

1154 BOYLSTON STREET
MADE NEW

ON FRIDAY, JUNE 11, FROM 4:30 TO 7:00 P.M., the Society will celebrate the completion of the final phase of a long-term project to renovate its 1154 Boylston Street headquarters building, a national historic landmark. The annual spring reception will be a little different this year: in addition to our traditional open house in the public areas on the first and second floors (so recently completed that the paint may not be dry), our *entire* building will be on display. We invite members and guests to see the MHS “made new”—top-to-bottom, front-to-back—from the cooling fans recently craned up to the roof to our new conservation laboratory in the basement. This will be an opportunity to have a behind-the-scenes tour of the Society and see where and how we catalog, edit, preserve, and house the historical treasures in our care. We have much to show off and much to celebrate.

Over the past eight years, working from a master plan and designs by Tom Hotaling, a principal of Ann Beha Architects, the Society has renovated or replaced nearly everything, beginning with the most pressing problem—a leaky, 50-year-old roof—and progressing through a series of phased projects that have allowed the MHS to operate without interruption, although occasionally with more than a little noise and disruption.

The final phase of construction began last October. It has been the largest and most complex of all, tied to the most ambitious schedule. During the course of the current project the library staff moved the bulk of the MHS research collection to temporary locations in

previously renovated parts of the building and to offsite storage. Through careful planning by Shawmut Design and Construction (the general contractor that has managed all MHS construction projects since 1998), during the previous phase of work we completed much of the preparation for what is now underway.

The least visible, but among the most important building improvements was the installation of new insulating walls that allow us, when combined with our new heating and air-conditioning system, to regulate the temperature and humidity in the library stacks precisely. At the same time, thanks to a \$169,000 matching grant from the federal Save America’s Treasures Program that we received in 2002, the Society has installed a new inert, gaseous fire suppression system (Inergen) in stack storage areas.

During the final weeks of the project, as we race towards completion, the contractors are hard at work in the public rooms on the second floor of the original 1899 building. While plans call for the replacement of “infrastructure”—heating, air-conditioning, and electrical services—most work consists of the restoration of the original historical fabric. There will be important changes: the director’s former office will become a new display gallery and meeting room, and former editorial offices adjoining the Dowse Library will house a relocated administrative suite. When the public rooms on the second floor reopen on June 11, there will be new lighting, new display cases, and redesigned gallery spaces. The contractors will have repaired floors, woodwork, and plaster, as well as the marble and mosaic tile in the main stairway lobbies.





MHS Miscellany, no. 86
Periodical Newsletter of the
Massachusetts Historical Society

Address:
1154 Boylston St. Boston MA 02215
617-536-1608 www.masshist.org

Hours:
The MHS reading room is open to the
public free of charge, Monday, Tues-
day, Wednesday, & Friday, 9 AM to
4:45 PM, & Thursdays 9 AM to 8 PM.

For more information:
Please call ahead or check the website
for directions, information about
collections, reading room policies,
holiday hours, and special events.



MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL

Masthead illustration:

“Plan & Elevation of the Tontine
Crescent, now erecting in Boston.”
From the *Massachusetts Magazine*, 1794.

The MHS occupied the Tontine
Crescent from 1794 until 1833.

Above: Demolition underway on
the second floor during February.

All illustrations are from MHS
collections unless otherwise noted.

For the library staff, June 11 will not be the absolute end of our project; after an afternoon of respite to celebrate, we will return to the task of moving the collections back to their permanent homes and installing compact storage for our collection of art objects and historical artifacts, but that is only housekeeping writ large. Come to the spring reception to see what we have accomplished or, if you cannot wait, contact Director William M. Fowler (wfowler@masshist.org; 617-646-0520) or Peter Drummey, the librarian (pdrummey@masshist.org; 617-646-0501), for what we hope are the very last “hard hat” tours ever (or at least for this generation).

* * *

WOMEN/WAR/WORK

*Conference Scheduled for
August 2004*

Images of women who served in or with the U.S. military in the last century proliferated on the covers of periodicals in the last year, both locally—the *Boston Globe* (November 11, 2003), *Wellesley* (Summer 2003), and *Simmons Review* (Fall-Winter 2003)—and nationally, including the December 29 issue of *Time*. All draw attention to the contributions that American women have made during times of conflict, both in the military and in related capacities. This August, a two-day MHS conference will examine this history

in-depth, convening a group of scholars from a range of disciplines to discuss current research and the future of the field. The proceedings will also include a roundtable event with local women who served from the 1940s through to Desert Storm.

“Women/War/Work” will focus specifically on how wartime demands have altered the lives of American women and, conversely, how the wartime work that women do has influenced the United States and its military. Topics covered by the presenters’ papers (see the program, pp. 6–7) will take the discussion from the Spanish-American War in 1898 through to the present; they will invoke many varieties of work (active service as well as journalism, morale and recreational support for male troops, and antiwar organizing, for example) and will address many of the civil rights struggles of the last century. With many of the foremost authorities in the field at this conference, we look forward to a lively and substantial discussion that will contribute to ongoing research.

The MHS also wants to use this opportunity to express its strong interest in collecting personal papers—letters, diaries, photographs—of Massachusetts servicewomen and women who worked in related capacities during periods of international conflict. Historians have frequently pointed out that the debates we continue to have today about women and the military rarely take into account the very active roles that American women have played in the service, in defense production, and in political discussion of military engagement. In order to reconstruct that history, and in order to separate myth from reality in its telling, we need to provide researchers with the records that document those experiences. The Society will serve that mission, with your help. Please contact Curator of Manuscripts Brenda Lawson at 617-646-0502 if you would like to discuss donating relevant papers in your care.

You may now register online at
www.masshist.org/events/conferences.cfm

FROM THE DIRECTOR

The *Miscellany* is too short. In a brief newsletter how can we summarize all that is going on at the MHS? We can't.

The best way to know more about what's going on at the Society is to become involved. Attend a lecture and come early so that you can spend a few minutes with others who share your interest in history. Take part in a seminar or a conference. Yes, these are academic affairs, with papers and scholarly comments, and they may not be popular with everyone, but on the other hand when was the last time you participated in one? Undergraduate years? Graduate school? This is your chance. We also offer trips to historic places and invite you to come along. Finally, you are supporting one of the finest research libraries in the world, so why not use it? I invite you to visit our website (www.masshist.org), use the online catalog (ABIGAIL), and then come in and look at the materials of interest to you.

By the way, when you sign in let me know that you are here so that I can say hello.

* * *

ABIGAIL'S WAR

Teachers throughout the United States now have access to a splendid project developed by 2003 Adams Fellow Rachel M. Ottman, a fifth-grade teacher at McCarthy Middle School, in Chelmsford, Massachusetts. Entitled "Abigail's War: The American Revolution through the Eyes of Abigail Adams," Ms. Ottman's project is a 57-page, primary-source-based activity book for elementary-school-age children. The activity book and a detailed set of teacher lesson plans for its use are available on the MHS website as a downloadable PDF file (www.masshist.org/digitaladams/aea/education/).

By "putting themselves in Abigail's shoes," students learn about primary sources and about life in Revolutionary-era Massachusetts. In "Abigail's Economy: Shopping during the American Revolution," for example, children learn how to add in pounds, shillings, and pence. They read two letters from Abigail Adams to her husband, John, one written in April and the other in September 1777, in which she complains about the rise in prices. With £6 in hand, students then take two "shopping trips" keyed to those dates and the goods mentioned. Able to purchase fewer goods on the second trip, they soon learn firsthand about the difficult concepts of inflation and currency devaluation.

In "Everyday Abigail," children read Abigail's letters



about the work involved in managing a family in difficult, distant times. Students are encouraged to compare the chores they and their families routinely perform with those Abigail and her children performed and to think about washing without machines and cooking without stoves. In a wide variety of such stimulating exercises, Rachel Ottman helps students apply their critical and creative thinking skills to the dynamic materials of history, a process that helps bring history out of the shadows and into the light of the present.

* * *

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AWARDS MHS FIVE MAJOR GRANTS

Library Receives Federal Grants

Three federal programs made major grants to the Society's library in recent months. Two of the awards will promote the MHS's ongoing efforts to care for its collections. The third grant will contribute to our initiative to promote collecting in environmental history at the Society and elsewhere.

In December, the National Endowment for the Humanities awarded the Society a \$400,000 challenge grant to establish a new, endowed library staff position for a preservation librarian. The NEH requires the MHS to match the grant four to one (or \$1,600,000). The new staff member will be responsible for the coordination of all MHS preservation activities, including paper conservation and repair, microfilming, and digital preservation, as well as the administration of the Society's newly installed climate control system (see the related article on building renovations) and the MHS emergency preparedness plan.

The challenge grant is a cornerstone of one of the primary goals of the Society's future fundraising—the preservation of its collections through state-of-the-art climate control, fire suppression, collection maintenance, and conservation. The NEH awards challenge grants only after a demanding peer review process. Evaluators were enthusiastic in their support for the MHS; while they praised the Society as a distinguished repository, they also recognized its readiness to embark on the most important next step to ensure that its collections are available for future generations. The NEH grant is a high honor; only three historical societies received challenge grants in this application cycle.

Another federal grantmaker, the Save America's Treasures program, has (as its name implies) the preservation of our national heritage as its primary mission. For the third time in the program's brief four-year existence, the Save America's Treasures program has awarded the Soci-

ety a grant, an accomplishment unmatched by any other cultural institution. This year's award will support the preservation of John Quincy Adams's diary. Adams's 50-volume journal, kept over 68 years (1779–1847), truly is an American treasure. The grant will fund the conservation and repair of the manuscript volumes that remain in their original bindings, as well as the digitization from microfilm of more than 15,000 diary pages in Adams's hand. Conservation Technician Oona Beauchard will clean and repair damaged and fragile diary pages. She will work closely with Karl Eberth, a conservation bookbinder from West Pawlet, Vermont, who will stabilize and restore the original bindings and build conservation cases for each volume. Digital Projects Coordinator Nancy Heywood will oversee the digital portion of the grant, which will present page images of the diary, searchable by date, at the Society's website.

Thanks to funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, the funding arm of the National Archives, the Society will host an archives fellow for 2004–2005. The NHPRC Fellowship in Advanced Archival Administration is designed to give a professional archivist with two to five years of experience the opportunity to receive management training and mentoring from an experienced archival administrator. The MHS is one of only two institutions in the country that will host a fellow in 2004–2005. The fellow, who will begin the 12-month project in July, will develop a framework for documenting the environmental history of New England and establish an environmental records collecting policy for the Society. The MHS recently established a collecting initiative in environmental history. Associate Librarian and Curator of Manuscripts Brenda Lawson, who will serve as the project manager for both the NEH challenge grant and Save America's Treasures project, will also supervise the NHPRC fellow.

*Endowment Doubles Support for
MHS/NEH Long-term Fellowships*

An award from the National Endowment for the Humanities will allow the Society to double the number of long-term fellowships it offers beginning in 2005. The grant—\$235,000 over three years—will permit the MHS to offer as many as two year-long or four semester-long fellowships each year. A portion of the Endowment's support is in the form of a challenge; the Society must match \$20,000 of the NEH's grant. The MHS must also raise an additional \$40,500 to provide its long-term fellows with a subsidy for housing and professional expenses.

NEH fellows have contributed to the life of the Soci-

ety since 2002, when historians Ivan Jaksic of the University of Notre Dame and Walt Woodward of Dickinson College each spent four months with us. Ellen Gruber Garvey of New Jersey City University, an American literature scholar, has been in residence at the Society since last July. Two more MHS/NEH fellows will take up residence at the Society shortly: Woody Holton, an historian at the University of Richmond, and David Ciepley, a sociologist and social theorist at Washington University in St. Louis, both plan to begin half-year tenures this summer.

Passionate about their research and active participants in the Society's academic programs, past and present MHS/NEH fellows have energized the scholarly life at 1154 Boylston Street. We are looking forward to even more contributions from our fellows when their number increases in 2005.

MHS Awarded NEH Education Grant

By our explanations, interpretations, assumptions we gradually make [the past] seem automatic, natural, inevitable; we remove from it the sense of wonder, the unpredictability, and therefore the freshness that it ought to have.

—Hugh Trevor-Roper, as quoted by Bernard Bailyn,
The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution

Individuals and nations are moved to bold and decisive action not in the midst of calm but in the heat of strife. The years from 1764 to 1776 were such a time for the British citizens of the American colonies. Through the letters and diaries of contemporary observers and participants; through the broadsides, pamphlets, and official documents that set out their grievances; and through newspaper accounts, maps, portraits, engravings, and images of artifacts, the Massachusetts Historical Society will bring those tumultuous times to life for students of American history thanks to a three-year award from the National Endowment of the Humanities in its Grants for Teaching and Learning Resources and Curriculum Development program.

Although ratification of the Constitution would later launch America's grand and unique experiment with democracy, America truly became a nation—rather than a cluster of competing colonies with differing origins, goals, and policies—in the years between 1764 and 1776. Luckily for historians, the colonists actively documented contemporary concerns and events. The timeline/documentary history we will develop for the World Wide Web will ground students' understanding of the facts relating to the coming of the American Revolution, but it will also do more; through primary, contemporary accounts, it will bring history from the distant past into the immediacy of the present. As they enter the

private thoughts of a people intent upon their rights but afraid that anarchy lay just on the other side of freedom, students will come to appreciate not only the intricacies of history but the demands of citizenship.

Our timeline will be no simple chronological listing of events but a multilayered, interactive instrument that will help students develop the tools they need to penetrate the motives and understand the actions of the determined individuals who founded their country. Specifically, our website will 1) provide an easily understood chronology of key events leading up to the war; 2) present crucial documents relating to those events; 3) offer contextual materials that comprise a cumulative narrative of the period; 4) include suggestions on how teachers can use the documents to convey the immediacy and contingency of historical events; and 5) reveal that the practice of history is a series of approximations, as historians compare and contrast differing documentary accounts to arrive at the most accurate view of an incident. Scores of individuals—from MHS staff members to teachers who have worked with us in the past, to scholars who have embraced our vision—have promised to help us solve the practical problems that will inevitably arise as we work toward our goal of immersing students in the “stuff” of history.

The MHS staff will build the website in three phases. In its first phase, the site will offer an overview of the pre-Revolutionary period useful for teaching elementary schoolchildren or for helping older students review the period’s important events and documents. Taking the form of a timeline, the basic site will be organized by 14 key events (e.g., Stamp Act, Boston Massacre, First Continental Congress, Lexington and Concord). For each event, which will be introduced by a contextual essay, we will select four to six crucial documents (manuscript or printed). For each document, we will prepare high-quality images of each page (some documents will run to many pages), a searchable, printable transcription, and a biblio-

graphic statement. Additional primary materials will illustrate events as appropriate, biographical sketches of central figures will be woven throughout the units, and suggestions for further reading will be listed.

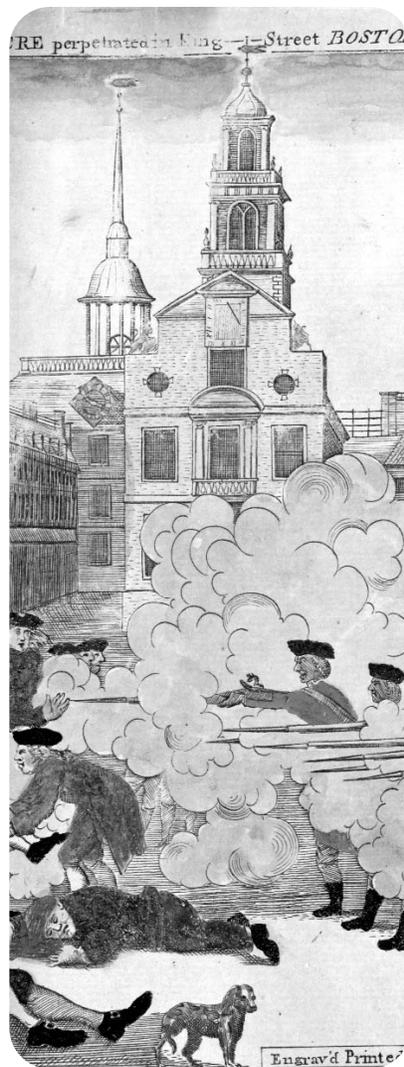
In phase two, we will enhance the site by developing four topical units on the Revolutionary era: 1) Its Ideological Dimensions; 2) Its Economic Dimensions; 3) Its Social Dimensions; and 4) Petitioning for Rights (including the Declaration of Independence). To help us create superior content in each area, we have invited four renowned scholars—Bernard Bailyn, David Hancock, Richard D. Brown, and Pauline Maier—each to lead a five-day seminar/workshop with five teachers, to explore the assigned topic. Scholars will share their expertise with teachers; together, scholars and teachers

will be introduced to the wealth of primary materials available at the MHS and elsewhere; they will advise MHS staff as they select materials for in-depth coverage; and they will identify the contextual materials and analytical tools and strategies necessary to help students critically evaluate documentary materials relating to the American Revolution. Each topical unit, as presented on the website, will model the ways in which historians engage with primary sources.

In the final phase of the project, we will draw from curricula written by MHS Teacher Fellows to mount online lesson plans that will further model the use of documentary materials in an educational setting. Throughout project development, a teacher team will advise MHS staff.

The Coming of the American Revolution website will be available on the Society’s parent site, www.masshist.org. It will be free, accessible on all platforms, and expandable as new materials become available after the grant period ends. Links to other MHS online resources (such as the Adams and Jefferson electronic archives) and other resources on the World Wide Web will further enhance the timeline/documentary history.

* * *



Detail from “The Bloody Massacre Perpetrated in King Street, Boston,” engraved by Paul Revere, ca. 1770.

WOMEN

★ WAR ★

WORK

American
Women &

the U.S. Military
in the 20th century

Friday, August 20

8:30–9:15 Registration

9:30–11:15 *Session 1: Demanding Work*

Michele Midori Fillion, Producer, “Hurry Up Sister Productions,” New York, N.Y.

“Coolness under Fire: The Women War Correspondents of WWII,” a one-hour made for television documentary, currently in pre-production.

Judith Graham, Independent Scholar, Newton, Mass.

“‘Strong Minded Women’: Nora Saltonstall’s Service at the Front in World War I.”

Ann Kelsey, Associate Director, Learning Resource Center, County College of Morris, N.J.

“War Zone Diversions: An Overview of Women Volunteers in Civilian Staffed Recreation Programs in Vietnam.”

11:30–1:15 *Session 2: Civilian Life in the Bay State*

Celeste Benardo, National Park Service, Boston, Mass.

Topic: Women workers in the Charlestown Navy Yard.

Kimberley Phillips, Associate Professor of History and American Studies, the College of William and Mary

Topic: Black women and the USO, including the Boston USO fight against segregation during World War II.

Virginia Hurley, Massachusetts Chapter of the Gold Star Wives of America, Cambridge, Mass.

Topic: History of the Massachusetts chapter of the Gold Star Wives of America, including the economic impact of government policy on World War II widows.

3:00–5:00 *Roundtable: Women Who Served*

Joanne Keenan, served with WAVES during World War II

Nancy Mayo-Smith, went overseas with Red Cross during World War II

Susan O’Neill, served in Vietnam

Glynis Phillips, served during Desert Storm

Mary Quinn, served in Korea and Vietnam

Ann Wood-Kelly, flew transport for British Air Transport Authority during World War II

5:30–6:30 *Keynote*

Jacki Lyden, Senior Correspondent, National Public Radio

“Iraq from the Inside Out” *A Lowell Institute lecture, free to the public.*

7:00 *Reception*

These proceedings made possible with generous funding from the John H. and H. Naomi Tomfohrde Foundation, the Lowell Institute, Amalie M. Kass, Deborah Bogin Cohen, and Carol Bain.

August 20 & 21, 2004
The Massachusetts Historical Society Boston, Mass.

Saturday, August 21

8:30–10:15 *Session 3: Fighting the Good Fight: Race, Segregation, and Defense, 1898 to 1945*

David Lewis-Coleman, Frederick Douglass Institute for African American Studies, University of Rochester

“Victory Men and Women: Gender and the Struggle for Racial Equality in Detroit’s Wartime Auto Industry.”

Brenda L. Moore, Associate Professor of Sociology, State University of New York at Buffalo

“Minority Women in the Military during World War II: The Cases of African American and Nisei Wacs”

Charles McGraw, doctoral candidate in History, University of Connecticut

“The ‘Old Colored Aunty’ and the ‘Up-to-Date Trained Nurse’: The Racial Coding of Women’s Work during the War of 1898.”

10:30–12:15 *Session 4: Framing Narratives of War and Work*

Frances Early, Professor of History, Mt. St. Vincent University

“Reframing the War Narrative: The Voice of Women of Canada and the Opposition to the Vietnam War.”

Susan Grayzel, Associate Professor of History, University of Mississippi

“Morale as Women’s Work: Mrs. Miniver and the Popular Representation of the Second World War.”

Margaret Higonnet, Professor of English, University of Connecticut

“Snapshots of World War I: The Labor of Finding a Place for Women Who Volunteered to Serve Overseas.”

2:00–3:30 *Session 5: Race, Sexuality, and Respectability*

Elizabeth Hillman, Assistant Professor of Law, Rutgers School of Law at Camden

Topic: The historical context of the women-in-combat debate, WWII to the present, emphasizing the divide between female officers and enlisted troops.

Katharine H. S. Moon, Associate Professor of Political Science, Wellesley College

Topic: Female sex workers in the brothels around U.S. bases in Korea and the impact of that interaction on Korean nationalism and on the women’s lives.

Register online at www.masshist.org/events/conferences.cfm or use the form below.

Name _____ Affiliation _____
Address _____ E-mail _____
Address _____ Phone _____

Please register me for Women/War/Work at

- \$70 for full registration
 \$40 for student registration
 \$35 for both days: I am

I am a veteran or K-12 teacher and would like to attend Friday’s session only (no charge)
 both days for \$35

The papers under discussion at this conference will be available at the Society’s website a month before the conference. If you need papers mailed to you, the registration rate will be \$120 for full registration and \$80 for students.

For further information, please contact Ondine Le Blanc at 617-646-0524 or oleblanc@masshist.org.

JOHN ADAMS *in the* NETHERLANDS

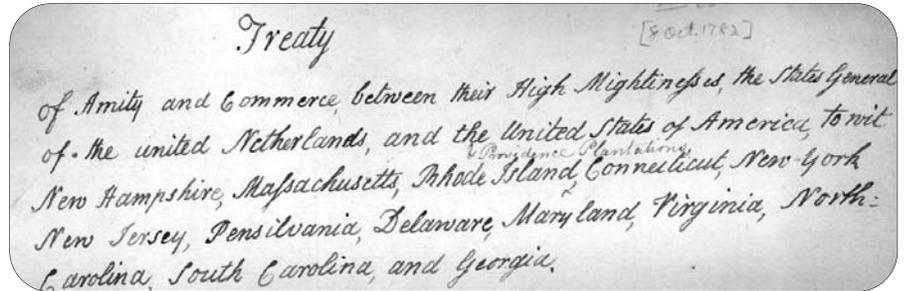
The May 2004 publication of volume 12 of the *Papers of John Adams* provides those interested in John Adams and the diplomatic history of the United States with an arresting account of a seminal event. On April 19, 1782, the Netherlands recognized the United States as independent and John Adams as its minister at The Hague. For Adams the Dutch decision was “the most Signal Epocha, in the History of a Century,” a triumph that he achieved at considerable personal sacrifice.

Adams achieved his success against great odds and in the face of serious criticism of his methods. The French foreign ministry and Congress’s newly appointed secretary for foreign affairs, Robert R. Livingston, would have preferred he follow a more traditional and patient course. But Adams vigorously defended his seemingly unorthodox methods, describing himself and other American diplomats in Europe “as a kind of Militia” that some held in contempt, but that “wise Men know . . . sometimes gain Victories over regular Troops, even by departing from the Rules.”

The publication of this and the previous volume, in which Adams is working toward the success he engineered in 1782, has led to an interesting new relationship between the MHS and the John Adams Institute in Amsterdam. Primarily a Dutch-American cultural exchange organization, the Institute has designated 2005 as the year of John Adams. Programs beginning as early as September 2004 will consider the history of Dutch-American relations with emphasis on John Adams as the United States’s first minister to the Netherlands. Likewise, volume 7 of *Adams Family Correspondence*, scheduled for 2005 publication, contains information about a one-month trip from England to the Netherlands the Adamases took in August 1786. Abigail’s long letters to her family containing her impressions of Holland and the Dutch people are of great interest to the staff at the Institute.

Monique Knappen, director of the John Adams Institute, and Buford Alexander, chairman of the John Adams Year program, visited the MHS for two days in February to meet the Adams Papers staff and complete research in preparation for their celebration of John Adams and Dutch-American cooperation. In March, Jim Taylor of the Adams Papers returned the visit and discussed plans for the Adams staff’s participation in a session on John and Abigail Adams in the Netherlands.

John Adams, who worked tirelessly to create a political and economic alliance, would be immensely pleased to see his name associated with this cultural and intellectual exchange.



John Adams's draft of the Treaty of Amity, commerce and navigation, October 8, 1782. Adams Family Papers.

OLD NORTH CHURCH

Records Come to MHS

Great things often grow from small beginnings. In March, Christ Church in the City of Boston, known to history and present-day Bostonians as “Old North Church,” deposited its voluminous records at the Historical Society. The collection begins modestly in 1722 when Anglicans in Boston invited Rev. Timothy Cutler, the former rector or president of Yale College, to take the pulpit of a new church here (the future Old North), and continues until the 1960s.

While the bulk of the Old North records came from the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, which transferred them from its Tremont Street headquarters in Boston, where they had resided since the 1980s, other materials came directly from storage rooms in the church. The Rev. Stephen Ayres, vicar of Old North, contacted the Society last year because he was concerned about the condition and security of items remaining in his care, including important early documents such as the manuscript invitation to Cutler and Paul Revere’s original bell-ringing contract. Curator of Manuscripts Brenda Lawson worked with Rev. Ayres and Diocesan Archivist Sandra Sudak to bring collections together at the Society.

The Old North Church is, of course, best known for its role in Paul Revere’s famous ride. On the evening of April 18, 1775, acting according to a pre-arranged plan, the church’s sexton, Robert Newman, hung two lanterns in the steeple. The lamps signaled Revere that British regulars were crossing the Charles River to Cambridge to proceed to Lexington, a movement that precipitated the “shot heard ’round the world” the next morning and the onset of the Revolutionary War. At the Historical

Society, the church records join Paul Revere's family and business papers, including his own personal accounts of the events of April 1775.

The early history (and the first records) of Old North, however, predate this seminal event by more than 50 years. The Church of England had organized its first congregation in Puritan Boston in 1686, and King's Chapel, the first Anglican Church building in Boston, was finished several years later. By 1722, the small wood- en structure in the heart of the town was inadequate for the size of its congregation, and the Anglicans solicited subscriptions to pay for a new house of worship in the north end of the town.

The choice of Rev. Timothy Cutler as minister was controversial. Cutler had been ordained a Congrega- tional minister, but he had left his pulpit in Stratford, Connecticut, in 1719 to become rector of Yale. Less than three years later in 1722 the Yale Corporation "excused" him from his duties because of his apostate Anglican beliefs. Before he could take up his duties in Boston, Cutler traveled to England in 1723 to take holy orders in the Church of England. At the same time, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts licensed him to undertake mission work in America. Cutler held the first service at Christ Church on December 29, 1723.

The Old North is the oldest church building standing in Boston, designed in the style of English architect Christopher Wren. The Rev. Samuel Myles, the rector of King's Chapel, laid the cornerstone on April 15, 1723, and reportedly proclaimed, "May the Gates of Hell never prevail against It." The church bells, the first in America, were fashioned by Abel Rudhall of Gloucester, England, in 1744, and installed in 1745. The church

records contain documents related to the construction of the building and several communications from Rud- hall. A letter that Rudhall wrote in Gloucester on Janu- ary 12, 1742, gives the full particulars of expenses for fashioning a peal of eight bells and a peal of six bells, although he added "a Peal of 8 Bells is better for the Tower than six, because they'l have a more equal Bearing in every part of it."

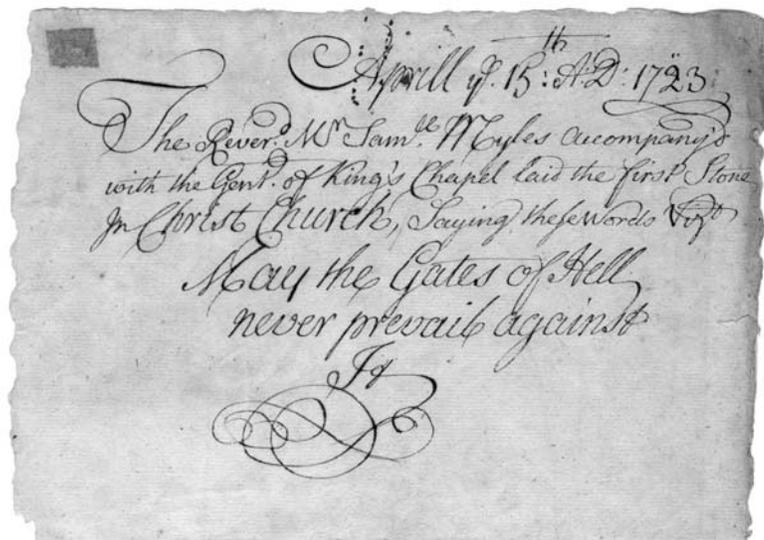
The Old North records provide a complete docu- mentary history of the church and contain all of the early volumes of proprietors', treasurers', wardens', and vestry records, as well as pew and tomb records. Parish registers contain lists of baptisms, marriages, and burials, fertile ground for family historians. Finally, the col- lection also contains artifacts, including a musket more than seven feet in length reportedly used at the Battle of Lexington, as well as Bibles and other printed church materials. The famous "Vinegar Bible," so-named because one page of the text reads "Parable of the Vine- gar" instead of "Parable of the Vineyard," was, until recently, on display at the back of the church gift shop. George II sent it to the colonies in 1733; it is one of only eight known surviving copies. At the Society, the records of Old North Church join those of colonial Boston's other two Anglican churches, King's Chapel (which became Unitarian in 1787) and Trinity Church.

* * *

BEFORE SIBLEY

The same good ideas often come to more than one per- son. So it was with the plan to prepare biographical sketches of early graduates of Harvard College. Today we ordinarily identify this idea with John Langdon Sib- ley (1804-1885), the librarian of the college, who started to work on our series *Sibley's Harvard Grad- uates* in the late 1850s, and with his successor, Clif- ford K. Shipton (1902-1973), who produced 14 volumes in the more than four decades he devoted to the project. So who, then, was William Cogswell?

While working in our collections on an entry for volume 19 of *Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, the classes of 1775-1777, a member of our staff came across a remarkable document. The papers of Huntington Porter, A.B. 1777, contain a printed circular that Cogswell signed in 1840, nearly 20 years before Sibley undertook his research. "I have obtained brief biographical notices of all the Graduates at Harvard University, down to the year 1766, being in number 2130," Cogswell wrote, "and a few oth- ers since that time. Some of these memoirs have been published in the *American Quarterly Register*.



Account of the laying of the cornerstone of Christ Church, April 15, 1723.

In subsequent volumes of this work, other notices of Graduates will appear.” The circular went on to solicit biographical information on the college’s more recent alumni. The questions that the author posed had a distinctly modern ring. He asked about date and place of birth, ancestry, marriages, children, education before and after college, occupations, public offices, publications, and other distinctions. Had Cogswell anticipated more than 14 decades of hard work from Sibley to the present?

William B. Sprague’s *Annals of the American Pulpit* provided information on Cogswell, and an examination of Widener Library’s set of the *American Quarterly Register* added reassurance that he had not completed *Sibley* before Sibley. Cogswell (1787–1850), a Dartmouth graduate and a member of the MHS from 1839 to 1841, was the secretary and director of the American Education Society, an association for subsidizing the college careers of pious young men intended for the ministry. In this capacity, he was also the editor of the *American Quarterly Register*, his organization’s periodical.

The AES was one of a number of institutions that modern scholars identify with the Benevolent Empire, an informal collaboration prior to the Civil War of voluntary organizations dedicated to promoting evangelical Christianity and moral reform, but the Society’s periodical was atypical. Such associations as the American Bible Society and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions ordinarily filled their publications with accounts of revivals and sentimental stories of deathbed conversions, but not the AES. In Cogswell’s hands, the *American Quarterly Register* was filled with facts. There were reports on the origins of medical societies and historical societies (including the MHS) as well as schools of all kinds. There were lists of public servants, members of voluntary organizations, and college graduates. And there were brief biographies—not only of Harvard graduates but also of college presidents, public officeholders, and other public figures.

To the relief of the members of our staff working on *Sibley’s Harvard Graduates*, Cogswell did not preempt our work by publishing thousands of sketches of the college’s alumni. Ten- to fifteen-page biographies of such figures as Samuel Sewall, Benjamin Colman, and Caleb Strong were models for their time, however, elegant and informative sketches of prominent—and inevitably pious—alumni of the school. Other contributions revealed the considerable breadth of Cogswell’s research. One entry provided brief biographies of dozens of loyalist who attended the college. Another tallied Harvard men who lived at least to the age of 84.

In 1841, after a dozen exhausting years at the AES, Cogswell resigned his position in favor of a more relaxing prospect, a professorship at Dartmouth. Two years later, at the conclusion of volume 15, the organization determined to end the *American Quarterly Register*. Publishing the journal required too much time and energy. If Cogswell ever intended to issue a comprehensive run of biographical sketches of Harvard graduates, he fell short of this objective, although another series of articles provided thumbnail biographies of many early classes of Dartmouth men.

Perhaps Cogswell’s exhaustion preserved an opportunity for Sibley, Shipton, and their modern successors. In any case, work continues on this jewel in the Society’s crown. At the end of 1999, volume 18, the most recent, provided information on the classes of 1772 through 1774; we anticipate that volume 19 will appear in 2007 or 2008. Our staff is also working industriously on *Colonial Collegians*, a CD-ROM with entries on every identifiable American college student in the classes through 1774, the last to graduate before the start of the Revolution. That title should appear in 2005.

* * *

MHS FINDING AIDS

Now Available Online

January marked an important milestone at the Society. Our library has taken another step in the transition from describing its collections through card catalogs and typescript inventories to employing searchable finding aids (narrative guides to manuscript and photograph collections) linked to ABIGAIL, the MHS online catalog. In January, the Society launched a new section of its website, www.masshist.org/findingaids/. The new section enables researchers to view and search more than 70 online finding aids. The encoded guides are the result of almost three years of work by Manuscript Processor Michael Rush and other members of the library staff to implement Encoded Archival Description (EAD).

EAD is a markup language, similar to HTML, the language used to create web pages. Archivists created and maintain this international standard for the purpose of encoding descriptions of archival collections in a regular fashion. EAD makes it possible to deliver finding aids over the Internet, for researchers to search them, and for archivists and librarians to share them in union catalogs.

The Society’s online finding aids are available either via links from collection records in ABIGAIL, the MHS

continued on page 12

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

• NOTICES • SUMMER 2004 •

The BLOODY MASSACRE perpetrated in King Street BOSTON on March 5th 1770 by a party of the 29th REG^{ts}

BERANEK RECEIVES NATIONAL MEDAL OF SCIENCE

Congratulations are in order for Leo Beranek, who received the National Medal of Science in a White House ceremony on November 6. Dr. Beranek, a vice president of the Society from 1990 to 2002, is a pioneer in the science of acoustics and a founder of the firm Bolt Beranek and Newman. Pres. George W. Bush, in recognizing Dr. Beranek's distinguished career, cited him "For his leadership, dedication and contributions to the art and science of acoustics; for co-founding one of the world's foremost acoustical research and consulting firms; and for sustained contributions to scientific societies and civic organizations."

NEQ LAUNCHES PRIZE IN NEW ENGLAND LITERARY HISTORY

Thanks to the generosity of its loyal readers, *The New England Quarterly* is launching the Herbert Ross Brown Prize in New England Literary History. Professor Brown, the late, longtime editor of NEQ (1945-1980), taught English at Bowdoin College and was author of *The Sentimental Novel in America, 1789-1860*.

Details about the prize will be forthcoming as soon as a committee of judges has developed criteria for evaluation. Continue to check NEQ's website, www.newenglandquarterly.org, for updates about the prize and to order your subscription.

EARLY AMERICAN HISTORY SEMINAR

Ben Mutschler, assistant professor of history at Oregon State University, will be the featured scholar on Thursday, June 24, at 5:15 when the Boston Area Early American History Seminar convenes for its only summer session this year. Professor Mutschler is writing a book on health in early America from which he is drawing his seminar paper: "Invalid Women and the Problem of Refinement in Turn-of-the-Century New England." Prof. Mark A. Peterson of the University of Iowa will offer the comment.

The Boston Area Early American History Seminar devotes each session to a pre-circulated paper. The essayist and commentator each make brief remarks, following which questions and comments from the floor occupy the rest of the meeting. For information on securing a copy of the paper for the session, contact Seth M. Vose at svose@masshist.org or 617-646-0518.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
1154 Boylston St.
Boston MA 02215

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Boston, Mass.
Permit No. 53

online catalog, or from a search interface and a browse list accessible at www.masshist.org/findingaids/. Users can perform a keyword search of all the available finding aids, or they can restrict their search either to manuscript or to photograph collection guides. Search results display the title and an abstract of the collection. When viewing an individual finding aid, users can navigate the guide using a table of contents and can search within a single guide as well.

The library staff already had encoded 45 manuscript and photograph collection guides when the online finding aids interface became available in January. They have added more than 30 online guides since, and the work of encoding new and existing guides continues. Approximately 400 existing finding aids will eventually be available online, while staff members regularly add new finding aids as they process recently acquired or previously undescribed collections.

Too much paper?

Now you can access the *MHS Miscellany* online through the Society's website, www.masshist.org. If you would like to view the newsletter online rather than receiving a mailing of the paper copy, contact the membership services office at jscal@masshist.org. Please provide your full name, e-mail address, and postal mailing address so that we can update your record. Then, each time a new issue of the *Miscellany* becomes available, an e-mail notice will arrive with the appropriate URL for accessing the PDF version at the website.

See you online.