

Indiana Historical Society

HOWARD H. PECKHAM

The American Association for State and Local History held its annual meeting in Washington in October. This is the same organization that met in Indianapolis last year. In attendance from Indiana were Howard H. Peckham, secretary of the Indiana Historical Society, and Mrs. Grace Osterhus, of South Bend, a director of the Northern Indiana Historical Society.

The Association voted to inaugurate a quarterly magazine for history teachers, in co-operation with Cornell University Press. This periodical is designed for national circulation among junior and senior high school history teachers, to help them to do a more effective job of interesting their students. Individual member dues in the Association were raised to \$3, and institutional memberships were pegged at \$5. The Association is making a determined effort to raise additional funds by selling higher classes of membership to individuals, local societies, and corporations having historical interests. The goal of the Association is to employ a traveling executive secretary who can help societies in each state become more active and effective.

The Association has also instituted a system of awards to local historical societies for distinguished activity each year. The society that has done most by way of providing good programs, issuing publications, gaining members, leading the community in historical observances, etc., is given a certificate of commendation. Another contest is open to newspapers, service clubs, patriotic, and fraternal organizations for their historical activities. The country is divided into five regions, and there are winners in each region. It should stimulate local historical societies to know that their activities are watched by a national organization which stands ready to give them recognition for their efforts. Indeed, the idea has suggested to the Indiana Historical Bureau the desirability of instituting a statewide contest on a similar basis.

The Association passed a resolution to submit to President Truman a request for declaration of a National History Week, which would focus attention on the work of state and local historians once each year.

Dr. Carl E. Guthe, director of the New York State Mu-

seum, delivered a stimulating address on local museums. Having inspected many of them, he is aware of their faults. He urged the adoption of three policies. First, local museums should delimit their scope; that is, they should determine how broad a field they will attempt to cover. Naturally, the history of their own community suggests itself first. Then they should refuse materials pertaining to other parts of the world and even non-historical gimcracks of their own area. Secondly, he advised "good housekeeping"—the keeping of accurate accession records and catalogues and the use of enough storage space so that everything is not on display at one time. Finally, he recommended developing the community services of the museum, to schools, clubs, business firms, and others.

Other papers dealt with publicity practices of historical societies, acquiring and preserving historical properties, and with folklore. The 1947 meeting of the Association will occur at Denver next September.