Historical Societies have not been content with merely gathering materials; they have sought to make their collections known through publications. Founded in December, 1824, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania issued its first printed work in 1826. Thus was started the initial volume in a series of Memoirs which appeared sporadically in fourteen volumes between that year and 1895. While a proper vehicle for book-length subjects, the Memoirs were too ponderous for lesser needs. In 1845, the Society supplemented them by the publication of The Bulletin, a magazine designed to “contain such portions of the minutes as it may be deemed expedient to publish, and such papers of historical interest as from their brevity would be better suited for publication in a Bulletin than in the Memoirs.” Although The Bulletin maintained a high standard of excellence, it lasted only two and a half years. Its demise, probably occasioned by inadequate financial support, was followed by the establishment of a Publication Fund for the benefit of the Memoirs. By the 1870s the growth of this fund was substantial enough to once more interest the Society in a magazine, although for a time its officers preferred to see some other agency back such a venture.

Their feelings in this matter were expressed in a resolution of the Society’s Council on May 27, 1872, which began: “Whereas, Special
reasons and propriety suggest that a leading American historical magazine should be published in the City of Philadelphia," and which went on to express satisfaction that Benson J. Lossing, an outstanding historian, was about to publish his *American Historical Record* in the city. However, several years later Lossing retired from this publishing venture. In 1875 its title was changed to *Potter's American Monthly* and the publication lost its historical theme.

The want of a historical magazine was consequently felt at the time the Centennial Exposition was enhancing historical interest, at the very moment when the Society, rising to the opportunity, was exerting itself to its utmost. In retrospect, Pennsylvania’s Governor John F. Hartranft was to observe in his 1877 Message to the legislature: "The Centennial celebration has attracted particular attention to State History, with the gratifying result that this Commonwealth has not been behind others in providing liberally for the preservation of its true source. The labors of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in this direction are worthy of special notice." While the Society’s labors during 1876 had indeed been worthy, an additional effort was clearly indicated.

Supported by the enthusiasm of the times, the sense of a void left in the passing of the *American Historical Record*, and encouraged by the growth of the Publication Fund, Librarian Frederick D. Stone and others determined on the publication of a quarterly tailored to the Society’s particular interests. Thus was born during the waning months of the Centennial year the concept of *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, the aims of which were printed in its first issue, which appeared in May, 1877.

With the view of fostering and developing the interest that has been awakened in historical matters, and of furnishing means of intercommunication between those interested in such subjects throughout the Commonwealth and elsewhere, the Trustees of the Publication Fund of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania have determined to issue a Magazine which shall be devoted to the preservation and circulation of important but isolated material relating to the history of the state and nation.

The publication of the *Magazine*, today the nation’s oldest historical quarterly in continual existence, met with a gratifying
reception. The newspapers commended its first volume. In the opinion of the *Pittsburgh Commercial*, "The work is invaluable and should be in every public and private library in the country." The prestigious *North American Review* applauded, "No more deserving work is published, and it is a great credit to the society, city, and state, and of use to the country that this is so well conducted and so well provided." In the words of Walter Muir Whitehill in his *Independent Historical Societies* (1962), the *Magazine* was "the first general historical quarterly of its type; it established a pattern that in later years has been widely emulated by other historical societies in the twentieth century."

Its four issues, comprising some 500 pages, provided with a title form and an index, were bound annually in a style known as Roxburgh, half cloth with dark blue spine, and with boards covered in red paper, a style which continued until 1943 when the binding became an all cloth one. It was truly a Philadelphia production, edited at the Society, printed locally on paper manufactured in the city, and completed at a local bindery.

The earliest volumes were made up of brief biographical sketches of Revolutionary leaders, *of* documents (many from the Society's collection) such as diaries, journals, and correspondence, as well as articles on historical and genealogical subjects, *Notes and Queries* dealing with valuable data, and, finally, *Historical Society* reports and obituaries of deceased members. The first dozen volumes were particularly rich in illustrations. Joseph Pennell supplied many etchings and drawings for a series of articles on the Germantown Road. Portraits etched by Max Rosenthal, some taken from the Society's paintings, enlivened the pages. Engravings by John Sartain and J. B. Longacre added distinction, and long-forgotten engraved plates from C. G. Childs's *Views in Philadelphia* and David Edwin’s 1817 engraving of Commodore Richard Dale were located, dusted off, and republished.

The *Magazine's* standards were high, though not in accord with those of the present day. For example, contributions were frequently published anonymously, documents were sometimes printed without reference to where the originals were to be found, deletions from documents (sometimes as a result of prudery) were not necessarily indicated, and footnote citations were generally few and far be-
tween. Changes in editorial policy came slowly, almost imperceptibly. The first major change in the Magazine’s content was its gradual withdrawal from the field of genealogy. With the founding in the 1890s of the Historical Society’s sister institution, the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania, its publication, The Pennsylvania Genealogical Magazine, became the proper channel for genealogical material.

Although it was many years before those in charge saw fit to reveal the name of the Editor of the Historical Society’s Magazine, Librarian Frederick D. Stone brought out its first seven volumes and set the tone for the volumes to be produced by others. Stone was followed by his assistant Gregory B. Keen, who held the editorship for about three years before passing it on in 1887 to John W. Jordan, Assistant Librarian. Jordan, who subsequently held the post of Librarian from 1903 until his death in 1921, continued to serve as Editor until the end of his days.

His championship of the Magazine at a dark hour during World War I saved it from a break in its quarterly publication record. As part of an effort to avert a financial deficit, the Society’s Board determined to cut back the Magazine’s schedule to a semi-annual basis. Jordan, then approaching his eightieth year, made a strong appeal to protect the quarterly he had edited for the past thirty-one volumes. As a result, the resolution limiting its publication to two issues a year was rescinded in favor of the customary four issues, but with the number of pages per issue reduced from 128 to 96.

Late in 1920 Editor Jordan became ill, and at the January, 1921, Board meeting his assistant reported that the Magazine was more than a year behind in the publication of its numbers. Surely this must have represented the low point in the journal’s history. Strenuous efforts were still in progress to correct the deficiency when Jordan died in June, 1921. Shortly afterward Thomas Lynch Montgomery was appointed Librarian and Editor.

An able man, Montgomery held these positions until his death in 1929, when they passed to a long-time employee, Ernest Spofford, whose interests were predominantly genealogical. Spofford was succeeded as Librarian and Editor in 1935 by Julian P. Boyd whose first issue, the April number, was notable for fundamental changes in policy and in typography.
While the overall size of the *Magazine* remained unchanged, many modifications were introduced in order to improve and modernize its appearance. The cover design, which had been altered in 1901 and 1913, was restored to one more closely related to the original, and the cover stock was changed from buff to grey, a color which gave way in the early 1940s to the present white. The *Magazine*'s new format, one which provided for more words per page, was featured by one of the most celebrated type faces. Designed by William Caslon in the first half of the eighteenth century, it had been used by some of Pennsylvania's most famous printers.

Thus appearing in a more pleasing and tasteful fashion, the *Magazine*'s pages were opened by the new Editor to a much broader sweep of writing. Historians were encouraged to contribute articles, centuries other than the eighteenth were given greater space, book reviews were introduced as well as a "Notes and Documents" section, and approved standards of editorship were established. In April, 1935, the *Magazine* was sent for the first time to all the Society's members, not, as in the past, just to those who subscribed to the Publication Fund. These changes combined to mark a renaissance in its publication. The finest example of Editor Boyd's regime was the impressive 200-page, 60th Anniversary number (October, 1936). That issue struck Dr. Theodore C. Blegen, Director of the Minnesota Historical Society, as "the most distinguished single number of a state historical magazine thus far published in this country."

In 1940 Dr. Boyd resigned to accept the librarianship at Princeton and, later, the editorship of the *Jefferson Papers*. In the interim that followed, Richard H. Shryock, Professor of History at the University of Pennsylvania and a champion of Philadelphia and Middle Atlantic contributions to American Culture, edited several issues before the new Librarian, William Reitzel, took over in 1941. When, shortly afterward, Dr. Reitzel went off on a military leave of absence, not to return as it eventuated, Dr. Shryock, who by then was Chairman of the Publications Committee, again filled in until R. Norris Williams, 2nd, the Society's Director (the title of Librarian having given way to that of Director) took over as Editor in 1946. With the retirement from the Committee of Dr. Shryock, Dr. Roy F. Nichols, another extraordinarily gifted Professor of
History at the University of Pennsylvania, became Chairman of the Publications Committee, serving in that capacity from 1949 to 1970.

During this period of change, continuity and support were provided by assistants. In 1936 Margaret L. Bailey (Mrs. Harry M. Tinkcom) had been named Assistant Editor, and was Associate Editor at the time of her departure in 1946. Her place was taken by Dorothy Ditter (Mrs. Victor Gondos). Upon Miss Ditter's leaving the city in 1947 she was replaced by Lois V. Given (Mrs. Frank W. Bobb). Miss Given, who did so much to uphold the standards of the *Magazine*, advanced from Assistant to Associate and then to Co-editor before her resignation in 1965. Meanwhile, at the end of 1951 I had been appointed Editor to replace R. Norris Williams, 2nd. Amidst these changes there was one constant. In 1942 the Wm. F. Fell Company of Philadelphia became the *Magazine's* printer, a task which has been continued since 1960 by The Winchell Company into which Fell was merged.

A point somewhat in contention over the years has been the publishing of Historical Society news in the *Magazine*. In 1934 a separate quarterly bulletin was advocated to keep the members informed, but this idea lost out to continuing such material in the *Magazine*, a procedure favored by some of the older members of the Board. This policy culminated in 1943 when the Publications Committee reported that the April issue would be largely devoted to Historical Society affairs which "will be of real aid to members in securing a picture of the total activities of the Society." But Dr. Shryock and the more professionally oriented members of the Board did not favor this course, nor did Dr. Shryock's successor, R. Norris Williams, 2nd, approve using the *Magazine* as a "house organ." Later in 1943 they were instrumental in excluding most of the Society's activities from the *Magazine* (not until 1957 was the Treasurer's Report with its lists of securities omitted) and publishing them in leaflets which announced the lecture program.

Thus, the pages of the *Magazine* have been restricted as closely as possible in these latter years to material relating directly to the history of Pennsylvania. In its presentation of this material, the Publications Committee has resisted postwar efforts at popularizing history which have so radically affected the appearance of several historical quarterlies. It is safe to say that were the *Magazine's*
founder, Frederick D. Stone, to return he would readily recognize a current issue as the offspring of that first number of his quarterly journal, which had been conceived during the patriotic fervor of the Centennial and had been born in 1877.

Now with the completion of its own centennial the Magazine represents a mass of information that no serious student of Pennsylvania's past can ignore. Its 100 volumes contain 51,000 pages relating primarily to the history of this state. The key to much of this data was published in 1954, a tribute to Director Williams' perseverance, in an impressive double-column, 1,170-page Index to the first seventy-five volumes, edited by Eugene E. Doll. Since many of these volumes are now out of print, volumes 30 through 66 have been made available in reprint form.

The completion of 100 years of publication is a notable accomplishment, an example of steadfastness of purpose during which period the Publications Committee, to paraphrase the motto on Admiral Sir William Penn's coat of arms, has kept its hand on the tiller, the ship on course. Today, as in the past, the Magazine is the Society's chief ambassador. It does to addresses in all fifty states in the Union and to many foreign countries.

Just half a century ago, Hampton L. Carson, then President of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, observed that "The usefulness of this Society as an educational institution largely rests on making known the labors of those who bring to light the exhaustless stores with which the liberality of men and women of the past and present have enriched and are enriching our archives." In that regard President Carson concluded: "No activity of the Society is more deserving of support than its Magazine."

*Historical Society of Pennsylvania*  
*Nicholas B. Wainwright*