

Report of the Council

IT HAS been a busy winter, as usual, with many researchers visiting the Library, chiefly from outside of New England. Although the weather has been severe, the building has been kept comfortably warm, and the frequent snowfalls have been plowed and shovelled promptly.

The director's recently published volume entitled *Fifty Years of Collecting Americana for the Library of the American Antiquarian Society, 1908-1958*, has received wide notice through reviews and mention in bibliographical journals. Over seven hundred copies have been distributed to the members and the libraries on the exchange list, to nearly one hundred booksellers, and to many friends of the Society. Most requests for this volume have been honored, if they came from deserving libraries and collectors. No copies are sold, since the book is only presented with the compliments of the author. Judging by the hundreds of replies received, the volume has added much to the prestige of the Society and spread widely the knowledge of the Library's valuable collections.

The saddest event in recent years was the death of the assistant librarian, Mrs. Dorothea E. Spear, who passed away after a brief illness on February 23, 1959. She had served on the Library's staff for thirty-five years. More familiar than anyone with the contents of the Library she conducted constant and invaluable research. She was especially useful in indexing the Society's printed *Proceedings* and making elaborate indexes for the special publications of the Society issued in recent years. She also made a card index to the vast correspondence of the Society, both

by writer and subject, from the year 1920 to date, which work has been of constant help to researchers and to the Library staff. She was the author of a monograph on *American Watch Papers* which was published in 1951. Her most pretentious undertaking was a bibliography of American directories to the year 1860, describing and locating over a thousand of these volumes, so much used in research. This work was about ninety per cent completed, and when the unverified material is finished, it will be published by the Society. Mrs. Spear's place will never be filled.

During the past six months there have been five deaths in the membership. John M. Merriam of Framingham, senior member of the Society, elected in 1888, died on January 9. Louis H. Dielman of New Windsor, Maryland, elected in 1925, died on March 9. Russell S. Paine of Worcester, elected in 1926 and a member of the Council, died on January 3. Thomas J. Holmes of Cleveland, elected in 1927, died on February 7. Samuel Hopkins Adams of Auburn, New York, elected in 1946, died on November 16. Obituary sketches of these members will appear in the printed *Proceedings*.

The Society has benefited in recent months by several bequests. James L. Whitney, who died in 1910, left a will making many bequests to institutions. The Society was favored by receiving a gift from his estate of about \$150 a year. Upon the death of a surviving niece who received during her lifetime the main income from the fund, the estate was recently settled and the Society received the sum of \$9000 as its share in the Whitney Fund.

The second bequest was from Donald McKay Frost, who died in April, 1958, after a long illness. He left to the Society a bequest of \$10,000, with no strings attached, but which will be largely used in filling in gaps in his remarkable collection of Western narratives which he gave to us in 1947.

He was an exceedingly useful and generous friend, and a member of the Council from 1940 until his death.

The third bequest was from Russell S. Paine, a member of the Council since 1938 and always one of our most interested members. In his personal will he bequeathed to the Society a sum which should bring an income of about \$2000, with an equal amount going to the Worcester Art Museum. Later, with the expiration of certain other personal bequests the income should be larger. Mr. Paine also left another will, or trust, amounting to \$1,052,000, which will bring an income of \$21,000 to the Society after the death of a life beneficiary. This also to be shared in an equal amount with the Worcester Art Museum.

The Society's finances are in excellent condition. In fifty years we have never had a deficit. This was brought about by the gifts made each year by members and friends amounting to more than \$15,000. These gifts enable us to acquire books needed to fill in our various collections and to keep the salaries of the staff at a fair level. Thus has the prestige of the Society been maintained.

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For the Council

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