

THE OPENING ADDRESS¹

ROBERT GARLAND

Descendants, Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of the Historical Society I heartily welcome you to this our first session of commemoration.

As you know the historical pageant will be staged this evening across the street at Soldiers Memorial Hall; and at the Society's building next door, today until 10 P. M., and Wednesday and Thursday from 1 to 10 P. M., there will be an exhibit of heirlooms—portraits, relics, furnishings, and the like; and at this time I want to thank the lenders, many of them in this group, for their loans.

I might say that we are not celebrating the Big Fire *as such*. That would be like celebrating the death of a person. Rather we are memorializing the pioneers of those days, whose unbounded energy and pluck rebuilt and made a great city, today the "Arsenal of the Republic."

I want also to thank the loyal members of the Society who have cheerfully given so much of their time to make the occasion a success.

We are also hoping that we can add materially to the membership of our Society. With our glorious history our people do not seem to be historically minded. Let us remember that it was here in Pittsburgh that a great historic event took place. Long before the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the pealing of the Liberty Bell, before the making of the Constitution and the Boston Tea Party, here at Fort Duquesne in 1758 the French flag was torn down and the English flag hoisted in its stead at Fort Pitt. Here the dream of the French king for Latin domination was forever shattered, and the English language, laws, traditions, morals, and hopes were forever established on the North American continent.

And yet with our splendid history, past and present, we find that the little city of Chester, Pennsylvania, with one-twentieth the population of Allegheny County, has a historical society with a larger membership than our own.

This is a "Call from Macedonia" addressed to an intelligent group of Pittsburghers.

¹ With these remarks, Mr. Garland, as president of the Historical Society, opened the afternoon session at the Twentieth Century Club, and, with some modifications, the evening meeting at Memorial Hall.—*Ed.*