



Longfellow House Bulletin

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

December 2009

New Research on “Paul Revere’s Ride” Marks the Poem’s 150th Anniversary

Just in time for the sesquicentennial of Henry W. Longfellow’s “Paul Revere’s Ride,” Boston historian Charles Bahne has uncovered several lost stanzas of the classic poem and makes a solid case that the poet had read Revere’s actual account of the events prior to composing his epic verse.

In a paper entitled “Paul Revere’s Ride Revisited,” Bahne carefully reconstructs the history of Longfellow’s idea to write the poetic saga, the process of composing the piece, and the variations in the text when it was printed in a number of nineteenth-century publications and books. Bahne conducted extensive research using the Longfellow House archives, Harvard University’s Houghton Library, and Boston city directories in the Boston Public Library plus many other sources and collections.



Print produced for the Revere Copper Co., 1942

Bahne concluded that Longfellow had learned of the true story of Paul Revere’s ride from reading Revere’s own report of

the event, a reprinting of his 1798 letter to the Massachusetts Historical Society, in an 1832 issue of *New England Magazine*. When Longfellow was a twenty-five-year-old professor of modern languages at Bowdoin College, Part V of his serialized essay entitled “The Schoolmaster” appeared in that same October issue. In his later years, Longfellow in two separate letters referred to Revere’s account in *New England Magazine* as his inspiration for the poem.

But it was almost three decades later, as the country headed towards civil war, that Longfellow began his own version of the historic day Revere described, and set about creating his mythic Revolutionary hero. An ardent abolitionist, Longfellow put pencil to paper for “Paul Revere’s Ride” in April

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Longfellow House Remembers Senator Edward Kennedy

On August 27, 2009, the Longfellow National Historic Site lost one of its dearest friends and most ardent supporters. From childhood through his later years, Edward M. (Ted) Kennedy appreciated Longfellow’s poetry and cherished the historic house in which the poet had lived.

As a child, Kennedy learned to recite Longfellow’s poems by heart. “I remember my mother and her insatiable interest in history, literature, and the arts,” he said in 2002 at the thirtieth anniversary celebration of the National Park Service’s stewardship of the House. “And she took advantage of every opportunity imaginable to teach and then to quiz each of her nine children about the things that she thought important. And one of my earliest memories was being required by my mother to memorize the poem, ‘The Midnight Ride of Paul

Revere’.... She felt, and how right she was, that Longfellow’s poem was a wonderful way for her children to learn about poetry and history at the same time. That early exposure to our nation’s history and literature had ... an immeasurable impact on my life....”

When his mother, Rose Fitzgerald Ken-

nedy, passed away, members of the family paid a visit to the House because of its importance to her. At other times Ted Kennedy stopped by the House with his nephews, nieces, and various relatives.

In the U.S. Senate, Kennedy played a key role in placing the House under the auspices of the National Park Service. In 1972 the Longfellow House Trust donated the House with all its furnishings, objects, library, and family papers to the NPS. Senator Kennedy along with U.S. Representative Thomas P. (Tip) O’Neill introduced the legislation to establish the Longfellow National Historic Site as part of the NPS.

Kennedy understood the significance of the House: “In so many ways, this magnificent and treasured place that we call Longfellow House, is a window into

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Senator Kennedy with NPS’s Jim Shea and Myra Harrison, 2002



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THE MIDNIGHT RIDE OF SANTA CLAUS

*Listen, my children, and you shall hear
 Of the midnight ride of the eight reindeer.
 'Twas the night before Christmas, in Seventy-five,
 Not a creature then stirring is now alive.
 The lanterns were hung in the steeple with care,
 In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there.
 The Yankees were nestled all snug in their beds,
 While visions of Red Coats danced through their heads.
 Hancock in his 'kerchief and Adams in his cap
 Had just settled their brains for a long winter's nap.*

*Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,
 Santa Claus stood on the opposite side,
 Ready to speed with gifts on his arm
 For every Middlesex village and farm.
 He chuckled with glee, as with gentle spanks
 He patted each of his reindeer's flanks.
 Then he sprang to his sleigh and the bridle he turned,
 For the Christmas lights in the windows burned.
 A hurry of hoofs in the village streets,
 Struck out by those reindeer fearless and fleet.
 A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
 And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark.
 That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light,
 The faith of two nations was riding that night,
 And the spark, struck out by the reindeer's feet,
 Kindled the whole world into joy with its heat.*

*'Twas one by the village clock, yes one,
 When Santa Claus rode into Lexington.
 Hancock and Adams heard such a clatter
 They sprang from their beds to see what was the matter.
 They paused to listen and look down
 On the snow-covered roofs of the little town.
 In the darkness around them they seemed to hear
 The measured tread of the eight reindeer.
 When they saw that strange driver so lively and quick,
 They thought for a moment: "It must be Old Nick!"
 But a wink of his eye and a twist of his head
 Soon gave them to know they had nothing to dread.
 And they heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight:
 "Merry Christmas! The British are . . . really all right!"*

*So through the night sped those eight reindeer
 With a message of hope for "A Happy New Year!"
 The bulk of the sleigh was magnified
 By the funny fat man who sat inside
 With his cherry-like nose and his little round belly,
 That shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly,
 Bringing Christmas presents and not alarm
 To every Middlesex village and farm,
 A carol in the darkness, a wreath on the door,
 And sleigh-bells that shall echo forevermore!
 For, borne on the night-wind of the past,
 Through all our history, to the last,
 The people will waken and listen and pause
 For that midnight message of Santa Claus.*

AFTER P.R. IN 1775
 AND C.C.M. IN 1823
 AND H.W.L. IN 1860
 BY H.W.L.D. IN 1941

The poet's grandson Harry Dana wrote this poem in 1941 and had a hundred copies printed as a Christmas card with an engraving by Reverend Samuel Miller. Dana submitted the poem to the *New Yorker* for publication, but they rejected it.

Interview with a Friend... Meet Charles Bahne, Public Historian

For thirty years Charles Bahne has researched and conducted historic tours usually related to the American Revolution. He has worked for a variety of organizations in the Boston area and has written a popular guidebook, *The Complete Guide to Boston's Freedom Trail*. Out of enthusiasm and with a concern for accuracy, he conveys history to tourists and the general public.

Longfellow House: How did you become interested in leading historic tours?

Charles Bahne: My college training was in urban studies and planning at MIT in the early 1970s. At that time in Boston there was a lot of work in planning for the huge crowds of tourists that were going to come for the Bicentennial in '75 and '76. I started working in planning for tourism – writing guidebooks and working in museums. By the time I graduated, there were no jobs in planning.

I was idealistic. I drove a cab, and then I started volunteering in various socially worthy projects, a couple of nonprofits, child-care, things like that. I really had become interested in history doing a class project about Paul Revere and his view of the Boston Massacre. A few years later, I saw an ad for volunteers for Boston By Foot, a walking tour group. Then I worked for a while at the Museum of Transportation, the Old State House, and the National Park Service in Boston. That got me interested in Boston's role in the American Revolution. I wrote a book on the Freedom Trail and worked as a free-lance tour guide. I started working with Elderhostel, now called Exploritas, doing programs on the American Revolution, which I still do.

LH: When did you first become acquainted with historic Boston?

CB: When I was in eighth grade in Indiana, the photo on the cover of my history textbook was the statue of Paul Revere in the North End with the steeple of the Old North church in the background. You'd look at that picture every time you'd read your history. Five years later I came to MIT. Some other freshmen and I decided to go exploring in Boston, looking for the Haymarket. It was late in the day, and we got lost. I still remember walking up Hanover Street and saying, "Oh, there's that statue and that church that were on my textbook."

One of the things that always struck me about Boston is this is not a theme park. You don't pay admission to go in, like Disneyland or Williamsburg or Sturbridge. Instead you've got a city where people are

living, working, shopping, traveling through, and there are sights like the scene of the Boston Massacre or Paul Revere's House. Places that I heard about a thousand miles away in eighth grade are still here. You come across them by accident as opposed to having to make a pilgrimage. Longfellow's House is similar. It's in a neighborhood. People live across the street and next door.

LH: What in particular led you to study Longfellow and "Paul Revere's Ride?"

CB: I had worked with the Paul Revere House and the Old North Church. Old



North approached me to do a booklet (which didn't happen), but one of the things I wanted to do for it was reprint the poem. I had noticed in publications of the poem that there were slight variations, so I thought I should get the official version. Between the Web and various libraries, I started comparing the text of the poems and noticed many differences. At some point I thought, why don't I try to track down the manuscript? The big discovery was that the manuscript in many ways doesn't match any of the versions.

LH: As a tour guide what is your mission?

CB: To try to figure out what the truth is. My research has indicated that the American Revolution was not just Revere and Samuel Adams and John Hancock. It involved a lot of people. It was a seed that was planted fifteen years earlier – before Lexington and Concord, with James Otis and the Writs of Assistance ... and earlier feelings of self government. These are some of the issues I try to talk about.

I had an academic background, and I started with reputable organizations – Boston By Foot, the Bostonian Society, the

Park Service – who felt you should tell the truth. If there is a myth, try to dissuade people. The costumed storytellers – actors in many cases – often lead tours that go with the myth and milk it for all they can make of it. They are becoming a greater and greater share of the market.

LH: What are the advantages of working as a tour guide?

CB: I enjoy working with people, the people contact, and the direct interpretation. Every opportunity for advancement involved getting away from that. I didn't want to become a supervisor. And I get to be in beautiful areas of our country, outdoors much of the time, with beautiful weather, meeting constant groups of people. You always get the person who has a new question: "When I was over in England I went to General Gage's house, and they told a different story than what we're hearing here in Boston." How do I reconcile what this person has told me with what the history books say?

LH: How do you try to reach kids?

CB: I try to talk about what it was like to be in school back then. The fact that the students on the morning of April 18th, some of them had to cross the line where the British soldiers were lined up ready to march to Lexington. They had to go around them. Or the incident when the soldiers were camped on the Boston Common and wouldn't let children sled on their favorite sledding hill. They protested and went to General Gage or one of the other junior officers and got the policy reversed. The general said the soldiers had to move their camps so the kids could keep going sledding. I try to talk about things like that, and that the first fatal casualty of the American Revolution was an eleven-year-old boy, Christopher Snyder.

LH: What do you think about requiring certification for tour guides of public tours?

CB: We're in America, and there's freedom of speech. Who would administer that kind of test? Which version of history would you be required to tell? If you had to tell things in a certain way, Longfellow would not have been able to write his "Paul Revere's Ride." Even though he didn't put it in the poem, he remembered years later what really happened. It's clear that, as a storyteller, he wanted the better story. Longfellow would have been able to pass the tour guides' exam, but he would never have been able to write the poem.

New Research on “Paul Revere’s Ride” Marks the Poem’s 150th Anniversary

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1860. The Supreme Court had recently ruled in the Dred Scott case that blacks were not U.S. citizens and that slaveholders could take slaves into free states. Militant abolitionist John Brown and two of the black members of his band had just been hanged.

“The common wisdom,” Bahne says, “is that Longfellow wrote ‘Paul Revere’s Ride’ as a call to arms. Just as Revere had warned the countryside on the eve of the Revolutionary War, so Henry Longfellow warned the nation



J.W. Enninger illustration for Longfellow’s poem, 1872

on the eve of the Civil War.” Although he hated war, Longfellow supported war as necessary to stopping the evil of slavery.

At dinner on April 4, 1860, Longfellow brought up the topic of Revere’s ride with his friend George Sumner, a political economist, writer, and brother of Charles. The next day the two men forayed into Boston’s North End and visited the Old North Church where the warning lanterns had hung. On April 6 the poet began his verses.

Longfellow completed the poem six months later. “Finished October 13, 1860,” he noted in his elongated handwriting on the last page of the manuscript.

Although Longfellow learned the historical information about the ride from Paul Revere, he chose to ignore certain

facts, employing poetic license to craft a more compelling and symbolic tale.

“In his published account of his own ride” writes Bahne, “Paul Revere doesn’t place himself ‘on the opposite shore’ in Charlestown, viewing lantern signals. That is Longfellow’s own invention. It makes for a much simpler story. In real life, Revere was using the lanterns’ signals as a backup, in case he himself was unsuccessful in getting out of town with the news of the regulars’ march.

That part of the story was too complicated for Longfellow. So the poet changed things around.” Thus some of the poems most famous lines demonstrate Longfellow’s alteration of events for artistic purposes, such as “One, if by land, and two, if by sea; . . .”

The poem initially appeared on the front page of the *Boston Evening Transcript* on December 18, 1860, as a kind of pre-publication announcement, says Bahne. The January 1861 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly* came out a few days later with the “first publication” of the poem, but both instances left out six lines. “Perhaps I accidentally omitted them in copying for the press,” the poet wrote to his friend and publisher James T. Fields, who took on many editorial tasks. Fields agreed with Longfellow’s explanation of the omission.

“Paul Revere’s Ride” made its way into Longfellow’s *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, a collection of stories in verse narrated by seven colorful storytellers. Ticknor and Fields restored the six missing lines and printed 15,000 copies of the book on November 25, 1863, with a second printing of 5,000 about two months later and an illustrated edition in 1866 – all a testament to the volume’s popular success.

Ticknor and Fields published the epic tale in their 1866 revised edition of *The Poetical Works of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*, and



Print produced for the Revere Copper Co., 1942

Harper’s Weekly picked up the poem in its June 29, 1867 issue. “From that time on, ‘Paul Revere’s Ride’ was continuously in print, as part of compilations of the poet’s works, through Longfellow’s death in 1882 and well into the twentieth century,” Bahne states.

Among these many printings of the poem, one finds small variations in text and punctuation. The most noteworthy change was the addition of the name of the church, the Old North Church.

At Houghton Library, Bahne closely examined Longfellow’s original manuscript, written in pencil with insertions and erasures over time, as indicated by different penmanship and line weights. To his surprise, he discovered fourteen lines near the end of the poem written in the poet’s hand and never published in any version. They refer to a legendary hunter who fired away at the Redcoats “with deadly effect” as they marched back to Boston. Instead, nine lines, which Bahne believes were written by someone at the *Atlantic Monthly*, replaced these. He hopes to ascertain this soon by combing through documents in the *Atlantic* archives.



From *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, 1906

Henry W. Longfellow’s journal,
April 4, 1860:

“Geo. Sumner at dinner. Proposes an expedition tomorrow to the North End or old town of Boston.”

April 5, 1860:

“Go with Sumner to Mr. Harris of the North End, who acts as our guide through the ‘Little Britain’ of Boston. Go to Copp’s Hill Burial ground – see the tombs of Cotton Mather, his father and his son, – then to the Old North Church, looking like a Parish Church in London. Climb the tower to the chime of Bells; – now the home of innumerable pigeons. From this tower was hung two lanterns, as a signal that the British troops had left Boston for Concord.”

Henry W. Longfellow’s journal,
April 19, 1860:

“Wrote a few lines of ‘Paul Revere’s Ride’; this being day of that achievement.”

Senator Kennedy Remembered

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the earliest days of our American history. George Washington slept here during the American Revolution. And just steps from where we are now, Longfellow wrote his magnificent verses about life and our young nation, about family, about idealism and optimism.... And the sense of history all around us here is palpable. It reaches out to all who come here, who walk through the gardens and the elegant and gracious halls."

Throughout his forty-six years in the Senate, Kennedy continued to work to preserve and improve the House and its archives.

In 1996, thanks to the efforts of Senators Kennedy and John Kerry, the Longfellow National Historic Site received an annual increase in federal funding, helping to ensure expert care and preservation for its textiles, historic books, photographs, and the other archival items, and also allowing additional hours of operation. But the House itself remained in need of essential work.

Kennedy credited author David McCullough for taking "the time to write me and

bring to my attention the extraordinary parts of our heritage here in Longfellow House and what danger they were in, and the fact that they were at such serious risk, and how important they were to our national heritage and our national history."

On October 15, 1996, Ted Kennedy announced that Congress had approved \$1.6 million dollars for a major restoration of the Longfellow House and its carriage house to help preserve the archives and collections. As part of a months-long, behind-the-scenes effort to obtain the funding, the senator had recited "Paul Revere's Ride" to West Virginia Senator Robert Byrd, a history buff and top Democrat on the Appropriations Committee. The senator had also visited the House on a number of occasions to speak with the NPS staff and assess the situation first hand.

"The Longfellow House is one of the most extraordinary historical treasures in our country," said Kennedy. "These funds will complete the work currently being carried out at the House, and ensure that it is preserved for future generations."

Two years later, Kennedy accompanied

then-first-lady Hillary Rodham Clinton when she visited the House as part of a national tour to "Save America's Treasures," a program to raise funds for restoration of historic sites. He toured the House with her and urged her to see not only the extensive treasures and the site's potential as a research center, but also the dangerous proximity of these treasures to the furnace.

Clinton expressed gratitude for Kennedy's commitment to the Longfellow House and his role in getting her there. She also acknowledged his leading role in obtaining \$1.6 million in federal funding for the House. "He didn't just talk about offsets and line items," she asserted. "Instead, he recited 'Paul Revere's Ride' by memory."

In 2000 Kennedy, together with Senator Kerry and Congressman Michael Capuano,

was instrumental in obtaining Congressional approval of funds to renovate the carriage house. The money made it possible to transform it into a much-needed space for public events, such as lectures, programs for school groups, and conferences.



Kennedy & Hillary Clinton, NPS 30th, 2002

On September 14, 2002, the National Park Service celebrated its thirty years of overseeing the Longfellow House. NPS Superintendent Myra Harrison described Senator Kennedy as a "long and constant friend" of the House. He brought the House's needs to the attention of Congress "by competitively reciting 'Paul Revere's Ride' with Senator Byrd, thus engaging in the first senatorial Longfellow poetry slam," Harrison quipped.

Concluding the anniversary celebration, Kennedy remarked, "I think it is appropriate that we take time out to celebrate a special part of America's history and tradition.... We are far more likely to understand the consequences of our actions if we vigorously pursue lifelong learning and a commitment to the timeless values of understanding and respect. Washington and Longfellow were giants in their time and examples for our time. And I hope that America will never forget the legacy they left."

Shortly before he died, as his last great effort on behalf the House, Ted Kennedy introduced legislation in the Senate to rededicate the House to both Henry W. Longfellow and George Washington.

Paul Revere: Man versus Legend

Longfellow took a relatively minor figure in the American Revolution named Paul Revere and crafted an epic poem depicting a lone hero warning the country of impending war. Written as the nation headed towards civil war, the poem serves as a parable more concerned with creating a legend and delivering a message to contemporary citizens than with historical accuracy.

In actuality, both Revere and William Dawes set out as couriers but never made it all the way to Concord. The British captured Revere and released him without his horse in Lexington, where he managed to alert Samuel Adams and John Hancock about the impending attack. Samuel Prescott, whom Revere and Dawes met along the way, reached Concord with the warning.

Despite historians' efforts to present factual information about Revere and his ride, Longfellow's myth persisted in the American psyche. Paintings, prints, illustrations, and even movies perpetuated Longfellow's legend. In his 1914 silent film Thomas Alva Edison immortalized Longfellow's version – except for correctly portraying Revere crossing the Charles River with the aid of two rowers and evading the first set of British troops on the road.

The myth of Revere gradually permeated popular culture. All across the country, towns and streets were renamed for the Revolutionary messenger. Composers wrote everything from two-step marches to classical works celebrating Revere. Businesses took the legendary patriot's name: Paul Revere Life Insurance Company and Revere Sugar Corporation. J. W. Enniger's 1870s illustration of Revere became the logo for Spurr's highest grade of coffee. James E. Pepper used Revere's name and another illustration along with the motto "Born With the Republic" to sell their whiskey. Tourists frequently bought Revere-themed souvenir postcards. One bicentennial postcard portrayed Revere on a galloping horse and a woman calling after him, "Don't stay out too late, Paul!"

Symposium on Integrated Anti-Slavery Activity

On October 24, the National Park Service and a coalition of historical organizations and universities hosted a symposium at Suffolk University called “Abolitionism in Black and White: The Anti-Slavery Community of Boston and Cambridge.”

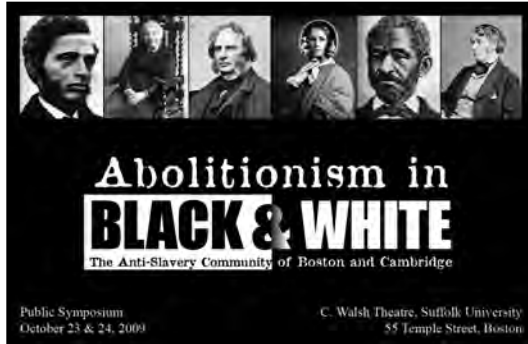
Spearheaded by the Longfellow NHS, Boston African American NHS and Boston NHP, this day-long series of talks and discussions convened public historians, teachers, academics and students to hear leading scholars discuss the topic of slavery and the abolitionist movement.

Attracting an audience of almost 200, the symposium focused on abolitionism in nineteenth-century Massachusetts as an extensive integrated network including free blacks, former slaves, white and black politicians, writers, artists, lawyers, ministers, and singers. Together these reformers sought to end slavery and realize America’s founding ideals. They made Boston the first city to desegregate public schools and transportation and to legally recognize interracial mar-

riage, a beacon for the rest of the nation.

Historians James Oliver Horton of George Washington University and Lois E. Horton of George Mason University opened the symposium with an overview of the anti-slavery movement. John Stauffer of Harvard University and Sandra Sandiford Young of Boston College then discussed the significance of Massachusetts senator Charles Sumner and the black and white abolitionist community in greater Boston. Other sessions looked

at anti-slavery music, abolitionism in popular culture, and women in the movement. David Blight of Yale University and award-winning author of *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* and *A Slave No More: Two Men Who Escaped to Freedom* provided the closing address. Zoe Trodd of the University of North Carolina and Massachusetts State Representative Byron Rushing concluded the program with a discussion of the relevance of slavery and anti-slavery today.



Henry W. Longfellow's letter to Charles Sumner, referring to Sumner's speech on accepting Kansas as a slave-free state June 14, 1860:

"You have done your work fearlessly, faithfully, fully! It was disagreeable, but necessary, and must remain as the great protest of Civilization against Barbarism in this age.... Its great simplicity gives it awful effect. In rhetoric you have surpassed it before; in forcible array and arrangement of arguments, never!"

Longfellow House in the Media

Founding member and first president of the Friends of the Longfellow House Diana Korzenik has spent years thoroughly investigating and contemplating the life of the poet's wife, Frances (Fanny) Appleton Longfellow. Part of this work has just come out as an article entitled "Face to Face: Fanny Appleton and the Old Man of the Mountain" in the Fall 2009 issue of *Historical New Hampshire* published by the New Hampshire Historical Society.

With her family, the Appletons of Boston's Beacon Hill, then-fifteen-year-old Fanny traveled by horse-drawn coach to Franconia Notch in the White Mountains. On July 17, 1833, she drew two versions of a rock formation there known as "The Old Man of the Mountain." Fanny was the first non-geologist to sketch it, Korzenik asserts.

The essay explores the Appletons' interest in the "Old Man" before it became a tourist attraction and sets Fanny's art in its context of lore, politics, geology, and printed imagery from the early history of this sight. These earliest surviving depictions of the "Old Man" (see one below) are among Fanny's many drawings that reside in the extensive archives at the Longfellow House.



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.

On October 1, German journalists **Franziska Trost** (*Kronen Zeitung*), **Robin Schwarzenbeck** (*Neue Zuercher Zeitung*), **Marianne Kolarik** (*Koelner Stadt-Anzeiger*), **Ulrike Passoth** (*Holiday & Lifestyle*), **Tina Uebel** (*How To Spend It!*), **Kerstin Decker** (*Leipziger Volkszeitung*), and **Anika Hagemeyer** (*Discover New England*) toured the House and archives for a special look at the German literary connections.

In August the **Japan Society of Boston** celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Kyoto-Boston sister-city program with a conference called "Guided by the Past: Historic Preservation in Kyoto and Boston." Kyoto's mayor **Daisaku Kadokawa**, Kyoto city officials **Takao Shige**, **Tatsuya Ibusuki**, **Etsuko Murata**, Harvard professor **Andrew Gordon**, and **Aurelie Guyot** of the Boston mayor's office came to visit the House.

Henry Longfellow's great-great-granddaughters **Lucy** and **Alice Knowles**, sisters from South Carolina, traveled to attend a family wedding. After touring their ancestral home, they viewed family papers in the House archives and their grandmother's home and father's birthplace, now the Quaker Meeting House on Longfellow Park. Their great-grandmother was the poet's daughter Anne Longfellow Thorp. Henry's great-granddaughter **Frankie Wetherell**, who lives nearby in Cambridge, accompanied them.

Paul Revere's Tie to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's Family

The close connection of his maternal grandfather to Paul Revere may have inspired Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's keen personal interest in the prosperous silversmith who served as a messenger in the colonists' fight against the British. Revere, an American officer during the Revolutionary War, had fought under the command of General Peleg Wadsworth, the poet's grandfather, in a military operation known as the Penobscot Expedition. The ill-fated maneuver, however, turned into the patriots' worst naval defeat and proved particularly unfortunate for Revere.

During the American Revolution, Yankee privateers had inflicted great damage on the British ships. To defend against further devastation, the British began constructing a fort along the coast of Maine at what is now Castine. Upon learning of this development, in the summer of 1779 the General Court of Massachusetts ordered Brigadier-General Solomon Lovell to take command of 1200 militia – with General Peleg Wadsworth directly below him and Lieutenant-Colonel Paul Revere in charge of the artillery train – for the purpose of getting rid of the stronghold and its inhabitants.

Additional forces were dispatched to help Lovell and his troops. Commodore Dudley Saltonstall and his strong naval fleet set out to meet them. Fifteen hundred more men were to join the main ground forces from points in Maine, although only a third of them appeared – most of whom turned out to be young boys, elderly men, and even invalids.

Lovell chose to stay aboard his ship

Longfellow Birthday Will Also Honor Kennedy

On February 27, 2010, the Longfellow National Historic Site will extend its annual Henry Longfellow birthday celebration to honor the late Senator Ted Kennedy – whose birthday was February 22 – as well.

Nick Littlefield, a longtime friend and adviser to Kennedy, will pay tribute to the senator's career and his dedication to the site. Charles Ansbacher, conductor of the Boston Landmarks Orchestra, will introduce and play their recording of "Paul Revere's Ride" set to music. In 2007 the orchestra made a CD of this piece for children with Kennedy as narrator. The event will take place at the Story Chapel in Mount Auburn Cemetery from 10 a.m. to noon.

while Wadsworth and Revere landed with the infantry and artillery and laid siege to the British fort. After almost two weeks, Saltonstall had failed to launch a naval attack in support of the ground forces, and the besieged British were able to survive. The Royal Navy came to the rescue of their soldiers and chased the American fleet up the Penobscot River. In the process, they destroyed forty-three American ships, which constituted almost all of the insurgents' navy.

Wadsworth managed to retreat successfully over land with his men. But Saltonstall and Revere faced an inquiry upon their return. The Massachusetts General Court found that the principal reason for the military debacle was "the want of proper spirit and energy on the part of the Commodore."

Saltonstall was court-martialed, found guilty, and dismissed from service.

The Massachusetts General Court charged Revere with disobedience, unsoldierlike behavior, and cowardice. Peleg Wadsworth found fault with Revere for refusing to give up a boat that he was using to flee. But the court's report neither acquitted nor condemned Revere.

Anxious to clear himself, he requested a court martial. A second inquiry criticized him for "disputing the orders of Brigadier-General Wadsworth" and declared that retreating from the Penobscot region with his men without specific orders was "not wholly justifiable." Although Revere was no more satisfied with this conclusion, he was allowed to continue to serve in the army. He died in 1818 at the age of eighty-three.



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.

Prof. Claudia Schnurmann of the University of Hamburg studied the correspondence of Fanny Longfellow and her sister Mary Appleton with Francis Lieber, a German-American political philosopher and professor, and his wife Mathilda. Schnurmann is working on a book about the Atlantic transfer of knowledge in the letters of Francis and Mathilda Lieber, 1826-1872. "These documents are of great value for my work," Schnurmann said, "and it was fun to learn that the rather shy and delicate Fanny Appleton had her very own, critical opinion about the pushy, pompous Lieber who thought a lot of himself while she really fancied his wife, Mathilda."

For her book on daughters and fathers from 1789-1840, Martha Tomhare Blauvelt of the College of St. Benedict/St. John's University in St. Joseph, Minnesota, read the letters between Zilpah and Peleg Wadsworth, and Polly Allen and Andrew Craigie.

Traveling throughout the United States under the auspices of Notre Dame University to examine manuscripts in the Irish language, Prof. Breandan O'Conchuir of University College in Cork, Ireland, came to Longfellow NHS to read several documents that Henry Longfellow had bound and titled "Celtic Poems."

Bernadette Williams at Boston National Historic Park and Boston African American National Historic Park studied the trial notes of Richard Henry Dana Jr. and contemporary newspaper articles about his defense of rescuers of fugitive slaves, particularly Lewis Hayden. She will use her findings to create an educational outreach program for high-school age visitors called "The Trials of Lewis Hayden."

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 Henry Longfellow's writing desk, a circa 1825-1835 Empire-style desk of mahogany and white pine designed to sit on top of another piece of furniture.

This is probably the desk that Longfellow used in his second-floor study when he first came to the House as Mrs. Craigie's boarder in 1837. It now rests on a table in his first-floor study where he likely moved it when he and his wife Fanny took possession of the House in 1843. With two writing desks in his study, Longfellow often worked at this one while standing by the window's morning light to aid his poor eyesight. Records indicate that the statue of Goethe always stood as a muse at the head of his desk.

In his journal entry on December 17, 1846, Longfellow mentioned writing at this table-top desk: "*Finished this morning, and copied, the first canto of the second part of Evangeline. The portions of the poem which I write in the morning, I write chiefly standing at my desk here (by the window), so as to need no copying. What I write at the other times is scrawled with a pencil on my knee in the dark, and has to be written out afterward.*"



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

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