

Report of the Council

APRIL 15, 1992

IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING that since the annual meeting in October the principal concern of the Council has been that of the identification and selection of a successor to the office of president of the Society. Harold T. Miller is chairman of the committee that was appointed by Mrs. Conway in the early fall. Mrs. Conway and Mr. Miller were pleased that all who were asked agreed to serve. They are Henry B. Dewey (secretary to the committee), Bernard Bailyn, Robert C. Baron, Frederick E. Bauer, Jr., Warren J. Haas, Mary Kelley, William O. Pettit, Jr., Roderick D. Stinehour, and Peter H. Williams. However, had the committee-folk known how much time and effort was to be involved, they might not have agreed so readily. The committee have reviewed the qualifications of well over one hundred individuals, have met many times, and have issued a preliminary report to the entire Council. Final interviews and meetings will be held within the next several weeks, to be followed soon thereafter by presentation to the Council of the committee's final recommendation.

The Council was not-a-little cheered by a letter received just last week from William G. Bowen, the president of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Mr. Bowen announced that the trustees of the foundation had awarded the Society a grant of \$1,500,000 as a challenge to AAS to raise an additional \$3,000,000 in order to strengthen our endowment funds that are dedicated to the support of basic library functions—salaries for essential library staff members, conservation of research materials, access to collections through computer services, and underwriting the costs of curatorial departments. As an initial step toward meeting this not inconsiderable challenge, Mrs. Conway and Mr. Jeppson have requested gifts for the purpose of establishing an endowment to fund the office of the librarian, which office will be named in honor of Marcus McCorison, our sometime librarian and (ever) retiring

president. At this early report, nearly \$200,000 has been subscribed toward our goal. In due course, all members and friends of AAS will be given an opportunity to participate in meeting the Mellon Foundation challenge grant. The Council is highly gratified by the generosity of the foundation and by the regard and confidence with which the Society is held by its officers and trustees.

Also, the Council calls to your attention a portion of Mr. Bowen's statement pertaining to the 1993 budget of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Presented to the Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies of the House Appropriation Committee, Mr. Bowen testified that NEH continues to play a crucial role in supporting research in the humanities, especially scholarship that requires 'determined efforts over long periods of time and that provide the base for work by other scholars— . . . bibliographical aids, and other research tools . . . not always seen as fashionable forms of scholarship, but they are fundamental. . . . Equally important to the future of American scholarship and education is the survival of those independent institutions where scholarship thrives. Research libraries of the quality of the American Antiquarian Society, the Folger, the Huntington, the Morgan, and the Newberry . . . need the long-term financial stability that only increased endowment can provide. NEH has a continuing and possibly expanded role to play here as well, though primary responsibility surely should be assumed by private patrons.'

The past six months have been busy ones, as usual, for our fine staff who continue successfully to meet the challenges that are set before them. It has been a period marked by major accomplishments and hard work. The Council enthusiastically thanks each member of our staff, particularly their leaders— Nancy Burkett, the librarian; John Hench, director of research and publication; Lynn Sodha, director of development; Donald Strader, superintendent of buildings and grounds; Eleanor Adams, executive assistant to the president; and Carol-Ann Mackey, the president's secretary.

A long-term goal was achieved early in 1992 when the Society's online public access catalogue, MaRK-I (*Machine Readable Katalog-One*), was installed and activated. The result of years of work by our staff and intense planning by the librarian and our head of technical services, Alan Degutis, the system is now available for use by readers at AAS and by our staff. More than 80,000 records of early American printed materials, including the Catalogue of American Engravings, are now accessible in the MaRK-I system, while AAS cataloguers constantly enter new records. Within the next several weeks, another 80,000 records, representing about 45,000 nineteenth-century materials and 35,000 modern books of scholarship, will be loaded into the system. When the loading of these machine-readable records is completed, something on the order of twenty percent of our book collections will be represented in MaRK. However, more records to other collections will be brought online, in addition to the books file. For example, machine-readable descriptions of our manuscript collections are now being written from the already existing hard-copy descriptions. Our holdings of 14,000 newspaper titles have been catalogued in computerized format, as have nearly all of our periodical holdings. Refinements to the programs that manipulate the records continue to be developed in a phased plan of action in order to make additional information, already present in the records, accessible to online searching. Several very generous grants, one from an anonymous source and others from the Stoddard Charitable Trust, the George I. Alden Trust, the Amelia Peabody Charitable Fund, and the Digital Equipment Corporation have made this important development financially possible.

On other fronts our work goes forward. Mr. Hench and Ms. Burkett are revising the Society's 175th-anniversary guide to the collections and programs. The original edition is all but out of print at this writing and after five years needs some revision. Retitled *Under Its Generous Dome: The Collections and Programs of the American Antiquarian Society*, the edition will include information on the online public access catalogue and updated descriptions of

collections and services. Other publications in train include a volume of essays, entitled *The Republican Synthesis Revisited*, delivered at a conference held at AAS in honor of George A. Billias, professor emeritus of history at Clark University, as well as, at long last, *A Checklist of American Newspaper Carriers' Addresses 1720-1820*, compiled over a fifty-year period by our late members Gerald D. McDonald and Stuart A. Sherman, and completed by Mary T. Russo of the Brown University library.

The Committee on Fellowships, staffed by M. A. McCorison, chairman pro tem, Patricia Cline Cohen, Nancy F. Cott, Richard Crawford, Gerald N. Grob, and Mason I. Lowance, Jr., who work under the benign guidance of Mr. Hench, recommended to the Council the following scholars for appointment to fellowships during 1992-93:

American Antiquarian Society—

National Endowment for the Humanities Fellows

Richard D. Brown, University of Connecticut, 'The Idea of an Informed Citizenry in Early America, 1650-1865'; Nym Cooke, Harvard University, 'Sacred Music in New England, 1720-1780: From Ritual Towards Art'; Kenneth J. Moynihan, Assumption College, 'A History of Worcester'; and Ronald J. Zboray, Georgia State University, 'Literary Enterprise in Antebellum America: Publishers, Novelists, and the Reading Public.'

Kate B. and Hall J. Peterson Fellows

Michael A. Bellesiles, Emory University, 'The Origins of American Gun Culture, 1760-1840'; Michael Clapper, Northwestern University, 'The "Popular" and "Elite" Disjunction in Art in the United States after the Civil War'; Marcus L. Daniel, Princeton University, 'Ribaldry and Billingsgate: Popular Journalism and Political Culture in the Early Republic'; Sally F. Griffith, Villanova University, 'Boosterism in Nineteenth-Century American Newspapers'; Phyllis A. Hunter, College of William and Mary, 'Ship of Wealth: New England Merchants, Colonial Capitalism, and the

Rhetoric of Money'; Clare A. Lyons, Yale University, 'Sex Among the "Rabble": Gender Transitions in the Age of the Revolution, Philadelphia 1750-1830'; Russell L. Martin III, University of Virginia, 'Almanacs of the Southern States, 1732-1860'; William B. Todd and Ann Bowden, University of Texas, Austin, 'A Descriptive and Historical Bibliography of Sir Walter Scott, 1792-1836'; David L. Waldstreicher, Yale University, 'Nationalism and Celebration in Post-Revolutionary America, 1780-1830'; Ellen E. Westbrook, University of Southern Mississippi, 'Cultural Captives: Euro-Amer-Indian Literary Landscapes'; and Marcus Wood, Worcester College, Oxford, 'Abolition Propaganda in Britain and the United States, 1780-1860.'

Frances Hiatt Fellows

Patricia Crane, Columbia University, 'Cultures of Reading in the American Renaissance'; and Erik R. Seeman, University of Michigan, 'Laity, Clergy, and the Shaping of Popular Religious Culture in New England, 1720-1770.'

American Antiquarian Society-

American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Fellows

Laurie Kahn-Leavitt, Watertown, Massachusetts, 'A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard' (film adaptation); and Jeffrey Walker, Oklahoma State University, 'Collegiate Literary Culture in Eighteenth-Century America.'

Stephen Botein Fellow

Daniel A. Cohen, Florida International University, 'Beyond Domesticity: Literary Images of Working-Class Women, 1790-1860.'

While life at AAS goes on with some stability and lest one be lulled into a false sense of security, Mr. Strader continues to remind the president and the Committee on the Hall that our eighty-two-year-old building and our twenty-two-year-old heating and environmental control systems frequently show signs of aging by

breaking or leaking. In addition, AAS must make structural adjustments to Antiquarian Hall in order to meet the regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which intends to make more accessible the facilities of older, inflexible buildings that were designed years ago to different expectations.

The staff was saddened by the death on April 1, 1992, of John J. Simpson, an admired colleague, who had served the Society well for nearly five years as an agreeable receptionist and good friend to readers and staff members alike.

Turning to financial matters, the treasurer reports that the budget is in hand, showing but a modest deficit at this writing. The outcome of the year's finances, less than five months away, is dependant upon the response of members and friends to the chairman's May appeal for the Annual Fund and on continued energetic and stringent measures taken by the staff.

At the end of March, the market value of the Society's portfolio stood at \$21,040,714, its cost being \$19,272,754. This represents a rise of four percent from its market value of \$20,199,033 at the beginning of the fiscal year on September 1, 1991. Yield on the portfolio stands at just under six percent, or \$1,240,000, approximately the amount budgeted for f.y. 1992.

Also at the end of March, gifts to the 1992 Annual Fund and for specified purposes amounted to \$127,321, a worrisome decrease from that of 1991. Since September, the monetary value of gifts in kind have amounted to a total of \$214,208, representing a number of exceptionally fine additions to the collections, the most important being the Paris, 1613 edition of the voyages of Samuel de Champlain to Canada. The gift of Henry S. Streeter, this superb book formerly was in the collections of the late Thomas W. Streeter, the donor's father and a past president of the Society. This and so many other benefactions demonstrate the extraordinary generosity of individuals, corporations, and foundations toward the American Antiquarian Society. To each giver of services and support, the Council offers their warmest thanks.

Marcus A. McCorison

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