



The Colonial Society of Massachusetts

October 1996 Volume 1, Number 1

A Letter from the President



Dear Members:

Yes, a newsletter.

Aside from the president's annual pastoral/fund raising letter and blue bound volumes, CSM members rarely hear from 87 Mount Vernon. That is now changing. So much is happening that the Council has decided that we need to communicate on a more regular basis. Some of you will be surprised at the range of activities being undertaken. Committees have been hard at work, and as you can read elsewhere in this newsletter they have accomplished a great deal.

Over the coming months I hope to see many of you at our meetings. In the meantime your comments and suggestions are always welcome. Send them to me at any of the following:

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Northeastern University
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COLONIAL SOCIETY OF MASSACHUSETTS
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Sincerely,

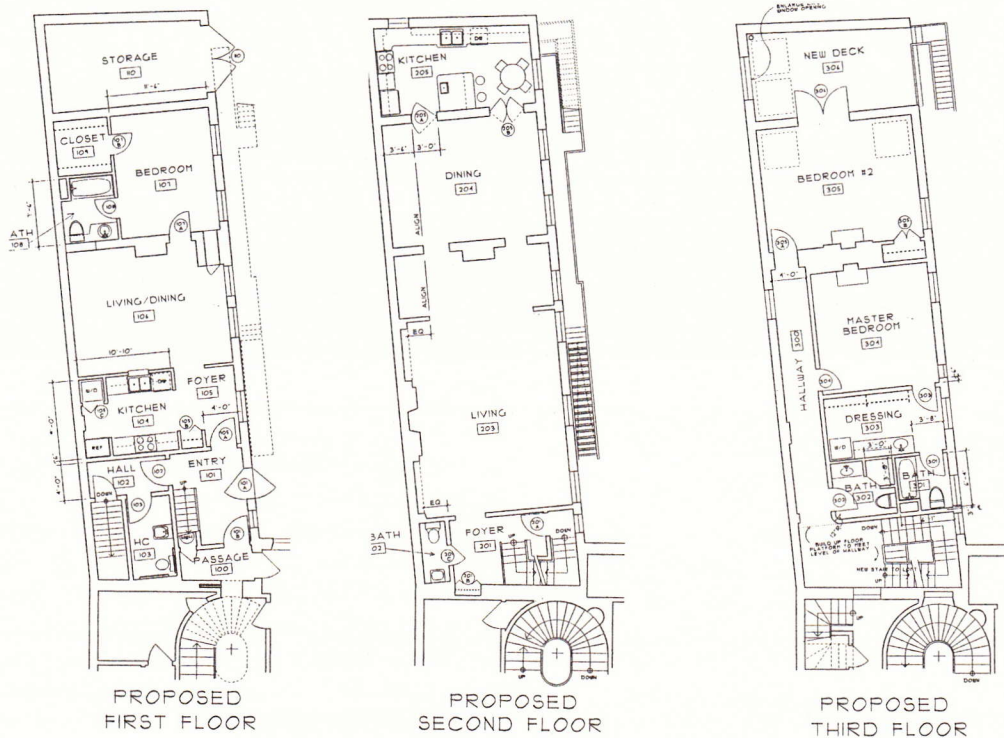
WILLIAM M. FOWLER, JR.

Renovations at 87 Mount Vernon Street, Boston

THE Colonial Society's house, built by Charles Bulfinch for Stephen Higginson, Jr., in 1806, and enlarged by Mr. & Mrs. Charles Jackson Paine about 1867, was given to the Society in 1955 by Georgina Paine Fisher Howland. Because the house had been unoccupied for many years, Mrs. Howland sought to ensure its long term preservation by transferring ownership to an organization that would appreciate its historic and architectural importance and that could put it to good use. For the past forty years the Society has taken care of the house, performing such maintenance and repairs as necessary. During the 1980s, however, there was a growing feeling within the Colonial Society that the house represented a vast and under-utilized asset. While the upkeep was costing the Society a considerable amount of money each year, we were not availing ourselves of the opportunities the house offered to make a contribution to the Society, to diverse fields of history, and to the neighborhood.

A House Committee, appointed to examine the property and make suggestions as to a course of action that would ensure the preservation of the house and make it more useful, determined that renovation of portions of the property not needed by the Society into income-producing property would best answer those issues. While preservation of the original, Bulfinch part of the house was given the highest priority, it was felt that the later rear addition, which had undergone numerous alterations over the years, and the separate carriage house, might appropriately be renovated. Because the carriage house was deteriorating seriously and is a discrete property, it was decided in 1988 to renovate it into a single dwelling.

Five year's experience with the carriage house confirmed the Council's belief that it had been a good decision. Meanwhile, reduction in size of the Archives of American Art, which has been occupying the ell for about twenty-five years, had left a large portion of that space vacant. Again, the House Committee was charged with making a recommendation for the next step in securing the house. Consistent with our belief that preservation of the Bulfinch portion of the house deserves the highest priority, we engaged the same architect to produce a scheme for the



BUILDING ELEVATION

renovation of the ell into two residential units, a duplex residence and a flat. We believe the result will contribute to the neighborhood with the addition of a top-quality residence, turn the ell into a sound, income-producing property, and provide a stream of income that will ensure the long-term preservation of the Bulfinch house.



A Brief Report on Publications

BY now, members should have received, if they requested it, a complimentary copy of Volume 68: *The Printed Catalogues of the Harvard College Library, 1723-1790*, edited by Past President Bill Bond and Fellow Member

Hugh Amory. The arrival of a new volume is always an occasion for rejoicing, but in this instance particularly so. Perhaps only fellow bibliographers will fully appreciate just how much labor was involved in Bill's preparation of the volume's index concordance. With terrier-like tenacity, Bill shook loose the mysteries of variant titles and provided each book with its appropriate British Museum Catalogue Number. Hugh emerged as the hero of the production phase. Early on, we all heard the siren song of what new technology could do for us. The digitized reproduction of images enabled us to darken portions of the page where the original image was faint and in some places (should we confess it?) actually drop in cloned images of letters found elsewhere in the manuscript in order to replace broken or missing characters. The process may sound simple enough,

but several technicians at the Office of the Harvard University Publisher came and went during the year and a half the manuscript was in production; each seemed to have his own way of doing things and to have been largely oblivious of the methods of his predecessors. This left Hugh with proofreading of the most tedious sort imaginable. The end result is an image far more legible than the eighteenth-century originals, but, oh, the labor involved!

Just as Volume 68 was finally going off to the printer's, the manuscript for Volume 69 arrived: *The Records of the Boston Overseers of the Poor, 1735-1795*, edited by Fellow Member Eric Nellis of the University of British Columbia. Through fragmentary, these records are easily the most extensive collection of documents related to institutional poor relief from any eighteenth-century town in North America. The manuscript includes a full introduction by Eric on "The Origins and Evolution of Public Poor Relief in Boston, 1630-1822," which explains why Boston retained the system it did long after such practices had passed out of fashion in Great Britain. Eric also gives us a composite portrait of the Overseers themselves, gentlemen of property and standing prompted by civic obligation to care for the poor (frequently out of their own pockets). Volume 69 includes what remains of the records of the both the Almshouse and the Workhouse, with the names and relevant information of those admitted to each. Because of space limitations, we have not included lists of all the individuals "warned out" of Boston during this period. (Newcomers to a town were formally warned that the town would not accept responsibility for their care should they become indigent.) Not every person warned was poor. (Some were very rich indeed.) Thus, the warnings out arguably say more about eighteenth-century mobility than poverty. They are worthy of reproduction and would be a useful tool for scholars. Perhaps they can be part of a second volume, which will carry the records forward to 1822, when the Overseers were disbanded and the whole system remodeled on more utilitarian lines by reform-minded mayor Josiah Quincy.

Other CSM projects at various stages of completion at this time include the proceedings of the conference on New England Silver held this past April at the Museum of Fine Arts; the first volume of the select correspondence of Thomas Hutchinson; and a newly annotated edition of Josiah Quincy's *Reports of Cases Argued Before the Superior Court* together with his literary and legal commonplace books.



The Colonial Society Launches New Initiatives in K-12 History Education

AT its September 28, 1995 meeting, the Council authorized John Tyler, the editor of publications, to begin to explore ways in which the Colonial Society might encourage the teaching of early Massachusetts history in New

England area public and private schools. Concern about education had been growing among members of the Council since the previous February when President Bill Fowler convened a meeting of members of the publications programs of area historical societies to discuss solutions to various common problems. Nearly all the participants at that meeting noted a decline in the market for the types of publications we produce. Clearly, all Boston-area historical societies need to do more to build an interest in history among future generations if the organizations we cherish are going to flourish in the future.

Tyler asked a committee of CSM members to advise on what specific steps the Colonial Society should take in this direction. Its members included Gretchen Adams, Director of Education for the Paul Revere Memorial Association; Helen Breen, English teacher in the Lynn Public Schools; Will Fitzhugh, editor of the *Concord Review*, a scholarly journal dedicated to publishing history essays written by secondary school students from throughout the English-speaking world; Robert Hall from the African Studies Department at Northeastern University; Jim Newton, history teacher at Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School; Linda Smith Rhoads, Recording Secretary of the Colonial Society and Co-Editor of the *New England Quarterly*; and John Warren, Academic Dean of Milton Academy.

The Education Committee had one clear guiding principle: rather than design programs for which no need existed, we wanted to ask area teachers what they thought historical organizations could do to help. With that idea in mind, the committee spent much of the winter designing a one-day meeting scheduled for late March when thirty-five area teachers would come to 87 Mount Vernon Street to advise us about what should be done.

The teachers who gathered on March 29 (despite the threat of the last snow storm of the season) represented a diverse selection of area schools (public and private, rich and poor, urban and suburban) and included persons who had particularly distinguished themselves either in curriculum development or teacher education. The day began when representatives of the following cooperating organizations were asked to describe briefly their programs in K-12 education: the American Antiquarian Society, the Boston Athenæum, the Bostonian Society, the *Concord Review*, the Museum of Our National Heritage, the National Park Service, the New England Historic Genealogical Society, the Old South Memorial Association, the Paul Revere Memorial Association, the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, and the USS Constitution Museum. Afterwards, the teachers broke into small groups to discuss obstacles they encountered in teaching early Massachusetts history while the historical organizations discussed ways they could cooperate with one another in facilitating history education.

A light luncheon provided informal time to renew old friendships and make new acquaintances, after which the entire group reconvened to talk about what historical organizations in general, and the Colonial Society specifically

could do to stimulate a love of history among pre-college students. It was a day that won the Colonial Society many new friends. A thank-you letter from one of the participants remarked, "The elegance of the surroundings and the warmth of your reception impressed those who seldom venture into town. Although they may never have heard of the Colonial Society before . . . these participants knew that they were being courted by agencies who are keepers of the flame of historic preservation."

After the March meeting, it then became the job of the Education Committee under John Tyler's direction to distill the ideas presented there into specific recommendations on which the Council could act. The single greatest need, according to those teachers attending the March meeting, was for workshops, which would bring teachers current with latest scholarship in colonial New England history. The presenters at such workshops would presumably be drawn from the Colonial Society's own membership. Following a related idea, the Society might also organize a speaker's bureau of CSM members willing to make presentations on site in the schools themselves.

The presentations of their education programs by the various historical organizations present at the March meeting were deemed so successful that the Education Committee recommended that the Colonial Society should take a leading role in seeing that they were repeated elsewhere in other forums, such as the regional meetings of the National Council for Social Studies and the New England History Teachers Association. The Committee also urged that the Colonial Society consider running a workshop for small, local historical societies which would help them begin the process of establishing their own education programs.

There was disagreement within the Council on whether or not it was advisable for the Colonial Society to establish its own Web site. Proponents urged that it would be an easy way for the Society to advertise to a wider audience and seek feedback on its publications and activities, while others believed it would be expensive both to establish and keep up to date.

One clear theme which emerged among elementary school teachers attending the March meeting was the success of the "People and Places" Program, currently administered by the National Park Service, which brings together the various historical organizations located along the Freedom Trail with elementary school teachers and their students from the public schools. Unfortunately because of government cutbacks and difficulties arranging private funding, there is a real possibility the program will not survive, or at least not survive in its present form. Consequently, the Council voted at its August 1 meeting a one-time emergency appropriation of \$5,000 to underwrite the teacher training workshops which are part of the People and Places Program.

CSM members with thoughts about any of the above programs or new suggestions for the Society's educational

efforts are urged to contact either John Tyler, editor, or Bill Fowler, president, or any of the other members of the Education Committee.



CSM Receives Proposal to Help Develop Historical Writing in the Lynn and Arlington Public Schools

AS a result of the Colonial Society's new initiatives in K-12 education (described elsewhere in this newsletter), the Society received a proposal from Dr. Brian C. Coughlin, Executive Director of Curriculum in the Lynn Public Schools to help in stimulating student research and historical writing in Lynn and Arlington. Dr. Coughlin suggested that the program begin with a one-day workshop where select students (no more than twelve from each school district) would hear specialists in early Massachusetts history describe the state of recent scholarship and highlight possible research topics for secondary school students. After this initial meeting, teachers would help students define their topics and develop appropriate research strategies.

About a month or a month and a half after the opening workshop, the Colonial Society would arrange for the students to visit a few key research libraries, such as the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Boston Athenæum, and the Boston Public Library. At each library, students would be shown rare books and original manuscripts which focus on a particular topic. The primary purpose of these visits would be to familiarize students with the availability of primary source documents and other research tools which they might use in conducting their own original research. If the students later returned to the libraries in question, they would always be accompanied by a faculty mentor from one of the schools.

After an appropriate interval, students would reconvene at the Colonial Society to talk with Will Fitzhugh, editor of the *Concord Review*, a journal which publishes only historical essays written by secondary school students. Fitzhugh might offer a few pointers himself, but we hope that he will be able to arrange for some of his published authors, who now attend Boston area universities, to come to the meeting with their own words of encouragement and advice.

At a final meeting at Mount Vernon Street in the spring, students would give precis of the results of their research to an audience of guests from a variety of local historical organizations and research libraries. If successful, this program might be a model for larger efforts involving a greater variety of schools in the future.



Colonial Society of Massachusetts

New Members

December 21, 1995

Resident:

PROF. MARY C. FULLER: Professor Fuller is Associate Professor of Literature at M.I.T., and holds her doctorate from Johns Hopkins University. Primarily interested in New World Discovery, her interests range beyond English America to the Spanish World. She has published numerous articles, as well as a recently issued book of English travel accounts of voyages to America. Much in demand as a lecturer, Prof. Fuller spoke to the Society last year on Captain John Smith. *Nominated by Pauline Maier.*

PROF. DAVID J. HANCOCK: Prof. Hancock is Associate Professor of History at Harvard, having received his doctorate from that institution in 1990 with several honors. His publications include numerous articles and book reviews, and Cambridge University Press has recently published his book, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785*. Professor Hancock's lecture to the Society concerning the Madeira Wine trade in the 18th century drew considerable interest among the membership present. *Nominated by John W. Tyler.*

PROF. STEPHEN A. MROZOWSKI: Professor Mrozowski is Associate Professor of Anthropology at U. Mass. Concentrating on New England sites, he works and publishes in such diverse areas as urban mills, country burial grounds, and under water surveys. Since receiving his degree from Brown in 1984, Professor Mrozowski has taught at Brown, Harvard, U.R.I., William and Mary, as well as U.Mass. He has published numerous articles and monographs. *Nominated by Jonathan M. Chu and James O'Toole.*

PROF. MARK A. PETERSON: Professor Peterson was assistant professor of history at Boston University. He received his Ph.D. from Harvard in 1993, and has published articles in the *New England Quarterly* and the *Essex Institute Historical Collections*. A participant in the Plymouth Conference, Professor Peterson also participated in the 1996 Silver Conference. *Nominated by John W. Tyler.*

PROF. ANITA TIEN: Professor Tien has been an assistant professor of history at Wellesley College since 1990. She received her B.A. from Yale in 1983, her A.M. from Michigan in 1984, and her Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley in 1990. She has published book reviews, delivered numerous conference papers, and received over ten fellowships and grants. She is currently preparing her dissertation for publication, concerning Dutch and German families' adaptation to life in the Middle Colonies from 1660 to 1832. *Nominated by Celeste Walker.*

DR. JOHN C. WARREN: Dr. Warren has been head of the History Department at Milton Academy for some years, and he became the school's Academic Dean on July 1 1995. Primarily a teacher, Dr. Warren's specialty is Ameri-

can history in the colonial period. *Nominated by William H. Bond.*

DAVID W. CONROY: Mr. Conroy is an independent scholar. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Connecticut in 1987, and has articles on various colonial Massachusetts topics, as well as reviews in the *New England Quarterly*. His book, *In Public Houses, Drink and Revolution in the Authority in Colonial Massachusetts*, is a path breaking study and reinterpretation of politics in Colonial Massachusetts. *Nominated by Prof. Richard D. Brown.*

EMILY CURRAN: Ms. Curran holds a B.A. in Fine Arts from Baird College, and her M.A. in Museum Studies from the Bank Street School. She has worked at the Drumlin Farm Education Center, the Children's Museum, and is currently Director at the Old South Meeting House. *Nominated by William M. Fowler, Jr.*

JEANNINE FALINO: Ms Falino received her B.A. from Providence College and her Master's from Boston University. Currently Assistant Curator in the Department of American Decorative Arts and Sculpture at the Museum of Fine Arts, she compiled a checklist of over 7,000 American drawings and watercolors at the Yale University Art Gallery, was curator for the MHS exhibition, *Witness To America's Past*, is a contributor and co-curator to *Collecting American Decorative Arts and Sculpture*, and the forthcoming Yale University Press publication, *A Dictionary of Colonial Massachusetts Silversmiths*. *Nominated by Linda Smith Rhoads.*

WILL FITZHUGH: Mr. Fitzhugh graduated from Harvard in 1960 and taught in the Concord-Carlisle School system. In 1987, he founded the *Concord Review*, a journal publishing historical essays by secondary school students throughout the English speaking world. He is also advising the Society on its efforts in pre-college education. *Nominated by John W. Tyler.*

SUSAN LINDSEY LIVELY: Ms. Lively graduated *magna cum laude* from Dartmouth in 1988 and will receive her Ph.D. from Harvard this spring. Her research concerns Americans living in or visiting Britain from 1740 to 1776, which was the subject of her talk to the Society last year. *Nominated by John W. Tyler.*

WILLIAM MARTIN: Mr. Martin is one of this country's best known writers of historical fiction. He earned his B.A. from Harvard, receiving the David McCord Prize, and holds an M.A. in Fine Arts from U.S.C. He is a member of the MHS, and a trustee of the Paul Revere Memorial Association. *Nominated by William M. Fowler, Jr.*

JAMES A. NEWTON: Mr. Newton teaches history and is Chairman of the Department of History and Social Sciences at the Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School. His degrees include an A.B. *magna cum laude* in Fine Arts from Harvard College, and a Master of Arts in Teaching from Harvard University. A recipient of awards and fellowships, Mr. Newton also serves on numerous organizations. Publications include an article on octagon houses, in *Old Time New England*, and another titled, "A High School Human-

ities Program," in the *Bulletin of Associated Public School Systems*. Nominated by Georgia B. Barnhill.

ANNE GRIMES RAND: Ms. Rand is Acting Director of the USS *Constitution* Museum, and Secretary of the Council of Maritime Museums. She is a graduate of Dartmouth College, Williams College and Mystic Seaport Program in American Maritime Studies, and is currently completing graduate work at Born University. Nominated by William M. Fowler, Jr.

MARK A. WALSH: Mr. Walsh holds his JD from Boston College *magna cum laude* in 1994, following a Bachelor of Arts from Trinity College, University of Dublin, with honors in history. Now a member of Choate, Hall and Stewart, Mr. Walsh has done considerable research in Massachusetts legal history and is currently co-editor of the Papers of Josiah Quincy. Nominated by Daniel R. Coquillette.

Non-resident

PROF. KATHLEEN BRAGDON: Professor Bragdon is an associate professor in the Department of Anthropology at William and Mary, and is the Associate Editor of the journal, *Ethnohistory*. A graduate of Brown, she has been recognized for her work in the study of Native American History. Her most recent book, *There the Way Divides: the*

Native People of Southern New England, 1500-1650, studies the effects of the English presence on native culture. Nominated by Linda Smith Rhoads.

DR. CAROL URNESS: Dr. Urness is Curator and Professor in the James Ford Bell Library at the University of Minnesota. Considered an enterprising and knowledgeable historical curator, she recently published *James Ford Bell and His Books: The Nucleus of the Library*. Her current project is a history of the Russia Company. Nominated by Roger E. Stoddard.



Colonial Society Seeks News of Members

IF you have changed jobs, received a recent promotion, published a book or article, delivered a scholarly paper, or been awarded a prize, please let us know so that we can share that news with members in the next newsletter. Please address communications to: John W. Tyler, Editor of Publications, Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 87 Mount Vernon St., Boston, MA 02108.



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