

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.

---

While the books, pamphlets and newspapers which have been added to the library of the Society during the past six months have been considerable, the Council desires to especially emphasize the fact that the largest increase has been in early newspapers of which perhaps 15,000 issues preceding the Civil War have been obtained either through gift, exchange or purchase. Special mention, therefore, should be made of the collection of early newspapers now belonging to the Society. Although the collection is one of the largest and most important in the country, it has never been listed in any way or made valuable to scholars in other cities by means of printed check lists. This want is now being remedied and it forms a notable event in the Society's work. The printing of the check list of our own issues has been made the occasion of compiling a Bibliography of all American newspapers to the year 1820 to be issued at the same time. The first installment of this bibliography, covering the States alphabetically from Alabama to Indiana, was printed in the Proceedings of the last meeting, which has been distributed to members. Not only will the bibliography list all our own issues and give a brief history of each paper, but it will also attempt to list all the important files of each paper possessed by the various libraries of the country. Probably 1,000 papers were issued in the United States up to the year 1820 and the compiling of this information regarding them is a task of considerable magnitude. It will take at least six installments in the Proceedings to finish the bibliography, and at the conclusion the whole material will be reprinted and bound up in a volume, which will form the first comprehensive bibliography of early

American newspapers. This bibliography, which begins at 1690 and ends in 1820, and which will give a complete check list of the issues in the library of the American Antiquarian Society; will be compiled by the librarian, Clarence S. Brigham.

The Council wishes to express to the members the great loss the Society has sustained in the deaths since our October meeting of Reuben Gold Thwaites, Dr. John Green, Alcée Fortier, Don Gleason Hill and Adolph Francis Bandelier. Obituary notices of each of these members will appear in the report of the proceedings of this meeting, prepared by the Biographer of the Society, Judge Samuel Utley.

It should be added that the Society has received a bequest of \$4,000 from the late Miss Katharine Allen, daughter of the Hon. Charles Allen of Worcester, a member of the Society from 1827 to 1869. Some of the members might be interested to know that considerable attention has been attracted to the collection of American Staffordshire pottery which has been on exhibition since the October meeting.

In the last Report of the Council which is in the Proceedings for October, 1913, and which has been printed and distributed to members; the President of the Society speaks of the pressing need of more funds to carry on our increasing work. With a beautiful building and with a library, the value of which may be conservatively estimated at \$2,000,000, we have invested funds of \$307,902.50 according to the last Report of the Treasurer. The income from this last named sum is not sufficient to carry on the work of the Society in the manner that it should be. Through the efforts of the President the sum of \$25,500 has been raised, which is called the Centennial Fund, and it is the earnest wish of the President that this fund should be at least \$100,000. The Council is therefore of the opinion that earnest efforts should be made during the current year and during 1915 and 1916 to complete the Centennial Fund and to raise four funds of \$25,000 each for binding, publications, manuscripts and newspapers.

Of the four specific funds the Binding Fund is the most pressing at the present time. The yearly income from the present Binding Fund is \$450, and this does not allow us to bind much more than the annual accessions. Large and important collections, especially among the newspapers and the manuscripts, still remain on the shelves either tied in bundles or grouped loosely in portfolios. In the basement of the building are over ten thousand issues of middle nineteenth century newspapers arranged ready for binding, but as yet unbound. In the newspaper stack are thousands of early papers, mostly dating before 1800, which are in flimsy bindings or are lying loose in bundles. The rare files of the *Boston Post* and the *News-Letter* have been subjected to such frequent use for so many years that they can scarcely be handled. The first volume of the *Boston News-Letter*, itself one of the rarest possessions of the library, is so much in need of repairing and rebinding that it is seldom shown to visitors.

In the Manuscript Room are many collections of documents and family papers which are tied up in bundles and practically inaccessible for research. The Isaiah Thomas Papers, several hundred in number, and containing much of interest upon the history of printing in America as well as upon the beginnings of this Society, would require but \$100 to be strongly and handsomely bound in a series of volumes. The Papers of the Mather family and also the early correspondence of the Antiquarian Society are two other documentary collections which through binding might be made more accessible.

The Finance Committee, under authority of the Society, appointed four years ago a committee to solicit funds. At the suggestion of the Council this committee will now be enlarged and will take immediate steps to ask members and others interested to make subscriptions to carry on the work of the Society.

CLARENCE W. BOWEN,

*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.