

NEW YORK SOCIETY LIBRARY

2

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Annual Report

of

The Trustees of the New York Society Library

THE Trustees of the New York Society Library present to the Shareholders this their report for the year ending March 31st, 1936.

Eighty years ago, on April 28, 1856, the Trustees met in their new building at 67 University Place (now 109 University Place) and the annual meeting of the Shareholders was held on the following day.

Phelps' Guide to New York City, 1857, says: "This is the oldest and most extensive public library in the United States. The institution was first incorporated in 1700, under the name of "The Public Library of New York." Its name was changed to its present one in 1754. The whole building most conveniently arranged, affords room for 100,000 volumes. It now contains 40,000 volumes, many of them exceedingly rare." It was then located at 67 University Place.

The Trustees have had under serious consideration for the last two years the purchase of another piece of property so that the Library could be moved from its present location. A committee was appointed for that purpose and they have considered many sites. On April 4, 1936, upon the authority of the Trustees, I signed a contract for the purchase of No. 53 East 79th Street, New York City. It will be necessary to make certain alterations so that the building may be converted for our own purposes and it is hoped that the Library will be enabled to move into its new quarters some time during the Winter of 1936-1937. By virtue of the generous gift of the late Sarah C. Goodhue we have been able to do this.

For many years, this Library was supposed to have the only copy in New York of The Book of Common Prayer printed by William Bradford in 1710. There was a copy sold at the Brinley sale in 1880 and resold in January 1935 at auction in the Ogden Goelet sale, and is now in a private collection in New York.

Mr. Henry E. Gregory whose resignation from the Board of Trustees was noted last year, was for many years an associate of the late Andrew H. Green, "The Father of Greater New York."

Mr. Gregory spent his boyhood in New York City and was familiar with the present library building, which at that time was uptown New York. For many years, he served as Secretary of the annual meeting of the Shareholders. He had been a member of the Board of Trustees since 1914 and was also a member of the Library Committee. His genial presence and sound judgment will be very much missed.

Mr. Henry James who had been a member of the Board of Trustees