

## YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN THE HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF INDIANA COUNTY

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A FEW years ago the officers and members of the Historical and Genealogical Society of Indiana County realized there were far too few young people participating in the historical activities. General apathy was evident on their part, and young members in the society took no part in the program planning.



McCORMICK HOUSE AT SMICKSBURG

*Birthplace of Jimmy Stewart's grandfather. The tower was added by John McCormick, inventor of the turbine.*

*Photo by E. Brown*

With a view to attracting a number of the younger citizens to the society and its work, high school seniors were invited to attend the meetings, but the response was not satisfactory. Contacts were then made by officers of the society with principals, teachers,

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and those students who evinced an interest in local, state, and national history. Principals and teachers were invited to attend and to explain the work of the society to their students. The students, especially, were invited to participate in the monthly meetings. The response was immediate. Soloists, small groups of musicians, those interested in public speaking, students of drama, and those with a flair for directing and presenting plays arranged complete programs for the monthly meetings. Students searched their attics for manuscripts, transcribed folk and historical lore from family tales and legends, and either wrote or dramatized local history for the regular meetings.

Once interested in the work and having a partial understanding of the value of what they were doing, students and teachers came to the society during the evening hours. They began filing and cataloguing old magazines, newspapers, pictures, and setting much of the society's material in order. Extra room space was provided by the directors of the Memorial Building, and vocational students and sympathetic teachers built cupboards, arranged shelving, and painted and decorated the room. Racks were built for newspaper files and other large volumes. A book repair unit was set up, and the students secured linen tape and repaired a number of valuable volumes. Youth groups now compose the House Committee, sit in on program planning, and are eager to give counsel and make suggestions as to how the society can best function to the advantage of the community. Essay contests have been arranged, and students from various county schools are invited to participate. Small prizes and certificate awards are presented to the winners, and officers of the society present the awards and prizes at the regular school assemblies.

Much of the credit for the appearance and participation of the students in the activities of the society goes to sympathetic and understanding teachers. But youth is in the organization, and the officers are sometimes hard put to find enough activity for the eager hands and alert minds.