

Maine Historical Society Quarterly

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THE SOCIETY

Operating under the theory that retrenchment now will avoid insoluble difficulties later on, several measures have been implemented this fall which will have a noticeable effect upon the Society's services to the public. These economy moves were indicated in the reports at the last Annual Meeting as published in the Spring, 1975 issue of the *Quarterly*.

The position of Registrar & Curator was terminated in October. Part of the responsibilities in this area will be assumed by the Director's office. However, it will be impossible to serve the public from the museum collections (requests for photographic reproductions, general information, etc.) without a Curator on the premises, and the Standing Committee has agreed that there will be no attempt to do so during the next two years, or, until such time that the position of Curator can be restored. During this period, as time allows, there will be an attempt to refine and work out systems for adequate retrieval and storage of museum collections which have accumulated over the past century and a half.

The position of Reference Librarian has been reduced from full-time to half-time, ironically, just when use of the Society's printed resources is accelerating. This serious reduction is possible only because the Cataloger is also an excellent Reference Librarian. However, this will result in a noticeable decrease in the amount of cataloging and catalog revision, and in the number of reference questions answered by mail.

These reductions have a human dimension too. We shall all miss Hannah Adams, particularly in her role as administrator and curator at the Wadsworth-Longfellow House. It will take a great deal of effort on the part of the House Committee and the Director to maintain the spontaneity and enthusiasm we have enjoyed at the House during the past several seasons.

It is devoutly hoped that it will become financially possible to restore this lost yardage in due season. Given the strength of its membership and expanded programs, it would seem that the Maine Historical Society is not entering upon an extended period of dormancy—which was most certainly the case in the 1930's. In order to hold firm to what we now have, the Society will need to rely upon the support and influence of its membership. In raising the dues for Active Membership to \$15 this January, the Finance Committee hopes that members will take into consideration that the director and the Standing Committee have done their best to impose serious economy measures before turning to the membership for increased support.

Security System: Thanks to a generous gift from two of our Portland members, Mr. and Mrs. J. Weston Walch, electronic surveillance systems are being installed in both the Society Building and the Wadsworth-Longfellow House. The long felt need for an adequate security system becomes more urgent each day. The threat is not so much theft, our security spaces are well guarded, as it is mindless vandalism; and the Society's gratitude to the Walch's for their timely gift is great indeed.

Honors: In November, the Maine Historical Society achieved national recognition as recipient of the American Association for State and Local History's *Award of Merit*. The award was presented to the Society "For its expanded and highly effective programs in publications and manuscripts."

Certificates of Commendation were awarded by the AASLH this year to two Maine institutions and one individ-

ual: Ralph B. Skinner of Auburn, "For six decades of work in preserving and interpreting the historical heritage of Androscoggin County, Maine." The Bethel Historical Society, "For an effective program of preservation, publication, and education." and to the Old Berwick Historical Society, South Berwick, "For a comprehensive and effective program of local history."

Workshop on Maine State Documents: A daylong workshop entitled: "An Introduction to Maine State Documents for the Local Historian and Reference Librarian," to be sponsored by the Maine Historical Society is being planned for next April. The workshop will be conducted by Dr. Edith L. Hary, Librarian of the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library, Miss Margaret A. Whalen, Director of Special Services at the Maine State Archives, and Mr. David Rabasca, Documents Librarian at the Maine State Library.

Although most historians and research librarians have gained some exposure to federal documents during their training, few have had the opportunity to learn about state documents. Thanks to the enthusiastic cooperation of Dr. Hary, Miss Whalen, and Mr. Rabasca, at least an introduction will be offered to this highly important body of source materials.

No pre-registrations can be accepted; but if you are interested, be alert for the official announcement and application forms which will be sent later on this winter. Of necessity the workshop will be strictly limited to fifty participants.

NEW MEMBERS

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