



# Longfellow House Bulletin

Volume 14 No. 2

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

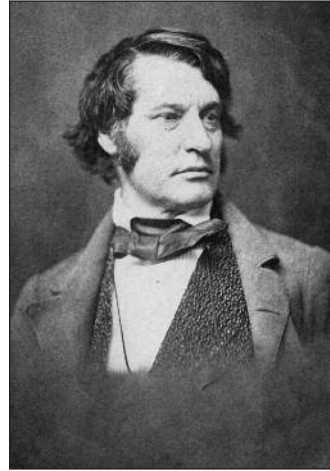
December 2010

## Celebrating the Bicentennial of the Birth of Charles Sumner

January 6, 2011, marks the 200th year since the birth of Massachusetts politician, crusader for abolition and civil rights, and Longfellow's closest friend – Charles Sumner. Although Sumner was one of the most prominent U.S. senators and reformers of his time, many people today know little about the man whom citizens chose to honor with memorial statues in Boston and Cambridge and name a street for in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

To inform the public about and commemorate the remarkable life and work of Charles Sumner, the National Park Service has joined with the Museum of African American History, the Boston African American National Historic Site, Mount Auburn Cemetery, and Harvard University to offer a series of tours, lectures, and events.

In January, at the African Meeting House, Prof. John Stauffer, chair of Harvard's History of American Civilization program, will speak on Sumner and his Beacon Hill roots. Henry Longfellow's annual February birthday celebration at Mount Auburn Cemetery will also include a tribute to his best friend. In late spring, at the re-dedication of Anne Whitney's statue of Sumner in Harvard Square, Cambridge Mayor David Maher will issue a proclamation recognizing Sumner's contributions to civil rights and his importance to the city of Cambridge. Imme-



Charles Sumner, 1850s

diately afterwards, the First Parish Church in Cambridge will host a program with lectures on Sumner as well as recitations by Cambridge schoolchildren.

During the year, walking tours will explore sites such as Sumner's Beacon Hill, where he was born and grew up, and Mount Auburn Cemetery, where he and many of his abolitionist friends are buried. Longfellow House, where Sumner spent much of his adult life,

will offer special theme tours as well.

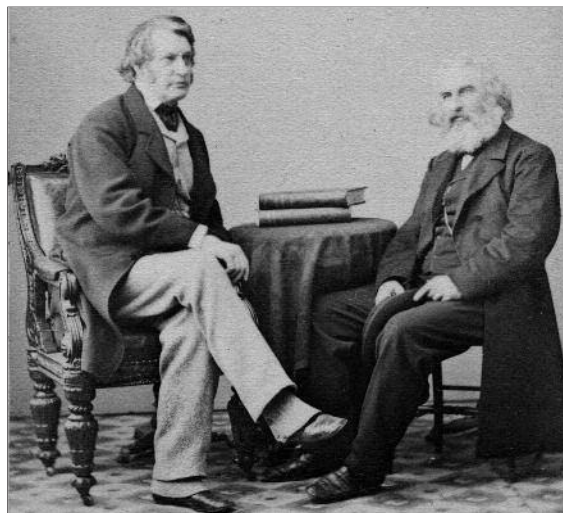
For details about these programs, call 617-876-4491 or visit: [www.nps.gov/long](http://www.nps.gov/long).

## The Poet and the Politician: The Lifelong Friendship of Longfellow and Sumner

When Henry Wadsworth Longfellow worked in his study, he often sat beneath the portrait of his best friend and most frequent visitor to the House, Charles Sumner. Although the two men chose vastly different careers and had contrasting personalities, they shared many interests and a deep concern for the rights of all people.

"Charles Sumner was perhaps the oldest and nearest of [father's friends]," Alice Longfellow, the poet's oldest daughter, reminisced circa 1900. "Their mutual fondness for literature and art drew them together in the beginning, and then their intense hatred of slavery, and their belief and interest in the cause of abolition.... All through his public life, Mr. Sumner wrote constantly to my father, sharing with him all his cares and perplexities, receiving in reply most heartfelt sympathy and advice.... There was always a sense that

Mr. Sumner might have a fugitive slave somewhere about him, and a mulatto girl, whom he befriended and brought to see us, was an object of tremendous interest."



"The Politics and Poetry of New England," carte de visite, Charles Sumner and Henry Longfellow in Washington, D.C. Photograph by Alexander Gardner, 1863

"Their temperaments seemed in many ways almost diametrically opposed," observed Longfellow's grandson Harry Dana, "the severity and vehemence of Sumner, the gentleness and serenity of Longfellow."

The poet and the politician first met at Harvard University in March 1837, while Longfellow, age thirty, was in his first year of teaching modern languages and Sumner was a twenty-six-year-old law student. Well-versed in the classics, Sumner wrote scholarly articles, and he filled in at the Harvard Law School when his mentor, Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story, was away.

When Sumner left for Europe the year after they met, Longfellow introduced and described him to his friend George Washington Greene in a letter on August 6, 1838: "You will not fail to *make much of [Charles Sumner]*, as Nature has done before you; for he stands six feet,

(continued on page 6)



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All images are from the Longfellow National Historic Site collections, unless noted otherwise.

## A Tale of Two Statues: Memorials to Charles Sumner

In 1875, the year after Charles Sumner died, the Boston Art Committee held a national competition for the design of a memorial statue of the beloved reformer in the Public Garden. According to the rules, all sculptors entered their small-scale models anonymously. When the judges discovered they had awarded the commission to a woman, Anne Whitney, they chose Thomas Ball's entry instead.

The socially conservative, presumably all-male Boston Art Committee believed that "no woman should attempt to model a man's legs; it was indelicate and would never be successful."

Thomas Ball, an eminent Boston sculptor, was already known for his statue in the Public Garden of George Washington on horseback. Although the committee had specified that Sumner's likeness be seated, "To make the decision the more unjust to all the other concurrents," James Jackson Jarves wrote in the *New York Times*, December 27, 1880, "Mr. Ball's model was set aside entirely, and he was given permission to make a standing figure of Sumner instead.... It is to be hoped that finally Miss Whitney will be invited by the citizens of Boston to put into bronze or marble her sitting figure of the illustrious Sumner, that Bostonians may see for themselves which is the better effigy of the two, and which displays the better knowledge of the male figure."

Anne Whitney was one of the few successful American women sculptors of her time. Born into a well-to-do family in Watertown, Massachusetts, in 1821 and raised in Cambridge, Whitney received a solid education. At age twenty-five, she started and ran a school in Salem for two years, and she published poems in the *Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper's Magazine*. In 1859 a collection of her poems appeared in a volume called, simply, *Poems*.

Her interest, however, veered largely

towards sculpture. She studied anatomy in New York, where she also spent time with Lucy Stone, suffragist and abolitionist, and Elizabeth Blackwell, the first American woman to earn a medical degree. Back again in Boston, she learned much from sculptor-painter William Rimmer.

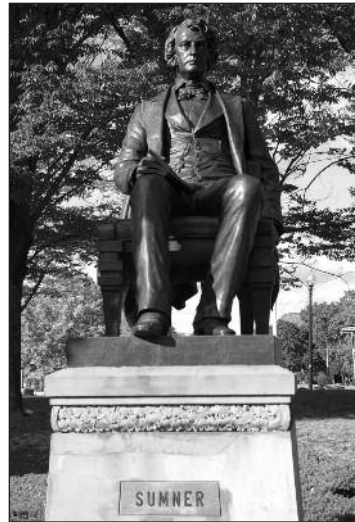


Thomas Ball's statue of Sumner, 1875

In 1867 Whitney moved to Rome and sculpted for the next four years. After she returned to the U.S., she established a studio in Boston and gained an international reputation.

Always an avid abolitionist and advocate of women's rights, Whitney addressed issues of equality for all in her poetry and sculpture. In plaster, marble, and bronze, she chose to portray people who worked for social justice — such as Samuel Adams, William Lloyd Garrison, Toussaint L'Ouverture (with expertly executed male legs), Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Lucy Stone — as well as the allegorical figures "Africa" and "Roma."

Whitney had been delighted to enter the Sumner statue competition: Charles had been not only a family friend, but also a hero to her. When the Boston Art Committee rescinded the commission, Whitney was outraged but resilient. "Bury your grievance," she wrote to her family, "It will take more than a Boston Art Committee to quench me."



Anne Whitney's statue, 1902

For almost a quarter century, the plaster model Whitney had created for the competition remained in her studio. In 1900 she secretly resumed the project, producing a full-size statue, cast in bronze by a foundry in Chicopee, Massachusetts. With the support of several Harvard professors, in 1902 her memorial to Charles Sumner, begun in 1875, was installed in Harvard Square, now a traffic island between Harvard Yard and the Old Burying Ground. This imposing work was the last major sculpture that Whitney completed before her death in 1915 at the age of ninety-three.

## Interview with a Friend . . . Beverly Morgan-Welch, Museum Director

Since 1999, Beverly Morgan-Welch has been the executive director of the Museum of African American History in Boston and Nantucket. Located on Beacon Hill in the Abiel Smith School and African Meeting House buildings, the museum is dedicated to the contributions of African Americans in New England from the colonial period through the nineteenth century. Ms. Morgan-Welch vividly described to us nineteenth-century Beacon Hill and the people who lived there. We spoke with her in her office at 14 Beacon Street.

**Longfellow House:** Can you tell us a bit about the Beacon Hill neighborhood where Charles Sumner grew up?

**Beverly Morgan-Welch:** By 1806 the African Meeting House had been built, so when Sumner was born [in 1811], there was already a sizable African American community living on the north slope of Beacon Hill. By the time he was old enough to notice, there were a number of people who owned property as well. They were not simply black people who were living in boarding houses or renting rooms. They had purchased property and put a stake in the ground for community building by erecting a meeting house where they not only worshipped but also gathered for many other purposes.

There was a greater concentration of black people on the north slope, and many fewer black people living on the Beacon Street side. You are talking about a time when you still had maids' quarters and butlers' spaces, so there were servants and live-in help too. There are people like Robert Roberts [butler to Nathan Appleton and Governor Gore], who was well-traveled, well-schooled and of great refinement. He wrote the first book on being a house servant. It was well-published and widely read and considered to be a standard for fine living. He married into a family that was esteemed from the Revolutionary War.

**LH:** Who in the black community might have been a neighbor of Sumner?

**BMW:** John Coburn was right around the corner. He was involved with the Massachusetts General Colored Association and the West Boston Colored Wide Awakes that were raising a furor for the election of Lincoln as president. Coburn was a man of some means who owned a gaming house. He provided money for mortgages and helped people find jobs. He and his wife actually owned two homes on Beacon Hill.

He was a leader in the black community and a very close neighbor to Sumner.

**LH:** Do you think living in this neighborhood might have influenced Sumner's societal and political views?

**BMW:** It *had* to have had something to do with how he saw the world. If you look at the Abiel Smith School and African Meeting House and their proximity [to his house], he could hardly have walked up and down without encountering them.

**LH:** Did the black and white communities on Beacon Hill interact?



**BMW:** They were *constantly* interacting. Beacon Hill was tightly knit. Smith's Barber Shop was right down the street on Cambridge Street. It is extremely important to understand that Sumner, like William Lloyd Garrison, becomes someone that if you can't find at home or at the State House, you can find him at Smith's Barber Shop. That's John J. Smith. You may find Frederick Douglass there, or Lewis Hayden. These are black and white abolitionists who have meetings there. If they're not at the Anti-Slavery Society, you'll probably find them at Smith's.

**LH:** Was Robert Roberts related to Sarah Roberts in the *Roberts v. Boston* case?

**BMW:** Robert Roberts had a son Benjamin Roberts, a printer. His daughter Sarah Roberts, we believe, was already attending and integrating a school. She was about five or six years old when she was removed from her school. This meant she'd have to walk past five other schools to get to the Abiel Smith School on Joy Street.

This was not a singular act by a singular family. Much of what happened in the abolitionist movement – petitions to the legislature and the city of Boston, and lawsuits –

were calculated actions by a community with the knowledge that the person bringing the suit or standing forward had to have a means of financial support. Suing the city of Boston means that you're going to have the Anti-Slavery Society buying printing services from you. So Benjamin Roberts brought a suit against the city of Boston. Robert Morris, the second black man to pass the Bar in Massachusetts, was the Roberts' attorney. He was joined by Charles Sumner.

**LH:** Were Morris and Sumner the first inter-racial legal team?

**BMW:** Probably. First of all, you can't have an inter-racial team if you don't have a black attorney. This was the A-team – an unbelievable pairing of hearts, minds, and legal preparation, and belief in the cause. Very often Sumner is credited alone, but of course it's the team that makes the difference.

This is what sets Boston apart, that there were people like Garrison and Sumner or the Reverend Thomas Paul and Robert Morris, who understood the value of working together interracially and ultimately brought their cause before the court or a gathering of people to change their minds.

**LH:** What remained to be done after the Civil War had ended?

**BMW:** Douglass basically said, if you think because this war is over that we have won the peace, think again – until all of the laws wipe out any mention of black and white, it's not over. Sumner continued this work. He understood you've got to put laws in place, and they've got to be enforced.

**LH:** How is Sumner represented in the Museum of African American History?

**BMW:** His home is often pointed out on our Black Heritage Trail tour. Because of his role, Sumner is often involved in our rotating exhibits, but our tiny buildings don't have the capacity for permanent exhibits. Technology may help us make these figures more lifelike for our visitors and for people using our website. Our desire is to bring these historic figures to life by using their words and providing the context. Then it allows you to have your own experience.

It's not just the old adage, if you don't know your history then you're destined to repeat it. You don't even know where you are! You have no idea what was done over the centuries to make it possible for us to have the freedoms we enjoy today.

**LH:** We look forward to working with you this year on Charles Sumner's zooth.

## The Political Career of U.S. Senator Charles Sumner:

Born and raised on Beacon Hill's north slope, where many African Americans lived, Sumner and his twin sister were the first of nine children born to Charles Pinckney Sumner, a lawyer and Suffolk County sheriff, and his wife Relief (Jacob) Sumner. Many of his siblings died young, and only two survived into middle-age. Young Charles attended Boston Latin School, Harvard College, and graduated from Harvard Law School in 1833. He was admitted to the Bar the following year.

By the early 1840s, Charles Sumner began to devote himself to reform issues. He struggled with the decision to enter politics and bared his feelings to Fanny Longfellow in a May 1848 letter: "I dislike controversy. It is alien to my nature; but I do love what seems to me true & right ... a duty which my soul told me to perform."

Compelled by his sense of duty to speak against slavery even if he alienated friends and pillars of Boston society (including Fanny's father, textile manufacturer Nathan Appleton), Sumner denounced the "unhallowed union" between "the lords of the lash and the lords of the loom."

In his journal on October 22, 1848, Henry pondered his friend's decision: "Sumner stands now, as he himself feels, at just the most critical point in his life. Shall he plunge irrevocably into politics, or not?... He inevitably will do so, and after many defeats will be very distinguished as a leader."

Meanwhile, Sumner used his skills as a lawyer for the cause of racial equality. In December 1849 Fanny Longfellow reported to her brother: "Sumner has been vindicating in court the rights of a little black girl against the city of Boston for free admission to the free school, to be able to go like white children to the one nearest her home, and not forced to traverse the town to an African school, with its ban of caste..." In 1848-1849 Charles Sumner and Robert Morris, a black attorney, challenged segregation in Boston schools on behalf of that "little black girl," Sarah Roberts. In *Roberts v. Boston* they argued before the Massachusetts Supreme Court that schools for blacks were physically inferior and segregation bred harmful psychological and sociologi-

cal effects – similar to arguments made a century later in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Although Sumner and Morris lost the case, the Massachusetts legislature eventually abolished school segregation in 1855.

Henry Longfellow shared Sumner's passion about the lawsuit, as evident in his journal, December 9, 1849: "Sumner at dinner, has been arguing the case of a negro girl against the city of Boston, for not admitting her into school with white children, but forcing her to go to the African school, made and provided for those who wear 'the bur-nished livery of the sun.'"

In 1851 Charles Sumner was elected U.S. senator from Massachusetts. He accepted the good news reluctantly. "A pleasant dinner, at the close of which we heard the news of Sumner's election," Longfellow remarked on April 24, 1851. "In the evening came Lowell and Gurowski and Palfrey and Sumner himself to escape from the triumph, and be quiet from all the noise in the streets of Boston. He is no more elated by his success than he has been depressed by the failure heretofore, and evidently does not desire the office. He says he would resign now if any one of the same sentiments as himself could be put in the office."

"The papers are all ringing Sumner,



"Mr. Sumner by Erny," drawing by Longfellow's son Ernest, age 10, 1855

Sumner!" Henry noted the next day. "And the guns thundering out their triumph. Meanwhile the hero of the strife is sitting quietly here, more saddened than exalted."

Sumner was among the first in Congress to call for the emancipation of slaves, and he never minced words. "Sumner in the Sen-



Charles Sumner, by Ernest Longfellow. Oil portrait based on an 1873 photo

ate was taking up the cudgels for the oppressed negroes in the Southern states," Harry Dana, Henry Longfellow's grandson, opined in an unpublished paper. "The abuse that had been heaped upon him in Boston was nothing compared to that which was now heaped upon him by the Southern senators... [Sumner] provoked them, they said, 'to kick him as we would a dog in the street.'"

On May 19, 1856, Sumner began a stirring two-day anti-slavery speech on the Senate floor in which he decried the "crime against Kansas." Four days later, South Carolina Representative Preston Brooks ambushed Sumner at his desk in the off-session Senate chamber, beat him senseless with a cane, and almost killed him. Southerners hailed Brooks as a hero, while Northerners condemned the beating, thus escalating tensions between the sides.

At Longfellow's house, Sumner's friends – even some who had previously disagreed with him – gathered to discuss how to protest the attack. They concluded that an overwhelming reelection of Sumner would be the best revenge. Their plan succeeded, and Sumner won a second term in 1857. Because of his injuries, however, Sumner was absent from the Senate for three years.

When Abraham Lincoln became president in 1861, he looked to Sumner as a spokesman for the anti-slavery conscience, and he trusted and confided in him. The Massachusetts senator introduced a bill to repeal the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, and Lincoln signed it into law in June 1864.

On April 20, 1862, four days after President Lincoln signed an act abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia, Longfel-

# Abolitionist, Radical Reformer, and Civil Rights Activist

low urged Sumner on: “You are hard at work; and God bless you in it. In every country the ‘dangerous classes’ are those who do no work; for instance, the nobility in Europe and the slave-holders here. It is evident that the world needs a new nobility,— ... not of the blood that is blue because it stagnates; but of the red arterial blood, that circulates, and has heart in it, and life, and labor. I am writing you on Easter Sunday. What an Easter this is for the negroes in the District of Columbia! I rejoice, with you and all true men, on this Easter of Africa.”

Sumner spearheaded efforts to recruit blacks into the military. In early 1863, he seized on the Emancipation Proclamation to justify a bill to gather up to 300,000 black troops. Thanks to his and Governor Andrew’s efforts, Massachusetts played a prominent role in creating black Union Army regiments.

In 1864 Charles Sumner proposed legislation that outlawed the coastal slave trade and opened the federal courts to black witnesses. Both laws were adopted. He also persuaded the Senate to approve the desegregation of Washington, D.C., streetcars.

In 1865 Sumner introduced the bill establishing the Freedmen’s Bureau. Approved by Congress, the bill enabled the bureau to protect the interests of former slaves by helping them find employment and improving educational and health facilities. In the following year, the bureau spent \$17 million to provide 4,000 schools, one hundred hospitals, and homes and food for former slaves. In 1867 the Freedman’s Bureau also helped found Howard University in the nation’s capital for the education of African Americans.

From 1861 to 1871 Sumner was chairman of the Senate foreign relations committee, a position of enormous importance and influence. During the Civil War, as the committee head, Sumner used his considerable diplomatic skills to convince European powers not to assist the Confederacy or recognize it as an independent nation. The president and the senator believed that preserving European neutral-

ity was essential to defeating slavery.

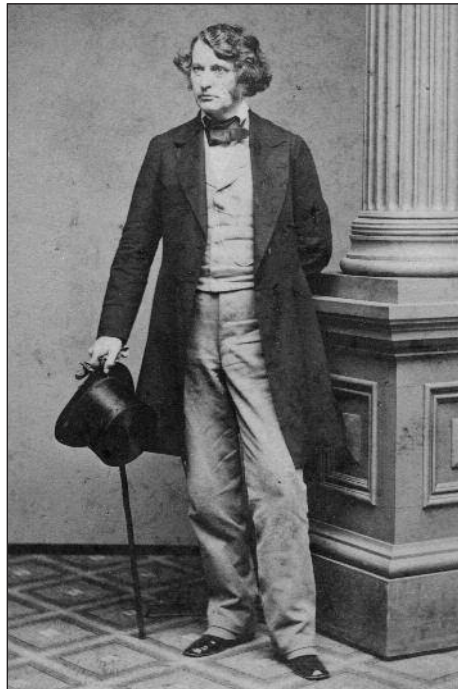
While head of the Senate foreign relations committee, Sumner obtained the Senate’s approval of a bill acknowledging the independence of and establishing diplomatic relations with the black republics of Haiti and Liberia. On June 5, 1862, Lincoln made the bill law. This act met with great jubilation in Haiti, which had declared its independence fifty-eight years earlier in 1804. Boston newspapers acclaimed the recognition not only of a country, but an entire race. To show their gratitude to Sumner, in 1871 the Haitian government awarded him a medal, now displayed in the Massachusetts State House.



Charles Sumner,  
by an unknown photographer, c. 1865

On February 1, 1865, the same day that Congress approved the Thirteenth Amendment putting an end to slavery, Sumner introduced a motion that allowed John Rock to become the first black attorney to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court.

In 1866 Sumner and the Radical Republicans advocated passing a civil rights bill designed to protect freed slaves from laws prohibiting their right to vote, forbidding their sitting on juries, and limiting their right to testify against white men, carry



Charles Sumner,  
photograph by Matthew Brady, 1860s

*Henry W. Longfellow’s account book  
March 24, 1855:*

*“For ‘Ida May’ slave \$6.00”*

N.B. “Ida May” is a generic reference to slaves – taken from *Ida May*, an 1854 anti-slavery novel by Mary Langdon (Mary Hayden Green Pike). In March 1855 Charles Sumner raised funds to buy the freedom of Virginia slave Mary Mildred Botts, whom he called a “real Ida May.” Longfellow’s entry in his account book provides evidence that he was giving money directly to Sumner to free slaves.

weapons in public places, or work certain jobs. In January 1872, Sumner introduced a civil rights bill mandating equal accommodation in all public places and requiring suits brought under the bill to be argued in federal courts. Although a lesser version of the bill passed the Senate, the House never considered it.

Determined as ever, Sumner reintroduced the civil rights bill in December 1873. But the outspoken activist who had crusaded continuously in the Senate for twenty-two years died on March 11, 1874.

“I thank you most for your kind letter of sympathy,” Longfellow wrote to his friend Lady Elizabeth Georgiana Campbell on April 5, 1874. “Sumner’s death is indeed a very great sorrow to me; for he was more like a brother than a friend. I knew you would feel as I do.... I hardly know what more to tell of his death than what you have seen in the papers. Seized near midnight by angina pectoris, and the next afternoon at three, dead. Among his last words were ‘Take care of my Civil Rights Bill.’”

Moved, in part, by Sumner’s death, the Senate passed the bill in May 1874, and the House approved it in March 1875 – although they stripped a school integration provision from it. Recognizing that to insist on racially mixed schools would now kill the entire bill, Radical Republican senators acquiesced to the amended measure.

In 1883 the Supreme Court ruled that the Civil Rights Bill exceeded Congress’s constitutional power under the Fourteenth Amendment because it governed individuals rather than state action. Not until 1964 would Congress pass another act that would come close to matching the sweeping vision of Charles Sumner’s Civil Rights Bill.

# The Lifelong Friendship of Longfellow and Sumner

(continued from page 1)

two, in his stockings. A colossus holding his burning heart in his hand, to light up the sea of Life. I am in earnest. He is a very lovely character; as you will find; – full of talent, with a most keen enjoyment of life; simple, energetic, hearty, good with a great deal of poetry and no nonsense in him. You will take infinite delight in his society; and in walking Old Rome with him.”

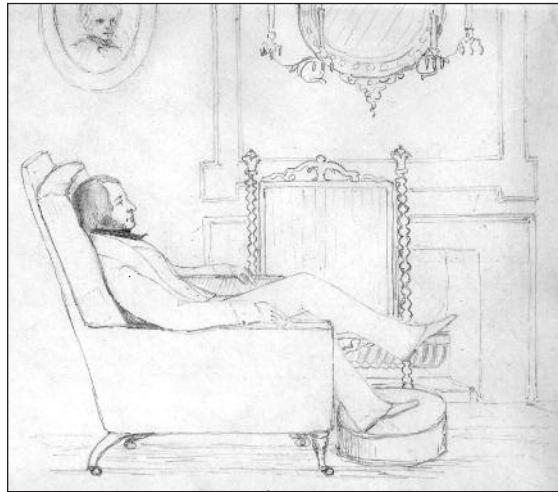
The hundreds of letters between Longfellow and Sumner document their warmth toward each other. When Henry married Fanny Appleton in 1843, they invited Sumner to spend part of their honeymoon with them. He grew fond of Fanny and often corresponded with her.

Longfellow’s journals give a good sense of how frequently Sumner visited Craigie House over the years – usually Sundays, often entire weekends, and portions of the summer. Henry’s journal, March 9, 1851, noted: “A Sunday without Sumner is an odd thing but today we had one....” And on October 23, 1851: “Sumner takes his last dinner with us. In a few days he will be gone to Washington for the winter. We shall miss him very much. He passed the night here as in the days of long ago. We sat up late talking.”

The Longfellow children incorporated Sumner into their lives too. (See Erny’s drawing on page 4.) Alice recalled, “At all times

[Sumner] was free to come and go without invitation, and his arrival surrounded and followed by immense bundles of newspapers was always an event in the household.”

When Charley was wounded fighting for the Union in the Civil War, Longfellow rushed to his side in the Washington, D.C.,



Longfellow, in his study, beneath Eastman Johnson’s portrait of Sumner. Drawing by Fanny Longfellow, 1855

hospital. Sumner made sure that Charley received the best care. The only two known photos of Sumner and Longfellow together were taken on this trip (see page 1).

While Longfellow lauded Sumner for his political work, he sought his friend’s comments on his poetry. Sumner advised and encouraged Longfellow, even suggest-

ing that he “write some stirring words that shall move the whole land” on slavery. The politician considered his poet friend’s verses “valuable as contributions to a great cause.”

Sumner also lent support at times of emotional distress. When Fanny died tragically, he wrote to Henry on July 21, 1861: “Daily, hourly, constantly I think of you, and my thoughts end with myself; for I cannot forget my own great and irreparable loss.... How strong must be your grief, I know and feel in my heart. But your happiness has been great, and the memories which remain are precious. I long to talk with you, and to enter into all this experience so trying, and help you to bear it, if I can....”

In turn, Henry consoled Sumner after his late and unhappy marriage in 1866, which ended soon in divorce, and counseled and nursed his friend during ill-health. “At the time of his severe illness and prostration after the terrible assault in the Senate chamber,” Alice Longfellow recalled, “he was much with my father, cared for with the greatest solicitude.”

When Sumner died at age sixty-three, Henry mourned the loss of their thirty-seven-year friendship. “[Sumner’s] death left a deep shadow, and sense of loneliness,” wrote Alice, “and brought to my father, I think, a realizing thought of age, and the passing of what was most valuable in life.”

## 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.

Accompanied by **Peter Accardo** of Harvard’s Houghton Library and **Christoph Irmscher**, professor of English at Indiana University, more than seventy scholars from all over the world visited the house as part of the **International Byron Society’s** weeklong conference. Studying the works of English poet **Lord Byron**, the conference was hosted by **Houghton Library**, **Northeastern University**, **Boston Public Library**, **Boston Athenaeum**, and the **Longfellow National Historic Site**.

For a special behind the scenes tour, members of the **Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS)** with its Director of Education and Public Programs, **Jayne K. Gordon**, visited the House. Longfellow NHS staff prepared an exhibit in the library and displayed Henry Longfellow’s MHS membership certificate from 1857. The MHS met at the House several times while Longfellow lived there.

This summer fifty teachers from all over the country participated in teacher workshops held at the House in conjunction with **Harvard University**, **Lesley University**, **Paul Revere House**, **MHS**, **Old North Church**, and **Old South Meeting House**.

## Longfellow House in the Media

In his book *Visualizing American Empire: Orientalism and Imperialism in the Philippines*, Prof. David Brody of Parsons The New School for Design considers Charles Longfellow’s art collection and includes ten photographs he obtained in the Philippines. The book cover features a photo of Charley in Japan.

On August 15, 2010, more than 400 people attended the Longfellow NHS program called “Thailand Legacy: The King and Cambridge.” Several photographers and reporters spent much of the afternoon at the event. The *Cambridge Chronicle* ran a feature article with photos on August 18. *Inside NPS* picked up the story on September 10, and they publicized it nationally via the National Park Service website. “Voice of America” aired video footage of the event from September 23 to 26 throughout Thailand on TNN (Thailand News Network).

## Charles Sumner, Art Patron and Art Collector

In 1839 during his trip to Rome, Charles Sumner met twenty-five-year-old Thomas Crawford, a student of the Danish sculptor Bertel Thorwaldsen. Crawford was working on a group sculpture of Orpheus entering Hades in search of Eurydice. Immediately taken with the piece, Sumner befriended the sculptor and became his patron, actively promoting Crawford's art among his Boston circle.

Many of the nineteen letters in the House archives from Sumner to Crawford between 1839 and 1850 speak of taking up a subscription to buy a copy of the Orpheus piece. Sumner's dogged marketing helped Crawford achieve recognition and fame.

Henry Longfellow came to know Crawford through Sumner, and the poet eventually owned three of Crawford's works, including "Sappho." Louisa Ward Crawford, the sculptor's wife and sister of Julia Ward Howe, gave the small plaster statue to Henry after his wife Fanny's death in 1861. It remains today in Longfellow's library.

In addition to his interest in classical sculptures, Sumner became enamored of paintings and, particularly, engravings. According to the December 1943 *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* (Boston), "Sumner's

taste for collecting seems to have first aroused in 1857, when, in his own words, he 'turned to engravings for employment and pastime.' This was after the Brooks assault, and subsequent convalescence and journey to Europe.... To quote E.L. Pierce, 'He availed himself of such [engravings] as were accessible in Washington; private collections in Philadelphia, New York, Boston and Cambridge were opened to him; he passed his days in the Astor Library; but the richest treasures of the kind he found in the library of Harvard College, where under the guidance of Dr. Louis Thies, he went through the remarkable Gray collection.'"

Longfellow commented on this in his journal on January 21, 1858: "We again passed the morning with the engravings, and again brought Sumner and Thies home to dinner, which they left midway to go back to the portfolios. Sumner is insatiable. He will be the death of Thies, who is ill."

Sumner composed an essay called "The Best Portraits in Engraving," published in

*The City*, an illustrated New York magazine, in January 1872. "Suffering from continued prostration, disabling me from ordinary activities of life," Sumner explained in the

introduction, "I turned to engravings.... Then in Paris, my daily medicine for weeks was the vast cabinet of engravings, then called Imperial, now National, counted by the million where was everything to please or instruct. Thinking of those kindly portfolios, I make this record of gratitude, as to the benefactors. Perhaps some other invalid, seeking occupation without burden, may find in them the solace that I did."

By the time he died, two years later, Sumner had amassed a substantial art collection. He left the largest share to Boston's Museum of Fine Arts. But the copy of the great painting in Venice by Tintoretto, "The Miracle of the Slave," Sumner specifically bequeathed to Joshua B. Smith, the African American member of the Massachusetts legislature who had helped repeal their censure of Sumner.



"Sappho,"

by Thomas Crawford, 1855

## Mary Smith Remembered

Mary Hunting Smith, Henry Longfellow's great granddaughter via his daughter Annie Allegra, passed away on August 12 at age 88. An administrator with the Boston Symphony and the New York Philharmonic, Mary Smith – a dear friend of the Longfellow NHS – is pictured at the House with her sister Francis Appleton Wetherell (right) and Horace the Longfellow family teddy bear.



## Recent Research at the House

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

Jill Lepore, professor of history at Harvard University, examined information about Jared Sparks, a historian who became president of Harvard. He rented rooms in the House from Mrs. Craigie in the 1830s while he was writing about George Washington.

From the LNHS program this summer on the "Trail of Thai Royalty in Massachusetts," Prof. Todd LeRoy Perreira of San Jose State University learned of Charles Longfellow's Siamese travels and photographs. Perreira is currently researching the history of Thai people in the U.S. and early contact between the two countries. He examined Charley's journal entries about and photographs of Siam (Thailand).

For a study on artist Thomas Crawford, Taeko Kitahara, professor of English at Toyo University in Tokyo, came to see Crawford's sculptures in the House collection: "Sappho," a bust of George Washington Greene, and one called "Excelsior."

Dr. Valerie Mathes, Professor Emerita of City College of San Francisco, looked at the papers of Alice Longfellow as president of the Massachusetts Auxiliary of the Women's National Indian Association. She discovered letters to Alice from Sac and Fox tribe member Walter Battice, a student at the Hampton Normal and Industrial Institute, who became a performer in wild west shows in the early twentieth century.

## 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 marble bust of the young Caesar Augustus owned by Charles Sumner and bequeathed to Henry W. Longfellow, which stands today in Alice Longfellow's study on the second floor.

While visiting the Vatican in 1839, Sumner first saw the original sculpture by Antonio Canova (1757-1822) upon which this copy was based. In 1857 Sumner traveled to Europe to continue recuperating from the wounds he received when Brooks attacked him in the Senate. Upon Sumner's return in 1859, he commissioned lawyer, essayist, poet, and sculptor William Wetmore Story – the son of Sumner's mentor, Judge Joseph Story – to execute a copy of this work of art. Story later recalled this time, "It was during this visit that the world of art first opened to [Sumner]; and though he liked living men better, the great statues and pictures he saw made a profound impression on him."

William Story lived and worked in Rome from 1850 until his death in 1895.



## 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](http://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](http://www.longfellowfriends.org)

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