

Report of the Associate Librarian

AT THE END of last year's annual report I suggested that this year would be one of consolidation and adjustment after a momentous twelve months marked by our 175th-anniversary celebrations and an unusually high number of major staff changes. Unlike most predictions, this has proven to be accurate, and I think the library staff is now in a strong position to continue our emphasis on excellent reference service while beginning serious consideration of space and staffing needs into the twenty-first century.

The library has benefited from two legacies of the 175th anniversary. The first is the daily use our staff and readers make of our guidebook, *The Collections and Programs of the American Antiquarian Society*. The second is the weekly public tours that we began in February as a direct outgrowth of our very successful tours during the anniversary week. These offer a behind-the-scenes look at the Society, with twenty-five staff members taking turns as guides. The tours have become an important way for the Society to bring our holdings and programs to a much wider public audience.

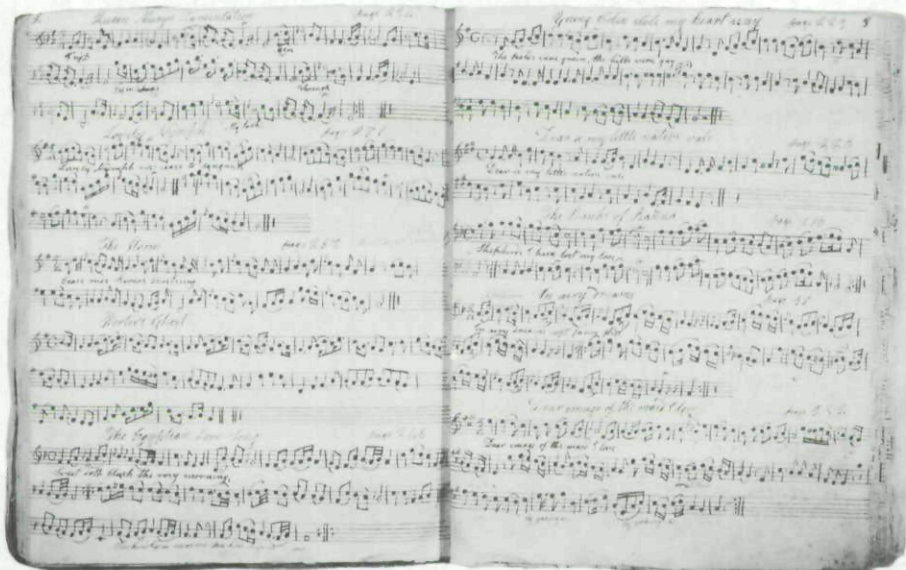
In the past year we have been awarded two important project grants and are very close to finishing work on a significant phase of a third, the North American Imprints Program (NAIP). In May we received from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) a two-year grant to continue the machine-readable cataloguing of the Society's children's book collection. This winter we will finish the NEH-funded first phase of this project, cataloguing children's books 1821-60, and will begin the second phase, which will concentrate on the period 1861-76.

The second grant awarded to the Society was one for \$50,000 from the J. Paul Getty Trust. This grant will enable us to complete the conversion of our records of early American engravings to computerized format and it will defray the costs of editing the

complete file of 16,500 entries. Much of our work on this long-term project of a definitive catalogue of engravings issued before 1821 has been funded by NEH, the H. W. Wilson Foundation, and Marion Fletcher. For each engraving there will be information on technique, text of the inscription, source of the engraving if it appeared in a book or periodical, location of the impression examined for the project, and sophisticated subject indexing. The project should be ready for publication in the fall of 1990.

NAIP continues to receive funding for two distinct but related purposes: NEH funds for completion of the catalogue of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century imprints and preparation of the file for merging with the Eighteenth Century Short-Title Catalogue (ESTC) in a special database in the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN); and U.S. Department of Education Title II-C funds for creation of machine-readable records for the Readex microform series of Early American Imprints to 1801 (Evans). The NAIP file now contains more than 39,000 records. Over 107,000 reports of locations and holdings have been received from libraries in this country and Canada. Under the leadership of Alan N. Degutis, head of cataloguing services, both projects should be completed in 1989. Creation of the MARC records descriptive of the microform series is scheduled for the first quarter of the year and NAIP records will be added to the ESTC file before the year is over.

We have had no department-head-level staff changes this year. The departments marked by changes last year have flourished under the leadership of Joanne D. Chaison, head of readers' services, and Sidney E. Berger, curator of printed books. In fact, the past year has been a busy and productive one for all the library departments. The readers' services staff processed the applications of 1,048 readers (compared to 980 last year) for 4,271 (3,671) days of research. They paged 22,521 (20,181) volumes of printed works. They answered almost a thousand telephone reference inquiries and responded in writing to over 400 letters. The curators of our other departments report similar statistics. Patrons requested



Manuscript tunebook compiled by Betsy Gaylord, 1798–1817. It contains a number of previously unknown tunes or unknown versions of tunes and is a rare combination of songs lewd, religious, and romantic. Gift of the Worcester Association of Mutual Aid in Detecting Thieves.

1,702 titles of newspapers, an increase of nearly 30 percent. The newspaper and serials staff answered 560 inquiries by letter, telephone call, and interlibrary loan, a very slight increase from last year. The graphic arts department sent out just over 600 letters. Many of them related to orders from publishers and scholars for photographs; the rest consisted of questions about collections from scholars. Usage by readers at the Society ranged from a request for just one broadside to a request for all the lithographed pictorial sheet music or all the Louis Prang greeting card sample books. Statistics increased this year in most areas of activity in the manuscripts department. Research topics included women's, religious, and community issues, with several readers focusing on the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The acquisitions department processed invoices totaling

\$355,000, an increase of about 3 percent over last year. There was a significant increase in the donations of newspapers in response to the circular letter sent out by Joyce Ann Tracy, curator of newspapers and serials, to 14,000 public and academic libraries and historical societies inviting donations of files.

For many libraries, newspapers are especially difficult to take care of, and we are fortunate that our building has climate controls and that our curatorial and conservation staff are well trained. In fact, the well-being of all our collections is dependent upon the vigilance of all our staff members working under the supervision of the chief book and paper conservator, Richard C. Baker. As in past years, the conservation staff concentrated on oiling books, boxing fragile materials, making minor repairs, treating paper, and binding books. Mr. Baker is also responsible for reviewing our disaster plan and the annual disaster training of our staff.

For many years we have had to resign ourselves to a growing backlog of uncatalogued acquisitions; thus, it is a rare pleasure to record that, thanks to Doris N. O'Keefe and Susan J. W. Gordon, our productivity of RLIN cataloguing increased 54 percent and we eliminated several of the backlogs. Mrs. Gordon, who had previously worked on our newspaper and children's literature projects, joined the general cataloguing staff in February.

There were eight exhibitions in Antiquarian Hall in addition to the Society's 175th-anniversary exhibition. Two exhibitions were the work of friends of the Society—Kent Ljungquist who is on the faculty of Worcester Polytechnic Institute and Dawn Thistle, music/visual arts librarian at the College of the Holy Cross. Materials from our collections were lent to eleven institutions for exhibition.

As in past years, the staff was active with a number of professional activities. Several members contributed to the work of RLG committees. Georgia B. Barnhill, Andrew W. Mellon curator of graphic arts, represents AAS on the Art & Architecture Program Committee and serves on a sub-committee charged with encouraging the use of the visual materials MARC format. She also chairs

a sub-committee of the Collection Management and Development Committee to encourage librarians of special collections to use the RLG conspectus. Joanne D. Chaison attended her first Public Services Committee meeting and Richard Baker continues to participate in the work of the Preservation Committee. I finished my tenure with the Archives, Manuscripts, and Special Collections Task Force, and AAS will be represented on the newly formed AMSC Committee by Barbara Trippel Simmons, curator of manuscripts. Both Alan N. Degutis and Sidney E. Berger served on the standards committee of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section of ALA. The committee is currently reviewing Mr. Berger's thesaurus of paper terms.

Mrs. Simmons completed her first year of a three-year term as the education coordinator for the New England Archivists. Miss Tracy attended the annual meeting of the United States Newspaper Project at the Library of Congress and remains a member of the Technical Advisory Committee for the Massachusetts Newspaper Project. Dennis Laurie of our newspaper staff wrote an article on amateur newspapers for *Collectible Newspapers*.

Mrs. Barnhill continues to serve on the advisory committee to the New England office of the Archives of American Art. She is a trustee of the Fitchburg Art Museum and chairs the museum's exhibition committee. She presented four lectures on various aspects of Society collections and published two articles on illustrations in gift books and on natural history illustrations.

Richard Baker served on an evaluation team of the National Association of Trade and Technical Schools for the hand book-binding program at the North Bennet Street School in Boston. He is the president of the New England Chapter of the Guild of Book Workers. He is continuing his research on Isaiah Thomas's binders and spoke to the staff of Houghton Mifflin Company about this project.

I continue to serve as vice-chairperson of the Northeast Document Conservation Center. My husband and I completed a bibliography on Afro-American Studies, 1880-1950, for the British

Library. It was commissioned by the American Trust for the British Library in order to assist the curators and librarians of the British Library with acquisitions of American publications. Our bibliography concentrated on books written by Afro-American authors and should facilitate an understanding of American life, history, and culture from an Afro-American perspective.

As part of our long-range planning, we have drafted preliminary proposals for an addition to the Society to house all library activities including reading room, stacks, curatorial offices, conservation lab, and cataloguing and acquisition work areas. These proposals mark the beginning of our efforts to meet the serious space deficiencies in Antiquarian Hall that have been generated by the increased activity of the Society since its last addition to the building in 1970-71. This process has forced us to consider urgent staffing needs as well as problems of physical space. Over the years we have accommodated ourselves to staffing and space deficiencies and adapted our work procedures to minimize them. The prospect of additional space has encouraged us to anticipate resolution of some of these present difficulties. Enhanced programs and services are just as important as an enhanced physical structure, and we are eager to allocate our resources in such a way that the Society can sustain both.

Nancy H. Burkett

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