

Report of the Associate Librarian

JUNE OF 1990 was one of the busiest periods in the reading room in recent times. The fourth Seminar in the History of the Book in American Culture, led by Michael Winship and David Reynolds, involved twenty-two participants, who made extensive use of our collections during their ten-day stay. We not only paged large quantities of materials for them during the week but also worked weekends and evenings to ensure the success of the seminar. Joanne D. Chaison, head of readers' services, Marie E. Lamoureux, assistant, and the entire public services staff deserve gold medals for organization, skill, good humor, and stamina. It is worth noting for the record that, in addition to the seminar participants, there were ten fellows in residence in June, as well as many other researchers who came for shorter visits.

Statistics for this year represent the highest totals ever recorded in our files. The number of telephone calls and written inquiries remained almost the same as last year (798 telephone calls and 303 letters), but we processed over one thousand reader applications (a 13 percent increase), paged 23,200 books (a 38 percent increase), and logged 4,546 days of research (an increase of 32 percent).

Several large projects also demanded the attention of the readers' services staff. The Society acquired a thousand-volume book-binding collection from Kenneth G. Leach, and our library page Jayne E. Holman, worked closely with Marcus McCorison to accession this important and fragile collection. Two of our receptionists, Ernest A. Tosi and John J. Simpson, used their time at the front desk to cull pamphlets relating to slavery from our miscellaneous pamphlet collection. They inventoried almost 500 boxes and compiled a checklist of 2,500 titles, which Susan J. W. Gordon has begun cataloguing.

All the staff at the Society enjoyed the researchers and seminar participants whom we had in residence this year. In addition to

utilizing catalogued materials for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and taking advantage of our records that are now available online through RLIN, many called for large numbers of works from uncatalogued collections. We took special pleasure in working with Rebecca Rourke, the Fenwick Scholar at the College of the Holy Cross. Supervised by AAS member Ross W. Beales, she studied deaf culture in nineteenth-century America. She spent many hours in the reading room with periodicals, newspapers, children's literature, and pamphlets. She presented one of the finest lunchtime colloquia of the year on her research.

The past year has been one of change for the acquisitions department. Sidney E. Berger moved from the position of curator of printed books (this position has been eliminated) to curator of manuscripts. Joan M. Pingeton was promoted to manager of acquisitions, and Carol J. Fisher-Crosby was hired as an assistant. Mrs. Fisher-Crosby came to AAS from the Houghton Library at Harvard University. The past year has also been a very busy one for that department. Expenditures totaled \$265,900, an increase of \$65,000 over last year. Purchases multiplied from 2,605 items to 5,682, an increase of over 50 percent. The total number of gifts also increased. For many years, this department of few has sought to do the work of many, and, as the above figures suggest, they are valiantly but vainly struggling to keep up with ever-increasing work. Under Mrs. Pingeton's able direction, the department has initiated several new procedures to expedite the work, but backlogs continue to grow. This pattern will not change as long as the volume of work remains constant (or grows, as it did last year) and the department remains understaffed.

The NEH-funded American Children's Books project, under the direction of senior cataloguer Laura Wasowicz, is now in its second phase. Begun in February 1989, this second phase supports the machine-readable cataloguing of approximately 4,000 children's books in the Society's nineteenth-century juvenile fiction collection that either bear title-page dates between 1861 and 1876 or lack title-page dates. In November of 1989, a tape of the last

batch of records of phase one cataloguing was loaded into RLIN. With that tapeload, all 5,400 records created during the first phase are now accessible to scholars. This spring, the Society received the happy news that the proposed third phase of the project would receive full NEH funding. The final phase will complete the cataloguing of all of the Society's post-1820 children's books. Researchers, who previously would not have considered children's literature as a resource, are being drawn to our collection by the superb, online cataloguing, and this increase in use has been very gratifying to the staff.

December 31, 1989, marked the end of NEH funding for the North American Imprints Program's (NAIP) creation of a machine-readable union catalogue of books, pamphlets, and broadsides printed before 1801 in the United States and Canada. Three NEH grants, spanning a full decade, enabled our staff to create a detailed file of nearly 39,000 records and to contribute modified versions of those records to the Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalogue (ESTC) in RLIN. Although the twelve months just passed saw the winding down of NEH-funded efforts, it marked a propitious beginning to the ongoing file maintenance and enhancement phase, thanks to the generosity of AAS members William Reese and Michael Zinman, a one-year grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and special funds made available to us by the North American office of the ESTC.

In October the International Committee for the ESTC convened in Worcester. Following that meeting, a day-long symposium/workshop on scholarly access to NAIP and ESTC was held in Antiquarian Hall. Alan N. Degutis, head of cataloguing services and project director of NAIP, was one of the speakers during the morning sessions. After lunch, staff members conducted hands-on sessions to give scholars the opportunity to search NAIP and ESTC records.

The NEH-funded project to catalogue AAS books and pamphlets for the decade 1821-30 began in July 1989. By the end of August 1990, the staff of what we term NEH-20 had catalogued

all the 1820s imprints in the following collections: American history, annuals, art, antiques and collecting, directories, foreign history and travel, genealogy, Latin America, plays, printing and related arts, religion, and songsters. They are now at work on Bibles, biographies, and state documents. Current funding for NEH-20 is scheduled to expire on June 30, 1991. In August, Mr. Degutis submitted a grant proposal to NEH for an additional two years of funding.

It should be clear from the above that the Society owes a special debt of gratitude to the National Endowment for the Humanities, which has over the past twenty years awarded us millions of dollars in project-related funds to enhance access to our collections. It is impossible to overemphasize the importance of this funding for making possible the present high level of user access that our readers enjoy. The ever-increasing public services statistics are but one proof that these funds have been well spent. Future generations of scholars will be the beneficiaries of this enormously important investment in our library.

The Society's first staff exchange came to a successful conclusion just before Christmas, when Doris N. O'Keefe returned from six months' work at Trinity College Library, Dublin, and Vincent Kinane of the Trinity College Library staff departed for Ireland. Both Ms. O'Keefe and Mr. Kinane broadened their experience in rare book cataloguing, and the host institutions profited from the insights and talents that the two cataloguers brought to their temporary assignments. On a personal note, I want to add that the AAS staff took great pleasure in getting to know Mr. Kinane. He participated fully in the life of the Society, and our staff-room talks were enlivened by his presence. We are delighted and relieved to have Ms. O'Keefe back at the Society.

Babette Gehrich, chief book and paper conservator, has now worked here for a full year and, with conservation technician Kenneth R. Desautels, has continued the tradition of vital conservation services to all departments of the library. The statistics for the year are as follows: 242 boxes made; 187 books bound or restored; 1,179

leaves of paper washed, deacidified, resized, and mended; 212 leather bindings oiled; and 814 minor repairs completed. In addition, almost 250 slides were taken for readers and for lectures at the Society.

With the generous support of AAS member Michael Zinman, we were able to hire Kristen Pelletier, a photography student at the Rochester Institute of Technology, to spend the summer working on the recently acquired collection of early American bindings. She oiled 321 leather bindings and made fifty clam-shell boxes and thirty-eight phase boxes. We hope we will be able to hire her again next summer to finish this project.

Under the patient direction of Georgia B. Barnhill, Andrew W. Mellon curator of graphic arts, the Catalogue of American Engravings Project is finally approaching the completion of the inputting and online editing stage. It will be a pleasure for her and her staff to begin the next stage—manipulating the database to produce the published catalogue.

Although the number of eighteenth-century materials acquired for the graphic arts department seems to be at an all-time low, many interesting nineteenth-century materials arrived as gifts or by purchase. The most interesting of the few eighteenth-century items is Israel Pemberton's address to the president and council of Pennsylvania, published by Robert Bell in Philadelphia in 1777. Forty items were added to the booktrades collection of broadsides, a collection that receives substantial scholarly use due to interest in the history of the book. Among the new items is the prospectus for William Mavor's *Voyages, Travels, and Discoveries*, issued by Samuel F. Bradford in Philadelphia in 1802. We also acquired the proposal for the *Federal Orrery*, a newspaper to be published by Robert Treat Paine in Boston in 1794. Although the Society does not actively collect drawings, we did seize an opportunity to purchase eighteen drawings by John Warner Barber designed in the 1830s for his book on Massachusetts towns. Another extraordinary item, a painting of a scene from James Fenimore Cooper's novel *The Last of the Mohicans*, came as the gift of Michael Zinman.

Daniel and Jessie Lie Farber continue to donate photographs of gravestone art to their substantial archives at AAS. Forty-two pieces of music came to the Society as a gift of Brown University, and an additional thirty-eight pieces were purchased, including a rare edition of music from Handel's *Acis & Galatea* (Philadelphia, 1823).

Many people contributed to our exhibition program. Volunteer Sally Levinson, with Georgia Barnhill's assistance, used notes accumulated by Loren Ghiglione, AAS member and immediate past president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, to produce the exhibition on newscarriers that coincided with the annual open house for the AAS Alliance group. Member William Reese, a rare book dealer, was curator for the next exhibition, which celebrated the 350th anniversary of printing in British North America. He wrote the catalogue for the exhibition and presented the address at the Society's annual meeting. Maryemma Graham, a faculty member of the English department at Northeastern University, was the guest curator for the exhibition on Afro-American authorship, which was also the subject of her well-attended lecture. The major fund-raising event of the year featured the magician and historian of magic, Ricky Jay, who is also an AAS member. The catalogue for this exhibition served as the program book for the event. Susan J. W. Gordon of our cataloguing staff drew upon her own collection of needlework materials as well as books from the library to create her exhibition on nineteenth-century needlework. This was mounted to coincide with the needlework competition and display that was sponsored at the Salisbury Mansion in Worcester. The Society mounted an exhibition on New England literature to coincide both with a visit to the Society by an NEH-funded summer institute at Colorado State University and with the Society's Seminar in the History of the Book in American Culture. The final exhibition of the year was prepared by William Ziobro, professor at the College of the Holy Cross, for the benefit of an NEH-funded seminar that explored the relationship between the classics and the Constitution.

The Society again lent material to other institutions in the United States for exhibitions, including fifty-six items that traveled all the way to the Higgins Armory in Worcester for a display of children's books and toys that featured medieval themes.

This year has been a disruptive one for the manuscripts department, with two changes in the curator's position. At the end of December, Barbara Trippel Simmons left to have a baby, and on August 22, 1990, Sidney E. Berger left to take the position of head of special collections at the University of California at Riverside. Thomas G. Knoles began working as curator on August 20, 1990. Mr. Knoles has an M.L.S. and Ph.D. in classics from Rutgers University, where he worked in the Department of Special Collections. He and his wife, a professor at Assumption College, moved to Worcester in 1984, and he has worked the past six years as a reference librarian at the Worcester Public Library.

The manuscripts department had its abundance of patrons, almost three hundred, who called for eight hundred collections. The curators wrote over two hundred letters and fielded more than two hundred telephone inquiries. This tremendous volume of activity demonstrates once again the need to have more than one person to staff the department.

Although the department accessioned only twenty-three collections, some are truly wonderful additions to the Society. One of the most exciting, the James Fenimore Cooper Papers, was bequeathed to us by the author's great-great-grandson, Paul Fenimore Cooper, Jr. Eight boxes of material join the one box that had been put on deposit at the Society in 1985. Combined with the Society's unparalleled collection of Cooper's printed works, these manuscripts make AAS the primary Cooper archive in the country.

Before she left, Mrs. Simmons wrote a grant proposal to be incorporated into an RLG proposal to NEH to fund the retrospective conversion of manuscript collections at ten RLG institutions. The grant was awarded this year, and Mrs. Simmons will return on a part-time basis in February to input our records into the RLIN system.

The statistics for the Newspapers and Periodicals Department reflect the hectic pace that characterized our summer months. Patrons requested over one thousand newspaper titles, an increase of 68 percent from 1988-89. The staff answered six hundred sixty-five inquiries by letter, telephone, and interlibrary loan, a significant increase over the previous year. As usual, newspapers rather than periodicals were the primary subject of the telephone calls and letters but led only slightly in the requests for interlibrary loans. The increase in RLIN interlibrary loan requests reflects the inclusion of our United States Newspaper Program information and records for retrospective periodicals in that database. Joyce Ann Tracy, curator, placed six hundred records for current and retrospective periodicals into RLIN, one hundred more than last year.

The Society added the following materials to its collection: by purchase, thirty-two newspaper titles and thirty-one periodical titles; by gift, thirty-seven newspaper titles and twenty periodical titles. Sixteen new subscriptions to current periodicals brought that total to 674. The Society receives from the federal government materials from 187 depository categories. Among the interesting titles received are: *American Repertory* and *The Repertory* from St. Albans, Vermont; *Columbian Gazette* from Utica, New York; *Volks-unterrichter/People's Instructor* from Easton, Pennsylvania; *Gem of the Prairies* from Chicago; *Lincoln Telegraph* from Bath, Maine; *Gazette of the United States* and *Philadelphia Daily Advertiser*; the *Publisher's Circular* of London for 1838-78; the *Book-finishers Circular* of London for 1845-51; the *Lily* for 1854-58; and the *Pennsylvania Freeman and the National Enquirer and Constitutional Advocate* for 1836-39.

Staff members continue to contribute an interesting array of professional activities, including program committee meetings of the Research Libraries Group and projects of the Worcester Area Cooperating Libraries. Babette Gehrlich attended the annual meeting of the American Institute of Conservation in Richmond, Virginia, and the triennial meeting of the International Commit-

tee for Conservation in Dresden, East Germany. In preparation for the AAS magic exhibition, Georgia B. Barnhill attended the Los Angeles conference on magic history sponsored by the Mulholland Library. She participated in discussions at Monticello to help plan for the 1993 celebration of the 250th anniversary of Thomas Jefferson's birth. In August, Marie E. Lamoureux was invited to attend the Allen Family reunion in Northborough, Massachusetts, where she spoke to a gathering of two hundred about the genealogical and local history collections of AAS. We have received the first two manuscript boxes of Allen Family papers of the many promised to us by family members.

Two members of the cataloguing department attended summer courses at Columbia University's Rare Book School. Doris N. O'Keefe attended the course in European bookbinding, 1500-1800, taught by Nicholas Pickwood. She has worked since then to establish a list of access terms to be used in describing bindings in our collection. Alan N. Degutis attended a course in American bibliography, 1820-1914, taught by Michael Winship. The course was especially useful in illuminating methods and circumstances of nineteenth-century book production.

Mrs. Barnhill presented a session on book illustration at our Seminar in the History of the Book in American Culture, lectured to a group of secondary-school teachers from Colorado on prints produced during the New England Renaissance, and presented a lecture on book illustrations by F.O.C. Darley at the North American Print Conference that was hosted by the High Museum in Atlanta. She also lectured on nineteenth-century art books and prints at the Newport Art Association. Joanne D. Chaison wrote a research note on indices for American periodicals that generated increased use of these resources. Sidney E. Berger's work for the Bibliographical Standards Committee of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section of the American Library Association culminated in the publication of *Thesaurus of Paper Terminology*, designed for use by rare book cataloguers. His annotated *Bibliography of Medieval English Drama* was published in January, and the article

he wrote on the Green family of printers for the American Printing History Association was accepted for publication by *Printing History*. He finished the text of his book *The Design of Bibliographies*, which will be issued next year by Mansell Publishers.

I served on the preconference planning committee of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section of the American Library Association. The meeting was held in Minneapolis in June. I was elected chair of the Board of Directors of the Worcester Area Cooperating Libraries and of the Advisory Board of the Northeast Document Conservation Center, and I will serve in both of those positions in 1990-91. I continue to serve on the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners' Advisory Committee on Collection Management.

The Society granted me a two-month research leave to complete a project that my husband and I have been working on for a number of years: *Black Biographical Dictionaries, 1790-1950*, a microfiche set and three-volume guide. The microfiche set has already been issued, and the guide will be published in 1991 by Chadwyck-Healey, Inc. Without the assistance of the Society, we could not have finished our work on time, and I am grateful to the Council for granting this leave. I am in debt to Eleanor S. Adams and Joanne D. Chaison, who took over many of my daily tasks so that I could spend the month of January in Washington, D.C.

Over the past two decades the Society has developed extraordinarily sophisticated and useful access to our collections. It is difficult to remember that when I first became head of readers' services in August of 1978, not only were none of the online projects under way but there were over fifty separate collections that had virtually no public access. Now we have checklists developed by the readers' services staff for most of the previously uncatalogued collections, and a few have been fully catalogued; we have the 175th anniversary guide, which the library staff initiated and wrote to help readers; and we are anticipating an online catalogue. The Society is a completely different place in 1990 in terms of the kinds of access and services that it provides its readers. It is not a coinci-

dence that every year, when the reports come in from our NEH-funded and AAS-funded fellows, we consistently receive the highest accolades for collections and services. Readers not only find a first-rate staff that works diligently but they also find a staff genuinely interested in their work. In my estimation, it is this more than any other single factor that accounts for the significant increase in scholarly use of the library.

At the same time that we are providing enhanced services to increasing numbers of readers, we have also added to our agenda frequent public lectures, Alliance events, colloquia, and special conferences that often involve the staff, the AAS American Studies Seminar, and the Seminar in the History of the Book in American Culture. It is important to note, however, that the number of public services staff in the library has actually diminished. The Manuscripts Department lost the position of assistant curator in 1981. The other public services departments (graphic arts, newspapers and periodicals, and readers' services) have had exactly the same number of staff people for more than a decade. I think it is now time to take stock of the increasing demands on our public services staff and allocate Society resources commensurate with their needs.

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