

The Report of the Council

April 15, 1981

PRESENTING the report of the Council at the semiannual meeting is an opportunity to share with Society members the variety of activities, the excitement of unexpected change, and the frustration of recurring problems which have been experienced here at 185 Salisbury Street since annual meeting time last fall.

Taking a commanding position on the list of priority concerns has been the intense self-study and reflection that was precipitated by the review that the Council made of the staff's planning document prepared in 1980. From the discussions and debate that have resulted has come a recognition of present and anticipated needs of the Society for acquisitions, conservation, buildings, personnel, fellowships, and education, for which the income from an invested sum of \$8,739,555 is forecast. One bit of supporting evidence appeared in figures recently included in the annual report of the Council on Library Resources. Currently published domestic hardcover books which cost on the average \$8.77 in 1969 cost \$22.80 in 1979. The \$8.66 periodical subscription of 1969 ten years later cost \$34.54 to continue. The situation with antiquarian books and retrospective periodicals is even starker. There is no need to add documentation about costs of energy, and the evidence is ample that salary scales for employees of nonprofit institutions are becoming widely distorted from the norms of equivalent government service or industry.

Of equal importance to the future of the Society and directly related to the planning for development has been the occupancy

of the Goddard-Daniels House. In 1970 Mrs. F. Harold Daniels deeded her family home at 190 Salisbury Street to the Society to be maintained and used for purposes consonant with the mission of the Society. Mrs. Daniels died on January 31 at the age of ninety-one and her home, 'Elmarion,' became the Society's responsibility and opportunity.

The intention of the Council in accepting the deed in 1970 was to use the house, the stable, and the surrounding grounds for AAS functions and activities such as living accommodations for visiting fellows, office space for non-library departments, meeting rooms for seminars, public events, committees, and space for storage of non-library materials and supplies. Since the energy cost for the house last year exceeded \$1,000 per month, and since renovating and refurnishing will require outlays far in excess of the income from the Daniels Fund, the house and its future are closely linked to the success of the Society's development plans.

A third matter of continuing concern and drain upon staff time has been the planning necessary to maximize the benefits of modern computer technology in all departments of a research library. Owning and using a properly programmed computer for a variety of different tasks is neither inexpensive nor simple. The Society is now committed to the installation of two Zentec terminals linking AAS to the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN) in Stanford, California. This project is currently in process and should certainly be completed before the October annual meeting. Prior to the actual installation of the hardware, however, many hours of staff time must be expended in establishing the specifications and creating the operating profile. The Society is also the owner of a Digital Equipment Corporation PDP 11/34A minicomputer with four terminals and two printers. The entire array is up and running in Littleton, Massachusetts, while Inforonics, Inc., our vendor, is completing the programming and the debugging process. AAS cataloguers have been traveling to Littleton on a

regular schedule, not only to learn the procedures for operating the equipment but also to input data into the AAS file. At a date very soon, the equipment will be dismantled in Littleton and installed here in the special stack room in the basement with the four terminals located on two other floors.

Two other events that cannot be ignored, at least for the next few years, have occurred since last October and intrude into all the thinking and planning that has gone on. One of these is related to the new national prominence of 'supply-side' economics and suggests massive cuts of at least fifty percent in the funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities and other federal agencies supportive of libraries. At the present moment more than ten project staff members are supported entirely from grants received from NEH. Within weeks, reapplications will be submitted to continue two of these projects supporting the positions of more than four of these persons.

The other event was a tax referendum in Massachusetts called Proposition 2½. By limiting the automobile excise tax as well as the local property tax this misdirected protest has created for cities like Worcester a desperate revenue crisis. Some voices locally and throughout the state are suggesting currently untaxed property of nonprofit institutions as a source of much-needed tax revenues. This local fiscal concern cannot be ignored as the Society thinks through its own plans and programs.

While these challenges and opportunities have absorbed time and energy at all levels of the AAS staff, the normal course of activity has continued with scarcely a skipped beat.

The Readers' Services Department, under the supervision of Nancy Burkett, has continued to serve the needs of readers in a skillful and highly professional manner. In the last six months 1,596 reader-days were logged and 7,623 books were paged. These are not very revealing statistics of themselves but are indicators of the day-to-day work of a research library. The Readers' Services staff has also found time to support the

varied education programs of the Society as well as to organize two miscellaneous collections of pamphlets and to mount a special exhibit focused on the City of Worcester.

The director-librarian, with the able support of Carolyn Allen of the Acquisitions Department, in the most recent six months has processed approximately 823 titles of newly acquired works. Of this number twenty-one percent were received as gifts. It is striking to note for comparison's sake that the pre-1831 titles were purchased this year at an average unit price of about \$175, a figure seven times the average cited earlier from the council on Library Resources report. It is abundantly clear to the staff at AAS, and ought to be to readers as well, that a research institution is continually obliged aggressively to seek out new acquisitions to strengthen existing collections, to fill in gaps, and to explore new areas of America's past. A research library can never rest upon its existing collection. It is never complete!

Not only does the Cataloguing Department, under the direction of Carol Alexander, bear the responsibility for processing the new acquisitions, it also has faced this year the enormous complication of absorbing and applying the new Anglo-American Cataloging Rules as well as adopting and adapting the new Library of Congress manual for the bibliographic description of rare books. To further complicate the cataloguing process is the forthcoming change in our machine-readable cataloguing system from OCLC in Ohio to RLIN in California. Amid all this challenge and change, work continues on the catalogue of broadsides in the AAS collection, with the expectation that items up to the year 1795 will be completed this month.

The Newspaper Department under the direction of Joyce Tracy has been the recipient of some of the newly acquired material. A large collection of Vermont newspapers was purchased from the Vermont State Library, and was carted to Worcester by Miss Tracy in one of the few bad snow storms

of last winter. Included in this acquisition was the Woodstock, Vermont, *Spirit of the Age*, 1840-76, and twenty-two volumes of the Middlebury, Vermont, *Register*, 1850-76. A smaller but equally desirable collection of the Lowell, Massachusetts, *Courier* was received as a gift of the Lowell Historical Society. Finally, the department and Miss Tracy are responsible for the commemorative exhibit on Isaiah Thomas which has been mounted in the Exhibit Room particularly for this occasion to honor the founder.

In the continuing work of the Manuscripts Department, not only have the needs of scholars been served, but additions to the Gage Family Papers have been received as a gift of William Wheeler III, and processing has continued on the Cheever-Wheeler Family Papers, supported by a gift from Eunice Wheeler. Amid the routines of daily work, Kathleen Major, assistant in the Manuscripts Department, planned and completed an uncommon exhibit on the American Philhellenes in the nineteenth century. The exhibit was highlighted in the local press and was the feature of a reception at Antiquarian Hall on March 16 for the leaders of the Greek community of Worcester.

The Education Department, directed by William Joyce, has continued to probe new areas of interest as well as to revise and improve those programs that have proved successful and consistent with the goals of the Society. Outstanding among these programs was the invitational Conference on Printing and Society in Early America convened about two weeks after the October annual meeting. The participants and guests were uniformly pleased with the work of the conference and have created a demand for a published volume of the papers that were presented. Also a success in terms of attendance figures have been the public poetry readings by Richard Wilbur (on Poe), Robert Bly (on Thoreau), and Galway Kinnell (on Whitman). Concluding the series will be Maxine Kumin, who is scheduled for a reading of selections from Emily Dickinson

on April 16. Not to be overlooked in the efforts of the Education Department are the well-planned workshops led by Mr. Joyce, other AAS staff, and former AAS fellows Stephen Nissenbaum and Donald Scott. These two programs during the winter were designed to introduce AAS research collections to faculty members of colleges and universities in the Worcester area.

The Education Department also concluded in the fall of 1980 another successful undergraduate seminar led by Professors Kenneth Moynihan and Charles Estus of Assumption College for ten students selected by the history departments of the five Worcester four-year colleges. Now being planned is the 1981 session which will be directed by Professor Ross Beales of the College of the Holy Cross. And, on May 15, the conclusion will be reached for the current series of meetings of the Seminar in American Social and Political History, sponsored by the Education Department.

The work of the Graphic Arts Department and its curator, Georgia Bumgardner, has since November been the center of national interest—or at least so we like to think. In the fall, a unique legislative desk from the AAS collections, which was identified with former Society member Thomas Hart Benton, was given to the United States Congress for permanent lodging and display by the architect of the Capitol. Perhaps even more newsworthy is the loan that was made to the White House of the AAS portrait of Calvin Coolidge. The Graphic Arts Department worked swiftly to insure the proper transporting and hanging of this portrait in time for President Reagan's inauguration. And for more local display was the acquisition of a handsome new display case, donated by an AAS member for the showing of a stunning silver tankard bearing the Isaiah Thomas crest, a gift of the same AAS member.

Mrs. Bumgardner has been extremely active not only in servicing the graphic arts requests of researchers but also among national groups of printing historians, print collectors, and

curators, having a part in the program of the American Printing History Association and the joint meeting of the Art Libraries Society and the College Art Association. She also continues to oversee the work of the project funded by NEH and the H. W. Wilson Foundation to compile a catalogue of American engravings, the results of which will replace the now out-of-date works by Stauffer and Fielding.

Judy Larson, the project's senior cataloguer, has extended her range of activities to include serving as guest curator and lecturer for an exhibition of original illustrations for children's literature which was mounted during the winter in the Santa Barbara (California) Museum of Art.

The Research and Publication Department, under the direction of John Hench, has maintained its standard of publishing excellence with the completion of *A Descriptive Checklist of Book Catalogues Separately Printed in America 1693-1800*, compiled by former AAS Daniels Fellow Robert B. Winans. The research and publication officer has also noted with muted ceremony the fact that the last item in the Shaw-Shoemaker bibliography for 1819 was entered into the system for reproduction by the Readex Microprint project of microform publication of Early American Imprints. This ceremonial act can be described as the beginning of the end of a very lengthy project, begun under the direction of the late Clifford Shipton. This has been a project which has had enormous impact upon the scholarly community as was forcefully stated by Mr. Lawrence W. Towner in the lead article of the winter 1981 *Newberry* (Library) *Newsletter*.

No less important to the future of American historical study has been the work done in the Research and Publication Department by Earl Taylor, senior cataloguer of the North American Imprints Program, to convert to machine-readable format the complex cataloguing-bibliographic records of American imprints published prior to the nineteenth century. Many hundreds of work sheets have been completed with care and are

now being entered into the data base of the aforementioned minicomputer temporarily located in Littleton.

Of even more immediate impact on current scholarship and the study of America's past is the recent selection of AAS fellows for 1981-82, who are the following:

National Endowment for the Humanities Fellows

David D. Hall, professor of history, Boston University, 'History of Popular Culture in Colonial New England'; Donald M. Scott, associate professor of history, North Carolina State University, 'Public Lecture and the Formation of American Culture, 1830-70'; Marc Shell, associate professor of English, State University of New York, Buffalo, 'Money and Symbolism in America: Case Studies.'

Fred Harris Daniels Fellows

Lucia Bergamasco-Lenarda, graduate student in American Studies, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, 'Women and Children in Colonial New England'; Lester H. Cohen, associate professor of history, Purdue University, 'The Origins of American Liberalism, 1780-1820'; Bruce C. Daniels, associate professor of history, University of Winnipeg, 'The Antiquarian Impulse: Local Historical Writing in the United States'; Charles Fanning, associate professor of English, Bridgewater State College, 'The Irish Voice in America: Nineteenth-Century Fiction'; Stuart A. McLean, Ph.D. candidate in history, University of Chicago, 'California Gold Fever'; Daniel K. Richter, Ph.D. candidate in history, Columbia University, 'Societies on the Eighteenth-Century New York Frontier'; Randolph Roth, instructor in history, Grinnell College, 'Religion and Reform in Antebellum Vermont'; John D. Rusk, Ph.D. candidate in history, Indiana University, 'Eighteenth-Century Anglo-American Seamen'; Laurence Shore, Ph.D. candidate in history, Johns Hopkins University, 'The

Degradation and Dignity of Labor: Political Economy and the Southern Ruling Elite, 1850-76.'

Albert Boni Fellow

Robert Blair St. George, P.H.D. candidate in folklore and folk-life, University of Pennsylvania, 'Popular Literature and Reading in Massachusetts, 1640-1720.'

Francis Hiatt Fellow

David P. Jaffee, P.H.D. candidate in history, Harvard University, 'The Formation of a Yankee Culture.'

Entwined in almost all the activities that have been reported has been the development officer, Mary Callahan. She has been advising, arranging, consulting, confirming, and supporting each department in the conduct of its separate programs. She has, with the director and librarian, deftly woven all the diverse strands into a unified AAS tapestry to be admired and appreciated by the many publics that are served.

In a more visible and measurable way, the Society received with gratitude a bequest from Mrs. Clarence S. Brigham amounting to \$138,000 to be known as the Clarence S. and Alice Comstock Brigham Fund. It came at the death of Brigham's daughter, Elizabeth B. McKee. The income from the fund is to be used for the general purposes of the Society. Special gifts so far this fiscal year have amounted to \$35,436 while gifts in kind now stand at \$6,381. Annual giving, which is the real measure of the imagination and persistence of the development officer, has reached \$82,298, of which \$12,835 is attributable to corporate giving, under the chairmanship of W. Douglas Bell.

Not to be ignored in this litany of generous giving is the impressive support and energy given to the AAS Newspaper Endowment Fund by Richard C. Steele. The fund's goal of a half million dollars has been exceeded by more than \$10,000.

Among the growing number of friends and supporters of the

work of the Society can be found a pack of thieves, or more correctly the Worcester Association for Mutual Aid in Detecting Thieves. This enthusiastic band enjoyed a gala dinner meeting to celebrate not only the birthday of Abraham Lincoln but also the safe return of the Steeles from their harrowing experience on the *Prinsendam*.

Underlying each of the special programs and behind all the routine, ongoing work of the departments of the Society is the skillful but unseen management of support staff: the necessary record-keeping, the vital accounting for income and expenditures, and the general supervision of administrative activities performed ably by Office Manager Eleanor Adams and Bookkeeper Vivian Schotte. Mrs. Adams has, since last October, patiently introduced the entire staff to the intricacies of a complex intercom system, while at the same time maintaining a steady work flow of reports and correspondence, which has increased by twenty-eight percent over the same period last year.

Despite the intense use of the building and equipment occasioned by the variety of regular activities, the superintendent of buildings and grounds, Donald Strader, has continued to husband the energy resources needed for heat and light, to upgrade the electrical service and lighting in the stacks, and to perform the maintenance miracles that keep this seventy-one-year-old building young and more useful than ever was expected by those who planned it. And, within an already busy schedule of indoor and outdoor maintenance, Mr. Strader and his assistant have added the care and upkeep of the Goddard-Daniels property to their routines although it is already clear that additional help will be needed before the next report of the Council.

There is much that has happened; there is much in current production; and there is much planned for the future. All of the Society's future depends as it has in the past on the continued professional dedication of the staff and the enthusiastic support of the Council and the members of AAS.

Frederick E. Bauer, Jr.

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