

# *The Report of the Council*

*October 20, 1971*

THE EVENTS of this past spring and summer have been of extraordinary importance to the future of the American Antiquarian Society. Following more than a year of consultation with the AAS staff and the Committee on the Hall, the architectural firm of Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott presented to the Council a completed plan for an addition to and renovation of the present library building. The structure will provide for both improved and enlarged staff and reader facilities, for a new heating and air treatment system, for improved security of the library, and for additional book stacks. After weighing many factors, including the difficulties we experience in supporting an adequate staff—in salaries as well as in numbers—the Council decided to ask for bids to perform the work. Offers were received from excellent local firms at excellent prices, the low bid being \$100,000 under the architect's estimate. With such a favorable bid in hand and with the continuing threat of inflation in mind, the Council authorized the construction of the building by the E. J. Cross Company. The budget for the project amounts to \$1,000,000. The addition to the building is rapidly progressing and the completion of all work is scheduled for July 1972.

Unless new money is raised which is given specifically for construction of the building, and that in large amounts, the treasurer will be required to use the Society's unrestricted invested funds to pay the bills. The income from these funds is already committed to the annual operations of AAS. The treasurer estimates that without prompt remedial action, a

deficit will result in the amount of \$40,000. As well as posing immediate financial problems, the significance of this decision to the future of the Society is important. We are radically increasing our physical capabilities for service to readers which, in turn, will demand increased staffing of a professional nature to perform it. The problem of building maintenance is increased. In short, the Society has made a financial commitment of very great proportions.

In many ways, the Council felt that it had little choice but to go ahead. The importance of the collections of the Society increases constantly. Those collections must be cared for in a manner consistent, at a minimum, with contemporary standards. The use of the library is increasing and contemporary demands for library service require facilities which are inadequate in our present quarters. Our staff performs at the highest level and their working conditions should be such as to make their tasks more convenient, not more difficult. Thus, a commitment for the future was boldly made with the assurance that the Society's members and friends would stand with the Council, equally determined that the American Antiquarian Society should meet the future head on.

Such a commitment is essential if the American Antiquarian Society is going to maintain its service through scholarship to our nation which has nurtured the Society for the past 159 years. Further, this commitment to broaden service must be more than rhetorical. There are any number of indications that the popular revolution which is now abroad in our world may not pass by such institutions as AAS. Our problem is to meet the challenge of a changing world while preserving and strengthening our ability to perform the unique functions which are critical to the furtherance of humanistic scholarship. We have found it difficult to persuade the people and foundations who could support the Society to do so. But we must not divert unnecessarily our limited energies or compromise the quality of our work by engaging in enterprises of dubious

merit in order to attract attention or support from broader sources.

It is encouraging to report that a group of fifteen independent, research libraries met last fall to discuss ways by which some action in concert may work for the benefit of the institutions involved. To that end, for example, we attended a hearing held in June by the Commissioner of Internal Revenue on the definition of private foundations in an effort to secure a more favorable recognition of our peculiar problems.

This past year, the response to the needs of the Society from our fellow members and from friends was very generous. The monies which have been pledged or received in support of the Development Program amount to \$1,236,966. Since our last report in April, \$64,371 was received for the program. In addition to these capital funds, \$17,707 was contributed to the Society for use in meeting its budgeted, annual expenditures. Such generosity must not go unnoticed and the Council extends its heartfelt gratitude to each helper of the American Antiquarian Society. In this connection, the good work of Frank L. Harrington, Howard B. Jefferson, their committee members, and E. B. Knowlton is happily acknowledged.

In other areas of the Society's work, matters progress. The Program for Loyalist Studies and Publications is well underway, as described by Mr. East in subsequent pages. Volumes by James Fenimore Cooper, printed before the 1870s, arrive by the yard with no end yet in sight, but Mr. Beard has news of that project. The United States Steel Foundation has made a grant of \$5,000 for the establishment of a fellowship program.

'A Society's Chief Joys,' our 'traveling' exhibition was installed in the rare books room of the Research Library of the University of California at Los Angeles on May 6, 1971. A very pleasant meeting of the Friends of the UCLA Libraries was held to celebrate the opening of the exhibit. A number of AAS members resident in the area also attended. On the eve-

ning before, the Director spoke at a meeting of the Zamorano Club on the subject, 'The Donald McKay Frost Collection of Western Americana,' located at AAS.

There are a number of publications which AAS has issued or is about to issue, including Pierce Gaines's bibliography of the American printings of William Cobbett. Eleanor Lowenstein Goldwater's third edition of the Lincoln bibliography of American cookery books is about to go to the printer. It is a pleasure to report that the bibliography of children's books printed in America before 1821 compiled by the late d'Alté A. Welch is being printed, after careful preparation of the revised text by Mrs. Charles F. Cecil.

The Society's Editor, Mr. Mooney, has done yeoman's work with these books, work which he fits into a busy schedule of editing the *Proceedings* and the *News-Letter*, as well as the Readex Microprint edition of American imprints, now progressed to the year 1812. Mr. Bauer has planned and supervised a good deal of shifting of books, with more to come, as the construction proceeds. In addition, new books are being catalogued and library operations are moving smoothly because of his oversight of such matters.

At a recent meeting the Council voted, effective October 20, 1971, to appoint James E. Mooney to the position of Assistant Director. He will have immediate oversight of affairs which impinge upon publications and the scholarly activities of the Society. Also, Frederick E. Bauer was appointed Assistant Librarian. He will supervise the daily operations of the library and its staff.

We have never kept a very accurate count of readers or of letters sent, received, etc., and we do not propose to waste time doing so. However, a record of readers using the library from June first through the end of August revealed that 1,360 people were at work here, a very heavy load for our staff of only four persons in that department of the library's responsibilities. It is only because the members of the staff are de-

voted to the Society and are working hard for it that we are able to continue to operate effectively. The Council extends its gratitude to each member of the staff for willing and cheerful service.

M. A. McC.

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