

## REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

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LITTLE has happened in the affairs of the Society during the past six months to call for extended comment. Our income has decreased slightly, due to the calling of bonds and the reinvestment of the proceeds in securities paying somewhat less interest, but that is an experience common to all educational and charitable institutions. Presumably the income will be restored if that long deferred period of prosperity ever returns. Fortunately occasional gifts or bequests help to enlarge our principal. The Nathaniel T. Kidder bequest of \$5000 has been paid in and set up as a separate fund. Also the support of the Carnegie Corporation, which this year is making a grant of \$3000, is a source of continued encouragement.

The use of the Library steadily increases, as new acquisitions make larger and more varied collections available, and a wider knowledge of our resources brings more students to our doors. Recent accessions have included many rare, unusual volumes, especially in the field of early newspapers. Several early Kentucky and Ohio files have been acquired, notably files of Cincinnati papers from 1799 to 1817. Other Western files represent the Pacific coast, in newspapers published at San Francisco and at Union, California, before the Civil War. Details as to the titles and dates of these files will await the Librarian's Report at the annual meeting.

Undoubtedly the Society's prominence in the field of collecting newspapers, which has existed since Isaiah Thomas sought material of this kind a century and a quarter ago, has helped to bring quotations of newspapers to us. Furthermore, the publication in the

Proceedings of the Bibliography of American Newspapers, 1691-1820, has spread the prestige of the Society generally throughout the country and induced libraries to offer us their duplicates, and private owners their possessions. This Bibliography was begun in 1913 and finished in 1927, for its tentative or preliminary publication. During the last ten years I have given most of my spare time outside of library hours to re-editing the Bibliography, and have so far finished about two-thirds of the revision, covering the States from Alabama through New York.

In the revision, the historical accounts of each newspaper have been developed and all files located have been listed in detail, whereas in the earlier printing such files were only generally described with inclusive dates. This relisting of imperfect files has taken a great amount of time, but is advisable, since it will tell researchers exactly what a library possesses. A few large libraries have greatly increased their holdings in the past twenty years and many small libraries have been found to possess newspaper files not hitherto suspected.

As a result of this increased labor of compilation and enlarged plan of operation, many new titles have been discovered and a vast number of new holdings have been recorded. In the two-thirds so far completed, 1040 newspapers have been listed and 21 new titles discovered. This means that the total bibliography will include about 1500 newspapers, with a record of about 8000 printers. The total number of libraries consulted will amount to nearly 1000. The total number of files recorded in various libraries will probably reach 15,000, and the number of individual issues well into the millions. A comprehensive index of titles and names of printers will be a useful and long desired aid to research.

One of the most difficult problems in the revision is to trace the location of newspapers possessed by private owners. Of the several files privately owned

and recorded by me twenty-five years ago, fully one-third has completely disappeared, either lost or destroyed or the present location unknown after the death of the original owners. While I don't object to individual owners possessing rare books, I only wish that it were illegal for them to retain newspaper files. I have taken up nearly all of this report with an account of the Bibliography of Newspapers, but the subject is of the highest importance to the Society, in fact I doubt whether any collection in the Library has brought to us so many researchers, chiefly because they cannot find this type of source material elsewhere.

There have been four deaths in the membership since the last meeting. Philip L. Spalding of Milton, Mass., elected in 1936, collector and student of early American silver, died December 4, 1938. William MacDonald of New York, elected in 1902, long-time professor of history at Brown University and later upon the editorial staff of the *Nation*, died December 15, 1938. Ralph Earle of Worcester, elected in 1927, retired Rear-Admiral of the United States Navy, and President of Worcester Polytechnic Institute, died February 13, 1939. James A. Robertson of Annapolis, Md., elected in 1924, Archivist of the State of Maryland, died March 20, 1939. Obituary notices of these members will appear in the printed Proceedings.

The Proceedings of the meeting of April 1938 have recently been issued from the press and mailed to members. Difficulty in obtaining material to complete the papers read at that meeting caused delay in issuing the April number as promptly as we wished.

Respectfully submitted,

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*For the Council*

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