

Report of the Council

APRIL 18, 1990

EARLIER THIS MONTH, an amazing thing happened at the Senate Hearing on the Reauthorization of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The dean of the Princeton University graduate school, Theodore Ziolkowski, issued a call to the Congress to support the cost of operations of independent scholarly institutions. He stated that such institutions 'make up a significant part of the infrastructure that supports scholarly work in the United States and that enhances the general quality of national life.' Dean Ziolkowski then suggested, because of the 'importance of these institutions to the nation's intellectual and cultural life and their financial vulnerability,' that the federal government should 'consider ways to assist those institutions that serve national constituencies.' Alluding to the operating support that the Institute of Museum Services provides to the nation's museums, Mr. Ziolkowski called upon the Congress to establish a new line item within the NEH budget to fund competitive awards to the institutions that 'constitute a critically important and irreplaceable base upon which American scholarship has become the most productive in the world.' Leading his list of worthy exemplars was none other than the American Antiquarian Society!

And not a moment too soon; the trend that we noted in our last report has become more pronounced! Recently, two major national foundations that significantly supported humanistic enterprises in the past have announced changes in their programs, thereby excluding independent research libraries as eligible institutions. In conversations with local foundations we have learned that they, too, under pressure to replace human services that have

been cruelly reduced by state and federal agencies, will devote more of their resources toward the funding of social concerns. We must acknowledge, also, that the 'Massachusetts Miracle' seems to have dissolved before our very eyes under the stress of our unconscionable 'Proposition Two and a Half' (California's Proposition 13) that has selfishly hamstrung state and local school, library, and other essential social services. This has resulted in the evisceration of the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities (the humanities always having received short shrift) with its useful (dare we say vital) 'Merit Aid' awards that provided operating funds for our education, public, and publication programs.

On the other hand, old and new friends within and without the foundation community still regard our work as important and worthy of support, viz.: the Ahmanson Foundation increased by \$25,000 our Ahmanson Publication Fund; the ever-generous trustees of the George I. Alden Trust awarded AAS \$25,000 toward a matching grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for the cataloguing of our collection of literature for children; the New York Times Foundation gave \$10,000 for support of our Program in the History of the Book in American Culture; the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation made a grant of \$25,000 toward general operating expenses; the Amelia Peabody Charitable Trust gave \$5,000 to increase our endowment funds; an anonymous donor made a gift of securities valued at \$175,000, as well as arranging a substantial bargain sale of securities, for support of computerized access to collections; the H. W. Wilson Foundation granted us \$40,000 to match another award from the National Endowment for the Humanities, this one for the cataloguing of American imprints, 1821-30; gifts totaling \$15,000 came from William S. Reese and Michael Zinman that will enable us to catalogue American imprints not recorded in Evans or Bristol; a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation of \$48,000 will enable us to engage an assistant for another eighteen months to deal with the never-ending flood of reports to the Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalogue.

The National Endowment for the Humanities is a significant factor in enabling AAS to exploit our research collections and, through NEH Challenge Grant programs that we independent research libraries instigated some years ago, in increasing our endowed funds. Since 1972, when we obtained our first grant for the cataloguing of our disorganized manuscript collections, AAS has benefited from NEH grants (and the matching gifts that went with them) to the amount of almost nine million dollars, four million of which went directly into our endowment portfolio. Thus, as one of a few 'centers for advanced study' that are supported by NEH through so-called 'regrants,' we have followed with bated breath and have participated with the National Humanities Alliance in quieting the imbroglio precipitated by those perspicacious art critics, Sen. Jesse Helms and his cohorts. You will recall that the senator objected to the content of two art exhibits that had been funded through regrants by the National Endowment for the Arts. To explain: both NEA and NEH make financial awards to organizations that submit proposals that the Endowments conclude will advance Endowment goals. The grantees then conduct their own competitions, granting money derived from NEA or NEH to projects that are deemed to be appropriate to their own programs. The AAS-NEH Fellowships that we award to scholars for lengthy tenures work in this manner. Senator Helms, his sensibilities offended by 'pornographic' art, called for a greater accountability to the Congress from NEA and NEH when awarding such regrants. In fact, the senator is out to kill off both Endowments. Forceful steps were hastily taken to insure that close supervision of regrants would occur. Thus, NEH decreed that AAS must submit our fellowship selections for approval. This surely smacks of censorship, although such did not occur, nor had it in the past. In fact, the staff of NEH and the review committees of its National Council were punctilious in making the process as painless as possible and in giving no hint of interference in the process. It is a considerable satisfaction to us that Chairman Lynne Cheney, in the reauthorization hearings, explicitly concurred with

President Bush's opinion that both Endowments should be continued for the next five years without congressional restrictions being placed on the content of the grants they award. Further, Chairman Cheney requested the Congress to specifically authorize the Endowment to make regrants, as well as to allow NEH to return to the level of supervision of them that prevailed prior to the Mapplethorpe-Serrano excitement.

These concerns, the diminution of sources of support available from national foundations, as well as the fragility of continued government support, have strengthened our resolve to renew our efforts to improve our endowed resources and to face up to the difficulties that our beautiful Antiquarian Hall presents in efficiently and safely housing an irreplaceable research collection. Therefore, the Council has authorized and called upon the Committee on Development and the Society's staff to begin the planning process for a major capital campaign that will address fiscal needs for the next several years, including the renovation and construction of a more adequate library facility.

AAS achieved a truly significant goal at the end of the last calendar year, when we successfully concluded the pre-nineteenth-century phase of the North American Imprints Program, which was linked closely to the Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalogue (ESTC). We have catalogued in the most precise manner all of our holdings printed in America from 1640 through 1800. We have catalogued the known holdings of other repositories for the same period in a comparable manner. We have modified machine-readable records to stand for records suitable for shared cataloguing by other libraries, to stand for records to the microform sets of those imprints, and we have greatly modified them so that they may stand as compatible records in the ESTC file. This signal achievement was brought about through the planning and supervision of John B. Hench, director of research and publication, and Nancy H. Burkett, associate librarian, and the quite brilliant execution of Alan N. Degutis, our head of cataloguing services, and by his excellent staff. We congratulate them and their

colleagues, past and present; Degutis's predecessor, Earl Taylor, and Richard Anders, Hollister Bernstein, Barbara Burke, Melissa Carter, Joanne Chaison, James Cuffe, Margaret Donoghue, Richard Fyffe, Paula Huggard, Mary-Parke Johnson, Joseph Macmanus, MaryKate McMaster, Pamela Meitzler, Anne Moore, Anne Nicholson, and Marie-Therese Poisson, even as the remnants of the staff plunge ahead to deal with still unprocessed records from the Public Record Office in London or those of the holdings of various Irish libraries. Having catalogued in like manner all our broadsides issued before 1831, we are also at work cataloguing miscellaneous American imprints published during the period 1821-30, as well as finishing up our collections of children's literature of the nineteenth century. This latter work is being diligently pursued by Laura Wasowicz. Some time ago, Doris O'Keefe, who has just returned from a six-month exchange internship at Trinity College Library, Dublin, and Susan W. Gordon completed the machine-readable cataloguing of our collections of printed matter dealing with the abolition of slavery, some 2,500 items. Our only trouble is this: we have isolated another 2,500 pamphlets on the same subject, most of them not duplicated at AAS, in uncatalogued collections. So it goes. There is no end to the work, it seems.

Acquisitions, although hardly as numerous as in past years, have held up in quality very satisfactorily. A gift from the James J. Colt Foundation enabled us to purchase several early imprints, including a copy of the *Catalogue of Books belonging to the Association Library Company of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1765) and the equally desirable and important *Examination of Col. Aaron Burr, before the Chief Justice of the United States, upon the Charges of a High Misdemeanor, and of Treason against the United States* (Richmond, Va.: S. Grantland, 1807). This is a pamphlet for which I had been searching for many years. The generosity of the members of the Worcester Association of Mutual Aid in Detecting Thieves made possible the purchase of two significant books written by a black sea captain from Cuttyhunk and New Bedford, Paul

Cuffe, both of which pertain to the history of Afro-Americans, to wit: *A Brief Account of the Settlement and Present Situation of the Colony of Sierra Leone, in Africa* (New York: Samuel Wood, 1812) and *Memoir of Captain Paul Cuffe, a Man of Colour* (Philadelphia: Kimber and Sharpless, 1816). However, the year's most important acquisition is a collection of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American bookbindings carefully gathered together over many years by Kenneth G. Leach of Brattleborough, Vermont. Numbering just about 750 titles in 1,000 volumes, the Leach Collection greatly enriches our preeminent holdings of American bindings that were begun by Isaiah Thomas and extended in the 1970s by the late Michael Papantonio. The collection was purchased on the Isaac Davis Fund, an acquisition fund recently established through the authorized sale of the famous Millbury, Massachusetts, five-cent, postmaster's provisional stamp of 1845. Davis, an exceedingly sharp mid-nineteenth-century lawyer of Worcester and a dedicated Democrat, had received this perfunctory letter from a Millbury colleague. It was part of a collection of manuscripts given to AAS in 1884 by Davis's son, Isaac, one of many such communications in the collection. We had sold another letter bearing the stamp in about 1895.

Activities within our educational arena continue at a high level of excellence. In addition to meetings of the long-running Seminar in American Political and Social History, seminars in American literary history and in bibliography and printing history were held. Prof. Maryemma Graham of Northeastern University was guest curator of an exhibition on writings by Afro-Americans, the costs of which were underwritten by a grant from the Massachusetts Foundation for Humanities. Professor Graham also presented a public lecture on her topic, which was extremely well received by an enthusiastic audience.

The Council is pleased to announce the appointment of the scholars who will take up fellowships at the Society during the coming twelve months.

AAS-National Endowment for the Humanities Fellows

Norma Basch, associate professor of history, Rutgers University-Newark, 'Framing American Divorce: Rules, Realities, and Mythologies, 1770-1870'; William J. Gilmore-Lehne, associate professor of history, Stockton State College, 'A Republic of Knowledge: The Rise of an Age of Reading in America, 1639-1850'; Barbara H. Meldrum, professor of English, University of Idaho, 'Harriett Beecher Stowe and the Dynamics of Nineteenth-Century American Progress.'

Kate B. and Hall James Peterson Fellows

Thomas Brown, assistant professor of history, University of Detroit, 'The Routinization of Charisma in the Early Democratic Party'; Scott E. Casper, Ph.D. candidate in American studies, Yale University, 'The Cultural and Literary Contexts of Antebellum Campaign Biography and Children's Biography'; Christopher Clark, lecturer in history, University of York, England, 'To Live in the Common Cause: Communal and Cooperative Groups in Nineteenth-Century America'; Mary Kelley, professor of history, Dartmouth College, 'Achieving Authority: Women in Public in Early America'; Carolyn J. Lawes, associate instructor in history, University of California, Davis, 'The Second Great Awakening and the Development of Commercial Capitalism in Worcester, Massachusetts, 1820-49'; Shane White, lecturer in history, University of Sydney, Australia, 'Black Festivals in the United States, 1750-1860.'

Frances Hiatt Fellows

Elliott Bostwick Davis, Ph.D. candidate in art history, Columbia University, 'American Drawing Books, 1820-80: Practical Guides for Artist and Artisan'; Todd Steven Gernes, Ph.D. candidate in American civilization, Brown University, 'Schoolgirls: Young Women's Literary Culture, Political Expression, and the Aesthetics of Affiliation in Nineteenth-Century America.'

AAS-Northeast Modern Language Association Fellows

JoAnn E. Castagna, academic advisor, University of Iowa, 'Women, Sexuality, and Popular Culture: Sensation Novels and Gender Ideology in Nineteenth-Century Newspapers'; Maryemma Graham, associate professor of English, Northeastern University, 'Afro-American Authorship, 1746-1906.'

AAS-American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Fellow

Robert Lawson-Peebles, lecturer in English and American studies, University of Exeter, England, 'Transatlantic Cultural Relations, 1745-80.'

Stephen Botein Fellow

Amy M. Thomas, Ph.D. candidate in English, Duke University, 'Reading in the Antebellum South.'

Boni Fellow

John Canup, assistant professor of history, Texas A & M University, 'New England Culture and the Pacific.'

Research Associates

Mary Cable, independent scholar, Sante Fe, New Mexico, book in progress, *Gone to World's End*.

John Corrigan, assistant professor of religious studies, University of Virginia, 'Reason, Passion, and Religion in the Eighteenth Century.'

If gifts have been important in enabling us to enrich our collections, the generous response of hundreds of friends of the Society and nearly all of the members of AAS has made the difference between a balanced budget and a deficit. Thus far, donations to the 1990 Annual Fund amount to \$182,372, which include some \$43,165 raised at the winter gala of the Alliance for the American Antiquarian Society, a 'Magical Weekend.' AAS member Ricky

Jay entertained and instructed us with demonstrations and a lecture on the history of the performance and literature of prestidigitation. These delights were accompanied by a perfectly smashing party, preceded by dinners given by faithful friends and members of AAS, as well as by a splendid exhibition prepared by Mr. Jay, Georgia B. Barnhill of our staff, and volunteer Sally Levinson. (A catalogue of the exhibition is available from our publication office.) Mr. and Mrs. Bruce G. Daniels were co-chairs of the event, while Lynnette P. Sodha, director of development, and her staff were responsible for tracking every last detail to its lair.

So, we are halfway through the year. The budget is in excellent shape, thanks to the careful management of staff and the aforementioned generosity of our friends. If we have any regrets with the passage of time, they must lie in the knowledge that during recent months we have lost so many long-time and faithful members through death. We think particularly of James F. Beard, Kenneth S. Jones, former Councillor Cecelia M. Kenyon, and Charles Van Ravenswaay. To past and present members and friends of the American Antiquarian Society, the Council offers its profound gratitude for your generous loyalty.

Marcus A. McCorison

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