

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.

I have the honor to present the Report of the Council covering the work for the last six months.

During this period the Society has pursued the even tenor of its way, adding to the collections along its special lines and classifying and arranging its treasures. Similar work to that already effected with the Isaiah Thomas papers should be done with the other important manuscripts in our archives, and the Council is happy to announce that work has been started upon the arrangement of the Salisbury Papers, representing the personal and business letters and papers of this well known Worcester family, which furnished to the Society two Presidents, both of whom were its generous benefactors. This work has been made possible through the generous gift of a sum of money not to exceed \$500 from the Worcester Art Museum, an institution which received large benefactions from the last Stephen Salisbury, and is in many ways quite as much interested in the memory of Mr. Salisbury as is this Society.

Perhaps the one thing above all others in which this Society stands pre-eminent is its collection of American Newspapers, and it is the one branch of our work that should be pushed with the utmost vigor, and when a rare lot appears it should be secured at once even if the purchase price has to be begged from some members.

Those of us who have occasion to consult these files are not only struck by the richness of the collection, but by the excellence of the stacks where they are arranged. But we have now reached a position where a serious problem confronts us, for we are very

near the time when there will be no vacant space left in our stacks, and future acquisitions must be stored, for we cannot afford to stop collecting these treasures when they come our way. The architects of the building have made drawings of an addition in the rear to give more stack room, and this has been planned so that a small portion can be added now and the balance in future years. In the present state of the world when so many imperative calls are being made upon the generosity of all, it may be a poor time for a literary or antiquarian Society to beg, but on the other hand there must be within our ranks many men of means who could show their interest by giving a moderate sum. If twenty men would give \$1000 each, we should have enough to warrant the starting of this much needed work, and others could then be induced to complete this first unit of the extension. Surely in our membership of 175 it would seem as if twenty might be found who could give this sum.

Another branch of our Library that has received many notable additions in the past six months is the genealogical collection, and this is one of the cornerstones of a library of Americana. We never have attempted or should attempt to compete with the matchless collection of the New England Historic Genealogical Society, but we should have a good library of our own along these lines, for in works of this character are found thousands of biographies of descendants of New England that can be found nowhere else.

Genealogy, which years ago was laughed at as a fad, has attained a worthy position in the field of historical research, and today has many accurate and diligent searchers among its devotees who should be given every encouragement to tell the stories of the early settlers of New England and their descendants. The *Boston Transcript* within two weeks had a long editorial laying stress upon the importance of this field of antiquarian research, even though it led to the

simplest of pioneers, and while we are not the centre of this work, yet our library should contain the principal works on this subject, to be used as books of reference and as a help for historical students. Our Librarian spoke of this in his Report last October, a portion of which was quoted in a Boston newspaper, and as a result our late associate, Ernest L. Gay, and the widow of Frederick L. Gay, sent us a large collection of genealogies from the latter's library. The only fund we have for this especial purpose is the Chandler Genealogical Fund, which yields but \$23 a year, and we should have a fund of \$5000 to give us an income of \$200 or more, so that we might be able to buy each year the best of the genealogical publications. In the meantime if any of our members are in a position to secure a copy of a genealogy, it would be a very welcome gift to the Society.

Mr. Franklin P. Rice, a member of the Society, has presented a collection of newspaper clippings arranged alphabetically in about 6000 small envelopes. There are over 20,000 clippings in all, most of them biographical sketches or obituary notices covering the period from 1860 to the present time. Prominent Massachusetts names predominate, although the deaths of most of the well-known Americans of the last fifty years are chronicled. The collection contains a great mass of clippings on historic, economic and other subjects, but the biographical clippings, because of the accessibility of the information, will prove of the greatest value.

This Society is national, is American, in the scope of its collections and in its membership, and hence many of its members live at such a distance from its home that they cannot often attend its meetings, and do not get in as close touch with its affairs as the Council wishes they might. More endeavor should be made to acquaint them with the purposes of the Society and with its treasures, so that they might know better what our Library contains and get help

in their historical researches, and in their turn help the Society by securing for it papers and documents that may be within their reach. The Harvard Commission on Western History is interesting the various Harvard Clubs of the country in its work, and why should we not also make our distant members representatives of our Society in their respective homes? Our little Bulletin is an excellent beginning in this direction but it should come oftener and tell more.

The suggestion has been made that at the Annual Meetings of the American Historical Association held in December in various parts of the country there might be a meeting of such members of this Society as were in attendance and perhaps a dinner such as was given by Mr. Clarence W. Bowen of our Council during the year when the Association met in New York, or a subscription dinner such as was enjoyed at the meeting of the same Association held in Washington in 1915. Another suggestion is that our Librarian or some member of the Council should at one of the annual meetings of the Historical Association read a paper on the American Antiquarian Society, and its various activities.

For some months the walls of the reading room and the front gallery have been adorned with a collection of early English and American portraits, deposited with the Society as a loan. These comprise portraits by Copley, Stuart, Lawrence, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Hoppner, Lely, Cotes, Hudson, Romney, Beechey and Raeburn. The collection forms one of the best exhibits in the country of the portraits of the school of English painters who served as models for the American school, as well as including four fine examples of early American portraits: Earl Barrymore, Moses Brown of Newburyport and Sir Richard Arkwright, all by Gilbert Stuart, and a fine Portrait of a Lady by Copley. It is to be hoped that these portraits will remain on the walls for a long time to come, as they are not only decorative, but especially

appropriate to the character of the Society's collections.

Through the indefatigable energy of one of our Worcester members our collection of book plates, the work of American engravers, has been greatly increased.

A Catalogue of the Morse Collection of American Historical Pottery has just been printed by the Society and places a knowledge of this wonderful collection within the reach of all who are interested.

Since the last meeting four of our members have died:

ERNEST LEWIS GAY of Boston, who was elected to membership in October, 1916, died on the following November 25th, on the train returning from New Haven.

REV. SAMUEL HART of Middletown, Conn., died there February 25, 1917. He was elected to membership in April, 1915.

ELIAS HARLOW RUSSELL, long a resident of Worcester, died at Sanbornton, N. H., his native town, on April 3, 1917, at the age of 80. He was elected to membership in October, 1900.

NATHANIEL PAINE of Worcester died at his home on January 14, 1917, after a long period of feeble health. A Special Meeting of the Council was held on January 16, to take suitable action, and at this meeting the President spoke of the fact that Mr. Paine's official connection with the Society since his election, October 22, 1860, was unique, he having been Treasurer from 1863 to 1907, on the Publication Committee from 1880 to 1907, on the Library Committee from 1901 to 1915, and on the Council during the entire period from 1863 to his death. He then presented the following minute which was adopted:

The Council learns with deep sorrow of the death of its associate Nathaniel Paine, a member of the Society for over fifty-six years and, since 1863, a member of the Council.

Elected to membership in the Society in October, 1860, he was, three years later, chosen its treasurer and held that office for forty-four years, during which time he administered its financial affairs with great prudence and foresight. Retiring from that office in 1907 on account of the infirmities of advancing years, he was at once chosen a councillor, an office which he held until his death, so that for fifty-three consecutive years he has been a member of the Council, a term of office equalled by no other member of the Society since its foundation.

Always enthusiastic over the objects of the Society he was ever active in promoting its interests, and perhaps did more than any other member to maintain its activities and keep it a growing, vigorous organization. This interest he preserved until his death, and it was not until his physical condition prevented that he absented himself from the Council meetings, or from those of the library committee of which he was a member for fourteen years.

Although for several years deprived of his presence, the Council remembers with gratitude his constant attendance at its meetings until prevented by illness, his willingness to perform any duty asked of him, his faithful care of the Society's finances, his frequent contributions to its Proceedings, and his many and valuable gifts to its library, and in witness of its appreciation of his services as a member and of its love for him as a man, the Council orders that this testimonial be spread upon its records.

Biographical notices of these deceased members will be prepared for the next number of the Proceedings.

HENRY W. CUNNINGHAM,
For the Council.

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