**The Colonial Society of Massachusetts**

Minutes of the 120th Annual Meeting of the Membership

Held at the Society’s House

87 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston

15 November 2012

President Donald R. Friary called the meeting to order at 6.05 P.M.

The reading of the minutes of the 2011 Annual Meeting was waived.

**1. Report of the Membership Committee.** Celeste Walker reported that the membership of the Society stands at 319 members: 187 resident members, 122 non-resident members, and 10 honorary members.

During the past year, the changes in membership are as follows:

*Deaths*

Richard N. Current, a member since 1998, died on October 26.

Robert Dunkle, a member since 2004, died on January 20.

H. A. Crosby Forbes, a member since 1967, died on July 22.

Wendell Garrett, a member since 1960, died November 14.

Carol Hills, a member since 2000, died July 3.

Sidney Jackman, a member since 1964, died February 27.

John Quincy Jr., a member since 2006, died April 25.

Kenneth Ryder, a member since 1981, died October 29.

John R. Silber, an honorary member since 1971, died September 27.

Arthur Vershbow, a member since 1988, died April 16.

The membership stood for a moment of silence.

The following new members were welcomed to the Society this year:

*Resident Members*

Ellen Berkland, of Dorchester

*Non-resident Members*

Eileen Hunt Botting, of South Bend, Indiana

Benjamin Ray, of Charlottesville, Virginia

The following nominations, approved at the June and September Council meetings, will be voted upon at the Society’s December Stated Meeting.

Brian J. LeMay, of Boston

Michael Yogg, of Wellesley

Nathaniel Sheidley, of Boston

Joshua Lane, of Deerfield

**2. Report of the Treasurer.**

President Friary then yielded the chair to D. Brenton Simons.

**3. Report of the Nominating Committee.** Susan Goganian, chair of the Nominating Committee, read the slate of nominees:

President Donald R. Friary

Vice Presidents Robert Allison, Dan Coquilette, Celeste Walker

Recording Secretary Leslie A. Morris

Corresponding Secretary Martha J. McNamara

Treasurer Thomas R. Appleton

Member of Council, Robert Bellinger (2015)

3-year term

Continuing members of

Council Jonathan Chu (2013); Caroline Sloat (2014)

There were no nominations from the floor. D. Brenton Simons moved the slate of officers and councilor.

**VOTED:** To approve the slate as read. Approved unanimously.

**4. Report of the Curator.** Elton Hall said that it was a quiet year as far as the fabric of the house was concerned. There was some routine maintenance in the carriage house including the replacement of some thermopane, and a new washer-dryer for the ground floor flat in the ell. This spring both units in the ell will be vacated, and it is likely that some repairs will be necessary.

Preliminary work on the forthcoming “Four Centuries of Massachusetts Furniture” project prompted a survey of the House furniture. Robert Mussey and Clark Pearce examined the Society’s Boston empire furniture, and were quite interested, particularly by the china cabinet, sideboard and serving table in the dining room, a sofa on the third floor, and a sleigh bed on the fourth. Robert and Clark attributed them to Isaac Vose, Boston’s leading furniture maker in the 1820s. All four of these pieces had been the gift of the grandchildren of Francis Parkman. Of the four pieces, they considered the sofa the most interesting in view of its exquisite carving and that, aside from the tattered upholstery, it was in remarkably fine condition, showing no damage or repairs and still in its original finish. They discovered the pencil inscription: “Stufd by Otis Packard at / Isaac Voses Boston / August 24th / 1823 OP.”

When the Parkman gift arrived, Walter Whitehill, who had secured it for the Society, wrote to Georgina Howland, donor of this house, to tell her the good news. She replied with enthusiasm that it brought a special joy to her for the Parkmans and the Paines were always particularly welcome to one another.

**5. Report of the Editor of Publications**. John Tyler began his report by telling the story of the events of July 20, 1766, when Harmanus Schuyler, sheriff of Albany County, and Robert van Rensselaer, son of the proprietor of Claverack Manor in the province of New York, appeared without warning at the head of column of 250 British regulars in Nobletown, on the Massachusetts/New York border. Many farms were attacked, and buildings burned. Eventually the matter ended up on the desk of the Massachusetts governor, Sir Francis Bernard; and the story is told in detail in volume 3 of Colin Nicolson’s Bernard papers, to be published in January this year by the Society. The volume principally concerns the repeal of the Stamp Act and the first stirrings of opposition against the Townshend Acts. John then related a story from his graduate school days, concerning “Introduction to Historical Methods,” taught by Arthur Link, distinguished biographer of Woodrow Wilson, when a student asked Link if he’d ever thought of forging a document by Wilson.

Publications. This year were published *New Views of New England: Studies in Material and Visual Culture, 1680-1830,* edited by Fellow Members Gigi Barnhill and Martha McNamara. The year ahead will see publication of volume 3 of the *Bernard Papers*; and volume 1 of the *Papers of Thomas Hutchinson*. The fall of 2014 should see the publication of volume 6 of *Portrait of a Patriot: The Major Political and Legal Writings of Josiah Quincy, Jr.,* with Neil York compiling Quincy’s newspaper writings and his correspondence; and the proceedings of the conference on Boston furniture to be held at Winterthur this coming March, edited by Fellow Members Brock Jobe and Gerry Ward. 2015 should see one, if not two, more volumes of *The Bernard Papers;* and *The Memoirs of Josiah Cotton (1680-1756).* Further in the future is Fellow Members David Hancock’s and Mark Peterson’s *Account Books of John Hull* *(1624-1683),*

**6. Report of the President.** Don Friary thanked John for shepherding through to publication this year both *New Views of New England* and volume 2 of the *Papers of Francis Bernard, Governor of Colonial Massachusetts.* He mentioned that not only will John be publishing the long-awaited first volume of his edition of the Hutchinson Papers, but he will also be giving a paper at *New Perspectives on Boston Furniture: 1630–1860*, a conference co-sponsored by the Society and the Henry Francis DuPont Winterthur Museum in Delaware on March 6th to 8th, 2013. John will speak about *“Such Ruins Were Never Seen in America”: The Looting of Thomas Hutchinson’s House at the Time of the Stamp Act Riots*.

Don mentioned that the Vose sofa discovery related by Toby in the Curator’s Report coincided with a meeting of the recently reactivated and energized House Committee, chaired by Cheryl Robertson and including Richard Nylander, Barbara McLean Ward, and Donald Wing, along with Curator Toby Hall, *ex officio*. He said that Toby is working diligently and is near completion of a new inventory of the furnishings of the House that will enable the Society to give appropriate attention to appraisal, insurance, and conservation.

Last April's Graduate Student Forum featured nine interesting presentations and a thoughtful talk by Jack P. Greene, Andrew W. Mellon Professor Emeritus in the Humanities at the Johns Hopkins University. On Friday, May 10, 2013 the next Forum will hear from nine graduate students of their research and the challenges it poses, and have remarks at day’s end by Karen Ordahl Kupperman, Silver Professor of History at New York University. Vice President Robert Allison, assisted by members Robert Gross and Susan Lindsay Lively, organizes this successful annual event, and selects the papers.

Another Colonial Society effort that encourages both graduate students and more senior scholars is participation in the New England Regional Fellowship Consortium that awards stipends for research in at least three collections of the eighteen-member consortium. This year’s Colonial Society Fellow, John Dixon, a Ph.D. candidate at Harvard, is computer-mapping late 18th-century Atlantic voyages from ship’s logs in several New England libraries. Susan Lindsay Lively, who completes her Council term with today’s Annual Meeting, is the new Colonial Society representative on the Fellowship committee.

Don then commented on Treasurer Thomas Appleton’s optimistic report, noting that his stewardship of the Society’s finances and investments is aided and observed by the Finance Committee that includes Ruth Oliver Joliffe and Lionel Spiro, and the Auditing Committee, chaired by Christopher Jedrey and including Rodney Armstrong and Carl Nold.

Don noted that this was a year of transitions, with The Friends of Public Garden, which had occupied the first floor office for more than a decade, departing to larger quarters. More importantly, Elaine Paul, Office Administrator for many years, retired, necessitating a search for a successor. An ad hoc Job Descriptions Committee, with Recording Secretary Leslie Morris as chair and Councilors Jonathan Chu and Susan Lindsay Lively prepared job descriptions for Office Administrator, Curator, and Editor of Publications that clarify all three positions and enable the Council to understand them better. A search committee consisting of Pauline Maier, Robert Mack, Celeste Walker, and Don reviewed resumes and interviewed candidates, for the important position of Office Administrator that keeps the Society running smoothly. Mary Blunt was hired, and is here this evening, and Don urged members to introduce themselves to her.

Don concluded by thanking the members for their participation in the life and work of the Colonial Society throughout the year, noting that the members make it a congenial and collegial organization to promote shared interest in, even passion for, the early history of Massachusetts, New England, and the Atlantic world.

The meeting was adjourned at 6.45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie A. Morris

Recording Secretary