ROBERT D. CHRISTIE, DIRECTOR EMERITUS

Robert D. Christie, Director of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania for the past fifteen years, upon his retirement from the directorship in September 1968, becomes Director Emeritus. Under his new title he will be a part-time lecturer and consultant. John W. Harpster succeeds Mr. Christie as Director.

Robert D. Christie was born in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1885, the son of Robert and Pauline Watson Christie. With his parents, he came to Allegheny City, Pennsylvania, in the 1890's, when his father accepted a call to Western Theological Seminary as Professor of Systematic Theology. Mr. Christie lived on Ridge Avenue in Allegheny for sixty-eight years. He now lives in Shadyside, and is a member of the Shadyside Presbyterian Church.

As a boy he attended Shady Side Academy for six years and then entered Princeton University. The diploma of his graduation from Princeton, in 1908, is signed by Woodrow Wilson. This past spring Mr. Christie attended the sixtieth anniversary of his Princeton graduation.

Following his college years Robert Christie was employed in the advertising business in California and in Idaho with men who later were part of Batten, Barton, Durstine, and Osborn. He became an enthusiastic student of Western Pennsylvania history as an employee in the distinguished law partnership of Knox and Reed. His job there was to study their records and write a biographical history of the firm. His researches and writing gave him a wide knowledge of the accomplishments of leading Pittsburghers — Andrew Carnegie and Henry Clay Frick and others whose enterprises helped build the great corporations of Western Pennsylvania.

In 1936, Robert D. Christie married Rachel Alexander, and she was thereafter a partner in all his undertakings, especially at the Historical Society.

A quotation from the report of the late Charles A. McClintock, when he was President of the Society, measures Mr. Christie's important service to Pittsburgh youth.

"Mr. Christie is a man of boundless energy and sincere devotion ... perhaps the most interesting speaker on local history. 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 buses at our door. 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. . . . Mr. Christie . . . [speaks] before patriotic bodies, civic organizations, clubs, college groups, and historical societies throughout Western Pennsylvania.”

Stefan Lorant, author of a definitive pictorial history of Pittsburgh, praises Mr. Christie’s service to history in Pittsburgh and as a consultant to the author in compiling his volume. On the half-title page Mr. Lorant inscribed a message which the staff and the members of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania can heartily and gratefully endorse:

“Robert Christie, scholar, wit, gentleman — a Mr. Pittsburgh himself — with affection.”

Pittsburgh

AGNES LYNCH STARRETT