



Longfellow House Bulletin

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

June 2008

A Paul Revere House Centennial and the Longfellow Contribution

On April 18 the Paul Revere Memorial Association celebrated the one-hundredth anniversary of the restoration of Paul Revere's house and its opening as a museum. As part of the event, schoolchildren recited the stirring words of *Paul Revere's Ride*, Henry Longfellow's poem that elevated Paul Revere to mythic status. Longfellow, poet-chronicler of American history, would have been proud to know that his 1860 classic was in large part responsible for the preservation of the memory and artifacts of this Revolutionary War patriot.

Through his narrative poems, Longfellow created national myths, among them the story of the Boston silversmith who "spread the alarm through every Middlesex village and farm" that the British army was about to attack the colonial rebels. In

the process of crafting these iconic characters, Longfellow heightened the awareness and appreciation of antiquarian relics in his native region and the nation as a whole, and he popularized historic places associated with these figures.

On North Square in Boston's North End, the wooden building now known as the Paul Revere House has survived numerous transformations. Between 1676 and 1681, a wealthy merchant built it as a two-story colonial residence with a second-floor overhang. In the mid-eighteenth century the roofline was



The Paul Revere House as it was restored in 1908 and remains today

adapted to the less-sloping Georgian style, and a third story was added.

In 1770 at the age of thirty-five, Paul Revere purchased the almost century-old

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Longfellow Family Members in the Historic Preservation Movement

In the United States, the idea of preserving the nation's history through its buildings and places began gradually after the American Revolution and became an organized campaign shortly before the Civil War. Several generations of Longfellow family members were interested and actively involved in historic preservation.

Many Americans cherished and attempted to protect places identified with George Washington and the Revolutionary War. One of the first successful acts of preservation took place in Philadelphia in 1813. Efforts by local historical societies helped prevent the demolition of Independence Hall (then known as the Old State House) where the founding fathers had drafted and signed the Declaration of Independence.

Henry Longfellow himself valued the historic significance of places. Traveling in Europe where historic preservation was in



Alice Longfellow, seated third from the right, with other members of the Mount Vernon Ladies Association, 1912

evidence, Henry sought out sites connected with history and culture — such as the houses of Voltaire, Goethe, and Durer — as well as ancient ruins and castles.

Back home he served as an early preservationist. Both he and his new bride Fanny felt a special attachment to Craigie House

because it had once served as General Washington's headquarters. "We have decided to let father purchase this grand old mansion if he will," Fanny wrote to her brother in 1843. "Mr. Greene of Rome, a great friend of Henry's ... has excited an historical appreciation, or rather reminded us how noble an inheritance this is — where Washington dwelt in every room." A contemporary newspaper article reported the purchase and that the new owners planned to create a Washington room: "It is said that he intends to enrich one room, at least, with furniture that has been in the possession of Washington."

In 1850 Longfellow visited Washington's homestead in Virginia and remarked on its disrepair. "Went with C. and M. to Mt. Vernon," he wrote in his journal. "Steamed to Alexandria, and then a coach to Mt. Vernon.

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Photo courtesy of the Paul Revere Memorial Association



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Revere House Centennial & Longfellow *(continued from page 1)*

house. He lived there off and on until 1800 with his mother, his wife Sarah (and after her death, his wife Rachel), and many children.

In the nineteenth century, the building was converted to a tenement with its ground floor serving as – at various times – a cigar factory, a grocery store, and a bank. These commercial uses caused extreme changes to the structure, many of which were never documented. The building fell into disrepair as the surrounding neighborhood became home to poor immigrants. In 1900 all but four of the neighborhood's wooden dwellings from this era had been razed.

In 1902 Paul Revere's great-grandson bought the building to prevent its demolition. Three years later several prominent Bostonians – including Fanny Longfellow's nephew William Sumner Appleton Jr. – organized the Paul Revere Memorial Association. By 1907 the group had raised enough money to buy and restore the old house.

In 1908 the association hired Joseph Everett Chandler, an architect particularly interested in the seventeenth-century colonial period who had restored Boston's Old State House the previous year. He believed

that a culture could not survive without preserving reminders of its origin and character. With almost all new materials and Appleton's counsel, Chandler restored the exterior of the Revere house to its seventeenth-century appearance and the second floor interior to Revere's occupancy. Besides Revere's few possessions and other period objects that the association installed, the patriot would not have recognized his house.

"[The house] now stands," reported the *Boston Sunday Herald* on April 19, 1908, "in the very inundation and overflow of a population foreign born and coming to us utterly apart from all the traditions, history, religion and tone of the North End of Boston in 1775." Hoping to help Americanize the newcomers by introducing them to the icon his uncle Henry Longfellow had created, Appleton wanted the house to be "a constant incentive to patriotic citizenship and the study of our national institutions." He remade the house into a museum "which would draw visitors from all parts." It was one of the earliest historic house museums in the country and Appleton's first completed historic preservation project.

Longfellows in Historic Preservation *(continued from page 1)*

What a road, good heavens! And in what a dilapidated, squalid condition we found everything there! Nothing fresh and beautiful but the spring, and the situation of the house overlooking a bend of the Potomac."

In 1853 people concerned about the decay of Washington's long-time plantation home organized the first American historic preservation group, the Mount Vernon Ladies Association, and a movement was born. Comprised of women from many states, the association raised money and bought the deteriorating property.

In 1880 Alice Longfellow joined the association and served as the vice-regent for Massachusetts until she died in 1928. Using her own funds, she hired an architect to restore the Mount Vernon library. She acquired books for it and furnished it with original or period pieces.

Alice maintained her father's Brattle Street house after his death in 1882 and saw to it that the necessary modernizations to the kitchen and bathrooms did not harm its historic integrity. In 1910 she helped her cousin William Sumner Appleton Jr. (known as Sumner) found the nation's first regional historic preservation organization,

the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA), and she became its vice president. (For more on William Sumner Appleton Jr., see page 4.)

Another of Alice's cousins took part in the historic preservation movement. In 1916 Alexander (Waddy) Wadsworth Longfellow Jr., an architect who designed buildings in the Colonial Revival style, prepared sections and plans for the restoration of Boston's first Harrison Gray Otis House, which became and remains the headquarters for SPNEA (now called Historic New England). Waddy worked closely with Sumner on this restoration and several others.

In her last years Alice also participated in the rehabilitation of the Wayside Inn, another landmark her father's poetry had made famous. She helped her friends Henry Ford, the automobile manufacturer, and his wife, Clara, who had purchased the neglected building in 1923 in an effort to preserve this place of literary fame.

Alice's nephew Richard H. Dana IV continued the family interest in historic preservation. An architect in the Colonial Revival style, he restored a number of eighteenth-century homes in Litchfield, Connecticut.

Interview with a Friend...Meet Melanie Hall, Historic Preservation Professor

A professor of art history, Melanie Hall currently directs and teaches in Boston University's Museum Studies program. Her previous work included surveying historic houses and towns for the Historic Monuments and Buildings Commission in her native England. She spoke with us in the Longfellow carriage house.

Longfellow House: How did you become interested in historic preservation?

Melanie Hall: I can't remember a time when I haven't been interested in historic homes. I grew up in Yorkshire and made regular trips to the Lake District. Bradford, the city I grew up in, had a lot of beautiful architecture in Ruskinian gothic. It was an industrial town, and a lot of other people in other parts of the country back then didn't necessarily appreciate it as much as I did. We had many immigrants in a short space of time, so we became quite aware of other cultures. I was always interested in how literature, architecture, and painting had helped shape cultures.

LH: Where did you study preservation?

MH: I came to art history through a very circuitous route. I always had an interest in late nineteenth-century British literature as well as late nineteenth-century American literature. I went to the University of Leeds and studied philosophy, sociology, history, and English and American literature before I found art history. At Leeds I entered a program that no longer exists. It took four students a year, and you spent half the week at the University and half the week in a historic house with an extraordinary collection. For me, art history, architectural history, buildings, and artifacts have always felt like an integrated whole.

LH: How did you come to know the Longfellow House and its archives?

MH: I first came here as a research fellow in 2001, when I was looking at literary homes in England. I wanted to find out about Longfellow's interest in preservation and his family's tours of Britain. I had become interested in why and how we visit what we visit. I started by looking at the origins of the National Trust [in England], and then I went back further – to Shakespeare's birthplace. That was the first building that I could find that had been purposefully preserved because of its association with a historic figure and because it was a historic building. What struck me as I was looking at these various buildings was that in every case there

was a British interest and an American interest. That really piqued my curiosity. Shakespeare's birthplace had been made famous by Washington Irving, who at that stage was working in the U. K. The second greatest number of visitors (after the British) to the birthplace were Americans. So then I began to wonder: Why were Americans interested in the buildings that they're interested in?

Phineas T. Barnum, the American circus owner, had wanted to acquire Shakespeare's birthplace and take it to America, and, as



the newspapers of the day said, "trundle it around the country along with performing acts and wild beasts." It was likely that helped act as a catalyst for the preservation movement. I thought there's a story here, although it might take me a while to unravel it. Because I'd come to America, I was in a phenomenal position to look at archives in both countries. Little did I know that this material is in a lot of small archives, not one big national depository.

LH: What did you discover?

MH: After talking to Anita Israel [the Longfellow House archivist], I thought I can start here and see how Longfellow's house was preserved. I knew that Longfellow had gone to Britain and to Shakespeare's birthplace. I looked at Alice's papers. She had the most fabulous diary of a trip to Europe. It gave me an idea of what places Americans planned to visit. She was traveling with her father, who was actually interested in preservation in a very real way and was a literary figure, and the sights they were going to were the true sights. I was able to see this movement through the sets of eyes of a family in the 1860s – a

father, his daughters, and [Henry's sister] Anne Longfellow Pierce. The things that Longfellow and his sister wanted the children to see were those with religious and literary connotations – like Shakespeare's church and monument as well as his school. The children had brought with them books of poetry, and I could imagine them going around and reading their poems at the actual sites.

They also went to visit Wordsworth's house near Lake Windemere, and Alice was not quite so enamored of Dove Cottage as she was of the performing acts that were taking place elsewhere around Lake Windemere. She wrote in her diary with great enthusiasm about seeing an African dance and "eat raw liver." I began to think that possibly one of the reasons that the Lake District began to attract the interest of preservationists was because these more sensationalist entertainments were coming into the mix. This was a parallel with the Shakespeare birthplace because they didn't want it touring around America with the circus. I began to think there were two sides to this story – that preservationists had one agenda and something else that they were reacting against.

LH: How can we make house museums relevant today?

MH: We have to think about how people learn things. Children learn so much through the internet. Museums in general are going to have to make far more use of the Web. Children now use avatars so they can fly around buildings or sites with the god or goddess of their choosing. A number of house museums, including Sir John Soane's Museum in London, have experimented with Web-based tours of the house. You can go around the house and click on objects to learn more about them.

LH: It seems that many historic houses today still function independently.

MH: I'd like to see informational links between house museums through the Web, so I am starting a project with our students at Boston University that aims to do exactly this. There are houses with correspondences between them – such as the Longfellow House, Dove Cottage, and Shakespeare's birthplace – which are linked through Longfellow's tour. A student could research and write something for the Website of more than one house museum and create hyper-text links to one another. It would be a win-win situation for students and for historic houses. Like a Facebook of house museums.

William Sumner Appleton, Founder of SPNEA

In 1910 at age thirty-five, William Sumner Appleton Jr., Henry Longfellow's nephew by marriage, conceived and set up the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA), the first regional historic preservation organization in the United States. For the rest of his life, he devoted himself wholeheartedly to SPNEA (now named Historic New England) and professionalizing the preservation movement.

Sumner, as he was called to distinguish him from his father with the same name, was born in 1874 at 39 Beacon Street on Boston's Beacon Hill in a fashionable townhouse built by his grandfather Nathan Appleton, one of the founders of the textile-manufacturing city of Lowell, Massachusetts. Nathan Appleton had a great interest in genealogy and heraldry, and belonged to the Massachusetts Historical Society, the New England Historic Genealogical Society, and the American Antiquarian Society.

William Sumner Appleton Sr. lived off a trust from his father's enormous wealth and shared a fascination for the antiquarian. A founder in 1881 of the Bostonian Society (to save the Old State House), a member of the American Historical Association, and an officer of the Massachusetts Historical Society, he and Nathan Appleton may have helped instill a taste for history and preservation in the young Sumner.

During his youth Sumner spent long periods of time living with his uncle and aunt Greely S. and Harriot Appleton Curtis and their ten children nearby at 28 Mount Vernon Street. The Curtises lamented the demolition in 1863 of the John Hancock house on Beacon Hill. In their summer residence at Manchester-by-the-

Sea on Boston's north shore, they installed architectural remnants, including an elaborate central staircase, salvaged from the eighteenth-century historic Hancock home.

In keeping with his Boston Brahmin upbringing, Sumner attended St. Paul's School and Harvard College. At Harvard he studied with Charles Eliot Norton, an art historian and close friend of British critic John Ruskin. Norton appreciated archaeology, supported the Arts and Crafts



William Sumner Appleton Jr. with his cousin Priscilla Thorp on Greenings Island, Maine, 1914

movement, and encouraged preservation of the past. In a published essay, he bemoaned the "lack of old homes in America."

Close to his Longfellow-descended cousins as well, Sumner spent part of his summers on Greenings Island, Maine, with the Thorps, and others with the Danas in Manchester. As an accomplished photographer, he often captured family events and the theatrical recreations the family enjoyed so much. After college he lived comfortably but not extravagantly on money from his grandfather's trust.

When it seemed that the Paul Revere House might go the way of the John Hancock house, Sumner joined with the governor, lieutenant governor, and other important leaders to defend it. "When a similar question faced our fathers with reference to the John Hancock house," he wrote in 1905, "they stood aside and let the famous house be pulled down." As the secretary and primary force of the Paul Revere Memorial Association, he worked tirelessly. At the same time he engaged in the fight to protect — once

again — Boston's Old State House, this time from being sold and transported brick by brick to Chicago for the World's Fair.

Inspired by the work of his aunt Alice and the others in the Mount Vernon Ladies Association, he joined the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, but criticized it for being more interested "in tablets and memorials" than the architecture of historic buildings. Also, the association worked through chapters, which Sumner felt dissipated the organization's energies. He believed that historic buildings should be "placed in the hands of permanent corporations" to guarantee their endurance.

Frustrated by only a partial success at saving the Harrington House in Lexington (the owner agreed not to tear it down but remodeled it extensively), Sumner decided to start an organization called the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities that would protect historic houses in all six New England states. He immediately requested measured drawings of the original Harrington House before its alterations, recruited wealthy and influential members, and convinced the Massachusetts legislature to pass a law enabling SPNEA to own property tax free.

Before long Sumner began publishing a regular SPNEA *Bulletin* with his thoughts on preservation as well as photos of saved and destroyed historic buildings in the region. In its pages he railed against the ineffectiveness of "one-house organizations."

By April 1911 SPNEA garnered three hundred members in twenty states with local offices in all six New England states and held \$3000 in its coffers. A year later it had acquired its first two colonial buildings — The Swett-Ilsley House (1670) in Newbury and the Cooper-Frost-Austin House (1681) in Cambridge — and was working on buying a third. When Sumner died in 1947, the society owned fifty-one properties.

W. S. Appleton Jr. almost single-handedly changed historic preservation's focus from valuing buildings only for their historical associations to an emphasis on architectural aesthetics, scientific method, and historical scholarship. He carefully inventoried historic properties and used his photographic skills to document them for SPNEA, thus establishing a large archive. He developed the criteria for determining whether to preserve a building, and the guidelines and standards for authentic restoration that are still used by professional preservationists today.

William Sumner Appleton Jr.

to his cousin Anne Thorp, August 5, 1931:

"I have been putting in a number of trips, here, there, and everywhere, mostly by automobile in order to see some special objective. One of the most entertaining trips was to Brooklyn, Conn., in order to have lunch with Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt Sr., and see what I could tell her about the probable architectural history of her own house. She was perfectly delightful and living a most simple life, practically camping out in her own ancestral home the President never even set eyes on and the very existence of which he probably knew nothing.."

Longfellow's Poems Helped to Preserve Historic Places

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow spent a lifetime writing verse, based on historical themes, that helped popularize and shape the nation's image of its own past. The extraordinary success of such poetical works as the *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (1863), "The Skeleton in Armor" (1841), and "The Jewish Cemetery at Newport" (1854) also made the settings of the poems famous and inadvertently led to the preservation of particular sites.

In thinking about writing his epic collection of poetic tales, Longfellow noted in his journal on October 11, 1862: "Write a little upon the Wayside Inn, — a beginning only."

The Wayside Inn — originally known as Howe's Tavern — in Sudbury, Massachusetts, functioned as an inn from 1716 to 1861. In 1862 Longfellow visited the well-known site for the first and only time and published the *Tales of a Wayside Inn* the following year. The book met with resounding success. In 1897 hoping to capitalize on the famous work, Edward Rivers Lemon, a member of the Howe family, purchased the building associated with it. He restored and preserved the structure's colonial features and called it Longfellow's Wayside Inn. Envisioning the inn as a mecca for literary pilgrims, Lemon operated it with his wife, Cora, until his death in 1919.

In 1923 Cora Lemon sold the inn to Henry and Clara Ford, who dramatically altered the site. They moved the one-room Redstone School to the grounds, built the grist mill and the Martha-Mary Chapel, and acquired some three thousand acres of surrounding land. From 1928 to 1947, they developed and operated a trade school for boys and may have intended to build the

"village site" they later created in Dearborn, Michigan. They obtained the non-profit status that the inn operates under today and were the last private owners of the Wayside Inn.

Henry's daughters Anne Longfellow Thorp and Alice Longfellow took on the role of advisors to Henry Ford on certain aspects of the inn's restoration, and they provided him with important memorabilia. On January 18, 1926, Henry Ford wrote to Annie Thorp: "I wish to thank you very sincerely for the frame containing, in your father's own handwriting, the list of the story-tellers of the Wayside Inn, with their real names shown opposite.

You may be sure that this shall always be treasured at the inn, for the sake of our future generations."

In 1955 fire destroyed much of the inn. It was reconstructed to an eighteenth-century colonial appearance by the Ford Foundation.

In 1838 Henry Longfellow traveled to Newport, Rhode Island, and Fall River, Massachusetts, where he viewed a skeleton with a crude armor that had been found on the shore years earlier. Inspired by Newport's Old Stone Mill and the Fall River skeleton, Longfellow plotted a poem in his journal on May 24, 1839: "... my plan of a heroic poem on the Discovery of America by the Northmen, in which the Round Tower at Newport and the Skeleton in Armor have a part to play."

On December 13, 1840, he wrote to his father: "I have been hard at work — for the most part wrapped up in my own dreams. Have written a translation of a German ballad, and prepared for the press another original ballad, which has been lying by me some time. It is called 'The Skeleton in Armor,' and is connected with the Old Round Tower at Newport. This skeleton in armor really exists. It was dug up near Fall River, where I saw it some two years ago (when returning from Newport). I suppose it to be the remains of one of the Northern sea-rovers, who came to this country in

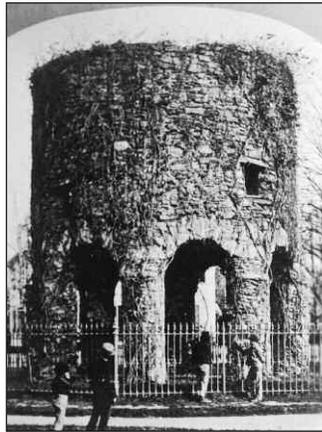
the tenth century. Of course I make tradition myself; and think I have succeeded in giving the whole a Northern air. You shall judge soon, as it will probably be in the next Knickerbocker; and it is altogether too long to copy in a letter..."

On July 9, 1852, Longfellow visited the Jewish Cemetery at Newport. "Went this morning," he recorded that day in his journal, "into the Jewish burying-ground, with a polite old gentleman who keeps the key. There are few graves; nearly all are low tombstones of marble, with Hebrew inscriptions, and a few words added in English or Portuguese. At the foot of each, the letters S. A. D. G. . It is a shady nook, at the corner of two dusty, frequented streets, with an iron fence and a granite gateway, erected at the expense of Mr. Touro, of New Orleans. Over one of the graves grows a weeping willow, — a grandchild of the willow over Napoleon's grave in St. Helena." Two years later he remembered his experience and wrote a sympathetic poem about the people and the place.

Newport was the home to the earliest and most influential Jewish community in American history, and its Touro Synagogue is the oldest existing synagogue in North America. Peter Harrison, the presumed architect of the Vassall-Craigie-Longfellow-House, designed the synagogue. In 1854 a financial gift from the Touro family enabled the restoration of the synagogue and cemetery. Today the site made famous by Longfellow's poem still draws numerous visitors.



Wayside Inn, Sudbury, Massachusetts, c. 1870



Old Stone Mill, Newport, R. I.



Jewish Cemetery at Newport, Rhode Island, 2007

Henry W. Longfellow's journal, October 31, 1862:

"October ends with a delicious Indian-summer day. Drive with Fields to the old Red Horse Tavern in Sudbury, — alas, no longer an inn! A lovely valley; the winding road shaded by grand old oaks before the house. A rambling, tumble-down old building, two-hundred years old; till now in the family of the Howes, who have kept an inn for one hundred and seventy-five years. In the old time, it was a house of call for all travelers from Boston westward."

The Courtship of Miles Standish

Published in 1858, *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, Longfellow's romantic poem about John Alden and Priscilla Mullins set in seventeenth-century New England, made the John Alden house in Duxbury, Massachusetts, famous and also led to its preservation. The couple became national icons of Pilgrim history, and the house they lived in became a historical shrine to the early settlers who had arrived on the Mayflower.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Longfellow's poem was part of every child's schooling. For adults it generated interest in other places people associated with the Pilgrims and created curiosity about early American artifacts such as spinning wheels. Ultimately, it helped inspire the colonial revival movement.

Henry's interest in the couple may have stemmed from his own relation to the Aldens. He was the great, great, great, great grandson of John and Priscilla Alden. His granddaughter Priscilla Alden Thorp was named after her ancestor.

For three hundred years generations of

the Alden family occupied the Duxbury house. In 1907 it was purchased by a group of Alden family descendants called the Alden Kindred to assure its preservation. In 2007 the house applied for and expects to receive national register designation as a historic landmark.

Alden family descendant Tom McCarthy said recently in an interview with the *Duxbury Clipper*: "This property owes its prominence to the national cultural impact of *The Courtship of Miles Standish*. ... At the time, Longfellow was the most popular poet in the English-speaking world. He was Queen Victoria's

favorite poet, and when he put out a new collection of poems, it would sell thousands of copies a day. When *The Courtship of Miles Standish* was released, it was immediately one of Longfellow's most popular works, and people began searching for a connection to the lives of Alden and Mullins. The public's embrace of *The Courtship* and its incorporation into American folklore made the surviving Alden House the most important physical site associated with John and Priscilla and a focus of ongoing national interest, especially since descendants continued to live in and own the house."



Longfellow House in the Media

On March 28, 2008 the *Cambridge Tab* and ten other community newspapers in the greater Boston area carried an article entitled "Cambridge Tour Celebrates Poetry of Longfellow" by Chris Bergeron. The story about NPS staff member Paul Blandford and his career at the House also mentioned the tours he lead with Jan Buerger and Deb Stein, which focused on the Longfellows' art collection.

As part of the "Big Read," the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with the Poetry Foundation published in February a Readers Guide and a Teacher's Guide, *The Poetry of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*. Longfellow is the first poet in America to be recognized for this nationwide program.



John Alden House, Duxbury, Massachusetts, c. 1960

Photo courtesy of the Alden House Historic Site

Recent Visitors & Events at the House

People from all walks of life have always come to the Longfellow House for cultural activities. Today the House continues to host numerous people and events. The following items represent only a small portion of what has taken place here recently.

Boston-based filmmaker **Michael Van Devere** premiered his film *Ithaca* in the carriage house to honor Longfellow's 201st birthday. Shot entirely in the House, the film was inspired by Longfellow's "Wreck of the Hesperus" and "The Building of the Ship."

Israeli filmmaker and concert pianist **Ophra Yerushalmi** came to the House in March to film part of her documentary on the nineteenth-century Hungarian composer Franz Liszt. She recorded former poet-laureate **Robert Pinsky** reading a few Longfellow poems in the study, including the "Musician's Tale" from *Tales of the Wayside Inn*.

In April **Sean Hennessey** from Boston National Historical Park, **Bill McGuire** from the State Dept.'s Office of Broadcast Services, and **Janos Molnar** and **Laszlo Racz** of the Hungarian Television Company toured the House, viewed the Franz Liszt portrait, Hungarian-language books, and a composition Liszt gave to Longfellow.

For the Harvard Institute for Learning in Retirement, **Marti Taub** organized a six-week series entitled "Tories, Slavery and Washington." All but one of the classes took place at the House. Speakers included **Bernard Bailyn**, **John Bell**, **Catherine S. Manegold**, **Ted Hansen**, and the staff of the Longfellow House.

Fellowships Awarded

The Friends of the Longfellow House awarded Sirpa Salenius the Paterson Fellowship to work on her project about nineteenth-century American impressions and images of Finland. Currently a lecturer at the University of New Haven in Florence, Italy, and an editor for an Italian publisher's series on the American presence in nineteenth-century Italy, she will examine Henry Longfellow's books in Finnish or about Finland and Russia and also the Charles Longfellow papers in the House archives. Finland's national epic *The Kalevala* influenced *The Song of Hiawatha*.

Kirstie Blair, a Victorian poetry scholar and lecturer in English Literature at the University of Glasgow, received the Korzenik Fellowship for her project "In Safe Hands?: Rereading Longfellow's *Evangeline*." After consulting the Longfellow House library collection, Fanny Longfellow's journals, and Longfellow's papers in Houghton Library, she plans to write about the importance of this epic poem to American literature and culture.

Dante Society Donates Library to Longfellow NHS

The Dante Society of America recently made the decision to donate to the Longfellow National Historic Site its collection of books connected with its founders, its members, and its activities over the years. The approximately 125 volumes will complement Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's historic library of 222 Dante-related works. Longfellow's library includes various editions and translations of Dante Alighieri's writings as well as biographies of and critical works about the thirteenth-century bard.

Longfellow was one of the earliest American experts on the Italian pre-Renaissance poet's works. With his friends and fellow writers – among them James Russell Lowell, James T. Fields, and Oliver Wendell Holmes – he painstakingly translated Dante's *The Divine Comedy* from Italian into English before Italian literature had gained the respect of the English-speaking world.

The group of scholars who met at Longfellow's home every Wednesday evening for this purpose called themselves The Dante Club. They worked on their project for several years in the mid-1860s, often winding up the session with a fine meal that lasted late into the night.

Teacher Workshop Highlights Paul Revere

The Paul Revere House, the Boston National Historical Park, and the Longfellow NHS offered a two-day workshop in March and April for elementary-school teachers on "The Revolutionary War in Poetry, Prose, and Primary Sources."

Beginning at the Paul Revere House with Robert Lawson's classic children's book *Mr. Revere and I* – an account of the patriot as told by his horse – the participants looked at portraits, genealogical records, and primary sources to determine the accuracy of Lawson's portrayals. A walking tour revealed sites in the book.

The teachers learned that Revere's ride to Lexington was the shortest he ever made as a messenger. He also traveled on horseback to New York, Philadelphia, and Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Through primary sources they researched why a silversmith, who did not own a horse, was chosen as a courier.

At the Longfellow House they heard "Paul Revere's Ride" (with recently discovered excised lines) and discussed the poem's accuracy with historian Charles Bahne and explored what inspired Longfellow to write it.

In 1881 Longfellow, Lowell, and Charles Eliot Norton helped found the Dante Society of America, and they became the society's first three presidents. Dedicated to promoting the study of the works of Dante Alighieri, it has remained in existence continuously and is the second oldest officially constituted organization in the world.

For the third year in a row, the Dante Society of America held its annual meeting at the Longfellow House. "We consider the place where our organization was formed so many years ago to be our home indeed," Todd Boli, the secretary-treasurer of the society wrote to Jim Shea, Museum Manager of the site.

"To indicate how mindful we are of the link between our society and the place of its origin, I would point to this year's (2007) program, which featured presentations of four distinguished scholars on the importance of Longfellow's life and works to today's Dante studies," Boli said.

Society members who attended the annual conference on May 16th viewed the library that they deposited at the House. They were pleased that their legacy had passed "to so safe and fitting a home."

From Homer to Henry

In July the House will present a small exhibit exploring how ancient culture informed and influenced the lives and work of the Longfellows. Called "From Homer to Henry," an array of family objects, photos, and drawings related to antiquity will be on display in the library.

The Longfellows cultivated a lifelong interest in ancient civilizations and visited important ancient sites in Europe, Africa, and Asia. Henry's poetry often referred to classical figures. His wife Fanny sketched Roman ruins in her journals. Their daughter Alice decorated the House with replicas of classical artwork, and their son Ernest painted such ancient icons as the Pyramids at Giza.



Ancient Roman earthenware oil lamp in the exhibit

Recent Research at the House

The Longfellow House archives contain over 700,000 manuscripts, letters, and signed documents and are used extensively by researchers from around the world. Here are a few recent researchers from among the several hundred who use the archives annually.

Harvard professor of comparative literature Theo D'Haen is examining how the nineteenth-century Flemish poet-priest Guido Gezelle may have used Longfellow's poetry to help forge a Flemish national identity and how Longfellow used Flemish material for his own poetic and scholarly purposes. He looked at Flemish books in Longfellow's library, including Gezelle's translation of *The Song of Hiawatha*, which contained a letter from Longfellow authorizing the translation and commenting on it.

For his work on nineteenth-century Russian-American cultural studies, Professor Richard Scheuerman from Seattle Pacific University was interested in any materials related to Charley Longfellow's and Nathan Appleton Jr.'s trip to Russia in 1866-67, or to Longfellow's volume on Russian poetry in his *Poems of Places*.

Musicologist Harald Herresthal came from Norway to research documents pertaining to Ole Bull's second wife, Sara Thorp Bull, sister of Annie Longfellow's husband, Joseph Chapman Thorp Jr. Herresthal is completing the last two volumes of his four-volume biography of the Norwegian violinist and composer.

Professor Nick Havelly, an authority on Dante's reception in English-speaking countries, is organizing a major conference on Dante in his native York, England, this coming July. He looked at books by and about Dante in Longfellow's library and researched papers connected with Longfellow's translation of Dante and The Dante Club.

Spotlight on an Object

In each issue of the newsletter, we focus on a particular object of interest in the Longfellow House collection. This time our spotlight shines on the rare surviving English (top tile below) and Dutch (bottom tile below) tiles around the Blue room fireplace.

The forty-eight tiles in this room all date from the eighteenth-century and have remained in place in the Blue Room since then. George and Martha Washington occupied this room in 1775-1776, and Longfellow used it first as his bedroom and later as the children's nursery.

Two other second-floor bedrooms contain eighty-six more original tiles. John Sadler and Guy Green of Liverpool printed the monochromatic English tiles between 1756 and 1761. Some of the tiles are signed "J. Sadler, Liverpool." Ten polychromatic Dutch tiles throughout the rooms probably replaced tiles damaged during the Revolutionary War.

In Longfellow's 1845 poem "To A Child," he wrote about the tiles:

*Thou gazest at the painted tiles,
Whose figures grace,
With many grotesque form and face
The ancient chimney of thy nursery.*



Longfellow National Historic Site, National Park Service

Longfellow National Historic Site joined the national park system in 1972. Its many layers of history, distinguished architecture, gardens and grounds, and extensive museum collections represent the birth and flowering of our nation and continue to inspire school children and scholars alike. The Vassall-Craigie-Longfellow House most notably served as headquarters for General George Washington in the early months of the Revolutionary War. It was later the home of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, one of America's foremost poets, and his family from 1837 to 1950.

For information about the Longfellow House and a virtual tour, visit:

www.nps.gov/long



Friends of the Longfellow House

Since 1996, the Friends of the Longfellow House, a not-for-profit voluntary group, has worked with the National Park Service to support Longfellow National Historic Site by promoting scholarly access to collections, publications about site history, educational visitor programs, and advocacy for the highest quality preservation.

To find out more about the Friends of the Longfellow House, visit:

www.longfellowfriends.org

Friends of the Longfellow House
105 Brattle Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

