

# *The Report of the Council*

*April 18, 1979*

IT APPEARS to this observer that solid accomplishment in all areas of the Society's work has been the rule in the half year just completed. Our first formal educational effort of recent times was excellently received; two projects to catalogue research materials were completed and a third begun; progress is apparent in our intention to cope with differing procedures necessitated by our desire to take advantage of computer-assisted cataloguing; two facsimiles were published, the first examples in a series that we hope will not die aborning; acquisitions of research materials, led by the Papantonio bequest, continue apace; gifts of money for all purposes received after September 1 total \$266,971; the rejuvenated Worcester Association of Mutual Aid in Detecting Thieves held a convivial annual meeting, the first under AAS auspices; an improved fire detection system was installed and the building has been kept in good condition; the members of the Society and our colleagues, the members of the Society's staff, have again proven to be stalwart pillars of reliability.

Our educational program is funded by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and is administered by William L. Joyce, who serves also as the Society's curator of manuscripts. The program is designed to enable AAS to experiment with various types of educational activities on both an advanced academic and a public level. According to all reports, the seminar for qualified undergraduates from the five local colleges was an outstanding educational experience for the students and a stimulating one for our staff. Participants developed individ-

ual research projects which were executed under the direction of Prof. Stephen Nissenbaum of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, one of which was an exhibition at AAS of book illustrations by F. O. C. Darley. It demonstrated one aspect of the seminar theme that was focussed on the professional writer in the mid-nineteenth century. Mr. Nissenbaum is a historian and the combination of historical and literary interests made a lively exchange possible. Mr. Joyce has scheduled several lectures and a concert of music for string instruments in an effort to present programs of interest to the public. In February and March he conducted a five-week course on Victorian America. This program was open to adults through the 'Night Life' series of the Worcester Public School system.

The Readers' Services Department functions very well under the direction of Nancy Burkett. The first three months of 1979 were remarkable for heavy readership and she and her capable staff supervised the use of a record number of books by scholars during that period.

Associate librarian Frederick E. Bauer, cataloguer Carol Alexander, and the director have been involved through various mechanisms in developing AAS skills to cope with new standards for computer-assisted cataloguing of research materials. Because most existing rules and programs have been developed for recently published materials, there are difficulties in fitting our needs for more precise description as well as for additional points of access to 'ancient' research materials. We and our colleagues at other institutions have found it necessary to come to terms not only with the opportunities and restrictions that the computer offers but to try to develop expanded rules to suit our needs, but rules that are compatible with national standards. Our efforts go on locally through NELINET and through an ad hoc committee called the 'Athenæum Group' which is chaired by Rodney Armstrong and Thomas R. Adams and at large through an Independent Research Libraries Association committee chaired by your reporter.

Carol Alexander successfully brought to an end the Society's four-year project to catalogue pamphlets printed in the United States from 1821 through 1830. The work was supported by two grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Mrs. Alexander's work turned up a large number of pamphlets on important or curious matters by important or eccentric authors. The cataloguing was done to our exacting standards and was entered into a national data base through computer facilities at AAS. Now, Mrs. Alexander and her assistant, Alan Degutis, have attacked the collection of broadsides at AAS, also a task funded by NEH.

The curator of manuscripts, Mr. Joyce, and his diligent assistants, headed most recently by Kathleen Major, brought to a successful conclusion in December the six-year task of cataloguing the Society's manuscript collections. The catalogue will be published this summer by G. K. Hall. The work was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities through three successive grants.

We offer our congratulations and thanks to Mr. Joyce and to Mrs. Alexander and their several associates over the years. In addition, our gratitude is extended to the National Endowment, particularly to Margaret S. Child, assistant director for the Centers of Research program, for her understanding and generous support of these projects that effectively open up important collections to scholars.

Acquisitions of research materials have continued at a satisfactory, indeed at an exuberant if not extravagant, rate. We reported at our last meeting that we had received the collection of American bindings bequeathed to AAS by the late Michael Papantonio. We are working our way through those splendid books after having benefit of the advice of our member Willman Spawn of the American Philosophical Society.

Purchases have included one of a handful of known copies of Phillis Wheatley's first published work, her elegy on the death of the Reverend George Whitefield. Two pamphlets by Ed-

ward Wilmot Blayden printed in Monrovia, Liberia, in the 1850s are additions to our holdings on black Americans. An outstanding description of forts and villages located in the Great Lakes region is rare. The pamphlet by Samuel Appleton Storrow was prepared as a report to his superior, Maj. Gen. Jacob Brown in 1817.

Adding to our collection of type specimen books is difficult, indeed. We were pleased to have the opportunity to purchase an 1821 example of E. T. White of Boston Type Foundry and two others, one a Pelouze firm specimen of 1856 and another issued in 1852 by H. H. Green, a New York and New Orleans firm. This brief recounting of acquisitions does no justice to the subject, but I shall forbear.

John B. Hench has overseen the publication of two handsome facsimiles of pamphlets from AAS collections. One is of the first United States publication on the art of weaving. An engraved book published in Baltimore in 1792, *The Weavers Draft Book* by John Hargrove is a stunning pamphlet that should have wide appeal to modern weavers. The other is a reproduction of the first pamphlet published in our country on the craft of house and ship painting. This pamphlet was prepared by Hezekiah Reynolds and was published for him in New Haven in 1812. Both facsimiles bear introductions by recognized authorities. We trust they both sell well enough to warrant other, similar productions. Mr. Hench has edited another issue of the *Proceedings*, and the book long awaited by us (but not more so than by the Gridiron Club which is helping to pay for it), *The Press and the American Revolution*, while not yet completely set in type, is surely in the final stages of editing and preparation. Mr. Hench also administers the Society's fellowship program. The Council has accepted the recommendations of the Fellowship Committee (Professors Prown, Lemay, and Main) and has appointed the following persons as fellows for the year 1979-80:

*NEH Fellowships*

William J. Gilmore, associate professor of history, Stockton State College, 'Reading and the Circulation of Print in Rural New England, 1787-1830'; Christine Leigh Heyrman, assistant professor of history, University of California at Irvine, 'The Culture of Charity: Merchants, Ministers, and the Social Order of New England, 1680-1740'; Arthur F. Schrader, Southbridge, Massachusetts, 'The Isaiah Thomas Ballad Collection.'

*Fred Harris Daniels Fellowships*

William B. Hamilton, graduate student, department of history, Yale University, 'Preachers and Professionalism'; Mary K. Macmanus, graduate student, department of history, Yale University, 'Symbols and Piety in New England, 1680-1740'; Robinson Murray III, associate librarian, Essex Institute, 'Bibliography of New Hampshire Imprints, 1756-1800'; Donald M. Scott, associate professor of history, North Carolina State University, 'The Public Lecture in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century United States'; David Warren Steel, doctoral candidate, department of music, University of Michigan, 'Stephen Jenks, American Musician and Publisher'; Robert B. Winans, assistant professor of English, Wayne State University, 'Checklist of eighteenth-century American Catalogues of Books, Part II.'

Antiquarian Hall and its inhabitants benefit greatly by the care and skills lavished on us by our superintendent of buildings and grounds, Donald K. Strader. He has overseen not only the substantial amount of regular maintenance, snow shovelling, and so on, but has also monitored the installation of a greatly improved fire detection system, the generous gift of our member Daniel Farber, and the laying of a layer of insulation on the roof of the third book stack, the gift of the Fuller Founda-

tion. The latter is one part of a program of roof repairs that is intended to keep water out and heat in. Still to be completed is some extensive work on portions of the copper-covered dome. At present Mr. Strader is planning for the addition of natural gas burners in our oil-burning boilers, thus giving us the option of oil or gas firing.

To support all these activities we are dependent upon the income from endowments, the gifts of generous past donors, and the contributions of the present generation of concerned members, friends, and staff of the Society. Responses to the treasurer's year-end reminder were pleasing and encouraging. They amounted to \$48,466, and gifts for specific purposes totalled \$46,100. President Jeppson is in the process of preparing his formal, annual appeal for funds which we trust will bring us to our goal of \$82,000 by August 1979. Existing endowments have been increased by \$34,310. A memorial fund initiated by the friends of Michael Papantonio, the income from which will be used to maintain our collection of American bindings, has received nearly \$15,000. Edward Connery Lathem established a book fund honoring his friend and our vice-president, Roderick Stinehour, and Mr. and Mrs. Hall James Peterson have established another restricted fund, the precise purpose for which is still under consideration by the donors and the Society. Bequests were received from two late members of AAS, Bradford F. Swan and Guy W. Walker. An additional distribution from the estate of Mary Gage Rice amounted to \$155,000, and we have been notified that the late Sinclair Hamilton of New York City had bequeathed \$10,000 to the Society. Also, as of the first of this year, AAS will share with five other institutions the income from a perpetual trust that was established by the late Horace McFarland of Morristown, New Jersey. The unrestricted income should amount to about \$4,000 each year.

Our new institutional associate, the Worcester Association of Mutual Aid in Detecting Thieves, is in fine fettle despite its

age of 184 years. Thief detectors number 263 and a goodly share attended the annual meeting on February 9 to celebrate the arrival of a new year and to hear a learned disquisition by Homer D. Babbidge of Hartford, Connecticut, on corkscrews.

Finally, we received three grants totalling \$6,656: for support of periodical purchases (from the United States of America), for support of a fellowship (the gift of the Earhart Foundation of Ann Arbor, Michigan), and for microfilming the *Worcester Spy* (awarded by the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities).

To write that the Council are grateful to all who support the work of the American Antiquarian Society is a gross understatement. Without the generous assistance of all kinds, especially faith in and friendship for AAS, our tasks would be heavy indeed. To each colleague in our joint effort to advance learning, we offer our heartfelt thanks.

Marcus A. McCorison

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