

## REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

THERE have been four deaths among the active members since the April meeting. James Phinney Baxter of Portland, Maine, a member of the Society since 1887 and of the Council since 1897, died at Portland on May 8, at the advanced age of ninety years; Charles Pickering Bowditch of Boston, a member of the Society since 1891, died at Boston on June 1; John Woolf Jordan of Philadelphia, a member since 1915, died June 11, at Philadelphia; and Edward Hooker Gilbert of Ware, a member since 1900, died October 7, at Ware.

Mr. Baxter had been a valued member of the Council for twenty-four years, serving as councillor from 1897 until 1912, and as secretary of foreign correspondence from 1912 until his death. He left to the Society a copy by a local artist of his portrait by the late Frederic P. Vinton. At a meeting of the Council on September 15 the following minute was passed:

“By the death of James Phinney Baxter the Council has lost a member who was ever ready with advice when called upon and whose judgment was always sound and valuable. Elected to membership in the Society in 1887, he became a councillor in 1897 and in 1912 was elected to the office of secretary of foreign correspondence, which he has held ever since, and by virtue of which he retained membership in the Council until his death and, so far as a distant residence and advanced years would permit, attended its meetings conscientiously until a few years ago, when he found it too great a tax upon his strength.

His presidency of the New England Historic Genealogical Society since 1899 brought the Council into closer relations with a sister institution, and his knowledge of New England history and methods of historical publication made his opinion always of value.

He remembered the Society in his will by leaving to it his portrait, which the Council gratefully accepts in behalf of the Society."

Brief memoirs of these gentlemen will be prepared for publication in the Proceedings.

The death of Señor Genaro Garcia of Mexico City has been reported, without date. Señor Garcia was a lawyer, a compiler of codes, who became the director of the National Museum of Achaeology under the Diaz regime. He edited a series of twenty or more volumes entitled "Nuevos Documentos ineditos o muy raros para la Historia de Mexico," as well as the correct text of "Bernal Diaz del Castillo" and "Dos Antiguos Relaciones de la Florida." His standing is due largely to two rather courageous controversies, in one of which he attacked the conventional Spanish historical interpretation of history in "Caracter de la Conquista Española en America" doing much the sort of thing our late associate, Charles Francis Adams, did to our New England ancestors. The other controversy dealt with the character of Juarez and the leaders of the independence, in which he stood for the more recent historical attitude. He was elected to this Society in April, 1907.

By the will of the late Nathaniel Paine of Worcester the Society was made his residuary legatee, under certain conditions as expressed in the fourteenth clause of the will and the seventh clause of the codicil. The former reads as follows:

"To the American Antiquarian Society located in the City of Worcester I give and bequeath all the residue of my estate both real and personal I may be possessed of, and not hereafter disposed of by this my last will or otherwise . . . upon the condition that so far as it can be done consistently, my books, pamphlets and other library matters be kept in an alcove to be known as the Paine Alcove and that any money that shall come to my estate from the sale of my real or personal property shall be invested and kept as a separate Fund the income of which may be used for the general purpose of the Society as the Council may direct. The suggestion given as to the name of

the Alcove and Fund are intended to be a memorial of the members of the Paine family who have been members of and benefactors of said Society since its formation."

Clause seven of the codicil says:

"In case the amount which will eventually go to the American Antiquarian Society from my estate shall exceed the sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) I request that the same be set aside by said Society as a separate fund, to be called the 'Nathaniel Paine Fund,' the principal to be kept safely invested and the income thereof only, to be used as may seem best to the Council of said Society."

A life interest in the estate was given to Mrs. Paine with the power to sell such securities as she might find necessary for her support, but so great was her interest in the Society and her desire that her husband's benefaction should be as large as possible, that she used this power to a very limited extent, even going so far as to deprive herself of certain comforts and luxuries, which she would have been quite justified in selling securities to obtain. The result is that the Society has benefited far more than Mr. Paine apparently expected. Mrs. Paine died September 20, 1920 and the estate has since been settled and the residue turned over to the Society. The property so transferred was appraised in March 1917, at \$55,446.75, but owing to the shrinkage in value of all investments, the amount credited to the Nathaniel Paine Fund on the Society's books, taking the stocks and bonds at their market value when transferred last winter and spring, is but \$38,123.58, showing a shrinkage of over \$17,000, nearly all of it in the stocks and bonds, as the real estate sold for very nearly its appraised value. As the two valuations of this property were made on dates corresponding closely with the entrance of the United States into the World War and with the declaration of peace with Germany, they are interesting as showing the great depreciation in values caused by these four calamitous years. Mr. Paine's estate was typical of that of many men of moderate means, especially in New England, who desired to place their

savings in conservative and safe investments. About fifty thousand dollars of his personal estate was invested in the stocks and bonds of fifty corporations, most of them of Massachusetts and nearly all of them devoted to public service and of good repute. This shows caution carried to extreme. Yet in four years this conservative and, on the whole, wisely placed investment suffered a shrinkage of a trifle less than forty per cent, and it is safe to say that this has been the common experience of all those whose property was similarly placed, certainly in New England and perhaps throughout the United States. Fortunately, however, this depreciation is not altogether permanent. The Society received this property at the time of its greatest depression and already there has been an improvement. As it is, the money value of Mr. Paine's bequest makes it the largest ever received by the Society except that of the younger Mr. Salisbury.

To conform as far as possible with Mr. Paine's wishes, there being no alcove available for the purpose, the most valuable portion of his library, including his extra-illustrated books, has been placed in the south-east study, over the librarian's room, and for the present is contained in three of Mr. Paine's own book-cases, but later it may be found desirable to replace these with steel cases, uniform with those in the other rooms and alcoves. This study will be called hereafter "The Nathaniel Paine Room." All duplicates and books which were not appropriate to the Society's collections have been exchanged for a valuable addition to the works on genealogy,—an exchange which the Council feels would meet with Mr. Paine's entire approval.

Mr. Paine's library deserves more than a passing notice. It was not very large, nor did it contain many books of early date or of great bibliographical value in themselves, but his interest in certain subjects, combined with great industry and skill, gave it many unique volumes by virtue of the hundreds of portraits,

views, maps, documents and autograph letters with which most of them are profusely illustrated. A favorite method of his was to cut from a magazine some article which he wished to illustrate, inlay the sheets so obtained on larger paper and have these handsomely bound in half morocco with the appropriate views and portraits. He was a good photographer and gained in that way many illustrations not otherwise obtainable. This is especially noticeable in his Worcester books, some seventy in number, in which he has preserved photographs of scenes and buildings no longer existing or changed beyond recognition. He was catholic in his tastes and his library contained good collections of books on many subjects, but he was especially interested in the drama, local history, the American Revolution, Washington, and art in general but particularly engraving, and he possessed books on all these subjects extended and illustrated by himself. He was not possessed of large means; for many years he had but a small salary and never more than a small private property; so that it is astonishing that he was able to acquire so much of real value. The result shows what enthusiasm and industry can accomplish if intelligently applied in the spare moments of a busy life, for Mr. Paine was occupied from his youth until the last few years before his death with the exacting duties of a bank teller, cashier, and president, which demanded of him long hours of service and left him little more than his evenings free for his own pursuits.

The limits of this report will not permit of an extended list of the books received from Mr. Paine and preserved by the Society, but mention may be made of a few of the more noteworthy: Irving's "Life of Washington," extended from five volumes to ten and containing over five hundred extra illustrations, including more than one hundred and fifty portraits of Washington. Over seventy books concerning Worcester, many of them profusely illustrated, the most

notable being "Carl's Tour in Main Street," extended to three royal octavo volumes, the original leaves having been split and beautifully inlaid on larger sheets. About thirty volumes of Washingtoniana. One whole bookcase filled with plays and works on actors and the drama, many of them extra-illustrated, and including a file of "The Theatre" from 1886, vol. 1, to May 1916. The "Diary of Christopher Columbus Baldwin" extended to two volumes has especial interest for this Society. But the most important work in the collection is "The Autographs and Portraits of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence," in two volumes and containing the autographs of all but five of the signers, viz: Button Gwinnett of Georgia, Joseph Hewes and John Penn of North Carolina and Thomas Lynch Jr., and Arthur Middleton of South Carolina. There is, however, an unsigned specimen of John Penn's handwriting. All of these are very rare in all forms, those of Button Gwinnett and Thomas Lynch being now practically unobtainable. Of the fifty-one autographs in the collection twenty-two are letters, twenty-eight are documents, and one, that of Richard Stockton of New Jersey, is a cut signature, but with this is an unsigned holographic document.

Antiquarian Hall and the surrounding grounds are in good condition and will require no extraordinary expenditure during the coming year. The congestion in the interior of the building is gradually increasing and in some departments has already reached a point demanding immediate action. The basement rooms are much crowded with an accumulation of bound volumes of newspapers which, for lack of other space, are stored there to the number of about fifteen hundred volumes, none of which can be available for research until an enlarged stack provides shelving. On the first floor the most pressing need is to provide for local history, genealogy and bibliography, all of which are growing rapidly, the cases devoted to them being practically full. It has been suggested that

cases might be placed between the columns on the east and west sides of the reading room, which would give temporary relief, but would, perhaps, be objectionable as marring the architectural beauty of the room. There will be no necessity for several years for increased shelving in the rooms devoted to maps, almanacs and manuscripts. The situation in the stack is serious. On the three lower floors a careful examination reveals that there is still room for two to three year's growth in most of the collections, the most important of which are school books, state documents, United States government publications, general history, early imprints, directories and periodicals; but this limited room compels a frequent rearrangement at an expense of time and labor which is a severe tax on a staff unavoidably small. Moreover there is no possibility of relieving the congestion in the reading room and alcoves by removing any of their contents to the stack. The condition on the two upper floors devoted to newspapers has been so often called to the attention of the Society that it needs no further comment. The shelves are more than full and the volumes stored in the basement tell the story. The Council can do nothing to relieve the situation until funds are provided for an enlargement of the stack.

With a view to obtaining these funds a circular was prepared and mailed to the members last December, explaining the situation and requesting subscriptions to add to those already obtained, chiefly through the personal solicitations of one of the Council. The result has been disappointing but not surprising, as the circular was not followed, as was intended, by a personal appeal, which is usually necessary in raising substantial sums of money for any object whether charitable or educational. Last spring business had become so depressed that it seemed unwise to attempt to increase the subscriptions then and a more favorable time was awaited, but in view of the conditions now existing in the library the matter must not be much longer delayed. The treasurer reports that the Build-

ing Fund amounts to but \$12,535, which is but one-sixth of what the committee hoped to have subscribed, if not paid, at this time. Very few responses were received to the circular, which has served, however, to introduce the subject, and those who have not subscribed, and perhaps some who have, may expect at an early date a more pressing personal presentation of the subject.

The modern daily newspaper is not only a vexatious thing to read but it is a cumbersome thing to collect and expensive to preserve. Its size, making from four to eight unwieldy volumes every year, its confusing make-up owing to the universal intermixing of news matter with advertisements, the absence of any index, the misleading headlines and above all the poor quality of the paper on which it is printed, make it of somewhat questionable value as a convenient source of information for the future historian. But the policy of this Society for the past forty or fifty years has been, besides adding to and maintaining its earlier files, to collect unbroken files of a sufficient number of current newspapers to preserve for the future a daily record of happenings throughout the country, and with this object the Society is now annually binding thirteen weekly and twenty-two daily newspapers into one hundred and ten to one hundred and fifteen volumes, for which the only expense incurred is for the binding. It is for the members to decide whether this policy is to be continued or abandoned, for it clearly cannot be continued much longer without room and shelving, and these cannot be had without money. The Society's collection of newspapers is perhaps its most valuable asset, the one possession for which it is most noted and which is the most frequently consulted, and one which the Council is unanimous in advising the Society to support, if its pre-eminence among national societies is to be maintained.

WALDO LINCOLN,  
*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.