

MHS Miscellany

Number 115 / Winter 2018-2019

NOW & THEN: ATTORNEYS GENERAL HEALEY & PAINE



ON DECEMBER 11, 2018, THE MHS HELD A special event to celebrate the upcoming publication of the fifth and final volume of *The Papers of Robert Treat Paine*, edited by Edward W. Hanson. Robert Treat Paine, largely remembered for being a signer of the Declaration of Independence, was the first attorney general of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Appropriately then, and to the Society's gratification, Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey headlined this celebration of Paine's legacy.

The MHS was honored with the attendance of not one but four Massachusetts attorneys general: Maura Healey, Martha Coakley, Thomas Reilly, and Francis Bellotti. We were honored, too, by the great number of guests the event attracted: 128—exceptional for a noontime gathering.

Attendees gathered in the Society's sun-filled reading room, Ellis Hall, for a speaking program and panel discussion introduced by MHS Pres. Catherine Allgor and featuring Alan Rogers, Christina Carrick, and AG Healey.

Massachusetts
Historical Society
Founded 1791

Alan Rogers, a legal historian at Boston College and an adviser for *The Papers of Robert Treat Paine*, provided the context in which Paine's legal and political career took place. Christina Carrick, the Society's former Robert Treat Paine Papers Editorial Assistant, offered insights on Paine the person, complicated as he was. Likewise, the *Papers* series brings to light Paine's humanity and creativity as well as legal thought. Carrick helped shepherd the fourth and fifth volumes into publication thanks to generous funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, the granting arm of the National Archives.

Maura Healey drew connections between Paine's work as attorney general and the office today. Then, as now, the position embodied a dedication to upholding the integrity of the laws of the Commonwealth. A notable difference, Healey pointed out, is that Paine was an office of 1 whereas today's office comprises about 600 staff members, a contrast that occasioned a laugh from AG staff among the audience.

Also in attendance were descendants of Paine himself. The Paine family made a donation to the Society that will enable the initial work on Paine's legal papers. The papers in question are Paine's legal notes, a rich vein of material represented by a limited selection in the now printed volumes of *The Papers of Robert Treat Paine*, which focus primarily on correspondence. This initial work will be used to prepare a grant application for undertaking the project in full, resulting in full transcriptions, a boon to researchers considering Paine's miserable handwriting. The notes, obviously valuable as records of Paine's legal career, are still more valuable in that they document everyday life in the Commonwealth during the nation's earliest days. Covering trials for the most quotidian burglary all the way to treason, Paine's jottings can introduce modern readers to people otherwise obscure in the historical record.

Prof. Alan Rogers, MHS Pres. Catherine Allgor, Attorney General Maura Healey, and Christina Carrick, one of the world's experts at interpreting Robert Treat Paine's handwriting.

The Massachusetts Historical Society is a center of research and learning dedicated to a deeper understanding of the American experience. Through its collections, scholarly pursuits, and public programs, the Society seeks to nurture a greater appreciation for American history and for the ideas, values, successes, and failures that bind us together as a nation.

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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. Cover: Statue of Robert Treat Paine by Richard Edwin Brooks, photograph by Tom Paine. Attorney General Maura Healey.

All photographs by Laura Wulf / all images from MHS collections unless otherwise noted.



massculturalcouncil.org

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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, Wednesday, Thursday,
and Friday: 9 AM to 4:45 PM
Tuesday: 9 AM to 7:45 PM
Saturday: 9 AM to 4 PM

For more information:

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



Clockwise from top left: Alan Rogers; Christina Carrick; Attorney General Maura Healey; Healey with former Attorneys General Francis X. Bellotti, Martha Coakley, and Thomas Reilly; the presenters with John P. Ganson, Avery Chaplin, Diana Chaplin, Tom Paine, and Robert Treat Paine Storer.

FROM THE PRESIDENT



It is a tried-and-true axiom of Madison Avenue that the words “new” and “fresh” hold a special attraction for shoppers. Could this be the source of all the excitement these days on Boylston Street? After all, we are hosting *new* kinds of events and partnerships across the city and the state, we’re publishing works that enable *new* scholarship, and we’re welcoming *new* colleagues with *fresh* energy and ideas in abundance.

Perhaps just as important is that we are being “discovered” by many people for whom the Massachusetts Historical Society is a new experience. The truly impressive array of people who came for the celebration of the publication of the Robert Treat Paine papers, the throngs of public officials who attended the State House ceremony to kick off the Remember Abigail commemorations—they quickly became our newest friends and fans. What’s not new, however, is our commitment to Jeremy Belknap’s vision of collecting, preserving, and communicating history. We are just finding more and more creative ways to fulfill that vision.

THE PAPERS OF JOHN ADAMS

Volume 19 Published

The Adams Papers Editorial Project has completed another fine volume, recently published by the Belknap Press at Harvard University Press. Volume 19 of *The Papers of John Adams* comprises 341 documents, chronicling Adams’s last diplomatic duties in London and at The Hague and his brief retirement before becoming America’s first vice president.

“Huzza for the new World and farewell to the Old One,” Adams wrote to Thomas Jefferson on December 10, 1787, wrapping up a decade’s worth of diplomatic service in Europe. In the period covered by this volume (February 1787 to May 1789), he worked to halt British impressment of American sailors, toured the English countryside, and observed parliamentary politics. Adams traveled to The Hague, then in the throes of William V’s resurgence, and secured two new loans, salvaging U.S. credit. Correspondents like Thomas Jefferson and the Marquis de Lafayette mulled over the ongoing Anglo-American trade war and reported on the French Assembly of Notables—topics that Adams commented on with trademark candor. He also wrote the final two volumes of *A Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America*.

Yet Adams yearned to return home and see the American republic take shape. “For a Man who has been thirty Years rolling like a stone,” Adams wrote, the choice was whether to “set down in private Life to his Plough; or push into turbulent scenes of Sedition and Tumult; whether be sent to Congress, or a Convention or God knows what.” In June 1788, back on his native soil at last, he and Abigail settled into rural retirement and watched as states ratified the U.S. Constitution. His ploughjogging days of private citizenship were few, however. Public life wasn’t finished with him yet, nor he with it, and by April 1789, Adams was America’s first vice president.

IMPOSSIBLE TO FORGET

The Life & Legacy of Abigail Adams

Abigail Adams was the first First Lady to reside in the White House and second First Lady in American history. She was one of two women who were both the First Lady and the mother of a U.S. president. She urged her husband to “Remember the Ladies” and made herself impossible

Such is the melancholly Lot of Humanity, that I cannot pretend to promise Immortality to Liberty or to Virtue in any nation or Country of great numbers and large Extent from any Constitution of Government within human Continuance. — All I can say is that it appears plain to me that every great Nation must have three Branches or but one, and if it has but one, that one must be a Simple Monarchy or in other words a Despotism. A Government of one assembly or of two assemblies only in any great nation, cannot exist but in a State of civil war that will soon end in Despotism, of one man.

John Adams to
Thomas Brand Hollis,
October 8, 1787,
on executive power.

to forget. October 2018 marked the 200th anniversary of Adams's death and saw the start of Remember Abigail, a yearlong opportunity to explore the life and legacy of Abigail Adams.

The commemoration launched on October 25, when more than 80 guests gathered in the Hall of Flags at the Massachusetts State House. Senate Pres. Karen Spilka, Mass Cultural Council Director Anita Walker, and MHS Pres. Catherine Allgor offered comment on Abigail Adams's "strong commitment to public service" and participation in the "political experiment of creating a new nation." Reenactors from the Boston Tea Party Ships and Museum brought John and Abigail's words to life with readings from the letters they exchanged during John's presidency. It was a great start to the year of remembrances.

Remember Abigail provides the opportunity to reflect on Abigail Adams through creative educational and public programming. The Society is joined in this effort by more than a dozen cultural organizations, primarily in Massachusetts. The celebration will culminate in November 2019 with the release of an educational film that draws from Abigail Adams's thoughts and writings to consider changing ideas of citizenship, rights, and power across 200 years of American history.

The public is invited to post their reflections on Abigail on social media using #RememberAbigail. A shared web-

site includes a calendar of events and other news about the commemoration. To learn more or get involved, visit www.RememberAbigail.org.

AN INFLUX OF FRESH PERSPECTIVES

Here at the nation's oldest historical society, there is an abundance of new energy. The Development and Research departments recently welcomed new managers, Maureen Nguyen and Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai, respectively. Each of these new arrivals brings strong experience and a fresh perspective to their role and to the MHS.

Maureen Nguyen, the Society's vice president of development, has spent her career helping nonprofits articulate their strategic visions and implement their missions with maximum impact. As principal consultant of Savvy Philanthropy LLC, she partnered with clients focused on healthcare, education, the environment, and civic causes. Her roles have spanned capital campaigns, major gifts, signature events, board development, communications, and more. Maureen has also been an active community volunteer with several organizations, including the MetroWest Health Foundation, and she currently serves on the board of Family Promise MetroWest. She holds a degree in sociology from Marymount College and an M.B.A. from the F. W. Olin Graduate School of Business at Babson College.

Kanisorn "Kid" Wongsrichanalai, the director of research, assumes leadership of the department that is responsible for fostering the Society's connections with scholars, an important objective of ours since our founding in 1791. A 2003 graduate of Bowdoin College, he earned a Ph.D. in history from the University of Virginia in 2010. From 2011 until this past fall, he taught history at Angelo State in San Angelo, Texas, where he was a tenured associate professor. As director of research, Kid will oversee the Society's extensive program of short-term and long-term fellowships, as well as conferences, seminars, brown-bag lunches, and special receptions for scholars, a total of more than 80 programs per year. He will also be at the helm of our annual journal, the *Massachusetts Historical Review*, and supervise work on our long-running series *Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, a collection of biographical sketches of Harvard men, now up to the classes immediately after the American Revolution.

We are delighted to welcome Maureen and Kid, who are sure to be integral in moving the Society forward.



THE REDCOATS CAME . . . AGAIN!

On October 1, 1768, 15 British men-of-war sailed into Boston Harbor and landed the king's red-coated infantry and royal artillery at Long Wharf. They came in response to growing unrest in Massachusetts following the passage of the Townshend Acts. By Paul Revere's description, the British army "Marched with insolent Parade, Drums beating, Fifes playing, and Colours flying" through the streets of Boston. It was an occupation, approximately 1,000 soldiers being quartered in a town with fewer than 16,000 residents. As Ben Franklin said in his testimony before the House of Lords in England in 1766, any troops sent to America "will not find rebellion; they may indeed make one."

The American Revolution started here in Massachusetts, and—as several of its key events reach their 250th anniversaries—here it will be commemorated. The Massachusetts Historical Society and 50 partner organizations from across the Commonwealth have formed a consortium called Revolution 250 to plan these commemorations, the first of which, Boston Occupied, unfolded last fall.

On October 6, 2018, before 9 o'clock on a Saturday morning, hundreds of people gathered on Long Wharf and watched as over 100 uniformed reenactors sailed into Boston Harbor on the ship *The Liberty Star* and long-

boats from the Hull Lifesaving Museum. They marched through Downtown Crossing, set up camp on Boston Common, and spent 30 hours occupying (and dining in) the city. The event garnered local newspaper stories and television clips and was reported by media from Texas to Italy. A livestream video of the happenings posted on the MHS Facebook page reached over 15,000 people. This event was sponsored by the Downtown Boston Business Improvement District, the Greater Boston Convention and Visitor's Bureau, Pfizer, the City of Boston, Conventures, Roche Brothers, and the MHS.

Revolution 250 will mark the coming anniversaries in creative ways through reenactments but also with art and participatory media, exploring our Revolutionary history to bring a deeper understanding of what liberty and freedom meant to the founding generation and what it means to us today. We will do this through events, education, and efforts to document and preserve the Revolutionary resources of Massachusetts.

Revolution 250 is a program of the MHS and is overseen by a volunteer advisory committee. We would love to hear your thoughts and have you join our conversation—please visit www.Revolution250.org.



John Collins
Photography



John Collins Photography

Paul Revere quotation: A View of Part of the Town of Boston in New-England . . . 1768, engraving by Paul Revere, ca. 1770.

Benjamin Franklin quotation: The Parliamentary History of England . . . to the Year 1803 (London, 1813), 16:147.

Photographs courtesy of John Collins Photography.



John Collins
Photography

SPECIAL EVENTS

MHS Fellows, Members, and supporters enjoy a wide array of special events. Here are some highlights since spring 2018.

Dinner with Dolley: On March 1, the reading room at 1154 Boylston Street was transformed into a social dining space where friends and new acquaintances gathered for a special evening. During dinner, MHS Pres. Catherine Allgor provided history and fun facts about dining with Dolley Madison, about whom she has published extensively.

Distilling Boston: On April 5, using illustrations, photos, and multimedia clips, Stephanie Schorow spoke about Boston's drinking history from the colonial period up to the current craft cocktail scene. Following the talk, guests enjoyed a reception featuring Bully Boy spirits and three special cocktails: the Ward Eight, Fish House Punch, and the Boston Club.

Cocktails with Clio: The eighth Cocktails with Clio took place on May 17 at the Fairmont Copley Plaza in Boston. Following dinner, guests enjoyed a conversation between Harvard University Pres. Drew Faust and MHS Pres. Catherine Allgor. The MHS awarded the first John Codman Ropes Award to Dr. Faust in recognition of her extraordinary service to history.

Exhibitions: The MHS held preview receptions for two exhibitions full of gorgeous examples of New England's material culture—on May 10 for *Entrepreneurship and Classical Design in Boston's South End: The Furniture of Isaac Vose and Thomas Seymour, 1815 to 1825*, and on October 4 for *Fashioning the New England Family*.

See pages 10 and 11 for photos from these events!

NEWLY ACQUIRED, REVEALING LETTERS & DIARIES

he had one wish, as he told me: to fight his Regiment alongside of a white one, & prove its equality. . . . Rob's last letters to me hours before he died, (first on the parapet of Fort Wagner, ready to take the colors from the color-bearer should the latter fall, so Wilkie James has just told me) are full of joy & happiness & gratified pride for his Regiment—he had no selfish ambition as we all know—and he died in what was to him the hour of triumph.

In this poignant July 23, 1863, letter to his brother Quincy, Francis Shaw shares his profound grief after learning of the death of his son, Robert Gould Shaw, just days earlier. Col. Shaw was in command of the Massachusetts 54th Infantry Regiment, the first Black regiment raised in the North, when he lost his life leading his troops into battle

during the Siege on Fort Wagner. The letter joins a large collection of papers, photographs, and artifacts related to Shaw and the 54th at the MHS, including the sword he carried when he bravely led his men up the parapet at Fort Wagner.

It is not unusual to find diaries kept by college students in the Society's collections, but a recently purchased set created by James Thomas Robinson of North Adams caught our attention. In two profanity-laced volumes he kept as a student at Williams College from 1842 to 1844, Robinson described in vivid detail his social life, drinking, and sexual encounters. Three later volumes that extend to 1853 reveal a more mature Robinson who returned to North Adams as an attorney, active in politics, particularly the Free Soil Party, and an opponent of slavery. One can only imagine what the older Robinson thought about his exploits as a young man, but luckily for future researchers, his earlier diaries survive.

Another remarkable set of diaries kept from 1854 to 1863 by Rev. Luman Boyden, a Methodist minister and head of the Boston City Missionary Society, contain exquisite details of his visits to the poor, including Yankees, African Americans, and particularly Irish-American Catholics in East Boston. In a typical entry from October 1854, Boyden describes the living conditions in one home: "O what wretchedness a mere hovel for a shelter. A drunken father. Two motherless boys—one about 7 years old very feeble—without fuel or suitable nourishment—the other boy out begging, fending or stealing wood. O the effect of Rum & still men are allowed to sell it." An evangelical missionary, Boyden also discusses his attendance at missionary and temperance meetings, the dissemination of religious tracts, and his work as an itinerant minister in eastern Massachusetts.

A new collection of Davis, Sturgis, and Tappan family papers adds to our already extensive holdings on these interrelated families. The collection contains letters exchanged among John Davis, a Massachusetts politician and Adams-appointed federal judge; his wife Ellen (Watson) Davis; and their son-in-law Ezra Shaw Goodwin, pastor of the First Church of Sandwich. Sturgis and Tappan family correspondence includes letters between Transcendentalist poet Caroline (Sturgis) Tappan and her parents, China Trade merchant William F. Sturgis and Elizabeth (Davis) Sturgis. Caroline's correspondence with her fellow Transcendentalists offers a window into her circle of friends that included Lydia and Ralph Waldo Emerson and Margaret Fuller.

Francis George Shaw to Quincy Adams Shaw, July 23, 1863.

My dear Ivin:

It was so -
our dear Rob's death was
fitting - He was as if
transfigured to me on that
day, when I took what
I believed to be my last
farewell of him - but he
had one wish, as he told
me: to fight his Regiment
alongside of a white one,
& prove its equality. That

the latter fell, to Wilkie
James has just told me)
are full of joy & happiness,
& gratified pride for his
regiment - He had no
selfish ambition - as we
all know - & he died
in what was to him the
hour of triumph - (as
we lament, but for our
loss - Dear Sarah bears
up nobly & tries to comfort

with was fully gratified,
on James' Island, the
54th not only proved its
equality, but four companies
of it saved the white Regt;
to one of the soldiers of the
latter told Mr Haggerty -

Rob's last letter, was how
before he died, (first on the
parapet of Fort Wagner,
ready to take the colors
from the color-bearer, should

her aching, yearning
heart by such thoughts,
as we all do - but we
must feel our loss
poignantly some times -

Give our best love to
Pauline, we hope that
she may pass through
her coming trial with
the least possible suffering -

a fly
Thursday. Hant.

Dinner with Dolley

March 1



During dinner, MHS Pres. Catherine Allgor entertained guests with history and fun facts about Dolley Madison.

Distilling Boston

April 5



MHS Stephen T. Riley Librarian Peter Drummey talks with guests about items on display, such as the Edes family punch bowl and a punch strainer that belonged to John Hancock.



Pamela Miles, Mike MacNaught, Kim Jesse, and Jim Jesse at the reception for Distilling Boston.

All event photographs by Laura Wulf

8th Annual Cocktails with Clio

May 17



The Fairmont Copley Plaza in Boston was the scene of the Society's eighth annual Cocktails with Clio.



MHS Pres. Catherine Allgor, Trustee R. Newcomb Stillwell, featured guest Drew Faust, and Chair of the Board of Trustees Paul Sandman after the presentation of the John Codman Ropes Award.

Entrepreneurship & Classical Design in Boston's South End exhibition preview

May 10



Top: MHS Pres. Catherine Allgor with guest curators Clark Pearce (left) and Robert Mussey (right). Guests explore the furniture of Isaac Vose and Thomas Seymour.



Director of Programs, Exhibitions, and Community Partnerships Gavin Kleespies comments on documents on display, drawn from MHS collections to supply historical context for the furniture.

Fashioning the New England Family exhibition preview

October 4



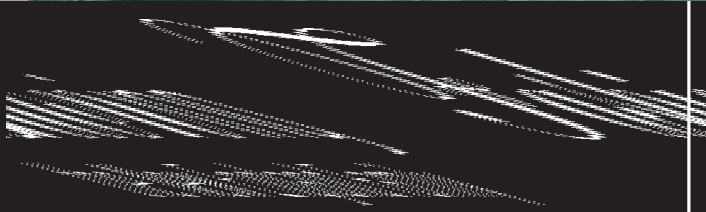
Above: Guests discuss pieces on display. Below: Guest curator Kimberly Alexander points out significant details of the William Tailer waistcoat during the Fashioning the New England Family preview.



Massachusetts Historical Society
1154 Boylston Street
Boston MA 02215

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exhibition



ON DISPLAY
through April 6, 2019,
Monday through Saturday,
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