



AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

WORCESTER, MASS., U. S. A.

Established 1812

CIRCULAR OF INFORMATION

THE AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY was established as a national Society in October 1812, at Worcester, Mass., for collecting and preserving materials for the study of American history and antiquities. The Library was located at Worcester primarily because it was away from the seacoast and hence not subject to naval attack. Its founder was Isaiah Thomas, a leading New England publisher and philanthropist, who gave to the Society his private library, then one of the best in the country.

The present library building was constructed in 1910 at a cost of \$172,000, with \$15,000 for the land. A wing for additional book stacks costing \$100,000 was finished in July 1924. The main feature of the building is a large rotunda reading-room, surrounded by four work-rooms and six alcove-rooms for special collections. On the second floor are the map and print room, almanac room, manuscript room and exhibition hall. In the rear are the stacks, each five floors high. The linear shelf measure of the entire library is nearly eleven miles.

The library of the American Antiquarian Society is one of the great reference libraries of the country for students of American history. It contained in 1924, 152,226 volumes, 234,832 pamphlets, 100,000 manuscripts and many thousands of maps, broadsides and engravings. Its chief specialties, in many of which it ranks first, are as follows:

- American Newspapers, 12,350 volumes
- American Imprints previous to 1920, 40,000 titles
- Spanish Americana and West Indies, 11,000 titles
- American Periodicals, 16,350 volumes
- American Local History, 11,000 volumes
- American Genealogies, 4,500 volumes
- American School Books, 12,500 volumes
- Civil War and Slavery, 3,900 titles
- U. S. Government Publications, 19,000 volumes
- American Almanacs, 10,500 issues
- American Directories, 5,200 volumes
- American Maps, 16,000
- American Bookplates, 25,000
- Library of the Mathers, 950 volumes
- American College Reports, 27,000 issues
- American Printing and Journalism, 4,000 titles

The Publications of the Society comprise two series—the Transactions and the Proceedings. The Transactions, at first also known as the "Archaeologia Americana," consist of volumes 1 to 12, published from 1820 to 1911, and with the exception of volume 2, which is out of print, are sold by the Society at \$4.00 each.

The Proceedings from 1812 to 1849, which were issued occasionally and are mostly out of print, were reprinted in one volume, in 1912, and are for sale at \$4.00. From 1849 to 1880, the Proceedings were issued semi-annually and are for sale unless out of print at \$1.00 each. In 1880, a "new series" of Proceedings was begun, with volume numbering, which are for sale at \$1.50 per issue, or \$4.00 per bound volume.

Membership in the Society is purely honorary, with two hundred members resident in the United States, and at present thirty-three foreign members. Members are chosen by the Council of the Society for prominence in collecting or historical research.

The Funds of the Society amount to \$352,000, yielding an income of about \$21,000. Since the Society has never received any financial aid from Government, State or City, and has a membership which is entirely honorary, it must derive its support from gifts and bequests.

Although the library has always been absolutely free to the public for reference, the financial support has come almost entirely from members. The collections, which at a conservative valuation are worth two million dollars, have been practically all acquired without public assistance.

The present income of the Society barely suffices for its necessary administrative expenses. It needs money for the purchase of books and early newspapers needed to fill in its files; for additions to its varied collections such as maps and engravings; for the purchase of local history and genealogies; for binding; for cataloguing and indexing; for printing its valuable manuscripts and exploiting its priceless possessions.

An additional endowment fund of \$500,000 is necessary for the Society to perform properly its duty to American scholars, and to the raising and giving of such a fund, the attention of patrons of history and literature throughout the entire country is called.



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