

No. 3

ANNUAL REPORT

— TO THE —

HAMILTON LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

OF CARLISLE, PENN'A.,

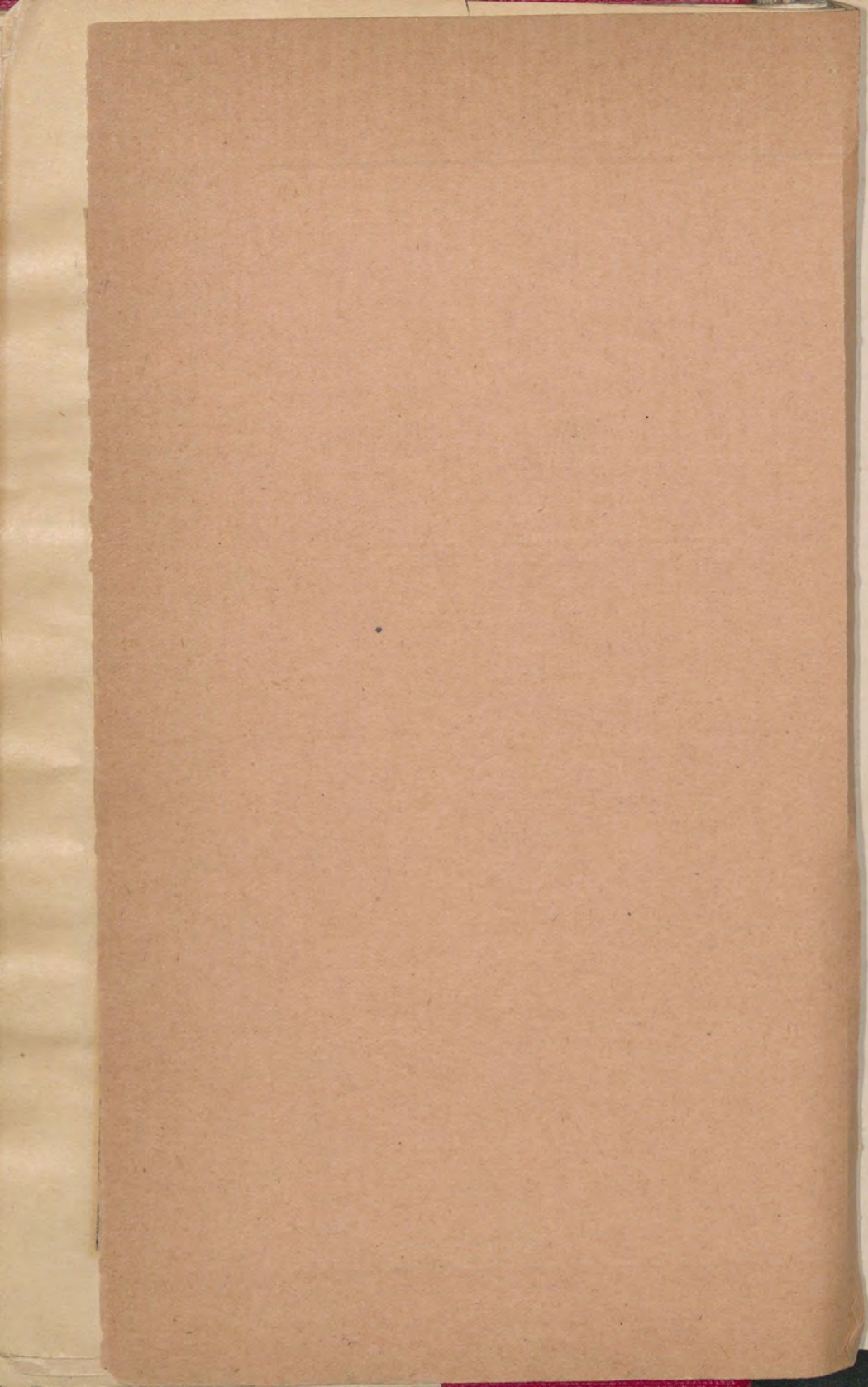
For 1902.



The Historical Organization

OF

CUMBERLAND COUNTY, PA.



Annual Report
TO THE
Hamilton Library Association
OF CARLISLE, PA.,
FOR THE YEAR 1902.

The first business at the annual meeting of the Association, has according to custom, been the reading of the reports of the officers of the Association.

As president I beg to report as follows on behalf of the board of directors. In view of the, unusual number of new members that have been enrolled during the past year, it seems not out of place to recall very briefly, some of the leading facts in the history of the association.

It originated in a bequest of James Hamilton, Esq., a prominent citizen of the borough for the establishment of a public library in the borough of Carlisle. The carrying out of his intentions was entrusted by him to a number of his well known personal friends, prominent citizens *of the* borough, intimately acquainted with his character, and most competent to interpret and carry out his benevolent intentions. In their

application for a charter, as granted by the court in 1874, among the objects set forth in connection with the public library was "the elucidation and preservation of the history of Cumberland County." The bequest was not a large one, at least for this day. It consisted of the lot 60 by 60 feet on Pitt street, on which the building is erected, and \$2000 in money, received out of his estate in 1875. The incorporators realizing the possibilities for public good, even in so small a beginning, set earnestly about carrying out the wishes of the testator, and to their careful and judicious, and I might add conscientious use of the bequest and thoughtful initiative, much of the present efficiency, if not the existence of, the Association is due. After unavoidable delay, due largely to the financial condition of the country, they saw their way clear to contract for the erection of the present building in 1881, which was completed and occupied in the year following, free from debt. The bequest was barely sufficient to meet this expense. In addition to contributions from members and others, more than \$200.00 was received as the result of a musical entertainment given by home talent for the

benefit of the Association, and the building was suitably furnished. The collection of a library, commenced before the erection of the building, was continued with special attention to matter of local historical interest. The room in which we are now met, not being needed by the association, was rented for a number of years, and proceeds applied to necessary expenses and the increase of the library. According to their records there was hardly a line along which a public library could be conducted that was not carefully considered in the final adoption of their plans. It is fortunate that the enterprise fell into hands as competent, as earnest and progressive, and at the same time as conservative and realizing as fully the conditions and possibilities of the case. The organization was hampered from the start by too great expectations on the part of the public upon so little a foundation, and by effort to cover all fields of a public library. But, a few years ago, whilst considering plans for increasing its efficiency, and rendering its accumulations more accessible to the public, the gratifying announcement was made of the proposed establish-

ment of the J. Herman Bosler Memorial Library which permitted and indicated, as its line of greatest usefulness to the public, a still closer adherence to local historical work. There was even a proposition to change the name by incorporating the word "Historical" in it. After full consideration, however, this was not deemed advisable or necessary to enable it to fully cover the field exclusively its own in the county.

The past year has been one of encouraging progress in many directions.

MEMBERSHIP.

It was thought that the usefulness and efficiency of the Association in all directions would be greatly increased by bringing it into closer touch with a greater number of individuals. Accordingly the requirement for membership was somewhat modified, and the number of elected and accepting members enrolled, each of whom has paid the entrance fee of \$2.00, has been increased to 120, not limited to residents of the borough. The entrance fee was fixed at \$2.00, because, according to the opinion of those learned in the law, it brings the association within the re-

quirements of the law recently enacted, which permits the commissioners of the several counties to appropriate aid to the amount of \$200.00 in carrying out the work in which this Association is engaged.

SEAL.

It was found desirable to have a seal by which to formally attest the certificates of membership and other documents of the corporation. The designing of a seal was committed to the president. In considering a device and motto, it was regarded not only as allowable, but as expressive of a most important fact, to emphasize the historical feature of the Association, impressed upon it by the incorporators at the beginning and its marked characteristic at the present time. The device consists of a volume of annals lying open where the dates are of local interest, namely 1750, that of the organization of the county, and 1751, that of the founding of Carlisle. The old style script, in connection with the dates, if not really legible, at least suggests the County and Borough. The motto beneath "Historia Magistra Vitae," one of Cicero's characterizations of history, seemed especially consonant with the purposes of the Association already alluded

readily

to. The date of incorporation—1874—is beneath the motto

The electrotype of the seal will be found serviceable in connection with the publications of the Association.

The heating of the building by means of stoves was not only inconvenient, but prevented the free use of all portions for library purposes and meetings of the Association. Upon examination of the building, it was found that in the original plan, arrangement had been made for a more complete mode of heating, by provision of the necessary hot-air and furnace flues, which made the installing of a hot-air furnace readily feasible. A furnace of good capacity was accordingly put in by which every part of the building can be heated. Whilst the library room may be the only one generally heated, any other portion of the building can be made comfortable, upon short notice, as occasion may require. By this arrangement the space in the different rooms can also be more fully utilized. The small room adjoining the library room, which was connected with it last year, by cutting a door, to adapt it for the use of the librarian and secretary and other purposes, has been oc-

cupied each Saturday morning by a committee of the Civic Club in connection with its Sayings Fund work, and has been practically unavailable for any purposes of the Association. Recognizing the great public benefit of that particular phase of the work of that organization, the directors did not hesitate to permit the use of the room for that purpose until the growing needs of the Association may require it.

The ladies of the club fitted the room up, and supplied the necessary additional furniture.

It is a matter of regret that whilst many valuable books have been presented to the Library, it has been possible to supplement these by but few purchases, the funds at the disposal of the directors being absorbed in changes and improvements in the rooms and necessary current expenses, including janitor and fuel. The files of our local newspapers have been kept up, old files have been rendered more complete, and pamphlets and papers of historical character have been received and filed, and in time will form a valuable collection, which should be properly classified and bound, as suitable volumes accumulate, under the direction of the library

committee and librarian.

Through the kindness of Capt. W. E. Miller, who was to be found in the building at almost all hours of the day the library has been accessible and under supervision, and the use made of it is encouraging and indicative of the place it can be made to fill with proper facilities. Through the efforts of the same gentleman many articles documents, etc. of historical interest have been collected, and secured in cases for exhibition and study, and with proper provision for their display and safe keeping, it is believed that this feature of the library could be much enlarged by the contributions or deposit of such articles by our citizens.

* The value of this work is, however, not to be estimated simply by the increase of our collections, but perhaps in a greater degree by the impression made upon the general public, and especially upon the holders of such objects, of their value, and the incentive to bring out of the cellars and garrets articles of the kind long forgotten and liable to destruction. It is a matter of fact that articles of priceless value in our national history as well as local have been recovered from cellars as well as garrets in our own county.

PUBLIC MEETINGS.

These have been held regularly each month, with growing interest on the part of all. As the membership in Carlisle and vicinity is not sufficient to fill the room the public, including ladies, have been invited to be present, and the attendance has increased at times beyond the capacity of the hall.

The papers have been followed by discussion participated in by members and others, who are requested in the printed programs to come prepared to take part in the discussions, and furnish any additional facts in their possession. In this way it has been possible to fill gaps in our local history, and its study and investigation have been stimulated, and local history given a more prominent place in the public thought.

The local papers have given full accounts of the proceedings and copious extracts from the papers read, which have an excellent effect in directing public attention to the topics discussed, but it is to be regretted that the finances of the Association do not permit their publication in full, as well as the discussions.

According to an authorization of the board of directors a series

of six papers selected from those published by Rev. J. A. Murray, D. D., deceased, for many years the efficient secretary of the Association, were reprinted in our local papers under the auspices of the Historical department of the Association, and a limited number of separates struck off in pamphlet form, and placed at the disposal of the Association for exchange for publications of other societies, or sale to individual collectors

In the last report attention was called to the possibilities of photography for recording and preserving facts of many kinds. The directors accordingly ordered a committee of five, with the president as chairman, to formulate and carry out plans in this connection. This committee is expected to report plans and recommendations at a meeting Feb. 17 as announced on the program.

The field of usefulness of the Association is so wide that it may seem to some that more should be done, but it must be remembered that the Association is without an income except from the dues and contributions of its members, and that it is best to proceed tentatively along lines that promise most success rather than hastily to undertake work that might have to

be abandoned. In looking back at the report of two years ago we note that all the recommendations involving a decided advance have been substantially carried out, and that at present, with a building in complete repair and well adapted to the work of the Association, and all the machinery in successful operation, ^{and} an increased membership, altogether the outlook seems encouraging. The treasurer's report will show that all the expenses of the year and the cost of improvements have been met, except a balance of \$45.00 on the furnace, to be paid out of the first income of the year.

Among the matters that suggest themselves as worthy of special attention may be named:-

1. Use of Library: The library has been comfortably warm, Capt. Miller, as before stated, has been there portions of each day as his own business has permitted to the great convenience of many. But in the nature of the case this does not fix a definite time at which the library will be open, and it is a question, whether, by supplementing it by some provision for opening the library between certain hours, if for only one or two days in the week, the use might not be greatly encouraged.

LIVE LITERATURE.

2 In the addition of books to the library, it might be well to consider the addition of live current, periodical, historical literature. There are magazines and Proceedings of societies that give facts and results of investigations of general interest that would bring the Association, and to some extent the community, in touch with similar societies, and inspire to more active interest in our own. Besides, such magazines, unlike current literary magazines, have a permanent and increasing value, just as many books of the same character published in limited editions at very moderate cost, soon advance to prohibitive prices if at all obtainable.

PARTICIPATION OF MEMBERS.

3. Some plan that may give to the members of the association in general, and more especially to the younger members, a greater and more practical interest in it. The addition of live literature as suggested, making the library to some extent a historical reading and club room might have this tendency. The assignment of some share in the proceedings and conduct of the library, or the encouragement to hold meetings of their own, even of small numbers,

the appointment of others than directors or committees, and other similar measures may repay careful consideration

ILLUSTRATIVE MAPS, DIAGRAMS, ETC.

4. The public meetings with their papers and discussions constitute the contact of the association with the general public, from which its active membership is to be recruited, and upon it ^{much} must rest for substantial advance in its work. Anything that adds to the interest or instructiveness of these meetings is of highest importance. It has doubtless been felt by many that most of the papers, though of highest historical and literary character, have failed of their complete effect by reason of inability to convey in words, except in a tedious way, what might have been presented to the eye by means of a map, or diagram, or simple picture. This is a day of ocular representation, and a small, suitable simple projecting lantern, that could be manipulated by any one would be a desirable addition to the resources of the association.

Of course there is need of money to carry out fully the purposes of the association, but there is even more need of an earnest, active, thoughtful membership. If the financial condition, at present does

not seem all that could be desired, the conservative plan that has been followed to present success commends itself, of doing the very best with the resources at command by careful and judicious expenditure, and at same time persistent effort to increase the resources of the association.

Respectfully submitted
CHARLES F. HIMES.

