

# *The Report of the Council*

*April 16, 1980*

THOSE OF US within the Society's staff have wrestled with three very interesting problems since this body last met.

The first issue has involved a sizable number of us as we worked to come to terms with the benefits, the problems, and the conflicts inherent in the description and analysis of books, pamphlets, and broadsides by means of computer-assisted cataloguing. Many of you are aware that AAS staff members make use of OCLC, a computerized, shared-cataloguing network, in order to take advantage of cataloguing done by other libraries or to enter into the network original catalogue records that are generated at AAS. Through this process, AAS obtains printed cards and a magnetic tape bearing records of all of our cataloguing activity.

At present, our staff is striving to come to grips with newly promulgated international standards for shared cataloguing, while attempting to preserve in AAS records the kind of data that scholarly bibliographers and historians of printing require for their work. With the helpful advice of consultants, we have concluded that, for the present, our best course is to establish a data-inputting system that will be compatible with international standards and that will go beyond them in order that we may include information in our records that is not necessary to ordinary university or public library records—data that pertain to printers, date and place of printing, and the like which we have included in our card catalogues since 1927. Thus, with funds provided by the George I. Alden Trust, we have obtained from a commercial computer service a program

that generates copies of our records for any catalogue network and that will enable us to print bibliographical records in book format.

Further, the Council is happy to announce that the Albert W. Rice Charitable Foundation has granted to the Society a sum of \$98,720, which will be used to defray the costs of a small data processor, the programming for it, and the maintenance of the system for a period of three years. Because AAS collections are so numerous, so deep in a relatively narrow area of human experience, and because so much of it is still undescribed and unanalyzed, I have long held that users of this library, more than almost any other, would benefit most from the flexibility and multiplicity of access that computer-assisted cataloguing can provide. We are very excited about the prospects for improving our ability to serve scholars and to advance historical knowledge through this enterprise.

Staff of the North American Imprints Program and the project to catalogue our early broadsides (both funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities) are directly involved in the development of the system, and we look forward to assessing the usefulness of machine-readable records to research and publishing. Also, we plan to work out a compatible form of entry for the records of our Catalogue of American Engravings, thus merging into our computerized records information concerning that important form of cultural expression. Beyond our own walls, those early imprint records will be put to use by the compilers of the Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalogue in London and Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

AAS has benefited greatly from the assistance that a number of people have given us in reaching the conclusion to develop an internal computer facility. At the Library of Congress, Lucia J. Rather, Ben R. Tucker, Kay D. Guiles, and Stephen P. Davis have provided cooperation and excellent advice on matters of procedure. A committee of the Independent Research Libraries Association (chaired by your reporter and assisted

by Stephen P. Davis) developed accommodations for the international computerized communication format called MARC (MACHINE-Readable Cataloguing) that will permit the acceptance of additional kinds of descriptive data in shared-cataloguing records. Several of the proposals have been approved by the powers that be, but they probably will not be implemented by the national networks for some time to come. Our friends in the neighborhood of New England have established The Athenæum Group, which is chaired by John Lancaster of Amherst College. They consider and criticize these various arcane matters and give us good counsel. Richard B. Kennedy of the Norton Company has viewed our plans for the computer and has steered us away from pitfalls we might not have seen. So, with good luck and enough patience on the part of Frederick E. Bauer, Carol R. Alexander, Earl R. Taylor, and Alan N. Degutis of AAS, and with the expert knowledge of Lawrence F. Buckland at Inforonics, Inc., we hope to develop the means of plumbing the depths of AAS collections and may help develop new standards for the cataloguing of the specialized research materials for which AAS has responsibility.

The second matter we have attempted to resolve is that dealing with the direction of our educational initiatives. We are now three years into the five-year, experimental period funded by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation during which time we have tried out several kinds of programs. All have worked satisfactorily. The American Studies Seminars for upperclassmen from five Worcester colleges have been held in the fall of 1978 and 1979. They have been well received by students, faculty, and AAS staff. A third, for the fall of 1980, has been arranged with somewhat more of the financial burden being borne by all participating institutions. William L. Joyce, the Society's education officer, has conducted an excellent adult education course and has arranged lecture series and performances of music and poetry. All have attracted good-sized crowds and have served to interpret the holdings and mission

of the Society to differing audiences. Mr. Joyce is planning workshops that will serve to describe various AAS collections that we hope will interest regionally based faculty members who might make curricular or research use of them. But we have foundered on the hard rock of one problem—that of a graduate education program. We have not been able to devise a focus nor to locate a clientele for such an offering. Mr. Joyce called a meeting of representatives from New England universities that offer graduate programs in subject matter appropriate to AAS. A large number of people came, some from as far away as Orono and Burlington. The response to our request for advice ranged from a decidedly negative response, i.e., any offering of any sort by AAS was unnecessary, to several of the most enthusiastic nature. Thus it came clear to us that institutional needs vary greatly and we are uncertain if we can put together a program that will suit the desiderata of a sufficient number of institutions and students to make our hopes a reality. Still, we are determined that we shall do all in our power to make AAS a stronger and more effective center for learning than we have been in the past.

Of course, the third leg on this problematical stool deals with the nuts and bolts of the Society. At last the boilers have been fitted with gas burners so that Donald K. Strader can burn either oil or natural gas. All the window openings have been fitted with a third barrier that reduces heat loss or gain and filters out light rays of the upper and lower frequencies of the spectrum. These expensive projects were made possible by generous gifts from the George F. and Sybil H. Fuller Foundation and by the Stoddard Charitable Trust.

Another nut or bolt worth mentioning is the level of annual support that has been provided by members and friends of the Society through the ministrations of Mary V. C. Callahan. Because of the generosity of more than 350 donors the Annual Fund now stands at a total of \$60,000, a sum that includes 99 gifts of \$100 or more from members of the Worcester As-

sociation of Mutual Aid in Detecting Thieves which amount to almost \$25,000. Also included in that figure are gifts from 25 corporate donors who have been approached with good effect by W. Douglas Bell, chairman of our Corporate Gifts Committee. Our late member Nathaniel Wheeler bequeathed a substantial, unrestricted gift to AAS of which \$86,000 has been received.

Grants ranging in size from \$1,000 to \$10,000 have been given to AAS by several hands including the Francis A. and Jacquelyn H. Harrington Foundation, the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, the George I. Alden Trust, the Earhart Foundation, William F. Boni, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities, University Microfilms International, Warren G. Davis, and Edward Connerly Lathem. Their gifts enable us to conduct such programs and projects as fellowships, book purchases, the Society's conference 'Printing and Society in Early America, 1640-1860,' to be held October 23-25, 1980, and the microfilming of files of the *Massachusetts Spy*. Friends of the late Michael Papantonio have increased the fund memorializing him to \$19,000. Marion S. Fletcher and Frank L. Harrington have provided monies to purchase the two outstanding books from the Papantonio Collection of American bindings, *The Federalist* and *New-Englands Memoriall* by Nathaniel Morton. The total of all cash gifts and bequests made thus far this year exceeds a third of a million dollars. The gratitude of the Council to each donor is unbounded, as is our thankfulness to the many people and institutions that have given valuable and useful materials for the Society's collections. We think of Parker B. Allen, the Denver Public Library, and Mrs. Bigelow Crocker, to mention only three, each of whom gave books, newspapers, or juvenilia that enrich our holdings.

Of course, other matters go on apace—not all presenting problems. John B. Hench fielded a total of 454 requests for information about our fellowships and received 70 completed

applications in return. Of that number the following have been appointed fellows for 1980-81:

*National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow*

John Owen King III, assistant professor of history, University of Michigan, 'Puritan Psychomachy: Themes of Piety and Mental Pathology in Early America.'

*Albert Boni Fellow*

Lewis Leary, William Rand Kenan, Jr., professor emeritus of English, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 'Literature in the United States, 1783-1820.'

*Fred Harris Daniels Fellows*

Charles E. Clark, chairman and professor of history, University of New Hampshire, 'Comparative Study of English Journalism, 1665-1765'; David Arthur Cressy, assistant professor of history, Pitzer College, 'Literacy and Its Uses in Early America'; Thomas M. Davis, professor of English, Kent State University, 'An Edition of Edward Taylor's "Harmony of the Gospels" '; Curtis M. Hinsley, Jr., assistant professor of history, Colgate University, 'The Indian and New England, 1800-1860'; John J. McCusker, associate professor of history, University of Maryland, 'The Rum Trade'; David Minter, professor of English, Rice University, 'Texts and Contexts: The Great Migration and King Philip's War'; Jonathan Prude, assistant professor of history, Emory University, 'The Meaning of Food in Early American History'; Harry S. Stout, associate professor of history, University of Connecticut, 'A Cultural History of the Sermon in Colonial New England.'

The great event in Mr. Hench's office, however, was the arrival of the printed copies of *The Press and the American Revolution*. This event, long awaited by AAS staff, its authors and editors, and (we trust) an eager buying public, was celebrated with a reception at the St. Botolph Club in Boston.

The Catalogue of American Engravings Project is progressing well under the guidance of Georgia B. Bumgardner and her assistants, Judy L. Larson (recently a guest on *The Sharon King Show* on Channel 4) and Karen A. Papineau. Their work is funded through grants from NEH and the H. W. Wilson Foundation. Nancy H. Burkett continues efficiently to manage the Readers' Services Department. Her predecessor, Mary E. Brown, has returned as a volunteer to assist us with searching and annotating a checklist of American technical publications that will be issued by Eleutherian Mills-Hagley Foundation. Joyce Ann Tracy and her assistants keep up with periodical and newspaper acquisitions and continue to answer many reference questions.

As for the director and librarian, it is obvious that with all this help from his outstanding staff, a dynamite secretary and assistant in all things, Eleanor Adams, and with the active interest and support of our president, he has nothing left to do.

To conclude, the Council and staff thank each of you who make our work possible and the Society useful.

Marcus A. McCorison

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