

## *Report of the Council*

SUMMER, supposedly the time for rest and relaxing, means for the Antiquarian Society a continuous and increased use of the Library. It is even difficult to find vacation periods for our staff. The closing of the colleges during the summer brings many visiting scholars, who come to Worcester for study. Private researchers, who spend summers in New England, take out days or even weeks to use the resources of the library. The addition of the new book-stack, however, finished a year ago, has relieved the pressing problem of space and has lightened the work of the staff in aiding visitors and researchers. In scarcely any library in the country is there a greater concentration in small space of a vast body of important source material. Within two hundred feet of the main reading-room are shelved three-quarters of a million books, and a similar number of manuscripts, maps and prints, all relating to American history and literature. The situation of course is simplified since this is solely a research library for adult study. The problems brought by the lending of books, children's rooms, and the use of the library by thousands of casual readers, with us are absent.

The two projects in the field of American literature, described in detail in the April report of the Council, have been given much attention during the summer, partly by the staff, but chiefly by the Director. As noted in April these projects consist of developing and completing the Library's collections of American literature of the nineteenth century, to aid the compilations of two important

bibliographical ventures now under way. One is the monumental Bibliography of American Literature, sponsored by the Bibliographical Society of America and edited by Jacob Blanck. Hitherto we have had for a guide chiefly P. K. Foley's *Bibliography of American Authors*, published in 1895 and listing the titles of the first and notable editions of 311 authors, comprising nearly 5000 entries. During the last thirty years we made extensive effort to obtain Foley titles, with the satisfying result that we now have well over ninety per cent of the books listed. But Foley was inadequate in that he did not give either pagination or locations, and omitted the works of many authors who were still living in 1895 and continued in later years to produce hundreds of additional volumes. With such additions the Foley list could be expanded from 5000 to 7700 titles.

The forthcoming Bibliography of American Literature will remedy these deficiencies. First it omitted 99 Foley authors who were not deemed up to the standard set by critics and literary historians. Then it added 75 more names not listed by Foley, authors who became accepted in later years or wrote important volumes after the date of Foley's book. Because the new bibliography lists only authors who died previous to 1930, there is a definitive and judicial consideration in the inclusion of names. A vast amount of research has been given by the editors to the determination of earliest issues, and the careful combing of the library resources of America has revealed many titles not previously known. The published results will take several volumes and will not be finally published for five or six years. The locating of copies, certainly one of the most important features of the work, will be restricted to ten leading libraries of the country, except for unique items elsewhere found.

The other project which the Antiquarian Society is attempting to support is the second volume of Lyle Wright's *American Fiction* covering the years 1851 to 1875, the details of which work were described in the Council Report for April. Important books and minor books are all included in this work, if the first year of publication falls between the dates selected. The period of 1851-1875 provides a more interesting field than the earlier years included in Mr. Wright's first volume, as it covers the growth of abolition, the Civil War, the expansion of the West and the great changes in national habits and customs. Whether or not these books of fiction attain high literary standards, they form as a body the most valuable source for a study of American social life.

Starting from scratch, this Library had only a handful of books in the 1851-1875 field, excepting of course instances of the few authors given in Foley. Therefore we had scarcely two hundred out of three or four thousand books which could be acquired. So far we have obtained about fifteen hundred titles in the desired field. This result has been accomplished by intensive combing of catalogues and by voluminous correspondence with dealers. But the funds to make such acquisitions could not be taken out of the Society's limited book income, which was required to support the already formed outstanding collections of newspapers, early imprints, local history, genealogies, and several minor but important fields. It became necessary to raise a special fund for this emergency buying. In this we have been highly successful, as six members of the Society have contributed or subscribed \$1000 each for the purpose—C. Waller Barrett, George F. Booth, Everett D. Graff, Richard A. Heald, Stephen W. Phillips and Harry G. Stoddard. In addition the Director contributed \$1500 by paying the bills of bookdealers during the spring and

summer. Therefore the success of the project is assured and the Society will be able to help notably in aiding in the compilation of the two important bibliographies.

The Society has always been helpful in supporting bibliographies of Americana, as the projects were established, by acquiring as complete collections as possible of the books needed. In this respect the Library has attempted to be of service during the past year. First of course is the completion of Evans's *American Bibliography* which sought to list all examples of American printing through the year 1800. Mr. Evans had finished his twelfth volume, covering imprints through the letter M in the year 1799, when he died in 1935 in his eighty-fifth year. Since then the task has remained unfinished, although the Society has always promised itself the obligation and the privilege of completing the work. Mr. Shipton has devoted much of the last five years to listing the imprints in the various libraries of the country and to carrying the work to the end of the year 1800. It has now been finished, the page-proof finally read, and the volume will be ready for publication during the coming year. Since Evans is one of the most important reference works produced in this or any country, there is a feeling of satisfaction to realize that at last it is completed.

Two other bibliographies have been aided during the year. Waldo Lincoln's *Bibliography of American Cookery Books 1742-1860*, issued in 1929, has long been out of print, although there has been constant demand for it. Mr. Lincoln had 492 entries in his volume. Since its date of publication 205 new titles and editions have been discovered, making a total of nearly 700 items to be entered in a new edition. Miss Eleanor Lowenstein of New York has become interested in the subject and has finished a revised bibliography, based largely upon Mr. Lincoln's list and our increased collections. This volume will fill a long-felt want.

Another bibliographical work which has interested the Society greatly is a checklist of American Songsters to the year 1850. The Library already owned an excellent collection of these rare little volumes, and during the past two years has sought to obtain new acquisitions in the field. This activity has been encouraged chiefly by the enthusiasm of Miss Lucile K. Wilkin of Denver, Colorado, who spent many weeks in Worcester listing and studying our collection. In addition to checking our collection she has listed the holdings of a dozen other leading American libraries. Miss Wilkin has also been most generous in buying for the Society many items which we could scarcely afford. Now she has turned over her material to Mr. William M. Howie of the Houghton Library at Harvard, who, we hope, will canvass other collections and bring the book into shape for publication. It will be of much literary and historical value if made available in printed form. Songsters preserve in verse and musical arrangement the earliest expressions of patriotism, the popular interpretation of political changes, and the story of American manners and customs.

The Director's long-contemplated volume on Paul Revere's engravings has at last advanced nearly to publication. The text has been finished and the 123 engravings or other designs made by Revere have been selected for reproduction. Estimates are now being figured on the coast of printing. It will be an expensive volume, but it is hoped that the comprehensiveness of the undertaking and the magic of Paul Revere's name will attract enough subscriptions to cover the cost of publication.

During the past six months there have been seven deaths in the membership of the Society. Wat Tyler Cluverius, President of Worcester Polytechnic Institute, a member since 1940, died October 28, 1952. John Thomas Lee of Chicago, writer on bibliographical and historical topics,

elected in 1917, died on April 26, 1953. John Marshall Phillips of New Haven, Director of the Yale Gallery of Fine Arts and authority on silver, paintings, and many other forms of collecting, elected in 1949, died on May 7. William Greene Roelker of Providence, Director of the Rhode Island Historical Society, elected in 1941, died on May 29. Douglas Southall Freeman of Richmond, historian and newspaper editor, elected in 1938, died on June 13. Joseph Carson of Philadelphia, interested in administering libraries and historical societies, and collector, elected in 1947, died on August 23. Lemuel Aiken Welles of Ridgefield, Connecticut, elected 1928, died February 15. Obituary notices of these members will appear in the printed *Proceedings* of this meeting. It should also be noted that the Duke of Alba, a foreign member elected in 1947, died September 24, 1953. He was the most titled nobleman outside of the reigning families of Europe, was for several years Spanish Ambassador to the Court of St. James, owned one of the greatest art collections in the world, and wrote many important historical works relating to Spanish history.

The Library has been especially successful during the past year in acquiring rare examples of early American printing, important books of history and literature, and hundreds of titles needed to fill in its various special collections. The details of these accessions will appear in the report of the Librarian. It has been only through the generous and continued support given to the Society by its members that such acquisitions have been made possible.

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.