

# MHS Miscellany

Number 102 / Spring 2012

## WAR OF 1812 COMES ALIVE

During the War of 1812, the United States Navy, which was less than 40 years old, took on the most powerful maritime power in the world, Great Britain, and something strange happened. They started winning. The USS *Constitution* defeated two British frigates, HMS *Guerriere* and *Java*, within a span of five months. Nobody expected this.



Capt. William Bainbridge of the USS *Constitution*, which captured the HMS *Java* during the War of 1812.

This spring, the MHS is commemorating the bicentennial of the War of 1812 with an exhibition entitled *Mr. Madison's War: The Controversial War of 1812*, prepared by the Society's own Katherine Griffin, Nora Saltonstall Preservation Librarian, and Peter Drummey, Stephen T. Riley Librarian. Among the many treasures from the

Society's collections, a log book from the *Constitution* will be on display, showing the entries that Midshipman Frederick Baurly made, describing the ship's actions early in the war.

Pres. James Madison declared war against Great Britain on June 18, 1812, in response to British and French interference with American trade and British impressments of U.S. sailors. This exhibition explores the political life of Massachusetts just before the war, when the Bay State was bitterly divided due to tensions between the Federalists and Jeffersonian Republicans.

The strife within the Commonwealth included the development of the still controversial political strategy of gerrymandering, which will be showcased in *Mr. Madison's War* with a political cartoon featuring the salamander-shaped Essex County voting district attributed to Elbridge Gerry, the Massachusetts governor who redistricted the state to benefit his Democratic-Republican Party—but still lost reelection. The cartoon includes Gerry's disguised profile and features the voting district transformed into a winged monster.

The declaration of war led to contentious debate throughout the United States. In New England and New York many opposed the war, which had a profound effect on the local region's maritime economy. Massachusetts seaports had suffered through a financially disastrous trade embargo from 1807 to 1809 during Thomas Jefferson's presidency, and now the party of Jefferson had created a war with the world's most powerful navy. The exhibition contains evidence of this public sentiment, including a ticket from the 1814 election in Massachusetts, when many anti-war candidates gained office, including then-president of the MHS Christopher Gore.



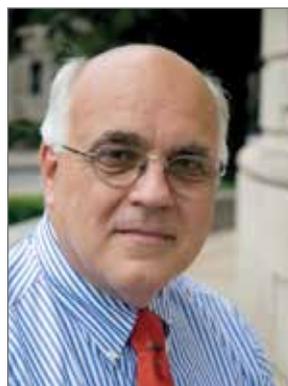
In 1814, in an effort to establish peace, both the United States and Great Britain sent representatives to Belgium to work on a resolution. The resulting Treaty of Ghent, once ratified by each government, would bring an end to the War of 1812. John Quincy Adams attended as an American representative, and the letters he sent home included observations about the events taking place. Visitors to the exhibition this summer will be able to examine letters that Adams wrote to his mother and father, including a letter to Abigail from Ghent, written on Christmas Eve in 1814, when the preliminary peace treaty was signed.

*Mr. Madison's War* opens June 18 and runs through August. It also will be available for preview at the Society's Annual Open House on Saturday, June 16. Visitors are invited to participate in tours, listen to gallery talks, enjoy refreshments, and learn more about the Society's collections, programs, and services.

The MHS is offering additional programming on the War of 1812, including a workshop for teachers in August. On October 1, in collaboration with the USS Constitution Museum, Christian G. Samito will present "The War of 1812 and the Making of Modern America," examining the political, economic, and social changes that resulted from the war. More details on all MHS events are available at [www.masshist.org](http://www.masshist.org).

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT



In any issue of the *Miscellany*, the wide range of articles speaks to the breadth and variety of activities at the MHS as we pursue a better understanding of our country's and state's history. They highlight our publications, research projects, exhibitions, and public programs. Too rarely do they provide insight

into what lies behind the scenes, the processing, cataloging, encoding, editing, and preservation that make all this activity possible. More than half of our staff is engaged in such work.

It certainly is not evident to the visitor. They experience a venerable institution in a timelessly beautiful structure filled with some of the greatest documents and artifacts from America's past. Most visitors have no idea that behind our classic public spaces lies a modern infrastructure utilizing the latest technology to preserve and present our incomparable collection.

This issue's article on restoring volume 4 of Harbottle Dorr's annotated Revolutionary-era newspapers provides that rare glimpse into the complexity of these inner workings. In a photo essay we take you through

The Massachusetts Historical Society is an independent research library that collects, preserves, makes accessible, and communicates manuscripts and other materials that promote the study of the history of Massachusetts and the nation—a mission it has pursued since 1791.

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#### Masthead illustration:

"Plan & Elevation of the Tontine Crescent, now erecting in Boston." From the *Massachusetts Magazine*, 1794. All images are from the MHS collections unless otherwise credited. The MHS occupied the Tontine Crescent from 1794 until 1833.

#### Address:

1154 Boylston St.  
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The MHS reading room is open to the public free of charge, 9 AM to 4:45 PM Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays; 9 AM to 7:45 PM on Tuesdays; and 9 AM to 4 PM on Saturdays.

#### For more information:

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



[massculturalcouncil.org](http://massculturalcouncil.org)

the steps involved in conserving this highly important recent acquisition. Conservation Technician Oona Beauchard is employing the latest techniques and materials and the best practices to conserve these newspapers. This is true for all of our conservation projects. Conservation, especially a project as complex as Harbottle Dorr, is a rigorous, time-consuming process. It will take months for volume 4 to complete conservation in the lab. With over 12 million manuscripts and documents in our collection, all in need of some level of preservation, the challenge is staggering. Fortunately, the bulk of our collection is best preserved through the more holistic approach of a stable environment, fire protection, security, integrated pest control, and a well-maintained building. These are our highest priorities and I am pleased to say we have provided for them well.

Look for future issues of the *Miscellany* to highlight the behind-the-scenes activities of the MHS as we seek to help you better understand the complexity of the Society's operations. Our aim is to make sure the valuable documents of America's and Massachusetts's past are preserved for the ages while making their content available to the widest public.

—Dennis Fiori

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## OUTREACH EFFORTS EXPAND

The last few issues of this newsletter have reported on new outreach initiatives at the MHS, including a refreshed style for exhibitions; Cocktails with Clio, our new annual fundraiser; a kiosk in front of the building promoting exhibitions and upcoming events; and underwriting spots on Greater Boston's National Public Radio stations. These and other efforts have proven effective at attracting new audiences and engaging our continuing audiences in new ways.

While the leading edge of such activities typically gets the spotlight, important work goes on behind the scenes that also contributes to these improvements. More recently, two new positions have been added to the MHS staff to pursue the stated goals of increasing the content generated for the Society's general audiences and delivering it more quickly.

Emilie Haertsch, the new assistant editor for content development, comes to the MHS after several years working for the Pennsylvania Humanities Council, where she spearheaded many public relations activities. Drawing on an MFA in writing and a passion for history, Emilie will be creating and editing copy for the Society's newsletter and website, as well as other projects.

As the new assistant web developer, Travis Lilleberg joins the MHS in a part-time capacity while he com-

pletes a master's degree from Simmons College. Having interned in web development with our neighbor Berklee College of Music, and with relevant experience gained in independent study, Travis has a broad skill set that will assist the MHS in many of its online projects.

The MHS is confident that these new staff members will further the Society's ongoing goal of bringing the wonders of its collections to more members of the public.

\* \* \*

## RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

### *A Banner Year*

The definition of marriage, the nature of communal society, the meaning of relics, and coming to terms with an American tragedy—these are some of the important topics that scholars will be investigating with fellowship support at the MHS over the coming year.

For the fourth consecutive year, the Society's program of research fellowships has attracted more than 200 applications. In order to promote scholarship in its areas of interest, each year for the past quarter-century the Society has appointed a cohort of research fellows. They bring vitality to the life of the Society and keep us in touch with the latest, most interesting scholarship. Most research fellows make brown-bag presentations while they are in residence at the MHS. Many also take part in our conferences and seminars, as well as contribute to our publications.

Today the Society runs four annual research fellowship competitions, including two in collaboration with sister institutions. All told, we appoint more than 35 fellows each year. The terms of the competitions (including applicants' qualifications and the conditions of the award) vary, but they all provide scholars with stipends to support archival research.

Our most prestigious awards are our long-term fellowships, grants of between 4 and 12 months that bring scholars to the Society for extended research visits. Major funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities has supported most of the costs of this competition—including monthly stipends for the fellows—since 2002.

This year, 37 candidates applied for long-term support. A national committee of scholars reviewed the applications, met, and selected 4 very strong recipients:

- Megan Bowman, University of California at Santa Barbara, "Networking for Global Perfection: The International Dimension of 19th-Century Fourierism"
- Kristin Collins, Boston University School of Law, "Entitling Marriage: A History of Marriage, Public Money, and the Law"



mm Pratt  
mm Home  
A. Pratt

- Matthew Dennis, University of Oregon, “American Relics and the Material Politics of Public Memory”
- Martha Hodes, New York University, “Mourning Lincoln: Personal Grief and the Meaning of the American Civil War”

We are looking forward to hosting our new class of research fellows over the coming year and to learning about their fascinating work.

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### CLOVER ADAMS REVEALED

On a Sunday morning in May 1883, Clover Adams wrote to her father about her plans for an outing later that evening. Instead of her routine ride on horseback through the dusty streets of Washington, D.C., with her husband, the historian Henry Adams, Clover intended to take Henry and their three dogs for a carriage ride to a nearby park to try out what she called her “new machine.” She had started to learn photography. By that summer, Henry would remark to a friend that “my wife does nothing except take photographs.” In beautifully composed images, Clover photographed her lively domestic scene, her summer home on Boston’s North Shore, her husband, her father, her nieces, and her remarkable circle of friends that included such 19th-

century luminaries as John Hay, H. H. Richardson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., and John La Farge. She bought the newest camera equipment, installed a darkroom, and attended lectures on photography. Undaunted by photography’s technical demands, she kept detailed records of her camera work in a small, lined notebook and carefully pasted 113 photographs into three albums, one image per page.

Almost 130 years after Clover first picked up her camera, the Society has put together the first gallery show of Clover’s photographs for its newest exhibition, *A Gilded and Heartbreaking Life: The Photographs of Clover Adams, 1883–1885*. Based on Natalie Dykstra’s new book, *Clover Adams: A Gilded and Heartbreaking Life*, published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, the exhibition showcases almost 40 of Clover’s most striking photographs, many of which have not been seen before in a public venue. Following the sequence of Clover’s albums to most closely represent how she wanted her images to be viewed, the exhibition also highlights Clover’s letters and her photography notebook, as well as Henry’s letters and other family materials.

Clover Adams came from privilege, married into one of America’s first families, and presided over a celebrated salon in the nation’s capital. She had, as a friend noted,

“all she wanted, all this world could give.” With her photography, she began an exploration of visual beauty that was imbued with questions about life’s meaning and a woman’s place in her culture, conveying what she thought and felt with expressive, vital images. Inspiration for the composition of her photographs came from fine art she knew well, and while her pictures can be playful—her “dogs at tea” is a perfect example—she can also evoke an intense feeling of loss, as with her photograph of the Arlington graveyard.

Clover’s story has long been shrouded in mystery. Just when she found a powerful way to express herself in photography, her life began to unravel. A recurrent undertow of dark moods gathered force until, on a Sunday morning in December 1885, Clover, then 42 years old, committed suicide by drinking from a vial of potassium cyanide. A chemical she used to develop her photographs had become the means of her death. Henry Adams rarely spoke of his wife after her death and never mentioned her in his Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Education of Henry Adams*. Yet she left behind clues. Most

*Left: Mrs. Ellerton, Mrs. George D. Howe, and Alice Pratt on rocks at Smith’s Point. Photo 50.65. Below: Possum, Marquis, and Boojum at tea in garden. Photo 50.93.*

eloquent are her revelatory photographs, which are an invitation to look beyond the circumstances of her death and to stand with her in the world where she lived.

—Natalie Dykstra, guest curator

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## NEW ADAMS VOLUME

### *Hits the Shelves*

In April, the MHS published volume 16 of the *Papers of John Adams*. This volume chronicles 14 months of Adams’s diplomatic career, from February 1784 to March 1785.

“Once more after an Interruption of ten Years, I pronounce my-self a happy Man,” Adams wrote in late August 1784. He, his wife, and their two eldest children were again united and living in the pleasant Paris suburb of Auteuil. There Adams joined with Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson in a new joint commission to negotiate commercial treaties.

Adams’s letters, with their comments on events and individuals, remain incisive and relevant, but they are less confrontational than those in earlier volumes. This change in tone reflects warnings from America about



*Possum  
Marquis  
Boojum*

the effect of his candor on Congress. Adams's newfound prudence may have helped smooth the way for his long-sought appointment as minister to Great Britain in February 1785.

This was a time of incredible change in American relations with Europe. The negotiation of the Prussian-American Treaty of Amity and Commerce indicated that European nations were beginning to take the United States seriously. In addition, in its creation of a joint commission in May 1784, Congress departed from its erstwhile complacent attitude toward foreign relations.

Adams had a critical role in many of the changing currents, including his negotiation of a new Dutch loan that saved the United States from bankruptcy. He also received correspondence from the United States with crucial intelligence on the critical state of Anglo-American relations, and those letters are chronicled in this volume. As a result of the breadth of his involvements, his letters at this time are invaluable to understanding the period.

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## REVOLUTIONARY-ERA NEWSPAPERS

### *Reunited & Restored*

Harbottle Dorr, Jr., has come home! In August, the MHS acquired the fourth volume of a set of Revolutionary-era Boston newspapers collected, annotated, and indexed by Dorr, a Boston shopkeeper, from 1765 to 1776. With the other three volumes already in the Society's collections, volume 4, covering the years 1772 to 1776, completes the set.

In 1914, Thomas Upham Coe donated the volume to the Bangor Museum and Center for History in Maine. It remained there until going up for auction at James D. Julia, Inc., in Fairfield, Maine, where the MHS purchased it. The Society is enormously grateful to our Members and Fellows who helped to make this acquisition possible.

Dorr systematically collected the newspapers in Boston during the tumultuous years leading to the American Revolution. He methodically annotated and indexed the contents of each newspaper, often identifying the names of anonymous contributors. The annotated volumes provide a glimpse of the thoughts of an ordinary man as the Revolution unfolded around him. In the introduction to volume 4, Dorr wrote, "I have thought it worth while to collect them, tho' at considerable expence, and VERY GREAT TROUBLE, in hopes that in future, they may be of some service, towards forming a POLITICAL History of this Country, during the shameful, and abandoned administration of *George the third's* despotic Ministry."



*Top: The fourth and final volume of newspapers collected, annotated, and indexed by Harbottle Dorr, Jr., as the MHS received it.*

*Bottom: The volume with the binding detached, midway through the process of scraping off the glue to separate the newspapers for conservation. The lighter section is where the glue has been softened and removed.*

*Facing page, top: Once the pages had been dry cleaned, the individual newspapers were ready for a bath in the MHS conservation lab. After testing the ink for solubility, the conservator washed and de-acidified the pages in purified water.*

*Facing page, bottom left: Prior to restoration, the pages are tattered and fragile, placing them at risk for paper and text loss, since Dorr wrote his marginalia to the edges of the paper.*

*Facing page, bottom right: A restored page, after the MHS conservator used Japanese tissue paper and wheat starch paste to repair it.*



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Dorr was born in Boston in 1737, the son of a Boston leather dresser. An early and enthusiastic member of the Sons of Liberty, and a Boston selectman during and after the Revolution, Dorr despised the royal government of Massachusetts Bay and its representatives. It is in Dorr's choice of words for his index that we get a sense of popular opinion among the citizens of Boston. Gov. Thomas Hutchinson, whom Dorr hated with a venomous zeal, appears frequently in his index under revealing headings such as "vile hypocrite!" "arch fiend," and "traitor!" Entries such as "Act called the declaratory Act, the Death Warrant of our Liberties," and "Troops. Liberty always in danger from them" exemplify the growing resentment against British laws and its military presence that would lead to war.

Former MHS Trustee Bernard Bailyn, who is Adams University Professor and James Duncan Phillips Professor of Early American History, *emeritus*, at Harvard University, notes, "there is no more ordinary active participant in the Revolution and no one who left behind a more revealing record of the inner, personal meaning of the Revolution than a Boston shopkeeper with the unlikely name of Harbottle Dorr. His passionately patriotic scribbling in the margins of the newspapers and pamphlets he collected and his comments in his superbly confused indexes to his volumes are unique in the literature of the Revolution." The newest volume contains accounts of many of the events from the first year of the Revolution, including an early Boston newspaper printing of the Declaration of Independence.

Dorr bound his archive of 3,280 pages of newspapers and other documents, including pamphlets, political cartoons, and broadsheets, into four volumes. Volumes 2 and 3 were donated to the Society in 1798 by Josiah Quincy. In 1915, the MHS purchased volume 1 from the Dedham Historical Society, where it had been since 1888.

With grant support from the Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati and the Richard Saltonstall Charitable Foundation, work has already begun on the conservation of volume 4 and the digitization of the entire collection. (Refer to photo captions for details about the process.) Once conserved and stabilized, the newspapers will be scanned. The digital images then will become available on the MHS website, along with transcriptions of Dorr's index entries, which will allow users to jump to the corresponding newspaper page. The project is scheduled for completion in early 2013.

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## THE ANNUAL FUND & YOU

### *Be a Part of MHS History*

This issue of *Miscellany* illustrates the broad scope of the activities, projects, and programs taking place this year at the Massachusetts Historical Society. As you can see, a lot is happening. The Society could not accomplish this without the support of our many Fellows, Members, and friends who contribute to the MHS Annual Fund. Thank you.

The Society's Annual Fund is approaching its final push. As of March 31, 2012, the Fund had received a total of \$296,912, or 71% of our goal. This is 7% ahead of where we were at that same time last year.

We are now approaching the most crucial time of year. On June 30, our fiscal year ends, and we are counting on year-end gifts from supporters like you to help us reach our \$420,000 goal. If you are as excited as we are by all that the MHS is doing to gather, protect, and share the documents that define America's past, then please contribute today at [www.masshist.org/support](http://www.masshist.org/support). Your gift will help make the MHS a place where history happens!

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## ANCESTORS IN YOUR ATTIC

The Massachusetts Historical Society is a living organization. Its hard-working staff members collect personal and family papers—diaries, letters, and other personal records. They also collect the records of institutions and organizations, such as churches and clubs. These acquisitions document the history of Massachusetts and the nation. The misconceptions that the MHS no longer collects or collects only the papers of "great men" are finally disappearing.

If you have family papers and wonder how to preserve them, take a second look and consider donating them to the MHS. Please contact Director of Collections Services Brenda Lawson at 617-646-0502 or [blawson@masshist.org](mailto:blawson@masshist.org) to determine if your material fits our collection policy and learn more about how the ancestors in your attic can become part of the MHS collections.

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### 2013 CIVIL WAR CONFERENCE

What was the role of Massachusetts in the origins, conduct, and aftermath of the Civil War? This question will be at the heart of a scholarly conference sponsored by the MHS next spring. The autumn issue of the *Miscellany* will include details of the event, but for the moment, if you are interested in the topic please save the dates April 4–6, 2013.

## MHS EVENTS SUMMER 2012

JUNE

05 TUES | 6 PM TOUR

**The Fenway Victory Gardens: Finding History Inside & Out**

View items from the Fenway Garden Society's collections, which are preserved at the MHS, and then tour the nearby Victory Gardens. Presented in collaboration with the Fenway Gardens Society to commemorate the 70th birthday of the Gardens. Reception begins at 5:30 pm.

11 MON | 9 AM TO 4 PM CONFERENCE

**Taking Center Stage: Conflict & Collaboration in the Peopling of Massachusetts**

To mark the 100th anniversary of the "Bread and Roses" strike in Lawrence, known for a high level of collaboration between various groups of immigrants, the 2012 Massachusetts History Conference will explore immigration history in the Bay State. This conference, which is sponsored by the MHS, is held at the College of Holy Cross in Worcester. Register through the Mass Humanities website: [http://masshumanities.org/history\\_conference](http://masshumanities.org/history_conference).

16 SAT | 10 AM TO 3 PM

**Open House**

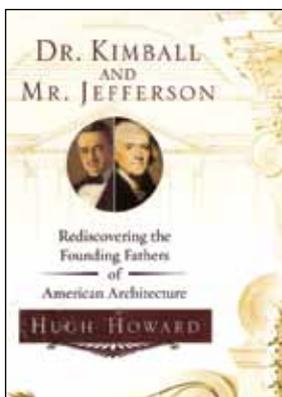
The Society hosts its annual Open House featuring a preview of its summer exhibition, *Mr. Madison's War: The Controversial War of 1812*. Visitors are invited to participate in tours, listen to gallery talks, enjoy refreshments, and learn more about the Society's collections, programs, and services.

20 WED | NOON BROWN BAG

**Next to Kin: Native Americans & Friendship in Early America**

Tyler Boulware, West Virginia University

This talk explores how the cultural meanings of friendship, both Indian and European, influence personal relationships and inter-group alliances, and how ideas about friendship contribute to the violence that erupted between individuals and communities.

**Annual Jefferson Lecture**

28 SAT | 6 PM LECTURE

**Dr. Kimball's Time Machine: The Man Who Rediscovered Thomas Jefferson, Architect**

Hugh Howard

At this lecture, Hugh Howard, author of *Dr. Kimball and Mr. Jefferson*, will discuss Fiske Kimball, the pioneering writer, scholar, and museum director who eventually revealed Jefferson's architectural genius. Registration required: please call 617-646-0560, e-mail [education@masshist.org](mailto:education@masshist.org), or register online. The reception begins at 5:30 pm.

JULY

11 WED | NOON BROWN BAG

**Pictures & Progress: The Politics of Images in the Woman Suffrage Movement**

Allison Lange, Brandeis University

This talk will examine the visual culture of the woman suffrage movement. Lange's research shows how images, from engravings and lithographs to photographs and halftones, shaped Americans' conceptions of gender and women's relationships to politics.

PURCHASE BY BLOOD EXHIBITION OPENING    OCTOBER 4, 2011



On October 6, the Society welcomed 90 guests to the opening of its fall exhibition, *The Purchase by Blood: Massachusetts in the Civil War, 1861–1862*. The exhibition showcased letters, photographs, broadsides, journals, and works of art surrounding one small group of officers to illustrate the price of war as it was brought home to Massachusetts.

*Top left: George Putnam, Christine Martin, Member George Beal, and Members William and Ellen Cross enjoy the reception. Bottom left: Nancy Lippe and Channing Page examine a diary in the exhibition. Below: Stephen T. Riley Librarian Peter Drummey discusses the exhibition with Trustee Hiller Zobel and his wife, Margaret Hinkle. Photos by Laura Wulf.*



COCKTAILS WITH CLIO    NOVEMBER 18, 2011

The Society's second annual Cocktails with Clio was a great success, raising more than \$100,000 for MHS outreach efforts. A reception at 1154 Boylston Street kicked off the event with 236 guests enjoying a cocktail buffet and jazz trio from the Berklee College of Music. The evening continued at the Berklee Performance Center with a wonderful dialog between National Book Award– and Pulitzer Prize–winning author and MHS Fellow David McCullough and MHS Pres. Dennis Fiori.





*Above: Members Ronald Barbagallo and John Munzer pose for a photograph with Trustee William Clendaniel. Top right: The Figgy Puddin' Carollers entertain guests at the start of the Holiday Party. Right: Fellow David McCullough, Fellow Celeste Walker, Members Gail and Frank Reitter, and Rosalee McCullough celebrate the holidays. Photos by Laura Wulf.*



Festive carols and seasonal music sung by the Figgy Puddin' Carollers was enjoyed by all at the annual Holiday Party. More than 130 Fellows, Members, and staff gathered to celebrate the holidays and enjoy refreshments.



*Far left: The program featured a wonderful dialog between Fellow David McCullough and Pres. Dennis Fiori. Left: Trustee Peter Spang (right) enjoys the reception with guests Thomas Spang, Member Elizabeth Spang, Caroline Spang, and Frances Colburn. Right: Allys Spilios and Cocktails with Clio Planning Committee member Julia Pfannenstiehl pose for a photo during the reception. Photos by Bill Brett.*



Massachusetts Historical Society  
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## What is a Harbottle Dorr?



Learn more about one of the Society's latest acquisitions and see behind-the-scenes photographs of this manuscript's restoration on pages six through eight!