

## *Report of the Librarian*

THE most important event of our year has been the conclusion of an agreement with the Readex Microprint Corporation by which we shall edit and they publish in microprint form the full text of every book, pamphlet, and broadside listed in Charles Evans' *American Bibliography*. As first proposed by a third party, the project provided for the publication of these reprints helter-skelter, without plan, and without editing of any kind. Obviously the chronological approach has many advantages. It will, for example, put in a single segment of the file of microprint cards such classes as all Cambridge Press imprints, all Great Awakening tracts, or, in most cases, all the works of any one author. It would be a tragic mistake to pass up this opportunity to publish the corrections of the hundreds of errors in the original volumes of Evans which have come to light during the fifty years of research which have gone on since the first volume appeared. About one in ten of the Evans entries has something the matter with it as it stands in his volumes. There are hundreds of ghosts—titles or editions which never existed, but arose from errors in other bibliographies, or from a misunderstanding of advertisements. There are thousands of titles of which no copy can now be found; it will be a major bibliographical service to search for these and in the microprints to distinguish them from the ghosts. In hundreds of instances Evans was in error as to the identity of authors. Our own imprint catalogue records the result of fresh biographical research on every author, the dating of thousands of undated items, and the results, if

any, of an actual examination of the text of each item in order to determine its relation to its fellows. In the microprint edition we propose to insert before each item a card identifying the author and giving a reference to a biography of him; and an abbreviated title, with, in the case of controversies and supplements, cross references to other items relating to this. The greater part of this information is already available in our own imprint catalogues; but the search for items not in our own collection will keep us very busy for years.

Since the thirteen volumes of Evans will serve as the index to the microprint edition, the reproduction of items omitted by Evans will be left to the end of the project. As a matter of fact, most of the omissions are reprints of well-known titles which will be reproduced from other editions in our first series. For the time being, newspapers and other serials will be passed over. Many libraries already have these in microfilm and would hesitate to subscribe to the general project if they were included. Moreover the serials would not fit into our proposal to reprint in the Evans order, which divides them into annual segments.

This is the most important bibliographical project since the National Union Catalogue was begun. In no other way could so much be done to diffuse knowledge by making widely available the tools of research. The most essential printed sources of American history through the year 1800 will for the first time, at the cost of about twenty cents apiece, be brought within the reach of the thousands of students who cannot travel to the great research libraries, or live for months or years in the cities in which these are located. No more need a research scholar in our field regard as exile a position in a distant college. In academic circles interest, research, and instruction in colonial history has been declining. This project will do much to revive it.

The objection has been raised that with this source material widely available in microprint, the importance of such libraries as this will be diminished. Well, I do not expect that any of us will live to see the completion of the train of related microprinting projects which this will begin. But when this work with all of its ramifications is done, we shall have exhausted the contents of one third of one of the twenty miles of bookshelves in our Library. The other shelves suggest bibliographical projects enough to keep our successors busy for a century.

The greater part of the film from which the microprints will be prepared will be made in this building by an operator furnished by the Readex Corporation. Unfortunately there seems to be no practical way of developing from this situation a permanent solution of the problem of getting a photographic department of our own under our own roof. We simply do not have enough orders to justify the expenditure involved; nor, thanks to the new stack, are we pressed enough for space to justify filming our bulkier and less valuable files.

One of the most successful solutions of the space problem which all libraries face was the famous Farmington Plan, by which the great American libraries divided up the fields of human knowledge, each taking the responsibility for preserving everything published on certain subjects, and abandoning the effort to collect thoroughly in the others. Our interest in the Farmington Plan lies in the list of materials excluded from its operations, a list which sounds like a record of our important collections: Almanacs, Annuals, Bibles, Juvenile Literature, Newspapers, Periodicals, and the like. In some of these excluded fields we long ago assumed the responsibility of developing the definitive collections.

Take Almanacs, for example. A bibliography now in preparation, covering primarily almanacs published before

1850, has reached a total count of 11,000 issues, of which we have 8100, by far the largest collection. And of our 8100, more than 1500 are the only known copies.

Within the past few years our collection of American Literary Annuals has ceased to grow, apparently because it is substantially complete. Juvenile Literature before 1820 is another matter, for although we have here a margin of superiority like that in the field of Almanacs, we are constantly adding rare and sometimes hitherto unreported titles and editions. Among the more interesting acquired this year were *The History of Holy Jesus* (New London, 1766), *The Northern Lord, or the Knight in Green* (Bennington, 1802), *Will Whistle's History of the Birds of the Air* (Philadelphia, 1805), *Tom Jones* (Hartford, 1806), *Sinbad the Sailor* (Philadelphia, 1808), *A New-Year's Gift* (New York, 1809), and 1811, *Cinderella* (Albany, 1818), and *Peter Prim's Profitable Present*, another of W. Charles' engraved and colored books. Different in kind, but still Juvenile Literature, is *The New-England Psalter . . . Being an Introduction for the Training up Children in the Reading of the Holy Scriptures* (Boston, 1771).

To our unrivaled collection of New England Primers we have added editions published at Middletown in 1786, Norwich, 1803, New York, Ming and Young, 1805, Wilmington, 1805, and an early undated Episcopal edition published at New York by M. Day.

It is understandable that none of the libraries participating in the Farmington Plan wanted to take the responsibility of becoming the central repository for newspapers. They create such a storage problem that, although college librarians and professors are sometimes resentful because we will not open our files to undergraduate research, their own institutions will usually not accept as a gift even the fine bound runs which we sometimes acquire in duplicate.

Thanks to the fact that book dealers will not even examine lots of newspapers circulating as discards, we sometimes make remarkable finds. The best and most famous of the early American sporting papers was, of course, the *Spirit of the Times*; but of its first years there have been known hitherto only a few scattering issues, from which vain efforts have been made to reconstruct its early history. Recently we acquired an almost complete file of its first two years, comprising the *Spirit* from volume 1, number 1, December 10, 1831, to November 17, 1832, and its companion *Traveller* from December 1, 1832, to September 14, 1833. This file was described fully in a communication from Mr. Brigham to the last number of the *Papers* of the Bibliographical Society of America.

Other important files acquired this year were the *Portland Eastern Argus*, 1804, 1805, 1810, and 1818-20; the *Augusta Age*, 1836-50; the *Hartford Times*, 1817, and 1837-40; the *Hartford Evening Press*, 1862-66; the *Middletown Constitution*, 1838-42; the *Waterbury American*, 1852-59; and the *Columbus Ohio Press*, 1846-48.

Another major field not parceled out under the Farmington Plan was that of Periodicals. The reason is illustrated by the findings of a library very similar to ours, which did some figuring recently and decided that the overhead cost of keeping bound magazines on its shelves was forty cents per volume per annum. We are very well aware of this problem, for we take currently about a thousand periodicals, including practically everything relating in any way to American history. Fortunately most of these publications are thin quarterlies. Our files of pre-1821 magazines are nearly complete, but this year we acquired a run (lacking only two issues and one other leaf) of one of the rarest, the *New American Magazine* published at Woodbridge, New Jersey, from 1758 to 1760.

Had we formally assumed the responsibility for any one field under the Farmington Plan it would have been that of pre-1821 American printing. Many libraries buy the rarities, and oddities, in this field, but we are the one which systematically searches out even the most trivial and unimportant imprints. The microprint project alone would justify us in this policy, for it is the "unimportant" items which no library troubled to keep which are going to be the most difficult to find. Of great help in filling out our imprint collection has been the generosity of the Goodspeed company, which from time to time presents us with large cartons of pamphlets relating to our several fields of collecting. From the contents of these boxes we have improved scores of copies and added many more, not only the ephemera which are important primarily as imprint records, but also many of historical importance for which we have been watching catalogues for years.

It has not been so much by watching catalogues as by watching and waiting for known copies to come onto the market that we have been able to fill in the almost complete sets of certain authors. Thus we have finally acquired fine copies of Cotton Mather's *Restitutus. . . . A Discourse made upon a Recovery from Sickness* (Boston, 1727), Benjamin Wadsworth's *Twelve Single Sermons* (Boston, 1717), and Richard Alleine, *Heaven Opened* (Boston, 1699).

A few fine pieces have crept upon us unawares. One day Mrs. John Popham Sedgwick of Worcester walked in and handed me a clean pamphlet in its original wrappers, and inquired whether we would have any use for it. It was a copy of Coverly's Haverhill, 1796, edition of the captivity of Mary Rowlandson, one of the very few editions not represented in our collection.

An adventure story quite unlike that of Mrs. Rowlandson, but one in which there has been much interest of late by

naval historians, is *The Adventures of Lucy Brewer, (alias) Louisa Baker*, "Who after living three years a distinguished member of an immoral Society of her Sex, in Boston, became disgusted with the Sisterhood, and garbed as a Male, entered as a Marine on board the Frigate *Constitution*, where she faithfully served in that capacity during three years of our late contest with Great Britain, and from which she was honourably discharged without a discovery of her sex being made." To our fine collection of editions of this entertaining tale we added that published by Trumbull in Boston in 1815. We were astonished and delighted to acquire an entirely unknown tract, *A Brief Reply to the late Writings of Louisa Baker. . . . By Mrs. Rachel Sperry*, her former employer on West-Boston Hill, who gives us, with remarkable clarity, details of life in the Scollay Square district at the beginning of the nineteenth century. A contemporary Coverly tract on the same subject is *The Surprising Adventures of Almira Paul*, "A Young Woman, who, garbed as a Male, has for three of the last preceding years, actually served as a common Sailor, on board of English and American armed vessels, without a discovery of her sex being made." The tract says that Almira Paul was then in Boston with "a number of respectable gentlemen" who would confirm her tale.

These ladies were American reincarnations of Moll Flanders, whose story had been popular in the colonies for generations. This year we acquired *The Beauties of the Renowned Moll Flanders* (Baltimore, 1802). One of the scarcest items in American literature which we have received in recent years is a fine copy, in original paper covers, of Stephen Crane's *Maggie, a Girl of the Streets*, published in 1893 under the pseudonym of "Johnston Smith." It is the gift of Mr. C. Waller Barrett. I hoped, when I first picked up Mrs. Elizabeth Jacob's *Epistle in True Love* [Boston, 1723], that it belonged in the same class with Louisa, Almira,

Moll, and Maggy; but Mrs. Jacob was a Quaker. After reading Louisa Baker and sending a boy of my own into the service I can sympathize with the anonymous author of another tract which we acquired this year, *A Late Letter from a Sollicitous Mother, to her only Son* (Boston, 1747).

More profitable juvenile activities are reflected in a group of pamphlets relating to Yale college which we recently purchased. Among these was the copy of the laws of 1759 which was the admittatur of Joseph Camp. In the lot were three of Benjamin Gale's controversial tracts, *His Letter to J. W. Esquire* (Hartford, 1769), his *Observations* (Hartford, [1770]) on the rebuttal to the same, and his *Calm and Full Vindication . . . Shewing, that the Taxes Imposed on the Students of Yale-College, are Stated Higher than to Defray the Annual Expences of that School* (New Haven, 1759). Another was President Stile's funeral oration for Governor Law (New London, 1751), and within the same contemporary wrappers *A Poem Occasioned by the Death of the Honourable Jonathan Law* (1751). From another source we acquired *A Poem Spoken in the Chapel of Yale-College . . . March 9th, 1784. By R. J. Meigs* (New Haven, [1784]) which contains this interpretation of its scene:

See fair Yalensia's sacred walls renown'd,  
With bays—with myrtles, and with laurels crown'd:  
See num'rous youths in learning's ways engage,  
And rise the learned of the dawning age:  
See Popes and Addisons—see Miltons rise,  
And soar in verse sublimely to the skies.

Speaking of poetry, which I was not, we also purchased a copy of *The Jeffersoniad; or, an Echo to the Groans of an Expiring Faction*, published on March 4, 1801, the paean of joy at the New-Deal inauguration. The Federalist leaders were neatly disposed of, Hamilton after this manner:



Detested monster! will each female say,  
Far be his presence from the realms of day;  
Down where old grisly Pluto holds his reign,  
Swift be he sunk, and there let daemons chain,  
Let vultures tear him—anguish'd let him groan,  
Whilst hags and furies revel to his moan.

On the Federalist side we acquired General James M. Varnum's *Oration: Delivered in the Episcopal Church in Providence . . . December 27, 1782*, and dedicated to General Washington. Three Revolutionary tracts which we purchased give very different versions of events. These are the bitter protest of the misused Loyalist, Martin Howard, in *A Letter from a Gentleman at Halifax, to his Friend in Rhode Island* (Newport, 1765), Nathan Perkins' *Sermon, Preached to the Soldiers, who went from West-Hartford, in Defence of their Country. Delivered the 2d of June, 1775*, and James Murray's *Sermons to Asses* ([Boston,] 1768). The last is very rare, probably because few people thought that it was addressed to them. The tale of a far more brutal revolution is told in the Hartford, 1778, edition of Bernard Romans' *Annals of the Troubles in the Netherlands. . . . A Proper and Seasonable Mirror for the Present Americans*.

In defending the usefulness of Evans' *American Bibliography* we are accustomed to say that of the thousands of items discovered since his volumes went to press, only a handful have any historical importance. This year we acquired a startling exception to this rule—an entirely unknown and *Precise Journal of General Wayne's last Campaign in the year 1794, against the Western Indians, taken down in the Course of the Campaign. With an Account of an Attack made on Fort Recovery, by the Indians, on the 30th June Preceding*, printed by John Gruber in Hagerstown in 1795. We bought this as an unknown imprint and then dis-

covered that we also had on our hands an unknown historical document of some importance. The author was apparently an officer in the regular army and well-read in the classics, but although he signs himself "Randolph" he has so far defied identification. Foiled in our own research, we have put the question into competent hands. We shall reprint the journal in this number of the *Proceedings*.

Another unsolved historical problem which is sticking in our crop at the present moment is a fragment containing pages 9-16 of a pamphlet arguing that the Continental Congress should adopt the name "Sebastia" for the United States, leaving the name "America" for the parts discovered by Vespucci. The test suggests that this was a sermon preached in New England and printed about 1776, but efforts to identify it have failed, nor has any other reference to the "Sebastia" proposal been found. There were, of course, many proposals that the name "America" be changed. We recently acquired a map published at London in 1814 by James Whittle and Richard Holmes Laurie, entitled "A Map of Cabotia; Comprehending the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, New-Brunswick, and Nova-Scotia, with Breton Island, Newfoundland, &c. And Including, also, The Adjacent Parts of the United States. Compiled. . . . by John Purdy. Engraved by Thomson & Hall."

Another field which is peculiarly our own is that of American Song Books. Through much correspondence and research in book catalogues, we had acquired by the beginning of the year a collection which numbered nearly 140 Songsters published to the year 1820, and 200 between 1821 and 1850. After 1850 there were about 350 additional titles. A sharp decline in accessions from the usual sources indicated that we had pretty well covered the field. Early this year we learned that H. Douglass Dana, the Providence

bookseller, had been an ardent collector of American Songsters. We made overtures toward the purchase of this collection and obtained it through the generous aid of Miss Lucile K. Wilkin, whose knowledge of Song Books and their contents is unrivaled. From the Dana collection we added 117 titles, quite the largest single accession of the kind we had ever obtained. It is particularly rich in political and minstrel Songsters.

In several other fields we have been offered little of importance which we lacked. The only item of significance which we acquired at the Holliday sale was *Horrible and Aweful Developments from the Confession of William Morison. The Rocky Mountain Trapper* (Philadelphia, 1853). One of the most important accessions in the field of literature was one of the three known copies of the second (1774) edition of Francis Hopkinson's *A Pretty Story*, which is generally considered to be the first work of fiction by an American writer. It came to us as a gift from a member of the Council. Mr. Brigham's project of extending the collection of Wright-type fiction to 1876 is slowing to a walk as it nears completion. Our total accessions for the year, exclusive of periodicals, amounted to only 2100 bound volumes, 2096 pamphlets, and 1294 maps, prints, and the like; bringing the total in the Library as of October 1, 1954, to 289,613 bound volumes and 435,575 pamphlets.

The time saved by the reduction of accessions has been used to press toward completion of several bibliographical projects which have long been on the fire. The most important of these is the imprint catalogue, which will be the basis of the Evans microprint project. We had hoped that the last of the old uncatalogued collections would have by this time been processed into our new subject classifications, but lack of satisfactory summer help has somewhat delayed the work. It will be completed this year however.

We have had no changes in the permanent staff, which is a blessing, for it would be impossible to gather a more skilled, industrious, and even-tempered family than we now have. They regard the varied and complex work of the Library as their personal responsibility, and they take pride in the results. With Paul Revere and the last volume of Evans in the page-proof stage, we all look forward to the even more important and more interesting tasks which are on our horizon, and to the satisfaction which comes of being a part of an ever-widening sphere of usefulness.

Respectfully submitted,

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*Librarian*

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