THE 47TH ANNUAL MEETING
PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
20–21 OCTOBER 1978

The 47th annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Historical Association was held on 20 and 21 October 1978, at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, sponsored jointly by Temple University and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The registration desk was at the Benjamin Franklin Hotel.

The first event was a session from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 N. at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, featuring “Careers for History Majors,” a panel discussion chaired by Mahlon Hellerich, the archivist of Lehigh County. Approximately one-half of the fifty who attended were students.

A luncheon meeting at 12:30 P.M. in the Benjamin Franklin Hotel, with Herbert Ershkowitz of Temple presiding, was addressed by Beatrice Gavan of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Her illustrated presentation was entitled “Philadelphia’s Decorative Arts—High Style.”

There were two concurrent sessions in the Benjamin Franklin Hotel beginning at 2:30 P.M. Roger Moss of the Philadelphia Athenaeum chaired Session A, “Arts of Philadelphia.” The topic, “Conflicts Between Artists and Laymen in Early 19th Century Philadelphia” was explored by Lee Schreiber of Temple. In recent years much attention has been given to the “firing” of Thomas Eakins by the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. However, much of the literature has treated this incident as an isolated occurrence and generally has praised the Academy for its role in advancing both the technical abilities and the societal status of the artist. Despite the apparent and praiseworthy efforts of the Pennsylvania Academy at various intervals, investigation shows that for the most part the Academy’s formative years from 1805 to about 1850 were
marked by acrimonious debate and organizational struggle between Philadelphia artists and the laymen directors of the PAFA. The conflict between Eakins and the Academy was not an isolated happening, but merely a continuation of the struggle between two groups who have always viewed the role of the artist in society and the role of an academy of fine arts from different vantage points.

Abraham Davidson of Temple University, speaking on "Philadelphia Painters and Paintings," focused on Edward Hicks, the Quaker painter of numerous versions of "The Peaceable Kingdom." Outlining Hicks' life and illustrating its development with slides of Hicks' paintings, Davidson discussed the relationship between Hicks' psychology and religious belief and the era in which he lived as influences on his art, contrasting Hicks's work with the contemporary painters of apocalyptic scenes but finding similar influences affecting Hicks and such painters despite the obvious differences.

"Aspects of Philadelphia Architecture" was the topic of James Slayman of Temple. He emphasized the early work of John Notman, especially Notman's designs for the entrance gate and other features of Laurel Hill Cemetery. Slayman also developed the theme that the architecture of the cemetery represents nineteenth-century urban architecture and neighborhood development in microcosm.

Benno Foreman of the Henry F. du Pont Winterthur Museum, discussing "German Influence in Philadelphia Furniture," selected the German slatback chair as a design that entered the vernacular craftsmanship of the Delaware Valley among all ethnic groups, losing its identification with the Germans but not its distinctive form. He illustrated the evolution of the slatback chair particularly through the products of the Ware family of Roadstown, New Jersey, from the late eighteenth century to the 1940s.

Session B, with the theme, "Revolutionary Finance," was chaired by Yvonne Milspaw, Capitol Campus of the Pennsylvania State University. An essay, "Thomas Willing and the Economic and Political Developments of the Revolutionary Era," was read by Eugene Slaski of the Allentown Campus of the Pennsylvania State University. Throughout the life of Thomas Willing, decisions which affected his future were made from a pragmatic viewpoint. Political decisions were made from the standpoint of their impact on his commercial business. Although he opposed independence, when it became clear in 1778 that the penalty for not siding with the revolution was confiscation of his personal property, Willing altered his position. By 1780, he was convinced that it was in his best interest
to join the independence movement. As a consequence of his alignment with the business community, he became president of the Bank of North America and later of the Bank of the United States.

Kristen Guss of Camp Hill spoke on "Benjamin Rush's Role in the Financial and Economic Difficulties of the Revolution." The role of Rush in the actual decision making of the Revolution was marginal, but his actions and attitudes provide insight into the sentiments of the people of the era. Rush represented that element of the population who advocated firm measures against England's arbitrary rule and initially sided with the radical position. Later, he became convinced that events demanded alliance with conservatives who wanted financial reform. The printing of large amounts of currency by the Congress had resulted in a precipitous depreciation of its value and galloping inflation. Rush and the moderate element provided support for those demanding reliance on taxation, a national bank and stable currency.

"The Financial and Economic Writings of Thomas Paine During the War for Independence" was discussed by Lemuel Molovinsky of the Capitol Campus of the Pennsylvania State University. Historians have traced the antecedents of the political developments of the revolutionary era to the English experience of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries but have usually ignored the influence of the economic and financial aspects of the era. Regarding Thomas Paine, scholars who examined the English background have given inadequate attention to economics and completely omitted mention of finance. When comparing English literature and legislative policies of this era with Paine's writings on the same issues, there are remarkable similarities. Paine and numerous English writers expressed confidence in the benefits of trade to the nation, the need for less restricted trade opportunities abroad and the use of customs duties to further economic and social goals; for example Paine called for a continental impost. Thus Paine's ideas were clearly influenced by the prevalent mercantile and financial ideas of England and any interpretation of his position on such controversial issues as the impost of 1781 should be viewed from this perspective.

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania hosted a cocktail hour from 4:30 to 6:00 P.M. at the Society's charming headquarters.

James Mooney of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania presided at the annual dinner meeting beginning at 7:00 P.M. at the Poor Richard Club. The highlight of the evening was the presidential
address of Russell Weigley. He assessed the 1976 bicentennial's interpretations of the military history of the American Revolution. Arguing that bicentennial interpretations were much influenced by the Indochina War and largely for that reason tended to over-emphasize the unconventional, guerrilla-war, "war of national liberation" aspects of the American Revolution, he asserted that the time has come to recognize again that the military history of the Revolution was primarily the history of an eighteenth-century conventional war. Especially in the Middle States and Pennsylvania, neither geography nor the attitudes of the inhabitants lent themselves to a guerrilla war in which hit-and-run bands of revolutionaries might have struck suddenly out of concealment and just as suddenly merged back into the landscape. George Washington's efforts to build the Continental Army into a replica of a conventional European army of his day sufficed, despite grave difficulties, to secure a narrow margin of military victory. They also gave the United States Army from its beginnings a tradition of waging conventional war that helped limit its capacities to cope with its later unconventional wars, such as the recent one in Indochina.

The Executive Council of the Pennsylvania Historical Association met at 9:30 P.M. in the Lafayette Room of the Benjamin Franklin Hotel.

The annual business meeting of the P.H.A. was on 21 October 1978, at 9:30 A.M. in the Poor Richard room of the Benjamin Franklin Hotel, with President Russell Weigley presiding. Approximately 30 members attended.

The minutes of the 15 October 1977, business meeting were approved as printed in the April, 1978 issue of Pennsylvania History.

Business Secretary Stebbins reported a decline in membership from 1108 to 1057 between October 1977 and October 1978. There are eight honorary and 12 life members. There is an excess supply (3371) of back copies of Pennsylvania History available to members for the cost of mailing them from University Park. The Pennsylvania Germans booklet is a best-seller (400 since April 1978). Of the 500 booklets printed in 1978, the P.H.M.C. purchased 1000; the printer is storing 2000. Stebbins announced that the Business Secretary's office needs clerical help of about 30 hours per week. The sum of $1000 had been authorized by the Executive Council on 20 October 1978, for expenses of the Business Secretary's office, pending the raising of the annual dues to $10.00 for individuals and $12.50 for institutions. Stebbin's report was accepted.
Treasurer Wright reported a total account balance of $18,389.66 as of 1 October 1978. Receipts for the past year ($12,816.27) were less than disbursements ($16,012.72). The general account balance shows a deficit of $2,281.38; the publication fund balance is $9,102.60; the investment fund total is $11,568.44. The action of the Executive Council to recommend an increase of annual dues was commended by Wright as a measure to alleviate the deficit in the general fund. The membership will take action on raising dues later in this meeting. His report was accepted.

Research committee chairman Rodechko announced that the Spring Research Conference committee would meet at 9:30 A.M., 6 December 1978, in Harry Whipkey's office at P.H.M.C. Suggestions are requested for topics to be explored.

Membership committee chairman Hoffman announced that about 750 new membership brochures were distributed since April 1978. Extensive discussion followed concerning methods to gain and retain individual members. The apparent sense of the meeting was that a membership list be furnished to those (especially Council members) who might seriously recruit members. Requests to join the P.H.A. probably should be included with invitations to attend the spring research conference.

Hellerich, chairman of the State Committee of the National Coordinating Committee of the A.H.A., spoke of the successful meeting yesterday morning. Approximately fifty were present. About one-half were students. Hellerich's report was accepted, including the continuation of the committee. More panel discussions on employment of historians will be held; summaries of such meetings will be printed in Pennsylvania History. Program committees of annual meetings should include sessions sponsored by the Committee. The P.H.A. will underwrite the Committee's expenses (up to $400) for next year.

The Committee on the Status of History in the schools has been in abeyance, except the degree to which its functions have been assumed by the Hellerich committee.

President Weigley read the report of Editor Cox. Relations with Payne Printery remain harmonious. Inflation will adversely affect the journal's financial situation. The sharp increase in postage offset much of the savings resulting from the work of the editor and student assistants, subsidized by Wilkes College. The journal shows an annual deficit of $1600 in the amount of subscription income and total costs. Cox asked for a raise in annual dues. A year's supply
of publishable articles is ready, and certain Rose Hill seminar papers will be used. In general, future articles will emphasize statistical, post-colonial and military aspects of Pennsylvania history. In regard to book reviews, more emphasis will be placed on Pennsylvania-oriented books. There is no backlog of reviews at present.

Chairman Kent of the Nominating Committee presented the following slate: for president, John M. Coleman; for vice-president, Robert Carlson (2nd term); for council, Irwin Richman (2nd term), Roland Baumann (replacing Clemmer), John Folmar (replacing John F. Coleman), Mahlon Hellerich (replacing Reed), James Rodechko (replacing Miller); and to complete the remaining year of John M. Coleman's vice-presidential term, the committee recommended John Frantz. There being no further nominations from the floor, the committee-recommended candidates were unanimously elected.

Russell Weigley then transferred the office of President of the Pennsylvania Historical Association to John M. Coleman. A motion by Rosenberger to commend Weigley for his dedicated and long service as President, council member and member was passed by acclamation.

Weigley's motion to amend the constitution to enable a raise in annual dues to $10.00 for individuals and $12.50 for institutions was passed. The constitution should be changed to delete a specific amount for dues. A motion to have the Executive Council establish a lower membership fee for students was passed.

The 48th (1979) meeting will be at California State College, with John Folmar the chairman of local arrangements. The 49th (1980) meeting will be at Wilkes College; the 50th (1981) at West Chester State College, and the 51st (1982) is scheduled for Gettysburg College.

A motion was passed to extend the gratitude of the P.H.A. to the hosts, program chairman and local arrangements chairman. The Recording Secretary will write the appropriate letters.

The 47th annual business meeting of the P.H.A. adjourned at 10:30 A.M.

The program resumed at 10:30 A.M. with two simultaneous meetings. Session C, "Musical Life in Philadelphia Before 1920," was chaired by Robert Graham of Penn State's Capitol Campus. JoAnn Taricani of the University of Pennsylvania enlightened her audience concerning "Michael Hillegas and Music in Colonial Philadelphia." Although many researchers have complained of the lack of sources
on musical activities during the colonial period, a new investigation has discovered important evidence about the availability of solo and ensemble music during the period and about types of instruments. An examination of letters, manuscript books, concert programs and other sources shows that Michael Hillegas, the first Treasurer of the United States, supplied music by well-known eighteenth century European composers as well as instruments of exceptional quality. The popularity of instrumental tutors (instruction books) for harpsichord, violin and flute demonstrates considerable interest in private music-making at a time when few public concerts were advertised. Hillegas, in 1759 in Philadelphia, started the first music store in the colonies. His documents show that Philadelphia had a very active musical life and that citizens there cultivated music for personal pleasure, establishing a tradition of domestic music-making which lasted throughout the nineteenth century.

"The Musical Fund Society and the Better Music Movement in Philadelphia" was discussed by William Mahar of the Capitol Campus of Penn State. The listeners' interest in his presentation was heightened through tape recordings. Philadelphia's place in American musical history has been misrepresented by many music historians who believed that the standard by which a city's musical life was measured was the frequency of performances of German instrumental music by an orchestra supported by private philanthropy. Viewed in the context of American music in particular and European music in general, such a standard is false. Philadelphia was late in establishing a symphony orchestra, in supporting a musical academy and in sponsoring a local opera company, but these facts should not diminish its importance in the musical history of American cities.

The most important musical organization in nineteenth-century Philadelphia was the Musical Fund Society, which presented or sponsored numerous musical events during its most active years (1820-1857). Unique among early musical organizations in America, it has often been criticized because its programs reflected the predominantly Anglo-American taste of its founders and patrons. Exemplifying the diverse backgrounds and interests of its members and audience; the Musical Fund Society was dedicated to professional standards and to the performance of music by recognized European masters. The contributions of the Society have been underestimated and the musical life of Philadelphia unjustly criticized.
Peter Strickland of Sotheby Park Bernet, Inc., reported on "Musical Instruments: Their Design and Place In Philadelphia’s Grand Houses." Musical instruments were a most conspicuous adornment of such houses, though now often neglected by historians of interior design. The instruments, especially the pianos, reflect changing architectural as well as musical tastes, sometimes grotesquely and amusingly.

"Reform in Pennsylvania," Session D, was chaired by Mark Dorfman of the Capitol Campus. "The Pennsylvania Freeman 1836–1854" was reported on by Robert Hochreiter of the University of Scranton. Among the tactics used by organized antislavery were paid lecturers, pamphlets, tracts and antislavery newspapers. The purpose was the same—conversion of antislavery. The Pennsylvania Freeman thus represents an excellent example of an abolitionist newspaper; it not only reflected the common concerns of the movement but, as the instrument of a state society (the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society), it refracted those concerns through the unique prism of a local group. The basic arguments of the sinfulness of slavery, immediatism, the system's harmful effects on whites as well as Negros, the complicity of the North in the sin, its degrading effects on civil liberties for all, the fear of an approaching Armageddon unless it were eradicated were enunciated in the Freeman and each was poignantly exemplified by specific examples from the Pennsylvania experience.

Although the Pennsylvania society sided with the moral suasion of the Garrisonian national organization, the Freeman allowed its columns to be used by political actionists and there was no evidence of the bitterness which attended the squabbles between Garrison and his opponents elsewhere. This situation lasted in Pennsylvania until 1844 when Garrison's last important contribution to moral suasion was adopted by the American Anti-Slavery Society—"no union with slaveholders." Shortly thereafter, the Freeman also adopted it and succumbed to Garrisonian orthodoxy.

Being Garrisonian, however, did not mean that the Pennsylvanians meekly followed all his ideas on abolitionism. At least two public disputes subsequently arose and were aired in the Freeman. The first had to do with the purchase of freedom for slaves. Garrison defended Frederick Douglass's purchase and was criticized in the Freeman for hedging on the principle of uncompensated emancipation. A second dispute concerned the free produce movement. Prominent abolitionists such as Lucretia Mott extended the principle of nonunionism to economics and considered the boycott of slave
products a duty. Garrison eschewed the whole idea as impractical. Both positions were aired occasionally in the *Freeman* over a three-year period until, by 1850, the state society left it up to individual members to decide the validity of the program for themselves.

With the adoption of nownionism, Garrisonian moral suasionism had reached the end of the line. The *Freeman* responded to the annexation of Texas, the Mexican War and the extension of slavery into the territories with the familiar slave-power conspiracy, peace and nownionism arguments of former years. After the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 was passed, the *Freeman* publicized case after case of hapless Negroes being remanded to slavery. The violence which sometimes attended such incidents severely tested the paper's official pacifistic position.

Antislavery papers were continually beset with financial difficulties. The *Freeman* by 1854, after weathering a series of financial crises and even a two-year shut-down from 1842 to 1843, was ended by the Pennsylvania society. The society euphemistically called it a "merger" with the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*. The demise of the *Freeman* marked the end of radical abolitionism as a dynamic force in Pennsylvania. Moral suasion had run its course; the vitality of abolitionism after 1850 for good or ill became the province of the politicians. Only twenty-three members of the Pennsylvania society bothered to show up at the special meeting in Philadelphia which voted the *Freeman* out of existence.

Megan McLoughlin of Chester discussed "Philadelphia Quakers and Irish Famine Relief." During Ireland's 1846-48 potato famines the Irish Quakers provided the most effective American relief effort as well as the machinery to administer it. Contacting American Friends proved invaluable, resulting in contributions totalling more than $980,000 from various organizations throughout the United States. Three Philadelphia groups contributed both funds and provisions, the Orthodox Quakers, the Hicksite Quakers and the Irish Relief Committee. The Orthodox Quakers provided the stimulus for other groups and became a major vehicle through which contributions were channelled to the Irish Quakers. American famine relief was one factor influencing the Irish decision to emigrate to the United States during and immediately after the famine era.

A more contemporary subject, "Let the People Decide: Judicial Selection in the 1967 Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention" was authored by Lynne Kaltreider and George Wolf of Capitol
Campus. Between 1 December 1967, and 29 February 1968, the 163 delegates to Pennsylvania’s fifth constitutional convention produced a largely self-executing document notable for its flexibility, with surprising initiative for the people. Nowhere was that flexibility more evident than in the activities of one of the four substantive (or primary) committees of that Convention—the Judiciary Committee—and its ultimate product, the Judiciary Proposal, the development and adoption of which caused more debate and contention than any other proposal at the Convention. In particular, it was apparent in the single most controversial aspect of the Judiciary Proposal—the selection of judges. The Judiciary Article in its final form—particularly the section pertaining to the selection of judges—was pure compromise. It is startling to follow the extremely lengthy, often heated debates on this subject, only to discover the final proposal on that section emerging suddenly, with a minimum of debate, and passing 108 to 37.

On May 20, 1969, in the primary election, the voters were asked to carry out the role designated to them by the delegates regarding the selection of judges. They were asked to vote on Question No. 5:

Shall justices and judges of the Supreme, Superior, Commonwealth and all other statewide courts be appointed by the Governor from a list of qualified persons submitted by a non-partisan Judicial Qualifications Commission, subject to retention in office thereafter by vote of the electorate, instead of by partisan nomination and election?

By a vote of 643,960 to 624,453, the voters answered no. In the final analysis, the people decided to continue their role as judicial selectors through partisan nomination and election.

The last formal event was a luncheon at 1:00 p.m. in the hotel, with Irwin Richman of Capitol Campus presiding. Raymond Shepherd, Jr., of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, spoke on “Cliveden: Documenting the Building of a Country House.” He used illustrations of the artifacts found at Cliveden to illuminate the ways in which the house and the styles of living it represented evolved over the years of the Chew family’s occupancy.

The 47th annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Historical Association adjourned at 3:00 p.m.