Report of the Special Committee on Public Relations

The purpose of this Committee is to suggest and direct, for the Council, any services which the Society may render the public. During the present year, 1942–1943, it has inaugurated two programs, one relating to the high schools, the other to the public in general and our members in particular.

When it was learned that the Pennsylvania Historical Commission was encouraging the formation of history clubs in the high schools, the facilities of our Society were offered to any such clubs formed in the Philadelphia schools. Teachers were invited to bring small groups to the library and museum; and it was also suggested that the Society might serve as headquarters for any club organizations that might develop.

It may be recalled that last year the Society placed its hall at the disposal of a group in American history which was sponsored by the Junto. During the current season, this organization decided to hold all its classes at the Mercantile Library. It therefore seemed wise to the Committee to provide our own lectures in the Society’s building—both for our own members and for the interested public. Plans were made accordingly for a series of monthly talks on American military and naval history. Certain of these occasions served as the stated meetings of the Society. Exhibitions of the Society’s collections were also arranged in connection with the lectures; so that, as each one was given, an exhibition pertinent to the topic was presented. This exhibition was then continued throughout the month following the lecture. Posters announcing the arrangements were distributed throughout the city and suburbs, and individual cards were also sent to members each month.

The Society was fortunate in securing, as lecturers, a number of civic leaders and members of the faculties of Princeton University and the University of Pennsylvania. Able and interesting talks have already been given by Professors Harold Sprout and Robert G. Albion of Princeton; by Mr. Frederic R. Kirkland, Treasurer of the Society; and by Professor Roy F. Nichols of the University of Pennsylvania. The response has been encouraging, attendance averaging something over one hundred. Interest has also been displayed in the exhibitions, which have been arranged through the cooperation of Mr. J. Harcourt Givens.

We look forward to a similar response to the concluding lectures and exhibitions, and again cordially invite all members and other interested persons to attend. It is believed that there are possibilities in further lecture series in ensuing years, perhaps in relation to such topics as the history of Philadelphia or of Pennsylvania.

Richard H. Shryock, Chairman