

HISTORICAL SOCIETY NOTES

At the annual meeting of the society, held on January 28, 1947, a paper on "Hervey Allen *vs.* Arthur St. Clair," written by Henry K. Siebeneck, Esq., was read by Mr. Lawrence S. Thurman, and an account of "Charles Brewer, Mid-nineteenth Century Pittsburgh Philanthropist," was given by Mr. C. Stanton Belfour. A minute on the death of Frank L. Duggan, long a trustee of the society, was read by Judge Gray and unanimously approved. All incumbent officers of the society were re-elected for three-year terms; Miss Nixon and Mesdames Adams and Stewart were re-elected as trustees for five-year terms; and the following were newly elected as trustees—Mr. Ralph E. Flinn, in place of the late Frank L. Duggan; C. F. C. Arensberg, Esq., in place of the late Thomas Mellon II; and Mr. Richard S. Rauh, in place of the late James Rae. A change in the by-laws, whereby new members are now accepted upon application and payment of current dues, without the formal election previously required, was unanimously adopted.

An all-Washington program was appropriately provided for the afternoon meeting of the society held on February 22. "The Washington Family Other than George" was the subject of a paper presented by Mr. Richard B. Tucker, a grandnephew, several times removed, of the Father of His Country; an account of "Western Pennsylvania in the Military Schooling of Washington" was given by Dr. Alfred P. James; and a copy of Gilbert Stuart's portrait of Washington, painted by Mr. Vincent Nesbert, was presented to the society by Mr. Siebeneck. Among special exhibits shown on this occasion were a diorama of Fort Duquesne, loaned by the artist, Mr. L. Evans Parcell; a charcoal drawing of Bouquet's Blockhouse, a gift of the artist, Mr. Thornton Oakley; and a collection of swords, rifles, powderhorns, and some relics associated with the Washington family.

In place of its regular March meeting in the Historical Building, the society met in the Commons Room, Cathedral of Learning, University of Pittsburgh, on Friday evening, the twenty-eighth, for a tour of the Nationality Rooms under the competent guidance of Mrs. Ruth Crawford Mitchell and a number of student aides.

The noted composer, Ethelbert Nevin, was the subject of the entire program given at the society's meeting of April 29. It opened with a general account

of Nevin's life, entitled "From Vineacre to Venice," written by Daniel E. Nevin, but read, in the absence of the author, by Gifford K. Wright, Esq. "Reminiscences of the Composer" were then offered by his nephew, Fleming Nevin, Esq., who took occasion to remark that this was the first time that the memory of Ethelbert Nevin had thus been honored at a public meeting in Pittsburgh. Followed extemporaneous remarks on the same subject by Mr. Charles E. Irwin and former Judge David Miller. Mr. J. Fred Lissfelt of the University of Pittsburgh then presented a critical estimate of "Ethelbert Nevin, the Musician," followed by a group of Nevin's songs played by the speaker and sung by Mrs. Lissfelt. Also included in the program was a piano solo, Nevin's "Song of the Brook," played by Mrs. Samuel Selkovits of Aliquippa. In the entrance hall, displays of a considerable number and variety of Nevin memorabilia were on exhibit, most of them loaned by the University of Pittsburgh, but some by Mr. Fleming Nevin and by Mrs. T. A. Standish, Sr., the composer's sister.

A special meeting of the society was held in the afternoon on May 20, for the formal acceptance and installation of a large oil portrait of Judge Thomas Mellon, which was received as a gift from his grandson, Mr. William Larimer Mellon. The portrait is a copy, done by the late Verona A. Kiralfy, of one painted by the French artist, Chartran. In the absence of the donor, President Garland called on Mrs. Sarah Mellon Scaife, a granddaughter of Judge Mellon, to make the presentation, and Mr. Evans, in accepting the portrait on behalf of the society, reviewed at some length the characters and achievements of Judge Mellon and his descendants, with special emphasis on their cultural interests. Mr. John O'Connor, assistant director of the Department of Fine Arts, Carnegie Institute, followed with a "Sketch of the Artist, Chartran," and of the local copyist. The exercises concluded with the presentation and adoption of a minute offered by Charles A. Locke, Esq., on the death of the donor's brother, Thomas Mellon II, a trustee of the society. Before the meeting adjourned, however, Mr. Charles A. McClintock exhibited an original letter written by Colonel Henry Bouquet at Fort Loudoun, August 25, 1764, to Alexander McKee, assistant deputy agent for Indian affairs at Fort Pitt, which he thereupon presented to the society as a gift from Mrs. Roland Wood of Lacanada, California.

The last regular monthly meeting of the season was held on May 27, the customary "University of Pittsburgh Night." The history department of the university, under the direction of Dr. John W. Oliver, presented the following

speakers: Mr. James A. Kehl, who offered a study of "The *Allegheny Democrat*, 1833-36"; and Mrs. Charles F. Lewis, who discussed "The Three James Finley's: Preacher, Politician, and Engineer." A large framed portrait of John D. Scully was presented by his grandson, Mr. John D. Scully Ackenheil, and accepted for the society by Mr. Evans.

REPORT OF MOTOR TOUR

The annual motor tour of the society took place on Saturday, June 28. Starting promptly from the Historical Building at 10:45 A.M., some fifty members and their friends journeyed to Grove City: about half of them traveled in a motorbus chartered by the society, their trip being enlivened by comments from Henry Oliver Evans, Esq., on the several points of interest seen in passing. The group had an excellent lunch at the Penn-Grove Hotel. After it President Garland, who has been a trustee of Grove City College for many years, introduced Dr. Weir C. Ketler, president of the college, who spoke at length of the history of that institution, founded by his father about 1876. Dr. Morgan Barnes, president of the Mercer County Historical Society, then recounted some of the salient features of the settlement of the county.

Grove City College has been richly endowed by a number of generous benefactors. After lunch the group visited several buildings on the upper campus, including, first, the chapel donated by the family of the late Samuel P. Harbison, the significance of the architecture and fittings of which was explained in detail by Dr. Alva J. Calderwood, dean of the college. It is a fine example of American Gothic fashioned after the model of Sainte Chapelle, and bears striking witness to the evolution of Calvinistic taste from the old-time brick cube to the perfection of medieval reproduction.

Next visited was another ornament of the campus, the Mary Anderson Pew Dormitory, a recent building housing two hundred women students in term time. Few royal palaces are more spacious and appealing than this structure.

Lastly, the Administration Building, given by Mr. Harry J. Crawford of Emlenton, was inspected. It includes a theater and dance hall sufficient to provide for one thousand students. In the executive office was found the great gift of H. J. Heinz made forty years ago. It is a remarkable oil painting of Daniel Webster, than whom no man ever had a more superb head to paint. The nameplate on the picture announces that the artist was the celebrated *English* painter, Stuart. As the plate is said to have been put on in Cincinnati during the fifties of the last century, too much weight should not be given to the word

English. Experts have declared the picture to be a genuine Gilbert Stuart, the great American portraitist. And indeed no other contemporary artist could have produced so brilliant a result—a magnificent head, magnificently painted.

The return trip was made by way of Harmony, site of the first Harmonite settlement in this country. Here, our group visited the Harmony Society and Mennonite cemeteries under the guidance of Dr. Arthur I. Stewart assisted by the Rev. Mr. Loran Veith and a number of the local Boy Scouts. Dr. Stewart's remarks were supplemented by the distribution of locally prepared mimeographed lists of the outstanding facts about the Harmony Society, its old graveyard, and other surviving features of the original settlement. Unfortunately, the hour was too late for a walking tour of the town, and it was evident that enough points of interest remained to be seen to warrant another, more leisurely, visit in the not too distant future.

H. K. SIEBENECK, Chairman

The following new members were enrolled in the first six months of 1947: contributing, Richard S. Rauh; sustaining, Frank M. Hesse; annual, John D. Scully Ackenheil, Mrs. Royal Daniel, Jr., Robert L. Forsythe and Mrs. Charles J. Horst of Ben Avon, Mrs. Charles F. Lewis of Coraopolis, Mrs. Birney K. McMechen, Mrs. E. R. McMillin, Donald D. Mangone, Lester R. Mohr of Zelienople, Charles Penrose of Bethany College, W. Va., Mrs. Hugh Rodman of Oakmont, George A. Smith, George F. Swetnam; educational, Lloyd M. Clark of Kiskiminetas Springs School, Robert D. Hazlett of Princeton University, Henry A. Riddle of Western Theological Seminary; annual institutional, Historical Committee, Central Council of Polish Organizations, Pittsburgh, J. Borkowski, chairman.

In the same period word was received of the deaths of Sophie Gaskell Keenan, Georgina C. Negley, and John E. Reynolds of Meadville—all annual members.

Plans previously announced for enlisting the interest and active coöperation of young people in the work of the society have begun to materialize under the supervision of the museum curator, Mr. Thurman. In response to invitations sent experimentally to the nearer-by schools and colleges early in the year, some sixteen students from four schools came to the Historical Building for instruction and work on the society's collections, most of them once or twice every weekend, until the end of the school year. Among them were Ann Clark, Mary Ann Potter of Oliver High School; Martha Church of Peabody High

School; Anita Conte, Rose Marie Castelli, Pat Petrovic, Mary Vacarelli, Grace Sassons, Joan Strobel, and Angela Conte of Divine Providence Academy; and, beginning in the spring, Maryanne Laffey, Helen Ann Quinn, Pat Wohlforth, Delores Havrella, and Joan Wagner of Cathedral High School. These students assisted in recataloguing most of the society's stored museum collections and all of its larger portraits and other pictures. They also arranged certain displays for the annual western regional conference of the Pennsylvania Federation of Junior Historians, held at the Historical Building in April, and assisted in the composition of the special Nevin and Mellon exhibits referred to above. In fact they have done so well that, although formal organization of the projected junior council is still in the offing, it is expected that the work will be resumed next fall, and enlarged to embrace library work and the repair of old books and newspapers.

Mr. Thurman has spoken as a representative of the society at meetings of a number of outside organizations, including the Men's Club of McCandless Township, the conference of Junior Historians referred to above, the Wilkesburg Rod and Gun Club, the Lions Club of Greensburg, the Westinghouse High School commencement for veterans, and the Pittsburgh chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

The more permanent exhibits in the society's museum have undergone extensive alteration and relocation, many of the objects long on display having been replaced by others hitherto kept in storage. Among other things, one of the long side exhibition halls is now devoted to war relics, mostly of the Civil War, and the other to household furniture and equipment of the years from about 1750 to 1880. Special exhibits have been provided for display in other places, including, seven frames of early United States stamps and envelopes of the pre-stamp era, shown at the Pittsburgh Post Office; old money, at a nuns' school in the Cathedral High School; and two successive exhibits of such objects as artifacts, weapons, old letters, money, and lottery tickets, in the display windows of the Farmers Bank Building.