

Report of the Council

THE use of the Library, which seems to increase each year, has given the staff a very busy winter, and because of weather conditions it has been a long winter. As in previous years researchers come to Worcester to consult material which they do not find elsewhere, or often because the collections here are extensive and more readily available. This is especially true of newspaper files, where original issues are so much easier to consult than microfilm reproductions. As in the recent past such subjects as early American printing, local history and genealogy, literature, biography, and the graphic arts are continually used.

The project of reproducing the full text of the thousands of books, pamphlets, and broadsides recorded in Evans's monumental *American Bibliography* on microprint-cards is proceeding at an impressive rate. The subscriptions which have poured in show that libraries throughout the country and the world highly approve of the plan. The Librarian's time is largely given to the development of the project, which means that much time is also spent by the staff in finding for him the titles in this Library. Generally speaking, about a half of the imprints have to be sought elsewhere, which entails tremendous labor and correspondence. Only through the cooperation of all the leading libraries has this been made possible. Mr. Shipton has already proceeded through the year 1745, covering about 5600 entries in Evans. His Report which will come in October will reveal much more information about this outstanding project.

Two bibliographical undertakings which have been mentioned in Council Reports for the past three years have been given further attention. Lyle Wright's approaching volume of American Fiction from 1851 to 1875 is nearing completion. Starting with only a few volumes in this field less than three years ago, we have written hundreds of letters to book-dealers and built up a collection which today amounts to 1640 titles. It is seldom now that we can find titles that we lack.

The other bibliographical venture is the collecting of titles which will be included in the comprehensive *Bibliography of American Literature* being compiled by Jacob Blanck for the Bibliographical Society of America. The first volume in the series appeared late in 1955, covering authors from the letters A and B. In this category alone the work lists 2328 titles, indicative of the comprehensiveness of the Bibliography. We have checked this Library's holdings for most of the forty authors included in the first volume, showing that we have about two thirds of all the titles entered. The Bibliography is one of the greatest and most monumental works of its kind ever published, and is an outstanding credit to the compiler, Mr. Blanck, for his knowledge, his ability, and his research. One of the features of the list is the inclusion of books to which an author contributed—either a preface or introduction, or even a single story or poem—if such contribution appeared in book form for the first time. Such anthologies are difficult to find, chiefly because they are so lightly regarded, and we hope to improve our holdings in this field during the next year or two.

For the past three years, cartons of valuable material have been regularly coming to the Library from Thomas W. Streeter, our fellow member and past president of the Society. These contained that portion of his famous

Railroad collection which dated through the year 1840. As is shown in Thomas R. Thomson's splendid *Check List of Publications on American Railroads before 1841*, published by the New York Public Library in 1942, it was the Streeter collection which contained the greatest number of titles for the period covered by the check list. During the coming weeks the collection will be unpacked and arranged, and united with our own collection which is stronger for the period from 1841 to 1870. The arrangement so far decided upon is to classify all material relating to any railroad under the title of the company, alphabetically in order, followed by general railroad items chronologically arranged. The latter method will give us the added usefulness of the Thomson check list, which is arranged by year and is excellently indexed. There will be a separate classification for canals. The Librarian, in his report for next October, will analyze the Streeter collection and comment upon its usefulness for the study of early American railroads.

One of the most important and hitherto neglected fields of Americana is the study of English engravings relating to America, especially during the period from 1750 to 1783. These were mostly published in English magazines of the period, although a few were separately issued. The magazines were numerous, and are not too often found in American libraries. The best collections are at Yale, Harvard, and this Library, although many other libraries have occasional and partial files. Most of the magazines made liberal use of prints, such as caricatures, scenes, and maps. When my book on Revere's engravings was being compiled, I visited many libraries to search for the prints which Revere used in preparing his engravings for the *Royal American Magazine* and found some of the prints in rare periodicals known in this country only by single or partial files.

A tremendous help in the study of the subject is the *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires* issued by the British Museum in nine volumes, from 1870 to 1949. This work, especially in the more recent volumes, includes historical introductions of great usefulness for the study of the political relations between England and this country. Volumes 5 to 9, covering the years from 1771 to 1819, are provided with splendid indexes of names and subjects. Such indexes were so valuable that we made indexes for volumes 3 and 4. But the British Museum work lists only the prints which are in the Museum, and many additional items are to be found in English and American libraries. The impressive collection of caricatures which has been gathered by Wilmarth S. Lewis of New Haven numbers in the thousands and contains scores of prints not in the British Museum list.

The collections of American caricatures are most comprehensively shown in this Library (the Sabin collection), at the Carter Brown Library (the Halsey collection), at the New York Public Library, and at Harvard, to name only a few of the libraries which have many caricature prints in the Americana field. A check list of such caricatures, numbering several hundred prints and provided with a subject and name index, would be of much value for the study of English-American relations for the thirty years previous to the close of the Revolution.

There have been five deaths in the Society's membership during the last six months. Bernard A. DeVoto of Cambridge, elected in 1945, died November 12, 1955. Robert L. O'Brien of Washington, elected in 1928, died November 23. Archer M. Huntington of New York, elected in 1910, died December 11. Stanley T. Williams of New Haven, elected in 1944, died February 5, 1956. Howard Corning of Salem, elected in 1934, died February 13, 1956. Obituary

notices of these members will appear in the printed *Proceedings* of this meeting.

This Council Report could be lengthened considerably by reference to the many and important recent accessions to the Library, but such remarks should wait for the Librarian's Report for the annual meeting in October next.

Respectfully submitted,

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For the Council

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