

HISTORICAL SOCIETY NOTES

The 1937-38 season opened with a meeting of the society on October 26 at which Miss Lois Wiley read a paper on "Lafayette in Western Pennsylvania," written by her father, Dr. Richard T. Wiley, who was also present, and Dr. E. Douglas Branch, research professor of history in the University of Pittsburgh, presented a paper on "The Coming of the Telegraph to Western Pennsylvania." Among special exhibits displayed on this occasion was a life-size portrait of Admiral Farragut by William Page, which had been presented to the society by the artist's son, Mr. George S. Page, and had been restored through the generosity of Mr. Thomas Mellon II.

In view of the continuing need for funds for the dependable maintenance of its work on the present modest scale at least, the society at this meeting adopted amendments to its by-laws whereby the dues of annual members, both individual and institutional, are increased from three to five dollars, and those of associate members from one to two dollars a year. Another amendment adopted at the same time enables former members to re-enroll without payment of arrearages in dues except in so far as needed to cover the cost of magazines accepted after the last previous payment of dues.

Twenty-one persons were elected to active membership at the October meeting: Albion Bindley, Thomas Howe Childs, David F. Collingwood, Carroll H. Fitzhugh, Thomas J. Gillespie, Jr., Mrs. Edward Henesey, Joseph A. Heyl, T. Clifton Jenkins, Francis J. Le Moyne, Curtis S. Mitchell, Miss Eleanor G. Park, Stephen C. Taylor, and Harold E. Williams, all of Pittsburgh; Mr. and Mrs. C. G. Grove of Crafton; James H. Anderson of Grove City; Alan D. Reynolds of New Alexandria; William W. Stewart of Sewickley; H. A. Heintzelman of Slippery Rock; Thomas R. Bremner of Wilkinsburg; and Edward Dumbauld of Washington, D.C. Mr. Jenkins was enrolled as a contributing member; Messrs. Childs, Collingwood, Fitzhugh, Gillespie, Mitchell, and Stewart as sustaining members; Mrs. Grove as an associate member; and the others as annual members.

During the two quarters ending September 30, the society lost five members by death: Dr. John J. Buchanan, Andrew W. Mellon, John L. Porter, and Charles L. Snowden, all of Pittsburgh; and McClellan Leonard of Uniontown.

The council of the society has recommended that the city of Pittsburgh make use of the society's facilities for preserving and making accessible certain non-current city records now occupying space in city offices and storerooms—space that is needed for growing files of records in constant or occasional administrative use. Some, at least, of these records are bound to contain material of use to historians and genealogists, and it is argued that rather than destroy them, as had been proposed, the city might well arrange to have an agency such as the society take over, sort out, and permanently preserve such part of the records as might have historical, or even continuing administrative, value.

Miss Helen Clay Frick has generously renewed for five years her lease to the society without charge of the Abraham Overholt Family Homestead at West Overton, which for ten years she has maintained and will continue to maintain both as a memorial to her distinguished father, Henry Clay Frick, and the Overholt family and as the museum and headquarters of the Westmoreland-Fayette branch of the society.

At the annual meeting of the branch society, held at West Overton on June 26, Mr. Dan R. Kovar, principal of the Benjamin Franklin Junior High School in Uniontown, presented a paper on "Social Life in Early Fayette County." An innovation, adopted the better to co-ordinate the work of the society and of the schools in that section, was the addition to the roster of officers of the branch of four vice presidents to be chosen from among principals and teachers in schools active in the field of local history. With these additions the officers elected for the year beginning July 1 are as follows: the Reverend J. P. Harman of Greensburg, president; Mr. Buell Whitehill of Uniontown, first vice president; Mr. Lloyd E. Davis of Alverton, second vice president; Mr. Jesse Coldren of Brownsville, third vice president; Miss Aileen K. Burd of Derry, fourth vice president; Mr. J. B. Sheetz of Uniontown, fifth vice president; Miss Elizabeth B. Leonard of Uniontown, secretary; and Mr. S. L. Denniston of Uniontown, treasurer. The parent society is represented on the executive committee of the branch by Mr. Edward B. Lee of Pittsburgh and the Honorable Edmond H. Reppert of Uniontown, both reelected for a term of five years at the October meeting of the parent society.

The branch society is actively seeking to enlarge its membership, and as one means of arousing and sustaining interest it has issued, largely through the initiative of its new treasurer, Mr. Denniston, what seems likely to be the first of a series of modest publications: a three-page mimeographed summary of "Some

Early History of the Coke Industry in Western Pennsylvania" based on data compiled by Mr. C. S. Wardley and Mr. M. A. Burriss. Accompanying the summary is a facsimile of an interesting "Bird's Eye View of the Connellsville Coke Region" in 1890.

ADDITIONS TO COLLECTIONS

Mr. B. I. Mathews of Ligonier has presented to the society a collection of several thousands of letters and papers relating mainly to persons and events in the Ligonier Valley in the period, roughly, from 1810 to 1875. The papers had come into the possession of the donor from the well-known Laughlintown collector and dealer, the late Charles L. Armor, and they comprise a portion at least of the papers left by Robert Louthier (1799-1888), a Laughlintown attorney whose work as a conveyancer and executor of estates touched intimately the fortunes and activities of many of the propertied people of the section, notably those of Colonel Jacob D. Mathiot, local ironmaster, militia officer, and state representative. In addition to correspondence and numerous legal documents relating to real estate holdings, there are letters and accounts relating to the manufacture, transportation and sale of iron and iron products—those produced by the Ross, Washington, Madison, Lucinda, and Aetna iron furnaces or works, for examples; occasional documents relating to salt manufacture, the construction of the Pennsylvania Canal, the building of roads, difficulties with the currency, and the early schism in the Harmony Society; personal memorandum books, inventories of estates, bills for postage before the days of stamps, lists of newspapers and periodicals locally subscribed for, prescriptions, and a receipt for "freedoms" due an indentured servant upon her release; and numerous signatures of and references to residents of the region—all, in short, shedding light from many an angle on life in the Ligonier Valley in the middle of the nineteenth century.

A typewritten copy of an extended account of "Samuel Craig, Senior, Pioneer to Western Pennsylvania, and His Descendants," compiled by Jane Marie Craig and printed at Greensburg in 1915 for private circulation, has been received as a gift from Mr. Jos. T. Miller of Wilkinsburg.

The Civic Club of Allegheny County, through its secretary, Miss H. Marie Dermitt, has transferred to the library of the society a considerable accumulation of reports published by the city of Pittsburgh or by civic agencies in the