ANNUAL TOUR OF 1968

Members and friends of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania numbering 107 went to Wheeling and Bethany, West Virginia, on the thirty-ninth historical tour of their fellowship, Saturday, July 13, 1968.

They were passengers in three Pullman-size Greyhound buses which left 4338 Bigelow Boulevard, Oakland, Pittsburgh, at 9 A.M. of the date listed as the 181st anniversary of the passage by Congress of the famous Ordinance of 1787 for the government of the Northwest Territory — a memorable event, indeed.

Running south and west over the Fort Pitt Bridge and through the Fort Pitt Tunnel, then passing Carnegie and Bridgeville, Canonsburg and Washington, Pennsylvania, the caravan followed well-traveled roads to Oglebay Park — "one of the most beautiful and spectacular municipal parks in the United States" — outside of Wheeling proper, where the pilgrims received a friendly welcome from a staff distinguished for its considerate hospitality.

A glance sufficed to convince the visitors that the area is, in fact, a reservation of great natural charm and much added attraction and popular accommodation. With the spacious country estate of Colonel Earl W. Oglebay as a beginning in 1926, the property has grown in size and practical utility during more than four decades. The Wheeling Park Commission is responsible for improvements already completed, among them being Wilson Lodge of 123 rooms, the Oglebay Restaurant, adjacent cabins, etc. A bounteous luncheon was served to H.S.W.P. personnel at the Lodge, after which Robert Di Bartolomeo, curator, spoke on "A Visit to Wheeling in 1820."

Subsequently the Greyhound conveyances took the pilgrims to the Oglebay Mansion Museum, built in 1832. It contains exquisite period furniture in period arrangement, a priceless collection of Wheeling glass, the celebrated Sweeney punch bowl regarded as the largest cut glass piece in the world, dolls, toys, pictures, etc., each item with its own particular appeal to a sensitive visitant.

At three o'clock the buses left for Bethany College over characteristic mountain paths dating back to early colonial times and still rich in natural appeal as "props of the sky." At Bethany College itself the pilgrims were received and brilliantly addressed by Dr. Perry Gresham, president of the school and leader of the Disciples of Christ faith of this present era wherever they may be. The auditorium of the new Michael L. Benedum Science Building was the assembly place for
this memorable occasion and event. Later, there was a kindly “Scotch Tea” in the T. W. Phillips Memorial Library, where H.S.W.P. members had the privilege of meeting faculty members and wives and a few pupils. Departing for home at 4:30, the 107 tourists of 1968, once again comparing notes of their impressions of an historical tour, mentioned with special gratitude the fellowship of mutual travel which they have noticed year after year whenever they fare forth together on such trips.

The Greyhound buses were back at the Historical Society Building at 6:45.

Dr. Stanton Belfour, president, in charge of the 1968 excursion, already has indicated that he would like to hear from members who have suggestions for the historical tour of 1969.

James Waldo Fawcett