



Longfellow House Bulletin

Volume 2 No. 2

A Newsletter of the Friends of the Longfellow House and the National Park Service

December 1998

Congress Approves \$1.6 Million for Longfellow National Historic Site

On October 15 Senator Edward M. Kennedy announced that Congress had approved \$1.6 million dollars for a major restoration of the Longfellow House and its carriage house. The funds were contained in the Omnibus Appropriations Act for the fiscal year 1999.

The approval followed a great deal of effort on the part of Senator Kennedy. According to the *Boston Globe*, the senator recited Longfellow's "Paul Revere's Ride" to West Virginia Senator Robert Byrd, a history buff and top Democrat on the Appropriations Committee, as part of a months-long, behind-the-scenes effort to obtain the funding. Senator Kennedy had memorized the entire 130-line epic poem as a child.

"The Longfellow House deserves this strong federal support," said Kennedy. "It has one of the most extraordinary archives in the nation with thousands of documents on America's early history and literary development. It is a



Senator Edward Kennedy at the House with Deputy Superintendent John Maounis (left) and Site Manager Jim Shea (right)

fascinating place for people of all ages to learn about our nation's past. But this magnificent house is in jeopardy and needs extensive restoration to protect it. I am

pleased that Congress agreed to fund this much-needed renovation."

The \$1,645,000 in funding will cover the costs of rehabilitating the House and the carriage house in order to preserve the site's outstanding collection of more than 600,000 artifacts and its extensive archives of letters, books, and documents and also to make them more accessible to the public. Contractors soon will be implementing plans for new fire suppression, security, and electrical systems to bring the House up to the necessary standards. The carriage house will be renovated to accommodate classroom, lecture, and staff work space.

"I congratulate the National Park Service staff and the Friends of the Longfellow House for laying the groundwork for this important undertaking," Senator Kennedy commented. The senator visited the House on a number of occasions to speak with the NPS staff and assess the situation first hand.

Packing, Moving, and Repairing Recall a Longfellow House Tradition

The Longfellow House closed its doors to visitors on October 24 to begin its year-and-a-half-long comprehensive rehabilitation. In preparation, the House staff will pack all the objects in the House and safely stow them out of the way of the construction work. Often considered an art form itself, packing museum objects requires an understanding of points of stress and fragility of materials, all of which the staff studied at a workshop last spring. The packing and moving process has begun and is expected to take five months.

Packing and moving at the Longfellow House have a long tradition. When Henry and Fanny Longfellow purchased the house

in 1843, worn carpets, outdated wallpapers, and peeling paint testified to its eight decades of use. Fanny surveyed the "carpetless stairs—and desolate halls" and "could not get the desolate rooms out of her mind." Henry Longfellow confided to his diary, "Troubled in mind about this old castle of a house and the repairs. He who undertaketh a great house, undertaketh a great care."

In the early years of their marriage, Fanny and Henry packed up and moved family bedrooms as the family increased in number. Periodic refurbishing occurred

during the annual spring and fall housekeeping rituals, and were carried out by the family's servants.

Though a time of relaxation for the Longfellow family and their friends, early summer and fall were periods of intense work for the family's servants. June was a month of great activity, as the Longfellows struggled to finish

spring housekeeping and simultaneously pack for their annual summer stay in Nahant. The servants pulled down trunks from the attic and laundered and pressed a

"Troubled in mind about this old castle of a house and the repairs..."

—H. M. Longfellow, 1844

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Packing and Moving (continued from page 1)

supply of clothes for the journey. In addition, the house had to be preserved for the summer, in keeping with standard nineteenth-century housekeeping practices. Ornate gilded frames and light fixtures were covered with muslin to protect them from insects and dust since window screens were not commonly used. One time the family was so hurried that Fanny Longfellow herself climbed a ladder to “bag” a chandelier. Upholstery textiles were protected from bright summer rays with linen slipcovers, woolen drapes were stored in camphor trunks, woolen rugs were rolled in peppercorns or tobacco to keep out moths, and silver was polished and wrapped in cloth for storage. Fireplaces were swept and blocked with fire boards; andirons were carefully stowed away in newspaper wrappings. In September the process was reversed: Fanny wrote to her sister of the “bustle of getting settled at home, putting down carpets, getting the children ready for autumn weather...”

Today’s conservation standards differ, but much nineteenth-century wisdom holds true. The staff will continue to use soft laundered muslin to swathe delicate veneer tables, linen tapes to tag oil paintings in gilt frames, and acid-free boxes to store textiles. However, recent technological developments suggest that, for proper cushioning of delicate museum objects, fragile items be packed with inert and low-abrasion materials which don’t absorb humidity.

Inventorying and packing every piece in each room will bring great rewards. Museum staff will gain comprehensive knowledge of the site’s collections and their preservation needs, and may even make some new discoveries. As teams of museum staff move through each room, they perform discrete steps of the project. A registration team tags each artifact, updates all catalog records, notes location and any preservation issues. The next team packs the museum collections, using archival supplies. Finally, as the construction date draws near, a security team will shift museum collections within the rooms, out of the way of construction work. Protective barriers will be constructed to separate the museum collections from any dust, sawdust, or harm.

Like the Longfellows at the end of a long summer in Nahant, the Longfellow House staff looks forward to “unpacking” in the spring of 2000 and enjoying the new rehabilitated facilities.

State Funds Earmarked for Longfellow Park

The Cambridge Historical Commission announced in August that Massachusetts Senate President Thomas Birmingham initiated and secured \$155,000 for Longfellow Park, formerly part of the poet’s estate between the House and the Charles River, as part of a \$1.95 million appropriation for the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

The grant, to be managed by the Cambridge Historical Commission, is meant to enhance the setting of the Longfellow House by improving the landscaping, providing interpretation of the park’s historic importance, and recasting a bust of Longfellow sculpted by Cambridge artist Daniel Chester French, designer of the Lincoln monument in Washington, D.C., and the Minuteman monument in Lexington.

The park was created in 1883 by the heirs of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow as a means of preserving a view of the river and the meadows, which the poet commemorated in his verse. It was originally designed by Charles Eliot, a prominent landscape architect. The heirs deeded the park to the city in 1907.

“Longfellow Park is of national significance,” Birmingham said. “With new signs and renovations, the site will, as Longfellow wrote, ‘summon from the shadowy past, the forms that once have been.’”

Zilpa Longfellow, Henry W. Longfellow's mother, in a letter, 1843
 [Nathan Appleton] has purchased [the House] for them, also the lot in front, that their view of the River Charles may not be intercepted.

The Longfellow House is closed for renovations, but you can still visit it at... www.nps.gov/long

On our website you can stay up-to-date on the progress of the rehabilitation. Our mail order brochure posted there will allow you to purchase many items previously found in our bookstore. And if you would like to contact us for any reason during this time, simply E-mail us at: frla_longfellow@nps.gov

Interview with Two Longfellow Descendants... Frankie Wetherell and Edie Bowers

by Ruth Butler

I spoke with Frances Smith Wetherell of Cambridge, a great-grandaughter of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Fanny Appleton, and Edith Hollmann Bowers of Boston, a great-great-grandaughter. All Fanny and Henry's descendants are from their two youngest daughters, Edith [Dana] and Anne Allegra [Thorp], and, therefore, none bear the Longfellow name.

Ruth Butler. Did you know the Longfellow House before you moved to Boston at age seven?

Frankie Wetherell. Oh yes! I can't remember when I didn't know the House because my mother talked about it a great deal. Also, I was named Frances Appleton and was brought up to know the history of that name and be proud of it. We would come to stay with my aunt Alice Thorp at 115 Brattle Street—two doors from the Longfellow House on the other side of the Dana House—so it was easy to go over and visit. When I was very small, I remember my mother, born Priscilla Alden Thorp, giving me a pair of silver sauce boats that she said her grandmother Fanny wanted me to have.

R.B. That must have been when Harry Dana was living in the house. Did you know him very well? Did he live there alone?

F.W. No, not well. He was quite formal and not at all comfortable with us children, but he certainly knew who we all were. He rented rooms to students from the neighboring Episcopal Theological School.

R.B. But you felt this was a family house?

F.W. Definitely—everyone stayed there. Members of the family who came to Cambridge regularly stayed there. If someone was studying in college for a term, they would live at the house. It was wonderful.

R.B. What do you remember of the period when the family was considering giving the house to the National Park Service?

F.W. A great deal since my mother and her sister Anne Thorp worked very hard once it was agreed that the Park Service would take it. They went over everything in the House and decided what should remain, sorting out what had been added by Alice Longfellow or Harry Dana. We used to go down there and sit around the dining table and look at things. I would say, "I want those wine glasses," and my mother would reply, "You can't have them."

R.B. How did family members feel about turning the House over to the Park Service?

F.W. I think most of the family was pleased it was going to be taken care of. We all knew the Trust could not cope any more; there was just not enough money. But one of the requirements set down by the Park Service was that money come with the donation of the House. So we all signed off on our rights to any money that was in the Trust.

R.B. Did you always have a sense of your special heritage?

F.W. Oh, yes! We were brought up with that. And we were brought up with the poetry. My father read us the poems, especially *Hiawatha*. It's perfect for a child—so musical. When I was in school, they were still



Frankie Wetherell (left) and Edie Bowers

reading Longfellow's poems, but by the time I got to high school, his place was definitely on the decline. Kids would say, "Oh, him," but he remained treasured in the family.

R.B. Speaking of treasures, what did you eventually come to own?

F.W. Odds and ends—some china, a couple of rugs, a table. Now that the Park Service has decided to interpret the House through Alice Longfellow's day, I'm going to see if they want these things back. I already gave Alice Longfellow's damask dinner napkins. I was thrilled to see them on the dining table at the Christmas open house. I also gave Fanny's journal and most of the things that dated back to her time—like the wonderful silver and coral rattle that was a copy of Charley's as a child.

R.B. What do you think of the Park Service as custodians of the House?

F.W. I think they are wonderful. They have done a great job bringing out the best in the House, working with the archives, making it all more accessible, and letting the public know what is there, not to mention the concerts and public programs. And they have been marvelous with the family. We thought when it went to the Park Service, "Too bad, we've lost the family home," but right from the beginning they

welcomed us in the most extraordinary way. It's still a family home for us. And now I find that my niece and nephews, who are in their thirties, are coming to share my sense of excitement about it. It's very satisfying.

Ruth Butler. Edie, how did you become part of the Friends?

Edie Bowers. I was sitting in the basement of the House reading my great-grandmother Edith's letters when Jim Shea mentioned that a Friends group was forming—would I be interested?

R.B. Why were you reading your great-grandmother's letters?

E.B. At the annual wreath-laying ceremony at Mt. Auburn Cemetery on Longfellow's birthday, Jim told me he had recently uncovered watercolors by Edith Longfellow. Being a painter, I was naturally interested in seeing what she had done. When Jim mentioned he had Edith's letters, I became interested in finding out whether art had been a special focus for her. Was this just something women were supposed to learn, or was it something of deeper value for her? There are so many letters. I am still in her teenage years.

R.B. So this is an ongoing project?

E.B. In a way. I want to know what kind of person she was. I also should read things written to and about her. But mostly I have taken this on as a golden opportunity, a way to be connected to my past. Also, I hope that my children will come to have a greater sense of the House and the family. They think it's sort of fun, but their interest isn't that strong. I am not an ancestor worshiper at all, but I do not want this heritage to die out.

R.B. How many letters of Edith Longfellow do you think there are in the House?

E.B. Hundreds—no, thousands. I was reading letters from a summer Edith spent in Nahant. She must have written to every friend back in Cambridge and to her sisters and to cousins, someone every day—a huge number of letters in a short period.

R.B. What did the House mean to you when you were growing up?

E.B. Well, I had mixed feelings about it. My father was a professor at Princeton, so I grew up in New Jersey. At different times various family members spent summers at the House. When I was first married, we lived north of Boston; when we wanted to spend a weekend in Boston, we stayed at the

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Longfellow House in Print

Recently, the Longfellow House has been the subject of several articles in the *Boston Globe*. On September 4, 1998 it ran an editorial supporting necessary federal funding for rehabilitation of the House. On September 5 Michael Kenney wrote an in-depth piece for the Living Section entitled "Face Lift for Longfellow: Work Planned on Poet's Full House of History." Following approval of federal funding, on September 16 the front-page story "Personal Touch Pays Off for Bay State Delegation" described the hard work to secure funding for Massachusetts.

The *New York Times's* editorial of May 25, 1998 calling for more federal money for our national parks mentioned the Longfellow House as a case in point: "...a gorgeous Georgian mansion stuffed with priceless artifacts and archival treasures."

An article by Christine Guth in the December 1998 issue of *Orientalism Magazine* discusses the attitudes of early American collectors—including Charley Longfellow—towards Japan and its culture.

Christine Wallace Laidlaw is the editor of *Charles Appleton Longfellow: Twenty Months in Japan, 1871-1873* published in July by the Friends of the Longfellow House. (See "Publication Party" on page 6.)

As part of their World Writers series, Morgan Reynolds Inc. of Greensboro, North Carolina, has just published a young adult biography called *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: America's Beloved Poet*, which is illustrated with photographs.

*Henry W. Longfellow's
Inaugural Address at Bowdoin College,
(where he taught from 1829-35)*

I regard the profession of teacher in a far more noble and elevated point of view than many do. I cannot help believing that he who bends in a right direction the pliant disposition of the young, and trains up the ductile mind to a vigorous and healthy growth, does something for the welfare of his country and something for the great interests of humanity.

Interviews with Two Longfellow Descendants (continued from page 3)

House, which we, of course, called the Craigie House. We had cocktail parties there after football games.

R.B. What a wonderful idea! It's such a warm house. I can imagine entertaining there.

E.B. It's not only warm, I find it full of ghosts—happy ghosts. But it was simply our house, and that is how we used it. My brother told me that Frank Buda, the major-domo for such a long period [see *Longfellow House Bulletin*, June 1997] used to point us out as descendants to people on tours.

R.B. Harry Dana lived in the house until he died in 1950. How well did you know him? Did your family, as Danas, feel a special claim on the House?

E.B. He was my great uncle, but I don't remember him well. I have a vivid memory from childhood, a breakfast with him on the corner porch on the second floor off the Japan room. As for special claim—no, any of the Longfellow descendants were free to use the House. My memories are vague because I was quite rebellious and had no interest in Longfellow's poetry and wasn't interested in the fuss made about the House. But as I got older, I became interested and began to understand how unusual the whole thing was.

R.B. When do you think you first became aware of your heritage?

E.B. I don't remember ever not knowing

it. One memory that stands out is a visit with my parents. Frank Buda was there with his daughter. She and I went to the basement to explore and found a diary. It was very old, and I felt no one but me had ever read it or even knew it existed. That was my first personal sensation of there being something special about the House.

R.B. How did you feel when the Trust negotiated with the Park Service?

E.B. I didn't think too much about it. I was married with two small children—my interests were elsewhere, but other family members were very concerned about what the government would do, how they would maintain it, and whether we would be welcome. Over the years I have become more and more pleased about what has happened to the House. I am thrilled with Jim Shea,

his sensitivity to the House and its contents, his making it available to researchers, and his warm response to family members.

R.B. Besides reading in the archives and working as a Friends board member, how is the House important in your life?

E.B. My daughter is Allegra, my son Charles. These are Longfellow names. It is their heritage. I can imagine that one day Allegra will bring her daughter, Natalie Dana, to Brattle Street and begin to explain to her where she came from. This pleases me.



Edie Bowers "descending the broad hall stair" of the Longfellow House, 1939

Appleton Descendants Visit Longfellow House

On October 18, descendants from Nathan Appleton (Fanny Longfellow's father) and his second wife, Harriet Coffin Sumner, paid their first visit ever to the house their ancestor purchased as a wedding present for Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and his new bride, Fanny.

The visitors included several generations who could claim a direct relation to the poet's wife as descendants of her half-brothers and -sisters, since Fanny's mother was Nathan Appleton's first wife, Maria Theresa Gold. Weld Coxe, whose grandmother Dorothy Appleton was Nathan's granddaughter, organized the gathering.

Three-year old Andrew Knight and his baby sister were the youngest members of the party touring the House.



Nathan Appleton portrait

While in the archives, the descendants viewed family journals as well as photos of William Sumner Appleton, Jr., founder of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA), and his sister Dorothy Appleton. They saw paintings that had once belonged to Fanny's brother Thomas Gold Appleton, who bequeathed many works of art to the House, among them paintings by George Healy, the artist who painted the portrait of Nathan Appleton which hangs in Longfellow's bedroom.

Women Artists at the Longfellow House

Although often overlooked in art history, nineteenth-century women artists figured prominently in the Longfellow home. Henry Longfellow, a great appreciator and collector of art, and his family acquired works from many contemporary women artists, which are on view in the House or stored in its archives. Nancy Jones, Museum Educator at the Longfellow House, has researched some of the women artists connected with the House and put together a special tour introducing these women and their works to visitors.



"Sandalphon" by Florence Freeman

The poet's wife, Fanny Longfellow, much preferred painting, reading, and writing to managing the household. Like many women of her time, Fanny studied art as part of her genteel education but never practiced it professionally. Women were often excluded from art schools completely or—if they did attend—from sketching the nude figure. Many of Fanny's sketchbooks still survive in the archives today, including one filled with landscape and architectural drawings from her trip to



"The Violin Player" by Maria Carlotta Greene

Switzerland during which she met her future husband.

In 1844 Fanny received, as a birthday present from their friends the Greens, a small oil painting on cardboard by Maria Carlotta Greene. Entitled "The Violin Player, the 'charming miniature,' as Fanny referred to it in a letter to her brother Tom, was a copy of a painting by the sixteenth-century Venetian artist Sebastiano del Piombo. It

hangs in the dining room. Carlotta was married to Henry's friend, a diplomat named George Washington Greene, whose bust is in the Longfellow study. In June 1846 Henry noted in his journal that he was lending the painting to the Boston Athenaeum for an exhibit—a strong endorsement of the artist by a famous man.

In 1870 a group of Henry's friends and admirers presented him with a marble bust of "Sandalphon" by Florence Freeman (b. 1836). Freeman studied in Florence with Richard Greenough and Hiram Powers, two well-known nineteenth-century American sculptors. Longfellow had written a poem called "Sandalphon" about the angel at the foot of the stairway to heaven. The bust of the angel holds a position today in the Longfellow's back hall.

Of Henry's daughter Alice Longfellow's generation, Anna Klumpke (1856-1942) was not allowed (because she was a woman) to enroll at the École des Beaux Arts in Paris. However, she was accepted at the Académie Julian where she was the first woman to win a first prize in 1888. She became a good friend of the most famous woman artist of her time, Rosa Bonheur. In the early 1890s, Klumpke returned to Boston where she set up a professional art studio—unusual for a woman then—on Beacon Street. During her first year, she received seventeen portrait commissions and earned \$5000. Many of her portraits were of women involved in the suffrage movement, educational reform, or other social causes. Her pastel "Child with a Doll" hangs in Alice's study. In a 1909 letter to Alice's sister Allegra she wrote, "You and your family have always been so cordial towards me and I shall never forget those delightful weeks spent in your family..."

Mary King Longfellow, (1852-1945) Henry's niece, also became a profes-

sional artist. In 1866 she studied painting and drawing in the House along with Henry's three daughters. Later she studied with Ross Turner, a student of William Morris Hunt. Besides working on theatrical productions and developing her own photographs, she painted prolifically. In 1885 she exhibited twenty paintings in various museums.

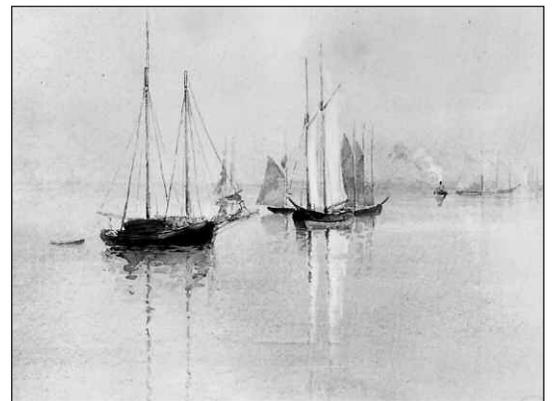
Other women artists represented in the Longfellow collection include Jane Stuart (1812-1888), who helped her renowned portraitist father, Gilbert Stuart, by painting bodies and backgrounds, and copying her father's portraits to help support her family. She received some training in her father's studio, but he refused to give her formal lessons. "When they want to know if a puppy is of the true Newfoundland breed, they throw him in the river; if true, he will swim without being taught," Gilbert said referring to his daughter Jane.



"Child with a Doll" by Anna Klumpke

In April 1858 Henry Longfellow recorded in his journal, "At the Exhibition of English Pictures with Fanny. Delighted with the watercolours. Buy 'Lake of Killarney' by Fanny Steers." The poet did indeed purchase this watercolor, which occupies a place of importance in the second floor front hall.

In the back hall hangs Rose Lamb's (b. 1842) 1886 portrait of Henry's grandsons H.W.L. Dana and R.H. Dana IV. From a prestigious Boston family, she mainly painted portraits of children. Throughout the House and in the archives are works by numerous other women artists. Their careers and relationships to the House should be of great interest to future researchers.



"A Calm Day," watercolor by Mary King Longfellow

Summer Festival Highlights

The summer series of concerts and poetry readings on Sunday afternoons took place once more on the House's east lawn. "The ambiance makes it so special," an attendee observed. "The trees, the grass, the sunshine, the architecture—it is like Seurat's painting, "Sunday on the Grande Jatte."

Leading the series, the popular Lydian String Quartet played Mozart, Brahms, and Duke Ellington to an audience of 300. The following week an international poetry reading featured Grace Paley, Claribel Alegria, Youseff Komunyaka, and John Deane.

Several programs showed influences from New England's past. The New Mendelssohn Quintet Club of Boston performed music popular in the nineteenth century, including works by Ludwig Spohr and Louis Moreau Gottschalk. The quintet takes its name from an "artistic" chamber music group that performed throughout the United States and Europe between 1849 and 1895 and was considered among the foremost chamber ensembles of its day.

"The Holy Land of Song" program took its title from Longfellow's poem "Prelude." Musicologist and guitarist David Farewell with Marlies Kehler, soprano, Jane Levin, harp, and Victoria Kehler, violin, reflected Longfellow's love of German literature and music in nineteenth-century German folksongs, ballads, and musical settings by Beethoven, Schubert, and others of poems by the German Romantics Goethe, Schiller, and Heine.

At the annual "Poets who Edit" session, Peter Davison engaged the audience in a lively discussion on the processes of editing and writing poetry. Davison, poet and poetry editor for the *Atlantic Monthly*, read from his *Collected Poems* a poem dedicated to Charles Hopkinson, a one-time resident of the Longfellow House. Davison recalled his first visit, as a Harvard freshman, to the House and tea with the Hopkinsons.

The Longy School of Music organized three programs, including the early music vocal group Liber unUsualis which sang music from the Italian Renaissance, the New World Guitar Trio which played twentieth-century classical guitar music ranging from Villa-Lobos and Manuel de Falla to a piece by David Leisner, and a Woodwind Quintet.

More than 2000 people enjoyed this year's Summer Festival, sponsored jointly by the National Park Service, the New England Poetry Club, the Longy School of Music, and the Friends of the Longfellow House.

Publication Party for Charley Longfellow Book

One hundred fifty people gathered at the Longfellow House on Sunday afternoon October 4 to celebrate the publication of *Charles Appleton Longfellow: Twenty Months in Japan, 1871-1873*, edited by Christine Wallace Laidlaw and published by the Friends of the Longfellow House. The book compiles personal journal entries and letters home by Charles Longfellow, the poet's eldest son and one of the first Americans to explore Meiji Japan, with many previously unpublished historical photographs.

The publication party began with tours of special exhibits from the Longfellow House archives of numerous furnishings and decorative arts that Charley Longfellow had shipped home from Japan. Among his acquisitions on display were silk kimono with designs of oyster shells and a leaping carp, a wood and paper screen painted with a scene of a river boatman, and works in bronze including a whimsical monkey with an extended palm serving as a candle holder.

The guests, including many from the Japan Society of America, gathered in the garden for sushi and Japanese music followed by brief remarks. The Honorable

Shinichi Kitajima, the new Consul General of Japan in Boston, noted that the poet Longfellow was well-known in Japan in the nineteenth century so his son was cordially received and given entry into circles to which few Westerners had access, including an audience with the young Meiji emperor.

Susan J. Pharr, Edwin O. Reischauer Professor of Japanese Politics at Harvard University, described Charley's expeditions



Charley's "Japanese Room" in the House, 1899

through the Ainu country and from Hakodate to Tokyo as well as his repeated requests to his family to send him some more money. Tom Woodward, a program analyst with the National Park Service, dressed in a Japanese haori and read excerpts from Charley's writings. Christine Laidlaw discussed her work on the book and highlights of her recent journey following Charley's route in Japan.

Charles Appleton Longfellow: Twenty Months in Japan, 1871-1873 is currently available through the Longfellow House's website at: fri_la_longfellow@nps.gov for \$19 (\$15 for Friends). This is the first in a series of books produced by the Friends in an ongoing project to publish some of the documents in the House archives.

Recent Discoveries in the House

While cataloguing the Dana family papers in the archives, staff members came upon a letter dated March 11, 1828 from President John Quincy Adams to Richard Henry Dana, a well-known poet of his times, thanking him for sending a book of his poetry. "I have perused this little volume with pleasure with an interest enlivened by the consideration of the relation of its author to my old friend..." wrote President Adams referring to the author's father, Francis Dana, an ambassador to Russia under whom Adams had served.

In a box of uncatalogued books in the attic were discovered two family Bibles, one from the Longfellows and one from the Danas. The Dana Bible had entries as far back as 1722 and was signed by Elizabeth Dana in 1793.

Behind a bell pull in Henry Longfellow's bedroom, the staff uncovered five well-preserved layers of wallpaper which it was then able to separate. These tangible layers of history date from the late eighteenth through early twentieth centuries. This is the only place in the House where so many wallpaper layers have been found.

Hiawatha's Wedding Feast Performed

Under the striking headline, "Stirring Strains of Coleridge-Taylor Revisited," *Boston Globe* music critic Richard Dyer hailed the October 25th performance by the Cambridge Community Chorus of Anglo-African composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's musical settings of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poetry.

The concert at Sanders Theatre celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of the choral masterpiece by Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912) called *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*, a work for chorus, tenor soloist, and orchestra with text from Longfellow's renowned 1855 epic poem *The Song of Hiawatha*.

Composed when the prolific young graduate of Britain's Royal College of Music was only twenty-three, *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*, his most famous work, was an immediate success in his native England and in the United States. Its Boston premier was in 1900 by the Cecilia Society (now the Boston Cecilia). Dyer described it as "a stirring work, rhythmically alive and a 'big sing' for choral musicians" with "a beautiful wedding song for solo tenor."

Coleridge-Taylor was an international



Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, c. 1899

celebrity in his day, and a number of Coleridge-Taylor Choral Societies were formed specifically to perform his music. Among the more notable was a 200-member African-American group organized in Washington, D.C., in 1901. They sponsored the composer's first visit to the United States where he conducted them in a concert at Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C.

The Cambridge Community Chorus, under the direction of William Thomas, also performed two ballads, "The Slave Singing at Midnight" and "The Quadroon Girl," based on selections from Longfellow's *Songs of Slavery* written in 1842.

Prior to the concert, many copies of a twenty-page centennial-concert booklet with informative essays on Longfellow and Coleridge-Taylor as well as the texts of the poems the composer set to music were distributed to Cambridge schools. During October, the main branch of the Cambridge Public Library displayed memorabilia and material pertaining to the lives and careers of the poet and the composer and included reproductions of items in the Longfellow House collection.

Henry W. Longfellow's Journal,
September 14, 1850

The day has been blackened to me by reading of the passage of "The Fugitive Slave Bill" in the House, Eliot of Boston voting for it. This is a dark disgrace to the city. If we should read in Dino Campagni that in the 10th century a citizen of Florence had given such a vote, we should see what an action he had done. But this the people of Boston cannot see in themselves. They will uphold it.

May 8, 1862

Of the Civil War I say only this. It is not a revolution, but a Catalinian conspiracy. It is Slavery against Freedom; the north wind against the southern pestilence. I saw lately at a jeweller's, a slave's collar of iron, with an iron tongue as large as a spoon, to go into the mouth. Every drop of blood in me quivered! The world forgets what slavery really is!

Upcoming Event

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Birthday Celebration. On Saturday February 28, 1999 at 10:00 A.M., celebrate the poet's 192nd birthday with a wreath-laying and reception at Mount Auburn Cemetery. This annual event is co-sponsored with the Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery.

Historian Pauline Maier Speaks at Lyceum Honoring Diana Korzenik

A lyceum evening to honor Diana Korzenik, first president and founding member of the Friends of the Longfellow House, was held in the Longfellow House library on October 29. In the tradition of the nineteenth-century lyceum, the evening featured poetry, music, and a lecture.

Pauline Maier, Professor of History at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and author most recently of *American Scripture: The Making of the Declaration of Independence*, read and analyzed passages from the diary of an anonymous soldier in the Revolutionary War. Using the diary found in the Longfellow archives, Professor Maier set forth a common soldier's experience of the war and traced the slowly developing sense of nationalism in the American colonies during the crucial months of 1775-76. At first the soldier referred to the British as the "regulars" or "Gage-ites" (a reference to General Thomas Gage), but by the next

year the soldier called them simply "the enemy." Friends board member Frances Ackerly had transcribed the diary from difficult-to-read eighteenth-century script. At the conclusion of the talk, she revealed that, through birth and death records, she had identified the soldier as Moses Sleeper of Newburyport, Massachusetts who probably moved to New Hampshire after the Revolution.

The evening began with readings and recitations of Longfellow's poetry by National Park Service interpreters Paul Blandford and Nancy Jones. NPS Deputy Superintendent John Maounis welcomed the nearly fifty guests and expressed his thanks on behalf of the Park Service to Diana Korzenik for her enthusiasm and tireless work for the

Longfellow House and the Friends. House Site Manager James Shea, Friends board member Stanley Paterson, former Longfellow House staff person Sally Sapienza, archivist Anita Israel, and Evy Davis, a personal friend of the guest of honor, all paid tribute to Diana Korzenik's inspiring work and leadership.

Liber unUsualis, a three-person vocal ensemble in Victorian-style dress, gave a virtuoso performance of early Renaissance songs by Heinrich Isaac, Costanzo Festa, and others. The full sound created using only their voices filled the high-ceilinged library, which, appropriately, was also the music room in Longfellow's day. James Shea concluded the event with the promise of many more such lyceum evenings in the future.



Pauline Maier at the lyceum

Adopt-an-Object Program

Help us tend to our most critical priorities by donating specifically to an object in need—the argand chandelier (an oil-burning lamp with a tubular wick) that hangs in the parlor archway. Recent finds completed this rare fixture whose history is now better understood.

Searching through unexplored cupboards in the attic, a visiting cataloging team found several unusually shaped gilded metal and glass pieces. Meanwhile, staff researchers studying lighting fixtures in the House identified another piece of the high-style argand chandelier and dated it from the 1820s or 30s. All the pieces were reunited at last to form a complete chandelier.

Photographic evidence shows that the chandelier may not originally have hung in the House. Its earliest recording is in an 1886 photograph of the “girl’s bedroom” at 39 Beacon Street, the childhood home of Fanny Appleton Longfellow. But photographs from the early 1900s on show the chandelier—without its multi-tiered crystals and argand fixtures—in its familiar place at the edge of the parlor. Further research is underway to determine the provenance of this highly preserved piece and the only one of its kind to hang in context.

However, this chandelier’s gilt finish is dulled and flaking, its oil-stained fixtures need cleaning, and the wires holding its Irish crystal pendants need stabilizing. Repairs will cost in the thousands. Won’t you help restore this fine example of early nineteenth-century lighting?



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