

# *The Report of the Council*

*April 13, 1970*

THE INCREASED ACTIVITY in the affairs of the Society during the fall and winter months has produced a certain degree of exhilaration, as well as wonderment. For example: where does all the time and money go? But—we are buying books and getting more work done and helping more readers.

Several changes among members of the AAS staff are in the offing. Avis G. Clarke is retiring on August first after forty-three years of outstanding service to the Society. Miss Clarke came here from the John Hay Library of Brown University on October 1, 1927. Since that date she has devoted her considerable powers to the cataloging of American imprints and at the time of her retirement will have single-handedly catalogued nearly all of our materials dated before 1821. Her contribution to American bibliographical scholarship through the AAS catalogue and through the biographical file of American printers is of the utmost importance. Jean C. Spence will retire on July first. Miss Spence came from the Bancroft School in May 1959 as secretary to Clarence Brigham. After his retirement she faithfully served Messrs. Shipton and Mooney in the same capacity. Emma Forbes Waite died in Worcester on January 28, 1970. She had been on the staff of the Society since the end of World War I. Miss Waite was Curator of Maps and Prints and was an expert on American lithography. A major contribution to the Society was her work upon the Charles H. Taylor Collection of lithography and the preliminary cataloging of our prints. Although she broke a hip at age eighty-five in 1959, she returned occasionally to her desk in the early years of

this decade until her weakened health prevented. She will be long remembered by her colleagues, and she provided in her will a sum of money for the purchase of miniature books.

Other members of our excellent staff continue in their usual, efficient ways. They perform without stint the work of a much larger group. Our admiration and gratitude to all the staff are unbounded. In addition to his regular editorial duties, Mr. Mooney is a member of the executive committee of the Program for Loyalist Studies and Publications and described the Program at a very successful session at the American Historical Association meeting in Washington. Mrs. Bumgardner assisted in the planning and mounted the AAS quarter of a four-part exhibition of the graphic arts of David Claypoole Johnston (1798-1865). The Worcester Art Museum, The Boston Public Library, Boston College, and AAS produced simultaneous shows which depended in very large measure on our collections. She also attended the recent conference on American printmaking held at Winterthur. Mr. Knowlton participated in a New York City seminar on taxes and fund raising.

The recent death of d'Alté A. Welch was an especially sad event to the staff of the Society. His frequent visits here permitted us to become well acquainted with him, while his friendliness, enthusiasm, and generosity made him a friend. We plan to complete his nearly finished bibliography of American children's books and publish it as promptly as possible. Mr. Welch bequeathed to us his American books not in our collections. We shall miss him greatly.

In the matter of books, we have added a fine lot of material. Among the highlights is *Remarkable Story of Chicken Little* (Roxbury, Mass., 1840). It is possible that this is the first issue of the first edition of this classic children's story. John Greene Chandler of Lancaster, Massachusetts, was the author and illustrator of the tale which, I need not remind you, contains the immortal line of Chicken Little: 'O Hen Pen,' said she, 'the sky is falling!' The Society's copy bears Chandler's

name in the imprint as well as in the copyright notice. The copy at the Boston Public Library has the name of W. J. Reynolds in the imprint. It was this issue of the cover-title which was deposited at the Library of Congress for copyright purposes on July 2nd, 1840. The Free Library of Philadelphia has an 1842 issue with the imprint of T.H. Carter and Company. Our copy, in fine condition, seems to be the unique example with the Chandler imprint. *History of Jack Thoughtless* (Norwich, Conn., 1796) and *Entertaining Fables for Children* (Weathersfield, Vt., 1817) are also recent additions to our children's book collection. Both titles were unnoticed by the late d'Alté A. Welch. *Entertaining Fables* was a gift of Mr. Harold W. Robinson.

Byles family memorabilia were obtained from a Canadian member of that Loyalist family. Of great interest to students of American graphic art is the engraved copper plate, executed by Peter Pelham, of his portrait of Mather Byles. Incidentally, the Society has the oil painting, also by Pelham, from which the engraving was made. In addition to the copper plate, another item of note was a presentation volume from Byles to his daughter, Catherine. It contains a half dozen of his sermons but more importantly the final pamphlet is a rarely found copy of *Pious Remains of a Young Gentleman Lately Deceased* (Boston, 1764). This slight booklet contains poems of Samuel Byles, a son of Mather. Of more than passing interest is the binding, executed in a handsome manner by Andrew Barclay, featuring a sun-burst pattern, stamped in gold on red morocco leather. Among the manuscripts, which we sent on to the Massachusetts Historical Society, was a listing of Byles's library. Several broadsides, kept at AAS, included *A List of His Majesty's Ships and Vessels in the Royal Navy* which was printed in Boston about 1750.

A number of notable literary acquisitions have been made during the past six months. They include rare copies of *Some Rude & Indigested Thoughts on the Terrible Majesty of God in the Works of Nature Particularly in the Phænomena of Earthquakes*

(New London: Timothy Green, 1730); *Amelia: or, the Influence of Virtue* by Sarah Sayward (Barrell) Keating Wood (Portsmouth, N.H.: Oracle Press, 1802), this being the generous gift of Nathaniel Wheeler and provides AAS with a copy of all of her novels; *The Wreath* by Mrs. Littleford (Lexington, Ky.: D. Bradford, 1820) from the bequest of Thomas W. Streeter; and a previously unknown pamphlet of poetry printed in Auburn, N. Y., in 1810 by Seth Madison entitled *Elegiac Poems*.

*The American Singing Book* by Daniel Read is the earliest of nearly a dozen pre-1821 American music books acquired during the past six months. Read's book was published in New Haven in 1786. He was important as an early professional musician and music publisher. *The Baltimore Songster* is also a scarce musical acquisition. The AAS copy is billed as the third edition, printed in Baltimore in 1799 for Isaiah Thomas, Andrews, and Butler. This is the only known copy of the third edition, but, no copies are known of the first or second edition.

*Remarks on the Manufacturing of Maple Sugar* (New York, 1791) is the kind of book which invites reportage. We can hear Vermonters chaffing under the ignominy of such a pamphlet bearing a New York imprint. On the other hand, New Yorkers have always claimed that more Grade A, pure, Vermont maple syrup was made in New York State than in any other place. In this case, I am in favor of giving the devil his due. The John Carter Brown Library copy of the first edition (published the year before in Philadelphia) was exhibited in the joint exhibition, 'The Colonial Scene,' which AAS and JCB mounted in 1949. *Life and Memorable Actions of George Washington* (Baltimore, [1800]) is the first of Mason Locke Weems's legend-making biographies of our early national heroes—Washington, Marion, Franklin, and Penn. There are three other copies recorded of this, the first edition, of which two are imperfect. Our copy is complete.

The Publications Committee has shepherded through the god-like mills Professor Ray Nash's *American Penmanship*,

1800-1850: *A History of Writing and a Bibliography of Copy-books from Jenkins to Spencer*, a three-hundred-page work utilizing the concept, photo-bibliography, of Henry Stevens, G.M.B. Each title page is illustrated to reduced size, using line cuts, with Professor Nash's notes illuminating the illustrations. Clifford K. Shipton's great contribution to American bibliographical scholarship was capped with the December publication of *National Index of American Imprints Through 1800: The Short-Title Evans*. The massive two-volume work was seen through the press by the Society's Editor. Both books are available from Barre Publishers of Barre, Massachusetts, which firm now distributes all AAS books.

The Massachusetts Commission on the Arts and Humanities has provided us with another grant, although sharply reduced from a year ago, for the preservation and restoration of AAS books and paintings. We will use their \$350, matched by \$350 of ours, to clean certain paintings.

The work of the Development Committee under the devoted guidance of Frank L. Harrington proceeds at a satisfactory level. At the end of February the Development Program Fund stood at \$765,257 in pledges, cash, or kind. During these past six months thirty-two donors have enhanced the Annual Giving fund by \$5,290. The benefits from the Paine Trust made their first impact upon the Society's income during the half year just finished and two other bequests were received. A thousand-dollar quest of Henry R. Viets is for the general purposes of the Society, while the income from the bequest of Emma Forbes Waite is to be used for the purchase of miniature books. In addition, I am happy to report the receipt of \$23,863 from several donors whose gifts are directed specifically to current acquisition of books. The Special Gifts committee under the chairmanship of Paris Fletcher and the Worcester Committee led by Howard B. Jefferson are at work and the fruits of their efforts will materially increase the giving to the Program. In short, through the exceptional generosity of our

members and friends, the Society is making a determined and effective effort to improve noticeably our financial condition. All hail!

The Committee on the Hall with the Library Committee have been paying careful attention to the planning of the alterations and additions to the Society's building. They are satisfied that the best arrangements have been arrived at and the Committee on the Hall recommended approval to the Council, which was granted. We will make no major structural changes in the present building, although we do intend to 'open up' the reading room by removing the partitions which now divide it. We plan to provide for exhibition space on that floor and to enlarge the present quarters of the print department, upstairs. Further, we will have a handsome room for housing our rare books which will also serve as a committee room. Most of the work in the present building will be behind the scenes. The boilers will be replaced (if they don't collapse before then) and other expensive mechanical work will be done. The new construction will provide critically needed staff working space and improved quarters for the manuscript collection. An estimate of the cost has been projected for a 1972 beginning date. It is in the neighborhood of \$800,000, a figure which gives us palpitations but, considering the times, probably is a realistic one.

The President, upon the advice of the Council, is in the process of appointing the Society's American Revolution Bicentennial Committee which will be charged with planning an appropriate response to the great event. Early thinking suggests an emphasis centering on the role of printers and editors in the revolution.

Thus, the work of the Society moves along, while we attempt to maintain a mixture of the best of our traditional ways of doing the Society's tasks but changing and expanding them as necessary. The role of the Society as an agent of American higher education has not altered, although through our Development Program we hope to place the Society in a

position by which we can extend the effectiveness of the Society's program as well as to enlarge it. Finally, the Council and the Director thank the members and friends of the Society for continued interest and support. We trust that our stewardship of the American Antiquarian Society's gifts is acceptable.

M. A. McC.

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