

Report of the Council

IN no summer within memory has this Library been so much used by writers and researchers. Almost every day of the week cars from such distant points as Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Virginia, Nebraska, Colorado, Wisconsin, California, and Oregon have been parked in front of the Society's building, bringing scholars from the South, the West, and the far West to work on chosen subjects. From New England, of course, and from the states on the Atlantic seaboard we have many visitors. Probably most of these travellers have come to New England on vacations and stopped over in Worcester as part of their journey.

The subjects studied reflect our establishment of new and varied collections in the last thirty years, and the expansion of collections for which we were hitherto noted. Newspapers, of course, have always been called for, especially since no library in New England, nor in fact north of Washington, has attempted to collect American newspapers so comprehensively. The publication, only two years ago, of the *Bibliography of American Newspapers* has enabled students to know where early newspapers can be located, and because of our pre-eminence in that field, such journals have been used more than any other single subject in this Library. Perhaps next used have been the collections of ephemera only recently developed, such as engravings, lithographs, bookplates, and even valentines. Among the hundreds of subjects studied, as shown by the Visitors' Register, are Early Vermont Imprints, Early Maine Imprints, Children's Books, the Circus, Early American Watermarks, Broad-sides, and American Novels. Compilers of biographies have worked on Alexander Hamilton, Andrew Barclay, Cotton Mather, James G. Huneker, Christopher Saur, Stephen

Marshall, to mention only a few names, where unique material was to be found in this Library. Politics were covered by inquiries into Revolutionary Political Societies, and Massachusetts Politics of the early Nineteenth Century. One student spent the entire summer studying our unique files of Bolivian newspapers for a political history of that South American country, and a scholar from Paris stayed in Worcester for three weeks, working in the Tinker collection upon a study of French Writers of Louisiana.

When the Council Report for last April was read, it was thought that the new steel bookstack would be finished before the time of the annual meeting. But due to late delivery of steel and other delays expected in building today, it will be well into November before the stack is finally completed and the moving of books begun. The financing of the cost of the stack, about \$160,000 as a total, was defrayed by specific funds on hand, with the exception of \$70,000. This deficit had to be met from principal funds of the Society, accomplished by selling low interest bonds. It is hoped that this loss can be made up during the next few years. Whatever the cost, it was necessary for the Society to construct an addition to its bookstack, already too long delayed.

There have been six deaths in the membership during the past half year. Charles K. Bolton, long Librarian of the Boston Athenæum, elected in 1918, died May 19, 1950. Glenn Tilley Morse, Episcopal minister of Newburyport and distinguished for his study of early American silhouettes, elected in 1932, died June 22. Dixon Wecter, Californian literary historian, elected in 1944, died June 24. Carl Van Doren, editor and author, elected in 1942, died July 18. Fred T. Field, Chief Justice of Massachusetts, elected in 1938, died July 23. Lathrop C. Harper, noted as a bookseller and a bibliophile, elected in 1936, died August 11.

Obituary notices of these members will appear in the printed *Proceedings* of this meeting.

Although the Society has never within memory finished its fiscal year with a deficit—a remarkable achievement in comparison with hundreds of similar cultural institutions—it will be difficult during the coming year to adhere to this high standard. The loss of \$1500 in income due to the erection of the bookstack, the additional expense brought about by the new Social Security laws, the necessity of raising wages due to increased living expenses, and the presumable decrease in dividends, combine to make us practice stringent economies to match our expenses with our income during the next twelve months.

Two exhibits have been arranged in the cases in the upper gallery, which more or less reflect our recent activities in collecting. One is an exhibition of the engravings of Paul Revere, centered around the View of Harvard College presented to the Society by Mrs. Henry E. Warner of South Lincoln, Massachusetts. This print will be described in the Librarian's Report. Only a selection of our almost complete collection of Revere's engravings can be shown. But the exhibit does include the Revere, Pelham, and Mulliken prints of the Boston Massacre; his three political caricatures—the View of the Year 1765, the View of the Obelisk, and the Rescinders; the unique North Battery, the View of Boston in 1768, and Buried with Him by Baptism. Three of the sixteen plates which he engraved for the *Royal American Magazine* are shown. All of the six Masonic notifications which are known, and all of his five known advertising cards are included. The Director hopes that within a year his book on Paul Revere and his Engraving will be published, including reproductions of all of his known prints.

The second exhibit shows copies of some of the most popular books read in America during the first two hundred

years of its existence. This is not quite the same as a list of best-sellers, because there were some fields, such as agriculture, in which no one book dominated. Therefore only representative volumes are shown. To a remarkable degree these books illustrate the swing from the seventeenth century preoccupation with religion, through the practicality and skepticism of the century of revolution, to the sentimental romanticism of the opening years of the nineteenth century. The colonial American was uniquely, among all the people of the world, a reader. His consumption of the written word was incredible, and his choice of reading matter showed not only what manner of man he was, but what manner of man he was going to become.

Respectfully submitted,

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For the Council

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