

Report of the Council

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS BALDWIN, the third Librarian of this Society, wrote in his diary for March 13, 1834, "I must accord this one of the happiest days of my life. I received early in the morning a copy of the *Bibliotheca Britannica* by Robert Watt in 4 volumes for which I paid thirty-eight dollars. It has often occurred to me how much we want such a work in this country, and since I have been librarian I have uniformly held out the idea that our Library was designed to collect all the productions of American authors. I shall begin shortly to make a sort of *Bibliotheca Americana*, but there will be no occasion for many notes, because our continent is so new."

A year later Baldwin was killed in Ohio's first recorded traffic accident, but his project for a *Bibliotheca Americana* marches on. A week ago there came to my desk the first four boxes of the new segment of our Early American Imprints series, which in addition to Baldwin's projected description of the items, reprints the text of them as well. This year we shall issue three or four thousand works in microprint, carrying the project through the year 1801.

For several years our receipts from the microprint project have served to balance the deficit in our publication funds created by the rising cost of manufacturing our *Proceedings*. For some time the copies of the *Proceedings* which we have been selling for \$2 have cost us between \$5.00 and \$7.50 apiece. To even out the demand and to check the run on popular items like d'Alté Welch's bibliography of children's books, or the Parkman diary, we have been refusing to

sell single issues. Knowing customers have then smiled and said, "please enter my subscription for the *Proceedings*," which we could not refuse to do. To check this run, and to meet more nearly the cost of publishing the *Proceedings*, the Council has voted to raise the price to \$5 an issue.

Our Xerox machine, on the other hand, has been showing such a profit (since we do not figure in the cost of labor) that we have decided to cut the price of prints to ten cents. Another unexpectedly favorable discovery was that the cost of the first full year of the operation of the air conditioning system was a thousand dollars less than our optimistic estimates, far less than the electric company had estimated. Although the summer was relatively cool, there were hot spells in which the system functioned beyond expectations. The two contractors have worked with the greatest patience all year, getting the systems adjusted, and I am sure that they both lost heavily on the job. Without their care, and the intelligence and skills of our building custodian, Mr. Malcolm Hannah, the project would have been a failure.

With these successes balancing our unexpected costs, our operating expenses for the year past have exceeded our budget of \$131,216 by only seventeen dollars. The cash surplus mentioned by the Treasurer is in special accounts not available for ordinary expenses. In such an evenly balanced operation, the annual gifts of members and friends have been vital. Looking ahead to next year, one of the chief problems will be the bindery. In this our costs used to be a dollar for each item processed; after our costs had grown to ten dollars an item a couple of years ago, I ceased keeping count. Today the amount spent on the bindery is about half of what we have to spend on book purchases, an entirely unreasonable proportion. Our good member Willman Spawn has offered to come to Worcester and spend some

time in getting the bindery on its feet. On his professional advice our policy will be determined.

In 1940 our bindery was skillfully processing two dozen daily newspapers. Acting on C. C. Baldwin's principle that the entire output of the American press was our field, Clarence Brigham always believed that we should continue to be responsible for current American history as we are for the earlier period. He did not realize that the masses of printed and typewritten material of the twentieth century create an entirely new problem, and even call for an entirely new type of historian. This new historian must work in archives, not in research libraries, and he makes relatively little use of newspapers. We have long been, I believe, the last research library of our type keeping any current newspapers. Consequently both bindery costs and the practical dictates of our field of collection led us this year to discontinue the last of the daily papers which we were receiving. The keeping of current files of local papers is a natural function of public libraries, and now that the Worcester Public Library in its new building has space, staff, and suitable accommodations for this function, we have happily released it to them.

Although our newspaper accessions have fallen off somewhat in bulk, they have stood up in quality. Libraries all over the country offer us their broken files of early papers, and some, as in the case of the Dartmouth College gift which Mr. McCorison will report, are of great importance. Although we make a practice of buying everything in the early American newspaper field offered by anyone with a knowledge of prices, most of our important accession today comes as gifts from other institutions.

Of course this particular type of gift comes because of the fame of our newspaper collections. It is not so well known that our strength extends through the entire field of Ameri-

can printing through 1876, in which there are large areas not being collected by anyone else. Take, for example, pre-Civil War American paper-back reprints of English fiction, of which hundreds came to us from the library of our Worcester Paine family. It is decidedly important to the historian to know what the people with whom he is concerned were reading, but in the future he is going to find it difficult to recover this information. We could find no American locations for many of these novels which came to us from the Paine house. This field of hitherto uncollected pre-1876 American printing is one in which every member of the Society can help to collect.

Since midsummer we have lost five members:

Newton Case Brainard on July 16, 1964

Henry Wilder Foote on August 27, 1964

John Adams on August 29, 1964

Stewart Hall Holbrook on September 3, 1964

William Alexander Jackson on October 18, 1964

Another, but happily less drastic, change results from the decision of Mr. Richmond that he ought not to accept re-election to the Presidency. No one but the Director knows how willingly and well Mr. Richmond has served the Society. I trust, however, that he will be returned to the Council, where he will be readily available for us to exploit his wisdom and good will for years to come.

CLIFFORD K. SHIPTON

For the Council

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