SUSQUEHANNA University and the Historical Society of Snyder County played host to over one hundred historians at one of the most successful conventions of the Association in recent years. The general theme of the program was "The Susquehanna Valley," an area which on this week-end was fittingly arrayed in the richest tints of autumn beauty.

At the luncheon on Friday, Presidents G. Morris Smith of Susquehanna University and Ray Smith of the Historical Society of Snyder County extended welcome to the assembled guests. William A. Russ, Jr., then delivered his Presidential Address on the subject: "The Partnership between Public and Private Initiative in the History of Pennsylvania." Dr. Russ showed that throughout the history of the Commonwealth public bodies, responding to the wishes of their constituents, had aided private endeavor by outright grants, by "mixed corporations," or by ownership and management when private effort proved incapable of the task. Such public assistance had been common in relation to churches, educational institutions, banks, turnpike roads, bridge companies, canals, railroads, and real estate development. Dr. Russ' conclusion was that in our own day there has been too much talk about gov-
ernment as an enemy of private economic aspiration, and too little recollection of the historic fact that public effort has in the past been commonly demanded and used to stimulate private enterprise.

At the general session on Friday afternoon, Dr. Ira V. Brown of the Pennsylvania State College spoke on “Joseph Priestley: An Exile at Northumberland.” Dr. Brown emphasized that Priestley’s major interest was in Unitarianism, while his activities in the realm of science and politics were secondary. In a paper full of human interest and delivered with charming informality, Dr. Brown traced the main events of Priestley’s life and described in some detail his experiences in America. Charles H. Glatfelter of Gettysburg College then spoke on “The German Lutheran and Reformed Clergymen in the Susquehanna Valley in the Eighteenth Century.” The German church people of this region, largely cut off from support by the European church, had to shift for themselves without organized churches, pastors or schools. For a time, itinerant or irregular pastors and union churches partially met the most critical needs, but it was not until the early 19th century that sound church organization began to catch up with the settlers of the upper Susquehanna Valley who had migrated faster than church leaders could provide for them. In a story not dissimilar,
Guy S. Klett, of the Presbyterian Historical Society, developed the theme of “Scotch-Irish Presbyterian Pioneering along the Susquehanna.” Here, again, the movement of congregations was too rapid for effective organization by the church. Itinerant supply ministers had to fill the gap between established pastorates and pioneering Presbyterians who, in their new homes, had no preachers at all. As a special example of this condition in the Susquehanna Valley, Dr. Klett recounted the experiences of Philip Vickers Fithian, which have been left to us in detail in his remarkable diary.

During the latter part of the afternoon, the ladies were graciously entertained at tea by President and Mrs. G. Morris Smith of Susquehanna University at their home, Pine Lawn.

More than one hundred and twenty-five persons who attended the annual banquet were fascinated by the masterly address of Dr. Paul A. W. Wallace on “Our Predecessors in the Valley.” Dr. Wallace, after comparing the white man and the Indian and describing briefly the Indian contributions to our culture, interpreted the activities of the Iroquois Confederacy in the Susquehanna region. He showed that the Iroquois' use of force through union as the best means of achieving peace and security gave them an influence out of all proportion to their actual numbers. When, because of the exodus of other tribes, the Susquehanna Valley became a power vacuum, the Iroquois attempted to fill it with dis-
placed persons. Dr. Wallace drew many instructive parallels between power politics as played by the Iroquois and as used today.

At the business meeting held on Saturday morning the following action was taken: Miss Frances Dorrance was re-elected second Vice-President to serve from 1952 until 1955; Messrs. Heckman, James, Powell, and Heizmann were re-elected to Council to serve from 1952 until 1955; the Secretary reported a decrease in membership during the past year and the need for an active campaign to build up the membership; the Treasurer reported that the financial condition of the Association reflected the membership pattern, and that more members were required to meet normal expenses; Dr. Rosenberger of the Special Publications Committee reported that three new pamphlets were in the process of preparation: Dr. Paul Giddens on the petroleum industry, Dr. Arthur Bining on the iron and steel industry, and Dr. Robert Billinger on the coal industry; Dr. Cordier reported resolutions of thanks to our hosts, to the program and local arrangements committees, and to the Selinsgrove *Times Tribune* for its special edition in honor of the meeting. He reported a further resolution urging each member of the Association to assume a responsibility for interesting others in our work. The amendments to the Constitution which had earlier been mailed to the membership were adopted. The invitation of Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to act as host to the Association at its meeting in 1953 was accepted. The date of this meeting was set on October 23-24.

Dr. Wallace reported as Editor of the quarterly journal, stating that he planned to continue the use of illustrations, and hoped to publish at least once a year an issue devoted to a single theme, comparable to the lumbering issue of October, 1952.

At the historical session of Saturday morning, Norman B. Wilkinson, Assistant State Historian, added a new chapter to the history of land speculation in Pennsylvania in his paper "The 'Philadelphia Fever' in Northern Pennsylvania." Mr. Wilkinson enumerated the causes of the "land fever" during the 1790's, the methods by which large blocks of vacant lands came under the control of speculators, chiefly Philadelphians, and the operations of the Land Office and of district surveyors in administering the laws regulating land disposal. A case study of John Adlum who acted as speculator's agent while in the official position of district
surveyor was offered as typical of the relationships existing between many speculators and State surveyors. Homer T. Rosenberger, of the Department of Justice, continued the economic theme by tracing the history of one of the most intriguingly complex transportation routes of the Commonwealth, “The Philadelphia and Erie Railroad.” Promoted by the threat of New York monopolizing the trade of the Great Lakes hinterland, this Pennsylvania route suffered many vicissitudes in construction and financing before it was completed. The unique operating arrangements of the “Philadelphia and Erie” with other railroads, and its financial maneuverings with the larger communities it was planned to benefit, were developed in extenso by Dr. Rosenberger. Lack of time prevented more than a cursory summary of the importance of the railroad as a competitor to New York transportation routes and its function as a connecting link between Pennsylvania’s two major port cities. To accompany his paper, Dr. Rosenberger set up a pictorial exhibit including many rare photographs of early local railroad history. To conclude this session, Dr. Russell W. Gilbert of Susquehanna University explained “Blooming Grove, the Dunker Settlement of Central Pennsylvania.” Dr. Gilbert spoke on the Old World origins of the Dunkers, and their migration to Pennsylvania and movement into several parts of the State. Some comparisons of Dunker ways and customs, and the not-too-friendly relations with the Rappites in their communal “Economy”
at Ambridge were illuminating. A most interesting description of the netting of the once prolific passenger pigeons by the Blooming Grove Dunkers concluded Dr. Gilbert's paper.

After luncheon at the Susquehanna Country Club, George F. Dunkelberger of the Snyder County Historical Society commented on the basic characteristics of the County, stressing its predominant Protestantism, its German population, its almost exclusive devotion to agriculture, and gave a preview of the historic tour.

A motorcade of some thirty cars then proceeded to visit a number of points of special interest: the Albany Treaty line marker; the site of the Penn's Creek massacre of October, 1755; the birthplace of Jacob S. Coxey; the Susquehanna Female Seminary; the home of Governor Simon Snyder; and the monument to his memory at one of the oldest cemeteries at Selinsgrove. Here, our guide called attention to other local worthies such as George Kremer, Ner Middleswarth, and Anthony Selin.

The meeting adjourned in good time, giving the out-of-town visitors several daylight hours to enjoy Pennsylvania scenery at its best on their return trip. It was an occasion which was so gratifying and instructive in all respects that everyone who attended will count it among those experiences which it is a joy to remember.

Jacob S. Coxey, leader of "Coxey's army." Born at Selinsgrove, 1854; died at Massillon, Ohio, 1951.

Courtesy, Dr. George F. Dunkelberger