

PROCEEDINGS

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY, OCTOBER 19, 1927,
AT THE LIBRARY OF THE SOCIETY, WORCESTER

THE Annual Meeting of the American Antiquarian Society was held at the Library of the Society, Worcester, Mass., October 19, 1927, at 10.45 o'clock, a. m., with the President, Waldo Lincoln, in the chair. The following members of the Society were present:

William Eaton Foster, Francis Henshaw Dewey, William Trowbridge Forbes, George Henry Haynes, Charles Lemuel Nichols, Waldo Lincoln, George Parker Winship, Clarence Winthrop Bowen, Clarence Saunders Brigham, Worthington Chauncey Ford, Julius Herbert Tuttle, Charles Grenfill Washburn, Samuel Bayard Woodward, William Vail Kellen, Samuel Morris Conant, Wilfred Harold Munro, Justin Harvey Smith, Henry Winchester Cunningham, Albert Bushnell Hart, Rev. Shepherd Knapp, George Francis Dow, Rev. Herbert Edwin Lombard, Howard Millar Chapin, Samuel Eliot Morison, Thomas Hovey Gage, Leonard Wheeler, Alexander George McAdie, George Anthony Gaskill, John Woodbury, George Watson Cole, John Henry Edmonds, Samuel Lyman Munson, Robert Kendall Shaw, James Benjamin Wilbur, Chandler Bullock, Charles Eliot Goodspeed, Gardner Weld Allen, George Ichabod Rockwood, Lawrence Counselman Wroth, Daniel Waldo Lincoln, Frank Brewer Bemis, George Sumner Barton, Rev. Charles Alpheus Place, Aldus Chapin Higgins, Forrest Waldo

Taylor, Charles Edward Banks, James Melville Hunnewell.

The call for the meeting was read by the Secretary.

It was voted to dispense with the reading of the records of the last meeting.

The report of the Council to the Society was presented by the President.

At the conclusion of the report of the Council, Mr. Charles G. Washburn presented the following minute upon Mr. Lincoln's retirement as President and moved its adoption.

We all, I am sure, deeply regret Mr. Lincoln's decision, which must be accepted as final, not to continue as President of the Society.

As we are concerned here with the past as well as with the present, which so soon becomes the past, it may not be amiss for me to say that Mr. Lincoln is the ninth, in a distinguished line, to hold this office. His term of twenty years is second in length, being exceeded only by that of Stephen Salisbury, Senior, who served for thirty years.

From 1812 to 1831, Isaiah Thomas, founder of the Society, printer and publisher, historian and philanthropist.

From 1831 to 1841, Thomas Lindall Winthrop, a graduate of Harvard, State Senator, Lieutenant-Governor, member of many learned societies.

From 1841 to 1853, Edward Everett, a clergyman, Member of Congress, Governor of Massachusetts, Minister to the Court of St. James, President of Harvard College, Secretary of State, a Senator of the United States.

From 1853 to 1854, Honest John Davis, Representative in House and Senate of the Congress of the United States, Governor of Massachusetts, leader of the Bar, classical scholar.

From 1854 to 1884, Stephen Salisbury, Sr., a benefactor of this Society, who occupied a distinguished place in this community.

From 1884 to 1887, George Frisbie Hoar, scholar, lawyer, orator, and statesman, inheriting by birth the best traditions of the earlier days; champion of the Free Soil Party.

From 1887 to 1905, Stephen Salisbury, Jr., like his father, a benefactor of this Society, to whose generous consideration of our needs we owe the building in which the Society is now housed.

From 1906 to 1907, Edward Everett Hale, Unitarian clergyman, author of many books; wrote here the greatest lesson in

patriotism in the English language, "A Man Without a Country"; editor, friend of the weak and unfortunate, public spirited citizen.

From 1907 to 1927, Waldo Lincoln.

Mr. Lincoln inherited a sense of responsibility for the welfare of this Society which has continued through succeeding generations. His great-grandfather, Levi Lincoln, Sr., soldier in the Revolutionary War, lawyer, Judge of Probate, delegate to the Convention that framed the Constitution of Massachusetts, Attorney General of the United States in the cabinet of Thomas Jefferson, acting Governor of the State, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States; and Mr. Lincoln's grandfather, Levi Lincoln, Jr., Member of the Massachusetts Senate and Speaker of the House, Lieutenant-Governor, Governor, Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court, Representative in Congress and Collector of the Port of Boston, first Mayor of the City of Worcester, Councillor of this Society, were both, father and son, charter members.

Mr. Lincoln's father, Daniel Waldo Lincoln, an eminent citizen of Worcester, was a member of the Society.

Added to this inheritance was a fondness for research in which field, particularly that of genealogy, Mr. Lincoln has always been an industrious worker, and also the gift, so rare, of being an admirable administrator, never better exhibited than in his recent successful effort to increase the endowment of the Society. With the foundation laid, it is hoped for further substantial accretions.

It was during Mr. Lincoln's administration that the beautiful edifice we now occupy was planned, constructed and finally occupied in 1911.

During the past twenty years, the collections of the Society have steadily and greatly increased and the quality of its "Proceedings" have been of a high order. All of these accomplishments are due, in large measure, to the painstaking and I may truly say the daily oversight of the President.

I am sure that the members would not wish me to close this very inadequate recital without expressing to Mr. Lincoln our deep appreciation of his hospitality, after each annual meeting, adding to the more serious consideration of the agenda of the morning, the lighter and more intimate social relations which we have enjoyed in his historic mansion; nor should I fail to express our satisfaction in knowing that he will continue his official relations with the Society as a member of the Council.

By a unanimous vote the foregoing minute was adopted and ordered to be spread upon the records.

The Treasurer's report was presented by Dr. Woodward, at the conclusion of which Mr. Hart paid a tribute to the outstanding economy of administration of the Society and the excellence of its work.

The Librarian's report was presented by Mr. Brigham, who also read a "Survey" describing the growth and present status of the Library.¹

It was voted to accept these reports and to refer them to the Committee on Publications.

The election of officers being in order, the President appointed Messrs. Washburn, Wroth and Woodbury a committee to distribute and collect ballots for the election of a President, which committee reported that all the votes were for Charles Lemuel Nichols and he was declared elected and signified his acceptance of the office.

It was voted to authorize the President to appoint a committee to nominate other officers of the Society. The President appointed as this committee, Messrs. Kellen, Goodspeed and Higgins, who presented the following nominations:

Vice-Presidents

Arthur Prentice Rugg, LL.D., of Worcester, Mass.

Clarence Winthrop Bowen, LL.D., of New York, N. Y.

Councillors

Waldo Lincoln, A.B., of Worcester, Mass.

Charles Grenfill Washburn, A.B., of Worcester, Mass.

Francis Henshaw Dewey, A.M., of Worcester, Mass.

Henry Winchester Cunningham, A.B., of Boston, Mass.

George Parker Winship, Litt.D., of Dover, Mass.

William Howard Taft, LL.D., of Washington, D. C.

Clarence Saunders Brigham, A.M., of Worcester, Mass.

James Benajmin Wilbur, LL.D., of Manchester, Vt.

Samuel Lyman Munson, of Albany, N. Y.

William Vail Kellen, LL.D., of Boston, Mass.

¹This Survey has been separately printed.

Secretary for Foreign Correspondence

George Hubbard Blakeslee, L.H.D., of Worcester,
Mass.

Secretary of Domestic Correspondence

Worthington Chauncey Ford, LL.D., of Boston, Mass.

Recording Secretary

Thomas Hovey Gage, LL.B., of Worcester, Mass.

Treasurer

Chandler Bullock, LL.B., of Worcester, Mass.

Committee on Publications

George Henry Haynes, Ph.D., of Worcester, Mass.

Julius Herbert Tuttle, of Dedham, Mass.

John Henry Edmonds, of Boston, Mass.

Clarence Saunders Brigham, A.M., of Worcester, Mass.

Auditors

Homer Gage, M.D., of Worcester, Mass.

Daniel Waldo Lincoln, LL.B., of Worcester, Mass.

It was voted that the Secretary be requested to cast one ballot for the election of officers of the Society and the Secretary having cast a ballot, the nominees were declared elected.

The Clerk was sworn to the faithful discharge of his duties by John Woodbury, a Justice of the Peace.

The Secretary then presented the recommendations of the Council for membership in the Society and the President appointed Messrs. Hart, Bullock and McAdie a committee to distribute and collect ballots for new members, who reported that the following were unanimously elected:

William Evarts Benjamin, New York, N. Y.

Chester Noyes Greenough, Cambridge, Mass.

Charles Seabury Hale, Worcester, Mass.

Luke Vincent Lockwood, New York, N. Y.

Adolph S. Ochs, New York, N. Y.

Abraham S. W. Rosenbach, Philadelphia, Pa.

William Bacon Scofield, Worcester, Mass.

The Secretary, in behalf of the Council, presented a revised set of By-Laws which had been approved by the Council with a recommendation that they be adopted by the Society. He stated that the changes were to simplify the By-Laws and to make them conform to present day usage. It was voted that the By-Laws, as presented by the Council, should be adopted.¹

The members then listened to the reading of papers by Wilbur H. Siebert, of Columbus, Ohio, on "East Florida as a Refuge of the Southern Loyalists," and by George Watson Cole, of Pasadena, Calif., on "Lewis Hughes, the Militant Minister of the Bermudas, and his Printed Works." By vote these papers were referred to the Committee on Publications.

Justin H. Smith of New York City read a paper on "General Grant's Opinion on the War with Mexico." Since Mr. Smith intended to publish this paper in another form, it is not printed in the Proceedings of the meeting. The following summary shows the scope of the paper:

1. In vol. i, p. 53, of his "Personal Memoirs," General Grant calls that war "one of the most unjust ever waged by a stronger against a weaker nation."

2. In these memoirs the author expresses views on certain military operations of the war; and, where he lacked full information, he is found to be—even in this, his special field—a long way from infallible. Hence the prestige of his name should not blind us.

3. The question of the justice of the war lies in a very different field. In passing upon it one requires a great deal of historical and political knowledge, which nobody supposes that General Grant possessed. Besides, even the best historians of his day were unacquainted with numerous important facts bearing upon the question. Hence there is a double presumption against his opinion.

4. To bring up the comparative strength of the two nations is like rating pugilists by the size of their muscles, omitting such factors as quickness, reach, courage, endurance, intelligence and experience. Mexico, while inferior to the United States in population and wealth, was believed to have a number of advantages for a conflict with us, and was generally considered

¹The By-Laws, with the Rules and Regulations, have been separately printed.

in Europe a fairly equal antagonist. Had the people of that country united and made the most of their advantages, no one can safely assert that we should have triumphed. But is justice, after all, a question of relative strength? If an African tribe raids British territory, that nation has a right to wage war upon it.

5. The core of the dictum is merely an unsupported assertion that the war was very unjust. Now we have conclusive reasons for believing that what the General wrote was what he called it, "personal memoirs," and that essentially his opinions on the Mexican War simply reproduced the impressions left on the mind of a young soldier. He evidently felt that the United States, like a school bully, had jumped upon a little fellow, and his sympathies rose up instinctively for what seemed to him the far weaker party. But, however we explain the dictum, it is positively incorrect. Today the genesis of the war can clearly be traced. We can prove that it was forced upon us, and international law holds that defensive war is just.

The President explained that Dr. Albert Shaw, who had expected to address the meeting, had been detained in New York through circumstances beyond his control.

The meeting adjourned at 1.15 p. m. and the members were entertained at luncheon by the retiring President at his residence, 49 Elm Street.

THOMAS HOVEY GAGE,
Recording Secretary

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.