Report of the Librarian

DURING the past year the accessions of the Library have been less numerous but more valuable than usual. They have included 5119 bound volumes, 3760 pamphlets, 2105 engravings, broadsides, maps, and manuscripts, and 41 unbound newspapers. This brings the number of bound volumes in the Library to 250,275, and of pamphlets to 387,844, or a total of 638,119 titles. The most important accession, comparable only with his like donation of two years ago, was Mr. James M. Hunnewell's gift of about a hundred volumes of which no less than fifty are rare or unusual. The collection includes the entire library of material relating to Christopher Columbus built up by Mr. Hunnewell's father, one of our devoted members of the previous generation. The cornerstone of the collection is a beautiful specimen of the edition of the Imago Mundi used by Columbus. There is an almost complete set of the facsimilies of the Columbus letters, several being John Harris reproductions, of each of which only five copies were printed. The earliest of the secondary works is a copy of the Venice, 1571, edition of Ferdinand Columbus' biography of his father. The most important items in Mr. Hunnewell's gift, however, are in the New England field. Among these is John Cotton's Gods Promise to His Plantation (London, 1630) in which the author rules out conquest as a means of obtaining lebensraum for God's people. There is a copy of the Act of Parliament of 1649 incorporating the Society for Propagation of the Gospel in New England, and a copy of the London, 1653, edition of the Platform of Church Discipline. The latter was the Brinley specimen, of

which signatures A and B were imperfect: we combined it with a fragment which had those signatures in good condition and the Increase Mather autograph on the title page. There is one Cambridge Press imprint. John Allin's Animadversions (1664), and two Mather items which delight the eve: a particularly beautiful copy of Increase Mather. Brief History of the War with the Indians (London, 1676), and a copy of Cotton Mather. Late Memorable Providences The political troubles of their day are (London, 1601). represented by a copy of The Humble Address of the Publicans of New England (London, 1601), which tells of the plunderings of politicians who are described as being a "gang" as "greedy as hell." Skipping to the period of the next revolution. there is Abiel Leonard's Praver Composed for the Benefit of the Soldierv in the American Army (Cambridge, 1775) in which he assures the Diety that he has not entered the war because of "lust for independence." On the other side is the Form of Prayer printed at London the following year, asking God "to restore tranquility among His unhappy deluded subjects in America, now in open rebellion against His Crown." A very unusual item is the Rules and Regulations for the Massachusetts Army, printed at Salem in 1775. An unique part of the Hunnewell gift is a collection of 270 ship's cards, most of which advertise clippers in the California trade.

After the death of our friend and associate, Matt B. Jones, a member of the Council gave us a very considerable sum of money in order that we might acquire at the sale of the Jones library the items which were lacking in our collections. By this means we obtained eighteen rare pieces, including such choice items as John Josselyn, *Two Voyages to New England*, (London, 1674) and the *Manifesto* of the Church in Brattle Street (Boston, 1699). The lot was particularly strong in such political material of the Revolutionary period

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as the Constitution of the State of New York (Philadelphia, 1777), the Debates of the Convention of Virginia (Petersburg, 1788-89), the Exeter and New London editions of the Articles of the Confederation, and a copy of Brackenridge, *The Death of General Montgomery* (Philadelphia, 1777) with the very rare plate.

From Dr. Rosenbach came a collection of early Philadelphia almanacs aimed to plug certain holes in our collection. These included:

Titan Leeds, American Almanack, for 1717, 1719, and 1738.

Jacob Taylor, Almanack, for 1719, 1744, 1745, and 1746. Thomas Godfrey, Pennsylvania Almanack, for 1736.

Andrew Aguecheek, Universal American Almanack, for 1762.

Dr. Rosenbach also gave us a copy of the Young Man's Companion with the imprint of William and Andrew Bradford, New York, 1710. This is the first known and located American arithmetic; but more than that, it contains, according to its printers, sets of tables, a dictionary of words, a biographical dictionary, the history of the world, the prayer book, a secretary's guide, and a legal guide.

Mr. Wilbur Macey Stone gave us eighteen particularly rare early juveniles. In the Hunnewell collection there is a copy of *The Holy Bible*...with Cuts. For the Use of Children, printed at New York in 1790. Through exchange we acquired one children's book not in Evans: Benjamin Keach, *Instructions for Children* (New York, 1695). We have obtained two more Isaiah Thomas juveniles, *A Bag of Nuts*, "the first Worcester edition" (1786), and *The History of Little King Pippin*, "third Worcester edition" (1800). Of the former, we already had a copy, but as it was unique and lacked the title page, it was by error assigned to 1787.

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Of these Thomas juveniles we now have all of the titles and ninety-six of the one hundred and one editions of which specimens are known to exist; of sixteen other editions, no copy is known.

Among the good items which we acquired by exchange and purchase were two Mather pieces. The first, Cotton Mather's Durable Riches (Boston, 1605), is not particularly rare and was therefore an annoving lack. The second was Increase Mather's Sermon Shewing that the Present Dispensations of Providence Declare. that Wonderful Revolutions in the World are near at Hand (Edinburgh, 1713). An interesting Franklin item is his Cool Thoughts on the Present Situation of our Public Affairs (Philadelphia, 1746). This tract (anonymous. like other of his offspring) describes roval government in a strangely rosy light. We have acquired another unusual Philadelphia imprint, entitled Ten Minutes Advice to Every Gentleman Going to Purchase a Horse out of a Dealer, Jockey, or Groom's Stables (1775). This advises prospective buyers to look the horse in the eye: "After having carefully satisfied yourself as to his eyes, let him be brought out, and have him stand naked before you; then take a strict view of his countenance, particularly with regard to the chearfulness of it, this being an excellent glass to observe his goodness and best perfections." Strangely enough, the buyer was not instructed to study the countenance of the seller. Our copy lacks four pages which have been supplied in photostat; there is a perfect copy at the Racquet Club of New York.

Our collection of early American poetry has been enriched by the purchase of *A Poem on the Unsuccessful Measures Taken by the British Army*... *Printed in 1782*. The signature of Ezekiel Kellogg appears at the end of our copy, thus confirming the attribution of authorship made by Kellogg's grandson in a letter now with the copy of the pamphlet at Brown. Dr. Rosenbach gave us a hitherto unrecorded item of poetry by one Ebenezer Smith: A Vindication of Lawful Right & Rational Liberty ... Including two Letters to a Public Authority, Concerning the Baptist Churches of Woburn & Reading, Mass. (Leominster, 1807). At the end of the prose part of this tract are two long poems, "No Order Without Good Practice," and "Improvement in the Musical Art." Almost as readable is the Book of Common Prayer in the Mohawk language (London, 1787), which we were fortunate to acquire. A different kind of Indian item is Abraham Panther's Very Surprising Narrative of a Young Woman, who was Discovered in a Rocky Cave; after Having been Taken by the Savage Indians of the Wilderness, in the Year 1777, and Seeing no Human Being for the Space of Nine Years (Greenfield, 1796). With its tale of seduction and kidnapping this is a foretaste of the modern tabloid newspaper. More probable is Noah Jackson George's Memorandum of the Creek Indian War printed by R. Lothrop for the author at Meredith, New Hampshire, in 1815. This is not only the first record of the pamphlet but also the earliest known Meredith printing.

From the Hearst collection we acquired an interesting broadside, the Letter from the Country, in which John Dickinson assailed the privileges of the East India Company. By purchase we acquired William Croswell's Mercator Map of the Starry Heavens (Boston, 1810) on which the constellations were delineated by a Harvard student, Samuel Harris, who was drowned immediately thereafter in the Charles. Like most large libraries we have the pamphlet which was printed to accompany the map, but of the latter we have been unable to find any other copy.

The American Antiquarian Society Library has for some time been very strong in sheet music printed prior to 1870 and has now embraced an opportunity to bring the collection

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of popular music practically down to the present. This opportunity took the form of the gift of about 10,000 pieces of sheet music by a group of publishers who were interested in the project by Mr. Elliott Shapiro. There is no doubt that future students of social history will find this collection comparable in importance with the Nathaniel Coverley ballads which Isaiah Thomas purchased in 1815. Two very unusual music items which came to us by gift of Mr. Henry Lowell Mason were Lowell Mason's Musical Exercises for Singing Schools (Boston, 1838 and 1851), in which the notes are printed large enough to be read across the room. By purchase we acquired Tans'ur's Royal Melody Complete (Boston, 1767) and The American Musical Magazine. published at New Haven by Amos Doolittle and Daniel Read in 1786. The twelve numbers of the latter are in the original blue covers.

Our collection of newspapers has grown by purchase, by exchange, and particularly by the gift of several rare early files from Mr. John H. Scheide. Some of the more important of the accessions are:

San Francisco and Sacramento, Weekly Rescue, 1864-69, 1875-77 Sacramento Daily Union, 1863-65 New London, Connecticut Gazette, 1802, 1805 Chicago American, 1835-36 New Orleans, Weekly Picayune, 1843-48 Farmington, Maine, Daily Patriot, 1863 Baltimore Evening Post, 1809 Baltimore, Federal Gazette, 1796 Lynn, Organ, 1854 Lynn, Tatler, 1848 Natchez Daily Courier, 1836 Catskill Packet, 1794-95 New York City, Atlas, 1830-32 New York City, Spirit of the Times, 1887-91 New York City, Weekly Visitor, 1804-06 New York City, Young Men's Advocate, 1832-33

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Poughkeepsie, American Farmer, 1799 Cincinnati, National Republican, 1828-32 Easton, Pennsylvania Herald, 1808-10 Doylestown, Pennsylvania Correspondent, 1804-06, 1808-09, 1818-19 Philadelphia, Alexander's Messenger, 1840-41 Philadelphia, Aurora, 1807 Philadelphia, Country Porcupine, 1798-99 Philadelphia, Freeman's Journal, 1781-85 Philadelphia Mercury, 1827-29 Philadelphia, National Gazette, 1833 Philadelphia, Press, 1870-72 Washington, Pennsylvania, Western Telegraphe, 1795-97 Charleston, State Gazette of South Carolina, 1787-88, 1790

Twice this year our hearts have been gladdened by the arrival of large boxes of new books from the office of our associate, Mr. Frederic G. Melcher. We have been so accustomed to the necessity of waiting for remainder sales of current books that a box of the newest history and biography stimulates the entire staff. From Mr. Frank J. Metcalf we received two hundred volumes of recent biography to strengthen one of our most important collections. Mr. Slater Washburn and Mrs. Esther Crosby, children of Charles G. Washburn, gave us what we needed from his library of modern history and biography as well as his important collection of material relating to Theodore Roosevelt. Mrs. Mary Gage Rice gave us some valuable volumes of history, literature, and Worcester material from the library of T. Hovey Gage.

In a recently acquired Bible printed by Robert Barker, London, 1610, we found this exciting inscription in a seventeenth century hand: "Mark Palmer New Plymouth Ano dom 1622." There were Palmers in Plymouth at that time but this is the first record of a Mark. There is in the Bible this further clue to his identity which we shall leave to the genealogist to work out: "John Palmer the son of Mark Palmer was baptized the Foure and twenty day of october In the year of our Lord god A. D. 1613 in Boston [?] Church by John Tookey."

The disastrous fire which consumed the private library of our associate, Mr. Goodspeed, induced his neighbors, Charles Knowles Bolton and Ethel Stanwood Bolton, to turn over to us twenty-seven volumes of manuscripts. These include diaries and account books of James Parker of Shirley which continue the file already in our possession. The greater part of the manuscripts are the private correspondence of the Bolton and Stanwood families of which those of the historian, Edward Stanwood, are already of historical importance.

From Mr. John H. Scheide we have received two interesting lots of manuscripts, one of them dealing with drunkenness, profanity, and assault in Connecticut in the 1740's. One of the glimpses of the "American Scene" afforded by these papers is the black slave Hercules, who did upon the Lord's day in time of divine service in the Norwich meetinghouse assault a free man, and did "Kick him with his foot against the Peace of Our soveraign Lord." The other collection given by Mr. Sheide relates to the early days of the telegraphic fire alarm system.

From Miss Louise Bigelow we received ninety-three volumes of the manuscripts of the Reverend Andrew Bigelow of Boston including a day-by-day diary from 1835 through 1876 and journals of European tours in 1816–17 and 1826–27.

From Mrs. William A. Dick of Wilmington, North Carolina, we have received as a gift a most interesting collection of the manuscripts of Sukey Vickery, author of *Emily Hamilton, a Novel, Founded on Incidents in Real Life. By a Young Lady of Worcester County.* This was the first novel issued in Worcester and was printed by Isaiah Thomas, Jr., in June, 1803. Mrs. Dick is the great-granddaughter of Sukey Vickery and Samuel Watson of Leicester, Massachusetts, her father being Edward T. Draper, son of Martin T. Draper and Caroline Burr Watson, daughter of Sukey Vickery Watson. The collection consists of manuscript poems in Sukey Vickery's own hand, a page from her diary (dated December 18, 1815) revealing her charm of personality, several newspaper clippings from the Massachusetts Spy in 1801 and 1802 containing her printed poems, her own copy of Emily Hamilton, and two interesting letters. One of these letters was written to Isaiah Thomas, February 13, 1802, concerning Emily Hamilton and Miss Vickery's desire not to be known as its author. Dr. Charles L. Nichols in his Bibliography of Worcester attributed the novel Emilv Hamilton to "Eliza Vicery," an error which was copied by Wegelin, Sabin, and Wright. Sukey Vickery Watson had a daughter Eliza, which may have been the reason for the confusion of names. The authorship of the novel was credited to Sukey Vickery by Joseph A. Denny in one of a series of "Reminiscences of Leicester," printed in the Worcester Spy of November 22, 1873. The Leicester Vital Records and the Watson Genealogy, 1894, establish her identity without a doubt. This gift of interesting Vickery manuscripts came at a particularly appropriate time because Mr. John B. Bennett of Worcester was already engaged in a study of Sukey Vickery at this Library, prepared as his thesis at Wesleyan University. Another curious manuscript which we have received is Dr. Thomas H. Gage's record of physical examinations for draft exemption during the Civil War. It is an unique record of the aches and pains of the inhabitants of this region.

Many of our old friends and sister institutions go unthanked because we have grown so accustomed to their kindnesses, but we should mention the fact that the Worces-

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ter Public Library has again given us truck loads of recent city directories which, although very valuable to us, are beyond our purse when new. J. S. Wesby and Sons, the oldest firm of Worcester binders, has continued to present to the Library quantities of current Worcester material which would not otherwise come to our attention.

When I became your librarian a year ago it was with the degree of information concerning the Library, its problems, and its policy which the average member has. I had worked in the collections, I had heard the reports of Mr. Brigham and Mr. Vail; but when I became librarian I was surprised at a number of things, some of which I am going to call to your attention before I have become callous to them.

The first morning in my office I noticed two large boxes labelled "Announcements of books we would like but cannot afford to purchase." Very soon I discovered that the monev available for book purchase covers only the moderately priced books in a very few of the fields of American history. The phrase on our letterhead, "A National Library of American History," states a goal rather than a fact; we can systematically cover only a portion of that field. In general, we buy regularly in but six large fields: American imprints before 1821, early newspapers, early American literature, state and local history, American arts and crafts, and American genealogy. Even in these, we must beg before we can buy. One of my first tasks as your librarian was to put a little more pathos in the form letters which we send to authors before giving in to the evil necessity of having to buy their books. The mass of new books in American history and biography we must go without. Those members of the Society who sent apologetic notes with their contributions of five or twenty-five dollars in answer to our appeal this year did not realize how many five dollar items we sacrifice for lack of such horseshoe nails.

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Our other famous special collections, such as almanacs and first editions, have been built up in the past generation because the bibliographical skill and guile of two remarkable men have overcome these financial handicaps. Their technique has been to watch collectors develop a field, to wait until the bibliographers had worked out the problems and the first great collectors had died. Then, when prices had collapsed, Mr. Brigham and Mr. Vail stepped in and reaped the harvest. When one hears of a great collection of American literary first editions one naturally thinks of rarities and high prices, but actually our collection, possibly the largest in existence, was for the most part acquired in lots of dozens and twenties, at so many cents rather than at so many dollars an item. By this system of collecting our Library has attained unique strength in several special fields, whereas if it had spent its time and money on building up a general collection of current publications it would have been just one more good library. But one result of this policy of developing special collections is a degree of weakness in standard books which would be a shock to most of you. We lack many such invaluable common sources as, for example, the revised edition of Hutchinson's History of Massachusetts, because they have never been remaindered and have not appeared in second-hand book dealers' catalogues. Our weaknesses in authoritative secondary works are also noticeable. To take a typical example, although our collection of source material regarding American canal companies is among the best, when a member of our Council sought material on the Middlesex Canal, we had to borrow the authoritative monograph from Harvard for his use.

There is no hope, barring a great increase in endowment, that we shall in the future be able to afford to buy the bulk of recent and new books which we must have if we are really to be a national library of American history. But if our members and other friends cannot send us Cambridge Press imprints and early American ballads to fill the gaps in our collections of such rarities, they can remember us when they are discarding from their private libraries the volumes which are no longer of use to them. When I first studied the purchasing policies and possibilities of the Library, this situation distressed me, but the gift during the past year of the four lots of modern books mentioned earlier in this report encourages me to hope that we shall not have to do without these essential tools.

Had I the means to make one change in the purchasing and collecting policy of the Library, it would be to build up our collection of the original narrative type of source material. The bulk of European travellers' accounts and the records of early journeys in the new states, the most interesting and important part of the original narrative material, is beyond our grasp because of the heights to which collectors of Western materials have driven prices; but we can obtain the autobiographical material which the first settlers in the newer states and men and women of every profession are writing. For the most part these books are published in very small editions but because few libraries buy them, they are now to be obtained at relatively low prices. Not much material of this sort comes in by gift because little of it is of enough general interest to find its way into private libraries.

During the past year I have frequently been surprised, as Mr. Brigham still is occasionally, at the strength of the Library in various fields, and I have felt a growing awe for the wisdom of Isaiah Thomas and our early librarians in marking out and laying the foundations for the paths along which the Library has developed. This year we found two examples of the collecting foresight and thoroughness of the founders. The Library of Congress proposed to revise the

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check list of the publications of the first fourteen congresses and sent us an inter-leaved copy in which to indicate our holdings and enter any unlisted items which we might have. A few hours of work showed that we had so many hitherto unrecorded documents that the interleaving would not provide for them. In the end it turned out that we had between 150 and 200 printed documents which were not in the Library of Congress; these they photostated for their own use. Mr. Brigham had a similar experience in checking our holdings for the American edition of the Short-Title Catalogue of English Books, 1475–1640. Although this Library has never been in a position to buy early English imprints it now possesses, largely due to the energy and wisdom of the founders, nearly a thousand early English titles. comprising one of the better collections in the country. It would appear from the preliminary lists that we reported 103 titles not to be found in any other American library and that we had no less than 77 which were not reported in England, or which varied from copies recorded there.

Considering the relatively small purchasing funds available, the growth of the Library has been phenomenal. During Mr. Brigham's librarianship it doubled, and during Mr. Vail's shorter tenure, it increased by twenty-five per cent. This has been in spite of a policy of sending to specializing sister institutions truckloads of such material as the agricultural studies published by state colleges and various recent state publications which in no way relate to history, archaeology, education, or literature. By such painless amputation of useless growth we have obtained space for this year's accessions. Although we now receive only 18 current newspapers and, in general, refuse to buy any printed after the Civil War, we have been driven to construct a curious and wonderful stack in the old coal bin which I hope some of you will view. In order to house our own archives, which are increasingly used by students, we have been obliged to spoil our manuscript room by building wooden cases which cut off one end.

Equally serious is the small size of the staff which is struggling with this great collection of books. During these last years the Library has functioned successfully only because Mr. Brigham and Mr. Vail have gone without vacations and made a practice of working nights and Sundays. This has now become a habit of the Director; many a morning I find that the pile of work which was on my table at five the night before has disappeared. Unless the financial situation changes radically, the Library will not again be able to afford at one time the services of two men with the energy and technical competence of Mr. Brigham and Mr. Vail. We have only one cataloguer, and during a considerable part of last year we were without her valiant services. The illness of our assistant librarian, Mrs. Mary R. Reynolds, has deprived us during almost the entire year past of the knowledge and skill which only her sixty years of service could develop. Our daily correspondence is all that our two overburdened secretaries can handle. Certain important bibliographical work which requires letter writing must proceed at a snail's pace, if at all, for lack of stenographic assistance. Frequently we lose items advertised in dealers' catalogues because we cannot check our holdings soon enough.

Due to the curtailment of government funds, the W.P.A. projects carried on in the Library have been temporarily suspended since June last. But the important project of listing the marriages in the *Columbian Centinel* from 1784 to 1840 was completed and the similar record of deaths was finished as far as copying was concerned, leaving only the alphabetizing and final typing. This presumably will be continued and completed as soon as the W.P.A. grants are restored.

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The task of combining our psalmody collection with that of Bishop Peach and checking the result against Mr. Frank J. Metcalf's bibliography has long hung over our heads as a problem with which our regular staff could not cope. The past summer, however, Mrs. Homer Gage showed her continued interest in the Society by the gift of funds which permitted the employment of Mr. Valmore X. Gaucher upon that task.

This shortage of help is greatly aggravated by the fact that, largely due to lack of space and cataloguers, the old arrangement of our collections has broken down. Originally the Library had a typical early nineteenth-century system with alcove, shelf, and volume numbers marked on the back of each book. A few of the alcoves have grown into special collections, such as state and local history, which lend themselves to alphabetical arrangement. One of our most useful collections, the genealogies, has been catalogued according to the Library of Congress classification. Our American imprints before 1821 are being pulled out and the pamphlets among them given modern cataloguing and placed in chronological order. But hundreds of other early American imprints are scattered through the old alcove sections which can now be called classifications only by courtesy. The old, small-card, catalogue may show that a certain book is in E 21 or W 49, where it was placed, if a recent accession, simply because there happened to be a hole the right size on a shelf there. The book has no item number, so the searcher may have to take dozens of volumes from the shelf before he finds the one he is seeking. The hours which we lose every day searching for books would soon enable us to revise the troublesome portions of our collections if we could only stop looking for books and devote our time to reorganization.

Our problem is not one of the entire reclassification of the Library, however. When living in Cambridge I discovered

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that for certain fields it was more economical to collect my references and make a special trip to Worcester to consult these collections than it was to attempt to find the items I wished in the libraries of Boston and Cambridge. But this advantage applies only to certain of our collections which have been recently reclassified.

One of the chief reasons why, in the last twenty years, the printed output of American historians appears to have exceeded that of all the rest of the world put together, is that the American scholar can consult a dozen books while his foreign fellow is struggling to extract one from the depths of a library. The arrangement of library books by subjects has been one of the two most important mechanical aids to productive scholarship in the last three centuries. When we are forced by lack of space to shelve books in any hole they may fit, we are going back to the dark ages of library science. When, as result of this system, we take twenty minutes to find a book, we are whittling twenty minutes from the productive life of a scholar who has cost society many thousands of dollars. If all of our collections were arranged as some of them are, so that the reading room attendant could step to the shelf and get any book called for without having to consult a card catalogue and then search among unnumbered books in the old alcove classification or among the uncatalogued sections, we would be making a great contribution to the productiveness of American scholarship.

Hardly a day goes by but we receive a request for a microfilm copy of some of our treasures, but we have to reply that the nearest place where such copies can be made is a commercial agency forty miles away. Usually the requests are for films of newspapers, which are too large for safe transportation to the photographer. Rare books I sometimes carry to Cambridge in order to obtain microfilm requested by sister institutions, but obviously such service must be exceptional. The art of microfilming has now reached the point where we can no longer convincingly play the part of the wary angels.

The fact that you have had only a half-time librarian during the year past has worked out as well as could be expected considering the shortage of hands in the Library. My continued connection with Harvard University and with the Massachusetts Historical Society has enabled me to do myself many favors in my different capacities, and indeed would be a thoroughly satisfactory arrangement if there were less work to be done. Every member of the staff of the American Antiquarian Society during the past year has patiently aided my blundering progress. Above all, it has been a joy to work with Mr. Brigham, whose knowledge and skill in the profession are unique, and whose kindness and patience are as rare as the treasures he has gathered here.

Respectfully submitted,

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