

## *Report of the Council*

IN my half century's experience in the affairs of this Society, I have never seen so much use of the Library as during the past summer. In addition to the regular run of customers, there have been an unusual number of historians, bibliographers, and serious researchers from various parts of the eastern United States. d'Alté Welch of Cleveland continued for three weeks to work on his bibliography of early children's books. The Reverend John A. Harrer, Librarian of the Congregational Library in Boston, paid us two visits working on his bibliography of "The Cambridge Platform." James M. Barriskill of South Byfield, Massachusetts, found here a greater assemblage of Newburyport printing to 1820. Irving Lowens of Washington examined for a fortnight our outstanding collection of early American songbooks preliminary to his check list on the subject which covers all the libraries of the country and which we soon hope to publish. It is a remarkable bibliography on a popular and much-studied subject. I am sure that the reason for the increased use of the Library during the past summer is the publication of several bibliographical works by the Society during recent years. The Director's *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers* in 1947 emphasized the preëminent status of the Society's early newspapers and produced a reference work, in two quarto volumes, that gave the Society a standing in the newspaper field that was unequalled. Mr. Shipton's volumes extending Evans and the microprint edition of American titles to the year 1800 emphasized the Library's outstanding collec-

tion of imprints and brought scores of scholars here to study them. Perhaps the most prominent publicity regarding the Society's collecting in many fields was the volume entitled *Fifty Years of Collecting Americana* published last fall. The scores of letters received, acknowledging the volume and often expressing surprise over the variety of our collections, invariably asked queries that resulted in lengthy correspondence. Nearly one thousand copies were sent to collectors, libraries, booksellers, and friends of the Society and acquainted scholars throughout the country with the extent and variety of our resources.

These visits overworked the staff in finding the numerous books required by these and other scholars. During Mr. Shipton's vacation in England, the Director was at the Library every day for the entire summer, even Saturdays and Sundays, and has yet to take a vacation. It reminded him of his early years, when the summer was always the period of hardest work for the staff.

During the past summer there were three saddening accidents to members of the staff. Albert G. Waite, in charge of manuscripts, stumbled over a metal drawer, and badly cut his leg, but fortunately the wound healed and he was spared the expected visit to the hospital. Miss Emma F. Waite, for many years a member of the staff and a constant visitor to the Library, caught her foot in a doormat and fell heavily, breaking her hip, and requiring a six weeks' stay in the hospital. Fortunately the injury was not permanent and she should be able to walk soon. One morning in August, Miss Louise Trowbridge of the Library's staff, was heavily struck by an automobile on Park Avenue, and was carried to the hospital with two broken ribs and a serious injury to her arm, but after two weeks she was discharged and will soon be back at work.

There have been three deaths in the membership since the April meeting, that of William Davis Miller of Wakefield, Rhode Island, on July 7, 1959, that of James Hazen Hyde of New York, on July 26, 1959, and that of Milo Milton Quaife of Detroit, on September 1, 1959.

The saddest event in my fifty years' period of administering the affairs of this Society was the death on February 23, 1959, of my secretary and Assistant Librarian of the Society, Mrs. Dorothea E. Spear. She was born in Worcester, the daughter of Walter B. and Emma L. Nourse, on January 5, 1900. After an early education at Bancroft and local schools, she entered Smith College from which she was graduated in 1922. The following year she taught French at the Bancroft School. In 1923 she became secretary to the Director of the Antiquarian Society and served in that position until her death, a period of nearly thirty-six years. She was appointed Assistant Librarian in 1954, and presumably would have become Librarian with the change of officers during the present year had she lived. She married Hadley Spear of Woodstock, Vermont, on January 29, 1937. She was survived by her husband.

Mrs. Spear's interests lay along the lines of reference and research, in which her skill and knowledge were extraordinary. She indexed on cards the correspondence of the Society for the letters from 1920 to 1958, forming a subject catalogue which was of constant use. The complicated indexes which fill three hundred pages of the Director's *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers* are typical of her careful work. She also carried out research of her own, compiling *American Watch Papers*, published in 1951, which evoked much interest from clock and watch collectors. Her greatest task was the preparation of a check list of all United States town and city directories, taking much of her time for the past nine years, and cover-

ing from 1785 through 1860. This compilation, listing over one thousand directories for 225 towns, will soon be published by the Antiquarian Society and will be of exceptional use to historians and researchers. Fortunately she had already written a comprehensive historical introduction on the publishing of directories, from the earliest period in England, and narrating the salient facts concerning directory publishing in the United States. For years we have, as a matter of course, turned over to Mrs. Spear a knotty core of mail inquiries demanding research, knowing that she could solve them if anyone could. Her friendship with members, her knowledge of bibliography and libraries, and her familiarity with the varied possessions of this Library, gave her especial ability in answering questions which perhaps would have been unsolved except for her knowledge. She was a member of the Library Council for the Smith College Library, a position where she was very useful and of which she was justly proud. Her friendly manner charmed researchers and her wide knowledge helped scholars as well as the staff.

The appeal for contributions to the Special Gifts Fund which is sent out each June was highly successful this year. We added to our income for the present fiscal year a total of \$16,191.31, more than we have ever received from members and friends of the Society in any previous year. It is true that \$3,280 was a special gift from a member of the Council, to pay the salary of one of the staff. Such support is not only very gratifying but is the sole reason why we are able to buy needed books and to pay other expenses. This was my final appeal as Director and President. I am sure that this support will continue in future years.

One of the most useful and time-consuming tasks which we have ever attempted, although we have long intended to do so, is the weeding of the correspondence, to keep only

those letters which are worth preserving. We first tackled the correspondence of 1958. Fully one-third of the file for that year was discarded, about 1,500 letters, ordering supplies, asking for books which were received, and genealogical queries of no particular importance. Then we began on the immense collection of letters from 1950 to 1957. This has progressed well into the alphabet, and thousands of letters have been discarded. This work of selection and throwing out the useless letters has been entrusted to Mrs. Ruth Merrill. It is a task which requires long experience with the work of the Society and careful judgment as to rejection. After the weeding out, all such rejected letters have been carefully examined by the Director, so that nothing will be thrown away that should be preserved. It is to the credit of Mrs. Merrill's judgment that almost none of her rejections have been saved.

The Library has had continued success during the last six months in acquiring new material to complete its collections. Many imprints before 1820 drifted our way. We were especially fortunate in obtaining two rare collections of Baltimore and West Virginia newspapers. All the details of such acquisitions will be handled in the Librarian's report.

I realize that this is the last time that I will preside over a meeting of this Society. I intend to retire both as President and Director at this annual meeting. I hope to continue, for a while at least, in a minor capacity as a member of the staff, primarily to finish for publication Mrs. Spear's bibliography of directories and to do whatever the new Director assigns me to do. I was elected a member of this Society in 1905, fifty-four years ago. Every person who was a member in that year has passed away, the last being John M. Merriam of Framingham, who died in his ninety-seventh year last January. Every year of this period of

service has been enjoyable to me. In fact I wouldn't have known what to do if I didn't have the Library to go to. My health through all these years has been excellent. Lack of vision and deafness, with which many older men are afflicted, have never affected me. Last year in August I underwent a serious and unexpected operation which fortunately was completely successful, although it took me three months to regain my strength and be restored to normal. The duty of raising funds to carry on the work of the Society has always been in my thoughts, and members and friends have been very generous. I hope to continue to be of service to the Society, which I love. I wish it progress and prosperity for all time to come.

Respectfully submitted,

CLARENCE S. BRIGHAM,

*For the Council*

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