

# *The Report of the Council*

*October 21, 1970*

*Do not ask for tasks equal to your powers,  
but for powers equal to the tasks.*

**T**HE TASKS set before the American Antiquarian Society, if it is to remain a vital force in the world of American scholarship, are very large and, because of the importance of our collections, those responsibilities will not lessen.

The Councillors do not propose to permit the Society to stagnate. The Director and the members of the staff will not let it become a non-demanding place, resting on past laurels. We believe that we are struggling for our institutional life in a world where the priorities are directed away from historical knowledge, one of the few kinds of human knowledge from which we can gain perspective for living, as well as deriving courage from the human condition.

It should come as no surprise to American Antiquarian Society members to learn that the finances of the Society are of primary concern to their Council and Director. In 1969 the operating expenditures exceeded income by \$5,000; this year we estimated a deficit of \$3,500. Our difficulties are due to a number of factors, among which are: a drop from a year ago of \$10,000 in annual giving, increasing personnel costs, rising costs of supplies and services needed to operate the library and Society, and continuing difficulties in the stock market.

No doubt the drop in gifts for annual operating expenses should have been anticipated as we knew that the membership was to be solicited for support of the Development Program.

It was the hope of the Council that this factor would not be as large as it turned out to be. In this regard, several observations need to be plainly made. Because of our traditional kind of membership, a custom not fully in accord with the modes of the twentieth century, we have inherited a peculiar problem. If a learned institution with a numerically small, elective membership is to meet its obligations, its members must be the first to support it. In our 1970 appeal for annual support, one-half of the AAS members did not respond. Indeed, over the past ten years a quarter of the membership never has responded. One of them wrote to the president declining to send a gift and referred to 'your' Society. Gentlemen, the American Antiquarian Society is not *ours*, it is *yours*. We have willingly accepted membership to it.

Turning to staff costs, the realities of post-war inflation are at last coming home to roost. The pressures upon your staff to produce more help for readers, to sort more papers, to file more correspondence, to shelve more books, to catalogue more pamphlets, to sweep more dirt, to repair more volumes grows and grows. We have a much larger collection than those of many university libraries. We have a staff of seventeen permanent members, with two temporary assistants and two high school helpers. Yet, we are starting this year with two less staff members than last year. The staff of AAS, as in most such institutions, has for years subsidized the Society. We cannot ask them to continue to do so. During the past two years the staff has received a total salary increase of ten per cent—not enough to cover the rise in inflation—and certainly not enough to increase the inadequate pay scale which the Society now underwrites. When the bank increases its charges to cover its higher costs and to insure its profits, we *pay*. The Society must face its responsibilities to its own staff, by *paying*.

The improvement in the condition of the stock market is not within our control, but we can look to other matters which

may have a salutatory effect upon our fortunes. The Development Program is the major effort. It stands at \$831,516 in pledges from 240 persons. Of that amount sixty-eight AAS members have pledged \$462,733. Just over \$400,000 of the total has been paid. This is a great step forward for the Society, especially, as we are using these funds to improve our permanent endowment funds for operating the Society. Even so, we are a very long way from attaining our modest goals and I urge you to give generously. We can hardly ask people who are not members of AAS to give when the Society's own group is not fully committed to the program.

On another front, a group of similar institutions are joining their efforts to try to improve their situation with the government and foundations. Calling themselves representatives of Independent, Privately Supported Research Libraries, a meeting of twenty-eight leaders from fifteen libraries met this fall at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Also present were officers of organizations interested in the welfare of such libraries. The point of the meeting was to survey our situation as it pertains to governmental relations as well as to private foundations. Some substantial areas of agreement were found and the group reaffirmed their conviction that these libraries make an indispensable contribution to American learning. They believe that this contribution is not as widely recognized as it ought to be, and that their ability to continue to make this contribution is now seriously threatened, and that, in order to maintain the same, government at all levels must avoid deliberate or inadvertent taxation destructive of the educational role of these institutions, and that both governmental and non-governmental sources must give these institutions greater support.

Therefore, the group concluded its deliberations by the appointment of a committee from its membership to further these ends; by enlisting the support of similar institutions; by carrying to the great, national foundations the case for the in-

dependently financed research libraries; by seeking such amendments to applicable statutes as will qualify independent, research libraries as educational institutions for tax and grant purposes, in order that they may continue to make a significant contribution to American education by preserving the raw materials of history; by serving the needs of the nation's scholars; by providing the factual foundation for writings on art, science, and politics; by disseminating throughout the educational community the recorded knowledge of the past and of the present. Your Society was represented by J. R. Wiggins, Julian P. Boyd, and the Director, although many of the other participants were AAS members.

Several other projects of the Society are moving forward. James E. Mooney, the Society's editor and our chief representative in the Program for Loyalist Studies and Publications reports that since June 1969 a meeting has been held of the Canadian Committee in Montreal at which he was present with other members of the executive committee. The meeting led to the successful application for a sizable grant from the Canada Council for the advancement of the Canadian side of the Program. Robert A. East, Executive Director of the Program and a member of AAS, announced that office space at City University of New York had been set aside as headquarters for the Program, that the Program had the unanimous support of the National Historical Publication Commission, and that the first of the letterpress volumes is to be the journal of Samuel Curwen, edited by Andrew Oliver and published by Harvard University Press. At the meetings of the American Historical Association in Washington in December, there was a well-attended session chaired by Mr. East at which Wallace Brown of the University of New Brunswick and Mr. Mooney gave papers. Application for support was also made to the National Endowment for the Humanities. In July notice was received of a grant of over \$40,000 for one year. Since that time, stationery and forms have been

printed, post-doctoral searchers hired, and the Program is moving toward its first objective, the publication in the AAS *Proceedings* of a finding list, nation by nation, state by state, and town by town. Director-Emeritus Clifford K. Shipton is a member of the Program's Advisory Committee.

AAS still pursues the shade of James Fenimore Cooper by buying or otherwise acquiring the various editions and printings of his books. In that effort, last year we added one hundred additional titles to the collection. Professor James F. Beard, with the aid of a grant from the American Philosophical Society, has been encouraging the standard edition by accumulating facsimiles of literary manuscripts and by assisting editors. Cooper's *England* has been completed by Kenneth W. Staggs of Trinity University, while James A. Kilby of the University of Iowa has started work on *The Deerslayer*.

Mr. McCorison has been active in the work of a planning committee working toward a bibliography of New England history. A prospectus has been adopted and was printed in the Fall 1970 issue of *The New England Quarterly*. The Society is one of a number of institutions sponsoring the effort.

The Worcester Area Cooperating Libraries, a division of the Worcester Consortium for Higher Education is another group with which AAS is associated. Frederick E. Bauer, the Society's chief cataloguer, represents us in those deliberations. Underway is a union listing of periodicals in area libraries and means of improving intellectual and physical communications.

The Society's American Revolution Bicentennial Committee, chaired by Benjamin Labaree of Williams College, has yet to meet although he and Mr. Mooney, the staff liaison member, hope to get things underway shortly.

The Development Committee, chaired by Frank L. Harrington has been active on several fronts. Howard B. Jefferson's committee for soliciting gifts from the Worcester community has partially completed its work, as has Paris Fletcher's Special Gifts Committee. An attractive appeal to

2,000 friends of the Society, mailed in August, produced \$12,500 in a little more than a month and was the work of Alden P. Johnson's General Gifts Committee.

In addition to the results of work of the Development Committee, the Society received from benefactors \$16,170 for the current operating expenses of the Society as well as \$33,200 in specific gifts for the purchase of books. The Society received during the year \$10,000 from two bequests, an aspect of benevolence which we have not heretofore stressed at AAS, but which will receive more of our attention in the future. For all these blessings we are truly grateful. Without them, we would not continue and we herewith thank each willing giver.

The Publication Committee has been active. *The National Index of American Imprints Through 1800: The Short-Title Evans* was published in December while Professor Nash's *American Penmanship* was issued in the spring. Pierce W. Gaines's bibliography of the American editions of William Cobbett is in the hands of the printer and d'Alté Welch's *Bibliography of American Children's Books* is now being prepared for publication. Irving Lowens has reported that the manuscript of his bibliography of American song books is about to be delivered. The publication of J.A. Leo Lemay's 'A Calendar of American Poetry in the Colonial Newspapers and Magazines and in the Major English Magazines through 1765' in the *Proceedings* is an important scholarly event and the three parts, the last to appear in the October 1970 issue, will be re-issued separately. Thus, the publishing program seems to be healthy.

Publishing of another sort goes on at AAS also. Mr. Mooney is half way through the year 1810 in the Readex-Microprint reproduction of all located titles in Shaw and Shoemaker's bibliography of American imprints, 1801-1819. Despite the untimely death of our friend, Nathan Cohen, late editor of the Readex-Microprint edition of early American newspapers, work on that project also is progressing under

the guidance of Stanley Shapiro. To the Research Publications Corporation of New Haven, Connecticut, we have given assistance in the form of books in order that they might film and distribute *facsimiles* of American directories and works of fiction listed in Mrs. Spear's book and in Lyle Wright's bibliography. This summer a crew employed by the Greenwood Press of Westport, Connecticut, filmed the Society's card catalogue. That work will appear early in 1971 in twenty volumes and will serve to make our collections even better known to a wider audience. The above is, of course, performed in addition to the Society's heavy load of electro-static and micro-film copying in response to local and mail orders.

During the course of this past year the Misses Clarke and Spence retired, Miss Clarke's position as chief cataloguer being filled by Mr. Bauer, formerly of Mount Hermon School. His presence on the staff is, after only three months, making itself felt in useful ways and we look forward to a happy association with him. Mrs. John T. Donoghue, formerly in the post of an assistant cataloguer has taken over Miss Spence's duties as secretary to Mr. Mooney. The Council, I am sure, speaks for us all in extending to our loyal and diligent staff the profound thanks of the Society for services cheerfully given in the past year.

Readership has increased markedly over the past year. The number of registered readers rose nearly twenty per cent above attendance of a year ago. In July and August the reading room was filled to capacity while the staff's physical endurance was stretched to the utmost. Following the usual pattern, readers came to AAS from every corner of the nation, with the largest group originating in the northeast. Our most constant readers have been Professors David Fischer of Brandeis University, who is at work on a study of social mores of the early nineteenth century, and George Billias of Clark University working on a biography of Elbridge Gerry. We should not fail to mention the constant use made of the So-

ciety's collections by graduate students from Clark University, as well as those in the University of Connecticut—Old Sturbridge Village program for museum training. To increase use by local faculty, Mr. Mooney and the Director entertained about forty-five persons one evening, last winter. Despite strong evidence of interest on the part of the visitors, we have not been very successful in attracting this group to our doors, but local people continue to make heavy use of the local history and genealogical collections.

In this regard, the Council has approved a policy which will lead to the establishment of fellowships. We are hopeful this program will attract more scholars to Worcester for intensive and extended work in our collections. The Development Office is now preparing material designed to attract gifts for this purpose.

To conclude this portion of the report of the year's activities, it would appear that the Society is sustaining an active program of quality and usefulness to the scholarly community which is pertinent to the Society's purposes. That is the sole object of the Council and the staff. We ask for your support and encouragement and thank you for giving so generously of the same in the past in the Society's efforts to provide powers equal to our tasks.

M. A. McC:

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