

## *Report of the Associate Librarian*

WE HAD TWO significant personnel changes in the library this year. Keith Arbour, head of readers' services for three years, left in August to begin a graduate program in American history at the University of Michigan. He was a superb reference librarian and combined excellent skills in working with our researchers with a love for organizing, shifting, and cleaning the books on our shelves. His standard of service to readers was an inspiration to the rest of us, and our stacks are now models of order (vital for both good conservation and security). Joanne D. Chaison, who had been a cataloguer with our North American Imprints Program (NAIP), was selected as the new head of readers' services and is continuing to maintain this tradition. Mrs. Chaison holds an MLS degree from Simmons College and an MA in history from the University of Connecticut.

We have created a new position, curator of printed books, as a result of the retirement of Carolyn A. Allen as acquisitions administrator. Sidney Berger, who will begin this position in October, received an MLS from the University of Illinois and a Ph.D. in English literature from the University of Iowa. He learned the printing trade from his grandfather and from Kim Merker at the Windhover and Stone Wall Presses, and comes to us with a perfect combination of interests: history of the book, book collecting, printing, and enthusiasm for hard work. Hard work has been the trademark of Mrs. Allen, and all of us find it difficult to contemplate how we will manage without her.

The normal work of the acquisitions department continued throughout the year with the assistance of Joan M. Pingeton, Peggy St. John (who left us for another position and was replaced by Lorry W. Magnuson), and Ernest A. Tosi. Purchases of research

materials totaled slightly more than \$400,000, with gifts declining in both number and value. Highlights of our acquisitions have been described by the director and librarian in the Report of the Council.

Throughout all the changes, the readers' services department has continued to meet its day-to-day responsibilities with the aid of Marie E. Lamoureux, library assistant and genealogy specialist. Miss Lamoureux answers our genealogical reference correspondence, introduces new genealogical researchers to our catalogues and collections, and shelves all our new acquisitions. For over five years she has been adding call numbers to our local history cards, and to date she has corrected 35,500 cards and has worked her way through the subject heading 'Prostitution.'

Marie-Therese J. Poisson began work as a library assistant on the first of October 1986. Her chief responsibilities include paging, reshelving, and the maintenance of our collections of booksellers' and auction catalogues. Our summer library assistants for this year were Sean Savage and Gayle S. Shepardson.

During the year we processed the applications of 980 readers (compared with 956 for the past year), who recorded 3,671 reader days, and who used 20,181 volumes (compared with 21,159 last year).

Much of my time as assistant librarian seems to be spent responding to problems that demand immediate attention, so it is a pleasure to report that a substantial portion of this past year was devoted to working on our special anniversary project, *The Collections and Programs of the American Antiquarian Society: A 175th-Anniversary Guide*. The staff responded with enthusiasm to our invitation to participate in this project and they wrote more than fifty separate essays describing our library collections. Each essay outlines the contents of a collection and explains the types of bibliographic and catalogue access available. We are confident that the book will help our readers use the library more effectively. The Society's staff did a superb job of writing the essays and proofreading them through an endless stream of typescripts and galley

proofs. John Hench, Sheila McAvey, and I deserve credit for editing the work of thirty authors and remaining friends with all of them!

As an example of a problem more typical of my work as assistant librarian, Eleanor Adams, Donald Strader, and I schemed throughout the past year to find better ways to utilize existing space in Antiquarian Hall. Sheer numbers of people and noisy equipment are taxing space originally designed for quieter times. Our solutions are temporary and not entirely satisfactory, but we plan to begin implementing the changes after our 175th-anniversary celebration.

Alarmed by what we have read about the devastating fires at the Los Angeles Public Library, we formed a small committee (Richard Baker, Donald Strader, Nancy Burkett) to examine fire safety at the Society. A consultant, Harold Cutler of Sudbury, Massachusetts, surveyed our building, and the committee has made several recommendations to Marcus McCorison based on that report. Decisions about these proposals will be made in the next several months.

This June, at the Rare Books and Manuscripts preconference to the American Library Association's annual convention, I participated in a panel discussion about promoting the use of special collections. My presentation focused on attracting scholars to independent research libraries, with specific reference to four libraries: the Folger Shakespeare Library, the American Antiquarian Society, the Huntington Library, and the Newberry Library. In February, the librarians of the four institutions met at the Huntington to discuss issues of mutual interest and to develop recommendations for joint activities. We discussed the topic of my presentation, in addition to reviewing issues ranging from difficulties in hiring rare book cataloguers to problems with replacing the Xerox 4000 for safe photoduplication. It became increasingly clear to me during the discussions that the Antiquarian Society has done a superb job in providing an array of opportunities to scholars for the use of our collections. We should take pride in our excellent

reference services, sophisticated rare-book cataloguing, imaginative programs like the Program in the History of the Book in American Culture, and our generous fellowship assistance.

For all the library departments, this past year has been one of preparation for the 175th anniversary combined with our normal workload and active professional schedules. The highlight of our activities this year was the loading into RLIN of more than 31,000 records from the Society's holdings that had been created on our local system over the past seven years. Included now in the RLIN database are catalogue records for our books and pamphlets published before 1801, our broadsides through 1830, and some of our post-1820 children's books. These records are available to the scholarly community in this country and abroad and may be searched by personal and corporate name, title, subject, and genre. All of this gives scholars unparalleled access to detailed descriptions of many of our imprints; the AAS staff uses the RLIN file for reference searches and acquisitions checking. This advance marks the beginning of a new era in the interpretation and use of our collections.

Richard C. Baker, chief conservator, and Kenneth R. Desautels, conservation technician, spent most of their time at the bench, working on items sent to the lab by the library curators, and by late summer, both Mr. Baker and Mr. Desautels were concentrating their efforts on preparing items for the 175th-anniversary exhibit.

For the second year, thanks to the generous support of Michael Zinman, we were able to hire a person to work during the summer on preservation housekeeping. Judith H. Budwig, a graduate of the University of Illinois and a volunteer at a Worcester elementary school, was selected to oil bindings and make protective enclosures. She made a significant contribution to the preservation of the Society's collections at a very modest cost.

The conservation staff has been busy outside of the lab this year as well. Mr. Desautels is writing a history of his church, St. Joseph's, as part of its centennial celebration. Mr. Baker has chaired

the New England Chapter of the Guild of Book Workers for the past two years. Mr. Baker has also been working on a research project involving the binder or binders employed by Isaiah Thomas. He has taken rubbings of all the ornamental bindings on books printed or published by Thomas that Thomas owned and that are at the Society. From this, Mr. Baker has developed a tool catalogue of 110 tools and 37 rolls that appear on bindings from 1781 to 1804. Analysis of the bindings indicates that the tools fall into two distinct but chronologically overlapping groups: 1781-1804 and 1795-1803. The latter group is the work of Henry Bilson Legge, a binder known to have worked in Boston. The binder of the first group remains a mystery. Knowing what tools he used and the books he bound for Thomas may lead to other evidence that will reveal his name.

Progress has continued at a steady pace on all fronts of the Society's cataloguing activity. Work continued on two grant-funded projects (the North American Imprints Program and the American Children's Books project). Work began on the United States Department of Education-supported project, under Title II-C, intended to create machine-readable cataloguing of the microform *Early American Imprints, First Series*, which had been edited by AAS and published by Readex Microprint Corporation. We continue to catalogue modern materials (post-1876) directly into RLIN. Although that system's performance has been satisfactory this year, our cataloguers, Doris N. O'Keefe and Dorothy M. Beaudette, cannot keep up with the increasing quantities of material to be catalogued each year. Richard L. Anders created almost five hundred new records for the imprints catalogue and has completed the cataloguing of the Society's pre-1821 American almanacs. The Society's contribution to the Library of Congress's Name Authority Co-Operative Program (supervised by Carol R. Kanis with the assistance of Dianne Rugh) continues, with efforts concentrated on personal and corporate names used as main entries in the NAIP records.

We experienced another personnel change with the departure,

in October 1986, of Richard Fyffe, who accepted the position of librarian and curator of books at the Essex Institute in Salem, Massachusetts. Laura E. Wasowicz was hired as senior cataloguer in January to replace Mr. Fyffe. Under her direction, and with the assistance of Susan J. W. Gordon as cataloguer, the project has continued to make excellent progress. In November 1987 we shall submit an application to NEH for the second and final stage of the project. If that application is successful, our entire children's literature collection will be thoroughly catalogued by the fall of 1991. As mentioned earlier, the first cataloguing records have been entered into RLIN, and it is already evident that scholars are benefiting from our work.

The Society sponsored two major exhibitions this year that drew almost entirely on our graphic arts holdings. 'Curiosities and Wonders: Evolution of the Modern American Circus' was on view at the Museum of Our National Heritage in Lexington, Massachusetts. This captivating exhibition was organized by Joanne D. Chaison, with the assistance of Georgia B. Barnhill, Andrew W. Mellon curator of graphic arts. 'Renderings from Worcester's Past: Nineteenth-Century Architectural Drawings from the American Antiquarian Society' was presented at the Worcester Art Museum. This exhibition and accompanying catalogue were organized by Lisa Koenigsberg, a former AAS fellow, with the assistance of Mrs. Barnhill.

Much of Mrs. Barnhill's time during the summer and early fall has been devoted to designing and installing our 175th-anniversary exhibition, which is titled 'A Sampler: 175 Years of Collecting American History.'

Audrey T. Zook was named coordinator of photographic services in November 1986 but retired to a part-time level in May. She now works three days a week in the serials department. Jane P. Neale was hired as the part-time assistant in the graphic arts department and has performed a wide variety of tasks with intelligence and enthusiasm. Our volunteer in this department, Augusta H. Kressler, a retired physician, continues to work with the

sheet music collection and has rehoused the collection of late trade cards in acid-free envelopes.

Mrs. Barnhill had two articles published during the past year, both based on AAS manuscript holdings. She lectured to a variety of audiences on aspects of Society collections and attended conferences sponsored by the College Art Association, the North American Print Conference, the American Historical Print Collectors Society, and the Research Libraries Group. In May she received the Maurice Rickards Award given by the Ephemera Society of North America. Gigi is well-known in the print and ephemera worlds as Georgia B. Bumgardner, so it is important to record that she became Georgia B. Barnhill on May 30.

Barbara Trippel Simmons, curator of manuscripts, focused her attention this year on the archives of the Society. Organizing our own records is a project we have long wanted to accomplish and one that we decided to incorporate into our 175th-anniversary programs. These records date back to the first days of the Society and have been carefully saved for 175 years. Stored in 579 manuscript boxes and a small number of volumes, they have never been satisfactorily arranged or described despite their great research potential. Jacqueline Blaine, part-time archives assistant until the end of April, helped Mrs. Simmons with the rehousing and identification of the Society's older records. Before she left, Mrs. Blaine had arranged and described almost all of our records from 1812 through the decade 1910-19. A replacement for Mrs. Blaine, Janet K. Pelletier, will take up her duties in October. In addition to supervising the work on the older records, Mrs. Simmons spent time developing a records management program for the Society. Like all complex and busy institutions in the age of photocopiers and word processors, we are generating enormous amounts of paper. Once she has surveyed our departments, Mrs. Simmons will analyze the findings and make recommendations for more efficient filing methods for our records. She will also help us decide what we should not save for the next 175 years.

Twenty-nine items or groups of manuscripts were added to our

collections this year including articles of agreement between James Fenimore Cooper and the firm of Carey & Lea for publication of *The Prairie*, May 1826; a manuscript bibliography of Mathew Carey imprints compiled and donated by Chester T. Hallenbeck; a probate inventory of the books of Otho Shrader, April 1812, given by Michael Zinman; records of the Worcester jail, 1751-88, given by Mrs. Peter M. Sturtevant; and Dodge-Kilham family papers, from Kenyon Riley.

Eleanor O'Donnell, a volunteer, prepared several collection contents lists and rehoused the Esther Forbes Papers. Mrs. Simmons continues to be an active member of the Society of American Archivists (SAA) and of New England Archivists (NEA). She served on the 1987 SAA Program Committee and in April began a three-year term as an NEA education coordinator. She was co-author with her former colleagues Helen W. Samuels and Joan K. Haas of 'The MIT Appraisal Project and its Broader Applications,' which appeared in *American Archivist* (Summer 1986).

The staff of the newspaper and serials department includes Joyce Ann Tracy, curator; Dennis R. Laurie, newspaper assistant; and Audrey T. Zook, periodicals assistant (part-time). Martha Gunnarson and Anne C. Moore were co-supervisors of the CONSER Newspaper Cataloguing Project until their resignations upon the completion of the NEH-funded project in February 1987.

The basic work of the department remained constant: helping patrons with reference questions; cataloguing materials; conserving periodicals and newspapers; retrieving and shelving newspapers; checking in serials and government documents; and working on exhibits. The staff delivered 1,240 newspaper titles to patrons in the reading room and answered 547 reference questions by letter, telephone, or interlibrary loan.

The Society added eighty-eight titles to the newspaper collections, twenty-one from gifts, and sixty-seven by purchase. The periodical acquisitions included ninety-three titles, eighty-four through purchase. Readex Microprint Corporation gave the Society approximately eighty reels of microfilm.



The completion of the CONSER Newspaper Cataloguing Project marked the successful end of an important commitment the Society made to the scholarly community. AAS was one of six national newspaper repositories selected by NEH to initiate its United States Newspaper Program (USNP) in 1982. State projects, also funded by NEH, are now being integrated into the program. At the conclusion of this work, which is expected to take fifteen years to finish, information about 300,000 American newspapers, dating from 1690 to the present, will be available to researchers. As our contribution to this national effort, we catalogued online 13,500 pre-1877 American newspaper titles. The bibliographical records for the Society's holdings are now available on OCLC, RLIN, and in the two editions of the USNP National Union List. As soon as the summary information, already available on OCLC, is loaded into RLIN next year, the Society's project will be officially over and Miss Tracy, who continues as project director, will prepare a final report. Miss Tracy served on the Technical Advisory Committee of the Massachusetts Newspaper Program, one of the new cycle of state projects, which is administered by the Boston Public Library. The planning phase of the program has been completed and the application submitted to NEH.

Mr. Laurie prepared an excellent exhibit on amateur newspapers for the Society and wrote an article on that collection for our Program in the *History of the Book in American Culture* newsletter *The Book*.

The year ended spectacularly for Miss Tracy when she traveled to London in August to attend the First Annual Symposium on Newspaper Preservation and Access, sponsored by NEH and the Working Group on Newspapers of the International Federation of Library Associations. She was honored with a Bogle International Travel Grant from the American Library Association to help finance the trip, with the remainder of the costs underwritten by the Society. The four-day conference provided rich information about the field of newspaper librarianship and gave the curator an

opportunity to talk about our collections to an international group of librarians.

After a year of significant staff changes, along with a major commitment of staff time for the 175th-anniversary book, exhibit, and open houses, we need a period of consolidation and 'settling in.' At the same time, we must squarely face the major issue before us, the problem of lack of physical space. We must address the space needs that have been created by the past decade of dynamic growth and development. Thus I anticipate that next year will be one of consolidation coupled with careful planning for the renovation and construction that will be required to meet the Society's needs as we go into our 176th year.

Nancy H. Burkett

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