OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESEARCH IN EARLY WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA HISTORY

ALFRED P. JAMES

REALIZATION of the importance of this region is possibly older than significant events in the region itself. A mere bibliography of publications indicating the idea of the importance of western Pennsylvania would require more space than is available for this paper. Very probably this idea was in part responsible for the establishment of the Western Pennsylvania Historical Survey.

But the scholarly and critical historiography or writing of the history of the region has been too much neglected. Such historiography involves the meticulous collection of the documentary material of all kinds bearing upon the history of the region. Possibly the realization of this necessity was an additional motive for the founding of the present survey. Certain is it that vast documentary materials have not yet been utilized. In many cases, notably in family collections, they have not yet been located and brought to light. The work of Dr. Charles Henry Ambler in West Virginia indicates that great possibilities exist in the collection of private documents in the possession of families in western Pennsylvania and in the homes of western Pennsylvanians and their descendants who have moved to other parts of the country. It is true that Dr. Lyman C. Draper, in visits to the Ohio Valley in the middle of the last century, secured some of this material and deposited it with the State Historical Society of Wisconsin at Madison. But much undoubtedly escaped his notice and his genius for collection. And this material must be located and made available for use.

1 Read at a meeting of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania on January 10, 1933. The author is a professor of history in the University of Pittsburgh and served as research associate on the staff of the Western Pennsylvania Historical Survey for 1931-32. Ed.
It was with some consciousness of the importance of western Pennsylvania and some realization of its unexplored historical data, that, while on leave of absence from my position in the University of Pittsburgh, I took up a year's work as research associate in the Western Pennsylvania Historical Survey. Most of my time and attention was devoted to the early history of the region and, although I felt and was at perfect liberty to consult materials of any or all kinds, my main purpose was the examination of documents derived from or yet on deposit in outside depositories, particularly those of Great Britain and France.

It is probable that this paper will be most valuable if held somewhat to a discussion of some of the materials which offer an opportunity for research in the early history of western Pennsylvania. Only larger subjects for investigation will be suggested.

The Draper Collection of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin has already been mentioned. This is a voluminous mass of material on the early history of the Ohio Valley region. It varies greatly in character and value. Much of it consists of manuscript notes of Dr. Draper taken from the reminiscences of old men whom he interviewed in the middle of the last century, and the value of such material for critical historical scholarship is almost negligible. But, as is well known, Dr. Draper collected much original documentary material, and this is of the highest value. Fortunately much of this material has been printed in easily accessible works. There can be no satisfactory scholarship in the history of western Pennsylvania in the eighteenth century without adequate consideration of the Draper material.

The Colonial Records of Pennsylvania (16 vols., Philadelphia, 1852–53), the Pennsylvania Archives (101 vols. in 7 series, Philadelphia and Harrisburg, 1852–date), and the Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography (56 vols., Philadelphia, 1877–date) have been the hunting ground for many local historiographers. These publications contain many important documents. That they furnish a considerable basis for good historiography is demonstrated by Dr. George P. Donehoo, who, in his recent publication, Pennsylvania: A History (7 vols., New York, 1926) has managed to write a good general account of early western Pennsylvania from materials derived mainly from them.
Other states or state historical agencies have also published materials of value for the history of western Pennsylvania. These are easily located in the so-called "States Room" in the central Carnegie Library at Pittsburgh. The publications of Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin contain items bearing directly on the history of this region. These must be thoroughly canvassed before a definite account of the region can be written.

It has long been known that the Bouquet Papers in the British Museum are vital for research in the history of western Pennsylvania from 1757 to 1765. Many writers have drawn upon them, notably the Darlingtons of local fame in historiography. Transcripts of the thirty volumes of these papers have long been in the Public Archives of Canada; and the Library of Congress has recently secured photostatic reproductions of the more important volumes. Although documents from the Bouquet Papers, not always very well edited, have been printed in many places, many of them are not yet in print. The importance of this unprinted material may be illustrated by a consideration of the letters of General John Forbes. Of the 105 that have been discovered, Miss Irene Stewart of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, has published 41 of the 43 in print. Of the more than 60 not in print, at least 36 are to be found in the Bouquet Papers. To these must be added a dozen or more written by Forbes's secretaries, William Halket and James Grant. No publication on the early history of western Pennsylvania would be more valuable than a critical edition of the entire Bouquet Papers. They contain essential material not only on the Forbes Road and military events, but also on economic conditions, army life, social matters, Indian affairs, and colonial politics.

The Haldimand Papers, also in the British Museum, similarly transcribed in the Public Archives of Canada, and now also being photostated by the Library of Congress, contain documents of value for the history of this region. Likewise some of these have been printed, but others have not. Fortunately the materials in them relating to western Pennsylvania involve only a few volumes and some scattered items in the 230 volumes of this collection. They furnish material for research on the fur trade,
Indian affairs, army discipline, local geography, and the Revolution in western Pennsylvania. Until these papers are available in satisfactory reproduction or edition, writers of local history must not fail to consult the calendars in the Reports of the Public Archives of Canada from 1883 to 1889.

Probably the first topic in the history of western Pennsylvania is that of the Indians. Dr. Donehoo, in the work mentioned, has demonstrated that Indian history is more than a story of atrocities committed either by Indians upon whites or by whites upon Indians. On this topic, in addition to the Pennsylvania publications already mentioned, the research student should consult various state publications, especially The Papers of Sir William Johnson (7 vols., Albany, 1921-date), and the documentary material in British and French archives and in the Indian Papers of the Public Archives of Canada.

On the fur trade and fur traders of Pennsylvania, a topic involving the years from 1725 to 1750, the material so far as I know is largely in Pennsylvania depositories. It needs collection and interpretation.

The Ohio Company of 1748 is a subject that needs scholarly research and exposition. Probably the destruction of most of its records at Alexandria, Virginia, during the Civil War makes the full story a permanent impossibility, but scattered materials exist and they should be carefully reproduced and edited. The most important of them are in the possession of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

It is hard to believe that much remains to be done on the topic of George Washington and western Pennsylvania in 1753 and 1754. The so-called "Dinwiddie Papers"—the Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie, governor of Virginia from 1751 to 1758 (Virginia Historical Society, Collections, vols. 3, 4—Richmond, 1883–84); Washington’s Writings in editions by Jared Sparks (12 vols., Boston, 1834–37) and by Worthington C. Ford (14 vols., New York, 1889–93); and the Letters to Washington and Accompanying Papers, edited by Stanislaus M. Hamilton for the Society of Colonial Dames of America (5 vols., Boston, 1898–1902) have long been available. Nevertheless there is some opportunity for further research on this topic: a new and more complete edition of Washington’s Writings, edited by John C. Fitzpa-
trick, is now appearing (Washington, 1932—date); Washington Papers in manuscript in the Library of Congress contain letters to Washington not included by Hamilton; and it is possible that a more thorough canvas of French archival deposits, particularly in the Archives des Colonies, will throw more light on the events of these two years. What is particularly needed here is a detailed study of Washington's military rôle in 1754, 1755, and 1758, by a critical historiographer who is well versed in the strategy and tactics of war. It is not improbable that such a study will reveal what one ought to expect—that the young Washington in his early twenties was hardly equal in knowledge, experience, or sagacity to the exigencies of responsible military command and warfare.

The English documentary sources on Braddock's campaign have long been known. Most of them are in print. There is some possibility that French archives, some of which have been transcribed by the Public Archives of Canada and many of which are being photographically reproduced by the Library of Congress, may give further information on this famous campaign.

Western Pennsylvania was largely abandoned by English-Americans from midsummer, 1755, to midsummer, 1758. The story of the French at Fort Duquesne needs fuller treatment. The story of Indian affairs from the French point of view needs clarification. Both of these topics can be worked out from documentary materials, some of which have been printed, but some of which remain in manuscript form in the French archives. On the story of captives among the Indians and on Indian ravages much has already been written. It has been a favorite theme of historical repetition, compilation, and restatement. But critical historiography has little use for such incidental material. It explains little and does not clarify matters. On the contrary, in too great number and too great detail, such items confuse the historical reader. Underlying factors, sequences, development, evolution, perspective, and continuity are vital in history, and too much incidentalism and too many ungrouped and unclassified personalities confuse the mind. In my probably not too humble opinion, the study of these years might better be directed to more general matters, such as the public policy of the various colonies in the crisis and the work of England and France in political and military management.
It has already been mentioned that the Bouquet Papers are valuable for the years 1757 and 1758. This is particularly true of the latter year. New information upon military aspects of Forbes's campaign from the Bouquet Papers will be mainly a matter of details, but the papers do furnish the basis for research studies in army administration, army life, transportation, agriculture, commerce, and finance. The actual campaign might be examined closely in contrast with the earlier campaigns of Washington and Braddock, to the disadvantage, I believe, of both of the earlier campaigns. In making this remark I have in mind not simply the palpable results, but strategy, method, and management. The final three months of Forbes's campaign need revaluation based on the investigation of such matters as the allocation of French effort during the war, the dominance of British sea power, the capture of Louisburg, the exhaustion of Canada, the capture of Fort Frontenac, and the contrast of French strength at Fort Duquesne in August and in November.

Materials will also be found in the Bouquet Papers on the campaign of 1759 and on the building of Fort Pitt in that year; on the campaign of 1760 against Presqu'Isle and Detroit; on the measures to control the West in 1761 and 1762; on the great Indian War of 1763; and on Bouquet's famous expedition into Ohio in 1764. In addition these papers throw much light on the early settlements in western Pennsylvania.

The years from 1758 to 1763 are also revealed in the recently discovered papers of Sir Jeffery Amherst. The 255 volumes of these papers are in the possession of the British Public Record Office, where they are classified as War Office 34. Transcripts, which so far have progressed through the first fifteen volumes, are gradually being made of this collection for the Canadian Archives; and photostatic copies of some of the volumes have been secured by the Library of Congress. Since Amherst was commander in chief of all British activities in North America, many of these volumes concern western Pennsylvania only indirectly; but volumes 40 to 49 deal with affairs in the West, and pertinent documents are found scattered through the other volumes. Some idea of the importance of these papers may be gained from the fact that they contain twenty or more letters from General Forbes to General Abercromby, which were evidently turned over to Amherst by Abercromby on his
departure from America. It is probable that until this past year, no Pennsylvanian has seen these letters since 1759. Additional Amherst papers have been more recently unearthed, from which three journals—those of Jeffery Amherst, of William Amherst, and of John Montréal—have been extracted and edited by J. Clarence Webster. The remainder of these papers have not yet been published and are probably still in private hands. It is understood that photostatic reproductions of some of them have been secured by the Public Archives of Canada. It may be conjectured that they are largely family papers. It should also be noted that the Henry E. Huntington Library at San Marino, California, possesses not only other Abercromby papers, but some of the papers of Lord Loudoun, Abercromby's predecessor as commander in chief of the British forces in North America. In this connection might be mentioned the writings of William Shirley (2 vols., edited by Charles Lincoln—New York, 1912), which contain some of the correspondence of the years 1755 and 1756.

Supplementing the great collections to which reference has already been made are the extensive archives in the British Public Record Office, especially those of the colonial office, the war office, and the treasury. Of the colonial office records, volumes 45 to 65 of classification cover roughly the years from 1750 to 1770. Long accessible to students, many of the documents in these volumes have for some time been in print, and many of them are available in transcripts or reproductions in the Library of Congress and in the Public Archives of Canada.

In the British Museum, in the colonial office in Whitehall, London, and in the British Public Record Office, are many maps bearing upon western Pennsylvania. Some of these are reproduced by Archer Butler Hulbert in the first two series of his Crown Collection of Photographs.

2 Jeffery Amherst, Journal ... in America from 1758 to 1763 (Toronto and Chicago, 1931); William Amherst, Journal ... in America, 1758-1760 (London, 1927); John Montréal, "Journal ... in 1763," in J. Clarence Webster, Life of John Montréal, p. 10-29 (Royal Society of Canada, Transactions, series 3, vol. 22, section 2—Ottawa, 1928). Since this paper was read in January, the appearance of a new biography, Lord Jeffery Amherst: A Soldier of the King, by J. C. Long (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1933), furnishes more information about Amherst documents. On pages 327-329 will be found important information about reproductions in Washington, D.C., in Ottawa, and in Amherst College.
of *American Maps* (10 vols., 1904–1912), copies of which are to be found in any adequate research library. Others were copied in engravings for William M. Darlington and are now in the Darlington Collection of the University of Pittsburgh, temporarily on deposit with the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. Some of them have been reproduced in the writings of Darlington. A critical publication of reproductions of old maps relating to this region is a needed feature of local historical scholarship. Such a publication might be supplemented by historical maps, recently made or to be made, dealing with aspects of early western Pennsylvania.

The story of the British and Americans in this region obviously cannot be set forth critically without consulting the French archives at the Archives Nationales and in the government departments in Paris. Transcripts of most of those dealing with New France are in the Public Archives of Canada. The originals are slowly being reproduced by photography by the Library of Congress, which hitherto has avoided such duplication and confined itself mainly in the French archives to those of the department of foreign affairs and of Louisiana. Much work remains to be done not only on the integrated story of the French in this region but on the French documents and facts as a check on British documentation and assertions. Some of the French documents fortunately have been printed in sundry publications. A calendar of the more important of these documents, printed and unprinted, is essential for critical local historiography.

For the years from 1763 to 1773 the most important single collection of documentary material on the history of western Pennsylvania is the Gage Papers, discovered in private hands a few years ago by Professor Clarence E. Carter of Miami University and purchased by Mr. William L. Clements of Bay City, Michigan. Destined ultimately for the William L. Clements Library at Ann Arbor, Michigan, these papers, involving, it is said, forty-five thousand items, are in the private home of Mr. Clements and not readily accessible to the research student. Fortunately the Western Pennsylvania Historical Survey was enabled to make a copy of parts of a list of some of these letters made by Dr. Carter. From this copy, which was checked in part with another list furnished the Clements
Library by the Public Record Office of Great Britain, it may be noted that the Gage Papers contain hundreds of letters and copies of letters that passed between the commander in chief and people associated with Fort Pitt, including officers such as Colonel Henry Bouquet, Lieutenant Colonel John Reed, Captain William Gordon, Captain William Murray, and Captain Charles Edmonstone; merchants and contractors such as Plumsted and Franks, Ingles, Franks, and Barkley, and Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan; and Indian agents such as George Morgan and Alexander McKee. Dr. Carter has published the letters of Gage to the British secretaries of state as volume 1 of *The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage with the Secretaries of State, 1763–1775* (New Haven, 1931), and the Library of Congress very fortunately secured photostats of the letters by Gage to others before the purchase by Mr. Clements.

Some of the Gage materials are printed in scattered places, but many of the important letters to Gage from local places in North America have never seen the light of historical investigation and no definitive history of this region can be written without them. They are likely to be particularly valuable for research on such topics as expeditions and geography, Indian trade, Indian affairs in general, the settlement of the region, the expense of imperial administration, the activities of land companies, and the evacuation of Fort Pitt.

The Shelburne and Dartmouth papers, in the Clements Library, contain scattered documents relating to the history of western Pennsylvania, among them letters of George Croghan and John Connolly.

On the Revolutionary War and Confederation years from 1775 to 1789, further research is possible. Of the documentary materials so far mentioned, only the Pennsylvania official publications, the Draper Collection, the writings and papers of George Washington, and the *Calendar of Virginia State Papers* throw much light on western Pennsylvania during this period. The research student must, in addition, go to other sources, among which the most important, probably, are the journals of the Continental Congress, which are in manuscript in the Library of Congress, and are either in print or rapidly being printed. With the

---

3 Reviewed ante, 15:68.
exception of scattered items in the Haldimand Papers, foreign archives and their reproductions in North America seem to be strangely lacking in any volume of information on western Pennsylvania and its affairs during the Revolutionary War. It is not impossible, however, that the Clinton Papers, in the private possession of Mr. William L. Clements, embodying twenty thousand items, may contain materials on the Revolutionary War period in western Pennsylvania.

There is room in this period for detailed investigation of the settlement of western Pennsylvania, and of the migration from or by way of Pennsylvania to Kentucky. There is also room for further investigation and interpretation of the development of local political, economic, and social life. But all this will have to be done mainly in public records at Philadelphia, at Harrisburg, at Richmond, Virginia, or at county seats such as Carlisle, Bedford, Greensburg, Staunton (Virginia), Uniontown, Washington, and Pittsburgh.

On the period of local history so far considered, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania possesses voluminous and important documentary materials. In its alphabetical card catalogue nearly a quarter of a million manuscripts are listed. It is easy to locate the collections or groups of papers that directly or indirectly concern western Pennsylvania. These volumes can be canvassed thoroughly. In research on Pennsylvania biography, Pennsylvania trade and commerce, and similar matters, these collections are absolutely necessary. They are particularly rich in journals and diaries of important individuals. The Wayne Papers, of many volumes, furnish information about local history in the last decade of the eighteenth century. Thorough research on the Indian troubles from 1783 to 1795 will require the use of documentary material in this depository. The American Philosophical Society at Philadelphia also possesses valuable manuscript material on the history of western Pennsylvania, especially on Franklin, on Indian affairs, and on the Burd and Shippen families.

There is in all probability much opportunity for further research on and better interpretation of the Whiskey Insurrection. We need to know more about the rank and file of the insurrectionists, about their ideas and behavior. We need to compare the Whiskey Insurrection more closely with the American Revolution and to study the influence of the French
Revolution on western Pennsylvania. Some study is necessary also of the effect of Hamilton's policy on the Pennsylvania election of 1798 and the presidential election of 1800; and the rise of Jeffersonianism in western Pennsylvania should be carefully worked out in detail. In such studies, in addition to records in the Pennsylvania Archives and the well-known writings of Henry M. Brackenridge, Albert Gallatin, and William Findley, use must be made of two volumes of original documents in the Library of Congress that contain some original official documents and letters but are especially valuable for autograph signatures of the hundreds of citizens of western Pennsylvania who affixed their names to articles of submission. An old volume in the war department also contains a few papers on the Whiskey Insurrection.

Information on Pittsburgh as a commercial center can be derived from the annual reports of the quartermaster-general of the United States. Almost alone of the early war department files, these reports have escaped destruction by fire and at Fort Myers, Virginia, in the quartermaster's department, they are accessible to research students. Since army activities for twenty years after 1789 were mainly in the Mississippi basin, Pittsburgh was naturally the base of operations, particularly for the quartermaster's activities. Several prominent Pittsburgh families were connected with the work of supplying the army, notably the Wilkins and Craig families.

The role of Pennsylvania, especially of western Pennsylvania, in the struggle for the navigation of the Mississippi and in the Louisiana Purchase calls for investigation and exposition. In the manuscript archives of the United States, Great Britain, France, and Spain, there is much pertinent material. Some of this material is in print, but much of it is still available only in manuscript. Since the Library of Congress is accumulating reproductions of this particular foreign archival material, it will be possible to do much of the work there. Spanish materials, especially, are thus being made available in the United States for research students. The materials in British and Canadian archives on the War of 1812 are, of course, voluminous, but so far as the history of western Pennsylvania is concerned, they furnish only a somewhat unimportant light on the opposition to American forces.

The important matter of Indian history from 1775 to 1815 requires
the use not only of the Draper Collection and of the documents of the United States, New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Michigan, and Virginia, but also collections of Canadian and British documents. Among them should be mentioned the Haldimand Papers; the Clinton Papers; the Carleton Papers, most of which are in Ottawa (though some may be in the Clements Library); and the enormous collection of Indian documents in the Public Archives of Canada. A survey of guides to British archives and libraries must also be made to locate possible information reported home from Canada.

On the very important problem of population elements in western Pennsylvania, the United States Census schedules in Washington furnish valuable material for research. Those of 1850 give the name and date of birth of all members of a family, with indication of the country or state of birth. By a judicious combination of nomenclature and places of birth, it is possible to calculate roughly the percentage of any given population element in any community or in the region in 1850. Such a study will probably show a somewhat larger percentage of people of German racial stock and a somewhat smaller proportion of Scotch-Irish than many have claimed.

In conclusion of this hurried and incomplete survey, it may be said that there are literally hundreds of topics available for research and investigation in connection with western Pennsylvania history. Some of them are small, but many of them are of major importance. There is also an abundance of material widely scattered over the western world.

Three comparatively recent publications indicate what can be done. I refer to Albert T. Volwiler, George Croghan and the Western Movement (Cleveland, 1926), Claude M. Newlin, The Life and Writings of Hugh Henry Brackenridge (Princeton, 1932), and Max Savelle, George Morgan, Colony Builder (New York, 1932). These publications reveal not only the wealth of local historical subject material but something of the even more important matter of the significance of early western Pennsylvania in the history of the United States and of the western world as a whole. But not one of these three publications is actually put out in such a way as to identify the research and authorship with Pittsburgh or western Pennsylvania. That some such identification
was possible is shown by the fact that local studies on each of these subjects were published in the *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* in advance of the appearance of the corresponding book. 4

In order to identify such high-standard historical research and authorship with western Pennsylvania, the groundwork must be laid. Subjects are not lacking and instruction and guidance are available. Better libraries and documentary collections are the vital need. As much expansion by the Carnegie Library as is possible for a public library; the establishment of a great Darlington Memorial Library by the University of Pittsburgh; and the collection of documents by the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, whether in originals, in satisfactory reproductions, or in well-edited publications, may supply this vital need. Many other local institutions might also contribute to the local provision of adequate materials for historical research. I hope it will cause no offense to say that not even the Western Pennsylvania Historical Survey can alone do quickly all the work necessary to establish Pittsburgh as a satisfactory center of historical research, even in our own local history.