THE FORTY-FIRST ANNUAL MEETING

By Charles H. Glatfelter

THE Forty-first Annual Meeting of the Pennsylvania Historical Association was held on October 20 and 21, 1972, at West Chester, Pennsylvania. The hosts were West Chester State College and the Chester County Historical Society.

The opening session began at 12:30 P.M. on Friday in a dining room of the Treadway Inn with Patricia C. Johnson, West Chester State College, presiding. Following the luncheon, greetings were extended by President Paul W. Rossey of West Chester State College and by President Clement R. Hodges of the Chester County Historical Society. Then Albert J. Wahl, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, read a paper on "Longwood Meeting: Public Forum for the American Democratic Faith." In 1853 a group of Chester County Quakers formed the Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends as a protest against the antireform policies of their conservative brethren. In 1855 they dedicated their own meetinghouse at Longwood near Kennett Square to the service of God through service to man. Here for eighty-six years they made their meeting a center, if not the center, of liberal thought and action in eastern Pennsylvania. Welcoming anyone who believed in the brotherhood of man, these Progressives preached and practiced an early form of the social gospel, turning their Sunday services and annual conventions into public forums for the advancement of the American democratic faith. Here famous reformers adduced the higher law to the support of social uplift; here free and responsible individuals became more free and responsible as they developed principles of social action through open discussion; here the American mission to make democracy work operated through many reforms of the day. The meeting dissolved in 1940. The property was sold, and the proceeds were devoted to the support of Howard University.

Joseph E. Walker, Millersville State College, presided at the first afternoon session. Donald A. Grinde, Jr., Mercyhurst College,
presented a paper on "Lammot du Pont and the Anthracite Coal Region." Two of du Pont's ideas—soda or B blasting powder, invented in 1857, and the creation of the Gunpowder Trade Association in 1872—relate directly to the growth and development of the Pennsylvania anthracite region. Soda blasting powder was a cheaper explosive, the demand for which increased rapidly during the 1860s. The Du Pont Company and others sought to meet this demand by building plants in eastern Pennsylvania. Because the coal producers had created a buyer's monopoly in 1888, they were in a position to stimulate competition among the powdermen. The latter's response was the Gunpowder Trade Association, an organization designed to halt "ruinous competition." Lammot du Pont, its first president, established minimum prices for blasting powder in the anthracite region, and by 1878 had succeeded in achieving a blasting powder oligopoly in eastern Pennsylvania. He had dealt successfully with an industry far larger than his own.

The second paper at this session, entitled "Precursors of the Anthracite Coal Barons," was read by H. Benjamin Powell, Bloomsburg State College. His paper dealt with leadership in the anthracite industry prior to 1825. The Pennsylvania hard coal industry started with a few big businessmen owning nearly all the land. They systematically examined the nature of anthracite as well as the physical dimensions of the coal formation. Realizing the value of their fuel for industrial development, they assumed responsibility for educating the public about its potential. These entrepreneurs used their wealth and political influence to develop mines and transportation. In many respects they resembled such later coal barons as Franklin B. Gowen and George F. Baer. The paper drew upon twenty-one manuscript collections in eight archives, including the papers of Jacob Cist, Matthias Hollenback, John Nicholson, Samuel Potts, Jacob Weiss, and James Wilson.

John Offner, Shippensburg State College, presided at the second afternoon session. John K. Folmar, California State College, read a paper on "Reconstruction and the Pennsylvania Delegation in the Forty-second Congress (1871-1873)." Ronald M. Benson, Millersville State College, presented a paper on "Bourbonism, the Eastern Democracy, and Pennsylvania Democrats in the Gilded Age."
Ira V. Brown, Pennsylvania State University, presided at the third afternoon session. Carl D. Oblinger, a doctoral candidate at the Johns Hopkins University, who is teaching in Missouri, read a paper on the “Development of the Black Community in Southeastern Pennsylvania” in which he discussed his efforts to gain accurate information about the transient members of this community by using such hitherto little-used sources as court and prison records. William L. Ziglar, Eastern Baptist College, presented a paper on “The Coatesville Lynching in 1911.” He discussed the events leading up to the incident as well as the community reaction which accompanied and followed it.

Following the afternoon session, a reception was held at the Chester County Historical Society. Refreshments were served.

The annual dinner meeting of the association was held on Friday evening in the Treadway Inn with President Robert L. Bloom, Gettysburg College, presiding. Norman B. Wilkinson, Eleutherian Mills-Hagley Foundation, spoke on “Lafayette in Southeastern Pennsylvania and Delaware.” He recounted the events of the Frenchman’s stay in the area during the American Revolution and then again in 1824-1825. One of the themes of the paper was the long-lasting and close relationship between Lafayette and the du Pont family.

The meeting of the council concluded the day’s program.

About twenty-five persons attended the Phi Alpha Theta breakfast in the Treadway Inn on Saturday morning.

The annual business meeting of the association convened in the Philips Library, West Chester State College, at 9:20 Saturday morning with about twenty-five members in attendance and with President Robert L. Bloom presiding. The recording secretary read the minutes of the preceding annual meeting, which were approved.

Phillip E. Stebbins, business secretary, reported there were 1,328 members in the association as of October 15, 1972. An adequate supply of journals and publications is on hand, he said, and the association is prepared to make available free to subscribers runs of journals to replace those lost during the June flood. He stated that the association was about to enter into an agreement with Xerox Corporation for microfilming back and current issues of Pennsylvania History.
Treasurer Richard P. Wright reported continuing progress in improving the financial condition of the association. For the year just closed (October 1, 1971, to September 30, 1972) income from all sources amounted to $12,260 and expenditures were $11,084. The year end balance of all funds was $11,921.54. The report was approved.

H. Benjamin Powell, acting editor of Pennsylvania History, informed the meeting of several changes forthcoming in Pennsylvania History. The magazine will be printed by means of photo offset on permanent durable paper with some rag content. Also, an attempt will be made to include one picture with each article.

For the publications committee, John M. Coleman reported that the major limiting factor in its program was lack of suitable space in which to store an inventory of publications. Approval has been given to the publication of a pamphlet on the constitutional governors of Pennsylvania.

Reporting for the nominations committee, Philip S. Klein presented the following slate, all of whom were duly elected for terms ending in 1975: for president, Donald H. Kent; for vice-president, Robert E. Carlson; and for the council, Robert R. Clemmer, John F. Coleman, Robert D. Duncan, Ernest C. Miller, and John J. Reed. One vacancy on the council for a term ending in 1973 will be filled later.

The following proposed amendment to Article III, Section 5, of the constitution, having been duly presented, was adopted: after having served two full terms, no member of the council shall be reelected until at least one year has elapsed.

Francis Jennings, chairman of the bicentennial committee, said that his group is seeking ways for appropriate observance of the event and is seeking financing for the publications proposed.

In a brief valedictory President Robert L. Bloom thanked the association for the help given him during the last three years. He noted the passing of one of his predecessors, J. Cutler Andrews, and said that appropriate note of the death will be taken.

After receiving the gavel, newly elected President Donald H. Kent expressed on behalf of the entire association a deep sense of gratitude to retiring President Robert L. Bloom for services well-rendered. President Kent also reported on the efforts of
the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission to assist in cleaning-up operations following the June flood. He presented certificates of appreciation to H. Benjamin Powell and Harry E. Whipkey.

It was announced that future annual meetings will be held as follows: 1973 in Carlisle, 1974 in New Wilmington, 1975 in Loretto, and 1976 in Allentown (upon invitation of Cedar Crest College).

The annual meeting adjourned at 9:55 A.M.

Craig A. Newton, Bloomsburg State College, presided at the first Saturday morning session. Edward R. Eidelman, Muhlenberg College, presented a paper entitled "Eighteenth Century Newtown: A Preliminary Study in the Relationship between Wealth Distribution and the Growth of Commercialization." Barry J. Levy, doctoral candidate at the University of Pennsylvania, read a paper on "Quaker Youth, Labor, and Adolescence in Early Eighteenth Century Chester County." Minutes, removal certificates, and wills show that Quakers of the monthly meetings of Radnor and Darby in Chester County had a conception of the role of youth in society. Although age distinctions were vague, youth comprised those past puberty and still unmarried. If the children of Friends, they were regarded as "hopeful" but still in danger of abandoning the "light within." Most of them worked on their fathers' farms; hiring out was infrequent and, where practiced, was done with care. At the time of their marriage the community reviewed the cases of young people through procedures which took up more time in the meeting than any other item of business. Increasing frequency of marrying out (twenty percent of all religiously legal marriages in the 1740s) caused great concern in both meetings, indicating the existence of an awkward age similar to modern adolescence and generational conflict.

Irwin Richman, Capitol Campus, Pennsylvania State University, presided at the second Saturday session. Richard McLeod, Shippensburg State College, read a paper entitled "The Social, Economic, and Ethnic Nature of Artisanship in Philadelphia, 1800-1850." This was an attempt to define more specifically the nature of early nineteenth century artisanship, using Philadelphia as a case study. Historical examples of occupational and geographical mobility, the primary importance of apprentice-
ship for industrial discipline rather than for the transfer of vocational skills from master to apprentice, and some characteristics of the social and ethnic self-identification of hand workers tend strongly to challenge the traditional interpretation of artisans as a highly skilled, socially disciplined, and essentially middle-class population in early nineteenth century urban society. The specialization of work tasks long before mechanization and the relative ease of basic shoemaking and hand-loom weaving illustrate some of the reasons for the speed and ease with which many Philadelphians picked up their trades. Harold E. Cox, Wilkes College, presented the second paper at this session on "The Growth of Philadelphia and the Beginnings of Urban Transportation, Pre-1860."

John J. Turner, Jr., West Chester State College, presided at the third session on Saturday morning. Mark Dorfman, Capitol Campus, Pennsylvania State University, read a paper on "Immigration—An Overlooked Catalyst of the Civil War." John Bodnar, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, presented a paper on "The Mobility Rates of Slavic Immigrants and Negro Migrants in a Pennsylvania Steel Town." He noted the widespread assumption among students of American minority groups that immigrants entered at the bottom of the social ladder and climbed slowly. As one group rose, another would enter and take its place. In a study of Negro migrants and Slavic immigrants in Steelton, he encountered a different development. Negroes began entering Steelton with the growth of the Pennsylvania Steel Company in the 1870s. Between 1880 and 1900 the Negro population increased five times. Meanwhile, the percentage of Blacks in unskilled occupations decreased, the rate of Black upward mobility increased, and the turnover (or persistence rate) declined. When the steel company began attracting large numbers of Slavic immigrants from southern Europe, the position of the Black worker began to worsen. After 1915 immigrants began to replace him in semiskilled positions. The number of Blacks holding unskilled jobs, which had declined between 1880 and 1905, began to rise in the next two decades. The rate of upward mobility also declined. Finally, persistence rates for the Negro, which had been increasing before 1905, now showed decided drops. Thus, it must be concluded that in Steelton the Blacks did not move upward and
leave room at the bottom for the Slavic immigrants. Rather they were pushed downward by the immigrants and moved out of Steelton at an increasing rate.

At 11:30 A.M. a caravan of automobiles proceeded to Breck's Mill, across the line in Delaware. From here, following an informal luncheon, buses took members of the association to the Hagley Museum, Eleutherian Mills residence, and the Eleutherian Mills Historical Library. At the museum and the residence there were guided tours. At the library Richmond D. Williams, the director, described the collections and programs of the Eleutherian Mills-Hagley Foundation, of which the library is a part.

This part of the program completed, the final activity of the forty-first annual meeting adjourned about 3:30 P.M.