

## *Report of the Librarian*

ONE snowy Sunday last winter we began the long-anticipated moving of books into the new stack, a task ultimately involving the cleaning and shifting of most of the volumes on our twenty miles of shelves. By late summer, with the aid of the regular members of the staff, our friends, relatives, and a passing crew of school and college boys, the log jam which for a decade has hindered our operations had been broken. We will still be moving, at a calmer pace, for another year or two, but we now have the room to breathe bibliographically. Thousands of volumes of newspapers which have been inaccessible in our basements for twenty years are now on roller shelves in light and clean quarters where they can be used within a few feet of their places in the stacks. For our books we have devised a new scheme of classification suited to our library and the calls which are made upon it, and we are transferring to it the old shattered alcove collections and the volumes which in recent years have perforce been placed in any hole on the shelves which we could find. We are also cataloging for the first time hundreds of books which during the last decade we had simply shelved awaiting space and a modern classification scheme. Within perhaps two years the backlog of cataloging can be cleared up. This all means a prodigious amount of labor for the staff, but it has already progressed far enough to make it easier for us to find books and to check book catalogues.

In the middle of this rush and bustle I had occasion to read the diaries of two librarians of a century ago, and I found it hard to recognize my profession at that stage of its development. The air of quiet leisure about the old librarians, the time they spent in reading books and being social with visitors, makes them seem quaint and far away. Even their virtues were different. C. C. Baldwin was a great librarian because he swept into our library everything on paper, without thought of the cost of cataloging it, or of providing it with space, light, and heat. He never stopped to decide whether in the days of his successors the several collections which he was building up would be useful and valuable enough to justify the space they would occupy and the cost of buying material to keep them up to date. Baldwin could keep his eye on the past and collect without worry about the future, but we who are blessed by his labors must keep always in mind the fact that we must not waste the funds with which we are intrusted by doing things which our successors must undo. The open shelves in the new stack will not entice us into fresh fields of collection which our successors might have to abandon.

One solution of the problem of selection and space is the consolidation of less-used collections in neighboring libraries. With this in view the trustees of the Free Public Library of Worcester have deposited with us their files of certain periodicals which, combined with ours, make much better runs available.

This year we have held down our accessions to 2863 volumes and 3055 pamphlets. This brings the total in the library to 282,713 bound volumes and 424,227 pamphlets. The distinction is meaningless, for the rarest and most important accessions are pamphlets. The total is meaningless too, for half of the linear footage of our shelving is occupied by great newspaper folio volumes.

In spite of the time spent in planning, moving, and re-cataloging, we have found time to press work on the several bibliographical tools on which we have been engaged. One of these jobs has been the copying and typing of the marriage and death records reported in the *Columbian Centinel*, which gave a national coverage for this kind of news. The twenty fat volumes which we have bound and placed on our shelves are the best existing source of this data for the period 1784-1840, which had hitherto been a troublesome blind area.

Another new tool has been completed by Mr. Waite, who has finished the cataloging of the 8400 letters from the files of McCarty and Davis, one of the leading Philadelphia publishing houses of the period from 1816 to 1844. This material, which was given to us by Dr. Rosenbach several years ago, is, thanks to this new index, now a useful addition to our knowledge of the publishing business of the entire United States.

Mrs. Spear's bibliography of early directories is progressing as fast as the innumerable calls upon the time of a reference librarian will permit. Dr. Brigham's book on Revere engravings has been slowed by a number of fresh and important discoveries. My concluding volume of Evans has reached the editorial stage and has raised the questions of manufacture and publishing. Miss Clarke's imprint catalogue has made wonderful progress, considering the demands which the recataloguing program has made on her time. We hope to train a young cataloguer to handle modern books, leaving Miss Clarke to devote her full time to the research and bibliographical complexities of the imprint catalogue, which is by all odds the most complete, the most thorough, and most accurate tool of its kind in the world. By means of it we unravel scores of bibliographical knots for ourselves and for other individuals and institutions.

One invaluable element in the imprint catalogue is the business and biographical data on the ten thousand printers and booksellers who were active in the United States between 1640 and 1820. This year Miss Clarke discovered that in a remarkable number of cases the printers about whom no biographical information was to be found a few years ago could now be identified by means of the genealogies and local histories which have appeared recently. It is just this sort of utility which leads us, almost alone among research libraries of our kind, to strive to complete the collections of local histories and American genealogies.

On the other hand we do not, gentlemen, purchase the kind of books which you buy for current reading and will eventually discard from your library. With the money which would otherwise go for current books which we shall eventually obtain anyway, we can frequently buy unique imprints of bibliographical importance. This is why we appreciate the thoughtfulness of Mr. Frederic Melcher who periodically sweeps his office shelves of American history and biography and sends us boxes of new books. Each of these shipments contains a surprising number of books so important as tools that we would have bought them had we seen them reviewed.

A different kind of collection came to us this year from Professor Harold Jantz, who gathered the volumes in this country and abroad because of their interest and importance rather than because they fell into any of the usual fields of collection. His permission to choose what we wanted from his library gave us a fine lot of Americana printed in Germany, and of American history and literature. Every volume in the lot he had chosen because it was significant.

From Mr. James M. Hunnewell we received the almost complete collection of Charlestown history, literature,

imprints, manuscripts, and engravings which his father, many times a benefactor of this library, had begun, and which he had carried on. Particularly useful were his father's bibliographical notes and a file of the *American Recorder*, a newspaper which ran from 1785 to 1787, and for which we had sought for years.

The steady decline in the volume of our newspaper accessions in recent years reflects the near completion of our collection of pre-1820 papers, and of those files of later newspapers which because of their subject matter are important to us. The early West Indies field is an exception, for here our collection, although probably the largest, is hardly more than a sampling of the lost output of the presses there. For example, Alexander Aikman, one time an apprentice to Robert Wells, the Charleston printer, fled with the other Loyalists to Jamaica and there in 1775 set up a newspaper of which the earliest surviving number hitherto known dates from 1791. This year we acquired a run of this paper, published at Spanish Town with the title *Gazette of Saint Jago de la Vega*, from February 15, 1781, to March 6, 1783, being numbers 1295 to 1402. The news from the mainland colonies occupies the front pages.

Research is frequently hindered by the lack of good runs of the papers of Newburyport, Massachusetts, in the days of its maritime importance, so we were pleased to obtain the *Morning Star* for 1794 and the *Impartial Herald* for the years 1794 through 1796. Something of the same situation exists in regard to the newspapers of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, of which we have obtained the *Republican Ledger* for 1800-03 and the only reported complete file of the *War Journal*, which ran from March 12 to December 10, 1813. Going farther south, we obtained the *Universal*

*Gazette* of Washington for the years 1807 through 1814, and the *Maryland Republican* of Annapolis for 1809-11.

In the later period, we took advantage of an opportunity to fill gaps in our files of two important Vermont newspapers, obtaining the *Burlington Weekly Sentinel* for 1832-37 and the *Vermont Watchman* for 1828-44, 1853, and 1865-68. Similarly we extended our existing file of the Hawaiian language newspaper, *Ka Hae Hawaii*, by obtaining volumes 4 and 5, covering the period of February 29 to October 3, 1860. A file of the New York *Daily Graphic* for the period 1877-99 has been acquired for its importance as a pictorial record.

In my reports of 1945 and 1946 I discussed the comic strips and comic books of the Forties and Fifties of the last century and succeeded in stirring up additional information, although not in inducing any one to make a detailed study of them. Another acquired this year has novel characteristics and purpose. It is *Ye True Accounte of the Visit to Springfelde by the Constabel his Special Reporter*, and is in format a folded strip of pictures rather than a book. It is dated, and its purpose indicated, by the inscription under the first picture, "Ye wise men of ye north, are astonished at accounts of the enormities and cruelties perpetrated in Roman Catholic Seminaries, ycleped nunneries." It then proceeds to picture the conduct of the inspecting committee in so scandalous a manner that the lack of an imprint is entirely understandable.

An item with similar subject matter unexpectedly provided us with one of the first signed American engravings. This is a woodcut frontispiece, repeated on p.12, of an undated edition of *The Prodigal Daughter*, printed at Thomas Fleet's Bible and Heart in Cornhill, Boston, about 1780. It is signed "P. F.," which reminds us that the Fleets

had a Negro who made woodcuts and had two sons, Pompey and Caesar, who also worked in the printing office. Presumably "P. F." stands for Pompey Fleet.

An exceptionally rare and interesting copper-plate engraving has been added to our collection of eighteenth-century trade-cards. It is the ornamental card issued by Joseph and Daniel Waldo "at the sign of the Elephant opposite to the South east Corner of the Town House in King Street Boston New England," and is signed "J. Turner sc." It shows a hanging sign of an elephant and lists about 250 items for sale by this firm of merchants. The size of the engraving is  $8\frac{1}{2}$  by  $5\frac{3}{4}$  inches.

Joseph and Daniel Waldo were associated in business from 1748 to 1770, but this advertising card can unquestionably be dated in May, 1749, through an advertisement by the firm in the *Boston Gazette* of May 9, 1749, listing exactly the same items. James Turner was an engraver in Boston from 1744 to 1752, when he removed to Philadelphia. Another copy of the advertising card was noted in George F. Dow's article on Trade Cards in *Old-Time New England* for April, 1936, XXVI, 119, and is there reproduced.

The incredible good fortune which has enabled us to fill out our collection of Revere engravings during the past few years still holds. This year Mr. Brigham found and purchased a copy of the diploma issued for Dr. John Warren's anatomical lectures. This was engraved by Revere in 1780, an elaborate design,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches high and 6 inches wide, with a chippendale border, cuts of two skeletons at the sides and a portrayal of an anatomical operation at the bottom. Dr. Warren established demonstrations in anatomy and surgery in Boston in 1780 and invited students to take his courses. These lectures, at first given privately, were incorporated, with the good Doctor himself, into the Harvard

Medical School when that was established in 1783. The only other known copy of this engraving is in the Massachusetts Historical Society, with the certificate made out for Israel Keith and dated March 28, 1782. The Antiquarian Society copy is made out for Levi Bartlett, dated June 8, 1785, and on it the words "American Hospital" are scratched out and "University at Cambridge" substituted. In Mr. Brigham's forthcoming book on Paul Revere and his Engravings, a full account of this print will be given. Obviously this cornerstone of Harvard medical history belongs in the University, and as soon as they can find us a copy of the engraving in its original state, they can have this one for it.

One of the most notable gifts of the year came from Edward H. R. Revere of Boston. This was a fine copy, in original binding, of William Billings's *New-England Psalm-Singer*, Boston, 1770, with the interesting frontispiece plate by Paul Revere and all of the music engraved by him. This was previously owned by Pauline Revere Thayer of Lancaster, and was given to the Society by Mr. Revere in her memory.

Mr. Edward L. Tinker has added to the fine collection of large colored views of Mississippi steamboats which he previously presented to us the Currier and Ives, 1855, print of the "High Pressure Steamboat Mayflower." He also gave us two early maps of Louisiana, one the large map of the Mississippi and the Province of Louisiana from Homann's Atlas published in Nuremberg in 1759, and the other the Dutch map of New Orleans included in the *Hedendaagsche Historie of Tegenswoordige* of 1767. Since we lack the Homann Atlas and our 1767 map of New Orleans is uncolored, these are excellent additions to our collection of early cartography.



Ordinarily we collect only those forms of art which have been through the hands of the printer, but in 1944 it was with great regret that we had to decline, as beyond our means, a dealer's offer of pastel crayon portraits of Isaiah Thomas, Jr., Mrs. Mary Thomas, wife of Isaiah Thomas, Sr., Mrs. Mary Thomas, wife of Isaiah, Jr., and Miss Hannah Weld, her sister. The crayon portraits of Mrs. Isaiah Thomas, Jr., and of Hannah Weld, were purchased by our member, Chauncey C. Nash, who this last year presented them to the Society. The two remaining portraits, those of Isaiah Thomas, Jr., and of Mrs. Isaiah Thomas, Sr., were retained by the dealer. We had conjectured that these portraits were drawn by William M. S. Doyle, the Boston artist, basing our assumption upon two receipted bills in our archives, dated July 19 and November 10, 1805, signed by Doyle and acknowledging payments of \$35.00 and \$25.00 from Isaiah Thomas for "miniatures." We thought that small pastel crayon portraits might then have been called miniatures. They were all in contemporaneous frames, 9 by 8 inches, and the portraits set in a gray oval about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  by  $5\frac{3}{4}$  inches, with a surrounding background of a soft brown color.

The Frick Art Reference Library now calls to our attention that these crayon portraits are almost identical with crayons drawn by Gerrit Schipper, of which the Frick Library has several photographed examples; also that in the Yale University Art Gallery are two original examples of Schipper's crayons, the portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Walter Edwards. The Schipper crayons are the same size as our Thomas family crayons, and the same color scheme of backgrounds. The case is furthered by our finding in the Boston *Columbian Centinel* an advertisement of G. Schipper, dated October 19, 1803, where he announces that he will take likenesses in crayon and in miniature, that the price of

the crayon with frame is \$7.00, and that he will leave for New York in November. Then comes his advertisement, November 26, 1803, stating that he is deferring his departure for a few weeks, and that he is especially occupied in making crayons.

On the back of our Thomas family crayons is recorded in Isaiah Thomas' own hand that they were made in 1804. It is a further fact that although a score of examples of Doyle's work are known, these are all large oil portraits or miniatures—no crayons. For the present we should credit these Thomas crayon portraits to Gerrit Schipper, and look for further proof.

Recently our friend Rollo Silver turned up in the office of the City Clerk of Boston two hitherto unknown volumes of indentures which throw fresh light on Isaiah Thomas in days before he could indulge his passion for family portraits. All that we have known hitherto about his indenture comes from the memoir which Judge Benjamin Franklin Thomas wrote for our edition of the *History of Printing*. Writing with the original indenture before him, the Judge says that Isaiah's mother was persuaded by Mr. Fowle to apprentice the lad to him. The Judge never returned to this library the Thomas papers which he had borrowed to write this sketch, perhaps because he was embarrassed by some things in them, such as the portions of the indenture which he did not quote. These show that Isaiah was not apprenticed by his mother, but by the Overseers of the Poor, who were acting under a law giving them permission so to take care of poor children whose parents could not provide adequately for them. So his beginnings were more humble, and his rise consequently greater, than we had known.

We have never looked down upon Isaiah Thomas because of his humble origins, but we have many times blamed him

because he did not give to this library a set of the charming little children's books with which he lightened American childhood. When Clarence Brigham came to this library forty years ago it contained only six of Thomas' juveniles. Today we have copies of every title and almost every edition. This year we added one, *The History of Master Jackey and Miss Harriot*, Worcester, 1794. It seems curious that Thomas, whose historical and bibliographical sense was so keen, should have failed to realize the importance of these little tracts. In our efforts to make up for this oversight on his part we have built up a collection of early American juveniles as outstanding in its field as our early American newspapers in theirs, but here we have not yet encountered the law of diminishing returns, for every year we add a number of unique or very rare titles. The cream of this year's crop is as follows: *Tom Thumb's Play Book*, Providence, John Waterman, 1768; *Entertaining Story Book for Little Boys and Girls*, Boston, N. Coverly, 1779; *Tom Thumb's Folio*, London, Carnan and Newbery, 1779; *The Sister's Gift; or, the Naughty Boy Reformed*, New York, 1790; *The Affecting History of the Children in the Wood*, Newport, H. & O. Farnsworth, 1799; *The Death and Burial of Cock Robin*, Baltimore, Warner & Hanna, 1801; *New Instructive History of Patty Proud*, Philadelphia, John Adams, 1806; *Juvenile Poems; or, the Alphabet in Verse*, Philadelphia, John Adams, 1807; the same, Albany, E. & E. Hosford, 1809; and *Metamorphosis; or, a Transformation of Pictures*, Philadelphia, Joseph Rakestraw, 1815. The last is an example of a type of picture book of which we have a small collection which we wish that someone would use as a basis for a comprehensive bibliographical and historical study of this curious type of art.

The unique-or-almost-unique imprints which we have acquired are mostly of the same popular or ephemeral

character which Thomas apparently thought disqualified them for inclusion in a research library. One, *A Token for Youth, or Comfort to Children, Being the Life . . . of Carteret Rede*, Boston, 1729, might be classed as an early juvenile. Other ephemera are Eliphalet Adams, *Sermon on the Execution of Katherine Garret, an Indian-Servant, who was Condemned for the Murder of her Spurious Child*, New London, T. Green, 1738; Sampson Occum, *Sermon Preached at the Execution of Moses Paul*, New Haven, T. & S. Green; *Exercise for the Militia of Massachusetts-Bay*, Boston, John Draper, 1758 (the only copy located); *Narrative of the Remarkable Escape of Captain Wilson, to which is added the Fantastical and Amusing Treatise on Whimsical Wives*, Frederick-town, G. S. Keatinge, 1814; and *Essays from the Desk of Poor Robert the Scribe, Containing Lessons in Manners, Morals, and Domestic Economy*, Doylestown, Asher Miner, 1815. One of the most interesting items is a folio broadside poster, advertising the feats of *Signior Manfredi, Artist of Agility, and Rope Dancer* who, fresh from triumphs at London, Petersburg, and Constantinople, offered to entertain the people of Portsmouth on September 23, 1803, with "the most astonishing feats that ever were known." Six large cuts of these feats make this one of the most interesting early posters ever discovered. These are the fugitive pieces, the records and the amusement of the common people.

Three of our unique accessions lack the festive air of an acrobatic performance or a good hanging. From Mrs. Joseph Carson we received a broadside, *Sacred Music, to be Performed in St. Paul's Church [in New York City] on Tuesday the 31st December, 1799, by the Anacreontic and Philharmonic Societies, at the Funeral Ceremonies in Honor of the Memory of the late General Washington*. In the preparation

of Evans, pursuit of bibliographical rumors led us to acquire the only known copies of the acts of the third session of the Fifth Congress and the first session of the Sixth Congress printed at Portland by Elezer A. Jenks in 1799 and 1800.

Since the gift of the Frost collection we have rarely been able to add Wagner-Camp titles, but this year we purchased N. S. Harris, *Journal of a Tour in the Indian Territory*, New York, Daniel Dana, 1844. The purchase was made from the proceeds of the sale of the duplicates obtained from the Frost collection, which in this manner is kept growing.

Persuant to our belief that manuscripts should be gathered in regional repositories, we have this year firmly declined many. Two, however, were taken as particularly apt for this library. Mr. Newman F. McGirr of Washington gave us the manuscript commonplace book which deacon and ensign Samuel Tompson of Braintree began in 1678 to record legal documents, perhaps in connection with his service as a deputy to the General Court. In 1685 he began proudly entering in it notes on the sermons of his son, Edward, who had the year before been graduated at Harvard. We have long had on our shelves pious books from the libraries of both Samuel and Edward, and their bookplates in them are jewels in our bookplate collection.

For twenty years I have been watching for the diaries of one of their contemporaries, William Williams (1688-1760) of Weston, of which two single years had come to the surface, one in Boston and one in Wisconsin. This year a casual visitor brought in Williams' interleaved almanacs for 1710, 1716, and 1753, containing his diaries for those years. He had picked them up when told by an auctioneer in North Adams to take anything that he liked from a room knee-deep in old papers. The visitor, influenced by our interest and a glance at the largest collection of early American

manuscript diaries, gladly traded these for books which would be useful to him.

This year we have had our usual flood of visitors from all parts of the country doing research on early agriculture, regional bibliographies and histories, numerous biographies, valentines, clocks, labor parties, the theater, music, the history of medicine, the lumber industry, country stores, aviation, the insurance business, and similar subjects. Only a portion of these people come to work in our famous collections of early printing and newspapers, for more and more university libraries, pressed for space and money, are abandoning the attempt to keep abreast of other fields in which we are strong, and are sending their better people to do their research here. Thus visitors come from all parts of the country to work in our almost complete collection of American county histories, which, in spite of their great value in many fields of research, present such a space problem that, so far as we know, no university library attempts to gather them systematically. One would think that any university library would need the printed archives of the thirteen American colonies and the early States, but some of the greatest libraries are not trying to keep abreast of such series but, for this region at least, are relying on us.

This general situation has compelled our Council to rule that our facilities are not to be made available to students doing research of a practice nature. Fortunately, the colleges which are deliberately tailoring their library policies to complement ours are careful to screen the researchers whom they send to us, so that they constitute no burden on our staff and inflict no undue wear upon our fragile material. By far the greatest part of our body of out-of-town visitors consists of mature scholars doing really important work. Some of these loudly abuse themselves for not coming to this

library at an earlier stage of their research, but many more have long known what we have, and enter our front door with faces beaming in happy anticipation of a long-deferred bibliographical feast. We decided that the reputation of the library had reached its climax one day this summer when two ladies arrived from Washington, D. C., and asked us to show them the original manuscript of the Declaration of Independence. This library contained, they had been assured in Washington, every treasure of that sort in America.

Respectfully submitted,

CLIFFORD K. SHIPTON,

*Librarian*

Copyright of Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society is the property of American Antiquarian Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.