

## *Report of the Council*

IT IS nearly two years since this country entered the War. Each semi-annual report of the Council during that period has referred to the gradually increasing Government restrictions—shortage of fuel, paper and supplies, decrease in the number of visiting researchers due to the difficulties of travel, and impairment of income as increased taxation brought reduced dividends. As in other libraries, there has also been a depletion in the library staff. Mr. Theron J. Damon, in charge of manuscripts, left early in the year for special service in the Office of War Information; Miss Ruth Russell, attendant in the reading-room, resigned to take up work in a local war plant; and a month ago Roland H. Clarke, in charge of newspapers, was drafted for the army. But the duties of these assistants have been distributed among the remaining members of the staff, and Albert G. Waite has been doing special work in the manuscript collections. Following the resignation of William Williams, Mathew J. Mathews was engaged in his place as superintendent of the building and has proved exceptionally efficient.

Thus the work of the library goes on much the same, the decrease in use by visitors allowing the staff more time for routine duties. In touch as we are with scores of similar institutions throughout the country, we realise that conditions elsewhere are similar. Some of the largest libraries have placed the valuable portions of their collections in storage and have also closed their buildings for certain months in the summer. None of these policies have we felt compelled to follow. This has accounted for a continuous

use of the library during the year by visiting scholars who have been unable to consult books in other institutions.

When we compare the lot of cultural institutions in this country with those in Europe, we can be grateful for the space which so far has separated us from the horrors of war. The destruction of cultural monuments and the sacking of historical and artistic treasures in Europe by Prussian barbarians makes one wonder whether civilization has advanced since the days of the marauding Huns. Our sympathy goes out to our fellow institutions, with many of which we have had friendly international relations for over a century. It is hoped that the accounting will be relentless and just.

Necessary repairs and changes have been made in the library building. Last February one of the oil burning boilers was converted to coal and provision was made for the alteration of the second boiler. But fortunately this was deferred, and now in one boiler we are using oil, which for the moment is more easily procured. The exterior of the building, which means the sash and the trim, has been recently painted. An important change has been made in the Map and Print Room, by the installation of roller shelving above the print cases, as far up as the ceiling. This was made possible by the friendly action of the Rhode Island Historical Society in allowing us to purchase 300 roller shelves not usable in its new building. It enables us to shelve hundreds of large folio books and boxes of folio prints for which we previously had no space.

The *Proceedings* of the Society are somewhat in arrears. The issue for October of last year is in the press, but will not be distributed to members for another month. As usual the deterrent influence has been the delay in obtaining manuscripts from contributors. The issue for April 1943, however, should follow soon thereafter.

One trust committed to the Society has been discharged. In 1935 Clarence W. Bowen left to the Society in his will the sum of \$20,000 if it would assume the completion of his *History and Genealogies of Woodstock*. The result of years of planning and unflagging research, this notable undertaking saw the light of print in 1926, when a volume of over seven hundred pages was published, devoted solely to the *History of Woodstock*. Then followed at intervals the volumes devoted to the *Genealogies of Woodstock Families*, until in 1935 appeared the sixth volume, carrying the alphabet part way through the letter H, and yet covering from the beginning nearly five thousand pages of family histories. Individual sketches, historical sidelights and numerous illustrations make the work of high value to the genealogist, the biographer, and the historian. This was a subject which the Director of the Society had frequently discussed with Mr. Bowen, and it was agreed that if the work could be completed under the amount of the bequest, any residue remaining should revert to the Society's funds. Mr. Bowen did not expect his sudden death and hoped to finish at least two more volumes in the munificent manner in which volumes two to six had been published. He also had intended to increase sizeably the amount of the bequest, so that in the event of his death, the work could be finished as he had planned it. But before the plan was carried out, death intervened, and the original bequest came to the Antiquarian Society. It was soon found that to complete the genealogies from the letter H to the end of the alphabet, with so detailed a history of the families as Mr. Bowen had planned, would be impossible, considering the amount of the bequest. Many families were carried back from their settling in Woodstock to the original colonial ancestor, and often were carried for three or four generations, in all lines, after leaving Woodstock. This meant the compilation of almost complete

genealogies of many families. It was finally decided to limit the family histories to the residence of the family in Woodstock and to one generation, or in some cases two generations, after leaving Woodstock. Also, it was found that the great profusion of portraits and illustrations—nearly two hundred in volume six alone—was far beyond the allotted funds.

The Society accepted the bequest and engaged Donald L. Jacobus of New Haven to prepare the work for publication, and Mr. Jacobus employed Mr. William H. Wood as his assistant. Two volumes, covering the letters H to Z, have recently appeared from the press, printed by the Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor Company of New Haven, in an edition of 150 copies. The Director of the Antiquarian Society believes that although the work has been completed in only two additional volumes, it is more truly a history of Woodstock families than if it had gone into all the ramifications of lines several generations removed from Woodstock. He also believes that no town in this country has ever had so comprehensive a printed history, and probably none ever will. Mr. Bowen gathered a vast amount of material relating to Woodstock families—records, letters, photographs—much of which concerns families in the latter part of the alphabet. Most of his data was used, but much, especially on branches of families far removed from Woodstock, was not. All of this material will be preserved in the American Antiquarian Society, in case it should be needed by researchers. The balance of the bequest according to the agreement with Mr. Bowen and with the executors, will be set up as the Clarence W. Bowen Fund.

Another duty which the Society should some day assume, and it is to be hoped soon, is to complete Charles Evans' monumental *American Bibliography* through the year 1800. Volume 12 of this work, upon which Mr. Evans had been

engaged for over thirty years, covered through the letter M in the year 1799. Therefore the remainder of the alphabet for 1799 and all of 1800 would finish the compilation through the eighteenth century. It should be completed in one volume by somewhat abbreviating the titles, although collations and locations of titles should be given in detail. Mr. Evans left to the Society his finished slips for about one-third of the work. To obtain the rest of the titles for 1799 and 1800, considering that the total number would amount to about 3000 titles, would constitute a task of considerable magnitude, entailing examination of the leading libraries and correspondence with scores of institutions all over the country. To finance the undertaking would require a subvention from one of the cultural foundations, but the great historical value of completing so important a work should not render this too difficult.

There have been five deaths in the membership since the meeting last April. Albert Bushnell Hart, teacher of history at Harvard for sixty years, elected in 1909, died June 16, 1943. Grenville Kane, dean of American book collectors, elected in 1927, died July 17, 1943. Winthrop Hillyer Duncan, student of Indian captivities and of the frontier West, elected in 1933, died July 20, 1943. Charles McLean Andrews, professor of history at Yale and one of the most able American historians, elected in 1907, died September 9, 1943. Frederick William Howay, historian of British Columbia and the northwest coast, elected in 1932, died October 4, 1943. Obituary sketches of these members will appear in the printed *Proceedings* of this meeting.

The financial affairs of the Society, as evidenced by the Treasurer's report, are in a highly satisfactory condition. The slight decrease in income, brought about by reduced dividends and by conservative reinvesting, has been counterbalanced by recent bequests, notably that of George

Watson Cole. There is sufficient income to administer the present needs of the Society, with the one exception of purchase of books. Fortunately this want has been remedied during the past year, as in recent years, by gifts from members. Slightly over \$5000 has been given during the fiscal year for book purchase, constituting a voluntary and generous response to our needs. Such evidence of faith in the Society is gratifying to its officers, and is the sole reason why we are able to fill in our many valuable collections.

Respectfully submitted,  
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*For the Council*

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