

HISTORIC NEW ENGLAND

One Hundred Years



of Defining the Past, Shaping the Future



WINTER/SPRING 2010

INTRODUCING WILLIAM
SUMNER APPLETON

FROM THE PRESIDENT

We're one hundred years old! This issue marks the launch of our centennial year, with an expanded thirty-six-page magazine—including articles by celebrity authors in each issue. We are finding new ways to use our thirty-six museums to serve the public in local communities and in communities of interest that span the globe. Our forthcoming collections access project will make our collections accessible online, with the future goal of networking information with other organizations that preserve New England treasures. There are special exhibits and celebrations planned throughout the year, and we will be providing services across the region through our 100 Years 100 Communities initiative.

Founder William Sumner Appleton recognized that an organization strong enough to protect and preserve New England's landscapes, buildings, collections, and stories would survive only if supported by a large group of like-minded members. Appleton and his successors created such an organization, which today serves as a national model for heritage preservation. The centennial provides the opportunity to take this vision even further by building an even stronger regional commitment. That effort begins today, on our birthday—but will only succeed if it includes you. Join with us now as we launch another hundred years of successfully serving the public.



Carl R. Nold

—Carl R. Nold

HISTORIC NEW ENGLAND

Winter/Spring 2010
Vol. 10, No. 3



Introducing William Sumner Appleton 2



War Stories 24

LOOKING FORWARD 1
Make Preservation Your Legacy

MAKING FUN OF HISTORY 8
Happy Birthday Historic New England

MUSEUM SHOP 10
The Historic New England Bookshelf

PRESERVATION 11
The State of Preservation

CONSERVATION 12
How to Find a Conservator

IN FOCUS 14
Photographers in the Family

COLLECTIONS 18
A Few Not So Minor Antiquities

SPOTLIGHT 32
My Favorite Things

ACQUISITIONS 34
Captured for Posterity

Except where noted, all historic photographs and ephemera are from Historic New England's Library and Archives.

The award-winning *Historic New England* magazine is a benefit of membership. To join, please visit www.HistoricNewEngland.org



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HISTORIC NEW ENGLAND magazine is a benefit of membership. To become a member, visit our website, HistoricNewEngland.org, or call (617) 227-3956. Comments? Please call Nancy Curtis, editor. Historic New England is presented by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. It is funded in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

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Editor: Nancy Curtis
Design: DeFrancis Carbone

COVER The fanlight depicts Historic New England's five program areas—education, historic properties, preservation services, collections, and library and archives.



David Behl

ABOVE The c. 1740 Codman Estate in Lincoln, Massachusetts, with its gardens, fields, and woodlands, is one of thirty-six historic properties open to the public. Legacy gifts, bequests, and other contributions form an essential source of support for Historic New England's broad range of preservation and educational programs.

Make Preservation *Your Legacy*

Upcoming centennial initiatives and activities are all part of setting the stage for Historic New England's continued success as the national model for the care of buildings, landscapes, and collections and for sharing these resources with diverse audiences. Consider being part of our next one hundred years by including Historic New England in your estate plans.

Planned gifts are a wonderful and convenient way to make a commitment that will leave a lasting legacy. Gifts can provide general operating support or can be designated to support specific historic sites, programs, or teams.

- *A bequest to Historic New England*

A bequest may take the form of a percentage or fraction of your estate, a specific dollar amount, or a part or the entire remainder of your estate after other specific bequests have been fulfilled.

- *Naming Historic New England as beneficiary*

For donors without a living spouse, naming Historic New England as beneficiary to a retirement plan enables the full amount to be donated and does not incur the tax penalty that naming an individual does.

- *Other planned giving options*

Charitable Lead Trusts and Charitable Remainder Trusts offer income tax deductions and a reduction of capital gains taxes and estate taxes. Please consult an estate planning attorney to determine if this option is right for you.

The Otis Society, named for Harrison Gray Otis, the prominent lawyer and politician whose 1796 home now serves as Historic New England's headquarters, honors individuals who include Historic New England in their estate plans. Otis Society benefits include invitations to a variety of events throughout the year and recognition in the Annual Report. We would be pleased to include you in this special group. If you have already made a provision for Historic New England in your will or estate plan, please let us know so that you will receive Otis Society benefits.

In 1910, William Sumner Appleton founded SPNEA, now Historic New England, with a modest bankroll of \$180. Upon his death, the organization's endowment of \$507,800 was a testament to Appleton's thoughtful financial planning. Please consider following in our founder's footsteps and help support Historic New England's next one hundred years.

—*Kimberlea Tracey*
Vice President for Advancement

For information on planned gifts to Historic New England, please contact the Development Team at 617-994-5900, ext. 5951 or Development@HistoricNewEngland.org.

Introducing William Sumner Appleton



ABOVE—Appleton at the Harrison Gray Otis house, 1929.
FACING PAGE, TOP Young Sumner in 1887, photographed by his
aunt Harriot Curtis. MIDDLE Sumner in ringlets, with his two
sisters, c. 1878. BELOW The Appleton family home at 39
Beacon Street, Boston, at right.



One hundred years ago this spring, William Sumner Appleton founded the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, known today as Historic New England. In his first *Bulletin* to members, he issued a forceful statement of purpose, “Our New England antiquities are fast disappearing...The situation requires aggressive action by a large and strong society, which shall...act instantly whenever needed to lead in the preservation of noteworthy buildings and historic sites.”



For the next thirty-seven years until his death in November 1947, Appleton continued to lead and inspire this rapidly growing organization: defining its purpose; persuading, charming, and occasionally hectoring the membership; raising money (sometimes covering deficits from his own funds); working without remuneration; establishing a sound preservation methodology; and guiding the organization successfully through two world wars and the depression.

Appleton was born in 1874 into a family of wealth and privilege, and one with strong historical interests. His grandfather Nathan, who had made a fortune in the textile industry, was a member of the Boston Athenaeum and the Massachusetts Historical Society, and his father, who had a scholarly interest in genealogy and numismatics, was a founder of the Bostonian Society, the Boston Numismatic Society, and the American Historical Society. Growing up on Boston's Beacon Hill, Appleton moved in a cultivated milieu. He also was surrounded by the work of some of New England's most influential architects, including Charles Bulfinch and Asher Benjamin. His family's own house at 39 Beacon Street had been designed by Alexander Parris, architect of Quincy Market. When he was only a year old, his father commissioned Peabody and Stearns, one of Boston's leading architectural firms to design a



ABOVE The Appleton family country house, Holbrook Hall, in Newton, Massachusetts, designed in 1875 by the Boston architectural firm of Peabody and Stearns.

FACING PAGE One of Appleton's many scrapbooks, open to pages recording his trip to the West in 1915.

Stick Style country house called Holbrook Hall, in Newton, Massachusetts. No doubt, Appleton's obsession with New England architecture was engendered by his childhood environment.

In 1886, twelve-year-old Sumner, as he was called, left Boston with his family for an extended stay in Europe, where he was introduced to the great art museums and monuments of the Old World. Young Sumner's letters to his beloved aunt, Harriot Curtis, and other relatives not only describe places and events, but also testify to his propensity for collecting, even at an early age: "Dear Aunt Harriot, Being far away and in foreign land, it is quite aggravating ... to hear Papa read in the news papers [sic] of new issues of stamps at home. If I were in America, I could get plenty of them, but here I receive none." Upon the family's return to America, Appleton went to St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire, and thence, in 1892, to Harvard University.

At Harvard, Appleton's program included courses in history, French, philosophy, and art, among others. Charles Eliot Norton, Harvard's first professor of the history of art, taught him Ancient, Roman, and Medieval Art. Appleton came under the spell of the influential and charismatic Norton, and became familiar with the thinking of William

Morris and John Ruskin. Appleton felt it a privilege to take a class with Norton, whose lectures, he wrote, were "nominally on the fine arts, but actually on anything." Upon graduating in 1896, he left for a six-month grand tour of England and the Continent, after which he returned and entered into business as a real estate and investment broker. After a few years, Appleton suffered a breakdown due, according to him, to severe eyestrain and gave up the business world for good.

Beginning in the 1890s and continuing through the first decades of the twentieth century, Appleton documented his widespread interests and activities in a series of remarkably detailed scrapbooks. That he was much sought after as a guest at receptions, dinners, balls, and other social events is evident from the hundreds of invitations he received.

The extensive international and national travel that influenced his thinking on the methods and aesthetic principles of preservation is recorded by means of maps, brochures, tickets, postcards, and so forth. Between 1893 and 1915, Appleton made two trips abroad, traveled across the United States three times, and attended four world's fairs (Chicago, 1893; Buffalo, 1901; San Francisco and San Diego, both 1915), as well as participated in numerous historical events, such as the 1908 Tercentenary of Quebec. Politics and

current affairs, both local and national, take up numerous scrapbook pages. His deep interest in theater and the arts is apparent throughout. He often viewed exhibitions of work by artists like Howard Pyle, Cecilia Beaux, and Charles and Marcia Woodbury at the Saint Botolph Club, the Boston Art Club, the Boston Camera Club, and other galleries. Many charitable and preservation organizations, including those concerned with the conservation of natural resources, received his support: the Shirley Eustis House Association, the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, the National Association of Audubon Societies, the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, and the Pine Mountain Settlement School in Kentucky, to name a few. His utter devotion to the cause of Harvard's football team is shown through hundreds of pages of newspaper clippings recording the highs and lows of the many seasons of play. Of course, hundreds of pages record his passion for buildings, both old and new, and his interest in a more formalized approach to preservation.

As he recuperated from his breakdown, Appleton began to explore in a serious way the historical and antiquarian activities that had been a tradition in his family. He turned to pursuits more in keeping with his interests and joined several patriotic, historical, and antiquarian organizations, including the Massachusetts Society of the Sons of the Revolution, the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Bostonian Society, the

Essex Institute, and the New England Historic and Genealogical Society. Through the Sons of the Revolution, Appleton became active in 1905 in the effort to preserve the Paul Revere House, in Boston's North End, one of the oldest houses in the city. Serving as secretary of the Paul Revere Memorial Association, Appleton worked with architect Joseph Everett Chandler and others on the restoration.

Early in the century, in another effort to decide upon a career, Appleton took classes at Harvard's Bussey Institution, a school of agriculture and horticulture, with the prospect of continuing the family's Holbrook Farm Dairy in Newton. He quickly decided that "the farmer's life was not for me" and sold the dairy. Much more stimulating and rewarding was a course on architecture taught by Denman Ross, art collector and influential lecturer and writer on art theory and design.

In 1905-06, Appleton took the lead in another preservation effort: to thwart the Boston Transit Commission's plans to alter the Old State House. In the face of opposition from a number of groups, the Transit Commission was forced to change its plans. Appleton's experiences in the fourteen years after his graduation from Harvard—in real estate, academic studies, civic affairs, non-profit organizations, hands-on preservation work, and travel—matured him into a more rounded individual and laid the foundation for his professional career.



In 1909, Appleton learned of plans to significantly alter the historic Jonathan Harrington House, which overlooks the green in Lexington, Massachusetts, and was the site of a dramatic incident during the confrontation with British troops on April 19, 1775. Outrage at yet another loss to the region's historic fabric had a galvanizing effect on him, and he took the necessary legal steps to establish the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, taking care to ensure that it would enjoy non-profit status. As he would later write, "From that minute on my life's work seemed to be cut out for me...." As he gathered his members for his society, the charm, zeal, diplomacy, and tenacity that characterized his professional work for the rest of his life came into play. He assembled officers and a board of trustees, including his cousin Alice Longfellow, who could provide financial support and/or prestige; several of them had academic experience or had worked with other historical and patriotic organizations. Appleton opened membership to all, and dues were modest. As Corresponding Secretary, he communicated to the members through the *Bulletin*, preaching to them about preservation, persuading them to donate objects, and, of course, asking for contributions to support special projects.

Appleton conceived of an energetic and dynamic organization that would be able to move swiftly whenever a historic building was threatened. He described his goals for the



Society as "to own for purposes of preservation, appropriate old houses throughout New England, or else to take such steps, by means of advice or financial assistance, as may lead other societies to undertake the work of such ownership and preservation."

The first house the fledgling organization acquired, in 1911, the c. 1670 Swett-Ilsley House in Newbury, Massachusetts, was initially let out as a tea house with the goal of making it self-supporting. Appleton's prime criterion for preserving a building was its intrinsic architectural or aesthetic merit, rather than its association with great men or events. He had a special interest in the modest dwellings of the first settlers, which by the standards of the day were incompatible with modern comfort and were falling into decay. Over the years, the Society acquired ten First Period houses, valued today by scholars as unique records of late medieval building methods in this country. In 1916, the organization acquired the Harrison Gray Otis House in Boston as its headquarters, a step that fortuitously saved the building from demolition a few years later, when Cambridge Street was widened.

As the country's first professional preservationist, Appleton brought a scientific method to his approach and defined procedures that are largely followed to this day. He came to see a building as an evolving organism, whose changes over time preserved the historic record of many eras.

This enabled him to resist the temptation to restore a building to a particular period to make it easier for a lay person to understand. Appleton hired professionals to do the work on a building and thoroughly documented the process by means of photographic and written records. As he wrote in 1930, about his restoration of the c. 1678 Coffin House in Newbury, Massachusetts, "The more I work on these old houses the more I feel that the less of W.S. Appleton I put into them, the better it is." He left in place a "perfectly good classical porch and door of about 1850...and a staircase built not in 1651 but at the time that the chimney and stairs were altered...It shows the process of evolution during 280 years and it seemed to me

that [this] was of infinitely more interest than a restoration of the old appearance...could have been."

Appleton also established a New England museum—at first a random assortment of old things, which gradually took shape as a systematic, documented collection of fur-



ABOVE Appleton had this silhouette made at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco in 1915. BELOW Pages from a scrapbook devoted to the Society's first year, showing a draft of the bylaws along with ideas for the official seal.



LEFT In this witty cartoon, artist and puppeteer Tony Sarg portrayed Appleton hard at work in 1929 on the preservation of



the Jethro Coffin House on Nantucket. RIGHT Avid photographer Appleton was seldom without his camera.

nishings and fine and decorative arts, as houses with their contents intact entered the collection. At the same time, he was a voracious collector of images—postcards, ephemera, measured drawings, and most importantly, photographs. An avid amateur photographer who took hundreds of documentary photographs of his restoration projects, he befriended professional photographers and sought donations of their work. Not everything could be saved, but buildings and streetscapes could be “preserved on paper.” Over the years, Appleton’s energetic if somewhat indiscriminate collecting practices have been refined, and today Historic New England’s holdings are recognized as the richest and best documented assemblage of New England material culture in the nation. Appleton’s leadership in the preservation field was honored by awards—in 1944 by the Trustees of Public Reservations and in 1946 by the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society.

On November 13, 1947, while on Society business in North Andover, Massachusetts, Appleton suffered a stroke. He never regained consciousness and died eleven days later. At the time of his death, his organization owned fifty-one historic properties, a museum collection numbering in the thousands, and a library with upwards of 600,000 images of New

England. In February 1948, the SPNEA board of trustees included the following in its memorial resolution: ...[Appleton] laid the foundation for the fulfillment of the hope of his last years that the Society would record the development of New England civilization by preserving actual examples of the mode of life of every age from early times to the time the Society is functioning, be it 1948 or 2048...[he] devoted his life and sacrificed his personal financial interests to a struggle to preserve the irreplaceable creations of the past, for the instruction, delight, and inspiration of mankind for generations to come.”

—Lorna Condon
Curator, Library and Archives

For further reading please visit our website at www.HistoricNewEngland.org/centennial



Happy Birthday, Historic New England!



Historic New England turns one hundred years old this year. This is called a *centennial*, from the Latin words for *hundred* (centum) and *year* (annus), and we are celebrating all year long. Let's look at

how people have celebrated birthdays and anniversaries in the past hundred years.



The song we know as "Happy Birthday to You" first appeared—with different lyrics—a little more than a hundred years ago. Today, the song is known all over the English-speaking world.

1893

Schoolteachers Patty and Mildred Hill compose a song for school-children called "Good Morning to All."

*Good morning to you
Good morning to you
Good morning, dear children
Good morning to all.*

Did you *know*?

Houses and towns can have birthday celebrations too. In 1889, the Marrett family of Standish, Maine, organized a family reunion when their house turned one hundred years old. Each guest received a hand-painted picture of the house as a souvenir.

In 1923, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, celebrated its three-hundredth birthday with five days of concerts, historical pageants, and a parade that included a float made by the local Odd Fellows lodge.



Portsmouth Athenaeum



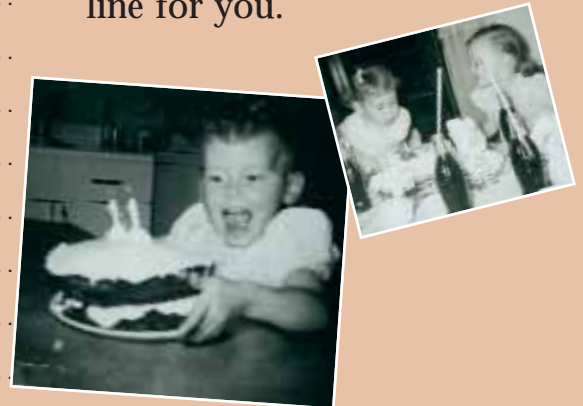
acrostic poem

You can use your acrostic poem to make a special birthday card for someone!

Having a special day of my own each year,
A
P
P
Y

B
I
R
T
H
D
A
Y

An acrostic poem uses the letters in a word to begin each line. Make an acrostic poem about what you like best about birthdays. We have filled in the first line for you.



1924
First publication of the lyrics of the “Happy Birthday” song, set to the Hill sisters’ melody.

1930s
Radio, movies, and musicals popularize the “Happy Birthday” song.

1933
“Happy Birthday” is the first singing telegram sent by the Western Union Telegraph Company.

1969
“Happy Birthday” is performed from space by the astronauts of Apollo IX.

fun fact



It used to be that only kings’ birthdays were celebrated. By the late 1800s, ordinary people began to celebrate their birthdays with decorated cakes, candles, cards, and gifts.



...my favorite birthday...


Do you have a photograph of your favorite birthday party or anniversary that you would love to share? Email it to CaseyTheClock@HistoricNewEngland.org.


The Historic New England *Bookshelf*

John Calvin Stevens, Architect

Joseph A. King Cottage, Great Diamond Island, Casco Bay, Maine, 1888

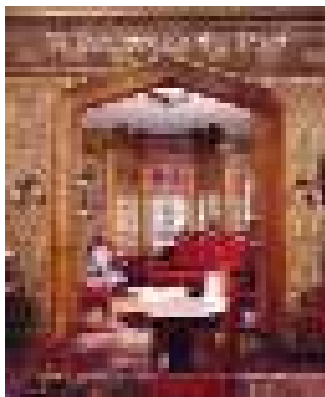
Like so many picturesque locations on the Maine Coast, Casco Bay experienced the development of boarding summer colonies after the Civil War. Four major resort communities were established there in the 1850s: Little Diamond Island (LDI), Great Diamond Island (GDI), Cushman's Island (CI), and Diamond Park, Cape Elizabeth (DPE). While some landowners willing to lease their estates were "open" to most every prospective tenant and upper middle class businessmen and professionals were and child-owning architect. The style of the cottage was a blend of the Federal and the Queen Anne styles. The cottage was a landmark on Great Diamond Island.





Drawing Toward Home, Designs for Domestic Architecture from Historic New England.
 James F. O’Gorman, editor, with Lorna Condon, Christopher Monkhouse, Roger G. Reed, and Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr.

Historic New England’s latest publication belongs in the library of everyone who loves architecture. Published in conjunction with an exhibition, it presents one hundred drawings ranging in type from diagrammatic plans to perspectives and stretching in time from the end of the eighteenth century through the twentieth. The content surveys the rise of the professional architect; the consolidation of the profession; English Colonial Revival, Arts and Crafts, and Modern styles. Building types include Federal mansions, summer cottages, country estates, apartments, and Boston three-deckers, designed by prominent and little-known architects. **Hardcover, 225 pages; 100 drawings and numerous photographs; four essays and extensive entries on the drawings. M, \$53.96 NM, \$59.95**



Windows on the Past: Four Centuries of New England Homes, centennial edition

Jane C. Nylander with Diane L. Viera

This book presents the story of life in New England from before the American Revolution to the twentieth century. *Windows on the Past* takes you on a tour of four centuries of homes, with fascinating interiors and furnishings; family narratives; advances in cooking, heating, plumbing, and lighting; the evolution of dining rituals; and classic landscapes, flower and kitchen gardens, and working farms. First published in 2000, the book has been updated with new chapters on servants’ roles in the New England household and on the Historic New England Stewardship Program, which protects more than seventy-five privately owned historic properties. **Hardcover, lavishly illustrated with 275 color and historic black-and-white photographs. M, \$40.50 NM, \$45**

To order, please call 617-227-3956 or shop online at www.HistoricNewEngland.org.

As part of Historic New England's centennial celebration, we are offering an overview of preservation in the region by showcasing the statewide non-profit preservation organization of each state. These organizations function as advocates for monitoring, promoting, and coordinating historic preservation efforts at the state level and work closely with their respective state historic preservation government offices.



Maine

The State of Preservation

Founded in 1972, Maine Preservation laid an impressive groundwork for historic preservation in the state and is now poised to enter a new era. In 2006, the Brookings Institution presented a report on the state's economy in which it identified our picturesque towns and landscapes as crucial economic assets. The report recommended aggressive preservation efforts to spur community revitalization and quality of place. Following this blueprint, the State Legislature passed major new initiatives, and private donations have funded complementary efforts.

The Brookings report specifically urged the use of historic rehabilitation tax credits; the legislature responded in 2008 by passing one of the nation's strongest laws, with incentives for rehabilitation projects including small pro-

jects and affordable housing. Among projects launched in 2008 and 2009 were affordable housing in South Berwick, a reused high school in Scarborough, a large mill in Waterville adapted for mixed use, and a restaurant in a former church in Portland.

The 2009 legislature approved \$3.5 million in state bonds for Communities for Maine's Future, a new downtown revitalization grant program. Grants will facilitate public and non-profit community enhancement in Main Street Maine communities and in villages, towns, and cities statewide. This bond, on the ballot for June 2010, also includes \$1.5 million for a new Endangered Properties Revolving Fund, developed in partnership with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission and bolstered by Governor John E. Baldacci and the State Planning Office.

The fund provides for securing historic properties, like the 1839 New Gloucester Universalist Meeting House (above), for resale to new owners, who will rehabilitate and preserve them, subject to preservation easements. The sale proceeds will be returned for reuse.

These efforts are facilitated by two new field service representatives, who "circuit ride" the entire state and provide local assistance to move preservation projects in the right direction. Small matching seed grants enable hiring professional services. Despite the economic downturn, prospects look bright for the future of historic preservation in Maine.

—*Greg Paxton*
Executive Director,
Maine Preservation



How to Find a Conservator

If you are a collector or own historic objects or artworks, chances are that at some time you will need to deal with issues of deterioration or damage. When this happens, we recommend that you seek the advice of a qualified conservator. Like restorers, conservators can treat works of art and historic objects to improve their appearance, but they have at their command a more diverse and scientific set of tools and techniques.

Conservators are committed to following the Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice established by the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC). This code requires them to preserve original materials and the maker's original intent as much as possible and to preserve the characteristics of an object that are considered valuable or of

interest. For example, on antique furniture, original finishes are highly valued (as demonstrated frequently on *Antiques Roadshow*). Conservators are trained to treat aged and discolored varnishes on a piece of furniture, returning it closer to its original appearance, rather than stripping the old varnish and refinishing it. Conservators also strive to make their treatments reversible, so that their work can be undone at a later date. This allows objects to be treated again if further deterioration or damage takes place.

Conservators will treat damage or deterioration that has already occurred, but they are equally concerned with prevention. They will look for the cause of a problem and advise you on proper handling and care to prevent its recurrence once the piece returns to your home. They may recommend the

installation of shades or UV-filtering film on your windows to keep light from damaging furniture, textiles, or works of art. Providing a safe environment for your collection is the best way to keep it in stable condition for years to come.

Conservators are divided into specialties, and you should select your conservator based on the type of object you have. The categories reflected in AIC's specialty groups are: paintings, textiles, objects, wooden artifacts (furniture), books and paper, photographs, and architecture. Electronic media is an emerging specialty.

There are several good ways to find a conservator. You can go to the AIC website, www.conservation-us.org, and fill out the questionnaire, identifying the type of object and your location. You will be given a list of special-

ists in your area who are members of AIC and have agreed to follow its code of ethics. Alternatively, ask your local museum or historical society for a recommendation, as they often have the most experience with the conservators in your area. Other collectors may also know someone they can recommend.

One service that a conservator may not perform is to provide an appraisal. The AIC's Code of Ethics prohibits conservators from appraising an object because of the potential for conflict of interest. Conservators should base treatment decisions on the needs of an object, not its value.

After examining your object, the conservator will provide you with a written condition assessment and treatment proposal, which should include a cost estimate. There may be a charge for this. You should ask if the conservator carries insurance, as many expect their clients to assume this responsibility. Make sure that your property is fully covered either through your own

insurance or the conservator's while it is away from your home.

A conservator's overall approach may involve three different types of treatment: preservation, which involves arresting deterioration by treating the causes, such as overexposure to light and high humidity; conservation, which involves treating an object to reverse deterioration, such as gluing down flaking paint; and finally, restoration, which involves adding new material to replace losses or missing elements. In some circles, the term restoration has a bad name, but as long as original material is not removed, restoration, in the form of in-painting losses to a painting, for example, or replacing missing veneer, can return much of an object's original beauty. Conservators should make decisions about how far to proceed with restoration in consultation with you.

Conservation is an important investment in extending the life and maintaining the integrity of something



important to you. Having your historic object or work of art treated by a conservator will give you the confidence to know that you have provided it with the best care available.

—John Childs, Conservator



The pictures on this page and the facing page show objects from Historic New England's collection before and after conservation treatment. On the facing page, discolored varnish has been removed from a painted chair back. On the left, disfiguring corrosion has been removed from a silver candelabrum, and above, finish lost from water damage has been restored to a small Chinese teak table.

American Institute for Conservation
of Historic and Artistic Works
1156 15th St NW
Suite 320
Washington, DC 20005-1714
(202) 452-9545
www.conservation-us.org

Look for the "Find a conservator" tab on the web site.

Photographers *in the Family*



TOP Eva Todd Newell, c. 1895. ABOVE LEFT Elisha Newell, March, 1863 ABOVE, RIGHT Charles Newell, c. 1903.

Historic New England's Library and Archives contains a small but important collection of materials relating to the joint photographic activities around 1900 of Eva Todd Newell, an amateur photographer of Southington, Connecticut, and her son, Charles, who became a professional photographer in Hartford.

Eva's husband, Elisha, grew up in an old family house in Southington. Following Civil War service, he was never entirely well again, and while he tried to farm and maintain the inherited homestead, this apparently became an overwhelming burden. In 1872, despite the fact that he and his wife treasured the old Josiah Newell house and its historic contents, he conveyed the entire farm to a brother-in-law. Ultimately he became associate editor of the local newspaper, in which he published articles about the early history of Southington and reminiscences of its oldest inhabitants. Eva clearly shared her husband's historical interests, and they both became caught up in the fervor of the Colonial Revival. In 1885, entirely in keeping with their deep historical interests, they purchased the locally important eighteenth-century Selah Barnes house in Plantsville, a village in Southington, picturesquely situated on the banks of the Eight Mile River and close to the equally picturesque abandoned bed of the old Farmington/Northampton Canal. To this house they brought



with them many of the inherited possessions from the old family homestead.

Eva, without any unusual educational advantages, had wide-ranging intellectual interests. Just when she took up photography is not known, but the pursuit was, of course, a highly popular amateur hobby for both men and women around 1900. She became very much absorbed in photography, which had interesting earlier associations with her husband's cousin, the artist Nelson Augustus Moore. Best known as a landscape painter, Moore had also trained in Boston as a photographer and was likely Connecticut's first photographer. In 1860, he opened a photography shop in New Britain and later had one in Hartford. He and his brother, Roswell Allen Moore, operated a studio, and photographed Elisha and his young wife in a pair of cartes de visite.

Photography at the turn of the twentieth century remained a highly complicated process, in which the images were captured on glass plates. Photographic enthusiasts at the time prided themselves as much on their mastery of the technical aspects of the craft as on their picture-taking skills, and it is clear that Eva was also involved in the whole process from start to finish. In August 1898, during a brief absence from home, she wrote to her husband, asking him to "tell Charlie

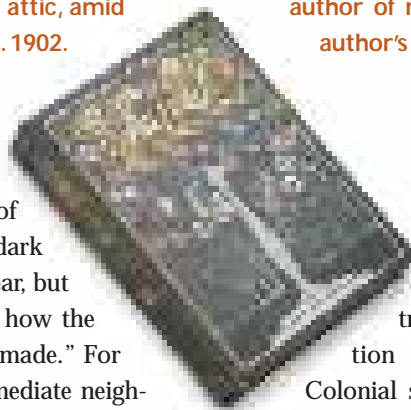


TOP Finding meaning in the everyday, Eva Newell created this composition of a sundial and bee skep in front of the family's eighteenth-century house in Southington, Connecticut, c. 1900. **BELOW** Eva's view of the Selah Barnes house in its rural setting, c. 1910.



THIS PAGE, TOP LEFT For this contemplative image, Eva posed her daughter, wearing old-fashioned clothing, in the attic, amid old trunks, textiles, and household implements, c. 1902.

BELOW Eva's copy of *Old Time Gardens* by Alice Morse Earle, author of numerous books on Colonial times, containing the author's inscription to her. FACING PAGE, TOP Panoramic view



[their professional photographer son] to write off our developer for me out of book of 'written formula' first, and out of the dark room last." Her statement is not entirely clear, but she goes on to say that "I have forgotten how the original solutions or the stock solutions are made." For subject matter she turned often to her immediate neighborhood and photographed views along the Eight Mile River and the old canal bed. These and other local scenes represent an important moment in the history of photography, when American camera enthusiasts were exploring the compositional possibilities in everyday familiar surroundings—often no farther afield than in their own backyards. Eva's neighborhood scenes have added significance today because Interstate 84 has cut a wide swath through Southington, and while narrowly avoiding the historic Selah Barnes house, has otherwise largely obliterated the picturesque vistas from the old house.

Very much in keeping with the widespread contemporary enthusiasm for the American past, Eva's subjects include a number of posed photographs of antique objects. One of these images shows an early sundial and a bee skep, or beehive, made of twisted straw, posed under one of the front windows

of the Selah Barnes house. Another picture, taken in the Barnes house attic, features her daughter, dressed in antique garments and examining the contents of an old trunk. By this time, Eva had come to the attention of Alice Morse Earle, whose writings on Colonial subjects had enormous popular appeal. Earle engaged her to supply a number of photographs (including those of the sundial and bee skep and the attic) for some of her books. Earle's books on gardens also contain photographs by Eva of "old-time" flowers, and a presentation copy of one of these volumes inscribed by the author to Eva is now part of the Historic New England collection.

It is hardly surprising that Eva communicated her love of photography to her only son, Charles. One of the earliest surviving likenesses of him is a tintype, identified on the original paper mount as "Cora and Charlie in tableau... 'Wounded Drummer boy.'" The subject in general was apparently inspired by the Civil War and shows Charles Newell, aged probably about eight, being tended by an equally youthful "nurse." This posed "period piece" by an unidentified photographer is perhaps all the more significant for its associations with a family for whom photography had a consuming



by Charles M. Newell of the campus at Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, c.1902. BELOW Tintype by an unknown photographer, entitled "Wounded Drummer Boy" and depicting the young Charles Newell and a friend, c. 1870.



appeal. In this connection it would be interesting to know when and how the mother/son photographic team of Eva and Charles M. Newell acquired the slim volume *Dernier Perfectionnements apportés au Daguerreotype*, by M.A. Gaudin and N. P. Lerebours, third edition, published in Paris and London in May 1842.

Charles never married, and eventually became a professional photographer. By 1902 he and a partner, Charles Dexter Allen, had formed the short-lived American Panoramic View Co. in Hartford. At least one of Charles's patent applications (undated) for improvements to the panoramic camera has survived. In December 1902, the *Hartford Times*, writing about the Panoramic View Co., declared that thanks to the use of the newly popular panoramics, "the art of landscape photography is extended far beyond the ordinary bounds. The camera, of special construction, uses negatives measuring nineteen by forty-two inches." The article mentions in particular views of Bushnell, Riverside, and Keney Parks in Hartford, and the Yale and Trinity campuses, which "were exhibited at the recent meeting of the American Park and Outdoor Art association in Boston, where they received most favorable comment in the press...The picture of Yale campus is acknowledged to be the finest that has ever been made of that historic spot..."

Charles's work with the panoramic camera clearly marked the height of his professional career. Beginning in 1908, he and an associate briefly kept a portrait photographic studio in Hartford, but by 1910 he had left the capitol city and, according to the federal census of that year, was living at home with his mother and sister at Plantsville, listed as "Salesman/Photography." By 1916, he had moved to Philadelphia, where he remained until shortly before his death in 1918, but the meager record for these later years suggests that his active life was drawing to a close, hastened perhaps by ill health. Eva's death a year later in 1919 brought to an end this productive family relationship in the art of photography at both the amateur and professional levels.

—Abbott Lowell Cummings

Dr. Cummings, former executive director of SPNEA, now Historic New England, is the Charles F. Montgomery professor emeritus of American Decorative Arts, Yale University.

Beginning in 1910, when the first object entered Historic New England's collection, founder William Sumner Appleton actively sought what he called "the minor antiquities," by which he was referring to the furnishings and decorative items found in the region's old houses. These items, appreciated by antiquarians for their historic interest as well as for whatever aesthetic appeal they possessed, were at that time often of little commercial value and, he feared, likely to be discarded. From modest beginnings, the organization has gone on to develop a broad general collection, deciding upon a policy of preserving the entire contents of a household, and at the same time assembling a vast archive of photographs, architectural drawings, ephemera, and other records of daily life in the region.

A few not so minor antiquities

The breadth of Appleton's interests set the stage for the accumulation of a rich body of artifacts, now numbering 110,000 objects and more than one million items in the Library and Archives. The collection supports all types of exhibitions, publications, and research projects. Indeed, no institution's holdings can offer a more comprehensive view of New England domestic life.

In honor of our centennial, New York's Winter Antiques Show featured Historic New England as the prestigious loan exhibition that was the centerpiece of the show this month. We share with you here a sampling of the objects that were on display.

RIGHT

Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*by Phillis Wheatley, 1773
Gift of Edmund Quincy*

Phillis Wheatley was the first black, the first slave, and the second woman to publish a book in America. In 1773, she published this collection of poems, which attracted widespread attention on both sides of the Atlantic. This copy belonged to Abigail Quincy, wife of the patriot Josiah Quincy, who signed her name on the flyleaf. Historic New England's Library and Archives contains a number of rare books from family libraries acquired along with the historic properties and their contents.



Peter Harholdt



ABOVE

Alcestis Frieze*designed by Walter Crane,
1876
Gift of Little & Browne*

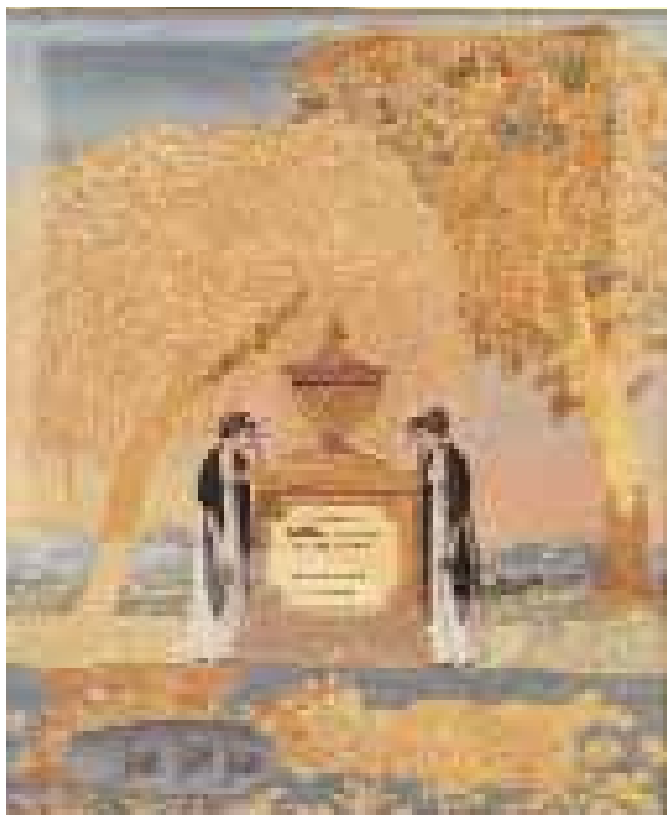
The wallpaper frieze shows Amor, the God of Love, and his wife, Alcestis, as well as

the domestic virtues of Diligence, Order, Providence, and Hospitality. Combining both classical and medieval elements, the wallpaper was designed by Walter Crane of London, a major figure of the Aesthetic movement. William Sumner Appleton began

Historic New England's wallpaper collection in 1911 with thirty-nine samples. Since then, the internationally known collection has become one of the largest and best documented in the country.

RIGHT
**Ezekiel Hersey
Derby Farm**
by Michele Felice Corné,
c. 1800
*Gift of Bertram K.
and Nina Fletcher Little*

Ezekiel Hersey Derby (1772–1852) purchased this 110-acre farm in Salem, Massachusetts, in the spring of 1800. He quickly set about making improvements to the property, hiring Salem architect Samuel McIntire to update the buildings and implementing progressive methods of farming. The painting depicts lush agricultural fields, with the corn just coming on. Paintings like this one in Historic New England's collection help document the changing landscape of the region.



LEFT
Mourning Picture
worked by Clarissa Page
Fowler; 1816
*Gift of Mrs. George F. Weld
and Mrs. R. H. F. Standen*

This mourning picture was worked by fourteen-year-old Clarissa Page Fowler in memory of her grandfather, Samuel Page, of Danversport, Massachusetts. Mourning pictures were popular school-girl projects during the early nineteenth century. Many, like

this one, featured a classical tomb and urn; female mourners dressed in white rather than the traditional black; a willow tree, symbolizing resurrection, and an oak tree, symbolizing strength and hope. Historic New England's collection is well known for needlework like this as well as for the extraordinary range of upholstery documents, bedding, and window treatments, and an extensive collection of well-documented everyday textiles.



Peter Harholdt

LEFT
Vase
Painted by Celia Thaxter, 1887
Gift of Boylston A. Beal

Although most of Celia Thaxter's income derived from her writings, she also designed greeting cards and decorated ceramics. This vase, thought to have been a gift to her friend, author Sarah Orne Jewett, shows an olive branch, one of Thaxter's favorite subjects, with a quotation about olives from Sophocles. Included in Historic New England's extensive collection of ceramics are hand-painted examples like this one and even a ceramic palette with a sampling of the glaze colors available to china painters.



Peter Harholdt

LEFT
Butterfly Stools
Designed by Sori Yanagi, 1954
Bequest of Ise Gropius

When Bauhaus architect Walter Gropius traveled to Japan in 1954, he was inspired by the Japanese aesthetic. These stools, designed the year of his visit, and perhaps acquired by him there, occupy pride of place in the living room of the Gropius House in Lincoln, Massachusetts. The house, which came to Historic New England in 1984, showcases what many believe to be the best example of Bauhaus principles to survive anywhere outside of Germany.



Peter Hanholdt

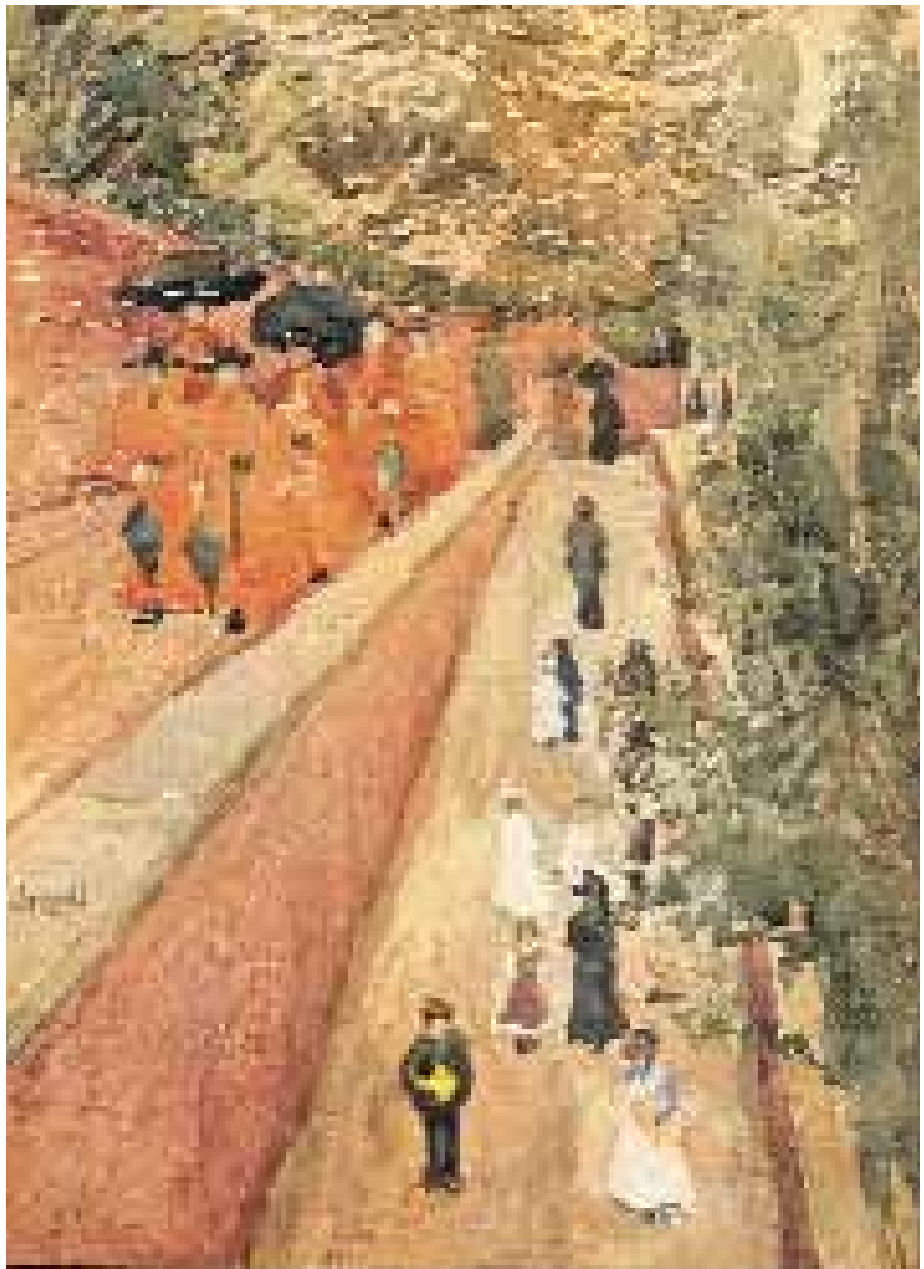
LEFT
Psyche
by Hiram Powers, 1849
*Bequest of Dorothy
S. F. M. Codman*

After he saw this bust in the artist's studio in Italy, Nathaniel Hawthorne rhapsodized: "A light... seems to shine from the interior of the marble, and beam forth from the features." *Psyche*, by Hiram Powers, evoked classical ideals of female beauty and had great appeal in the

nineteenth century. Vermont-born Powers moved to Florence, Italy, in 1837 to solidify his training as a sculptor. There he built a loyal clientele among American and English travelers. Apparently, *Psyche* was purchased from its original owner by members of the Codman family in 1868. The bust came to Historic New England along with the rest of the furnishings of the Codman Estate in Lincoln, Massachusetts, when that property was acquired in 1969.

RIGHT
Monte Pincio, Rome
by Maurice Brazil
Prendergast, 1898–99
*Gift of the Stephen Phillips
Memorial Charitable Trust
for Historic Preservation*

Maurice Prendergast's trip to Italy in 1898–99 transformed his career from that of a moderately successful Boston artist to one of national and international stature. While most of his time in Italy was spent in Venice, Prendergast traveled to Rome that winter and created several watercolors of the road leading up the Pincian Hill. Clearly influenced by Japanese printmakers in the arrangement of color, texture, and geometric form, Prendergast's Italian watercolors placed him among the best Modernists of the early twentieth century. This example belonged to the Phillips family, whose home in Salem, Massachusetts, is Historic New England's newest historic property.





ABOVE
**The Cushing
House Parlor**
by Ella Emory, 1878
Oil on canvas
Museum purchase with
funds provided by an
anonymous gift

This painting of the Cushing house in Hingham, Massachusetts, which was built about 1678 or 1679 and updated in the 1740s, shows

the layering of history typical of New England homes. The seventeenth-century summer beam on the ceiling was boxed in with boards in the eighteenth century. The clock, mirror, sofa, and footstool date from the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The wallpaper, window seat cushion, carpet, and bearskin rug in front of the sofa were the room's newest additions. Paintings like this

one, along with the surviving furnishings of Historic New England's house museums and the roughly 2,500 photographs of historic interiors in the Library and Archives, are an important resource for documenting how the interiors of New England homes have changed over time.

One of the things historic house museums do best is allow the visitor to view major historical events from the perspective of individuals. Here we present the stories of people from four Historic New England properties—Langdon House in Portsmouth, New Hampshire; Sayward-Wheeler House in York Harbor, Maine; Quincy House in Quincy, Massachusetts; and Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm in Newbury, Massachusetts—as they lived through the turmoil of the American Revolution.

War Stories

The Making of a Patriot

Before embarking on a long public career as a U.S. senator and governor of New Hampshire, John Langdon was a shipping merchant whose fortunes thrived in—and with—the city of Portsmouth. In conducting his business, he ignored the tariffs and taxes imposed by the Crown, which New England claimed were a violation of American rights. But in 1772, British regulations finally disrupted his affairs. He was charged with failing to register a ship to avoid taxation, and his cargo was seized. His legal appeal was not successful. Very likely this incident was the turning point that set Langdon on the path toward revolution. In 1773, at age thirty-two, with a healthy concern for his own interests, he embarked on his first political adventure, becoming the youngest member of the Portsmouth Committee of Correspondence.

In December 1774, Paul Revere rode up from Boston with a message for the committee. He warned of a possible deployment of British regulars to the Piscataqua region around Portsmouth, reported the king's order prohibiting the export of gunpowder and ammunition to America, and delivered the news that the citizens of Rhode Island had relieved the fort in Providence of its military stores. The committee

responded by planning a raid on Fort William and Mary, just east of Portsmouth at the mouth of the Piscataqua River. Recently upgraded, the fort was surrounded by stone walls and contained a fortified structure known as The Castle. It held cannons and ammunition and was guarded by only a skeleton force of five soldiers and their commander. The New Hampshire colony's governor, John Wentworth, alert to the possibility of trouble, ordered the fort's commander, Captain Cochran, to be on guard.

The next day, along the smoky, snowy streets of Portsmouth, Langdon gathered men who shared his belief that the military stores rightfully belonged under the colonists' control. A steady drumbeat collected a crowd of two hundred that set out for the fort. As one contemporary noted, "about 12 o'clock, news was brought to me that a Drum was beating about the town to collect the Populace

FACING PAGE, ABOVE [John Langdon. Copy of an original miniature dated 1792 owned by The Yale University Art Gallery.](#) BELOW [Map of Portsmouth Harbor \(detail\), by John Grant, 1774. Courtesy, New Hampshire Historical Society.](#)

together in order to go and take away the Gunpowder and dismantle the Fort.” With help from the citizens of neighboring towns, the raiders’ ranks swelled to four hundred. Together they had one purpose: securing the store of ammunition for their own use.

Upon their arrival, Captain Cochran ordered the crowd to desist and warned them if they “attempted to come into the Fort their Blood be upon their own hands for [he] will fire on [them].” A witness reported the rebels “fired three Guns, but no lives were lost; upon which they immediately scaled the



walls, disarmed the Captain and his men, took possession of ninety seven barrels of Powder, put it on board the Gondolas, brought it up to Town, and went off with it some distance into the country.” The capture complete, Langdon and the mob hauled down the king’s colors. The weapons and ammunition were sent to nearby Durham, where they were divided among local towns and later used in the bitter battles that ended American association with the British Crown. For John Langdon and the citizens of New Hampshire, the Revolution had begun.



A Man of Principle

For Jonathan Sayward of York, Province of Maine [now York Harbor, Maine], the prospect of rebellion threatened livelihood, property, personal safety, and his core beliefs. Born in 1713, he matured at a time when the struggles between the European powers were echoed by conflicts on this side of the Atlantic, such as the ongoing hostility between the colonists in New England and the French in Canada. In 1745, Sayward commanded a sloop in the capture of the French fortress at Louisbourg; spoils from this expedition, including china and candlesticks, are still on display in the Sayward-Wheeler House today. Professionally, Sayward started life as a self-described laborer, but gradually gained wealth as a merchant

and shipowner. By the 1760s, he had become York's most distinguished citizen, serving as judge and as a representative in the Massachusetts General Court.

In 1765, following the British victory in the French and Indian War, Parliament passed the Stamp Act, seeking funds to pay for the colonies' defense. This act, along with other highly unpopular actions by the Crown, provoked widespread opposition. In 1768, the General Court issued a letter inviting other colonial governments to join together in a common body to oppose British duties and taxes. Governor Francis Bernard insisted that the letter be rescinded. Sayward, who represented York in the General Court, was a





staunch loyalist. He was pessimistic about the colonies' ability to unite and feared they would pay dearly should they try. He therefore joined the small minority of members who voted to rescind. The seventeen "Rescindors," as they were called, came under bitter attack in newspapers, broadsides, and caricatures. Sayward wrote in his diary, "we are treated with all contempt."

Not surprisingly, Sayward was not re-elected to the General Court. His diary entries reflect his dismay at the disrespect toward the royal government and his anxiety about the colonies' future. He was appalled by the destruction of private property during the Boston Tea Party in December 1773, and, during a two-day town meeting in York, argued vehemently, but to no avail, against approval of the "actions in Boston." Later that year, at a dinner party in York, he even sparred good-naturedly with the visiting John Adams, urging him to be cautious in his "expedition to Congress."

Sayward's continued outspokenness put him in danger as the colonies inched closer to armed conflict. Yet, while other Tories met with violence or fled in fear, Sayward remained

steadfast, narrowly eluding harm on a number of occasions. In October 1774, for example, he wrote in his diary of rumors that he was to be "mobbed." He contacted a friend in nearby Berwick, where the mob was said to be assembling, asking for his assistance in discouraging the crowd. Four months later, while holding court in York County, an angry crowd confronted him and other judges. Sayward described one man, a member of the Continental Congress, as "heightening the people by haranging them on the loss of their privileges," while another collected "a great crowd around him and inflamed them in a most mad manner." Sayward defused the situation by refusing to sit in judgment on any cases, and eventually the crowd broke up peaceably.

Sayward described 1775 as a "year of many trials." His wife of thirty-nine years died, and he was stripped of his civic positions and sequestered in York. "I have been Confined upon honor not to absent my Self from the town... the loss of trade the scorn of the abject Slight of friends... all my offices... taken from me, all the above I have suffered from Principle." He spent many restless nights, of which he later wrote, "I heard the hourly chiming of the grandfather clock." Yet Sayward's loyalty to the Crown did not sway, and despite the

opprobrium he endured, his worst fears were not realized. After the war, loyalists were generally less feared. Many were allowed to return to their homes, and Sayward again held posts in town and church. He died in 1797 a respected man, his house and property unharmed.

FACING PAGE **Cartoon by Paul Revere showing demons driving the seventeen "Rescindors" into Hell, 1768. Courtesy, American Antiquarian Society** ABOVE **Jonathan Sayward, c. 1760.**



Will Brown Photography

A Family Divided

As revolutionary fervor swept through Boston, it caught up the family of the prominent merchant Colonel Josiah Quincy and ultimately divided its members. The Colonel, who a generation earlier had established the family fortune when a ship owned by his firm captured a Spanish treasure ship, was living at his country estate in Braintree, south of Boston. His two sons, Samuel and Josiah Jr., both attorneys in Boston, held complicated views of America's relationship with Britain. Although Samuel had been friends with John Adams and other Whigs, ultimately he chose the loyalist side. Josiah Jr. was known as an ardent patriot, advising his compatriots in an article in Samuel Adams's *Boston Gazette*, in February 1770, to "break off all social intercourse with those whose commerce contaminates, whose luxuries poison, whose avarice is insatiable, and whose unnatural oppressions are not to be borne." Yet he abhorred the mob violence perpetrated by some Bostonians in opposition to British taxes.

Following the Boston Massacre, the two brothers found themselves on opposite sides when the soldiers were placed on trial for murder. Samuel was appointed to prosecute. Josiah Jr. joined with John Adams to argue the defense on the principle that the men deserved a fair trial. The Colonel wrote to Josiah, expressing dismay, "I am under great affliction, at hearing the bitterest reproaches uttered against you,

for having become an advocate for those criminals who are charged with the murder of their fellow-citizens. Good God. Is it possible? I will not believe it." Josiah Jr. assured his anxious father that he had carefully considered his action. Having received the blessings of the Sons of Liberty, he believed that "this whole people will one day REJOICE, that I became an advocate for the aforesaid 'criminals,' *charged* with the murder of our fellow citizens."

In 1774, when Parliament closed the port of Boston in punishment for the Boston Tea Party and passed other "Intolerable" acts, Josiah Jr. published a pamphlet "Observations on the Boston Port Bill." In it he lambasted Parliament for singling out Boston and decried the presence of a standing army in the city. He sent a copy to his brother, who wrote to thank him, noting that "Our notions, both of government and religion, may be variant, but perhaps are not

ABOVE LEFT Samuel Quincy, by John Singleton Copley, c. 1767. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Bequest of Miss Grace W. Treadwell ABOVE RIGHT Josiah Quincy I, by John Singleton Copley, c. 1767. Courtesy, Dietrich American Foundation, Philadelphia.

altogether discordant.” Late that year, Josiah Jr. departed for London to meet with British officials and men sympathetic to the American cause in the hope that a peaceful settlement could be reached. He decided to return, despite poor health, because he had intelligence he felt could be delivered only in person. This information died with him, just off the Massachusetts coast. Even if he had lived, it may have come too late; blood had been shed a week earlier in Lexington and Concord.

Soon afterwards, Samuel left for England for what he expected would be only a short period. He wrote his brother-in-law that “if I cannot *serve* my country, which I shall endeavor to the utmost of my power, I will never *betray* it.” Ultimately, as the war escalated, his departure was seen as disloyal, his property was confiscated, and he was banished.

From the relative calm of his country estate, the Colonel could do little more than observe the upheaval, doubtless grieving for the loss of one son and the absence of the other. The monitor at the top of the Quincy House afforded a clear view of shipping lanes in and out of Boston Harbor. On October 10, 1775, he scratched “Governor Gage sailed for England with a fair wind” into one of the windows of the monitor. He shared his observations in letters to General Washington and invited him to view the harbor and islands from this prospect. In October 1775, he proposed building forts on several islands to block large ships from entering the harbor. Although Washington declined the plan, which would have required more powder and cannons than could be spared, the Colonel followed up with other suggestions, such as the use of galleys and whaleboats in the harbor. His watch over the harbor and letters to Washington continued until after the British evacuated Boston.

On New Year’s Day 1777, Samuel, in exile in England, wrote to his wife, who had remained in the colonies, “I long much to see my father. It is now more than eighteen months since I parted with him in a manner I regret. Neither of you say anything of the family at Braintree. They ought not to think me regardless of them though I am silent; for, however lightly they may look upon me, I yet remember them with pleasure.” Samuel never returned to America. The conflict had separated the family forever.

Merchant and Hero

On January 15, 1776, Offin Boardman, a Newburyport, Massachusetts, merchant and shipowner, became an instant hero by capturing two British ships. In the morning, as master of the privateer *Washington*, he set out and captured the brig *Sukey*. With that prize safely secured in Newburyport Harbor, he turned his sights on the vessel *Friends*, which was bound for Boston with a cargo of supplies for the British forces. The ship appeared to be uncertain of its location. Boardman and his crew approached in several whaleboats and convinced the captain that Newburyport, which was under patriot control, was actually British-held Boston. Boardman offered to pilot the ship into the harbor and was welcomed on board, whereupon his crew, armed with pikes and pistols, swarmed onto the ship and seized it.

Boardman’s luck ran out in December, when he was captured by a sixty-four-gun English ship, taken to England, and imprisoned in Plymouth’s Mill Prison, which he described as

BELOW [Captain Offin Boardman, attributed to Christian Gullager, c. 1787. Courtesy, Worcester Art Museum, museum purchase.](#)



“a horrible inquisition and slaughter-house of American victims.” After six months, he managed to escape but was soon recaptured, whereupon he volunteered to spend a year on starvation half-rations to avoid the more perilous punishment of being placed in the “Black Hole.” This was a place reserved for the most severe offenses, escape among them, and described by a fellow prisoner as “a very small room with neither bed nor bedding to lie on but the soft side of a plank. The water lies on the floor like a Hogstie.”

After another eight months, on January 4, 1779, Boardman, “by the Blessings of God,” scaled an eighteen-foot wall and lowered himself thirty feet into the prison yard reserved for French prisoners. Despite his intrepid clambering, what finally won him his freedom was not athletic ability but a guard willing to be bribed and a remarkable network of friends and supporters. At “half past five,” he walked out the front gate of Mill Prison, past five sentinels, “with the help of a gold key.”

Boardman’s journey from Plymouth to Newburyport seems less a mad dash for freedom and more a leisurely tour, despite the likelihood of the severest punishment if recaptured. He spent his first evening of freedom with friends, “very agreeable,” and took a berth on the ship *Diligence* bound for Exeter. Two days later, he was in a stagecoach bound for London with “a number of gentlemen and ladies.” On January 7, Boardman was in London having coffee at the New York and New England Coffee House, where he met up with an English merchant who gave him money and dinner, and introduced him to his extended family “who were overjoyed to think that I was clear of that dismal hole.”

On January 11, he went to the office of Lord Weymouth to ask for a passport and was asked whether he was an Englishman. He replied, outraged, “I beg your pardon?” to which the clerk responded, “I might have known you was a Londoner” and wished him a good voyage. Passport in hand, Boardman spent the next three days sightseeing, commenting on the deer in St. James’ Park and London’s many bridges. In the evening, he was the honored guest at the tables of sympathetic Englishmen, “where there were many toasts drunk after supper.” While strolling in the street, he encountered a fellow prisoner who had also escaped from Mill Prison. Boardman pulled him aside, admonished him for being “very dirty,” and gave him money. On January 13, he took the stagecoach to Dover and from there sailed to France, where he was entertained at dinner by Benjamin Franklin and John



Adams. By August, he was back in Newburyport. Courage and pluck, a talent for negotiation, and a network of contacts cultivated during years as a merchant captain endowed Boardman with the necessary means of survival in the time of war. His businesses continued to flourish, and in 1796, he purchased the Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm in Newbury. Fortune, in the form of the Embargo Act and the Newburyport fire of 1811, turned against him, and he died in 1812 overwhelmed by debt.

—Elizabeth Farish, Regional Site Manager, Maine and New



Hampshire; Peggy Wishart, Site Manager, South Berwick; Jennifer Pustz, Museum Historian; and Bethany Groff, Regional Site Manager, North Shore

ABOVE Watercolor of Mill Prison. Courtesy, Peabody Essex Museum.

We encourage you to visit the homes associated with the protagonists of “War Stories,” when they are open between June 1 and October 15. Fridays through Sundays, visit Langdon House, the mansion that John Langdon built for himself after the Revolution, in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Nearby, in York Harbor, Maine, the Sayward-Wheeler House, which contains Jonathan Sayward’s original furnishings, is open on the second and fourth Saturdays of

the month. In Newbury, Massachusetts, the Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm, which Offin Boardman purchased after the Revolution as a country estate, is open Thursday through Sunday. Please visit www.HistoricNewEngland.org for open hours at Quincy House, in Quincy, Massachusetts, where the monitor from which Colonel Josiah Quincy observed the movement of British ships in and out of Boston is included in the tour.

My favorite Things

During our centennial year, we are honored to present a series of articles by well-known authorities who have agreed to comment on a few of their favorite items in Historic New England's holdings.

In the French Taste

I chose this chair, not only because it is a beautifully made object, but because of what it says about taste in late eighteenth-century America. The chair and the rest of the set, comprising eight chairs and two settees, were made by the Philadelphia furniture maker Adam Hains for Theodore Lyman's country estate, The Vale, in Waltham, Massachusetts. Importantly, one of the chairs from the set bears Hains's label, so that it serves as a kind of Rosetta stone that scholars can use to attribute similar chairs to Hains. With their carved volute handholds, delicate rosettes, and stop-fluted legs, these chairs are incredibly stylish American interpretations of Louis XVI chairs. Both George Washington and Alexander Hamilton owned similar sets.

Scholars comparing the Lyman set with an almost identical documented 1793 set made for Andrew Craigie of Cambridge, Massachusetts, George Washington's apothecary general, believe that the upholstery on the chairs was by French immigrant George Bertault. The upholstery, with sharp, distinct sewn edges on the back, is an important part of the design, and it is wonderful that much of the original under-upholstery on the Lyman set survives.

As the nation's capital, Philadelphia at the end of the eighteenth century was naturally the social and style center. Politicians returning from abroad introduced the taste for French furniture and decorative arts. John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Monroe shipped furniture home from France. George Washington purchased a French "Chair for a model," which may have served as the prototype for Hains.

I have had the privilege of handling several French-style Federal Philadelphia chairs, including one with a Boston history that also retained its original upholstery. Two others turned up when I was filming a segment for a show with my brother, Leslie, in Stamford, Connecticut. We were walking through an antique shop, cameras in tow, when we came upon a pair of Louis XVI-style open armchairs, described on the dealer's tag as "French 19th century." Although they were in rough shape, we recognized that they had the prerequisite ash secondary wood and were made in Philadelphia and were therefore almost certainly by Adam Hains. We were thrilled by the find, and the seller was delighted with their enhanced value.

—Leigh Keno

Mr. Keno is President of Keno Auctions, a full-service auction house based in Manhattan.



FACING PAGE **Armchair, by Adam Hains, with under-upholstery attributed to George Bertault. 1797. Gift of the children of Arthur and Susan Cabot Lyman.**

Country Splendor

This painted high chest is one of the most engaging and whimsical pieces of American furniture that I have ever seen. The cabinetmaker who made this, working in rural Connecticut, making do with the materials he had at hand, created the illusion of wood graining in a unique and spontaneous way. Most high chests made in Boston during the same period would have been constructed from a more expensive primary wood, and the drawer fronts would have been veneered in more expensive and exotic walnut or possibly figured maple. Here the primary woods are poplar and chestnut. The construction also diverges from traditional cabinetmaking practices. Instead of finely cut dovetails that flare out to secure the drawer sides, as is typical on urban-made case pieces of the period, the maker used straighter dovetails combined with nails. Clearly, this artisan was not only making furniture but also was most likely a carpenter and house builder as well.

The maker cleverly combined strong sculptural form with a vivid paint scheme. Delicate pad feet support sinuous cabriole legs with peaked knees, which continue to join the corners of the lower case. The legs seem to dance playfully, with the help of the deeply cut serpentine skirt that visually



LEFT **High chest, 1740–65. Gift of Bertram K. and Nina Fletcher Little.**
 ABOVE **Note the vivid original paint colors preserved under the brass plates.**

lightens the case. Boldly patterned strokes of black paint dash diagonally across the drawer fronts, imitating a crotch-figured wood grain, and continue up the drawer fronts in alternating directions, teasing our eye upward to the projecting molded cornice. It is visually exciting and evokes a purely visceral response.

The chest is remarkably well-preserved. With its original paint and brass hardware, it is worthy of a “survivor” status and is a rare document of early paint. Most examples of American painted furniture that we see are either nineteenth-century pieces that were originally painted, or are earlier pieces with paint added later by an owner trying to update the piece. This very early example (1740–65) gives us rare insight into painted surfaces from this period.

It does not surprise me at all that one of the custodians of this spectacular high chest of drawers was Nina Fletcher Little. I have very fond memories of spending time with Nina at Pumpkin House and hearing her talk about her many treasures. She had a deep love of American painted furni-

ture and a strong appreciation for original surfaces.

This high chest of drawers shows the imagination, persistence, and inventiveness of a rural artisan working outside of the mainstream—American ingenuity at its very best.

—Leslie Keno

Mr. Keno is Senior Vice President & Director, American Furniture and Decorative Arts, Sotheby's, New York.



Leigh and Leslie Keno

ACQUISITIONS

Captured *for Posterity*



An avid photographer himself, William Sumner Appleton showed great foresight in collecting photography as a means of documenting the region's architecture and material culture. As he wrote in the *Bulletin*, "To preserve the likeness of an object is often the best way to preserve the knowledge of it, and may be the only way in which it can be preserved at all." He mourned the loss of 20,000 glass plate negatives depicting views of

Boston and surroundings, sold as old glass by a local photographer when glass prices rose during the First World War. Fearful that the same fate would befall the archive of Baldwin Coolidge, a commercial photographer known for the superb quality of his images, Appleton persuaded him to donate more than two thousand of his negatives to Historic New England.

Coolidge's haunting street views of Boston and its nearby towns, as well as his photographs of Cape Cod,

Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, and coastal Maine and New Hampshire, are rich in historical evidence, and many are works of art in their own right. Appleton subsequently acquired other important archives of photographs, like those of rural subjects by Emma Coleman and marine views by Nathaniel Stebbins. The collection Appleton pioneered continues to grow, comprising more than half a million images and today is a major resource for scholars, students, architects, homeowners, and film and television producers, among others.

—Lorna Condon
Curator, Library and Archives

ABOVE To commemorate Appleton's early commitment to collecting photography as part of the historic record, here is an image he acquired in 1918—"Willow Brook in the Snow, Biddeford Pool, Maine," 1907—as part of a large archive of works by Baldwin Coolidge.