To our Membership—Greetings:

I was very much impressed by the breadth and scope of the "Director's Calendar" in a recent issue of this Magazine, which sets forth the schedule of talks and appearances of our director, Mr. Robert D. Christie, before various groups of adults and school children. Certainly his numerous engagements went far beyond the "line of duty" incident to the work of a director of an historical society.

However, Mr. Christie is a man of boundless energy and sincere devotion to his work. He is perhaps the most interesting speaker on local history that we have in this district. The teachers of the public and private schools in Western Pennsylvania have learned how generously he gives of his time and talents; there is a constant and ever increasing stream of school busses to our door. This program of educating school children in local history and creating a pride in their heritage certainly will have far reaching effects in moulding better citizens and more understanding Americans. In addition to addressing school children, Mr. Christie is constantly importuned to speak before patriotic bodies, civic organizations, clubs, college groups and historical societies throughout Western Pennsylvania. This Historical Society can feel that it is ably justifying the city's and county's monetary support which is granted annually to us.

A survey is presently being conducted for us by a competent individual through the generosity and interest of a local Foundation. The purpose is to ascertain through visitation to a number of comparable historical societies in the United States, just what activities are encompassed by the various societies and which produce the best results. Through this means, we hope to learn what changes in our present program should be undertaken further to popularize the use of our facilities and enhance the scope of the Society's services. Certainly our efforts to instill in the minds of school children and others a pride in the history of this community is one of primary importance and in this endeavor we are fortunate to have in our director, Mr. Christie, a teacher second to none.

CHARLES A. McCLINTOCK, President
YESTERDAY'S CELEBRATIONS

1858

THE CELEBRATION OF THE COMPLETION OF THE LAYING OF THE ATLANTIC CABLE

On Thursday evening 19 August, 1858, there took place in Pittsburgh a grand celebration honoring the successful completion of the laying of the Atlantic cable. We, who now consider such scientific advancements as a matter of course, may find it a little difficult to realize why this event which the Pittsburgh Commercial Journal of 18 August 1858 called "the greatest event of ancient or modern times," should have given rise to such jubilation. People were not so blase in the 1850's and the new marvel was looked upon as an augur of a glorious future. The cable laying, which had been chiefly promoted by Cyrus W. Field (1819-1892) was begun in 1857 and after many trials and disappointments was completed. As soon as the message of Queen Victoria to President Buchanan was received in this country, a fact known in Pittsburgh on Monday 16 August, Mayor Henry A. Weaver planned a celebration and meetings were held to prepare for the festivities.

For Pittsburgh, the celebration was rather a gala affair; it was high summer and the weather was pleasant. On the designated day, most business in the city closed at 4 o'clock, the hour being marked by the ringing of the bell in Trinity Episcopal Church. Other bells in the city answered and two artillerymen from the Arsenal, stationed with minute guns on Cliff Street and Coal Hill, fired salutes until a late hour. The fire companies, the Independent Order of Red Men, the German Saengerband, the German Turners and the Sons of Malta, according to the Morning Post, formed a parade and marched about the streets for two hours. After dark, several of the city's important buildings were illuminated and great crowds gazed at the lighted transparencies in Fifth Street. The Court House was lit from top to bottom and, as the Post said, the lights in the uppermost windows of the dome looked like distant stars. All the boats and barges on the rivers turned out for the occasion forming a sort of impromptu regatta. Fireworks arched over bonfires on the wharves and rowboats full of men carrying torches traced bright paths on the dark waters, so that the soft air and the
water were splashed with points of fire. Thus, with hope and light, did mid-19th century Pittsburghers celebrate an occasion of world-wide importance.

J. D. Van T.—from Pittsburgh Newspapers—August 1858

1894
1794  -  1894

THE STORY OF A HUNDRED YEARS

of

PITTSBURGH'S CORPORATE LIFE

Proceedings

of the

Centenary Celebration, April 23, 1894

Under the Auspices

of the

Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania

Sed fugit interea, fugit irrevocabile tempus

Pittsburgh was incorporated as a Borough on the 22d day of April, 1794. This date was too memorable to be allowed to pass unnoticed, when the hundredth anniversary of the corporate existence of the city was reached. As there was a well-grounded fear that there might not be a proper recognition of the event the "Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania," at its regular monthly meeting in March, 1894, passed a resolution directing public attention to the approaching Centenary, and at the same time appointed a committee to cooperate with the Chamber of Commerce and the city authorities in a fitting celebration of the day.

1Title page of a booklet published by the Historical Society in 1894.
The entire work of preparation was left to the Committee of the Historical Society. The result of its labors was shown in the large and representative meeting held in Old City Hall on the evening of April 23d, 1894. The story of Pittsburg's growth and progress was told by its foremost citizens. The lesson of civic pride and patriotism was strongly inculcated. The coming century was welcomed with hope and the benediction of speech and song.

1910

1754 - 1910

ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST ATTEMPT TO FORTIFY THE OHIO

The Society held its first banquet on February 17th, 1910, the anniversary of the "first attempt to fortify the Ohio," at the Monongahela House, Pittsburgh. This was attended by about one hundred and fifty members. (The 156th anniversary). The principal speakers were General William H. Koontz, of Somerset, Pa., General Harry White, Indiana, Pa. President T. L. Rodgers presided and William H. Stevenson was toastmaster. Judge J. Denton Hancock, Percy Mackaye, and Dr. D. J. Cox also spoke.

Burd S. Patterson
Secretary

Minutes of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania

1910

1758 - 1910

OBSERVANCE OF THE 152nd ANNIVERSARY OF THE TAKING OF FORT DUQUESNE

On November twenty-fifth 1910 the Society celebrated the 152nd anniversary of the taking of Fort Duquesne, by participating in a Union Thanksgiving service at the Bellefield Presbyterian Church, at which Rev. G. A. M. Dyess, head of the history depart-

---

2 From preface of the above mentioned booklet.
ment of the University of Pittsburgh, preached a historical sermon.

Burd S. Patterson
Secretary

Minutes of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania

1911

1811 - 1911

CELEBRATION OF THE CENTENNIAL OF STEAM-BOAT NAVIGATION ON THE OHIO AND MISSISSIPPI RIVERS

At a large meeting of the Society held January 11th, 1910, it was decided on motion of Dr. William J. Holland to appoint a committee to cooperate with the Ohio Valley Historical Association and the Mississippi Valley Historical Association in celebrating the centennial of steam-boat navigation on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers in 1911.

This celebration was held October 30th, 31st, and November 1st, 1911. In connection with it a replica of the first steam-boat on the Ohio and Mississippi, the New Orleans, was constructed at a cost of $15,000 appropriated by the Pittsburgh City-Council. A committee appointed by Mayor William A. Magee, a member of the Society, and headed by President William H. Stevenson of the Society managed the affair. About $5,000 was collected by the committee and used to fit out the boat and pay the other expenses of the celebration. The boat was christened on October 31st, by Mrs. Nicholas Longworth, (Alice Roosevelt) in the presence of “The President of the United States, William Howard Taft, and 300,000 people. It made a voyage to New Orleans beginning November 2nd, and continuing about a month under the command of Captain James A. Henderson, a member of the Society. On the voyage were members and officers of the Historical Society and representatives of the City and State, and of the Lake Erie and Ohio River Canal Association.

These at many points advocated the study of history, the advantages of Pittsburgh and the desirability of improving and extending our waterways.

The boat was visited by 5,000 school children and 100,000 adults and viewed from the shore by several times that number.
As a result of the celebration the treasury of the Society was enriched about $3,000.

A great banquet on October 31st, at which President William Howard Taft spoke was a feature of interest.

Full particulars of the celebration are contained in the newspaper scrap-books relating to it in the Society's Library;

A banquet on March 17th, at which United-States Senator Theodore Burton spoke, preceded the celebration.

Burd S. Patterson
Secretary

Minutes of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania

1913

1788 - 1913

CELEBRATION OF THE 125th ANNIVERSARY OF THE CREATION OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY

In 1913 the Society held a most successful celebration of the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of the creation of Allegheny County during the week of September 21st, to 27th.

A dinner was given by McCreery & Company, on September 23rd to the State Historical Association, the guest of the Society, and a banquet by the Society at the Hotel Schenley on September 24th.

The general celebration committee was headed by I. K. Campbell, President of the Allegheny County board of Commissioners, and The Executive Committee by William H. Stevenson, President of the Society.

Full particulars are given in the newspaper clipping books in the Society's Library.

A feature of the celebration was the dedication of the Society's new building on September 24th, although the structure was not fully completed and opened until February 17th, 1914.

Burd S. Patterson
Secretary

Minutes of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania
1816 - 1916

CELEBRATION OF THE CITY CHARTER CENTENNIAL

In the spring of 1816 it was deemed advisable to transform the borough of Pittsburgh into a city. A charter was granted. In 1916 the City Charter Centennial was celebrated in Pittsburgh. "An Exhibition of Historical Portraits, Paintings, Prints, Drawings and Relics" was presented by The Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania in the Carnegie Institute, Gallery N, October 29—November 30.¹

The catalogue listing the items of the exhibition consists of sixty-nine pages. It was truly an interesting and valuable contribution to the celebration.

1919

1794 - 1919

CELEBRATION OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INCORPORATION OF PITTSBURGH AS A BOROUGH

On Tuesday, April 22, 1919, the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of the incorporation of Pittsburgh as a borough was commemorated under the auspices of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. This being also the centennial year of the incorporation of the Western University of Pennsylvania, now the University of Pittsburgh, the Historical Society undertook to combine an observance of this event with that of the one hundred twenty-fifth anniversary of the organization of Pittsburgh's first government.

The affair took place in the hall of the society's building on Bigelow Boulevard, and a large and representative audience was present. William H. Stevenson, the president of the Historical Society, presided.

Addresses were given by Charles W. Dahlinger, Chancellor

¹From catalogue published by Carnegie Institute.
S. B. McCormick, Harold M. Irons, Thomas A. Dunn, and Dr. H. J. Webster.4

1933

1758 - 1933

CELEBRATION OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF PITTSBURGH

The society joined with the Chamber of Commerce of Pittsburgh in sponsoring a public luncheon on November 24 to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the founding of Pittsburgh. The Honorable David A. Reed, United States Senator from Pennsylvania, and Dr. Solon J. Buck, director of the society, were the speakers on this occasion and over three hundred people attended.5

1934

1759 - 1934

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BEGINNING OF TRADE WEST OF THE ALLEGHENIES

A jubilee celebration sponsored by the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce was held in Pittsburgh on November 8, 9, and 10 to mark the 175th anniversary of the beginning of trade west of the Allegheny Mountains. A pageant of floats depicting the rise of Pittsburgh from a trading post to a modern commercial and industrial center and historical displays from the Society's collections shown throughout the city were features of the observance. The Honorable John F. Fisher, president of the Society, presided at the jubilee dinner on the ninth.6

*Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine, Volume 17, page 25.
*Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine, Volume 18, page 69.
1945

1845 - 1945

THE FIRE CENTENNIAL

The entire issue of The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine for March-June 1945 is devoted to accounts of the Historical Society's observance of the centennial of Pittsburgh's Big Fire of April 10, 1845.

The first suggestion that such a commemoration be held came from Mrs. Marcellin C. Adams, a trustee of the Society.

"The object was to commemorate, not the disaster itself, but the spirit and energy with which the stricken city arose phoenix-like from its ashes and went on to greater and greater achievement as a center of industry and culture."

The celebration, which occurred after many months of careful planning by the Society's centennial committee, was a great success.

This "1845 Committee" among other things organized a temporary association of "Descendants of Pittsburghers of 1845" with an enrollment, ultimately of a thousand members; arranged for an outstanding loan exhibit in the Historical Building; enlisted the services of the Pittsburgh Drama League in the staging of an appropriate play; provided for a colorful parade between the two meetings held; secured prominent speakers; and published a special pamphlet for the occasion, entitled 1845-1945: An Historical Commemoration.7

---

7 Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine, Volume 8, Nos. 1 and 2, March-June 1945.