THE THIRTY-THIRD CONVENTION OF
THE PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION

BY ARI HOOKENBOOM, Secretary

The thirty-third annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Historical Association was held at Wilkes-Barre on October 9 and 10, 1964. The host institutions were King’s College, Wilkes College, and the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society. Edwin B. Bronner of Haverford College, chairman of the Program Committee, presided over the opening luncheon session held at the Hotel Sterling on October 9. Addresses by Samuel P. Hays of the University of Pittsburgh and Frederick M. Binder of Hartwick College followed the invocation by Michael T. Price of the First Presbyterian Church of Wilkes-Barre. Mr. Hays told of “The A.H.A. Program to Collect the Basic Quantitative Data of American Political History.” In the spring of 1964 the American Historical Association appointed an ad hoc committee to collect this material. Through subcommittees in almost all of the states, county election returns for President, governor, and Congress from 1824 to the present are being sent to the Consortium for Political Research at Ann Arbor, Michigan. Ninety per cent of the data is now there. A grant of $144,009 has been received from the National Science Foundation to compute and process this data and to maintain a director of the project at the Consortium. It is anticipated that all of the data currently being collected will be available for use by researchers within a year. Plans are now under way to extend the project by securing election data prior to 1824, state referenda, selected precinct data, Congressional roll calls, and related county demographic data.

Speaking on “Echoes from the Coal Age,” Mr. Binder told the story of Pennsylvania anthracite between 1820 and the Civil War. Coal provided energy for the roots of the American industrial revolution, but despite the extravagant claims of newspapers, pamphlets, speeches, and articles during the coal age, anthracite was only slowly utilized in factory, home, and transportation.
Eugene S. Farley, president of Wilkes College, greeted the afternoon session held at his institution and presided over by Philip S. Klein of the Pennsylvania State University. Earl Kaylor of Juniata College presented the first paper of this session, "The Impact of the Women’s Temperance Movement in Pennsylvania, 1874-1896." The Woman’s Crusade of early 1874, culminating on March 3, 1875, in the Pennsylvania Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, marked the beginning of the Pennsylvania woman’s temperance movement. In the next two decades, agitation by women on the drink question revolved around three main contests: constitutional prohibition, a public school temperance law, and liquor license reduction under the Brooks Law of 1887. By the mid-1880’s, the WCTU had emerged as the state’s most militant and influential moral reform organization. It developed the lobbying techniques later adopted by the Anti-Saloon League. Furthermore, no other reform group in Pennsylvania in the late nineteenth century contributed more to urban progressivism than the WCTU. Viewing intemperance itself to be the result of society’s ills, it espoused other social reforms, such as anti-tobacco laws, penal reform, labor reform, and women’s rights. The Anti-Saloon League, founded in the mid-1890’s, brought the temperance movement in Pennsylvania back to masculine control, and with this shift of leadership came a shift of emphasis. In the remaining years before the Eighteenth Amendment, the WCTU’s wide social concern gave way to an exclusive drive for state and national prohibition.

Clyde Nelson of Elizabethtown College presented the second topic of this session, "The Economic Ideas of Russell H. Conwell." American intellectual historians have regarded Conwell as the nation’s foremost evangelist of the gospel of wealth. While Conwell stressed this theme in thousands of public lectures, the small number of honest stewards somewhat dimmed his optimism. During the Progressive Era, Conwell’s weekly sermons in Philadelphia’s “Temple” pulpit denounced in ringing terms America’s aristocracy of wealth. Supporting the workingman against corporate power, Conwell called for unity among laborers and advocated profit-sharing and arbitration. Radical in his Christianity, he championed an equalitarian society and thought that the gov-
ernment should reduce inequities in wealth through taxation. Indeed, critics accused Conwell of joining hands with the Socialists.

“The Women’s Rights Movement in Pennsylvania, 1848-1873,” presented by Ira V. Brown of Pennsylvania State University, was the last topic in this session. Mr. Brown traced the development of the woman’s rights movement in Pennsylvania during the twenty-five years following the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848. After noting the antislavery roots of the crusade, he discussed the married woman’s property law of 1848, the woman’s rights conventions and journals of the 1850’s, the progress of women in education and medicine, and the career of Anna Dickinson as an orator during the Civil War. Mr. Brown also covered briefly the relation of the cause to Radical Reconstruction, the formation of woman’s rights associations, and the early battles over the issue of woman suffrage, which was rejected by the Constitutional Convention of 1873 after extensive debate.

Following a reception and tea in the Faculty Lounge at Wilkes College, the annual dinner was held at the Hotel Sterling with J. Cutler Andrews of Chatham College, president of the Association, presiding. After the invocation by Simon Gardner, C.S.C., representing Lane D. Kilburn, president of King’s College, an award to the Association was presented by S. K. Stevens, head of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, in behalf of the American Association for State and Local History. The award was given “For constant support and aid of the activities of other societies interested in state and local history in Pennsylvania, and for steady contributions to historical knowledge.” Addresses were given by George Korson, author and folklorist, and by Herman Gundersheimer from the Tyler School of Art of Temple University. Mr. Korson’s subject was “Folk Songs and Ballads of the Anthracite Miners.” His presentation consisted of commentary, documented with the playing of records from Album 16, Archive of Folk Songs, Library of Congress. The album represents a group of ballads from a much larger collection that Mr. Korson recorded in the anthracite region in 1946 for the Library of Congress.

Mr. Gundersheimer’s address dealt with “George Catlin of Wilkes-Barre and his Position in the History of American Painting.” The speaker described how Catlin, a young lawyer, suddenly
became aware of the peculiarities in the appearance of the American Indians and decided to study their lives and customs more closely. He became, with little schooling, one of the first to establish a visual chronicle of the western Indian tribes and added to his hundreds of paintings and thousands of drawings verbal descriptions, mostly in the form of letters, which appeared in book form. Catlin's position in the history of American painting, aside from his contribution to ethnology and anthropology, rests more in the choice of subject matter, free from romantic sentimentality, than in the artistic quality of his work. Numerous slides illustrated the work of Catlin and its relationship to his contemporaries in the field of painting.

While the Council met at King's College at 9:30 that evening, movies were shown at the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society.

Saturday morning's activities began with the Phi Alpha Theta breakfast held at King's College, which was followed by the annual business meeting also held at King's College and presided over by J. Cutler Andrews. The secretary's minutes of the last annual meeting and his report to the Association were both read and accepted. Richard Wright's report on the treasury showing a modest improvement in our financial condition was accepted. Editor Russell F. Weigley once again stressed the connection between increased membership and a better magazine. From the Publications Committee, Homer Rosenberger announced the publication of *Pennsylvania Transportation* by George Swetnam and plans for the early publication of "Pennsylvania Boundaries" by William A. Russ, Jr. Possible future titles in this series include "Pennsylvania Scientists and Inventors," to be written by S. K. Stevens, and "Pennsylvania Reform and Reformers," to be written by Ira V. Brown.

President Andrews outlined his membership campaign, which divides the Commonwealth into nine districts with district chairmen and subdivides these districts into counties with county chairmen, who are to contact prospective members either personally or by mail. President Andrews suggested that members of certain groups seem more eager to become members of our Association than do others. These groups include college teachers; professional men such as lawyers, doctors, clergymen, and bankers; and public
servants such as Congressmen, senators, assemblymen, judges, and local officials. Mr. Russ commended President Andrews for his energy, and Melville J. Boyer suggested that members get publicity for the Association by reporting their attendance at this meeting to their local newspapers. President Andrews announced forthcoming annual meetings at Meadville on October 8 and 9, 1965, with Allegheny College the host institution, and at Lebanon and Annville on October 21 and 22, 1966, with Lebanon Valley College and the Lebanon County Historical Society as host institutions. Richard Wright informed us that the Federal Internal Revenue Service has recognized our tax exempt status. The secretary informed the Association that Johnson Reprints will reprint our out-of-print back stock and handle the sale of back issues from volumes I to XXI.

President Andrews and Mr. Russ reported on progress toward a prospectus for a Dictionary of Pennsylvania Biography. Mr. Russ requested that the membership submit to him the names of prominent individuals who should be included. Alfred D. Sumberg reported that the Pennsylvania Historical Foundation is now seeking members and money.

James A. Barnes of the Nominating Committee reported the following slate of officers, which was unanimously elected. Re-elected to the Council were Robert L. Bloom, Abram Foster, Samuel P. Hays, and Louis J. Heizmann, and Wallace E. Davies was elected to replace J. Orin Oliphant.

President Andrews announced that a conference to consider plans for more coordinated research in Pennsylvania history will be held shortly after the new Archives Building in Harrisburg is occupied. He also requested suggestions for the future location of annual meetings and closed his remarks with observations on the fact that Pennsylvania history is frequently not taught in Pennsylvania schools. The meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

Papers by George D. Wolf of Lock Haven State College, Charles Whittemore of South Kent School in Connecticut, and Ralph L. Hazeltine of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission were presented at the morning session held at King's College and presided over by Abram Foster of Millersville State College. In his paper, "The Politics of Fair Play," Mr. Wolf told of a community and political organization called the Fair Play
system which operated in Pennsylvania between 1769 and 1784. In an area about twenty-five miles long and two miles wide, located on the north side of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River, extending from Lycoming Creek, present Williamsport, to the Great Island, just east of present Lock Haven, one hundred to one hundred fifty families took part in this experiment. Mr. Wolf explained that the Fair Play system was a pragmatic one which the necessities of the frontier experience, more than national or ethnic origin, had developed.

In presenting "Sullivan's March: Some Observations," Mr. Whittemore told of General John Sullivan's march against the Six Nations during the late summer and early fall of 1779. Ironically, this march has received scant attention from military historians of the American Revolution even though Washington meticulously planned this campaign and considered it an important offensive. Despite Sullivan's success both the campaign and his efforts have been severely criticized. Sullivan devastated the land of the Six Nations between Tioga, Pennsylvania, and Genesee Castle, west of Geneva, New York, and released pressure from Washington's rear, allowing him to pin down Sir Henry Clinton along the Hudson. Sullivan has been criticized for not going on to Fort Niagara, but he was not ordered to; he has also been criticized for the destructiveness of his troops, but Washington's strategy called for massive devastation. And Sullivan was successful. The Indian confederacy was broken; the Indians were thrown back upon the British at Fort Niagara; and the British food supply in the Finger Lake district was destroyed. Despite retaliatory Indian raids in 1780, Indians no longer were an effective British ally.

"The Role of Wyoming in the American Revolution," the final topic in this session, was presented by Mr. Hazeltine. He told of the political, economic, and military factors relating to the settlement at Wyoming during the era of the American Revolution.

Saturday's luncheon session was held at the Hotel Sterling. Michael T. Price gave the invocation, while Alan W. Perkins of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society presided over this final session. The address, "The Politics of Cuckooland," presented by Arthur Dudden of Bryn Mawr College, recognized the fact that politics has long provided America's humorists with a
comic arena of generous dimensions and hilarious proportions. It was in politics, for example, that Baltimore’s H. L. Mencken found the richest sources of laughter. “Let us not forget its high capacity to soothe and tickle the midriff, its incomparable services as a maker of entertainment,” he wrote. So it is not surprising that political jokes should be in season in the autumn of 1964, for political humor always has been in season in considerable degree. In the past Will Rogers, Mencken, Finley Peter Dunne’s characterization of Mr. Dooley, Seba Smith’s Jack Downing, Charles Farrar Browne’s Artemus Ward, David Ross Locke’s Petroleum Vesuvius Nasby, Mark Twain, and Ambrose Bierce directed some or nearly all of their attention toward politics. Yet most of them contrived a softness of outline for their audiences as well as for their subjects, as if to illustrate that it is precisely at such bridging points between urbanity and crudity where civilization is to be found and its richest meanings understood. But today satire is in style. The directions of politics and humor point inward. It is easy to agree with President Kennedy’s wry reflection on the news reaching him that he was reading more and enjoying it less.

The thirty-third annual meeting ended with the adoption of a report from the Resolutions Committee, consisting of Melville J. Boyer, Louis J. Heizmann, and Robert L. Bloom, Chairman, thanking the host institutions for their hospitality and mentioning in particular President Lane D. Kilburn of King’s College and his staff, President Eugene S. Farley of Wilkes College and his staff, and Director Alan W. Perkins and members of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society. The report also expressed deep appreciation to the Program Committee, consisting of Wallace E. Davis, Abram Foster, Samuel P. Hays, George W. Kyte, Robert K. Murray, and Edwin Bronner, Chairman. The Local Arrangements Committee, consisting of Robert J. Alexander, Harold W. Thatcher and Alan W. Perkins, Chairman, was also thanked for providing all necessary facilities and arrangements.