

# Annual Report

OF THE PRESIDENT  
TO THE

## HAMILTON LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

OF

Carlisle, Pennsylvania

for the year ending

Dec. 31, 1908



The Historical Organization of  
Cumberland County, Pa.



## REPORT

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**T**HE year just closed has been characterized by the usual activity along the various lines of work of the Association, as the Historical Society of Cumberland County.

### PUBLIC MEETINGS AND PAPERS.

The monthly public meetings have been held regularly, according to the printed program, sent to members not in arrears, at the beginning of the year, at which papers upon historical subjects have been read and discussed. The attendance upon these meetings and interest manifested in the discussions indicate a growing appreciation of the work of the Association. Some of these papers have been published by the Association. The publication of others has been in many cases delayed by the time required by their authors for their completion in details. Whilst the delay in publication is to be regretted, the reading of such uncompleted monographs, or rather preliminary notes to valuable monographs, is desired and encouraged, as tending to arouse peculiar interest by this discussion, by which also facts are frequently elicited that contribute to the accuracy and completeness of the publication. In this connection it is proper to mention the paper of unique historical value, prepared at the request of the Association and published under its auspices by Gen. R. H. Pratt, the "Suggester, and Superintendent from September 1879 to July 1904 of the Indian Industrial School" at Carlisle Pa., on the "Origin, Purposes. Progress and the Difficulties Surmounted" in connection with that institution.

### MEMBERSHIP.

The membership remains substantially the same in numbers the inevitable losses being made up by new accessions. The distribution of the membership throughout the county is gratifying as indicating that the Association is not merely a local institution. The attendance on the public meetings is not restricted to members, and, as a matter of fact, of the attendance of those not members, women constitute a large proportion, and

their interested presence and frequent participation in the discussions contribute greatly to the success of the meetings. A paper on the regular program for the present year, on a subject of great local interest, has been assigned to a woman. It is natural, under these circumstances, that the question as to the eligibility of women to membership in the Association should be asked with increasing frequency. The only reply that can be made is, that there is nothing prohibitive, in the charter or in the Constitution, of the election of women to full membership with all the priveleges and responsibilities that implies, but that at the time of the organization of the Association it seemed best to confine the election of members to males, and unvaring practice since then has almost grown into unwritten law. At the same time another restriction on membership was the large entrance fee required, and the exceeding care in the selection of members. A few years ago the entrance fee was reduced to two dollars. with an annual due of one dollar, and the chief qualification for membership was made an interest in the purposes of the Association, and an expressed desire to become a member. This change has not only led to increased membership, but has proved of advantage in every way. Whether the election of women to membership by relaxation of the practice, might not prove a corresponding advance is a question, the decision of which rests by the constitution, entirely with the Directors of the Association. It may be stated that as a rule, with few excertions, women are not only eligible to membership in other local historical societies of the State, but also as a fact, that in many of them women fill important offices and are active members of various committees, thus contributing in every way to the efficiency of the organizations. It should, however, be made perfectly clear that in according eligibility to membership in the Association to women it is not implied, or necessarily expected, that those interested in the meetings and participating in the discussions, and otherwise promoting the work of the Association should assume the responsibilities and duties of membership. That would be a matter entirely for the determination of each

individual, and probably not many would desire to become members. These would not be as cordially welcome as at present to the meetings but would be expected to participate as freely in the discussions.

#### LIBRARY.

The files of the local newspapers have been kept up and securely bound. The valuable Magazine of History, published by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia, consisting of 32 volumes, has been completed by gift and purchase, and is continued by subscription. The Pennsylvania German and the other historic magazines have also been regularly received. A number of books have been given to the library or obtained by exchange and some have been added by purchase, as the other necessary demands on the limited income of the Association have permitted.

#### HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS.

Through the persistent activity of Capt. Wm. E. Miller, the Secretary and also Chairman of the Historical Committee, in every direction, many valuable additions to the objects of local interest have been made. These have been obtained almost exclusively as gifts. Among the many who have contributed may be specially mentioned, by reason of the number, variety and value of the objects given, Miss Emelin K. Parker, daughter of the late John Brown Parker, Esq., who has enriched the collection from the accumulations of one of the oldest and most prominent families of the Borough with documents, books, periodicals and numerous objects of great general as well as local interest, and has recently presented a richly embroidered silk coat and vest, in excellent state of preservation, of about 1776, a most unique and valuable specimen of a costume of that period. It has been cared for and displayed in a separate case.\*

\*See frontispiece.—The costume was worn by John Brown, maternal uncle of Isaac Brown Parker, grand uncle of John Brown Parker. He was, 1777-1782, Secretary of the State Board of War, 1783-1794 Assistant Paymaster General. He was brought up in the counting house of Robert Morris, enjoyed the friendship of Washington, Benjamin Rush, Commodore Barry, and was the intimate personal friend of John Paul Jones, with whom his correspondence was extensive, and he became possessor of many of his most interesting personal articles, among them the pistol worn at the fight of the *Bon Homme Richard* with the *Serapis*. He was born in Ireland.

#### FOUNDERS' WEEK PHILADELPHIA.

Request was made by the Committee having in charge the Historical Exhibit made by the City of Philadelphia during the Founders Week celebration last October, for the loan of certain historical objects in the Collection of the Association, most of which had been displayed at the Jamestown Exhibition. As the request was from a municipal corporation, within the State, and accompanied by guarantee of proper care and safe return, the Directors felt that it was proper to accede to the request. The articles have all be returned in good condition, without cost to the Association.

#### LIST OF CUMBERLAND COUNTY PUBLICATIONS.

This list suggested in the report of 1905, and subsequent ones, is being added to, but it is far from complete. It is not, properly speaking a list of 'imprints' in its narrowest sense. The word 'imprint' is so variously defined that there is considerable confusion in its use. In its narrowest sense, as suggested by the the Federation of Historical Societies of Pennsylvania, it is confined to the title page and the information it contains. The list proposed for this Association, as historic record, is designed to be much more comprehensive, and to embody all information of local historical interest, especially in regard to the earlier publications. It aims therefore, to include, as of great interest every publication of which the author was a resident of Cumberland County as well as those of the publisher or printer of which was a resident. The system of Hildeburn in his "List of Issues of the Press of Pennsylvania" is followed in a general way, as far as practicable, to give uniformity to the record. Correspondence is solicited in regard to any books suitable for the list, in possession of individuals.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CUMBERLAND COUNTY.

The commencement of a complete Bibliography of Cumberland County was suggested at the same time as the preceding, with which it is nor to be confounded, as it is entirely

independent of it and it is concerned with a subject. It aims to list, with precise reference, any publication containing anything in any way relating to Cumberland County or any part of it. Such a bibliography must necessarily be a growth, and of increasing value each year.

#### PHOTO-RECORDS.

Continued effort is being made to secure photographs of old land marks, documents, and objects of historic interest. The cooperation of many expert Amateurs would assist greatly in extending this work. Attention is again called to the fact, that complete data, upon which the value of such photographs greatly depends, should accompany any photographs sent to the Association. Circulars relating to the work will be furnished anyone on application.

#### EQUIPMENT AND NEEDS.

No unusual expenditure upon the building has been required during the year, but cases and shelves have been required by the numerous accessions to historical collection and for the accommodation of files of periodicals. These have been added out of the income of the Association with a regard to the permanent needs and character of the library. At the present rate of growth of the collection, an enlargement of the building in the near future will become a necessity. Fortunately there is ample ground, and the building readily adapts itself to enlargement at comparatively small cost, with the addition of a commodious fire-proof vault; for although the building is comparatively secure on a lot of its own, detached from other buildings, of brick with metallic roof, and only two stories high, a fire-proof vault, as suggested, would give more comfortable assurance of the complete safety of many irreparable articles of great local interest, to say nothing of many of great intrinsic value.

#### FINANCES.

The income of the year has been confined as usual to the dues of the members and an appropriation of 8185 by the Com-

missioners of the County. The necessary expenditures for fuel light, janitor's services, insurance, care of building and grounds, absorb a large portion of this. Most of the surplus is expended in the regular work of the Association, as binding, including the files of newspapers, subscriptions to historical magazines, printing programs, reports, papers read before the association, and leaving but a small balance to be expended for books and objects of interest, as it has been the policy of the Directors to confine the expenditures to the receipts of the year from all sources. Altogether the Association, as a working organization, is in a highly satisfactory condition, and with the limited resources is accomplishing an important work that otherwise might be left undone, and it is appreciative of the recognition and encouragement of those interested in the "elucidation and preservation of the history of the Country."

Respectfully submitted,

CHARLES F. HIMES

January 19, 1909.

President.