

## *Report of the Librarian*

LIBRARIES, like all human institutions, have their tides, and ours for the past year has taken the form of another fluctuation, this time upward, in the number of visiting scholars who for longer or shorter periods take up residence in Worcester in order to work in our collections. With increasing frequency those of our visitors who have stopped by while on their way to Boston or New York return and settle down here for the rest of their eastern stay because our collections, even when not stronger than are those of our sister institutions, are better arranged for purposes of research. As an institution we have no body of undergraduates which we have to serve by providing secondary works and the means of practice research, and as a result we can better serve mature scholars. If the duties of these visitors to their distant universities did not recall them each September, we would be in a serious plight for lack of time to carry on our own bibliographical projects.

When our proposal to reprint in microprint form the body pre-1801 American printing was announced, some friends direly warned that by making our books thus available we were undermining our own importance, because historians no longer would have reason to visit us. In view of this prognostication the increase in the number of our visitors is interesting. They are for the most part working in collections which will probably never be microprinted, although some of the new visitors first heard of us as a result of that publishing program. As our reputation spreads we are constantly reminded that in some academic circles we and our work have not been understood. This year one

distant university in opening communications with us addressed us as the "American Autocrat Society."

The revision of Evans has now proceeded through the first 17,000 items in the bibliography, which is roughly halfway through the original volumes. Microprinting has covered most of the first 11,000 items listed by Evans.

This unexpectedly swift progress has been due in large part to the generosity of the Library of Congress in depositing with us the W.P.A. inventory slips covering American printing through the year 1800. Although whole sections of the inventory are now missing, and others are in confusion, it is an invaluable tool for us, and in use every hour of the day. Its records of locations save us almost endless correspondence, and its descriptions of the peculiarities of defective copies solve many bibliographical problems. It frequently shows, for example, that the copy which Evans described was incomplete, and thus saves us long correspondence to discover an edition with the pagination which he gives.

One of the great difficulties in the use of Evans has always been the lack of a cumulative index. Not only is the user faced with the difficulty of using the indexes in thirteen fat volumes, but with the problems arising from the fact that the first of these were made fifty years ago, before modern bibliographical practices were developed. To a scholar trained in modern methods, they are a baffling puzzle, effectively concealing the treasure in the bibliography.

For the past several years Roger Bristol of the University of Virginia has been working on a cumulative index of Evans, aided by a grant from the American Philosophical Society, and goaded along by many of us who make daily use of the bibliography. Inasmuch as the American Antiquarian Society has been so deeply concerned with the Evans publications, it would have been confusing to have

any other organization print the Bristol index, so we have undertaken to do it. It can be financed by using the proceeds of our publication of Volume 13 as a revolving fund.

Our other bibliographical projects are rapidly ripening. Mr. Bristol has begun work on the supplement of Evans which will list the works omitted from the first thirteen volumes. In our microprint project we omitted serial material for several reasons, although our own unrivaled holdings of early newspapers make this the only institution which could launch a wide program of the micropublication of this essential source material. Those historians who know the value of colonial newspapers for research have been pressing us to publish in some way, for they know how many presumably definitive new histories are really bad because their authors did not have access to this material.

Microfilm publication is out of the question because it does not have the edition advantage necessary to bring down the costs to the point at which more than a handful of institutions could subscribe, because the reel form makes the use of film slow and its life relatively short. The Readex microprint process which we are using for the Evans project is unsatisfactory for reproducing newspapers because the bad condition of many of the early issues makes reproduction by any offset process difficult. I carried this problem to our member Alden Johnson, an engineer and a publisher, who soon developed three new processes of microprinting, each of them giving a better product than anything hitherto used. He has settled on one of the processes involving the use of etched plates and not offset, has carried on the necessary legal and business negotiations, and is ready to begin printing for us. This new process is more expensive as well as better than the Readex method, but we have reason to think that we can obtain a subsidy which will enable us to keep down the cost to subscribers and to carry our own

editorial expense. If these plans materialize we shall be in a position to carry out the several micropublication projects suggested in my last report.

Mr. Johnson is also carrying on another work which I proposed last year, a work which will be of great value to American bibliographers and cataloguers. This is the chronological catalogue of American type ornaments, which will enable us to date and identify the printers of hundreds of items now floating loosely in bibliographies. We are particularly anxious to have it for work on our great collection of undated American broadside ballads.

Our other bibliographical projects are in various stages of completion. Mrs. Spear's bibliography of early American directories has reached the point of such sharply diminishing returns that we should shortly print it. Mr. Brigham's bibliography of early American editions of Robinson Crusoe will soon appear in the Proceedings.

Miss Clarke's imprint catalogue, a research tool without rival, is proceeding swiftly toward completion. This year the Catechisms, with all their troublesome bibliographical problems, have been incorporated into it, and next year the schoolbooks will join them.

One of the most useful of the segments of the imprint catalogue is the section on printers and publishers. The research which Miss Clarke has put into tracing the biography and business history of these individuals is prodigious, but we had never been able to trace clearly the paths of the two young Loyalist printers, Nathaniel Mills and John Hicks, after their flight from Boston in 1776, although no doubt many of the counterfeit Continental notes in our collection came from their press. This year our friend Robert E. Moody presented us with the letterbook of Mills & Hicks for the years 1781-84, which traces them through South Carolina, Florida, and New York to Nova Scotia. He

published the manuscript twenty years ago in the *North Carolina Historical Register*, XIV, 39-83, where it had escaped our attention.

Our accessions of printed material for the year have been satisfactory but unspectacular. During the year we have acquired 2,316 bound volumes, 1,870 pamphlets, and 1,385 maps, newspapers, etc., bringing our total count to 295,906 bound volumes and 444,197 pamphlets. Once a library has acquired the key pieces in its fields of collecting, it must devote its efforts very largely to filling in the gaps. To me one of the most interesting books acquired this year was a beautiful copy of John Bulkley's *Impartial Account of a late Debate at Lyme . . . on the Subjects of Baptism . . . Giving some Account of the Rise of the Antipedo-Baptist Perswasion . . . To which is added, A Narrative of one Lately Converted from Dreadful Errors*, printed at New London in 1729. This is one of the key works in what seems to me to be the most inexplicably neglected theme in American history, as I suggested in the discussion at our last meeting. If one traces back the pattern of thought which has produced democracy and capitalism, one comes directly, it seems to me, to the Antinomianism of the Antipedobaptists, to their belief that the individual can communicate directly with God, without the intervention of saints and without interpretations and limitations laid by churches and states. From the Antinomian's belief in the ability of the individual to hear and interpret the will of God come the sense of the dignity of man on which our culture rests, and the faith in man's powers which has made possible modern civilization. This book of Bulkley's is typical of the protesting of Puritans such as he as they slid down the slippery and inevitable path of their own theology to the position of the Anabaptists themselves. This year we acquired another rare tract relating to the same controversy, [John Aplin's] *Address to*

*the People of New England*, Newport, 1753. Aplin's great-grandfather had died in prison during Charles II's persecution of Dissenters, and the family legend kept the taste of intellectual liberty sweet in his mouth.

Twenty years later an embattled New York Tory wrote a long, bitter, and somewhat obscene poem protesting the tyranny of the New England Whigs and published it under the title *The Poor Man's Advice to his Poor Neighbours*, New York, 1774. Mr. C. Waller Barrett has given us a beautiful copy.

As a gift from Goodspeed's we acquired an unknown tract, *A Serious-Comical Dialogue between the Famous Dr. Seth Hudson, and the Noted Joshua How*, Boston, 1762. It purports to be a conversation carried on by these two men while standing in the pillory for counterfeiting, and it is interesting because of its remarks on Hurd's engravings, the Masons, and Tom Bell, Harvard's most famous criminal.

We have purchased a hitherto unknown broadside entitled "A Song called Crawford's Defeat by the Indians, on the Fourth Day of June, 1782." It records in two columns of verse the capture of Colonel Crawford and the escape of Dr. Knight and John Slover. On the same sheet is another broadside poem, entitled "St. Clair's Defeat: a new Song." This battle occurred on November 4, 1791, and the broadside appears to have been printed shortly after that date. This may be William Munford's poem, printed at Richmond in 1792, and listed as No. 75 in Katharine Davis, Checklist of Richmond, Va., Imprints, 1781-1805 (Catholic University thesis). Another poem purchased this year was an almost unique copy of John Davis, *Tribute to the United States*, New York, 1798. With it we acquired a copy of the very rare first edition of the same author's *Original Letters of Ferdinand and Elizabeth*, New York, 1798.

Davis was an Englishman, and his comments on the American scene in these works are of great interest.

It must be admitted that most of the items hitherto unknown bibliographically which we acquired this year were uninteresting editions of well-known works. An exception was a juvenile, *The World Turned Upside Down*, printed at Boston by John Norman about 1794. It contains many curious cuts, such as "An Ox turned Butcher," "A Doll carrying a Child," and a "Hare roasting a Cook." Such an inversion of the social order was certainly likely to appeal to a child. It was not original with Norman, however, for it is very similar to an edition printed by Ryland in London about 1760.

By purchase we acquired a copy of John Taylor's *Verbum Semperiternum*, Boston, [1765]. Better known as the Thumb Bible, this fat little book, less than two inches tall, is excessively rare. This is the first fine copy in original binding that I have ever seen of any edition.

One of the largest acquisitions of children's books in recent years came through the purchase from Benjamin Tighe of his personal collection of 255 juveniles. About one hundred of these dated before 1820, and thirty before 1800. Nearly all of the early items were titles or states not represented in our collection. The nineteenth-century items had been selected because of woodcuts or other interesting features. Of the eighteenth-century titles, the most interesting were the *History of Little King Pippin*, Philadelphia, 1786, with a woodcut view of a bookstore; *History of Sindbad the Sailor*, Boston, 1794; *Remarkable History of Augi*, Worcester, 1799; and several early New England Primers.

We also purchased this year the Benjamin Tighe collection of early American watermarked paper. Because the Society already has tens of thousands of examples of

American paper in its early imprints, and because its founder was a paper manufacturer and one of the leading authorities on the subject, it is most appropriate that the Library should own what is presumably the largest institutional assemblage of watermarks on early paper. The Tighe collection numbered 600 different pieces, and this when combined with our own collection of 200 examples, makes a total showing of 800 watermarks covering from the earliest Rittenhouse examples of 1699 through the 1840's. Interesting pieces abound. Examples are the paper made for the German printers of the mid-eighteenth century, that made by the Milton paper mills with the watermark of James Boies, a good showing of Connecticut makers including Christopher Leffingwell, the Gilpins of Delaware, Rhode Island manufacturers such as Christopher Olney, the early Pennsylvania papermakers, the Funks, the Bickings and the Willcox Ivy mills, two pieces with George Washington's private watermark, paper made by such leading Worcester County men as Isaiah Thomas and the Burbanks, and numerous examples made especially for the United States services. Scores of pieces have only the initials of the manufacturers, many of which are recorded in the alphabetical list in Dard Hunter's *Papermaking in Pioneer America*. It would be a great aid to our knowledge of the subject if Mr. Hunter, who is the leading authority on early paper and a member of this Society, could examine this collection and identify the makers of the paper. The entire collection is arranged alphabetically in five folio boxes, and is accompanied by a card catalogue exhaustively describing each piece, whether a letter or a document or a blank, the date when given, and whether the paper is laid or wove. Also in the collection are nearly thirty of the large woodcut or engraved views of paper mills issued as advertisements by the various papermakers.



With a microprint edition of early newspapers in sight, the effort to fill out our own files becomes more and more serious. This year we acquired the Pittsfield *Berkshire Reporter* for 1814, the Utica *Columbian Gazette* for 1803-1806, 1811-1812, the *Utica Patriot* for 1808-1810, and the *Rutland Herald* for 1807. More than most rare-book libraries we collect with an eye to utility.

Would that I had the tongue of an angel to tell the world of the importance of the work of this Library, in the past year and in every year. We need angelic assistance to enable us to outride the inevitable inflation. There are only three members of our skillful and veteran staff of sixteen whose salaries are above median offered to the members of the graduating classes in American library schools this year. The average graduate this year had twelve positions offered him, and some 10,000 library positions will go unfilled. Institutions like this do not know where to turn. The great foundations are usually willing to aid in specific projects, but quite unwilling to contribute to the fundamental expenses of book purchase, salaries, and light and heat. The overhead charges allowed on foundation-endowed projects will not permit an institution to keep a staff together.

Gentlemen, The American Antiquarian Society is an organization of men with one thing in common, an interest in furthering the kind of work which it does. Right now its endowment needs furthering. I trust that every one of you who knows a rich man or a wise corporation will go out and do his duty.

CLIFFORD K. SHIPTON

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