

Report of the Council

EVERY year, especially during the winter season, the Society welcomes scores, if not hundreds, of researchers to its doors. Seasoned scholars, or young professors and candidates for advanced degrees, or casual private historians, visit us, each in pursuit of knowledge which in many cases can be found more adequately or more conveniently in our Library. The past winter has been no exception. Either because vacations are more liberal, or because the increase in the number of cultural endowments provides help to more scholars, it is noticeable that students come here for longer periods. Several, indeed, stay the entire winter. One capable investigator from the University of Washington at Seattle, has made his headquarters here in Worcester, with his wife, and has examined hundreds of volumes of newspapers, manuscript diaries, and printed tracts, for a monograph on the part played by Massachusetts in the French and Indian War. The range of subjects covered is interesting, if not startling. But the Society helps all students engaged in serious research, and the results invariably justify the effort.

The Society by this time is enjoying the additional space provided by the new book stack. The process of moving the books, begun just over a year ago, has nearly been completed. All but a few minor collections on the lower floor have been placed in their new locations, with space allowed for future growth. The greatest amount of time has been spent in vacuum-cleaning the books. To have twenty miles of

shelving with the books thereon, clean and free from dust, provides a healthful and satisfying feeling. To us it has been rather surprising that the work of moving has been completed so soon.

During the coming spring the grounds around the new stack will be graded and planted. The parking space in the rear of the building has worked out well during the winter, and fortunately the problem of water drainage seems to have been solved.

Correspondence is responsible for the largest proportion of help afforded to scholarship by the Society. A card index to this correspondence from 1920 to date, made by Mrs. Spear, and now taking five trays, with over fifteen thousand references, shows conclusively the vast number of subjects covered in queries. Also it is of constant value in answering new queries. A querist writes us regarding some subject, often on an unusual topic, and we may find the same subject treated in the correspondence of the last thirty-two years. Another great help to the staff, in research, is the series of card catalogues on early American printing begun by Miss Clarke twenty-five years ago and now filling 260 trays of over 1400 cards each. To have an extensive author, subject, and title catalogue of American imprints to 1820 available, and also similar catalogues arranged by date, place of printing, and printer is of tremendous help in bibliographical study.

The final volume of Evans' *American Bibliography*, covering the last half of 1799 and the entire year of 1800, has been sent to the printer, and Mr. Shipton's monumental undertaking, upon which he has been working for five years, will be ready for distribution, it is hoped, before the close of another year. The Director's book on Paul Revere and his Engraving, which is apparently and evidently a life work, should be finished within a year, although the problem of

reproducing nearly a hundred of Revere's engraved prints, or those allied with his work, will not quickly be completed.

The duty of publishing the *Proceedings* of the Society, twice each year, has now devolved entirely upon Mr. Ship-ton. The two issues for April and October, 1951, are in the press and will be distributed within a few weeks. One of the most necessary features in producing the *Proceedings* is keeping up with the necrology of the Society. There has been only one death in the membership during the past six months. The Reverend Edgar L. Pennington, of Mobile, Alabama, died December 10, 1951. Mr. Pennington, elected in 1935, was a scholarly writer on the history of the Episcopal Church in the United States and several of his monographs have been published in the *Proceedings* of the Society.

Among the several important accessions of recent months is the Spargo Collection of Vermont imprints. John Spargo of Bennington, Vermont, for forty years has been acquiring examples of early Vermont printing, especially those published by the outstanding Vermont printer, Anthony Haswell. He produced a large volume on Haswell in 1925, including a bibliography of his imprints. Through the purchase of the Spargo collection, we have added forty-nine titles printed by Haswell at Bennington from 1783 to 1818, and twenty-five early imprints of other Vermont towns. Included in the collections were a number of manuscripts written by Haswell, including a Journal of his Journey from Bennington to New York in 1796. A detailed description of this collection will appear in the Librarian's Report in October.

Another important acquisition has been the collection of early newspapers of Reading, Pennsylvania, gathered by J. Bennett Nolan. This consists of files of six Reading newspapers between 1792 and 1820, containing 410 issues, most of them, especially the early German newspapers, otherwise unlocated.

Through many years of book buying we have found that the most advantageous method of improving the Society's Library has been in purchasing or acquiring entire collections outright. A private collector with one object in view may have been years in obtaining as complete a collection as possible on one subject and thus this labor of time and of discrimination accrues to the Society. This was shown last year in the purchase of the Spiro collection of continental currency—a collection which the owner had spent a lifetime in gathering. There are certain fields, such as early American printing, genealogy, American local history, American literature, where we are already outstandingly strong, which can only be completed by acquiring single titles. It takes a vast amount of time on the part of the staff to examine lists of titles offered in subjects of our choosing, often to obtain only one or two titles. But in fields where we are weak, but would like to be strong, the acquisition of already formed collections is an advantageous and profitable method of improving the Library.

Respectfully submitted,

CLARENCE S. BRIGHAM,

For the Council

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.