

works, regarded his greatest by many. It has been said that "Alciphron" is redolent of the fragrance of rural nature in Rhode Island, and of the invigorating breezes of its open shore. A visitor to Whitehall once read some of these descriptions remarking that they were copied from the charming landscapes in that delightful island which lay before Berkeley at the time he was writing.

Though Berkeley loved the quiet and seclusion of Whitehall, he entered into the community life of Newport. He found pleasant associations in the company of clergymen, lawyers, physicians and enterprising merchants. Many of them he found qualified to engage with him in philosophical discussions and debates.

He was active in forming a philosophical society whose members included prominent leaders and thinkers of the day. This Society, among other activities, sought to collect books, and out of it originated Redwood Library. Likewise, Whitehall was a meeting place for missionaries and educators who resided nearby and elsewhere in New England. In the meantime he continued to correspond with his friends in England relative to his original plans to establish a seat of learning in America. This project never materialized although its chief proponent lost none of his enthusiasm for the purpose of his journey to America.

He continued to spread the circle of his acquaintance in New England attracting

more and more to his presence and influencing the minds and ideals of those who sought to explain life and its complexities. Sorrow darkened Whitehall in the fall of 1731 — Berkeley's second daughter Lucia died and was buried in the ancient burying ground beside Trinity Church where her father often preached to distinguished congregations. A letter to a friend written shortly after this domestic tragedy indicates that Berkeley, his wife and surviving child, soon bade farewell to Rhode Island. They sailed from Boston in November and Berkeley reappeared in London in February 1732. Two years later he was raised to the bishopric of Cloyne, and his career thereafter was one of great distinction. From his busy pen came countless masterpieces of philosophical composition revealing the mature thoughts and wide reading of their author. He died January 14, 1753 and his remains were deposited in Christ Church, Oxford.

Bishop Berkeley's brief sojourn in Rhode Island had profound influence upon the great and near great, for he turned their minds, for the first time, from the problems of state and the routine activities of community existence to analyses of life and to spiritual understanding. He inspired those about him during his stay in the land which he found delightful, and he left behind a memory of one who towered above the intellectuals of his day.

EARLY RHODE ISLAND LIBRARIES

THE church must be given a considerable amount of the credit for the early promotion of education and the spread of knowledge in the early days of Rhode Island; in fact, the same can be said for all of the American Colonies. Particularly, the first Rhode Island library institutions were dependent upon some church connection or influence for their existence and early development. Later, the larger part of the libraries in the State became important factors in the general educational system, especially when their

great value became apparent to school authorities, and when reading and research increased in popularity among students and among persons who sought cultural advancement. But the church brought about the founding of the first libraries, and some of the first books that were available to Colonists were those which had been sent here from England for the enlightenment and edification of the clergy.

The first public library founded in Rhode Island was a parochial institution

located in New
lished, in 1700
Rev. Thomas
comprised less
containing only
tended to instru
truths and do
that about half
theological char
preachers, and
a similar type b
study by layme
about one hund
none of this rea
fiction or other
those serious d
the pleasure of
adventure and
content with po
religious tenets,
and articles of t

The second l
originated in Ne
Bishop Berkeley
purpose of disc
jects and collect
a granduncle o
prominent amo
society and he
officers for a gre
of the outstandi
society was "th
and virtue," th
that the gather
one of the most
they could ad
object. At fir
society were fe
series of debate
activity soon ce
gies of the gro
accumulation o
able work soo
and interest o
wealthy Quaker
of £500 with w
London, and, a
vocated the ere
to house the co

In August, 1
Company was
eral Assembly,
Doric structur
Harrison, whos
profound influe

to his presence and minds and ideals of those explain life and its com- w darkened Whitehall in '31 — Berkeley's second died and was buried in ing ground beside Trinity er father often preached congregations. A letter itten shortly after this y indicates that Berke- d surviving child, soon o Rhode Island. They ston in November and are in London in Febru- ears later he was raised to Cloyne, and his career one of great distinction. n came countless master- hical composition reveal- oughs and wide reading

He died January 14, nains were deposited in xford.

ley's brief sojourn in l profound influence upon ear great, for he turned the first time, from the e and the routine activi- y existence to analyses piritual understanding. e about him during his hich he found delightful, d a memory of one who e intellectuals of his

BRARIES

me apparent to school when reading and re- in popularity among ng persons who sought ment. But the church e founding of the first e of the first books that o Colonists were those ent here from England ment and edification of

ic library founded in a parochial institution

located in Newport, where it was estab- lished, in 1700, through the efforts of Rev. Thomas Bray. This pioneer library comprised less than one hundred books, containing only literature that was in- tended to instruct and inculcate religious truths and doctrines. Records disclose that about half of these volumes were of a theological character for the special use of preachers, and that the remainder were of a similar type but intended for perusal and study by laymen. In addition, there were about one hundred pastoral letters, but none of this reading matter included any fiction or other amusement reading. In those serious days, a reader was denied the pleasure of reviewing tales of travel, adventure and romance, for he had to be content with ponderous dissertations upon religious tenets, scriptural interpretations and articles of the faith.

The second library in the Colony also originated in Newport when the illustrious Bishop Berkeley formed a society for the purpose of discussing philosophical sub- jects and collecting books. Edward Scott, a granduncle of Sir Walter Scott, was prominent among the founders of this society and he was one of its most active officers for a great many years. Since one of the outstanding purposes of this learned society was "the promotion of knowledge and virtue," the members soon decided that the gathering of a library should be one of the most influential measures that they could adopt to bring about that object. At first, the meetings of the society were featured by the holding of a series of debates, but this form of cultural activity soon ceased and the entire ener- gies of the group were devoted to the accumulation of books. This commend- able work soon attracted the attention and interest of Abraham Redwood, a wealthy Quaker, who contributed the sum of £500 with which to purchase books in London, and, at the same time, he ad- vocated the erection of a suitable building to house the collection.

In August, 1747, the Redwood Library Company was incorporated by the Gen- eral Assembly, and plans for the beautiful Doric structure were drawn by Peter Harrison, whose structural designs had a profound influence upon architectural art

in America. The building is standing today, with some additions and changes, on Bellevue Avenue in Newport, across the street from Touro Park, the park that the Old Stone Mill has made famous. It seems proper to call Redwood Library the oldest in America because it is the oldest library still in use. There are some who will dispute that this Rhode Island library is the oldest of all since two others were founded before the Redwood institution was established. One of these was the Library Company of Philadelphia, founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1732, and the other was the private library of James Logan of Philadelphia, who erected a special building for his book collection in 1747. However, the Newport library remains the oldest in use today, and it probably had its birth in the mind of Abraham Redwood at a much earlier date than the year when the building plan was suggested.

In constant use, the building stands today in perfect condition, in spite of age and the abuses to which it has been sub- jected. When the British occupied New- port during the War for Independence, the building was damaged somewhat, and some of the books were carried away by enemy soldiers. The General Assembly met in the library on September 11, 1780, the nearby State House being unfit for the purpose after it had been occupied by the enemy soldiers who also seized all of the Newport houses of worship with the exception of Trinity Church. At this time, both building and company were found to be in a very discouraging condi- tion, therefore efforts were made immedi- ately to improve this condition. This was not brought about until 1790, when a petition for the renewal of the company's charter was granted by the General Assembly, and this measure with others opened the way to the permanent estab- lishment of Redwood Library. By means of a lottery and with gifts from several sources the endowment for the institution was increased and the collection of books, manuscripts, records, art treasures, etc., that it contained was safely preserved.

The original building designed by Harrison is now the front room of the library and it faces west on Bellevue

Avenue. The architectural style is after that of an old Roman temple of the Doric order, with the pediment of the front supported by four columns of pure Doric character. This section of the building originally had a window with three sections, gracefully arched and enriched with Ionic columns. When the structure was enlarged, this window was moved to the north side, where it may be seen today at the end of the second building, or reading room. On either side of the front, or Harrison room, are two small rooms, really nothing more than alcoves, one of them for children, and the other for members of the medical profession. To the right of the main entrance on Bellevue Avenue is a tiny room where many of the first books owned by the library are stored. Most of these ancient volumes are bound in leather, rather musty now, and growing dry and yellow with age. Examination of these precious books shows the absence of frivolity in Colonial times. Most of them deal with subjects of theology, history and science, with only an occasional book of poems or fables.

In 1858, after the first building had served for more than a century, it was found necessary to make an addition to serve as a reading room. The architect for this addition to the library building was Mr. George Snell of Boston. Later, other enlargements were made by the addition of a large room which is now used for delivery purposes, although it was first used as a stack room. In 1913, the Perry stack room was built of fireproof material and it was expected that this equipment would meet requirements for many years to come, but like most of our libraries of today, no amount of room and facilities seems to be adequate for the demands of a reading public. There is a quiet atmosphere of culture and literary inspiration within the historic walls of Redwood Library enhanced, perhaps, by the memories that hover about the old center of educational uplift. From the time of its founding the institution exerted a great influence upon the cultural development

of Newport, although, for a period, this inspiration was lost. It survived the reckless vandalism of enemy troopers when many of its precious volumes were carried away; it was once the State Capitol of Rhode Island; and its splendid contributions to educational advancement have been generously supported by many of the most distinguished figures of Rhode Island history.

Among the other very early libraries in the State was one which was established in Glocester in 1794, for the incorporation of which, sixty-four persons petitioned the General Assembly. It was named the Union Library Company, and it was authorized to hold property to the value of \$5000. Books were purchased and kept in a private school house in Chepachet, and the library continued in existence for about thirty years. Other early libraries were established in Johnston, West Greenwich, Foster, Scituate, Smithfield, Burrillville and other country towns but very little is known of their histories. An act of the General Assembly of January 1840 provided that the school committee in each town might appropriate the sum of \$10 out of the school money distributed to each district for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a district school library "for the use of the children therein." Shortly after that, Henry Barnard was appointed by the Governor as an agent to investigate the condition of the schools throughout Rhode Island; he also served as school commissioner and devoted much of his time to the establishment and encouragement of school and other libraries.

Today, Rhode Island abounds in public and private libraries, many of which are nationally important, particularly those connected with Brown University and the Rhode Island and the Newport Historical Societies. Every little hamlet and all country districts have plenty of good books to read — if no library exists in a certain section, the State sends books there so that no one is deprived of wholesome literary pleasures.

EARLY in the life of King George and De C... educated in his family in... journeyed to... cleared at the... of New York... northern co... foundland b... a continuous... completely... ship's mast... bearings, an... on board, f... favoring wi... nearly reach... port harbor... struck the... rocks not fa... Fort Adam... others were... and his th... daughter. ... the vortex t... the vernal... solate and... which alte... firmest fab... eventually... wretched h... make an eff... to rear and... What litt... lost in the... realizing th... perform in l... forth all hi... ments to se... which woul... honest and... The town... then a pla... fame, beca... the wealth... only remind... and of his... Newport fa... north to the... of Mount F...