

## *Report of the Council*

AS USUAL, because of college vacations and presumably because of the charm of the New England scenery, the Society has welcomed during the summer many researchers working on topics which they hope to find in this Library in more completeness than elsewhere. The subjects are so numerous that it would fill a Council report merely to record them. The materials most used were undoubtedly the newspaper files, followed by early American printing, literature, graphic arts, and biography. A great help to us in the last-named field is the collection of newspaper clippings. Twenty thousand or more small envelopes of excerpts from newspapers, in alphabetical arrangement, provide a quick reference to many thousands of subjects at a fraction of the time which would be consumed by consulting the bound newspapers. This clipping index was started by the late Franklin P. Rice in the 1870's, was increased by a similar collection formed by Alfred S. Roe of Worcester, and has been maintained in recent years by clipping Worcester, Boston, and New York newspapers, chiefly in the biographical field. Such a collection seems trivial, but its continued use, scores of times each week, shows its value.

The time of the staff has been largely devoted to bibliographical research. The several prospective bibliographies in course of compilation require constant expenditure of time to answer many queries. Lyle Wright's forthcoming check list of American fiction from 1851 to 1875 has progressed in its preliminary draft form through the letter H, and in this project the Library is much interested. The Bibliography of American Literature, admirably conducted by Jacob Blanck, is of the greatest interest to this Library,

and its first volume will soon be published. The microprint project covering American printing from 1639 to 1800 entails much work for the entire staff, although the supervision and editorship are performed by Mr. Shipton. In the Librarian's Report this project is described in detail. It is the most important project ever undertaken by this Library and one of the great bibliographical undertakings of our time. Because of its demands Mr. Shipton will henceforth spend five days a week in Worcester.

At the time when the Director's *Paul Revere's Engravings* was published, in December last, the Society owned all of Revere's engraved plates except three—the Jonathan Mayhew portrait, the John Gardiner bookplate, and Josiah Flagg's *Psalm Tunes* published at Boston in 1764. The Chandler bookplate was acquired last January. Now, through the kindness of the Reverend Charles L. Atkins, of Boxford, we have obtained the *Psalm Tunes* of 1764. Although it lacks the title-page and part of page 19, this contains more leaves than any other known copy. Of the five copies listed in the Revere book, all are imperfect. Therefore we now have an excellent working copy of this very rare Revere title.

A change in the Library staff has resulted from the death on June 29th last of Mathew J. Mathews, who had served as superintendent of the building since 1943. He has been replaced by George W. Cobill, assisted by David J. Olson who has helped as custodian for several years.

The deaths during the last six months have taken five of the older members of the Society. Reginald Washburn of Worcester, elected in 1930, died May 12, 1955. Stephen W. Phillips of Salem, elected in 1930, died July 6, 1955. Allan Forbes of Boston, elected in 1921, died July 10, 1955. Herbert Putnam of Washington, elected in 1907 and the third senior member of the Society, died August 14, 1955.

George F. Booth of Worcester, elected in 1926 and one of the staunchest friends of the Society, died September 1, 1955. Obituary notices of these members will appear in the printed *Proceedings* of this meeting.

The annual appeal for contributions to the Special Gifts Fund made in the early summer met with a successful and ready response. Were it not for this generous help from members, the Society would do little in the way of purchase of books needed to fill in our collections.

Respectfully submitted,

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*For the Council*

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