

The Report of the Council

April 27, 1983

DURING the autumn and winter months, the staff of the Society has been deeply involved in a number of national or international activities which we expect will lead to improved access and preservation of research materials here at the American Antiquarian Society and among our institutional colleagues. We have become more involved with the programs of the Research Libraries Group. RLG activities are designed to increase the knowledge of the existence and location of outstanding specialized collections, to share the contents effectively through appropriate means, and to preserve or conserve endangered collections so that the intellectual content and/or physical form of the material will be available to later generations of users. During the last year the Research Libraries Group has passed from a very precarious infancy to a considerably more robust adolescence. The prognosis for reaching a healthy adulthood appears to be a reasonable hope. Georgia Bumgardner, Andrew W. Mellon Curator of Graphic Arts, serves as chairman of the RLG Art and Architecture Committee, while your reporter is chairman of the Preservation Committee. It is our opinion that membership in RLG, despite the costs in money and energy, is entirely worthwhile for AAS. Membership causes us to look outward, to understand better how our collections fit into patterns of national resources for humanistic research, and expands the experience and usefulness of our staff.

In the same vein, our participation in the Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalogue (ESTC) project—that huge effort to catalogue in machine-readable form the output of

presses within the eighteenth-century British Empire—moves us a substantial way toward the computerization of our own library catalogue, both in experience and in numbers. We participate in ESTC through the North American Imprints Program (NAIP), under which we intend to catalogue all of our holdings of American imprints through the year 1876. This work is supported generously by the National Endowment for the Humanities and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. By 1986 we expect to complete the cataloguing of the product of the North American printing trade through the year 1800. In November, the Society received from NEH an outright grant in the amount of \$166,745; the Endowment will contribute an additional \$150,000 toward the work on the receipt by AAS of a matching grant in the same amount. The additional funding appears to be secure; thus the total grant will amount to \$466,745. This work is supervised by John B. Hench, our assistant director for research and publication, and is directed by Alan N. Degutis, who is assisted by a staff of five cataloguers. The Society's grant to catalogue American broadsides through the year 1830 was renewed by NEH some months ago, and the H. W. Wilson Foundation has generously provided matching funds to carry on that work over the next two years. The records produced by the staff of this project have been merged with the NAIP records, thus providing full coverage of our eighteenth-century holdings. In order to take advantage of Avis G. Clarke's forty years of research to confirm the identity of early American authors and institutions, the Library of Congress has appointed AAS as one of a handful of authoritative centers that establish official headings on a national standard. These headings are used by LC and other libraries. The program is called the Cooperative Name Authority project (NACO).

During the late summer and early fall Joyce Ann Tracy, our curator of newspapers and serials, with the assistance of Frederick Bauer, was heavily engaged in the preparation of plans

for participation in the United States Newspaper Cataloguing Project, for which we had been invited to apply. Our application to the National Endowment for the Humanities was approved at a level of \$203,000, and the Society began in November the work of cataloguing, by computer, our holdings of American newspapers. AAS was appointed by the Library of Congress as a participant in its cooperative serials cataloguing effort, called CONSER. We rejoined the OCLC computer network in which CONSER records are held and made available. This work is directed by Joseph E. Macmanus, who is assisted by three cataloguers. Five other institutions participate in this national project. It is fair to report that, because of past experience, the AAS operation is looked upon as the model effort by the Library of Congress and NEH.

The Catalogue of American Engravings, Judy L. Larson being the principal cataloguer, is progressing well with a compilation of some sixteen thousand or more records. NEH extended the life of the project for an additional year through a continuation grant, at the conclusion of which, we believe, the work will be done. The records of this catalogue will be entered into our local computer system, as the first step toward producing a printed version of the records.

Through the encouragement and generosity of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Pew Memorial Trust, we have, as you are all aware, considerably enlarged and improved our conservation activities. Richard C. Baker, our chief conservator, is now assisted by an intern, Sheba A. Haner, and, of course, Kenneth R. Desautels. Mr. Baker has conducted demonstrations for our entire staff on conservation techniques and attitudes. He now leads an ad hoc committee of our staff which is preparing plans in the event of physical disaster to the library building.

Efforts to improve our ability to advance learning in American history and culture have not abated, even though we seem to have been preoccupied with cataloguing, computers, and

such technical matters. The Society's Committee on Fellowships, under the chairmanship of Jack P. Greene, met early in March to recommend to the Council the following individuals whom the Council is pleased to appoint:

Samuel Foster Haven Fellows

Catherine L. Albanese, Wright State University, 'The Divine Harmonia: Transcendentalism, Popular Religion, and Healing Movements in Nineteenth-Century America'; Françoise Basch, Université de Paris, 'Critics of the Family in mid-nineteenth Century America'; Edward Countryman, University of Warwick, 'Liberty, Liberalism, and the Making of Republican America'; Donald J. Ratcliffe, University of Durham, 'The 1824 Presidential Election'; J. Gary Williams, University of Idaho, 'The Cooper Edition of *Notions of the Americans*.'

Kate B. and Hall J. Peterson Fellow

Richard P. Gildrie, Austin Peay State University, 'New England Clerics and Popular Civility, 1679-1740.'

Albert Boni Fellow

Ronald J. Zboray, Pace University, 'A Fictive People.'

Frances Hiatt Fellows

Laura Cynthia Roe, Yale University, 'The Reproductive Print Trade in Colonial New England'; Harlow Walker Sheidley, University of Connecticut, 'Sectional Nationalism: Massachusetts Conservatives and the Epic of New England, 1815-1836'; Andrea J. Tucher, New York University, 'The Power Press as an Agent of Change.'

National Endowment for the Humanities Fellows

Stephen Botein, Michigan State University, 'Expertise in Eighteenth-Century America'; Dale Cockrell, Middlebury

College, 'The Journals of the Hutchinson Family'; James Hoopes, Babson College, 'Consciousness in New England'; Melanie L. Sovine, Appalachian Regional Hospital, Harlan, Kentucky, 'The Primitive Baptists and the Anti-Mason Party: The Formation of an American Religious Sect.'

John Hench has organized a number of colloquia for regional scholars interested in American Political and Social History. The group, with a shifting cast of characters, meets at the Goddard-Daniels House about six times a year and attracts upwards of twenty to twenty-five participants. The American Studies Seminar for students at Worcester colleges was very successfully led this past fall by Professor Donald C. Scott of Brown University. The 1983 seminar will be held by Charles Fanning, professor of English at Bridgewater State College, on the topic 'Ethnic America before the Flood: The Irish and Others.' Ten students have been selected and have already met to prepare for their forthcoming work. In addition, Mr. Hench has organized some noontime meetings of staff and fellows at which various topics dealing with activities here at the Society are discussed. The joint program of public lectures sponsored by the Society and the Worcester Public Library was held again this spring with speakers addressing the general theme 'New England Culture in the Age of Revolution, 1775-1825.' The lecturers were Ross W. Beales, Jr., Ellen Rothman, David P. McKay, Richard D. Brown, and Joseph J. Ellis. Topics included family life, courtship, music, communication, and literature. Each of the lectures and the succeeding discussions have been well executed, but attendance at this series is somewhat below that of last year's which was focused on 'Literature and Society in Early America, 1820-1860.'

However, the major activity of the Research and Publication Department has been that of planning for the Society's proposed Program in the History of the Book in American Culture. This program was debated at several meetings of the

Council following recommendations from the Society's Committee on Education, chaired by John William Ward, and that on publication, chaired by Jill K. Conway. Professor David D. Hall of Boston University drafted a prospectus for the program which was widely circulated to persons whose advice and opinion we valued. Informational meetings with faculty members from New England colleges and universities were held at the Goddard-Daniels House with the intention of obtaining reactions from colleagues in our region. The response that we have obtained has been overwhelmingly positive, and we are the beneficiaries of some excellent and useful suggestions that will result in considerable improvement in our plans. Messrs. Hench and Hall, as well as the director, have made preliminary inquiries into funding which will be necessary to establish the program. The first publication of the program, *Printing and Society in Early America*, edited by William L. Joyce, David D. Hall, Richard D. Brown, and John B. Hench, will be published in May.

Also, we have been involved in conversations with the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Henry E. Huntington Library, and the Newberry Library on the proposition that these four libraries have overlapping collections and interests in promoting scholarly activities. We hope to develop cooperative arrangements that will be of benefit to humanistic learning in our country. The first meeting was held at the Huntington Library in March and the second will take place at AAS late in the month of May, with one other to follow later.

Library acquisitions thus far have been quite remarkable as far as quantity, quality, and price are concerned. They have included a rarely found copy of the first edition of our national anthem, obtained on the Harry G. Stoddard Memorial Fund; a putative Halifax, Nova Scotia, edition of the memoirs of Fanny Hill issued in 1820; a substantial collection of pre-1877 American books issued in parts; three previously unknown children's books published in Hanover, New Hampshire, in 1811; the second or third known copy of Sir Henry Clinton's

defense of his strategies and tactics used in the 1776 Long Island campaign, the pamphlet having been printed in New York by James Rivington; a printing of the 1856 treaty of friendship and commerce between the United States and the king of Siam, printed at the American mission press in Bangkok; the rare first American edition (1753) of Sir Thomas More's *Commonwealth of Utopia*; more than 150 traveling book salesmen's sample books, the most notable being for two Mark Twain novels and the 1873 Lockwood edition of Audubon's *Birds of America*; a German-language protest of 1764 against the appointment of Benjamin Franklin as Pennsylvania's London agent; and the gift, by several collectors, of a number of volumes of newspapers from Santa Fe, San Antonio, Helena, and Gold Hill, Nevada, all published in the 1860s and 1870s.

All of these activities contribute to the increasing complexity of our business affairs. On the last day of November, the Society purchased from our neighbor, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, property at 9 Regent Street which abuts the Society's property and extends from Regent Street to Park Avenue. Additional projects or grants involve additional accounting and accountability. All of these matters are capably supervised by Eleanor Adams, your director's secretary and the office manager of the Society.

Owing to the improvement of the stock market and significant gifts to endowment, our Society's finances are at an all-time high. At the end of March the endowment stood at \$8,936,690 (but with the rise in the market since then, the market value of the portfolio now stands well over \$9 million). At the end of March the yield on investments was 8.9 percent, with 70.5 percent of the portfolio invested in equities and 29.5 percent invested in fixed-income securities. During the past twelve months, the market value of the total fund rose 42.7 percent; the equities portion rose more than 50 percent during the same period.

Much of the improvement in our finances is directly attrib-

utable to the diligent work of President Jeppson and his various committee chairmen who have been hard at work in increasing endowment through the Society's *Isaiab Thomas Fund: A 175th Anniversary Program*. The fund now stands at \$3,537,464, \$698,392 having been added in this fiscal year. Robert P. Hallock, Jr., is chairman of the Worcester Committee. The Worcester community has contributed \$2,151,000 to the fund—a most impressive result for which we are extremely grateful. In the report of the Council of April 1883, John D. Washburn stated, 'It is, after all, on the labor of resident-members that the prosperity of the institution, as a working power, must primarily depend.' It is gratifying indeed to note that a century later the Worcester community responds in such a generous manner.

In December the Society received a Special Incentive Grant of \$400,000, which was announced by President Ronald Reagan in the Capital. William J. Bennett, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, from which the funds derived, presented a persuasive statement on the vital necessity of a strong tradition in the humanities active in our national fabric. Since October 1, \$658,210 has been received as matching gifts for the NEH grant, leaving us with a mere \$541,790 to go to reach the \$1,200,000 in endowment funds needed to successfully meet the Endowment's challenge.

President Reagan, in announcing the grants made to thirteen independent research libraries, spoke in part as follows:

In a very special initiative to help keep our nation's independent research institutions viable, NEH is awarding \$5.3 million in grants to thirteen libraries throughout the country. It is expected that these funds will be matched by \$16 million from the private sector—a very impressive showing of at least three dollars of private support for every dollar of government funding.

Independent research libraries play a vital role in the cultural life of our nation. As centers for research and learning, they reflect our collective commitment to education and to intellectual freedom and growth—the survival of these institutions is essen-

tial. I applaud the private sector for recognizing their great importance and for its generosity in stepping forward to support the humanities which are so crucial to our life as a free and creative people.

The Development Officer, Mary V. C. Callahan, reports that gifts to the Society's annual fund received to date amount to just under \$55,000, a slight improvement over the amount received by this time a year ago. Letters requesting annual gifts have been sent to members of the printing and publishing professions by Harold T. Miller, and to antiquarian booksellers from Kenneth Nebenzahl. Donald R. Melville, president of the Norton Company, has sent letters to various corporations. The president's annual appeal will be sent, as usual, late in April or early in May.

Plans for the second phase of *The Isaiab Thomas Fund* campaign have been fixed for an autumn start. Our efforts will be directed toward national corporations and foundations and will be directed by Robert Cushman. Francis H. Dewey III, chairman of the Committee on Bequests, intends to encourage bequests to the Society over the next several years in the amount of two million dollars. To date some \$42,000 have been received into *The Isaiab Thomas Fund* from bequests.

As always, the Council closes its report to the membership by expressing its profound gratitude to all members, friends, and staff who generously and effectively support or execute the work of our great institution.

Marcus A. McCorison

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