The mission of the Massachusetts Historical Society is to promote understanding of the history of Massachusetts and the nation by collecting and communicating materials and resources that foster historical knowledge.
Year in Review

Reaching out, thinking big, and making history—what a year it has been for the MHS!

We welcomed new staff and new Board members, connected with multiple audiences, processed 152 linear feet of material, welcomed researchers from around the world, and broke fundraising records at our new Making History Gala all while strategizing about our future.

A renewed sense of energy, purpose, and focus among the staff—at all levels and in all departments—is evident every day as we reach out to answer the need for civic participation and historical knowledge.

Delivering the day-to-day, top-quality work for which we are known is our top priority.

Throughout the year, scholars moved in and out of the building, researching in the reading room, leading seminars, participating in brown-bag lunch programs, and discussing a robust slate of fellowship applications. Teachers and students participated in twenty-seven workshops complete with demonstrations and discussions all while learning the skills of an historian with primary sources.

Visitors enjoyed three fascinating exhibitions: *Entrepreneurship and Classical Design in Boston’s South End: The Furniture of Isaac Vose and Thomas Seymour, 1815 to 1825*, *Fashioning the New England Family*, and *“Can She Do It?”: Massachusetts Debates a Woman’s Right to Vote*, as well as gallery tours, pop-up displays, and Saturday building tours. What’s more:

• Thanks to a robust, diverse, and engaging roster of programs, we broke attendance records for the fifth consecutive year.

• As the state sponsor of National History Day in Massachusetts, we expanded school participation in the program by almost 20%. Greater awareness, in-classroom introductory workshops, and partnerships with Mass Humanities and the Mass Cultural Council contributed to the increase.

• Publication was the Society’s first form of education and outreach, and there is much to celebrate on that front with the completion of volume 4 of the five-volume edition of *The Papers of Robert Treat Paine* and volume 14 of *Adams Family Correspondence*.

• We celebrated the life and legacy of Abigail Adams with a series of rotating exhibitions, gallery talks, public programs, and an online bracket in which participants voted for their favorite Abigail letter.

• Our unparalleled collection continues to grow, as do our online resources. This year, 352 linear feet of manuscripts were acquired from 115 gifts and 5 deposits.

• Carefully cataloged records, professionally executed finding aids, and a congenial atmosphere enticed 824 individual researchers who made 2,565 visits to the MHS this year.

Your support has made these successes possible and we thank you for your commitment. We remain deeply honored to serve as President and Chair of this wonderful organization and are grateful to the Boards, staff, supporters, and friends as we work together to determine our future.

Let’s continue to make history!

Paul W. Sandman
Chair, Board of Trustees

Catherine Allgor
President
National History Day in Massachusetts, the state affiliate of National History Day (NHD), is a year-long interdisciplinary program focused on historical research, interpretation, and creative expression for students in grades 6 through 12. Students conduct research on a historical topic of their choosing and present their work through a documentary film, website, performance, paper, or exhibition. Since 2017, the MHS has sponsored this program, leading a host of volunteers, educators, and students through local and regional competitions and then to the national finals.

Impact Case Study: The Lynn School District

Searching for a way to improve history education in its schools, the Lynn School District approached the MHS to find a proven history program that would hone both research and writing skills. National History Day fit the bill.

MHS staff encouraged Lynn to bring the NHD approach to student research into their school gradually. Beginning in the 2018—2019 academic year, teachers focused on integrating the program into their curriculum. The effort made a strong impression on teachers and students, including Lynn Classical High School teacher Kristen Tabacco, who called NHD “perhaps the most vital program we can use as educators today.”

Joseph Severe, then a junior at Classical High, also had an exceptional experience with NHD that year. Challenging himself to reach the regional competition Joseph revised a paper he had written on the legacy of Emmett Till for his submission. He not only made it to the competition but also won a Mass Humanities Frederick Douglass Award. In addition to the $500 prize given to the student, the award also grants $500 to the student’s school to purchase books related to African-American history and culture. Envisioning a robust Civil Rights section, Joseph augmented that amount by donating part of his prize money to the library for additional books. He also used his money to launch an after-school program for students in need.

The impact of NHD for students is manifold. For students like Joseph it offers the opportunity to delve into a topic they are passionate about while developing research and writing skills they may not practice again until college. NHD also rewards and nurtures civic-mindedness, providing a platform for students to solve issues in their community as active citizens. As Kristen Tabacco stressed during a celebration event at the Massachusetts State House on April 22, 2019, “It is more important than ever to teach students to think for themselves, and to learn how to evaluate the huge influx of information coming at them every day. [Our] children need to learn valuable skills like evaluating bias, corroborating evidence and sources, and determining validity and reliability of sources and media.”

Growth Potential

After its first year of NHD curriculum integration—and success at the 2018–2020 regionals—the Lynn School District has moved on to adding the competition component to the program for students district-wide in 2019–2020. Now Massachusetts must work toward more growth across the Commonwealth. The nearly 6,000 Bay State students who currently participate in NHD are only 1% of those eligible. One of our most pressing goals is to boost that number as quickly as possible—especially since NHD requirements align with newly implemented history education standards. But more resources are required to remove obstacles and increase access to this transformative program. Fees must be eliminated or reduced; legislators need to dedicate state funding for NHD in Massachusetts; high-quality training and materials must be made available to teachers; and easily searchable materials, particularly primary and secondary sources, need to be accessible to students.

Teachers are eager to integrate NHD into their curricula. Students who participate in NHD also perform better in other academic subjects, not just history. And the practical skills that this program fosters—communication skills, both spoken and written, and critical thinking—help shape them into successful global citizens.
Dating from 1803 to 1823, this collection includes previously unknown letters by John Quincy Adams, James Madison, James Monroe, Elbridge Gerry, the Marquis de Lafayette, and James Sullivan. Correspondents include Thomas Jefferson, John Quincy Adams, James Madison, James Monroe, Elbridge Gerry, the Marquis de Lafayette, and James Sullivan, and founding president of the MHS. The letters pertain primarily to politics and include topics such as the Louisiana Purchase, foreign policy, Jefferson’s Embargo Act of 1807, relations with the Indians, the War of 1812, and the responsibilities of a first lady. More personal notes appear in letters that graciously extend invitations to dine, regretfully decline tickets to the theater, and ask after family and mutual friends.

“...It is remarkable that such an important group of letters had been in private hands. Not only are they in pristine condition but it is wonderful to have found several previously unknown letters that contain newly discovered content. The enormous generosity of the donor has enabled us to make these letters available to the public.”
—Brenda Lawson, VP for Collections

In FY2019, an outstanding collection of sixteen letters came to the MHS from an anonymous donor. Of these letters, fourteen were written to William Eustis, a physician and statesman, and two were exchanged between Caroline Eustis and Dolley Madison. Correspondents include Thomas Jefferson, John Quincy Adams, James Madison, James Monroe, Elbridge Gerry, the Marquis de Lafayette, and James Sullivan, governor of Massachusetts and founding president of the MHS. The letters pertain primarily to politics and include topics such as the Louisiana Purchase, foreign policy, Jefferson’s Embargo Act of 1807, relations with the Indians, the War of 1812, and the responsibilities of a first lady. More personal notes appear in letters that graciously extend invitations to dine, regretfully decline tickets to the theater, and ask after family and mutual friends.

Dating from 1803 to 1823, this collection includes previously unknown letters by John Quincy Adams, James and Dolley Madison, and James Monroe, as well as letters by Thomas Jefferson, the Marquis de Lafayette, Elbridge Gerry, and James Sullivan.

Thanks to documentary editing projects that track the existence of every known letter written to or from their subject, we know that five of the letters were completely unknown. Another four were known only from retained copies of outgoing correspondence, with the location of the originals a mystery. They complement letters already in the MHS collections among our presidential papers and Eustis family correspondence.

Physician, Statesman, and Army Surgeon
Born in Cambridge in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1753, William Eustis began his career as an army surgeon during the American Revolution. He represented Massachusetts in Congress from 1801 to 1805 and again at the end of his career from 1820 to 1823. In 1801 William married Caroline Langdon—later called Madame Eustis. Twenty-seven years his junior, she was reputed to be well-read and very beautiful. She managed William’s household first in Washington, DC, during his initial term as a U.S. representative and as secretary of war under James Madison (1809–1812), and later in The Hague from 1814 to 1818 when he was named envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to the Netherlands.

From 1819, the Eustises settled at Shirley Place (now the Shirley-Eustis House) in Roxbury where they entertained lavishly, hosting John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and, famously, the Marquis de Lafayette, among others. William was elected governor of Massachusetts in 1823, serving until his death from pneumonia in 1825. Madame Eustis survived her husband by forty years. Having torn up the carpets of their home in Washington to make uniforms for soldiers fighting in the War of 1812, in the final years of her life she knit socks for Union soldiers. Before her own death in 1865, she “was accustomed to remark that few people were permitted to witness the birth of a nation to watch it grow, growing with it, and to see its life struggle and end victory, as she was at last able to do.” (Ida Ayres, “Shirley Place,” The New England Magazine, n.s. 15, no. 6 [February 1897]: 755).

Highlights from the Collection
Among the highlights is a previously unknown letter written by John Quincy Adams on April 25, 1808, in which he offers his reasoning for breaking with the Federalist Party on matters of foreign policy, in particular his support for Thomas Jefferson’s Embargo. “...There is so much of self-delusion in human Nature, that I know not how to try my assuages...”

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In a poignant letter written on October 1, 1823, John Quincy Adams sends his regrets and returns tickets to the theater in Portland, preferring to spend as much time with his father as he could before returning to Washington. He writes: “The desire to spend with my father, all the time, which I can now, and perhaps ever dispose of to that purpose has induced me to renounce my contemplated tour to Portland, and I have remained with him instead of going there.” While the MHS already held a retained letterbook copy of this letter, the location of the recipient letter was unknown.

The collection is fully digitized and available online at: www.masshist.org/collection-guides/view/faq0179.

Above: James Monroe to William Eustis, September 24, 1816.
New Acquisitions

The MHS acquired 352 linear feet of manuscript material in FY2019 through 115 gifts and 5 deposits including:

Gifts

Adams Memorial Society: Additions to the Adams Memorial Society records
Algonquin Club: Algonquin Club records
Catherine Allen: Matthew Almy and Beatrice Adams
Janet Donati: Letters to William and Caroline Doss
Kenneth Dargis Sr.: From the collection Dakota City Heritage Village
Laura Burnham: Mary J. Brophy
Diane Brackett: Boothbay Region (ME) Historical Society: Belmar Historical Society
Roger Amory: Matthew Almy
Catherine Allgor: Algonquin Club: Adams Memorial Society: Beatrice Adams
Adams (1910-1999)

Printed material and George S. Bain: Anonymous: Roger Amory: Matthew Almy: Catherine Allgor

Account book kept by a unidentified carpenter in Boston, MA, 1848–1853

Blackstone Library Association, [Constitution of the Blackstone Library Association (Blackstone: ca. 1855),]
broadside

Papers related to amateur photographer and inventor Francis Blake

Circular letter from the Boston Selectmen stipulating the sizes and prices of broads, March 25, 1772

Several letters from George S. Boutwell. Photo album pages containing photographs of the Church of All Nations in Lowell

Manuscript reminiscences by Dr. Lincoln Ripley Stone

Additional sets of manuscript papers

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In Memoriam

Amalie M. Kass

When Amalie M. Kass passed away in May 2019, the loss was felt broadly throughout her many communities. Here at the MHS, where Mrs. Kass has been so deeply engaged and supportive for more than thirty years, her loss had a deep impact on staff and Board members alike.

Mrs. Kass became a Fellow of the Society in 1995, joined the Board of Trustees (then the Council) a year later, and served as the head of that body from 2002 to 2009—the first woman to do so. She brought to that work a vision for the Society informed by the many ways she engaged with it: as a teacher, historian, author, and philanthropist, Mrs. Kass was a part of the MHS across the spectrum of its mission.

She knew firsthand the process of teasing evidence from archival records, having arrived at 1154 Boylston Street in the 1980s in order to use the collections to pursue her study of medical history. Like many of our researchers, she crafted rigorously gathered evidence into works of published history, including her books *Perfecting the World: The Life and Times of Dr. Thomas Hodgkin, 1798-1866* (1988), co-authored with her husband Edward H. Kass, and *Midwifery and Medicine in Boston: Walter Channing, M.D., 1786-1876* (2001). Her self-discipline as an author is also reflected in the Massachusetts Historical Review, where she published articles that exemplify the care and clarity we hope for in all scholarly communication.

“She was almost unique in being a skilled researcher who was at home in our reading room as at an MHS board meeting or social event,” notes Peter Drummey, Stephen T. Riley Librarian, who knew Mrs. Kass from her early research trips to the MHS. In June 2017, the office next to the reading room, used to register new researchers, was officially dedicated as the Kass Room, recognizing the great value she placed on the Society’s open welcome to all seekers of historical understanding.

As a Trustee, Mrs. Kass participated in the Society’s governance for more than two decades. As Chair of the Board, she guided the MHS through nearly a decade of some of its most significant change, leading especially in the area of education.

Drawing on her background as a high school history teacher, Mrs. Kass fostered education in the Society’s programming, allowing us to move from happenstance events for visiting groups to a deliberate and funded suite of opportunities for students and especially teachers, including on- and off-site workshops, online resources, and fellowships. The leadership role the MHS now plays in running National History Day in Massachusetts (see pages 2–3 for more) originated from Mrs. Kass’s vision, and her commitment to improving history education determined the initial mission of the Council of Overseers, which she led as its inaugural chair.

An effective leader and administrator, Mrs. Kass contributed to the Society on a richly human level, meeting everyone as an individual with warmth and respect. In this, she brought new friends to the Society and a sense of recognition and gratitude to all who conducted the institution’s everyday business. And the equilibrium with which she could keep on course the occasionally quarrelsome meeting was unparalleled. Through it all, the guidance she brought reflected her deeply held understanding of the importance of history—focused, well-grounded, thoughtful history—to the nation’s democratic values. She grasped the crucial nature of the work we do at the MHS and supported that work with her insight and energy, and that gift continues to support and motivate us today.

MHS Trustee Robert G. Ripley, Jr. shared, “I am forever grateful to Fred Ballou for introducing me to Amalie. My first visit to the MHS, to meet her and discuss committee assignments, was a glorious introduction and the first of many visits. Working on Martha’s Vineyard, I would meet Amalie for lunch over the summer and will cherish those luncheons and our talks about all things history and the MHS. A most marvelous woman who will be missed deeply.”

“In so many projects her wisdom was invaluable. Her generosity was magnificent and in difficult times helped lead us out of trouble. She will be missed by us all.”

—William Clendanian, MHS Trustee Emeritus
What’s the Buzz Around the MHS?

Our vast collections are used for a range of projects by research fellows, and a broad array of topics are presented through workshops, programs, seminars, and brown-bag lunches. Looking at these subjects, one can learn a lot about the trends in historical study. The words on these two pages reflect the terms and names used by our scholars and speakers. The topics that came up most frequently are presented in black in the center of the page. The larger the font size, the more often the scholars used them to describe their work.
### Financial Statements

#### Statement of Activities (in thousands)

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<th>2019</th>
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<td>Gifts and grants</td>
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<td><strong>Increase (decrease) in net assets</strong></td>
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#### Statement of Financial Position (in thousands)

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<th>2018</th>
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<td><strong>Assets</strong></td>
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<td>Other assets</td>
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<td><strong>Total liabilities and net assets</strong></td>
<td>$103,105</td>
<td>$98,620</td>
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Our sincere thanks to our generous contributors. Your commitment helps us connect people and history. Without you, the work of the MHS would not be possible.

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