part of the West Branch and of the Juniata River. An illustrated story of the trip will appear in the *National Geographic Magazine*, sometime this winter.

The Manheim Township High School commencement exercises were devoted to the theme of the history and culture of the “Pennsylvania Dutch,” with six graduates speaking on the history, speech, literature, arts, folklore and foods of this distinctive Pennsylvania group. The *Lancaster New Era* published the six articles, beginning June 8. Such focussing of attention upon the background of their own daily life is a prime example of an intelligent approach to history.

The historic USS *Michigan* made her final voyage on June 20, from her mooring in Misery Bay to the foot of Cascade Street in Erie, where scrapping operations were to be carried on. The Foundation for the Original USS *Michigan*, which owns the ship, will use the money obtained from her scrapping to erect a monument to the vessel and to the men who sailed her. The claim that the USS *Michigan* was the first iron steamer on the upper Great Lakes is challenged by Anna S. Moore, of the staff of the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library. Her article, “The United States Survey Steamer *Alert*,” appeared in the fall, 1948 issue of *Inland Seas*.

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission has microfilmed the Pennsylvania materials in the Buffalo Historical Society, Buffalo, New York, with the co-operation of Robert W. Bingham, the society’s secretary, and his staff. Materials now for the first time available in Pennsylvania include the papers of Daniel Dobbins, builder of Perry’s fleet, and of his family; manuscript notes on place names and other topics by Orsamus H. Marshall; the accounts of William Penn with Samuel Carpenter; many items
dealing with the Seneca Indians; and numerous other documents and letters. The position of Buffalo on the Great Lakes, together with the alertness of the Buffalo Historical Society to acquire significant materials, seems to have attracted a great deal of Pennsylvaniana to their excellent manuscripts collection. Their ungrudging willingness to co-operate with the Commission in making this material available in Pennsylvania is noted with appreciation.

The community of Harford, Susquehanna County, is endeavoring to raise an endowment fund of $600 to provide perpetual care for the grave of Galusha A. Grow, one of the leading statesmen from Pennsylvania in the mid-nineteenth century. Hon. George W. Maxey, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, was a recent contributor, and wrote that Grow was the county's most illustrious citizen. He suggested that all the schools in the county take part in the project, the students not only contributing but also becoming familiar with Grow's great services to our country.

Historical documents and manuscripts in the William L. Clements Library at Ann Arbor, Michigan, will provide the themes for an unusual radio series, "Treasures Off the Shelf," to be broadcast this fall by the University of Michigan through its FM station WUOM and twelve other stations throughout Michigan. The series will focus attention upon the documents and the total historical situation at the time they were written. One will deal with the code letter written by Benedict Arnold from Philadelphia in 1780, offering to sell West Point to the British. The educational nature of the series will be supplemented by exhibits in the Clements Library.

The Guide to the Published Archives of Pennsylvania, by Henry H. Eddy, chief of the Public Records Division of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, will be available for distribution by the time this magazine appears. Readers who desire this invaluable aid in finding materials in the complex series of the Pennsylvania Archives and the Colonial Records are advised to send their requests to the Commission without delay, as the edition is not large and the demand will no doubt be great.
The Philadelphia Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society held an "off the beaten track" tour on July 24, traveling by special train over the Octoraro Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad to Port Deposit on the Susquehanna River, then north to Harrisburg, and returning to Philadelphia via the Low Grade Freight Line through Columbia and Quarryville. No regular passenger service has passed over the Octoraro Branch since 1935. Seven passenger-coaches were well-filled. The *West Grove Independent* reports, "The engine used a freight whistle, so many people did not bother to look—even though it has been quite a spell since a steam freight locomotive has been seen here."

The Pennsylvania Canal Boatmen's Association held its thirty-fourth annual reunion at Port Treverton on August 20. Nevin W. Moyer, of Linglestown, was the speaker of the occasion, his subject being "Our Relics and Heritages." Horace H. Neitz, of Harrisburg and Port Treverton, was re-elected president, and Charles H. Hiester, of Reading, was renamed secretary-treasurer. Oliver G. Rice, of Port Treverton, was elected vice-president.

Norman B. Wilkinson, assistant state historian of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, and Dr. Hubertis Cummings, who is doing special research on canal history, visited Cornell University in August, and examined its regional history collection for material of significance to Pennsylvania. Dr. Cummings found much of value for his work on Pennsylvania canals in the Canvass White Papers, while many other letters, documents, and newspapers relating to this state were noted by Mr. Wilkinson. Among them were letters of a Civil War soldier describing the battle of Gettysburg and his other experiences in Pennsylvania, records of the Laurel Furnace near Mount Braddock, 1804-1812, diaries pertaining to rafting on the Susquehanna, a number of rare Pennsylvania newspapers, and some early city directories.

Dr. Paul A. W. Wallace, former professor of English at Lebanon Valley College, biographer of Conrad Weiser, and authority on Indian life and customs, is now a Mohawk Indian named "To-ri-wa-wa-kon," meaning "he-who-holds a message." The formal adoption ceremonies, which were a complete surprise to Doctor Wallace, took place at the grave of Conrad Weiser, in Weiser Park, Womels-
dorf, Berks County, and were carried out by a deputation of Indians in tribal dress from the St. Regis Reservation at Hogansburg, New York. The Indians also presented Dr. Wallace with an unusual example of modern Indian beadwork, a seventy-five-foot long belt of white wampum on which is depicted the full story of the Legend of Deganawidah in authentic, centuries-old symbols. This legend recounts the foundation of the League of the Iroquois, a subject with which Doctor Wallace himself has dealt in The White Roots of Peace.

An article on “The Quaker Calendar” by Samuel G. Barton, associate professor of astronomy at the University of Pennsylvania, which appeared in the Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, April, 1949, will be of interest to historians who have encountered the problem of interpreting dates in colonial Pennsylvania history. By a study of actual contemporary usage in documents and letters, Doctor Barton has shown that many, if not all, of the standard explanations are misleading or erroneous. The University of Pennsylvania has reprinted the article as Flower Astronomical Observatory Reprint No. 74.

The site of Mary Ann Furnace, in West Manheim Township, York County, near Hanover, has been marked by a bronze tablet, dedicated by the Col. Richard McAllister Chapter of the D.A.R. and the Conewago District Boy Scouts of America on June 26. The marker includes a replica of a stove-plate from the historic furnace, which was established in 1761-1762 by George Ross and Mark Bird.

On July 13, Dr. Alfred L. Shoemaker, editor of The Pennsylvania Dutchman, addressed York Rotarians on the customs and habits of the Pennsylvania Germans. Dr. Shoemaker’s interesting and informative bulletin devoted to Pennsylvania Dutch culture continues to appear, having reached its seventeenth issue with an edition of 10,000 copies. It now appears every two weeks.

This summer there have been several celebrations of theanniversaries of communities or of notable events. One anniversary which passed without observance except for some newspaper comment was the two-hundredth anniversary of the expedition of
Pierre Joseph Celoron de Blainville down the Allegheny and Ohio rivers in 1749, to lay claim to the Ohio valley for the King of France.

The borough of Sharpsville celebrated its diamond jubilee during the week of June 26, in commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the borough's incorporation in 1874. An excellent pamphlet history of the town was published, prepared by an historical committee headed by Orvis Anderson, while local newspapers published a number of historical articles and pictures relating to the event. Among them was an article on "Sharpsville Beginnings," by William A. Hunter, senior archivist of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. An historical pageant was another feature of the celebration.

The Daily Republican of Phoenixville published a 106-page special edition on July 2, as part of the Phoenixville Centennial celebration. It included more than five hundred articles on the histories of churches, schools, businesses, industries, clubs, organizations, and the community in general. Another feature of the celebration was an antique museum and historical display, at which 938 persons signed the register. Miss Frances W. Pennypacker, chairman of the historical committee, states that there were more visitors than this, as many failed to sign.

The borough of Sandy Lake celebrated its hundredth birthday on July first. An exhibit of antiques and historical material was displayed, with the advice and assistance of Wallace K. Boyer, curator of folk history, Pennsylvania State Museum. Much attention was focussed upon historic buildings and sites in the locality.

The ninetieth anniversary of the Drake Well, the world's first commercial oil well, was celebrated at Drake Well Memorial Park, near Titusville, on August 27. A new room in a recently-built addition to the Drake Well Museum was officially dedicated by Dr. S. K. Stevens, state historian for the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, which administers the park. In his remarks Doctor Stevens officially welcomed on behalf of the Commonwealth the thousands of visitors at the public ceremonies. Charles B. Stegner, chairman of the park's advisory board, introduced Doctor Stevens. Secretary of the Navy Francis P. Matthews was then
introduced, and delivered an address on the present-day Navy and foreign policy. Another highlight of the occasion was the presentation of the original tools used by "Colonel" Drake, by Mrs. F. Wayne Fesenmyer, of Bradford.

For the Altoona Centennial celebration, the Altoona Mirror published a 128-page edition, with pictures, stories and features relating to the hundred years of the railroad city since the first railroad repair shop was built in the 1850's.

The Troy-Gazette-Register recently published a series of weekly stories on the history of that Bradford County area, beginning with the days of the French and Indians.

The September, 1949, issue of Pennsylvania Planning, the monthly magazine of the State Planning Board, is devoted to an 80-page review of the resources and achievements of Pennsylvania, under the title "Know Your Pennsylvania." It deals with such topics as topography, climate and land use, population, industrial and agricultural production, transportation and communication, culture, and state and local government. Well-illustrated, it is an excellent survey of present day Pennsylvania.