

# *The Report of the Council*

*October 15, 1980*

THE SOCIETY'S STAFF has now grown to forty-two colleagues who spend part or all of their working week at AAS. Of this number twelve are working on particular projects and one is an honorary consultant in children's literature. New projects begun this year include the catalogue of early American engravings, a revision of the Stauffer-Fielding lists of works of American engravers. The other new project, with a staff, is the North American Imprints Program, a long-term project designed to catalogue in machine-readable format works printed in the United States from 1640 until we run out of money. Judy L. Larson, formerly of the Los Angeles County Art Museum, and Earl R. Taylor, formerly of the Boston Public Library, are in charge of the two projects, which are funded, respectively, by grants from the H. W. Wilson Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities and by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and NEH. The increased number of staff members engenders a very different institutional spirit, permits fewer daily personal contacts, creates crowding of facilities, and contributes to a more complex system of communication. All of this is quite different from the kind of life we were used to here at AAS and has necessitated such mundane innovations as an improved telephone system. In addition, and with the increasing professionalization of the staff, the Society is faced with increased responsibility of meeting expectations, concomitant with a larger and differently oriented group of colleagues. These two forces—increased numbers of staff members and increasing compensation and

benefits—will demand our careful examination and reasonable response in the next few years.

Although these pressures have a dramatic and immediate impact on the administration of the Society, I suspect that the long-range implications of increased research activities will be even more important to the life of our learned society. For example, our long-standing commitment to the Microprinting of source materials located at AAS and in other cooperating libraries continues unabated as it has since 1955. We have reached the year 1819 in our effort to provide a microform facsimile of every book, pamphlet, and broadside printed in what is now the United States to that date. In addition, we have actively supported the work of our associates, the Readex Microprint Corporation, in providing microreproductions of a large number of files of American newspapers. That project also goes on with enthusiasm. In fact, the Readex Microprint Corporation is now in the process of reissuing their traditional Microprint versions of these early American printed materials in microfiche or microfilm editions. We believe that it is not inaccurate to say that by building on the collections so well established here and by following the example of the late Clifford K. Shipton, AAS persists in our determination to make materials pertaining to the history of our nation more readily available to all sorts and conditions of people.

Our research and publication officer has commented that although attention to the publications of AAS (which this past year resulted in the appearance of *The Press and the American Revolution*, edited by Bernard Bailyn and John B. Hench) has absorbed a great amount of his time, still more of his concerns have been directed toward the launching and nurturing of the North American Imprints Program. Projects like that and the Catalogue of American Engravings Project are precisely the kinds of activities in which AAS should engage. First of all, they require us to survey our own collections and to provide finding aids to them. Secondly, through published catalogues

or computer networks, the Society's unmatched holdings are made available to the scholarly community. It was in accord with this ambition that Mary Brown, so long on our staff, returned to AAS to check the typescript compiled by Evald Rink on technical works published in the United States so that our remarkable holdings in this area of inquiry might be adequately represented in the finished publication. In doing so, we follow in the tradition of Clarence Brigham who was avid in his attempt to have AAS holdings represented in any bibliography. He preferred the symbol AAS to MWA, because (obviously) AAS would appear first in the list of holding libraries.

Several events have transpired this year that are worthy of note. We have received a very generous grant from the trust of our late members Albert W. and Mary Gage Rice to enable us to obtain a Digital Equipment Corporation PDP 11/34A computer and the programs to go with it. This computer system will allow AAS to compile and to use research data more efficiently. We expect further that it will enable AAS to provide a variety of new services to our readers as well as to enable our staff to produce bibliographies and other kinds of finding aids with relative ease, if not economy. Furthermore, we shall add additional programs to the system so that our accounting, mailing lists, and other administrative activities will be accommodated within the computer system.

AAS joined The Research Libraries Group, a consortium of the nation's major research libraries, each committed to the proposition that research libraries must work together and share resources in order to advance their abilities to further scholarship and at the same time to attempt to hold costs within bounds. The Council and the administration of the Society know that if AAS is to hold any kind of a significant position within the world of American scholarship we must take a part in constructive efforts within the mainstream of the American research community. It is clear that not all of the concerns of a research library such as AAS have much to do with the day-to-

day activities of an institution such as the Columbia University Libraries, let us say. Still, there are critical elements within each of our concerns that coincide and we believe that through close association with independent research libraries and with the most important university libraries, AAS will improve its services while holding firm to its essential mission of the collection and preservation of materials of American history and the enlargement of the knowledge thereof.

Your reporter would be remiss if he did not allude to some aspects of our collecting during the past year. We added a substantial number of first-rate pieces to the collections. Among them were many gifts from generous members and friends such as Daniel and Jessie Lie Farber who gave us 603 negatives and 935 photographs of early New England gravestones. Among other notable gifts were those of Frank L. Harrington, Marion S. Fletcher, and the Scheide Fund who gave to the Society volumes from the collection of American bindings formed by our late member Michael Papantonio. Parker S. Allen of the Meriden Gravure Company gave us a large number of examples of fine printing, including a specially bound copy of *The Specimen Books of Binney & Ronaldson, 1809-1812*, published by the Columbiad Club in 1936. Mr. and Mrs. Roger Butterfield gave the Society a collection of works by and about George Lippard, the Philadelphia journalist and fugitive writer, that is unusual in its thoroughness. James D. Hart of the Bancroft Library at the University of California helped us purchase a wonderfully attractive copy of an 1871 San Francisco publication, *Handbook of Calistoga Springs, or, Little Geysers. Its Mineral Waters, Climate, Amusements, Baths, Drives. . .* A particularly interesting gift came from Stuart H. Buck presented in memory of his great-grandfather, Isaac Stearns. A large number of pieces in this accumulation pertain to reform movements of the nineteenth century, particularly the anti-Masonic and antislavery agitation. We were able to add a number of periodicals and newspapers, including the first issue of *The Anti-Slavery Ex-*

*aminer* published in New York in 1836. Incidentally, Mr. Buck and his late brother were former CIA agents, so that this collection has a particular sense of mystery about it. The Egbert Starr Memorial Library of Middlebury College continues to send us eighteenth- and nineteenth-century pamphlets, many of which become welcome additions to our holdings. With the breaking up of the library of your reporter's father, the Society's library has been enriched by a number of nineteenth-century books of a miscellaneous nature, prints pertaining to Abraham Lincoln, and secondary works that heretofore had not been in our collections. Kaye G. Frank of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, gave to the Society, as he did a year or two ago, a number of publications relating to the Territory of Michigan. Undoubtedly the most important piece was the 1802 Chillocothe printing of the laws of the Territory of the United States North-West of the River Ohio, the third volume. The Library of the Andover-Harvard Theological School sent us a very considerable number of books and periodicals relating to the Universalist denomination. Clark University, Boston University, and many other institutions and individuals all were generous donors of materials, some 1288 printed pieces in all, that are welcome here and which greatly enrich our holdings. To all named and unnamed, we are grateful.

In all, the Society added through gift and purchase 4,341 printed pieces. Of them, 404 were issued before 1821, 2,104 between 1821 and 1876, and 1,833 after the year 1876. Average prices paid for items in each group were \$143.50, \$27.35, and \$19.17, respectively. Included in the total number of pieces added are 230 new newspaper or periodical titles, chiefly of the nineteenth century.

Purchases covered all aspects of our collecting interests. Perhaps the most uncommon material was a group of eight broadsides ranging in date from 1682 to 1739. Obtained through monies received from the sale of duplicates, this group of early American broadsides makes a truly significant addition

to our holdings. Unrecorded and unique, the broadsides range in interest and subject matter from a poem entitled *Upon the Immature Death of Elizabeth Stetson* by William Witherell published in Boston in 1682 to such mundane matters as gubernatorial proclamations of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Another exceptional broadside was purchased on the Forbes Fund. It was printed in Chelmsford by Nathaniel Coverly in 1775 and contains two poems that normally would have been split apart for separate sale. One poem was written by Elisha Rich and, like the other, was concerned with the engagement on Bunker's Hill.

Leaving materials printed in Boston for the moment, we note the acquisition of a twenty-eight-page pamphlet compiled by Absalom Jones and Richard Allen. Their pamphlet is entitled *A Narrative of the Proceedings of the Black People* and was printed by William W. Woodward in Philadelphia in 1794. It was purchased on the John Thomas Lee Fund. The two authors were black ministers who, during the yellow fever epidemic in 1793, courageously remained in the city to assist fellow citizens who were taken ill with the dread disease. Later, Philadelphians accused the blacks of spreading the disease and of overcharging for their nursing services. The two authors vigorously refute the charges leveled against them and their people.

William Cobbett, the English-American pamphleteer, raised a tempest wherever he went. A recent acquisition purchased on the Henry F. DePuy Fund answers Peter Porcupine with tit for tat. James Philip Puglia, writing under the pseudonym of James Quicksilver, ridiculed Cobbett in a pamphlet entitled *The Political Massacre, or Unexpected Observations on the Writings of our Present Scribblers*. He set the stage for his pamphlet with a satirical engraved frontispiece depicting Cobbett as a porcupine.

Comic almanacs enjoyed a considerable vogue during the 1830s and '40s and those purportedly issued by Davy Crockett contributed greatly to his rise as a popular hero. In actual fact,

many of them were issued by an enterprising stationer-turned-publisher named Charles Ellms, of Boston. His earliest entry in this popular field is entitled *The American Comic Almanack for 1831*. In addition to other examples of his publications, including tales of vicious pirates and the like, AAS owns a collection of his business records. The most recent example of his business enterprise was acquired with funds obtained through the sale of duplicate publications.

One acquisition has puzzled the Society's chief acquirer and his colleagues. It is a novel entitled *The Purraul of Lum Ling: or the Missionary & the Mountain Chiefs*, published in New York City or in Utica (depending on which of its two title pages you prefer) by Charles Wiley, Collins & Hannay or William Williams. The book was printed by Williams in Utica in 1825 and it appears in appropriate bibliographies. However, facts concerning its composition seem to be elusive. Presumably based on factual situations, the novel is set in India in 1810 and concerns relations between the native population and foreigners. The unnamed author dedicated his novel to the officers of the Madras Army, which suggests that he was a British subject. However, William Williams, the printer, obtained an American copyright for his work, thus suggesting that it may be the product of an American citizen. In short, we have a conundrum.

Another novel, also very scarce, was published in Pittsburgh by A. A. Anderson in 1845. Entitled *The Smoky City: A Tale of Crime*, the book was written by Samuel Young who turned personal hardship into novelistic profit. The mill in which he had been employed was burnt down, forcing him and his fellows out of work. Apparently, the experiment was successful for he wrote two more novels, became editor of the *Connoquenessing Valley News*, and wrote an autobiography which was published in 1890.

Privately published books were not a common phenomenon during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Thus we are

always pleased when we find one. *United States Girls across the Atlantic* was published by Maria Welch Harris of Homer, New York, in 1876. The volume is a narrative of the adventures of three young women traveling alone across Europe. The book was printed in Syracuse and is copiously illustrated with photographic copies of cartes de visite, portraits, views of tourist attractions, objects in museums, admission tickets, maps, prints, and other impedimenta of the trip. Written in a lighthearted manner, it is a charming and evocative souvenir of the time.

Turning to more serious matters, we were pleased to obtain on our duplicate fund an unrecorded musical publication entitled *Sacred Music. Being a Collection of Anthems in Score*. The music was composed by Peter Erben, a member of a family of organ builders of New York City and a member of the Society for Cultivating Church Music. The seventy-six-page volume was issued sometime between 1807 and 1813 in New York over the imprint 'Sold at the Music Store.'

Hardly a year goes by that we do not add at least one more imprint issued from the press of our founder, Isaiah Thomas. The past year was no exception. Using income from the fund established by Thomas, we purchased *The Crafty Princess; or, the Golden Bull. In Four Parts*. It was printed in Worcester in 1787 and is not recorded in any of the bibliographies. This pamphlet reprints a sentimental poem, the subject of which is a clever princess who deceives her father in order that she might marry her prince.

*A Treatise on Gymnastics* was the first American book on the subject of organized exercise in schools. The book was written by Friedrich Ludwig Jahn and was published in Northampton in 1828. Physical training became a part of the curriculum of German gymnasia shortly before 1820 through the efforts of Herr Jahn. George Bancroft of Worcester and his colleague, J. G. Cogswell, studied in Germany before opening the Round Hill School in Northampton, a progressive school

that set new standards of American secondary education. Their edition, which is illustrated with plates explicating physical exercises, is an important element of American educational history.

Still another first American book, also of European origin, is Charles Babbage's essay *On the Economy of Machinery and Manufacturers* published by Carey & Lea in Philadelphia in 1832. Babbage designed a machine for mechanized mathematical calculations, a forerunner of the modern computer. Babbage was a mathematician and was concerned with the scientific management of mechanical procedures. His book is less concerned with his mathematical calculator than it is with emphasizing the economic advantages of the use of efficient tools and methods in various manufacturing processes.

In 1874 in Canton, Ohio, the Wrought Iron Bridge Company of that city issued a catalogue, *Book of Designs of Wrought Iron Bridges*. The fifty-six-page pamphlet illustrates a wealth of designs and specifications for their bridges. Canton then was a busy manufacturing city with excellent access to the iron needed for bridge building. The company was successful and remained active into the early twentieth century. The catalogue of their various designs presents an excellent overview of this form of engineering of the time.

While some people were interested in the improvement of manufacturing, many more authors were concerned with the improvement of agricultural methods. One such was the remarkably learned Israel Daniel Rupp who edited *The Practical Farmer* which he published in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, for several years following 1837. We obtained a copy of volume one, numbers one through twelve, the only recorded holding of these issues. It was purchased with funds from a grant from the United States government.

As usual we were hot on the trail of materials that served to enlarge our knowledge of the history of printing and publishing. We were extremely pleased to obtain through the kind-

ness of Ken Leach of Brattleboro, Vermont, Joel Munsell's copy of *The History of Printing* written by Isaiah Thomas and published by his son in 1810. This famous book holds a unique place in our pantheon of books on printing, as our readers can well imagine, and to have the copy owned by Munsell, the editor of the 1874, second edition of the work, is particularly gratifying to us. The New Haven Colony Historical Society recently divested itself of a number of collections that were not within the primary scope of that society. Thus, we were pleased when they offered to us manuscripts relating to the book trades outside of New Haven. In particular we found a collection of some 190 letters to the booksellers James Munroe & Company of Boston to be of special interest. They were dated from 1836 through the year 1866. One of the letters was dated March 7, 1842, from a professor of mathematics at St. Charles College in Missouri and was concerned with wholesale prices of specific textbooks which the professor wished to obtain for his classes and for resale to teachers in his region. Another letter in the collection was dated April 19, 1853, and was written by the poet Thomas Holley Chivers to Maturin Murray Ballou inquiring after material that Chivers had prepared for the periodical *Gleason's Pictorial*, which Ballou edited. During the past several years we have been eagerly looking for samples of publications carried around by salesmen as they attempted to secure subscribers for various publications. One of several obtained during the past year was that for P. T. Barnum's autobiography, *Struggles and Triumphs: or, Forty Years' Recollections*, published by J. B. Burr & Co. of Hartford in 1869.

This brief survey does little justice to the fascinating array of materials recently placed within our collections but will, we hope, give some indication of the breadth of our collecting interests.

As we indicated earlier, the effort to make our materials more useful continues unabated. The publication program continues satisfactorily. Reviews for *The Press and the American*

*Revolution* have thus far appeared in the *Times Literary Supplement* (London), *Choice*, and *Library Journal* and have been encouraging. Robert B. Winans's *A Descriptive Checklist of Book Catalogues Separately Issued in America, 1693-1800*, is now in page proof and should be published early in 1981. Articles submitted for publication in the *Proceedings* have increased in number and in quality, much to our satisfaction. However, the problems of printing costs, as affected by inflationary pressures, are matters of great concern to us.

We were extremely pleased that the Society received a third renewal from the Fellowship Division of the National Endowment for the Humanities under its Centers for Advanced Studies program. The grant, which amounts to \$132,000, is to be expended for two or three fellowships per year over a three-year period.

The Readex Microprint Corporation has continued for another year its support of the Albert Boni Fellowship at AAS and Jacob Hiatt has established the Frances Hiatt Fellowship in memory of his late wife. The Frances Hiatt award will go to a person at work on a doctoral dissertation.

On another front, the staff in the Readers' Services Department has worked hard to enhance reader access—'ERA' they call it. Members of that department are compiling checklists, characterized as pseudo-cataloguing, of various uncatalogued collections. For example, one volunteer has surveyed all of our institutional reports and compiled a checklist of the originators thereof. Our large collection of local history is being revamped so that it will be more easily retrievable. Early songsters are being surveyed and a checklist of them compiled. Readers may recall that our collection of children's books published between 1821 and 1876 was thoroughly surveyed over a five-year period by another volunteer and a checklist constructed of this collection, which numbers some 8,500 titles. It is not an overstatement to say that with the retirement of Mary Brown two years ago Readers' Services 'lost control' of the Worcester

materials. Now, with a newly constructed finding list to them, we have a useful means of access to that collection, even if the entire department were staffed with non-Worcester natives!

More than 4,000 readers' visits represent an increase during the past year of about three percent over previous experience. More dramatic was the thirty percent increase in the circulation of research materials. This suggests that our collections are getting much more intensive use than in the past—an objective that our cataloguing, research, fellowship, and other programs have been designed to encourage. Collections as deep and as rich as ours shall be used to good advantage and we shall devise the means to enable scholars to get at them.

In the way of preservation, we continue to pay close attention to the care of our surroundings. The services of our superintendent of buildings and grounds is of the utmost importance in keeping the building and contents secure and functioning. This includes such 'commonplace' objectives as cleanliness, the proper condition of heating and air handling equipment, and all of the other physical things that are critical in such an institution. Just as important is the work of our conservator who continues to push through his laboratory numbers of books and pieces of paper which he expertly repairs and returns to service.

The AAS department charged with the preparation and cataloguing of materials for use has been reorganized and a head of cataloguing services has been appointed. She is Carol R. Alexander, who supervises eleven people, making the department the largest single unit of staff members ever at AAS. We continue to catalogue our more recent materials into the OCLC data base, receiving the catalogue cards and a magnetic tape from that facility. In addition, we have two major projects—the aforementioned North American Imprints Program and the Broadside Cataloguing Project, which will describe some 6,000 broadsides at AAS dating from 1640 to 1830. Records of broadsides published in 1783 are now being prepared on worksheets in preparation for the arrival of our data input system

and for our hookup with the computerized Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN) of the Research Libraries Group. The broadside cataloguing staff works closely with NAIP staff in order that broadside records will be immediately useful to that even larger project. The AAS staff has worked closely with the Library of Congress in developing new cataloguing rules for specialized research materials, rules that will be coordinated to the new Anglo-American cataloguing rules, while still serving the needs of research libraries. Thus, AAS staff members have made a major contribution to national cataloguing codes. We are pleased that staff members at the Library of Congress entertain such regard for AAS cataloguing capabilities.

The staff of the Graphic Arts Department mounted eight most interesting and informative exhibitions in our readers' lounge during the year, but even more importantly worked their way through a substantial number of new acquisitions to the graphic arts collections. We added more than 300 broadsides ranging in date from the late seventeenth century through the year 1876. Among them were theater broadsides and playbills, as well as an exceptional collection of broadsides relating to the politics of Steuben County, New York, in the early 1820s. Forty-five prints, chiefly from the mid-nineteenth century, were acquired.

The Newspaper Department, as always, was very active, both in responding to research inquiries and in acquiring and cataloguing new newspapers. The *Massachusetts Spy*, published by our founder, Isaiah Thomas, was microfilmed through its final year, 1904, the wherewithal being derived from a modest grant—matched by AAS—from the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities. (We look forward to the opportunities available to us through the new Arts Lottery, a device of our ever imaginative legislature to improve the 'arts picture' in Massachusetts. Perhaps someone will give us a season ticket and we will be a big winner!) In addition to acquiring large

numbers of serials, we weeded out an even more substantial amount of material that was out of scope in the Society's collections. For example, long files of *Life*, *Saturday Evening Post*, and *Time* were traded off to various libraries and dealers for other materials more useful to us. In the course of cataloguing serials, we discovered that we had some seventy-two percent of all of the titles published in this country during the decade 1810-20—some 229 of 316 known periodicals. We are in the process of drawing up a list of political campaign newspapers and a list of holdings of temperance periodicals. Still, in this department as in all others, there is so much to be done to bring to the surface the enormous quantity of extremely interesting materials shelved in our stacks.

Within the Manuscript Department, the cataloguing of collections continues to go on even though a year or two ago G. K. Hall and Company published a large, four-volume catalogue of our holdings. For one thing, acquisitions to the department have increased dramatically. For example, some 190 letters of James Monroe and Company, Boston booksellers, of the period 1836-66 were purchased. Comey Family Civil War correspondence was obtained as a gift and so were a few nineteenth-century New England diaries. The curator of manuscripts and the librarian review acquisitions carefully in order to maintain a reasonably coherent collection of manuscripts, fearing that without a focus the collection would become frustratingly diverse.

Educational activities have been fruitful in this past year. Our second undergraduate seminar, held in the fall of 1979, attracted ten lively and interested students from Worcester's collegiate community. The course was directed by David Hall and his assistant Elizabeth Carroll Reilly. The topic focused on popular culture in preindustrial America, 1650-1850. However, the education officer's primary concerns have centered on the organization of the forthcoming scholarly conference 'Printing and Society in Early America.' He and his colleagues on the committee—our editor and research officer, David Hall

of Boston University, and Richard Brown of the University of Connecticut—worked hard to gather and sort out a large number of scholarly interests into what we expect to be a coherent learning experience for the participants in the conference. We look forward to the publication of the proceedings of that conference, for we believe that it will be of substantial significance in directing scholarly investigations into this area that is so close to the heart of our activities.

Our staff has been extremely active in a wide variety of outside enterprises during this past year. The director is involved with the Independent Research Libraries Association, the Bibliographical Society of America, the Grolier Club, and other organizations. Our editor continues to represent AAS at the ACLS and the Organization of American Historians. The curator of graphic arts delivered a lecture on book illustration in Dearborn, Michigan, while representing AAS on the New England Committee for the Archives of American Art and is a member of the Print Council of America. The associate librarian is a member of the Board of the New England Document Conservation Center, is active in his local historical society, and represents AAS on committees of the Research Libraries Group. The head of cataloguing services has represented AAS on various New England committees attempting to bring order out of chaos with the new cataloguing rules and will represent the Society on several RLG committees. The curator of manuscripts and education officer holds national offices in the Society of American Archivists and the American Historical Association and has served in a number of other capacities during the past year. The curator of newspapers has represented AAS at meetings of the New England Library Association and the Canadian Library Association as well as serving as a source of information for institutions attempting to organize their own newspaper collections. This brief survey hardly does justice to our activities but I hope it will give some sense of the excitement of work here at AAS.

Underlying all of this, of course, is the means of paying

the bills. Our development officer has worked mightily to encourage giving for annual expenses. In fact, giving this year attained the highest level ever. More than \$93,000 was raised for annual budgetary needs, while another \$90,000 was contributed for special purposes. In addition, the endowment of the Society was enlarged by more than \$168,000. Our late member Nathaniel Wheeler provided for a portion of the Society's future by means of a very generous bequest that the Council has applied to endowment for the manuscript collections. We cannot state too emphatically how important are bequests to the life of AAS. Faced with inflation, as we all are, the Society must enlarge its level of basic support. Bequests to endowment surely are an effective way to do that.

Still, as the treasurer's report noted, we ran a deficit this past year and there are spots in our budget that are funded with 'soft' money. As we look ahead it seems clear that AAS must ask its members for even more generous support, for some forty percent of our members fail to respond to the president's annual appeal. This is not to say that we are not grateful to the clerk and members of the Worcester Association of Mutual Aid in Detecting Thieves for their enthusiastic support the past year. Some 175 contributed \$36,920 to the treasury of AAS. Without these friends we would be in deep trouble. A recent president of the Society posed the question of whether or not independent institutions such as AAS can survive in the economic and political world in which we find ourselves. Your Council and your director believe that we can and, in fact, that we should. A nation needs a diversity of institutions, willing and able to serve a diversity of needs and interests. AAS does that by providing unparalleled resources for the study of our history and culture. We are grateful to all of you for your help in the past and we shall try hard to earn your continued confidence in the next year.

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