THE TWENTY-NINTH CONVENTION
OF THE PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION

BY ARI HOOGENBOOM, Secretary

ROUGHLY one hundred and twenty-five members and guests of the Pennsylvania Historical Association attended its Twenty-ninth Annual Meeting at Bucknell University on Friday and Saturday, October 14 and 15, 1960. For most of those attending the convention, Friday began with a beautiful drive through some portion of Penn’s woods. During and after registration in the lobby of Roberts Hall old friends were greeted and new acquaintances were made.

The opening luncheon session was held in the John Houghton Harris Dining Room in Swartz Hall. J. Orin Oliphant, Professor of History at Bucknell, presided, Douglas E. Sturm, Assistant Professor of Religion at Bucknell, delivered the invocation, and Ralph W. Cordier, President of the Pennsylvania Historical Association, responded to the greetings of Bucknell’s President, Merle M. Odgers. The main address of this luncheon, given by Larry Gara, Professor of History at Grove City College, was entitled “William Still and the Underground Railroad.” Gara pointed out that most accounts of the underground railroad accent the achievements of white abolitionists rather than those of Negro members of Vigilance Committees or of the fugitives themselves. The neglected role of the Negro in the underground railway is graphically portrayed by the career of William Still. For fourteen years Still served the Pennsylvania Abolitionist Society and as a key member of the Philadelphia Vigilance Committee spirited many slaves through Philadelphia. To emphasize the Negro’s contribution, Still published the Underground Rail Road in 1872. Although this book ran through three printings, Gara said that historians have largely ignored its message. The white conductor is remembered; the Negro conductor and passenger are all but forgotten.
Friday afternoon featured two concurrent historical sessions both held in Coleman Hall. Cyrus H. Karracer, Associate Professor of History at Bucknell, presided over the session entitled "Post-Civil War Reform Movements." The first paper, "Pennsylvania and Civil Service Reform, 1865-1890" by Ari Hoogenboom, Assistant Professor of History at Pennsylvania State University, traced Pennsylvania's significant contribution to the passage of the Pendleton Act and tried to explain why forty years elapsed before enactment of a state reform law. He suggested that the answer might be found in the domination of Pennsylvania by industrialists. Since the machine served the industrialists well they were indifferent, and the supporters of reform—people whose interests were mercantile and financial—lacked the proportionate power of their fellows in New York and Massachusetts. Speaking on the subject "Pennsylvania and the Rights of the Negro, 1865-1887," Ira V. Brown, Professor of American History at Pennsylvania State University, suggested that one of the few constructive results of Reconstruction was the impetus given to civil rights legislation by northern state governments. In 1867, following two years of agitation regarding the exclusion of Negroes from Philadelphia streetcars, the General Assembly of Pennsylvania passed a law forbidding this type of discrimination. In 1869 it ratified the Fifteenth Amendment and the following year Pennsylvania Negroes gained the right to vote, which had been denied them under the constitution of 1838. In 1881 school segregation was outlawed in this state, and in 1887 legislation was passed to prevent discrimination by hotels, restaurants, and theaters. Brown concluded that Pennsylvania was not in the vanguard of this type of reform and that state action generally followed in the wake of federal precedents. A lively discussion followed both papers.

The other session held on Friday afternoon concerned "Dickinson the Man and Dickinson the College" and was presided over by John F. Coleman, Assistant Professor of History at St. Francis College. John H. Powell of Philadelphia delivered a paper on "John Dickinson as President of Pennsylvania" and Norman B. Wilkinson, Research Associate, Eleutherian Mills-Hagley Foundation, Wilmington, Delaware, spoke on "A DuPont at Dickinson." The former analyzed the curious inconsistencies in the character and the career of John Dickinson, especially as seen in his some-
what less-than-successful tenure of power in this state; while the latter dealt with the scientific training of an early member of the DuPont family, in such a way as to illuminate the entire condition of scientific education in America at that time. Following the afternoon historical sessions a reception was held in the living room of Hunt Hall.

The Association's annual dinner was held in the Davis Gymnasium Annex. President Cordier presided and Mark C. Ebersole, Chaplain and Professor of Religion at Bucknell, invoked the blessing. The main event of the evening was the address of M. Nelson McGeary, Professor of Political Science at Pennsylvania State University, entitled "Gifford Pinchot in Pennsylvania." McGeary beguiled those present with an informal, critical evaluation of Pinchot, two-time governor of Pennsylvania who died in 1946 at the age of eighty-one. Calling Pinchot a highly controversial figure, the speaker first briefly traced the highlights of his life including his training as a forester, his intimate association with Theodore Roosevelt, his dismissal by President Taft as head of the United States Forest Service, and his political career in Pennsylvania. Quoting from Pinchot's letters and diary, McGeary showed how some of Pinchot's characteristics combined to produce in him "a faculty for antagonizing his friends as well as alienating his enemies." But other quotations illustrated the traits which helped to account for Pinchot's strong appeal to many voters. Having inherited a sizable sum of money, Pinchot felt that society had paid him his wages in advance and that it was his duty to work them out during his lifetime. McGeary concluded that Pinchot had earned his wages.

Following the annual dinner the Council met in the library of the Vaughn Literature Building, while other members of the Association and their guests viewed the historical film Nightmare in Red.

Saturday morning's program began with a Phi Alpha Theta breakfast at the Hotel Lewisburger, which was followed by the annual business meeting in the auditorium of the Olin Science Building. The following business was transacted: the Secretary's report and the Treasurer's report were read and accepted; Editor John M. Coleman reported that he had remained within his budget, announced that Pennsylvania History will publish the
best essay submitted in the Junior Historians Club contest, and urged that the twenty-five year index of Pennsylvania History be pushed to completion as quickly as possible; Homer Rosenberger reported the Publication Committee plans for issuing an illustrated, colored-cover, revised edition of The Quakers by spring, 1961. Four resolutions were unanimously approved. These expressed appreciation to President Odgers and Bucknell University for their hospitality, to J. Orin Oliphant and his Committee on Local Arrangements for their careful attention to the details of the meeting, to William A. Russ and his Program Committee for the excellent program, and to Ralph W. Cordier for his "self-effacing and efficient administration" of the Association's affairs as President from 1957 to 1960. James A. Barnes was elected President for the term 1960 to 1963, James Kehl was elected Vice President to fill the vacancy left by Barnes, Ross Pier Wright was re-elected Treasurer, Ari Hoogenboom was elected Secretary. Re-elected to the Council for the term 1960 to 1963 were Homer Rosenberger, Nicholas B. Wainwright, and Stanton Belfour. Ira V. Brown was elected to the Council in place of James Kehl, and Daniel Porter was elected to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of R. D. Williams. The Thirtieth Annual Meeting of the Association will be held in Washington, Pennsylvania, with Washington and Jefferson College the host institution. After a few further announcements the business meeting adjourned.

Two concurrent historical sessions followed. The first, chaired by J. Cutler Andrews, Professor of History at Chatham College, and held in the Olin Science Building, had to do with "Pennsylvania Presidential Politics a Hundred Years Ago." William H. Russell, Associate Professor of History at Geneva College, spoke on "A. K. McClure and the People's Party in the Campaign of 1860." McClure, Chairman of the People's State Committee, found his party divided both in interests and in leadership. The Republicans of western and northern Pennsylvania were primarily concerned with blocking the extension of slavery, but those in the eastern counties wanted a protective tariff. As a close friend of Andrew Curtin, the People's candidate for Governor, McClure was harassed by the followers of Simon Cameron who, while supporting Curtin, eventually set up a separate campaign committee. Overcoming these difficulties, he led a thorough party organiza-
tion in a vigorous and victorious campaign. The election of Curtin in October assured Lincoln's victory in November by a much larger majority. Although the campaign enhanced McClure's reputation and led him into close contact with Lincoln, it divided Pennsylvania Republicans, leaving the embittered factions ill prepared to face the problems of a disintegrating Union.

Speaking on "Newspaper Opinion in the Election of 1860" Robert L. Bloom, Professor of History at Gettysburg College, emphasized that the outcome of that important campaign hinged in large measure on state and local political contests. Pennsylvania illustrated the point. While both Republican factions united behind Curtin, the Democrats weakened by the Buchanan-Douglas feud split into three camps. Pennsylvania newspapers helped shape these developments. The Republican press was united while Democratic newspapers ranged from support of a straight-out Buchanan-Breckinridge ticket through fusion arrangements between the Buchanan and Douglas wings of the party in Pennsylvania to a straight-out Douglas ticket. Without any exciting state issues, the party press on both sides stressed national issues and indulged in personalities. All gave some support to the principle of the protective tariff. Following the Republican triumph in the state contest in October, the steam went out of the campaign as the Republican victory made Lincoln's election almost certain.

Saturday morning's other session, "Opportunities for Research and Study in Central Pennsylvania" was chaired by Charles F. Snyder, Secretary of the Northumberland County Historical Society. Henry Howard Eddy and Frank Evans, State Archivists, discussed "Materials Available at the State Archives." The state archives contain official records of Pennsylvania dating from William Penn's day, including the originals of Colonial Records and most originals of the material in Hazard's Pennsylvania Archives and the later series of the Archives. The state archives also contain many official records still unpublished. Important private papers, however, of officials prominent in provincial and later days are at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Land papers from the time of the Swedes remain with the Bureau of Land Records at the Department of Internal Affairs. Unofficial records of genealogical significance, such as transcripts of gravestone inscriptions, are at the state library where they are serviced by the Genealogical
Section. At the state archives are official records of Pennsylvania's
government from 1682, the basic records necessary for historical
research. J. Orin Oliphant continued the theme of the session by
discussing "The Founding of the Library of Bucknell University."
During the ten years following 1849 when Bucknell attained col-
legiate status, Oliphant said, the foundation of its library was laid
by gift rather than by purchase. The school's first president,
Howard Malcom, made the greatest contribution to the growth
of the library. Although in August, 1859, the library contained
only 3,147 titles, Oliphant emphasized that its holdings were com-
parable in size and in quality to those of many American college
libraries.

Saturday luncheon was held in Swartz Hall with Frank C.
Abbott, Assistant to the Dean of Bucknell, presiding and the
Chaplain of the Federal Penitentiary at Lewisburg, Henry H.
Cassler, offering the invocation. The main event of the luncheon
was President Cordier's address, "Pennsylvania History: Its Place
in Our Schools and in the Public Mind," which not only stated
objectives but also the means of achieving them. Cordier observed
that if the Association wished to improve the teaching of Penn-
sylvania history, all elementary teachers and all secondary teachers
of history should be required to take a course in Pennsylvania
history. He suggested that Association members should undertake
the writing of full-length summaries of major aspects of Penn-
sylvania history in a form suitable for students, teachers, and lay-
men. These writings should emphasize Pennsylvania history since
1865 and should extend beyond its political, religious, and military
aspects. An effort should be made, Cordier said, to interest both
secondary school teachers and laymen to join the Association and
to take an active interest in its activities.

The Twenty-ninth Annual Meeting terminated with a historical
tour of the area west of Lewisburg conducted by John B. Deans
of Lewisburg and assisted by John Carter and E. E. Ferster,
presidents of the historical societies of Northumberland and
Snyder Counties respectively. As planned, when members and
their guests reached convenient points of departure along the route
they left the caravan and thus the 1960 gathering of the Penn-
sylvania Historical Association ended.