

## REPORT OF LIBRARIAN

**I**N VIEW of the numerous accessions of the past year, it is fortunate that the addition to the stack was finished before 1925. Through gifts and purchase an unusually large amount of printed material has been added to the Library, nearly all of it fortunately strengthening collections in which we specialize. Expressed in tabular form, the total is as follows:

Bound volumes	3821
Pamphlets	3755
Engravings, broadsides and maps	1137
Unbound newspapers	5120

The number of bound volumes now in the Library is 156,220, and of pamphlets 240,635, a total of nearly 400,000 titles.

During the year the collections have gradually been shifted to make the best use of the additions to the shelf space. At the time of the writing of the last annual report, the newspapers, periodicals and government documents had been rearranged. Since then the remainder of the books have been relocated. The Civil War, Spanish-American and Bibliography Collections have been placed in the stack, and the rapidly growing collection of State and local history now occupies both wings on either side of the main hall. In the stack, the collections of State documents, school-books, college material, directories, music and psalmody have been shifted to allow for future growth.

A considerable part of the accessions of the year has come from certain members who send regularly to the Library all printed material which they acquire. It is from the donations of Chief Justice Rugg, President Lincoln, Mr. Grenville H. Norcross, Mr. Henry W

Cunningham, Mr. Charles H. Taylor, Mr. Charles G. Washburn and Mr. Nathaniel T. Kidder that we obtain hundreds of printed reports and pamphlets needed to complete our files. Rev. Herbert E. Lombard also favors the Library in this way, and in addition sent us 147 volumes and 62 pamphlets which we needed when he disposed of a large part of his own private library at Webster.

Among the special gifts may be noted a fine file of the Proceedings of the United States Naval Institute from 1877 to 1925 from Ira N. Hollis; a collection of Protestant Episcopal pamphlet reports and periodicals from Rev. Charles L. Short; a file of Massachusetts town reports from John C. L. Clark; a large collection of Worcester material from Joseph S. Wesby & Sons; several files of American art periodicals from Thomas Hovey Gage; and a complete file of the Civil Service Record 1881-1893 from William V. Kellen. From Mr. Samuel M. Conant has come an important collection of early manuscripts relating to Dudley and surrounding towns. Through the kindness of Mr. Charles E. Goodspeed we have enabled to acquire 335 "Juveniles" and 76 literary annuals, constituting an excellent addition to collections already strong.

The gifts from Mr. Charles H. Taylor have been increasingly valuable. Hundreds of volumes and pamphlets relating to American printing and journalism, important newspaper files, early railroad reports, recent books of historical interest, and scores of maps, lithographs and engravings. Among his manuscript gifts is a collection of 400 letters written to D. C. Heath from 1876 to 1898, many by well known writers and public men, and an annotated copy of P. K. Foley's invaluable Bibliography of American Authors, with numerous manuscript notes and additions of titles.

Through the generosity of Mrs. Arthur J. Hillman of Jamaica, Long Island, the Society has received two additions to its collection of early American painting—the portraits of the artist Winthrop Chandler and his

wife, who was Mary Gleason. Mrs. Hillman presents the pictures to the Society in memory of her mother, Mrs. Jacob Hicks Stark, who as Mary Gleason Chandler was a great-great-granddaughter of Winthrop Chandler. These two fine pictures were secured for the Society through the kindly offices of Mr. Clarence W. Bowen, whose interest in our collection of portraits has been manifested before.

More files have been added to the newspaper collection this past year than ever before in its history. They represent all the States along the Atlantic seaboard, several of the Western and Southern States, and also the West Indies and South America. Among the more interesting files secured are the Annapolis "Maryland Gazette" 1774-1775, the "Maryland Journal" 1782, 1789-1791, the Newport "Companion" 1798-1799, the Warren "Herald of the United States" 1796-1799, the Fredericksburg "Virginia Herald" 1796-1798, the Easton, Penn. "People's Instructor" 1810-1811, the "Richmond Enquirer" 1812-1813, the "Alexandria Herald" 1813-1814, the Hallowell, Me. "American Advocate" 1813-1817, the Paris, Ky. "Western Citizen" 1814-1816, the Lexington "Western Monitor" 1819-1820, the Louisville "Public Advertiser" 1820-1822, the Dover "Enquirer" 1828-1871, the Charlestown "Bunker Hill Aurora" 1841-1870, the Concord "Independent Democrat" 1845-1868, the Boston "Yankee Blade" 1846-1856, and the Bermuda "Royal Gazette" 1850-1882. Most of these files have been secured through exchange or purchase, and it is here fitting to record our indebtedness to Mr. Henry W. Cunningham and Mr. Charles H. Taylor for special gifts in this connection. The following list of files acquired does not include imperfect or scattering lots, of which there were many, or newspapers currently received:

PORTLAND, EASTERN ARGUS, 1806

PORTLAND TRANSCRIPT, 1843, 1883-1902

HALLOWELL, AMERICAN ADVOCATE, 1813-1817.

GARDNER, ME., CHRISTIAN INTELLIGENCER, 1827-1831  
NORTH YARMOUTH, CHRISTIAN PILOT, 1835-1836  
AUGUSTA, GOSPEL BANNER, 1845-1846  
AUGUSTA, MAINE FARMER, 1847-1849  
WISCASSET, SEASIDE ORACLE, 1874-1877  
PARIS, ME., OXFORD DEMOCRAT, 1875-1885  
MOUNT DESERT HERALD, 1881-1891  
CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE STATESMAN, 1823-1824  
DOVER, ENQUIRER, 1828-1871  
PORTSMOUTH, EVENING COURIER, 1832  
CONCORD, CONGREGATIONAL JOURNAL, 1843-1862  
CONCORD, INDEPENDENT DEMOCRAT, 1845-1868  
CONCORD, PEOPLE, 1868-1878  
BOSTON, MEDICAL NEWSPAPER, 1822  
BOSTON, NEW ENGLAND ARTISAN, 1832-1834  
BOSTON, YANKEE BLADE, 1846-1856  
BOSTON, NEW ENGLAND PURITAN, 1844-1849  
BOSTON, SATURDAY RAMBLER, 1849  
BOSTON, COMMONWEALTH, 1852  
BOSTON, FLAG OF OUR UNION, 1854  
BOSTON DAILY NEWS, 1870-1872  
BOSTON NEWS, 1891-1893  
NEW BEDFORD MERCURY, 1828-1830  
AMESBURY, CHRONICLE, 1833  
AMESBURY, MORNING COURIER, 1835-1839  
CHARLESTOWN, BUNKER HILL AURORA, 1841-1870  
WALTHAM SENTINEL, 1860-1867  
NORTHAMPTON FREE PRESS, 1861-1865  
READING CHRONICLE, 1909-1915  
NEWPORT COMPANION, 1798-1799  
WARREN, HERALD OF U. S., 1796-1799  
WARREN GAZETTE, 1866-1870  
WARREN, NORTH STAR, 1850-1855  
WARREN, TELEGRAPH, 1859-1861  
ALBANY ARGUS, 1826  
BROOKLYN NEWS, 1842-1843  
NEW YORK, COURRIER DES ÉTATS-UNIS, 1854-1858  
NEW YORK, STANDARD, 1887-1889  
PHILADELPHIA, AURORA, 1801, 1802, 1804  
PHILADELPHIA, DOLLAR NEWSPAPER, 1845-1847  
EASTON, PENN., PEOPLE'S INSTRUCTOR, 1810-1811  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND GAZETTE, 1774-1775  
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND JOURNAL, 1782, 1789-1791  
FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA HERALD, 1796-1798  
RICHMOND STANDARD, 1878-1882  
RICHMOND ENQUIRER, 1812-1813  
ALEXANDRIA HERALD, 1813-1814

PARIS, KY., WESTERN CITIZEN, 1814-1816  
 LEXINGTON, WESTERN MONITOR, 1819-1820  
 LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY REPORTER, 1826-1829  
 LOUISVILLE, PUBLIC ADVERTISER, 1820-1822  
 LOUISVILLE WEEKLY COURIER, 1868-1869  
 FRANKFORT COMMENTATOR, 1826-1828  
 MAYSVILLE, KY., EAGLE, 1828  
 CHARLESTON, CITY GAZETTE, 1799  
 CHARLESTON, S. C., STATE GAZETTE, 1799  
 BRUNSWICK TELEGRAPH, 1860-1876  
 NEW ORLEANS, WEEKLY PICAYUNE, 1846-1848  
 BERMUDA, ROYAL GAZETTE, 1850-1882  
 CARACAS, EL PATRIOTA, 1848-1849

One of the most noteworthy gifts that has ever been made to this library is the collection of American almanacs presented by Samuel Lyman Munson of Albany, N. Y. This collection came to us about six months ago and in this interval hundreds of hours have been spent in comparing his copies with ours. We already had a collection of 10,500 American almanacs, perhaps the largest collection in the country. Mr. Munson, who has been known for over twenty years as one of the most zealous of American collectors, had acquired a collection of almanacs which ranked with ours in the earlier period and in the later period surpassed it. He generously offered to allow us to take over his collection, compare all his copies with ours, and take out whatever we needed. As a result we have obtained a total of 3782 American almanacs, comprising 221 issues before 1800, 1324 between 1800 and 1850, and 2337 between 1850 and 1925. Added to this total are 1400 English almanacs dating from 1614 to 1783, forming one of the most important and comprehensive existing collections. It could well be the subject of a special report.

So many rare issues have been obtained that it is difficult to particularize with titles. Eighteen of the Franklin almanacs, including the Poor Richards and the Franklin Pocket Almanacs have been added. The Leeds Almanacs of New York for 1696, 1711, 1715, 1725 and 1736, and of Philadelphia for 1726 and 1737 are

especially rare issues. Our Whittemore series has been rendered practically complete by the addition of the issues of 1716, 1718, 1720, 1724 and 1725. Other rare almanacs are "Poor Job" for 1754 published at Newport, eight of the Revolutionary issues of Bickerstaff and Weatherwise published at Boston, and four issues of "Gaine's New York Pocket Almanack." Probably the gem of the entire collection is Samuel Brakenbury's Almanac for 1667, printed at Cambridge by Samuel Green, and containing manuscript annotations by Chief Justice Samuel Sewall. In a note laid in between the leaves of this rare issue Sewall records the fact that his Excellency Thomas Lord Culpeper, Governor General of Virginia, came to Boston "incognito" August 24, 1680. Among the nineteenth century issues are a remarkable file of "Miller's Planters' and Merchants' Almanac" of Charleston from 1818 to 1880, and the rare "North-Western Liberty Almanac" of Chicago for 1846, 1847 and 1848.

In many ways this gift might be called one of the most important bibliographical happenings of recent years, for the opportunity to compare ten thousand examples of American printing, with all their variations of type, names of printers and differences in contents, is not often granted. The labor of this comparison has been entirely performed by myself, partly because I was already interested in almanacs, but chiefly because I wished the experience of familiarizing myself with this great mass of early American printing. As a result of all this labor and since the theme is worthy of it, I have thought best to devote the major part of this report to a summary of the entire subject, which might be called "An Account of American Almanacs and their Value for Historical Study."

The literature of almanacs is considerable. In addition to such bibliographical works as the Library of Congress Checklist of Almanacs before 1800, Wall's List of New York Almanacs, and the Checklists of Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode

Island issues written by Messrs. Nichols, Bates and Chapin, there are sizeable volumes on Nathaniel Ames by Sam. Briggs, on Franklin's Almanacs by Paul Leicester Ford and on the Old Farmer's Almanacs by George L. Kittredge, not to mention numerous articles on the subject in magazines and the proceedings of learned societies. But most of these treatises concern the early almanacs, primarily those before 1800. They are of value chiefly to the bibliographer and the student of early American printing. It is true that almanacs are of the highest typographical import. No publication, excepting the newspaper, illustrates more clearly and consecutively the history of printing in any town, for nearly every printing firm issued an almanac and the time of its appearance was regular and certain.

Furthermore, the almanacs of the earlier period have incited especial study because they had a greater influence over the lives of the people. The "Almanach de France" for 1845 stated "Fifteen millions of French people learn only by the almanacs the destinies of Europe, the laws of their country, the progress of the sciences, the arts and industry. Almanacs are the village library. It is therefore important to give them a practical usefulness which shall satisfy the daily needs of the common people." This was similarly true in colonial America. The Bible and the almanac were the only reading matter in many a household. Joseph T. Buckingham in his *Memoirs*<sup>1</sup> records his childhood indebtedness to a fifty-year file of almanacs preserved by his family. "These periodicals I read often," he said, "and with never-relaxing interest. They contained many fragments of history, scraps of poetry, anecdotes, epigrams, &c. One of them had a long poetical account of Braddock's Defeat. Others contained accounts of events which led to the Revolutionary War. . . . The Articles of Confederation between the colonies, Petitions to the King, the

<sup>1</sup>"Personal Memoirs," 1852, vol. 1, p. 20.

Declaration of Independence, and many other papers connected with the history and politics of the country, were preserved in these useful annuals, and afforded me ample food for study."

There is no doubt that the early almanacs played an effective part in moulding the morals of the people. The exhortations to frugality, temperance, industry, piety and upright living must have had a permanent influence, especially when expressed in phrases that pleased the ear and caught the memory. The use of proverbs interspersed with weather prognostications under the headings of the calendar months seems to have started late in the seventeenth century, the advice regarding morals being the natural outgrowth of advice regarding planting and the performance of household duties. Both Daniel and Titan Leeds were among the first to write such sayings. "Passion runs through all languages" and "It is a bad Devil that does no good" occur in the Titan Leeds issue for 1718 and "He danceth well, to whom Fortune pipeth" in 1728. Nathaniel Whittemore, in his almanacs after 1713, inserted many clever proverbs, although the best of them were borrowed from the sixteenth century proverbs of John Heywood. Nathaniel Ames, whose almanacs were the "best sellers" in New England for a half century preceding the Revolution, was not as much given to proverbs as to poetry. It remained for Franklin to popularize the proverb and many of his epigrams such as "God helps them that help themselves" and "Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise," first appeared so worded in the Poor Richard almanacs. He also made his readers familiar with the earlier English proverbs, which doubtless became more prevalent in current speech in America than in the land of their origin.

Robert B. Thomas, whose *Farmer's Almanac* was the most popular of all early nineteenth century issues, inculcated moral precepts in the minds of his readers more by allegory than by proverbs. His diatribe



against the telling of idle rumors takes the form of a humorous description of a village gossip whom he calls "Old Betty Blab." All the characters in his little moral dramas have names suited to their failings, such as "Ben Bluster," "Captain Swash," "Goody Shipshod," and "Tabitha Twistem." One of his most telling fables and one not without literary merit was that of "Neighbor Freeport" who liked good-fellowship and grog so much that he fell into the clutches of the "Widow Nippet," "Captain Gripe" and "Old Screw-penny," and died an outcast, a vagabond and a drunkard.

The eighteenth century almanacs, although interspersed with bits of wit and wisdom, were primarily useful for their astronomical information. They also gave the records of the Courts and of the general religious meetings, and printed the list of roads, distances between towns and names of tavern-keepers. But early in the nineteenth century their scope began to widen and their statistical lists became of much more value for reference. The "National Calendar," published by Peter Force from 1820 to 1836, contained a history of all the departments of the national government with lists of officers, army, navy, and post-office lists, and summaries of governmental reports. The "American Almanac," begun in 1830 and continued until 1861, with a subsequent series from 1878 to 1889, included detailed astronomical information, selections regarding agriculture and planting of crops, facts concerning foreign countries, statistical tables and statements respecting the United States and all the State Governments, with lists of railroads, canals, colleges and religious denominations, and an annual chronicle of events. It was an abridged yearly cyclopaedia of national activities and is today a work of high reference value.

In the forepart of the nineteenth century almanacs began to be devoted to special subjects, representing some national organization or movement or designed

to participate in some social question then in controversy. Among the earliest of these special almanacs were those relating to masonry. Outside of a sporadic issue by Samuel Stearns at New York in 1793 of "The Free-Mason's Calendar," with masonic history and a list of lodges, the first of these was "Hardcastle's Annual Masonic Register" for 1812 published at New York and continued as late as 1824. This was followed by the "Masonic and Citizens' Almanac" for 1813, Philadelphia, including masonic songs and a list of lodges in the United States, and the "Gentleman's Pocket Register, and Free-Masons Annual Anthology" for 1813, published by John Lathrop at Boston, a work of 252 pages. The year 1828 witnessed the outcry against masonry, as a result of the abduction of William Morgan, and at Rochester in that year appeared "The Anti-Masonic Almanac," by Edward Giddins. This was published until 1833, in which latter year it was an elaborate pamphlet of 72 pages. Also at Boston appeared "The New England Anti-Masonic Almanac" from 1829 to 1835, and at Philadelphia, "The Sun Anti-Masonic Almanac" from 1831 to 1833 and "Allyn's Anti-Masonic Almanac" for 1832.

Agricultural Almanacs were started in 1816 in Connecticut and in 1817 in Pennsylvania, in each case being promoted by the State Agricultural Societies; also in 1821 in New York under the patronage of the State Board of Agriculture. All almanacs had previously contained directions for planting, but these were especially devoted to the distribution of agricultural information and to the communication of experiences in husbandry.

In 1817 at Boston appeared the first of the medical almanacs, entitled "The Physician's Almanac," containing rules for general health and remedies for sickness. In 1824 came the first number of "The New-York Medical Almanac," a more ambitious effort, with directions for health, household remedies and the

announcement of the award of nine medals for the discovery of a cure for certain diseases such as consumption, yellow fever, erysipelas and rheumatism. It is noticeable that no subsequent issue mentioned the award of any of these medals, although the editor featured a cure for chapped lips which was "infallible." This was followed in 1832 by "Porter's Health Almanac," published at Philadelphia by the editor of "The Journal of Health" and containing 80 pages given over to medical matters; and in 1839 by "The American Medical Almanac," published at Boston by J. V. C. Smith, M.D. Dr. Smith's second issue was a work of 152 pages, with lists of medical societies, colleges and hospitals and a formulary of prescriptions for physicians and apothecaries. In 1844 came the first of the almanacs published commercially by firms advertising patent medicines—"Bristol's Free Almanac," by Bristol's Sarsaparilla Company of Buffalo. This was the precursor of a swarm of patent medicine almanacs such as Ayer's, begun in 1855 and still issued, with the credit of having in some years published its almanac in fifteen different languages; also Herrick's and Hostetter's, each with a record of over half a century of publication.

Nearly all of the early almanacs were highly religious in tone, but they were not official, so in 1821 appeared "The Christian Almanac" published at Boston for the New England Tract Society and containing lists of Bible, Foreign Missions and Religious Tract Societies and general religious news. It was later published by the American Tract Society and was reprinted in many States throughout the country. For twenty years probably no almanac in America had so large a circulation.

The almanacs issued by the various church denominations have always been of value for the study of ecclesiastical history. The Baptists were the first in the field, with "The Baptist Almanac for the Middle States" for 1820, printed at Philadelphia and containing some account of missionary enterprises. "The

United States Baptist Annual Register and Almanac" was published in 1832 and 1833, and "The Triennial Baptist Register" in 1836; but it was not until 1841 that a regular series began, when "The Almanac and Baptist Register" was issued by the American Baptist Publication Society, with tables of Baptist associations and institutions in the United States. This became the "American Baptist Year Book" in 1868, since when the list of ordained ministers was included. In 1852 appeared a single issue of the "American Baptist Register," a large volume with valuable histories of the churches and lists of the clergy.

"The Methodist Almanac" for 1827, Boston, contained a list of Methodist missions, but was not issued again. In 1834 "The Methodist Almanac" came out as an official publication of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which useful work became the "Methodist Year Book" in 1880.

The Protestant Episcopal Tract Society issued "The Churchman's Almanac" at New York in 1830, with accounts of Episcopal institutions and the list of the clergy. "The Protestant Episcopal Almanac," better known as "Whittakers Almanac," was begun in 1854. Both these almanacs were later consolidated with "The Living Church Annual," which is the official statistical annual of the Episcopal Church.

The other denominations soon started almanacs or registers. "The Metropolitan Catholic Almanac," with an account of American churches, colleges and societies and a list of the clergy, was begun at Baltimore in 1833. The "Universalist Register and Almanac," with an historical account of each church and a clergy list, was begun at New York in 1836. This became "The Universalist Companion" in 1841 and "The Universalist Register" in 1864. "The Presbyterian Almanac" was first published at Philadelphia in 1845, by the Presbyterian Board of Publication. This was called "The Presbyterian Family Almanac" in 1852. Because of a division in the church, the "New

School" party started "The American Presbyterian Almanac" in 1856, the two series running at the same time. In 1859 appeared the first issue of "The Presbyterian Historical Almanac," a valuable work with histories of the churches, clergy lists and biographies. "The Congregational Almanac," containing the table of churches and names of ministers, was started in 1846, and became "The Congregational Year-Book" in 1854. "The Unitarian Annual Register," including lists of churches, ministers and societies, was begun in 1846 and was called Year Book in 1856.

The almanacs for mechanics are worthy of mention for little more than the name. "The Mechanics' Almanac" for 1825, by Benjamin Badger, published at Boston, contained only an article on "The Utility of Mechanic Arts." It is interesting chiefly since it omits all references to astrology and the foretelling of the weather, although the editor states that "he knows as much about it as any man." "The United States Working Man's Almanack" for 1831, published by the editors of the "Working-Man's Advocate," gives a long account of working conditions in Europe and America. The "Mechanics' Almanac and Calculator" for 1837, Hartford, prints tables of board and timber measure. "The American Mechanics' and Manufacturers' Almanac" for 1845, New York, published under the patronage of the Mechanics' Institute, contains notes on the mechanic arts, factory systems and sketches of the various Mechanics' Institutes.

The temperance movement brought forth a grist of almanacs. The first of these was "Green's Anti-Intemperance Almanac" for 1831, published at New London, and containing poems and anecdotes regarding the evils of hard drinking. Then followed the "Temperance Almanac" for 1832, Rochester; "The United States Temperance Almanac" for 1832, published at New York by Charles C. P. Crosby; the "Temperance Calendar" for 1832, published at Sandy Hill, N. Y., by S. P. Hines; "The Temperance Alma-

nac" for 1833, New Haven, with a history of the temperance movement in the United States; the "Temperance Almanac" for 1834, issued by the New York State Temperance Society; and "The Temperance Family Almanac" for 1835, Boston, stating that there were 7000 temperance societies in the United States, which publication in 1839 was taken over by the Massachusetts Temperance Union. Most of these almanacs contain graphic wood-cuts showing the results of intoxication which are suggestive of Hogarth's drawing. A movement akin to temperance was that started in the North for the freeing of slaves. In 1836 appeared "The American Anti-Slavery Almanac" published at Boston and transferred to New York in 1839.

Other special almanacs appearing before 1850 had to do with phrenology, music and angling. The "Phrenological Almanac" for 1840, published at New York, by L. N. Fowler, contained an elaborate exposition of the Fowler system, embellished with cuts of the heads of famous people, and was continued until 1875. "The Musical Almanac" for 1842 was published at Boston, with articles on music, the history of national songs and the score of several new tunes. "The American Musical Almanac" appeared in New York in 1852, containing lives of such American musicians as Lowell Mason and Thomas Hastings. Each almanac claimed to be the first of the kind attempted in the country. "The Angler's Almanac" was published at New York in 1848 and 1849, with anecdotes of fishing and information for anglers.

A notable class of almanacs which had an enormous circulation and must have been a relief from the earlier statistical and moralizing annuals, were the comic almanacs. The first of these was "The American Comic Almanac" published at Boston by Charles Ellms, in 1831, containing jokes and crude comic pictures. It immediately caught the popular fancy and was followed by a host of imitators—"The Comic

Token" and "Broad Grins" in 1832; "The American Comic Annual" in 1833, "Elton's Comic All-My-Nack" in 1834, "Finn's Comic Almanac" in 1835, and many others. In Tennessee in 1835 was started "Davy Crockett's Almanack of Wild Sports of the West, and Life in the Backwoods." Crockett died in 1836, and the almanac was published successively by his heirs and then by "Ben. Harding," until in 1839, it was taken over by the firm of Turner & Fisher of New York and continued until 1856. The stories and jokes were in Yankee dialect, the woodcut illustrations were crude and the narrative the tallest exposition of lying that ever graced a humorous publication. As Crockett said in his first preface: "I can run faster, jump higher, squat lower, dive deeper, stay longer under, and come out drier, than any man in the whole country." Fisher also published "Fisher's Comic Almanac" from 1845 to 1856, printing his issues with New York, Philadelphia and Boston imprints. The comic almanacs lasted nearly to the Civil War and foreshadowed the trend of American humor for half a century to come.

It is strange that so little of value for the study of colonial history is found in eighteenth century almanacs. Nathaniel Ames in his Almanacs for 1756, 1758 and 1763 wrote short accounts of the history and present state of the colonies, and Roger Sherman in his Almanac for 1760 in an article entitled "Good News for New-England" gave an account of the reduction of Quebec by General Wolfe. "Father Abraham's Almanack," Philadelphia from 1759 to 1761 contained historical accounts of the campaigns in Canada, with wood-cut plans of the forts and towns. The addresses to his readers by Nathaniel Low from 1775 to 1777 were stirring appeals in behalf of the cause of liberty. But not until well into the nineteenth century did the almanacs begin to be of particular value to the historian. Cramer's "Pittsburgh Magazine Almanack" from 1807 to 1816 includes several valuable articles

relating to early Western history—"A Tour to the Red River and to Hot Springs," "Western Emigration," "Pike's Voyage to the Mississippi," "Historical Account of Pittsburgh," and "Manufactures of the Western Country." The "American Naval Almanac" for 1815 contains accounts of naval battles of the late War, with full-page woodcuts of American ships.

The campaign almanacs from 1830 to 1860 are useful for the study of contemporary politics: "Applegate's Whig Almanac" New York, 1835, filled with political gossip and poetry, and "embellished" with fifty engravings; "The Tippecanoe and Log Cabin Almanac" New York, 1841, with sketches and pictures of Gen. William Henry Harrison, Whig candidate for the presidency; "The Harrison Almanac" New York, 1841, issued to exalt the life and deeds of General Harrison; "The Henry Clay Almanac" Philadelphia, 1844, with biography, songs and anecdotes of Clay; "The Clay and Frelinghuysen Almanac" New York, 1845, giving one hundred reasons why Clay should be elected President; "Gen. Taylor's Rough and Ready Almanac" Philadelphia, 1848, with anecdotes of the Mexican War; "The Cass and Butler Almanac" Philadelphia, 1849, with sketches of the Democratic candidates for President and Vice-president; "The Free-Soil Almanac" Rochester, 1849, devoted to the election of Van Buren and Adams; "The North Western Free-Soil Almanac," Chicago, 1849, filled with arguments against General Taylor and his influence; and "The Know Nothing Almanac," New York, 1855, an anti-Catholic publication issued to support the cause of the Know Nothing party in the campaign of 1856.

The leading political almanacs, however, were "The Whig Almanac" and "The Democrat's Almanac." Although there was an almanac with the title of "The Whig Almanac" published in New York for 1835, the first regular issue was "The Whig Almanac, and Politician's Register" for 1838, published by Horace



Greeley, called "The Politician's Register" from 1839 to 1841, "The Whig Almanac" from 1843 to 1855, and "The Tribune Almanac" from 1856 on. "The Democrat's Almanac and Political Register" began at New York in 1839, was continued to 1843 and revived for one year in 1848. These two almanacs gave election returns and expounded the principles of their respective parties. The Tribune issue became the oldest of the newspaper almanacs, which today are the leading almanacs of the country. The Albany "Evening Journal Almanac" began in 1858, "The World Almanac" in 1868, the Philadelphia "Public Ledger Almanac" in 1870, the Hartford "Courant Almanac" in 1873, the Albany "Argus Almanac" in 1874, the "Baltimore Sun Almanac" in 1876, the "Chicago Daily News Almanac" in 1885, the "Brooklyn Daily Eagle Almanac" in 1886, and the "Providence Journal Almanac" in 1887.

Many critics are wont to think disparagingly of the literary value of almanacs. But until American literature first became so recognized, a decade or two after the Revolution, it is doubtful if any body of material would be so fruitful for research as the almanacs. Every year in numerous localities these annuals were printing contributions of wit or poetry or essays—little of it good and most of it strikingly bad, but occasionally a flash of native genius worthy of more permanent surroundings. Franklin's famous "Poor Richard" series has been studied to the exclusion of most of his competitors. His poetry is labored, and there is little question but that his literary fame rests mostly on his Proverbs and his Autobiography. Titan Leeds frequently wrote a verse of good poetry, for instance in his 1737 "American Almanack" printed at Philadelphia:

Ye Britons, who the Fruit of Commerce find,  
How is your Isle a Debtor to the Wind,  
Which thither wafts Arabia's fragrant Spoils,  
Gemms, Pearls and Spices from the Indian Isles.

From Persia Silks, Wines from Iberia's Shore,  
 Peruvian Drugs, and Guinea's Golden Oar?  
 Delights and Wealth to fair Augusta flow  
 From ev'ry Region whence the Winds can blow.

Nathaniel Ames, whose almanacs were the standard in New England from 1726 until his death in 1764, wrote considerable poetry of vigorous and imaginative quality, especially in his descriptions of the seasons. His Almanac for 1743 has this verse to illustrate the rigors of December:

But when the angry Surge begins to rage,  
 And thro' the boundless Waste, the Tempests roar,  
 O Gracious God, do thou their Wrath asswage,  
 And bid the frightning Whirlwinds storm no more.  
 Let gentle Pity flow within thy Breast,  
 Oh, Chear his melting Soul, and give the wearied  
 Sailor rest.

There are sufficient poems in American almanacs to make a sizeable anthology. It is impossible to give many more illustrations, but a poem in Bioren's Almanac for 1819, entitled "Life's Likeness," seems particularly beautiful, as is instanced by the first three of its nine verses:

Life is—what!  
 It is the shooting of a star,  
 That gleams along the trackless air,  
 And vanishes, almost ere seen, to naught,  
 And such is man—  
 He shines and flutters for a span,  
 And is forgot.

Life is—what?  
 It is the vermeil of the rose,  
 That blooms but till the bleak wind blows,  
 Then, all entombed, in sweets, doth fade and rot.  
 And such is man—  
 He struts in bravery for a span,  
 And is forgot.

Life is—what?  
It is the dew drop of the morn,  
That quiv'ring, hangs upon the thorn,  
Till quaff'd by sun-beams, 'tis no longer aught.  
And such is man—  
He's steep'd in sorrow for a span,  
And melts, forgot.

Well known writers occasionally contributed to American almanacs, or at least their productions were reprinted. The famous Parson Weems contributed his "Hymen's Recruiting Serjeant" to the "Virginia Almanac" for 1800, which rare publication was printed at Fredericksburg expressly for the bookseller divine. Fessenden's poem "Jonathan's Courtship" appeared in Beers' "Farmer's Almanack" Kingston, 1805. Willis and Whittier were frequent favorites with later almanac compilers. The "Atlantic Almanac" from 1868 to 1874 was a repository of the best in American prose and poetry.

The use of almanacs has been responsible for the preservation of a great mass of manuscript material relating to the lives of the early colonists. Thousands of diaries, with all their details of social and economic affairs, have come down to us, interleaved between the pages of the lowly almanac. Of the fifteen hundred diaries previous to the year 1800 recorded in Mrs. W.T. Forbes admirable book on "New England Diaries," fully half are in interleaved almanacs. Keeping a diary, or daily chronology of important events, was a prevalent failing in the colonial period, and the almanac was a convenient excuse for it. In fact the mere presence of that valued little annual often tempted the owner to indulge in writing down the record of daily happenings, and many a dairy begun only as a chronicle of unusual manifestations of the weather blossomed into a narrative of considerable historical value. Furthermore, the fact that such records were concealed within a printed pamphlet accounts for so many of them having been saved.

In conclusion, there is no better statement regarding the value and usefulness of almanacs than is to be found in Moses Coit Tyler's "History of American Literature."<sup>1</sup>

"No one who would penetrate to the core of early American literature, and would read in it the secret history of the people in whose minds it took root and from whose minds it grew, may by any means turn away, in lofty literary scorn, from the almanac—most despised, most prolific, most indispensable of books, which every man uses, and no man praises; the very quack, clown, pack-horse, and pariah of modern literature, yet the one universal book of modern literature; the supreme and only literary necessity even in households where the Bible and the newspaper are still undesired or unattainable luxuries."

In this connection an exhibit of important almanacs has been installed in the cases in the exhibition hall. A list of eighty-seven almanacs has been prepared, almost entirely by Dr. Charles L. Nichols, whose knowledge of the subject is second to none and whose aid was most gratefully accepted. The list will accompany this report and will also be separately printed.

Respectfully submitted,

CLARENCE S. BRIGHAM,  
*Librarian*

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<sup>1</sup>Edition of 1878, vol. 2, p. 120.

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