

Maine Historical Society Quarterly

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THE SOCIETY

Annual Meeting: By unanimous vote of the Standing Committee, Herbert T. Silsby, II of Ellsworth, became the eighteenth President of the Society, succeeding Roger B. Ray of Cape Elizabeth. Mr. Silsby's election marks the first time since 1924 that the residence of the President has been outside greater Portland. Herbert Silsby is prominent in historical and legal circles in the State of Maine and has published a number of articles of historical interest. Martial D. Maling of Portland succeeded Miss Elizabeth Ring as Vice President. Miss Ring served the Society for nineteen consecutive years as Vice President and was the first woman to serve on the Standing Committee. Both the outgoing President and Vice President were given a hearty vote of thanks for their outstanding stewardship to the Society. In accordance with the 1969 revision of the Bylaws, neither the President nor the Vice President are allowed more than three years in office. Harry W. Rowe of Lewiston was reelected Secretary and Arthur T. Forrestall of Portland was reelected Treasurer.

Robert B. Williamson of Augusta, recently retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court of Maine, was newly elected to the Standing Committee. On the same ballot, three past presidents of the Society were re-

elected to serve three year terms on the Standing Committee: Messrs Albion, Philbrick, and Ray; Mr. John Hakola of Orono and Mr. Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr. of Portland completed the list of those elected.

A driving, penetrating rain reduced attendance at the 151st Annual Meeting at Orono to ninety. Those members determined enough to brave the elements discovered the University of Maine's impressive and comfortable hospitality. The Society, with a membership presently of 1,485, was reported by its officers and Director to be in splendid condition after 151 years of operation. Even though the Treasurer was understandably cautious, nevertheless he reported that the Society had ended the year quite definitely in the black financially. In addition, three important bequests from the estates of Emma Morse Brady, Grace B. Morton, and Margaret Jewell, increased the endowment for operating funds by \$84,000.

By the end of the fiscal year (March, 1973) one-third of the membership had contributed \$16,000 to the *150th Anniversary Building Fund*, about half the amount needed to proceed with construction. Any additional contributions to the fund would be most welcome to complete this number one priority project which aims at doubling the Society's storage capacity for manuscripts.

The Society Library in Portland was visited by some 5,586 people during the year, about one-half of them members, and 1,151 reference questions were answered by mail. The Wadsworth-Longfellow House was visited by 7,246 people during the four month summer season. 172 pages of *Newsletter* were published during the year and one *Bibliographical Guide*, Roger B. Ray's *Maine Indians*. William Willis's *History of Portland* was reprinted in cooperation with the New Hampshire Pub-

lishing Company. The Staff of the Society was increased by one, thanks to the Grace B. Morton bequest, when the position of Registrar-Curator was created. The Registrar-Curator acts as Head Hostess for the Wadsworth-Longfellow House during the summer months.

There were no awards for the Annual Prize Essay Contest this year. Although several essays showed good use of source material, and some displayed considerable originality; none of the papers submitted this year fulfilled that overall excellence described in the Contest criteria. In announcing the unanimous decision of the three judges, Dr. James S. Leamon, Chairman of the Publications Committee, explained that they felt that if the criteria for excellence were not carefully upheld, the Contest would rapidly become a meaningless annual exercise. He also expressed the hope that by holding to rather high standards, the Committee had not discouraged this year's entrants from participating during another year.

Mr. Joseph A. Miller, Librarian and Lecturer in History at the Yale School of Forestry gave an important Annual Meeting address, and we hope to reproduce it on these pages in the near future.

NEW MEMBERS

FROM MAINE Bucksport: Alfred E. Conners
Cape Elizabeth: Josephine Cobb, Nancy Hancock, Mrs.
T. H. Kurtz, Pauline W. Pero *Farmington Falls:*
William C. Hiss *Fort Kent:* Danny Michaud *Hamp-*
den: Mrs. Hope-Lindsay Ryan *Hollis Center:* Mrs.
William K. Lasley, Jr. *Houlton:* Chauncey Robbins
Portland: Dr. Helen Batchelor, Martha N. Turville,
Carlyle B. Voss, Mrs. Barent S. Vroman *Raymond:*
Frank H. Pratt *South Portland:* Dana C. Rydell
Winterport: Mrs. Barbara H. Warren.

Other States CONNECTICUT Winsted: Mrs.
Edward L. Burke *MARYLAND Baltimore:* Richard
K. Gould *NEW HAMPSHIRE Concord:* Mrs. Harry
Royce *VIRGINIA Vienna:* Mrs. Jean M. Cummings.

LIFE MEMBER

Mr. William B. Jordan, Jr.
Portland, Maine

PUBLICATIONS

Before the next regular issue of the *Quarterly* members will receive two special publications. Miss Elizabeth Ring, immediate past Vice President of this Society, teacher of Maine history and bibliographer, is the latest contributor to the Society's *Bibliographical Guide Series*. She has revised a project upon which she began work in 1935, a list of Maine bibliographies. This comprehensive listing has been used informally by various librarians and researchers since it was first compiled. It is long past due as a full-fledged publication. In addition to the bibliography of Maine bibliographies, Miss Ring has written a fascinating history of the progress of local history in this state which will be included.

Historical Society members will receive a second publication as a direct result of the meeting of the Maine Academic Historians last October. The paper read on that occasion by Miss Margaret J. Buker (of Bates College and the University of Virginia) proved to be so interesting that members of the Maine Academic Historians (all of them members of the Maine Historical Society as well) wanted to share it with others in more permanent form. Financial cooperation was sought from colleges throughout the State and the results were heartening. Responses from five colleges, Bates College, Colby College, and the University of Maine at Fort Kent, Orono, and Portland-Gorham were sufficient to proceed with the publication. In addition to Miss Buker's paper on the Irish of Lewiston, Maine, the special issue of the *Quarterly* will include a first annual listing of "Research in Progress in Maine History" and descriptions of formal courses and other activities relating to Maine history taking place on the campuses around this State.

Maine Becomes a State by Dr. Ronald F. Banks, published by the Society in cooperation with Wesleyan University Press in the fall of 1970, will be reissued this fall in cooperation with New Hampshire Publishing Company in paperback form at about one-third the price of the original edition. In its new paperback form, *Maine Becomes a State* will be lacking only in appendices; the monograph stands complete. The book has been extremely well received by the scholarly press. Some examples: "As a work in Maine history, it represents one of the most significant additions to Maine bibliography in recent decades," *The New England Quarterly*; "This book not only provides the last and most authoritative word on the crucial episode in the history of a state but also illuminates the nature of political struggle during the formative years of the republic," *The Journal of American History*; "Banks has written a book so rich in data, so sensible in interpretation, that it will remain for a long time the last word on how Maine became a State," *William and Mary Quarterly*. Since the book is presently out-of-print, it is wonderful to be able to extend the life of this obviously classic work on Maine history in a new, modest format, allowing wider audience to own and enjoy it.