

## *Report of the Council*

**D**URING the past six months the most noticeable work in the Library has been the shifting of books in order to obtain space for current acquisitions and for large collections lately received. This is the inevitable result of the crowded condition in the Library, and the problem will not be solved until we are able to build the contemplated addition to the book-stack. Considerable space has been gained, however, by an arrangement recently entered into with the Harvard College Library whereby we have transferred to that institution responsibility for preserving later nineteenth century schoolbooks, reserving for ourselves the field of American school literature published previous to 1821. As a result Harvard has given us such as we lacked of their schoolbooks published from 1800 to 1820, and we have sent to them our textbooks printed after 1820, except for Worcester imprints, first editions, or other books of peculiar interest to us. In many cases, such as Harkness's Latin Grammar, we had fifty editions, varying only in the date on the title-page. Through this exchange we obtained release of at least four rows of shelves, space needed for the expansion of college publications and the psalmody collection. In the future researchers can find in this Library the best existing collection of schoolbooks before 1821, and at Harvard the largest collection of the schoolbooks of the later nineteenth and the twentieth centuries.

A great relief to the crowded condition of the basement was the disposal to the Stanford University Library of our collection of duplicate newspapers, about four tons of

volumes and portfolios, thus clearing two rooms in the basement and giving us space for the sorting of future accessions.

The decision of the Worcester Public Library and of the Worcester Historical Society to get rid of hundreds of volumes not needed by them has brought to us large numbers of books in our special fields, thus making accessible to researchers more complete collections of material for subjects in which we were already strong. This is all part of the effort of Worcester libraries to specialize and to aid visiting scholars in finding the best collections in one library.

A remarkable collection of Americana has come to us from the gift of our fellow member, Donald McKay Frost. He has presented to us about four thousand volumes comprising his special collection of Western history and travel, and whatever we needed from his general library of Americana. The Western library was one of the best in the country and included all but his collection of rare early volumes relating to the West, such as those listed in Wagner's bibliography, the *Plains and the Rockies*, which notable collection is destined subsequently for this Library. Mr. Frost's generosity is deeply appreciated and a detailed record of the gift will appear in the Librarian's report at the annual meeting.

Much of the Librarian's time has been given to the preparation of the titles for the final volume of Evans's *American Bibliography*. This monumental work stopped with the letter M in the year 1799, and we have always promised ourselves the privilege of completing the series through the year 1800. Well over three thousand titles will be entered in this concluding volume, and in no library could the work of compilation be better performed, as we already have over half of the titles required. It is considerable of an undertaking, since the preliminary listing must be followed by

voluminous correspondence and an examination of the leading historical libraries of the country. But all of Mr. Shipton's spare time will be given to the work, and we hope that by another year we will have definite data upon the time of publication.

At last, and after innumerable delays caused by shortage of paper, and employment and binding troubles, we are ready to publish the *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers*. The binding is nearly finished and the work should be sent to subscribers in May. So many references to this long contemplated work have been made in previous Reports that nothing further need be said here except that the author will breathe a deep sigh of relief when the work is finally issued.

There have been five deaths in the membership since the last October meeting. Alfred L. Aiken, of New York, long an interested Worcester member, elected in 1918, died December 13, 1946. R. C. Ballard Thruston, of Louisville, Kentucky, historian and collector, elected in 1916, died December 30, 1946. Allyn Bailey Forbes, of Boston, Director of the Massachusetts Historical Society, elected in 1935, died January 21, 1947. William Sawitzky, of Stamford, Connecticut, authority on the history of early American art, elected in 1945, died February 2, 1947. Frederick W. Skiff, of Oregon, author and collector of Americana, elected in 1937, died March 15, 1947. Obituary notices of these members will appear in the printed *Proceedings* of this meeting.

The matter of funds is again a serious problem for the Society. As in recent years, the reduction of income from investments and the increased cost of maintenance make it necessary for the Society to turn to members and friends for gifts, if it wishes to maintain its standard of service. Last year its appeal was unusually successful, chiefly due

to a large gift from one of our members. At its last meeting the Council voted that the Director should send an appeal this year, stressing as previously that gifts were not necessarily expected and should be purely voluntary. Salaries of the staff have been kept at a minimum and in general have not been raised in fifteen years. The most stringent economies have been employed in every department of the Society's activities. Books have been bought carefully, and only to improve collections in which the Society is strong and for which it is noted. For one hundred and thirty-five years the Society has attempted to maintain its standard of aiding scholars and of making its abundant resources available to all serious investigators. The public expects this help, which is freely given, but it cannot be provided without funds.

Respectfully submitted,

CLARENCE S. BRIGHAM,

*For the Council*

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