THIRTY-SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

By CHARLES H. GLATFELTER, Recording Secretary

THE thirty-sixth annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Historical Association was held on October 20 and 21, 1967, at Beaver Falls and Ambridge, Pennsylvania. Serving as co-hosts were Geneva College and Old Economy.

The opening luncheon session was held in the ballroom of the Brodhead Hotel, Beaver Falls, with Catherine E. Reiser, University of Pittsburgh (Johnstown Campus), presiding. Following the luncheon, President Edwin C. Clarke of Geneva College brought the greetings of his institution. Professor Reiser then introduced George D. Wolf, The Pennsylvania State University (Capitol Campus), who spoke on “The Scranton Papers.” His address was a brief in support of research in contemporary Pennsylvania history and the use of the collections of governors’ papers available in the archives of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. He spoke particularly of the papers of Governor William W. Scranton (1963-1967), both in Harrisburg and Dalton, and discussed the nature of the work completed and planned with them. In conclusion, he urged the association to give serious consideration to the establishment of a fellowship providing at least one historian with the opportunity of serving as a participant-observer for each of the governors of the Commonwealth.

“Urban Development in Pennsylvania” was the theme of the Friday afternoon session at which William W. Hummel, Albright College, presided. The first paper, by Steven Cord, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, dealt with “Henry George and Urban Renewal in Pennsylvania.” After giving a brief biography of George with emphasis on his career in Pennsylvania, Professor Cord examined certain common misconceptions of George and discussed some shortcomings in his economic analysis. He explained why many urban renewal authorities today think there is
much merit in George’s proposal of a heavier tax on land values. They argue that construction would be encouraged because improvements would be untaxed and that urban land sprawl would be discouraged. The author presented a history of the Pittsburgh Graded Tax and the results of a recent study of the expected effects of the Graded Tax in Lancaster.

The second paper at this session, entitled “Historical Social Research in the Process of Urbanization: The Case of Pittsburgh,” was read by Samuel P. Hays, University of Pittsburgh. His paper described several projects dealing with urban political structure and urban political change in Pittsburgh during the past century. These case studies emphasize social research, the use of systematic concepts of group description and orderly classification of quantitative data. The projects described include: a cross-classification of nationality and occupation in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, in 1880; the transition in Pittsburgh’s downtown from a residential neighborhood to one of central city economic functions; the Negro upper class in 1964 and the Catholic upper class in 1910; the hierarchical organization within the business community as between neighborhood trade associations and the central city Chamber of Commerce on the one hand and as between regional and central banks on the other; the source of the movement for reform in municipal government in 1910; and the distinctions in political party leadership in 1912. Each of these case studies either modifies earlier descriptions based upon more impressionistic data, or provides new descriptions of problems not heretofore dealt with. On the whole, they indicate the possibilities of social research in broadening our understanding of urban development.

“Religion in Nineteenth Century Pennsylvania” was the theme of the second Friday afternoon session, chaired by Joseph C. Morton, Northeastern Illinois College. Robert Clemmer, Lock Haven State College, read a paper on “Historical Transcendentalism in Pennsylvania Religious Thought.” As he saw it, Transcendentalism was the American expression of the movement from empiricism to idealism and from the enlightenment to romanticism in the first half of the nineteenth century. In New England, as the result of an intuitionist epistemology related to the thought of Fichte and Jacobi, transcendentalism was inherently ahistorical in its outlook. In Pennsylvania, however, the Mercersburg theology was a form
of transcendentalism, related to Hegel and the Mediating school of German Protestant theology, which had a profoundly historical orientation. The leaders of the movement—Frederick Rauch, the philosopher, John Nevin, the theologian, and Philip Schaff, the historian—were important transmitters of German thought to the United States and deserve a more important place in the intellectual history of the United States than they have yet been accorded.

The second paper at this session was read by David M. Carson, Geneva College. Speaking on the topic of “Covenants in Western Pennsylvania: The Small Church and Its Environment,” he considered the Reformed Presbyterian Church in terms of three types of environment: theological, physical, and social-political. In its distinctive beliefs the church has been near the “extreme” end of the Presbyterian spectrum. Despite a great deal of theological argument with other Presbyterian groups. Covenanters felt through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that they had a secure and familiar place in the Presbyterian family. The physical environment of the church was chiefly determined by the desire for land. Covenanters moved into western Pennsylvania with the frontier or closely behind it, and they continued to move west along with the frontier. They created a mobile church, with problems of maintaining organization and contact. Socially and politically the church had some radical attitudes, sharing the concern of other Protestants of the early nineteenth century for many reform causes, but adding to this an intense commitment to abolition and a distinctive desire to amend the United States Constitution by a recognition of Jesus Christ as the source of governmental authority.

In the late afternoon the scene shifted to Geneva College, where there were tours of the campus and refreshments for all.

The annual dinner meeting of the association was conducted in the ballroom of the Brodhead Hotel on Friday evening. President Homer T. Rosenberger presided. A resolution in memory of Edwin B. Coddington was read and unanimously approved. The address of the evening was delivered by Edwin Fenton, Professor of History, Carnegie-Mellon University, on the topic of “The New History: Implications for School and College.” He described his own experiences over almost a decade in working closely with second-
ary school teachers and students, urging those present to consider making similar efforts. Unless this close cooperation exists and unless it is effective, he urged, the future of history as a strong subject in the secondary schools is in doubt.

The program for Friday concluded with a meeting of the Council in the Washington-Wayne Room of the hotel.

The customary Phi Alpha Theta breakfast began the activities for Saturday, October 21. About two dozen members attended. There was no formal program. Following the breakfast, several buses and automobiles left the Brodhead Hotel for Old Economy, Ambridge, where the morning sessions were held.

The day opened with the annual business meeting convened in the adult schoolroom, with President Homer T. Rosenberger in charge. The secretary read the minutes of the 1966 meeting in Lebanon and gave his annual report. In presenting the annual report of the treasurer, Assistant Treasurer Richard Wright declared that the financial position of the Association is good. The slight decrease in the cash balance, he stated, should be weighed against a considerable increase in the number of Pennsylvania history pamphlets in the inventory. The report was accepted.

Editor Seth M. Scheiner stated that the October issue of PENNSYLVANIA HISTORY would be mailed within the next few days. The January issue will contain a new feature: a listing of articles on Pennsylvania history that have been published in other journals.

J. Cutler Andrews reported for the nominations committee, as follows: for president, Homer T. Rosenberger; for vice-president, Robert L. Bloom; for business secretary, John B. Frantz; for recording secretary, Charles H. Glatfelter; for the council (regular three year terms), Robert E. Carlson, John M. Coleman, Abram Foster, and Samuel P. Hays; and for the council (for new positions), Loring B. Priest (one year), Robert D. Duncan (two years), and Walter S. Sanderlin (three years). Professor Andrews reminded the members that the effect of part of his report depended upon their response later in the meeting in acting upon several recommended constitutional changes. He also said that the vacancy created by the resignation of Vice-President James A. Kehl would be filled at a later date. Donald H. Kent then was called to the chair in order to conduct the election. All of the nominees were duly elected.
Homer T. Rosenberger of the publications committee reported that the revision of George Swetnam's *Pennsylvania's Transportation Industry* is about to come from the press. Pamphlets on Philadelphia and Pittsburgh between 1750 and 1840 are in process. The series continues to provide the Association with a steady revenue.

J. Cutler Andrews of the membership committee stated his belief in the effectiveness of direct mail campaigns in the effort to get new members. The Association should send out 2,000 letters each year, primarily to teachers of history. He reported on the success of recent efforts by local membership chairmen in Blair, Franklin, and Lancaster counties. Professor Andrews introduced Ralph Shay as his successor.

Donald H. Kent of the research committee announced that the third research conference will be held in April, 1968 in or near Harrisburg. The theme will be the social and intellectual history of the state. Furthermore, he reported that someone would soon be available to continue work on the proposed dictionary of Pennsylvania biography. Finally, he said that the revision of the bibliography of Pennsylvania history was in progress.

Philip S. Klein presented the proposed amendments to the constitution of the Association as they were presented on pages 308-309 of the July, 1967 issue of *Pennsylvania History*, with the exception that the first sentence of Article XII was revised to read as follows: “The editor shall edit or supervise the journal of the association.” After Professor Klein explained the purposes of the suggested changes, he moved their approval. The motion carried.

Secretary Frantz announced that the 1968 meeting of the Association will be held in Pottstown on October 11 and 12. The host will be the Pottstown Historical Society. The Holiday Inn will be the headquarters.

Acting for Stanton Belfour, Donald H. Kent presented the report of the resolutions committee, expressing the thanks of the Association to the committees responsible for the program (James A. Kehl, chairman) and for the local arrangements (M. Howard Mattsson-Boze, chairman) and to Homer T. Rosenberger for assuming the presidency of the Association when the late Edwin
B. Coddington found it necessary to resign. The resolutions having been adopted, the meeting adjourned.

Charles Halt, Slippery Rock State College, presided at the first Saturday morning session in the adult schoolroom, Old Economy. "Transportation and Politics" was the theme. Harold E. Cox, Wilkes College, presented his paper on "Street Railway Legislation and Pennsylvania Politics, 1874-1902," in which he discussed the relationship which existed in the last quarter of the nineteenth century between the Pennsylvania Republican machine and the street railway interests, particularly those in the city of Philadelphia. This period was marked by the introduction of the new State Constitution of 1874 and the final establishment of a street railway monopoly in the city of Philadelphia in 1902. During this period the street railway interests attempted to come to grips with the restrictions imposed upon their operations by the 1874 Constitution, through the establishment of an entirely new form of corporate enterprise: the traction motor company.

The title of Homer T. Rosenberger's paper was "How Pittsburgh Gained an Additional Rail Outlet to the Seaboard in the Twentieth Century." The tight monopoly of the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Baltimore and Ohio on traffic between Pittsburgh and tidewater was broken for a time by the extension of the Western Maryland to Connellsville (1912) to connect with the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad. The new trunk line thus formed was envisioned by George Jay Gould at the turn of the century. Following reverses in the Panic of 1907, the Vanderbilts of the New York Central system brought the Western Maryland and the P. & L. E. into one family and encouraged the construction of the last eighty-seven miles of track from Cumberland, Maryland to Connellsville so that a new rail route from Pittsburgh to Baltimore could be completed. Vast coal lands owned by the Western Maryland, the United States Supreme Court's decision on the "commodity clause" of the Hepburn Act, a trade and traffic alliance between the Western Maryland and the P. & L. E., and mountainous terrain in Pennsylvania each played a significant role in the drama which resulted in the forging of a new rail service from Pittsburgh to the East Coast. The first train to tidewater over the new line, a Western Maryland freight train, left the steel city on August 1, 1912. During the next fifty-five years
the Western Maryland was one of the most efficient and prosperous fast-freight roads in the United States.

“Social and Legal Aspects of Slavery” was the topic of the second Saturday session, with Walter S. Sanderlin, Washington and Jefferson College, presiding. Eli Seifman, State University of New York at Stony Brook, delivered his paper on “The United Colonization Societies of New-York and Pennsylvania and the Establishment of the African Colony of Bassa Cove.” His study traced the origin and development of the union formed in 1834 between the Colonization Society of the City of New York and the Young Men’s Colonization Society of Pennsylvania for the purpose of establishing a new and model colony of freed American Negroes on the coast of Africa. The colony, named Bassa Cove, was founded on the principles of temperance, peace, and the cultivation of agricultural pursuits. The colony emanated from the national and state conflicts over colonization procedure, methods and terms of manumission, and the growing influence of the temperance movement. Bassa Cove’s brief existence as an independent colony ended in 1839 when it became part of the Commonwealth of Liberia.

Joseph C. Burke, Duquesne University, spoke on “What Did the Prigg Decision Really Decide?” The traditional historical interpretation of *Prigg v Pennsylvania*, he stated, insists that a majority of the United States Supreme Court, speaking through Joseph Story, decided that the states could not legislate on the subject of fugitive slaves and that their officials had no obligation to enforce the fugitive slave clause of the federal Constitution. Professor Burke argued that Story did not speak for a majority of his colleagues on these two points. He also contended that the Court could not have decided these points, even if a majority of the judges had agreed, since neither was essential to the decision of the case. The Taney court spoke with many voices in this case, but historians have chosen to listen only to Story’s.

Curator Daniel B. Reibel and his staff conducted instructive and enjoyable tours of Old Economy while the morning sessions were in progress.

The final event of the annual meeting was a luncheon at McKee Hall Dining Room on the Geneva College campus. After luncheon, Roy H. Johnson, Thiel College, who presided,
duced Walter L. Ferree, The Pennsylvania State University (Ogontz Campus). Professor Ferree spoke on "Student Life in the United States in 1825." He said that his interest in the life of the college student was stimulated by his study of John Van Buren, second son of Martin Van Buren. John was a graduate of Yale, Class of 1828. Professor Ferree spoke of life at Yale, with some attention to Harvard, Princeton, Columbia, and Penn. He was concerned with procedures for admission, courses of study and teaching methods, housing and dormitory life, and "town and gown" relations. He reported also on customs governing the relations among the classes and on student recreational activities. Then, as today, he said, students rebelled against authority, sometimes with the connivance of the faculty. Pressure from the latter and from students helped bring about changes in student life at the "name" colleges by the middle of the century.