

## *Report of the Council*

**T**O those of us who are busy in the administration of the Society, the past winter looms as the most active and replete with achievement in our memory. Not so long ago the winter humidification and the cleaning of the air in our bookstacks seemed, because of the construction of our building, to be a dream beyond realization; during this, the first winter of the operation of the system, it has been a success far beyond our hopes. Installed to protect books rather than people, it has without a doubt reduced the number of colds due to dry air and dust. The first time that the air filters were changed, they were found to have collected twenty-five pounds of dust. To our great surprise, the system has sharply cut our heating costs, although what a full summer's cooling operation will add to our electricity bill is as yet unknown.

This construction, and similar experiences, have left me with the profoundest feelings of gratitude toward the men who have borne the burden of the operations of the Society and the improvement of the Library. In such matters of capital outlay, I have had only to demonstrate these needs, to have one of our friends come forward to assist. I am equally grateful for the annual giving toward operating expenses and book purchase. If the Society were suddenly deprived of this source of income, it would have to cut its staff to the bone, and bring bibliographical labors to a sudden halt. We would be reduced, in fact, to the status of being the mere custodians of work already done. Some insti-

tutions, instead of using regular gifts for current expenses, as we do, add them to the endowment. These institutions are in a better position than we to outride the inflation which has doubled library salaries in recent years. When the several present members of our staff approaching retirement age do leave us, we shall be unable to replace them with individuals of like training and promise. The only solution to this problem is a large addition to our endowment.

Throughout my term of office the staff of the Society has been able to devote the greater part of its time to bibliographical labors, which have enabled us to bring under control for the general use of mankind great areas of historical records. At our meeting of October, 1954, I announced the inception of our project to microprint the full text of all non-serial material listed in Evans' American Bibliography, together with all that was turned up in the process of the revision of that work. Historians hailed the project as one which, if completed, would revolutionize research in this field; but very few had any faith that it could be completed. We who were undertaking it were far from sure. Today, so far as historians are concerned, the job is done. There will be another two years of rounding up bibliographical strays, laying ghosts, and getting out the addenda and the short-title revision, but the material which the historian needs is now in his hand. In his latest book Edmund S. Morgan calls the microprint series "a work of twentieth century book collecting that dwarfs all previous efforts in the field. . . . Only those who have done research in early American history both before and after this undertaking began can appreciate the extent of its service to scholarship." So far as mere bulk is concerned, we have published three times as much in the last decade as in the preceding one hundred and forty years of the Society's life. Because most of the printing which we have done has been in micro-

form, we have, in the last decade, published about five hundred times as much printed text as in all our previous history.

The Evans bibliography ends with the material printed in the year 1800. December 31 of that year is not a natural watershed of American history. Bibliographically, the decades on this side of that date are a *terra incognita*. They have never been collected because they have lacked a bibliographical guide like Evans. Shaw-Shoemaker is a new work, and is, its compilers point out, in the nature of a preliminary gathering of data for a thorough bibliography. So this Society has concluded an agreement with the Readex Microprint Corporation to edit a micro-edition of the text of the items listed by Shaw-Shoemaker for the years 1801-1805, revising the bibliography as we proceed.

On April 3 and 4, we held at the Library and at Clark University the Fifteenth Conference on Early American History, this being devoted to the subject of Law and Authority in the American Colonies. We had long desired to have one of these conferences at the Library, but we lacked the free time and staff to manage it by ourselves. Dr. George Merriam and Dr. George Billias of Clark revived the idea and gave us the necessary assistance to carry through the Fifteenth Conference; indeed, Professor Billias was the spirit of it. We had hoped to draw sixty participants; we had a hundred and thirty, and only the happy juxtaposition of three other events of bibliographical importance prevented us from being swamped by twice as many guests as we could handle. The Conference was a great success, drawing some participants from as far away as Illinois; Mr. Johnson proposes to publish the papers which were read.

These last six months have also brought us spectacular accessions. Mere volume of accession is of course meaning-

less; no library in these days can really afford to house and care for volumes which do not relate to the strength of its collection. Our accessions have been more than relevant; they have been apt. Mr. Streeter has stepped up the regular flow of his gifts into the collections to which he has already contributed so much. From Mr. Robert H. Montgomery of Cambridge and Boston came a collection of reference works relating to genealogy, and to the Ulster Irish particularly. From Dr. Gabriel Nadeau, head of the Rutland Hospital, came an enormous and incredibly near complete collection of material relating to the French Canadians. We have always purchased freely in this field, but the Nadeau collection contained many works which we had never seen in any catalogue.

From Dartmouth College we received a ton or so of odd numbers, short runs, and broken files of old newspapers going back into the period of the Brigham bibliography. Several years ago I reported the gift of the archive of a Mendon minute-man company which incorporated into the Continental Army and served, with various reincarnations, through the war. This week we received another bundle of manuscripts relating to the same outfit. All of these will be described at more length in the Librarian's Report at the October meeting.

Fortunately none of these accessions, bibliographical or financial, came to us because we lost friends. We have, indeed, lost only two members since the last meeting, but they were Everett Graff and Perry Miller.

CLIFFORD K. SHIPTON,  
*For the Council*

Copyright of Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society is the property of American Antiquarian Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.