

PROCEEDINGS

SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY, APRIL 16, 1930,
AT THE HOUSE OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND
SCIENCES, BOSTON

THE semi-annual meeting of the American Antiquarian Society was held at the House of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 28 Newbury Street, Boston, Massachusetts, Wednesday, April 16, 1930, at half past ten o'clock.

The President of the Society, Calvin Coolidge, presided. The following members of the Society were present:

John McKinstry Merriam, Francis Henshaw Dewey, William Trowbridge Forbes, George Henry Haynes, Waldo Lincoln, George Parker Winship, George Lyman Kittredge, Clarence Saunders Brigham, Frederick Jackson Turner, William Coolidge Lane, Edward Luther Stevenson, Julius Herbert Tuttle, George Hubbard Blakeslee, Arthur Prentice Rugg, Marshall Howard Saville, Wilfred Harold Munro, Henry Winchester Cunningham, Albert Bushnell Hart, George Francis Dow, Livingston Davis, Charles Henry Taylor, Lyon Gardiner Tyler, Herbert Edwin Lombard, Howard Millar Chapin, Samuel Eliot Morison, Grenville Howland Norcross, Thomas Hovey Gage, Lawrence Waters Jenkins, Alexander George McAdie, Charles Knowles Bolton, Samuel Lyman Munson, Robert Kendall Shaw, Chandler Bullock, Charles Eliot Goodspeed, Gardner Weld Allen, George Ichabod Rockwood, Lawrence Counselman Wroth, Wallace Walter Atwood, Matt Bushnell Jones, Frederic Winthrop, Frank Brewer Bemis, Calvin Coolidge, Charles Alpheus Place, Russell Sturgis Paine, Charles Edward Banks, James Melville Hunnewell, George Crompton, Lawrence Shaw Mayo.

The call for the meeting was read by the Secretary. President Coolidge spoke as follows:

This is the first meeting of the Society that I have attended. I desire to take this occasion to express to the members my appreciation of the honor that has been done me in choosing me to preside over its deliberations. It is rather a personal convenience to me because many people still address me as Mr. President, and this enables me to say that the title is perfectly correct, if one understands that it refers to the fact that I am President of the American Antiquarian Society. Of course I am delighted to be associated with a Society of this nature because I thoroughly believe in the work that it is attempting to do. If we are to go forward in a line that I assume all desire to pursue, it is necessary to know something of the past and to keep our eyes on the guide posts that indicate the direction which has been taken by people in the past. But to me the meaning of this Society is even deeper than that. Our country is a democracy and its foundation is belief in mankind, and we cannot maintain that belief unless we believe also that the experiences of the past are important and that the things that people have done in the past should be brought to our knowledge. Anything that the race has done from the early dawn down to the present time is an important record worthy of our investigation and our study, and broadening in its influence, if we have knowledge of it. I had that reason in mind in accepting the honor that has come to me, and I wish to express my thanks to you for giving me the rare privilege of being associated with this Society.

It was voted to dispense with the minutes of the last meeting.

The report of the Council was then presented by Mr. Clarence S. Brigham and it was voted that the same be accepted and referred to the Committee on Publications.

The election of new members being in order, the Secretary presented the nominations of the Council for resident members:

Dixon Ryan Fox, Scarsdale, N. Y.

Darwin Pearl Kingsley, New York, N. Y.

William Davis Miller, Providence, R. I.

John Howland Gibbs Pell, Fort Ticonderoga, N. Y.

Stephen Willard Phillips, Salem, Mass.

Robert Francis Seybolt, Urbana, Ill.

The President appointed a committee, consisting of Messrs. Winship, Rockwood and Merriam, to distribute, collect and count ballots, who reported that all the votes were cast in favor of the election of the nominees and the President declared them elected.

The following papers were then presented: "New England's Contributions to Virginia," by Lyon Gardiner Tyler, of Charles City County, Va.; "Thomas Jefferson at Home," by Alexander George McAdie, of Readville, Mass.; and "Washington as a New England Man," by Albert Bushnell Hart, of Cambridge, Mass. Dr. Hart spoke informally, without the intention of having his address appear in printed form. The following papers were contributed by title: "New-found Letters of Josiah Gregg, Santa Fé Trader and Historian," by John Thomas Lee of Chicago, Ill., and "A Contemporary British Account of General Sir William Howe's Military Operations in 1777," by Robert F. Seybolt, of Urbana, Ill.

It was voted to refer the papers to the Committee on Publications.

Mr. Winthrop called the attention of the members to a question concerning the authenticity of the portrait of John Winthrop, now in the possession of the Society and spoke as follows:

I should like to say a word in regard to the portrait that the Society has of John Winthrop, this being the tercentenary year. It has been stated in newspapers, and in print several times, that of the two original portraits, one is in the American Antiquarian Society. I think I can show that this is not so. The one in the Antiquarian Society was given to the Society by William Winthrop who is a distant cousin of mine, about a hundred years ago. In a letter dated October 31, 1691, which can be found in the Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, vol. 8, 5th series, page 500, is this extract from a letter from Wait Winthrop of Boston to Fitz-John Winthrop of New London: "If you could by a very careful hand send the little picture of my grandfather, put carefully up in some little box, here is one would copy it for my cousin Adam; the great one here had some damage in the townhouse, especially in one of the eyes, and he desires to see that."

In a note the editor says: "The 'little picture' of Governor John Winthrop was the miniature now in possession of the

heirs of the late Francis Bayard Winthrop, of New Haven; the 'great one in the townhouse' is now in the senate chamber of Massachusetts; the copy here alluded to is probably the portrait now belonging to the American Antiquarian Society of Worcester."

My "cousin Adam" referred to in here was the great-grandfather of William Winthrop who gave the portrait to the Society. The little picture is one that I own, and is now in the Massachusetts Historical Society on temporary deposit. There is a picture of it in Mr. Bolton's book on the Portraits of the Founders. The only two original large portraits are: the one now in the State House and the other one owned by my brother in New York; and it is very evident that the Society's portrait is not a copy of either of those two original portraits. I believe that it must have been a copy from the little miniature.

Mr. Waldo Lincoln said:

Mr. President, there is a curious question about this portrait in the American Antiquarian Society. I am familiar with the argument that Mr. Winthrop makes. The curious question is this: Our portrait in the past has been attributed to Van Dyke or some pupil of Van Dyke, and at least was painted by a superior artist, as it has been regarded by critics as a very excellent painting. We have also been told that the brushwork is indicative of original work and does not have the appearance of a copy. Now, no one as yet has found a painter or artist in Boston or in Massachusetts at the period when this portrait was painted, who could make so good a portrait or who could copy such a picture from a miniature. I should like to know if Mr. Winthrop has considered that subject, or had any artist in mind who could have done such work?

Mr. Winthrop replied:

No, I have not. I have heard that it was attributed to Van Dyke, but I have seen the portrait, and I should say that it was quite impossible to have been done by Van Dyke or any good pupil of Van Dyke. The one at the State House has been attributed to Van Dyke. I have never heard it disputed, but I am very doubtful myself. I think that it may have been done by a pupil. I think that people attributed a great many portraits to famous artists when they had no right to do so at all.

The meeting adjourned at 12.45, and the members were entertained at luncheon by Mr. Frederic Winthrop at his house, 299 Berkeley Street:

THOMAS HOVEY GAGE,
Recording Secretary

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