

## *Report of the Council*

AMONG large city hospitals there is an aristocracy which prides itself on the teaching function by which it finishes off the preparation of the young doctors who have completed their course work in the medical schools. Among those research libraries which have no immediate connection with universities, the exercise of a teaching function is very rare, and for good reason. The demands upon the time of our library staffs are so great that we cannot give access to all who would use our facilities, to say nothing of carrying on teaching of our own. In these days, grammar school pupils write from as far away as California, asking us to aid in their "research" for class papers. In our library at Worcester we can usually give any would-be reader a book and a seat. Indeed, we can usually give a college student the same privilege he has in his own library, that of obtaining a specific book for which he submits a specific request. Unfortunately, he generally comes to us asking to do "research" which involves the use of many tools and materials not in his college library. Of course most such research, even at the level of the Ph.D. thesis, is only practice work, calculated to train the student, rather than to advance historical knowledge. Most of these candidates come expecting not only to be given the use of our research tools, but to be given instruction in the use of them. Such demands greatly hinder the work of our staff, which needs this same set of tools for our own bibliographical research. Our situation in Worcester is particularly difficult because the colleges in our area lack adequate library strength of their own for instruction in early American history. The other side of this problem is that

we have on our shelves thousands of secondary works which are rarely used for research, and are the only copies available in the Worcester area. Moreover, while our facilities for serving visitors are strained by the demands of visiting professors when the colleges are not in session, in term time our reading room is sometimes empty. The situation is one which, understandably, has made us unpopular with neighboring colleges and universities.

It was with a view of easing these strained relations that last winter, with Dr. George Merriam of Clark University, I gave an evening course in *The Methods and Materials of Research in Early American History*. By inviting other colleges in the area to enter students in the course, we have avoided the appearance of favoritism. Partly because of the coöperative nature of this venture, the United States Government has awarded to Clark University a grant to provide five full graduate scholarships, a new professorship in early American history, and funds to strengthen the university library for teaching purposes. I have participated in the choice of the students and the professor, and in the planning of the new courses. Dr. Merriam and I propose to continue to give our evening course on research materials and methods, and I shall assist in guiding the graduate research. By proper choice of students and subjects, I hope to see to it that certain seasonal slack in our library's operation will be taken up usefully. In the experiment of being a teaching library, we are trying to avoid the burden of providing facilities for practice research by ourselves guiding the work into useful channels. We shall at least be spared the pain of seeing our materials worn out and our time taken up by projects which we know are not worth while.

With each new academic generation the diversity of research methods and materials increases. An ever-growing body of American historians now devotes its time to the un-

digested manuscript masses in archives and the vast collections of modern private papers, and is hardly aware of the fundamental tools of bibliographical research among printed works. One result is that university courses in research materials and methods must of necessity become broader and more general. Other research libraries may be driven into following us into the field of teaching in their own special disciplines.

In the field of publication we have been active this year. We have made arrangements for the offset printing of Volume XIII of Evans and of Clarence Brigham's *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers*. One type of research tool which has been of the greatest utility over the years has been the indices to obituary notices published in several newspapers, notably the *Columbian Centinel*, which made a point of national coverage of this kind of material. Beginning with WPA labor, we built up a series of massive typewritten volumes which this year have been commercially published in offset form. In order to avoid the bookkeeping costs of publishing these three works ourselves, we have assigned the copyrights, and have already received some small royalties.

Mr. McCorison's *Vermont Imprints, 1778-1820* has gone to press and will be published soon as a monograph. In our *Proceedings* we are continuing to publish the Diary of Ebenezer Parkman, which is being edited by Professor Walett; social historians and casual readers are finding it of great interest. We have for years hoped to print Milton Drake's great bibliography of American almanacs, to which we have made much the largest single contribution, but for lack of available funds we had to relinquish it to another publisher. We do, however, plan to begin publishing in the *Proceedings*, for later offset printing in book form, the great bibliography of American juveniles on which d'Alté Welch

has been working for so many years. Because of previous commitments we have been compelled to put off indefinitely the publication of the Bougainville Dairy, edited by Edward Hamilton, perhaps the richest unprinted source for the French and Indian War. Our recent publication activities have tied up temporarily in paper and ink our revolving publication fund, and we are seeking means to get it in motion again. Practically all of the letterpress editing we have done this year has been the work of Mr. McCorison; I have devoted my editorial time to the microprint project. It is remarkable that we accomplish so much without a full-time editor.

This publication output has been made possible by the elimination of the great backlog of library work, particularly cataloguing, which hung over us for so many years, and by the reclassification now completed which greatly facilitates the finding of books. Our next major problem in this direction will be the cataloguing of our pamphlet collection, which fills some eight hundred large boxes. For many years all non-institutional pamphlet material which did not seem important enough to catalogue at the time it came in was dropped into this collection, which is primarily arranged by author. We shall catalogue most of the material printed before 1877, and the later material of a significant historical nature. Most other libraries used to have such collections of uncatalogued pamphlets, but a census taken some years ago suggested that ours was the largest. The author arrangement has made the material accessible for some purposes, but cataloguing by subject will give us much the best tool of its kind.

Such improvements in our machinery have made it possible for us to produce more with a smaller staff. The loss of Miss Elizabeth Donovan, who resigned last fall, is not, however, the kind of staff cut on which we congratulate our-

selves. She came to us in WPA days, and was kept on as a regular staff member because of the wisdom, efficiency, and kindly helpfulness with which she has managed continuations and related services. Another change in our staff has been the replacement of George Cobill by Malcolm Hannah, an experienced plant maintenance man, who has already solved problems which have bothered us for years.

A month ago we signed a contract by which, as the result of the generosity of Mr. Streeter, the 1909 lighting in our reading room, offices, and manuscript room will be replaced by more efficient fixtures, and various convenient changes made. The House Committee is investigating the possibility of air conditioning, or at least ventilating, the book stacks, to help protect our newspapers from the fierce summer heat to which they have been subjected. The relighting will be done in time for our sesquicentennial, which will be celebrated in Worcester at the next annual meeting. These activities will begin on the afternoon of October 16, when a meeting will be devoted to the consideration of the place of the limited-membership, privately-endowed libraries, today and tomorrow. That evening the members and guests will be entertained at a dinner without speeches and without business. On the morning of October 17, the regular annual meeting will be held, after which we shall, as last year, be entertained at lunch by Mr. and Mrs. Daniels.

On that occasion, and at all meetings of the Society for the rest of our lives, we shall miss Chandler Bullock, who died on the evening of March 23 after a busy day. From 1927 to 1961 he served this Society as treasurer, and in his hands it thrived. From our membership we have also lost John Woodman Higgins, who died on October 19, 1961, and Edward Alexander Parsons, on February 19, 1962; they were both active members. Obituary notices will appear elsewhere in this issue. The interest in membership, as indicated

by the backlog of nominations, is at an all-time high. Apparently the stringent narrowing of the field of our activities has been more than offset by the attention attracted by our increased activities in our special fields, and particularly by the great increase of interest in early American history at both the professional and amateur levels. It is now normal for any nomination for membership to take three years to work up to election, and some good ones never do get that far. Since the number of good nominations regularly exceeds the number of vacancies, this situation threatens to become more embarrassing in the years to come. With this in mind, the Council at the March meeting instructed me to prepare an amendment to the by-laws which would increase the number of members by twenty-five over a period of not less than five years. I shall therefore at the next annual meeting make the following motion:

The first sentence of Article VII of the By-Laws of the American Antiquarian Society shall be amended to read: "The membership of the Society shall at no time exceed two hundred and twenty-five, and the total number shall not be increased by more than five in any one year."

CLIFFORD K. SHIPTON,  
*For the Council*

April, 1962

Copyright of Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society is the property of American Antiquarian Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.