

## *Report of the Council*

LAST summer Mr. Barrett appointed a Planning Committee to take stock of the present situation of the Society, and to consider its policies and the steps needed to execute them. This committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Harrington, consisting of Messrs. Barrett, Hiatt, Jeppson, McCorison, Metcalf, Shipton, Stoddard, Wheeler, Whitehill, and Wiggins, met, drafted a plan, and reported to the Council. At its last meeting the Council accepted the report and instructed the Director to present the substance of it to this meeting, and, subsequently, after discussion, to the entire membership. This is the substance of the report:

The American Antiquarian Society was founded in 1812 by men who had participated in the American Revolution, and felt that the record of the experience of the nation was of vital significance to the entire world.

Today the American Antiquarian Society is the research library which is internationally recognized as responsible for acquiring, preserving, and bibliographically describing everything printed within the area of the present United States before 1876, and of modern historical works relating to that period. It is an active "researching" library as well as a repository of material for scholars doing research, and since 1812 its officers and staff have been engaged in the study of the printed records of American life. The cumulative effect of this century and a half of bibliographical research has been an explosive volume of publication in this generation. In the first century and a quarter of the Society's existence, it published 75 pamphlets and 60 vol-

umes of Proceedings and Transactions. In the last twenty-five years it has produced 40 volumes in letter press, including such works as the volume reproducing all of Paul Revere's engraving, and the bibliography locating every surviving copy of every American newspaper published before 1821. In addition, in the last decade we have republished in microprint form 50,000 volumes, pamphlets, and broadsides originally printed between 1640 and 1805, and are well engaged in the task of reprinting in the same way all pre-1821 American newspapers. The vast editorial work required by these publications could have been done only in this library, and has occupied the greater part of the time of its staff over the past 40 years. The result of this publication is that today research in American history is being carried on in 200 libraries from Stockholm to Sydney, Australia, which could not have been carried on in any one library in the world only a decade ago. Thanks to our publications, the libraries of the many new universities can purchase for what they might spend for one book, an entire library for research in American history. As a result of these studies and publications, the American Antiquarian Society is today serving hundreds of scholars, whereas a decade ago it could serve only dozens.

Within historical circles, there is a full awareness of the function and accomplishments of the American Antiquarian Society. This summer Allan Nevins wrote: "The American Antiquarian Society Library is one of our national treasures, from which I, as well as countless other scholars, have benefited. It is a marvel to me how much you and your associates accomplish on a limited annual budget. All workers in the field of American history, I am sure, appreciate what you are doing, and *I* am especially appreciative."

Certainly no historical organization with a budget as limited as ours can remotely approach our record of pro-

ductivity and usefulness. Unfortunately, the flourishing condition of the academic world today has created a competition in matters of professional salaries and book prices with which we, on our limited budget, cannot cope. When our professional employees retire it is after having achieved salaries at which we cannot obtain adequate replacements. It will be impossible in the future to maintain a competent professional staff if the budget remains at the present scale.

We must, moreover, create new staff positions if we are to continue our present work. We are, in terms of the number of titles issued, the largest publishers in the world, and these works require intense and scholarly editing; and yet, the Society has never had an editor. All of this work has been done by directors, librarians, and assistant librarians, working on schedules already crowded by other duties. If we are to continue our publication program, we must have a full-time editor skilled in history and bibliography, and he must have a secretary.

At present three members of the Society are for three years making the gift of the salary of a Curator of Maps and Prints, and the importance of her contribution convinces us that we must make the position a permanent one.

To hold, against the competition of other institutions, an adequate and competent professional staff will require the income from a million dollars of new endowment. To have our work brought to naught by an inadequate staff would be tragic. We all know of once important libraries which have in this way fallen into hands unable to manage them, and so have been lost to the world of scholarship.

This million of new endowment is essential simply to keep us in our present position. In order to advance constructively we shall need millions more of new endowment. For example, we spend about \$25,000 a year on books. The 64 major research libraries in the country on the average

have half a million dollars a year to spend in book purchases, and a number of libraries have over a million a year to spend. These institutions bid up prices so that we, with our limited budget, cannot compete. Indeed our purchases have not of late been as important a factor in our growth as the collections which institutions like Harvard, Dartmouth, the Boston Athenaeum, and the New England Historic Genealogical Society have transferred to us in recognition of our place and function in this world of growing complexity, specialization, and consolidation.

If we do obtain the means to buy actively, we shall need a new stack. It is twenty years since our last book stack was built, a period in which a research library is supposed to double in size, but we have kept within our walls by keeping strictly to our field of strength, and by discarding irrelevant material to which other generations gave a home. Our rate of growth is slow, but grow we must, or limit our service. The Planning Committee dismissed the suggestion that we might cut back either our service or our collecting.

The American Antiquarian Society has an unique position in American life, and is today far more influential and useful than ever before. It has no government support or subsidy, it has no alumni body on which to draw. A creation of the American free enterprise system, and indeed deliberately established in order to further that system by preserving a record of it, the Society hopefully turns to it for the means to carry on its work. We have since 1812 been a cooperative society. No historians are elected to membership just because they are distinguished; interest in and sympathy for our work is an essential prerequisite. Now we must call upon all those in our fellowship to give thought to and advice concerning our financial future. Do you have influence with individuals, business corporations, or foundations which could materially help to supply the new endow-

ment which we must have? Although the problem is pressing, the possibility of a long-term solution in the form of bequests should not be ignored.

We shall, in the near future, distribute to the membership a circular on the Society which we hope that they in turn will use to state our case.

In the last six months we have lost no less than seven of our members:

Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker	April 22, 1966
Josiah Kirby Lilly	May 4, 1966
Walter Goodwin Davis	June 11, 1966
Robert William Glenroie Vail	June 21, 1966
Carl Irving Wheat	June 23, 1966
Fred Norris Robinson	July 21, 1966
Edward Harold Cole	August 11, 1966

Each of these, like the hundreds of earlier members, had his part in the work which the American Antiquarian Society is carrying on today, and which by our efforts, we trust will carry on for years to come.

CLIFFORD K. SHIPTON,  
*For the Council*

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