

## NEWS AND COMMENT

### RICHARD P. WRIGHT: AN APPRECIATION

After the 55th annual convention of the Pennsylvania Historical Association, at Indiana last fall, I was asked to write an appreciation of Richard P. Wright who had just retired as Treasurer of our organization after 25 years of service. In filling this position Richard had followed in the footsteps of his father, Ross Pier Wright, a charter member of the Association who became its first Treasurer in 1933 and served for 34 years.

Both father and son were astute business men with a deep interest in history and a strong sense of responsibility to worthy civic causes in the city and County of Erie where they lived. Ross Pier Wright, a manufacturer and Director of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, became a member of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission from 1931 until 1947, serving as its Chairman for half of this period. He was an avid archaeologist as well as promoter of local history. In 1933 he was one of the small group that created the Pennsylvania Historical Association, and his counsel and support of it as Treasurer gave it status and stability during the years of the Great Depression and World War II when its publications and programs had to be run on a shoestring.

In 1962 his son, Richard, was elected Assistant Treasurer and five years later, at his father's retirement, became the new Treasurer. His wise guidance brought increasing economic security which enabled the Association to expand its publication program. He and his wife, Louise, having been "regulars" for many years at the annual meetings, became well-known to all and gave a tangible sense of permanence to the organization, noted most keenly by older members who remembered the precarious days of the 'Thirties and 'Forties.

The Association needed the support of men like the Wrights. To express its thanks to Richard on the eve of his retirement as Treasurer, it presented him with a handsome plaque at the annual dinner meeting last year. To bring our sense of appreciation to all our members, most of whom do not attend the conventions, we use this notice in the journal to communicate with everyone.

Most of us do not know how widespread have been Richard Wright's activities. He has served as a Director of the Reed Manufacturing Co. of Erie for 36 years, as its Treasurer for 16, and as its Senior Vice-President for a decade. For many years he held office in two of the promotional and study organizations of the American tool-making industry.

In the realm of volunteer civic service he has been since 1965 Director of the Erie Chapter of ACES (Americans for the Competitive Enterprise System). He was President of the County chapters of the Social Hygiene Association and the Pennsylvania Association for the Blind, and vice-President of the Mental Health Association.

In addition to these numerous and demanding responsibilities, he served his

Presbyterian Church as Deacon, Elder and Clerk of Session, and still found time for scholarly and historical chores. From 1949 to 1955 he was President of the Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology. He has been President of the Chataqua County (N.Y.) Historical Society and the Erie County Historical Society. He served for 35 years as Corporate-Trusee of the Patterson Library of Westfield, N.Y. And on top of all these commitments, he gave direction to the fiscal affairs of the Pennsylvania Historical Association for the past quarter of a century.

We salute Richard P. Wright and his wife as public-spirited citizens and generous colleagues whose attitudes and actions we wish would permeate a larger segment of the population of our land. To them both we give our respect, our admiration, our affection and our thanks.

Philip S. Klein  
For the Association

Bicentennial of the Constitution activities are being held throughout the state. Two notable events in Philadelphia take place this spring and summer. The MAGNA CARTA will be on exhibit at Old City Hall from May through December. Accompanying the Magna Carta is an exhibit by the Library Company explaining its meaning to Americans. On July 16, The United States Congress will meet in special session in Philadelphia for the first time since 1800. Contact the Visitor's Center (215/636-1666) for information. Official Bicentennial of the Constitution Calendars can be obtained free, in bulk, by contacting the Division of History, PHMC, Box 1026, Harrisburg, PA 17108.

The National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded \$206,744 to the State Library of Pennsylvania to continue the Pennsylvania Newspaper Program cataloging phase and has offered a challenge grant of \$300,000 to initiate a three-year microfilming program in 1987. Seventy-five thousand dollars in the challenge grant has already been matched by \$75,000 appropriated to the Department of Education by the General Assembly for the current fiscal year. An additional \$100,000 will be use for microfilming in 1988, provided the State Library can raise an additional \$100,000 in matching money for this purpose, and \$125,000 will be used for microfilming in 1989, provided matching funds are riased. Fifty thousand dollars from a Pew Memorial Trust grant will be used for this purpose. The outright grant of \$206,744 will be used to continue the present program inventorying and cataloging newspaper collections in local libraries, historical societies, publisher's files, and other repositories in 1987. In the letter of grant award, the National Endowment has indicated its intention to award an additional \$144,748 in 1988, and \$154,110 in 1989, to complete the cataloging program.

The Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania's newest exhibit, "Homewood-Brushton: A Century of Community Making in Pittsburgh," opened this winter and is scheduled to run at the society through summer 1987. It uses photographs, maps, and historical artifacts to depict the rich variety of people who created distinct communities within Homewood-Brushton's eastern Pittsburgh boundaries. Diverse groups who settled in this neighborhood include wealthy businessmen, their families, and domestic workers; middle class professionals, managers and small businessmen; and such ethnic groups as Italians, Blacks, Irish, and Germans.

"Impulse and Reaction: Waterpower on the Brandywine," an exhibit produced by University of Delaware students' opened at Hagley's Henry Clay Mill, in February and runs through Labor Day. The exhibit traces the waterpower technology employed in the Hagley yards and elsewhere along the Brandywine during the nineteenth-century. Impulse and reaction explains the difference between the two forces used in waterpower technology. Featured in the exhibit are interactive games and demonstrations which illustrate water-wheels, water turbines, and horse-power. Students in the University of Delaware's graduate course on "Exhibition of Artifacts" researched and developed the exhibit and worked with Hagley staff to produce and install it in the Henfy Clay Mill.

*Arnold R. Lewis: Camera Work 1891-1902*, an exhibition displaying over one hundred prints by the Allentown photographer, is on review at the Lehigh

County Museum through June 7. In later years a prominent businessman, Lewis was an amateur photographer whose experimentation with the camera was indicative of nineteenth century. Through his view camera he captured friends and local personalities at outings and celebrations, recorded streetscapes and regional landscapes, and documented momentous occasions while on trips, such as then President William McKinely riding in an open air carriage during a New York City parade. The majority of works are contact prints, including several platinum prints.

Historical organizations in Pennsylvania which desire to celebrate the U.S. Constitution's Bicentennial may receive free copies of "The Blessings of Liberty," a twelve-poster exhibit. A User's Guide provides an essay about the leaders and events pictured in the posters, and guides for teaching the materials are available for grades 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12. Copies of the exhibit materials and further information concerning it may be obtained by contracting: Dr. Joseph J. Kelly, PHC Office, 401 North Broad Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19108.

PENNSYLVANIA MEETINGS: *Rose Hill Seminar* on Governor Gifford Pinchot, June 6, Wilson College, Chambersburg; contact John Furlow, The Pennsylvania State University, The DuBois Campus, College Place, DuBois, PA 15801; *Institute of Pennsylvania Rural Life and Culture*, June 16-19, Lancaster; contact Institute Registrar, Pennsylvania Farm Museum of Landis Valley, 2451 Kissel Hill Road, Lancaster, PA 17601; *Society for Historians of the Early American Republic*, July 16-18, Temple University, Philadelphia; contact James B. Stewart, Macalester College, St. Paul, MN 55105.