

## REPORT OF THE LIBRARIAN.

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In this, my first annual report to the Society, I had intended to describe some of the special collections of the library and to trace the growth of the collection from its establishment in 1812 to the present day. But since these matters are fully treated in the *Handbook of Information* regarding the Society, to be soon distributed, this report will be confined to a relation of the progress of the year.

The guiding spirit in the acquirement of additions to the library has been that of specialization. To strengthen those departments of the library which are already strong, to obtain material for which the Society is a proper custodian and to reject that which does not come within our scope—are all parts of this program.

Two years ago, several members of the Society, prominent in library matters, were requested by the President to give a formal expression of their opinion as to the proper scope of the library of the Antiquarian Society and the lines of its future development. Among the reports then submitted, that written by Mr. George Parker Winship was so comprehensive and convincing and expresses so clearly my own views regarding the library, that I herewith reproduce it as part of my report. Under date of October 30, 1907, Mr. Winship writes:—

“Without a clear understanding of what the function of the American Antiquarian Society is, it will be impossible to decide definitely regarding the proper development of the Society’s library, a development which should include the elimination of books now useless and never likely to be used in this library. As it seems to me, the object of our Society, in its library, is to accumulate and preserve, accessible to all qualified students, everything that can be of assistance to those

who study the history of America. Inasmuch as the library is situated in Worcester, where there are other libraries which are devoted specifically to the accumulation of local Worcester material, and to meeting the needs of general readers interested in current modern historical publications, there is no need for the Society to collect in either of these lines. The Society ought to devote its resources to improving its collections in departments which other libraries in Worcester, or possibly elsewhere within a day's trip, have not developed more thoroughly than this library can expect to do.

"The Society ought, first of all, to increase just as far as possible those departments in which it already has large and important collections, with the idea of making the collections in the American Antiquarian Society library pre-eminent above all competitors on certain clearly recognized subjects.

"Taking into consideration the history of the Society and of its library, this is clearly a proper place for large groups of books, many of which President Eliot has dubbed "dead books," which are almost never used by anyone—but which, when called for, are in most cases wanted by students of exceptional erudition, engaged in researches of real consequence into the regions beyond the limits of the usual academic range. It is peculiarly the province of an Antiquarian Society to be prepared to assist in the work of scholars of this character. The Society ought, therefore, to retain so far as it can do so its reputation in the public mind as a dumping ground, if you will, of all the old trash of garrets and dead clergymen's effects. The expense of handling and sorting out such material is great, greater than most libraries are willing to assume on account of the small yield of books immediately useful; which is just why this Society should welcome it as a part of its duty, recognizing that the ultimate yield to its own resources and to scholarship much more than justifies the cost. Whenever possible, such gifts should be accepted with the clear understanding that the Society is to act as a clearing-house, retaining the privilege of disposing not only of duplicates but of any books which would obviously be more useful somewhere else.

"It is especially true in a library such as this that the contents or subject matter of a book as often as not constitute its least interesting aspect. The number of American publications, large and small, which it is inconceivable that anyone should ever wish to read, is very large. Most of these are, nevertheless, on account of the place where, or the person by whom printed, or from some peculiarity of the printing, likely to be of great value to future students of American printing. The debt of the Society to the first historian of printing in America—Isaiah Thomas—makes it especially desirable that in this

Society's library should be found the material for those who will, from time to time, rewrite that history, in whole or in parts.

"Closely allied to this subject is that of the art and craft of book-binding, and the library contains many invaluable examples of American bindings, oftentimes on books which are not otherwise important. Some of these earlier bindings are stiffened with sheets of other books, and these will in time need to be examined carefully in the hope of finding in them parts of some of the thousands of colonial publications which have apparently entirely disappeared.

"There is another large group of books which are interesting because of the marks of ownership which they contain. Besides these "Association books" which restore a sort of personal touch with the worthies or unworthies of other days, there are those which, because they go to show us what was virtually the entire library of some long ago forgotten clergyman, doctor or man of affairs, are of the utmost value as an exemplification of just what made up the intellectual stock in trade of typical characters in other generations. The books which contain the autograph of "Crescentius Matherus," now scattered over the building, are a striking illustration, but other libraries received in block are not less important, because they are more truly illustrative of a larger intellectual stratum.

"In fulfilling its duties to such varied possible interests of future students the Society will, perforce, find itself in possession of long shelves full of volumes seemingly worthless. It must not be forgotten, however, that the most worthless books usually have a story to tell to those who have stumbled upon the particular key to open the mystery. Various successive editions of theological treatises seem useless enough, and yet there is nothing that so convincingly reveals the amazing ability of colonial New Englanders to digest theological subtleties as the shelves full of these volumes, which would never have been printed if there had not been money to be made by selling them—except where this deduction is controverted by the equally interesting fact, which could only have been discovered by comparing the actual volumes side by side, that successive editions are evidence of the fact that the books did not sell, and that the printer tried to get his money back by inserting an up-to-date title-page in front of the old sheets of text.

"If I seem to have argued against disposing of most of the books now in the library, it is because my own experience has led me to feel more and more certain that there is no possible way of guessing what unheard of thing the next person who comes into the library will want, if the library is one with a

reputation, such as I believe the American Antiquarian Society should strive to acquire, for possessing unheard-of resources.

"The books which the Society's library does not need are primarily those which are to be had elsewhere. Any book, and certainly a book not related to at least a shelf full of other books, which can be gotten in half an hour or, thanks to the telephone, in half a day, is not, other things being equal, worth the space which it would fill on the library shelves. There are certain large classes, which no one, not intimately familiar with the library, would expect to find in an Antiquarian Society library. European literature, unless like Rabelais and Chateaubriand it shows how America influenced Europe; English county history, not of American genealogical interest; the biographies of Europeans who had no known influence upon American events, should properly be looked for in a public library, where will also be preserved most of the publications of recent years, including periodicals, which have enjoyed any popular vogue. The Society might properly preserve any books, perhaps even novels, that no one ever heard of, but why it should fill its shelves with the things that are carefully kept in every library one-fiftieth its size, is not obvious. The Society's library ought not to be a library for readers, in my opinion. It should be a place for special investigators, however broad or minute their field of study, who will be familiar with all the special treatises on their particular subjects, and who are seeking an opportunity to examine, through the Society's foresight, those things which the public that patronizes most other libraries has no interest in. The Society's library should contain everything that it can possess itself of, that other libraries do not preserve. It should have this material so arranged and catalogued as to anticipate as far as possible the needs of investigators who visit or write to the library. If this policy were adopted it would require that the Society should deliberately plan to develop a staff of specially trained attendants, familiar with its resources, accustomed to the by-paths of scholarly interests, and prepared at any time to place their own special qualifications and information at the service of American scholarship. It is my opinion, that only by so doing can the Society regain its position as an important factor in the American historical world."

I entered upon the position of Librarian of the Society in January, 1909. During the preceding three months, however, I attended the meetings of the Library Committee and spent part of each week in Worcester. This report, therefore, covers the year from October, 1908 to October,

1909. In this period the accessions to the library have been unusually large. Expressed in figures they total 2844 volumes, 4721 pamphlets, 8600 early issues of newspapers and 73 miscellaneous objects such as maps, broadsides and portraits. Of this total, 1903 volumes and 2048 pamphlets were received by purchase, and 901 volumes and 2668 pamphlets by gift. A list of the donors is appended to this report.

Since the Society's foundation, one of its most valuable possessions has been its collection of the early productions of the American press. Hence the effort should be made to strengthen this department at every opportunity, and the plan of collecting should be sufficiently comprehensive to include *everything* printed in the country before a certain date. Just what this date should be is a matter for arbitrary decision. It would be inadvisable to attempt to gather the entire output of the press for the last half century. Not only would such a task be impracticable, but the very purpose and usefulness of the collection, as one of service for a study of the beginnings of the American press, would be disregarded. It is more desirable to strengthen our collection for a certain period, than to expend our energies in the attempt to cover too large a field. For the present, therefore, the year 1820 has been chosen as our inclusive date. The reasons for this choice are threefold. The year 1820 covers the establishment of printing-presses in most of the older towns, it includes the mass of printed material bearing upon the Jeffersonian era, the War of 1812 and the ensuing period of national reorganization, and finally, it is the closing date of Evans' great *American Bibliography* listing all American imprints and already published through the year 1778.

The amassing of such a collection means the expenditure of funds as well as of no small amount of energy and research. But the task is not unsurmountable. How large is the number of American imprints issued before 1820? An estimate based on bibliographies and book-lists already published would show that the total output of the United States press to the year 1820 would number about 75,000

titles. In its century of growth, the library has acquired a fair share of this vast number, and a systematic attempt to enlarge the collection would have decided results.

The growth of the library in this particular direction during the past year gives promise for the future. Exactly 1496 American imprints, dating from late in the seventeenth century to the year 1820, have been obtained through various channels.<sup>1</sup> Although the great part of this material could not in any way be listed under the head of "rarities," yet there are several titles which are worthy of mention even in a brief report. There are many of the productions of the early eighteenth century Boston press, such as Thacher's *Unbelief Detected*, 1708, Nicholas Culpeper's *Pharmacopœia Londonensis*, 1720, and the *Confession of Faith*, 1723. Our notable Mather collection has received at least one addition, Cotton Mather's *Virtue in its Verdure*, Boston, 1725. A few other interesting titles are the first *New Jersey Bible*, Trenton, 1791, Langdon's *Excellency of the Word*, Portsmouth, 1756, the *New England Primer*, Providence, 1782, and Benezet's *Historical Account of Guinea*, Philadelphia, 1771, and a hitherto unrecorded tract entitled, a *Guide to Heaven*, printed at Boston in 1713. From the Penny-packer sale in Philadelphia in December, 1908, about 200 early Pennsylvania imprints were secured, and from a New York auction sale there were obtained a large number of Maryland and Virginia imprints. The negotiations now under way for the purchase of a notable collection of Pennsylvania imprints, the fruits of twenty years of research on the part of a Philadelphia collector, bid fair to make a large addition to the library in the near future.

I look forward to the time when so large a proportion of the reproductions of the early American press will be represented on our shelves that the collecting of the future will be devoted only to the search for rarities. No other library in the country covers exactly the same field or attempts to collect so comprehensively. The many requests which we receive for the privilege of examining or copying scarce

<sup>1</sup>In this total the early almanacs, about 400 in number, are not included, nor are the newspapers and broadsides.

publications show how much this work is appreciated. When all the material is arranged in the new library according to a subject classification, it will be much more accessible and useful. The value of such a collection for the student of early American history, literature, law, commerce, medicine, theology, education and science, as well as of early printing, cannot be overestimated.

A collection closely allied with that of American imprints is that of American almanacs. In the infancy of our printing these little publications vied with religious treatises as the most popular productions of the period. Whenever a printer invaded a sparsely settled neighborhood and established his press, his first publications were invariably the almanac and the newspaper. The almanacs, therefore, are of much interest to the student of local imprints. In addition to the value of their astronomical information, they are also useful to the historian for the statistics as to courts and legislatures and especially for their tables of travelled roads and highways.

Although published in large quantity—of one issue, that for the year 1797, Isaiah Thomas says that he printed 29,000 copies—comparatively few have survived the ravages of time. Their very name suggests the word ephemeral, and it requires much searching to complete a set. Before the year 1800 the number of almanacs published in the country amounted to about 2000 titles. Between 1800 and 1850 there were perhaps 5000 more. Of this great number we are still far from having a comprehensive collection, but have made considerable headway during the past year. Exactly 1272 almanacs have been acquired in the past twelve months through gifts, exchange and purchase, about five-sixths of them dating before 1850. Among the more important lots obtained were Davis's Almanac, Boston, 1758, Mills & Hicks's Register for 1775, a nearly complete set of Rhode Island issues from 1763 to 1799, long runs of Poor Will's, Bioren's, Carleton's, Leavitt's, Beckwith's and Webster's Almanacs, a large collection of early Maine issues, a number of Pennsylvania items from the Penny-packer sale, and about 200 of the German imprints of Penn-

sylvania and Maryland. In addition to the number of almanacs noted above, there have been placed in the library 274 early nineteenth century Mexican almanacs—the *Calendarios* of Cumplido, Ontiveros, Galvan and other Mexican almanac makers. If we could have the good fortune during the coming two years to witness an equal growth in our almanac collection, we should then be in a position where we should have to look only for the rarer issues.

There are other special collections in the library which have experienced some increase. The collection of early school books, which is perhaps the largest in the country and is surely the object of considerable inquiry, has received an addition of 314 volumes, many of which were obtained at the Pennypacker sale last year. Several gaps have been filled in the collection of colonial laws. Among these accessions should be mentioned the Vermont Laws of 1798, the Rhode Island Acts and Laws of 1767, the New Jersey Acts and Laws of 1776, the New Jersey Grants and Concessions of 1752, and the Virginia Acts of 1759, 1769 and 1785. Our collection of American Annuals has been increased by 76 volumes and a large number of early 19th century magazines have been added to our already large collection of American periodicals.

Nearly all of the foregoing books, excepting the few presented or received through exchange, have been purchased out of the general book funds. Of the books obtained from the income of special funds, the largest additions have been made to the Davis collection of Spanish-American. Chiefly through the aid of Miss Alice W. Kurtz, who has purchased many books for us in Mexico, we have obtained some exceedingly rare volumes on nearly Mexican dialects. Among the more noteworthy titles are to be noted the following:—

Molina, *Vocabulario en la Lengua Castellana y Mexicana*, Mexico, 1555.

Lorra Baquio, *Manual Mexicano*, Mexico, 1634.

Carochi, *Arte de la Lengua Mexicana*, Mexico, 1645.

Palafox y Mendoza, *Vida Interior*, Brussels, 1682.

Florencia, *La Estrella de el Norte de Mexico*, Mexico, 1688.

Avila, *Arte de la Lengua Mexicana*, Mexico, 1717.



Gastelu, *Arte de Lengua Mexicana*. Puebla, 1726.  
 Serra, *Manual de administrar los Sacramentos*, Mexico, 1731.  
 Aguirre, *Doctrina, Christiana en lengua Opata*, Mexico, 1765.  
 Moreno, *Vida del Vasco de Quiroga*, Mexico, 1766.

Our collection of bibliographical aids for the study of Spanish-Americana was rather scanty. An excellent beginning of such a collection has been made by the purchase of the following books:—

Andrade, *Ensayo Bibliografico Mexicano del Siglo XVII*, 1899.  
 Beristain de Souza, *Biblioteca Hispano-Americana Septentrional*, 3 vols., 1883.  
 Icazbalceta, *Bibliografia Mexicana del Siglo XVI*, 1886.  
 Leclerc, *Biblioteca Americana*, 1878.  
 Medina, *Biblioteca Hispano-Americana*, 7 vols., 1898-1907.  
     *Biblioteca Hispano-Chilena*, 3 vols., 1897-1899.  
     *La Imprenta en Guadalajara*, 1904.  
     *La Imprenta en La Habana*, 1904.  
     *La Imprenta en Merida de Yucatan*, 1904.  
     *La Imprenta en Oaxaca*, 1904.  
     *La Imprenta en Veracruz*, 1904.

The other special book funds have been used to purchase volumes relating to their respective subjects. With the income of the John and Eliza Davis fund a large amount of material has been obtained relating to the Civil War. Our collection of regimental histories is a large one and we take every opportunity to increase it. The Francis H. Dewey fund has been used for the purchase of legal books, and several rare volumes have been acquired from the income of the Haven fund. The Lincoln Legacy fund, according to the modification of its provisions in 1907, has been devoted to the increase of the library.

The collections of local history and genealogy have received many additions, but since the Local History fund yields but \$45.00 a year and the Genealogical fund but \$25.00, the increase in this direction will not be worthy of extended comment.

One of the pleasant happenings of the year was the receipt of a letter from Prof. Franklin B. Dexter of New Haven enclosing his check of \$100.00 to be used for filling the gaps in our collection of bibliographical material. Dr.

Dexter's own labors along bibliographical lines have made him sympathize with the helplessness felt by those who are without necessary books of reference, and for his assistance in this regard the Society owes him a debt of gratitude. With this gift, the following volumes have been purchased, filling many important gaps:—

- American Book Prices Current, 1896-1905, 10 vols.  
 Ford, P. L., Check List of Bibliographies, 1889.  
 Ford, P. L., Franklin Bibliography, 1889.  
 Goss, E. H., Bibliography of Melrose, Mass., 1889.  
 Griffin, Grace, Writings on American History, 1906, 1908.  
 Hall, F. P., Newark, N. J., Imprints, 1776-1900, 1902.  
 HARRISSE, H., Notes pour servir à l'histoire, à la bibliographie et à la cartographie de la Nouvelle France, 1545-1700, 1872.  
 Hart, Chas. H., Engraved Portraits of Washington, 1904.  
 King, Wm. L., The Newspaper Press of Charleston, S. C., 1872.  
 Lawson, W. T., Literature of the Mexican War, 1882.  
 Leclerc, Ch., Biblioteca Americana, 1878.  
 MacLean, J. P., Bibliography of Shaker literature, 1905.  
 Martin, Wm., Catalogue d'Ouvrages relatifs aux Îles Hawaii, 1867.  
 Miner, W. H., Bibliography of Daniel Boone, 1901.  
 Shea, J. B., Bibliographical Account of Catholic Bibles, 1859.  
 Smith, Wm. H., Jr., A Priced Lincoln Bibliography, 1906.  
 Tompkins, H. B., Burr Bibliography, 1892.  
 Weeks, S. B., Press of North Carolina, 1891.  
 Woodbury, C. J. H., Bibliography of Cotton Manufacture, 1909.

In addition to the above list, a large number of priced auction catalogues were obtained. The value of these catalogues, especially where the price and the disposition of copies are noted, is considerable. It can be illustrated by a case in point. Dr. Samuel A. Green, in his comprehensive "Bibliographical List" of books printed by John Foster, only recently published, notes an Almanac of 1676 the title of which was taken from the Brinley Catalogue and the location of which was unknown. In our copy of the Brinley Catalogue is pencilled on the margin the statement that this copy went to the Watkinson Library. Unfortunately our annotated Catalogue was not obtained until after

the publication of Dr. Green's volume, otherwise we might have furnished the information.

Since our collection of American newspapers is one of the strongest in the country, and is also the object of frequent consultation, considerable correspondence has been entered into for the purpose of obtaining files and every sale catalogue has been checked for lacking issues. The accessions for the year have been large, totalling 165 bound volumes and 8600 numbers. These papers all date before 1870, beyond which year we do not seek to obtain files unless in long runs or of important journals. Since 1870 we have many of the well known papers in bound files, and preserve and bind currently about two dozen journals selected from various sections of the country.

Of the unusually large number of papers which have been received during the year, nearly half have been obtained from the Library of Congress on exchange account. Several important files have been purchased at auction, and from dealers all the way from Portland to Charleston we have secured material to add to our collection. Among the longer files obtained have been the following:—*Pennsylvania Packet and General Advertiser*, 1771-1773; *Washington Globe*, 1832-1863; *Washington Star*, 1853-1865; *Independent Gazeteer*, 1785-1787; *Pennsylvania Herald*, 1785-1786; *Porcupine's Gazette*, 1798-1800; *Norfolk Herald*, 1795-1798; *New Hampshire Patriot*, 1809-1829; *True Flag*, 1852-1886; *San Francisco Herald*, 1851-1861; *New Haven Columbian Register*, 1831-1834; *Florida Herald*, 1838-1842; *Arkansas Gazette*, 1820-1849. This list, although containing but a few selections from the accession book, is especially instructive in showing the comprehensive scope of the acquisitions.

The accessions to the manuscript department have not been numerous. Among the few gifts may be noted a collection of the legal papers of Abraham Foster of Ashburnham, Mass., from Joseph F. Daniels of Fort Collins, Colo.; two volumes of a manuscript genealogy of the Goddard family from Lucius P. Goddard of Worcester; some interest-

ing letters on the Battle of Bunker Hill from James P. Paine of Worcester; and a list of marriages performed by Benjamin Colman in 1702.

The excellent work now being done in the cataloguing and calendaring of our manuscripts is rapidly making accessible this valuable portion of our library. The descriptive account of the collection recently prepared for the *Handbook of Information* reveals, almost for the first time, what an exceedingly large and important body of material we possess. In the new building we shall have an especially equipped manuscript room, with commodious and secure quarters for the preservation of rare documents. We shall then be in position to invite gifts of manuscript material and to suggest the consideration of this Society as a proper place of deposit for important family papers.

The limits of a brief report have already been exceeded by the account of the accessions of the year. Suggestions regarding future work and conjectures as to future plans are excluded. It is sufficient to state that the coming year will doubtless be the busiest in the history of the Society. The problem of moving into the new building is a serious one. The present system of classification, a "fixed" system, with an arbitrary reference to alcove and shelf, will be useless when the books are arranged in the new stack. The time is opportune for the installation of an expansive system of classification which will admit of rearrangement for all time. To adopt any of the well-known systems now in use would be inadvisable since the library is so largely made up of books of a certain class, whereas these systems are devised for collections of a general character. As I glance around at the shelves of this great storehouse of history, I can only remember the words of Samuel Foster Haven, written for his Report of October, 1850: "There are no problems in art or science that have been found more perplexing in practice, or more incapable of a satisfactory theoretical solution, than the arrangement of libraries and the preparation of catalogues. Men have become insane in their efforts to reduce these labors to a system."

The number of assistants in the library has remained the same as the preceding year, although it will be necessary to provide for some additional force when the time arrives for moving into the new building. I cannot let the occasion of this report pass without expressing my gratitude to those who have assisted me in the library during the year for their cordial coöperation and for their aid, always willingly given. Especially do I wish to record my indebtedness to Mr. Barton, whose thorough acquaintance with local affairs and familiarity with the history and traditions of the Society has been constantly at my disposal. With the various working committees of the Society my relations could not have been more harmonious. Such a spirit of coöperation and the assurance of increased funds can only cause us to look forward to the future with confidence and with pride.

Respectfully submitted,

CLARENCE S. BRIGHAM,

*Librarian.*

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