

## *Report of the Council*

APRIL 23, 1993

TRADITIONS OF THE PAST, tactics for the future. For more than seven generations, the American Antiquarian Society has maintained a strong tradition of farsighted and forward-looking leadership, planning carefully and creatively to meet the research needs of future readers. It is an extraordinary record of dedication, innovation, and foresight extending over 180 years: Isaiah Thomas, Christopher Columbus Baldwin, Samuel Foster Haven, Clarence S. Brigham, Clifford K. Shipton, and Marcus A. McCorison. Generation after generation, these leaders of the Society faced new challenges, seized new opportunities, embraced new technologies, yet remained steadfast to the mission of developing and preserving a great library and making it freely available for research and understanding of our national history and culture. With confidence in the institution's past, they added strength to strengths. Out of concern for its future, they made difficult decisions and took bold initiatives. The Society's library is their remarkable legacy, and I am honored and greatly humbled to have been asked to take a turn as its steward.

Before coming to the Society last fall, I knew AAS chiefly by its reputation as a great research institution. I have spent my first months on the job, therefore, in familiarizing myself with the inner workings of the Society and in coming to a great appreciation of the many factors which have contributed to its greatness: the depth and breadth of its superbly crafted collection, the enthusiasm and dedication of its highly capable staff, and a standard of service to readers which is unmatched by any major research library today. As my tutors in this learning process, the Society's staff and Council have been not only supportive and encouraging,

but also exceedingly patient, explaining things to me as charitably the third time I asked as they did the first. For their many kindnesses, as well as for the warm welcome extended to me and to my family by the Society and the Worcester community, I am most grateful.

My heartiest thanks, however, are reserved for my predecessor Marcus McCorison. The paths for future progress and success for AAS have been solidly paved by his dedicated and determined hands. Each small step we now take is made possible by that which he laid down for us, and I want to take this occasion to publicly acknowledge what a privilege I feel to launch my little boat along the path of his powerful wake.

My 'on-the-job training' at the able hands of Marcus, the staff, and the Council, has included a comprehensive review of the Society's collections, programs, and administrative procedures. Thus it has afforded an opportunity for us all to reflect on the strengths and successes of the Society, to consider current needs and future possibilities, and to weigh carefully where our energies should next be directed. The world of libraries is changing rapidly today with the advent of computer networks and digital storage systems, and so we must take stock of these developments as well. We are asking many questions of ourselves, of our constituents, of consultants, and of colleagues from other educational and research institutions: 'How can we best insure the continued vitality and financial security of the Society?' 'Are its capital assets being wisely husbanded?' 'How active a role should AAS play in the development and adoption of new technologies for digitized preservation and access to its collections? for electronic publishing and scholarly communication?' 'Can we use these technologies, as well as broadcast media, to extend and multiply the breadth and scope of the Society's services without subjecting its irreplaceable collections to unwarranted wear and tear?'

Other questions we are confronting relate to the audience that the Society serves: 'How can AAS best relate to today's educational enterprises and needs, especially those in pre-collegiate educa-

tion?' 'How can we use our publications and programs to convey to contemporary audiences the vitality of the institution's historical mission and contemporary spirit?' 'Are there groups of readers whose needs are not being adequately served?' 'How can we most effectively reach potential readers who remain yet unaware of the resources the Society has to offer for their study?' And today we have asked each of you attending the semiannual meeting to share your thoughts on a question which has been of continuing concern to the Society's leadership: 'How can our modern-day need for financial support from every member be reconciled with our age-old method of membership election, whereby we have honored individuals from various walks of life (and of various philanthropic abilities or proclivities) whose interest in historical subjects parallel those of AAS?' Eager to hear your thoughts on these matters, let me bring my own to a quick conclusion.

As to the state of the Society, let me just flash two thumbs up. Acquisitions, readers' services, cataloguing, conservation continue at a lively clip. Through the first six months of the year, we have maintained the balance between our income (thanks as much to our generous contributors as to the stewardship of our investment advisors) and our expenses (to the credit of our provident staff). As you will see by the report appended, the Committee on Fellowships (Patricia Cline Cohen, Richard Crawford, Mason I. Lowance, Jr., Jackson Turner Main, and Lillian B. Miller) has made excellent appointments for the coming year, and has awarded a fellowship to a secondary school teacher for the first time. Our undergraduate American Studies Seminar on gender in nineteenth-century America was enthusiastically received by students and AAS staff alike. The Thomas Jefferson 250th-birthday observance at AAS is off to a very successful start, with standing room only for the first two events in our eight-lecture series. And, most importantly, the American Antiquarian Society continues to flourish as a lively and welcoming meeting ground for scholars and students from many disciplines, for independent and amateur historians, for filmmakers and writers, for teachers, and for all who

take interest and delight in exploring the history of our nation and its people. It is for them, and for the generations which will follow them, that I pledge my best efforts at maintaining the vitality and usefulness of the great institution which you have entrusted to my care.

Ellen S. Dunlap

1993-94 AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY FELLOWS

*American Antiquarian Society—  
National Endowment for the Humanities Fellows*

Wilson H. Kimmach, affiliate professor of English, Clark University, 'Literature of the Sermon in Eighteenth-Century America'; Bruce Laurie, professor of history, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, 'The Search for Security in Nineteenth-Century America'; Michael Winship, associate professor of English, University of Texas at Austin, 'The American Book in the Industrial Era.'

*Kate B. and Hall J. Peterson Fellows*

Molly W. Berger, Ph.D. candidate in history, Case Western Reserve University, 'The Modern Hotel in America, 1829-1929'; Martha Dennis Burns, Ph.D. candidate in history, Brown University, 'A Piano in the Parlor: Music and Gentility in America, 1790-1860'; Katherine A. Chavigny, Ph.D. candidate in history, University of Chicago, 'American Confessions: The Formation of Antebellum Addiction Narratives'; Russell Duncan, assistant professor of history, John Carroll University, 'Joshua Fights the Civil War: James Montgomery, "Bleeding Kansas," and Black Equality'; Kenneth Haltman, postdoctoral fellow in the history of art, Bryn Mawr College, 'The Invention of Ethnographic Portraiture'; Russell G. Handsman, independent scholar, Litchfield, Connecticut, 'Challenging the Silences in New England History: John Milton Earle and the Indian People of Massachusetts'; Jill Lepore, Ph.D.

candidate in American studies, Yale University, 'Commemorating Cruelty: Writing and Remembering King Philip's War, 1675-1976'; Scott A. Sandage, Ph.D. candidate in history, Rutgers University, 'Deadbeats, Drunkards, and Dreamers: The Problem of Failure in Nineteenth-Century America'; Janice Simon, assistant professor of art, University of Georgia, 'Woodland Meditations: The Forest Interior in American Painting, 1840-1900'; Barbara Wojtusik, English teacher, Bristol (Connecticut) Public Schools, 'The Somers Mutiny.'

*American Antiquarian Society-*

*American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Fellow*

Daniel E. Williams, associate professor and acting chair of English, University of Mississippi, 'The Theft of Authorship.'

*Stephen Botein Fellows*

David A. Rawson, Ph. D. candidate in history, College of William and Mary, 'The Print Distribution/Consumer Nexus in Piedmont Virginia, 1760-1810'; Grantland S. Rice, Ph. D. candidate in English and American literature, Brandeis University, 'The Transformation of Authorship in Early America.'

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