



The Colonial Society of Massachusetts

September 2006 Volume II, Number I

Colonial Society to Co-Sponsor a Conference on New England Visual and Material Culture Together with the American Antiquarian Society

THE COLONIAL SOCIETY will join the American Antiquarian Society in co-sponsoring a Conference on New England Visual and Material Culture entitled *Fields of Vision: The Material and Visual Culture of New England, 1600-1830* in Boston and Worcester on November 9-10, 2007. The conference will help mark the founding of a new Center for Historic American Visual Culture at the Antiquarian Society directed by Fellow Member Georgia Barnhill. Council Member Martha McNamara will join her in co-chairing the Program Committee for the conference.

Visual culture is a relatively new field of study that bridges many areas of scholarly interest. In an article in *Reviews in American History* in 1998, George H. Roeder Jr., broadly defined visual culture as “what is seen,” including photographs, printed texts and their illustrations, ephemera that entered the household (currency, advertisements, invitations, tickets, invoices, etc.), the built environment, and images of the natural landscape, material objects, and people. CSM member and cultural historian Michael Kammen was among the earliest historians to center his writing on such sources. Representing increasing acceptance of the field, there is now a journal devoted to visual culture: *Early Popular Visual Culture* published by Routledge.

Most scholars “of a certain age” prefer to use texts rather than images as sources for their research. But younger scholars raised on a barrage of images from TV, video games, magazines, and film are more comfortable without necessarily relying on the written word.

Studies in visual culture also appeal to many K-12 teachers looking for materials for children whose learning styles can be enhanced by the use of images rather

than text. Together with the New England History Teachers Association, the Center for Historic American Visual Culture will hold its first workshop for teachers this fall on October 13 with addresses by Louis P. Masur of Trinity College on “Images as History and the History of Images” and Patricia Johnston of Salem State College on “An Interdisciplinary Approach to Teaching History, English, and Art.” Fellow Members Georgia Barnhill, Jim Moran, Jim Newton, and Robert Gross will all lead workshops during the day, with the latter speaking on “The Look of Death: Printed Elegies in Early America.”

The members of the Program Committee for the fall 2007 conference are: Co-chairs Georgia Barnhill, Curator of Graphic Arts at the AAS, and Martha McNamara, Associate Professor of History at the University of Maine, and committee members Joanna Frang, Ph.D. candidate in the History Department at Brandeis University; David Jaffee, Associate Professor of History at City College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York; Jane Kamensky, Associate Professor of History at Brandeis University; Jennifer Roberts, Assistant Professor in the History of Art and Architecture at Harvard University; Eric Slauter, Assistant Professor in the Department of English at the University of Chicago; Caroline Sloat, Director of Scholarly Programs at the AAS; and John Tyler, Editor of Publications. The call for papers accompanies this article, and members are reminded that their proposals are due by December 1, 2006.

A Brief Report on Publications

Publications seemed to roll along this summer at an alarming rate—at least compared to the Colonial Society’s usually sedate pace. In July members received copies of Volume 72: *The Colonial Church Records of the First Church of Reading (Wakefield) and the First Church of Rumney Marsh (Revere)* edited by Fellow Members Jeff Cooper and Ken Minkema. This was their second CSM volume; they also served as editors for Volume 66: *The*

Sermon Notebooks of Samuel Parris, 1689-1694. In their new volume, Cooper and Minkema provide “A Primer of Early New England Congregationalism,” a succinct introduction to an often complex subject. The records of the Revere and Rumney Marsh churches both cover the early eighteenth century, a period often neglected in New England church history with its intense focus on the experience of the founding generation. These records also reveal how churches maintained moral discipline and resolved doctrinal disputes.

The long-awaited manuscript to Volume 69: *The Eighteenth-Century Records of the Boston Overseers of the Poor* has now been set in galleys and weighs in at a hefty 991 pages without the index. To reach this stage in production has been a truly remarkable achievement by the volume’s patient and painstaking editors Fellow Members Eric Nellis and Anne D. Cecere. As readers will soon see, the records of the Overseers, though they will be an invaluable tool to social historians, constitute a very complex manuscript, which changes format according to the whim of each new clerk who takes office. The fact that some of the clerks were not exactly good spellers further complicates the work. Nevertheless, Nellis and Cecere have gone to great lengths to produce a printed version of the text that closely mirrors the idiosyncrasies of the original.

The portrait of the eighteenth-century “welfare system” that emerges from the records will surprise many readers. The distinction that the Overseers made between the “deserving” and “undeserving” poor sounds harsh to modern ears, especially when one learns that the latter were remanded to the workhouse to pick oakum, but those entitled to “outdoor relief” could remain in their homes, where they might receive firewood in harsh winter months and money for food, clothes, and medical care as needed. All of these needs were watched over by the Overseer appointed for each ward, who advanced the necessary funds out of his own pocket until he was reimbursed by the town once a year. Thus, the system had a flexible, face-to-face quality absent from modern efforts to deal with urban poverty. The Almshouse, which provided shelter for the “deserving,” was part lying-in hospital, part smallpox ward, part asylum for the mentally ill, part nursing home, and ultimately a hospice for the dying. Though the number of persons recorded as having “jump the fence” and run away suggests that it was not a place where one would want to linger, providing such a shelter was assumed to be an obligation incumbent on all taxpayers and not a matter left to the intermittent charitable impulses of the well-disposed.

Early in the summer, Vice-President Dan Coquil-

lette and Fellow Member Neil York sent their manuscript for the second volume of *Portrait of a Patriot: The Major Political and Legal Papers of Josiah Quincy Jr.* to Stinehour Press. The designers there are now wrestling with the complexities of that manuscript, since it contains Quincy’s “Legal Commonplace Book,” which he compiled as way of learning the law under the tutelage of Jeremiah Gridley. Quincy developed his own system of indexing for the Commonplace Book, which Dan and Neil have carefully preserved along with Quincy’s many marginal notations and cross-references. It is a typesetter’s nightmare—or perhaps one might better say “challenge.” The material does reveal, however, both Quincy’s acuity and the sophisticated resources available to young lawyers in provincial Boston. Readers can look forward to an introduction from Dan describing the system of legal apprenticeship in some detail. The editors also included in Volume Two the journal Quincy kept of a tour he made of the Southern colonies in 1772. Quincy traveled to Charleston partly to recruit his failing health, but also to gauge the depth of commitment to the Patriot cause among Southerners for his colleagues on the Boston Committee of Correspondence. While in Charleston, Quincy was both dazzled by the wealth of the Carolinians and repelled by the institution of slavery and the legal supports constructed around it. In addition to these thoughts, the journal also includes some sharply drawn observations on Southern womenfolk and manners. CSM members may have seen a tantalizing summary of the journal Dan published in the June 2006 issue of the *New England Quarterly*.

Dan Coquillette also reports that he is nearly finished with Volumes Three and Four of *Portrait of Patriot*, which constitute a newly revised and annotated edition of Quincy’s *Reports of Cases Argued and Adjudged Before the Superior Court of Judicature of the Province of Massachusetts Bay Between 1761 and 1772*. Quincy’s *Reports* have long been a key source for both historians and lawyers, constituting as they do the first attempt at systematic legal reporting in North America. Although the *Reports* have been available in published form since 1865, the CSM version will be the first newly annotated edition since that printing.

Ira Berlin and Joanne Melish have withdrawn from editing the proceedings of the Conference on New England Slavery and the Slave Trade held in April 2004. Berlin and Melish provided the presenters with many useful observations about their manuscripts, and Editor of Publications John Tyler and chair of the Publications Committee Pauline Maier are now reviewing the revised essays to see whether we have a publishable manuscript.

The Colonial Society of Massachusetts and
The Center for Historic American Visual Culture at the American Antiquarian Society

Fields of Vision: The Material and Visual Culture of New England, 1600-1830

November 9 & 10, 2007
Boston and Worcester, Massachusetts

IT HAS BEEN twenty-five years since the path-breaking exhibition *New England Begins* opened at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The exhibit, and its comprehensive three-volume catalogue, brought new scholarly attention to the art, artifacts, and built environment of early New England. Since that time, the discipline of material culture has matured, while the emerging field of visual culture has brought new methods and genres to bear on the study of images, objects, landscapes, and the technologies that shaped them. This two-day conference, sponsored by the Colonial Society of Massachusetts and the Center for Historic American Visual Culture at the American Antiquarian Society, will assess new approaches to the material and visual culture of New England. Reflecting the scholarly trends that have emerged in the past quarter century, the conference will extend the chronological scope of inquiry to embrace the eighteenth and early nineteenth century and will explicitly address the innovative work being done in the field of visual culture. We particularly welcome proposals that address Native American and African-American material and visual culture as well as proposals that engage broad theoretical, methodological, and historiographical approaches.

The conference committee will consider individual submissions as well as panels with three papers and a moderator/commentator. Two-page proposals accompanied by a two-page c.v. for each presenter should be sent via electronic mail to Georgia B. Barnhill, curator of graphic arts at the American Antiquarian Society (Gbarhill@mwa.org). For further information, please contact Martha McNamara (McNamara@maine.edu) or Georgia Barnhill. The deadline for submissions is December 1, 2006.

Though *Quincy* and the *Overseers* are the two documentary manuscripts in active production this summer, there are several other CSM projects in the pipeline. Fellow Members Sheila McIntyre and Len Travers are nearing completion of their work on *The Letters of John Cotton Jr.* Fellow Member Mark Peterson and Vice-President Celeste Walker kindly agreed to review their manuscript for them prior to publication and provided many thoughtful suggestions. John Cotton Jr. was the well-connected pastor of the Plymouth Church in the late seventeenth century, writing at a time when letters might more accurately be described as “newsletters” intended for public reading rather than private correspondence.

After some delay in photocopying the original documents, Fellow Members Mark Peterson and David Hancock are now able to begin in earnest the work of

transcribing *The Collected Writings of John Hull*. A silversmith and shipowner, Hull (1624-1683) rose to be captain of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, a member of the Court of Assistants, and mint master and treasurer for the colony during King Philip’s War. Hull was also intimately involved in the founding of the Third Church in Boston and the religious controversy that surrounded it.

In the far distant future are two important multi-volume projects: *The Selected Letters of Sir Francis Bernard*, royal governor of Massachusetts from 1760-1771, and those of his successor, Thomas Hutchinson, governor from 1771-1774. The Bernard Letters are being edited by Colin Nicolson of the University of Stirling in Scotland, while the Hutchinson Papers are the work of Editor of Publications John Tyler.

New Members, 2005–2006

DAVID AMES JR.

David Ames Jr. was educated at Milton Academy, Harvard College, and Northeastern University Business School. He spent most of his professional career in Bank of Boston's international and trade divisions, specializing in financing capital goods exports, mostly in Latin America. Since leaving the bank in 2004, he has been working on projects in North Easton where his family has property. Mr. Ames has a great interest in colonial history, especially King Philip's War. In 2000, he collaborated with a few friends to produce a 26-minute video on the war, which has sold more than one thousand copies.

AMALIE MOSES KASS

Amalie Kass is a graduate of Wellesley College, where she presently serves on the Board of Trustees. She is the author of numerous articles and two books, *Midwifery and Medicine in Boston: Walter Channing, M.D., 1786–1876*, and *Perfecting the World: The Life and Times of Thomas Hodgkin, M.D., 1798–1866*, which she co-wrote with her late husband. Currently Mrs. Kass is a lecturer on the history of medicine at Harvard Medical School and is the President of the Massachusetts Historical Society. She has also served on many community-based organizations and now sits as chair of the Lincoln Rural Land Foundation.

JOHN QUINCY JR.

John Quincy Jr. is the author of *Quincy's Market*, an account of one of Boston's most historic buildings. He graduated from Boston College School of Business Management, and has since been associated with the Boston commercial real estate firm of Quincy & Company, which was founded by his great-grandfather in 1865. He is a Fellow of the Massachusetts Historical Society, an active member of the Boston Athenaeum, and a Life Member of the Bostonian Society, Historic New England, and the Quincy Historical Society. Mr. Quincy has been of enormous assistance to the Colonial Society in the publication of the series of Josiah Quincy's works.

ALICIA CRANE WILLIAMS

Alicia Crane Williams is Museum Operations Manager of the Alden Historic House Site in Duxbury, where she serves as chair of the Operations and Personnel Committees and coordinates all of the operations of the museum including tours, sales, research, and conservation. She is a graduate of the University of Connecticut and

received her master's degree in Historical Administration from Northeastern University. She is also a specialist in Mayflower genealogy and has been the editor and compiler of more than seven published genealogies. She served as the executive secretary of the Massachusetts Society of Mayflower Descendants and, for four years, was the editor of their periodical *The Mayflower Descendant*.

News of Members

Robert Hall, acting chair of the Department of African-American Studies at Northeastern University, is co-editor of the "Ethnic and Racial Identity" section of the *Encyclopedia of New England* published by Yale University Press in the fall of 2005 under the general editorship of Burt Feintuch and David H. Waters. Hall co-wrote the introduction to the section with Marilyn Halter and also contributed an entry on the *Amistad* case. At a celebration of the anniversary of the publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in Torrington, Connecticut, sponsored by the Beecher House Society, he portrayed Venture Smith in period costume. The African-born Smith experienced the Middle Passage and enslavement in eighteenth-century Rhode Island and Connecticut, purchased his own freedom and that of his wife and three children, published an autobiographical narrative in 1798, and died in 1805 owning over one hundred acres of land in East Haddam, Connecticut.

Michael Kammen published in 2004 *A Time to Every Purpose: The Four Seasons in American Culture* (University of North Carolina Press), which contains in chapter 2 much material on the early American reception of that ancient and enduring European motif, notably by Franklin, Jefferson, and John Paul Jones. The following chapters include a great deal of material devoted to Henry David Thoreau and his influence. In 2006, Transaction Publishers in New Brunswick, NJ, issued a new edition in paperback of *A Machine that Would Go by Itself: The Constitution in American Culture*, which first appeared in 1986 on the eve of the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, and received both the Francis Parkman Prize and the Henry Adams Prize in 1987.

Crawford Lincoln is President of the Longmeadow, Massachusetts Historical Society and received an honorary D.H.L. from the American International College in June 2004.

William Martin's latest novel, *Harvard Yard*, which fol-

lows the history of the college from its founding to the present, was published in 2003. He received the New England Book Award for Fiction in 2005. It is given by the New England Booksellers Association to “an author whose body of work represents a significant contribution to the culture of the region.”

Arthur P. Middleton writes that he has little to report other than that he has now entered his nineties and is a resident of a life-care retirement community in his native Maryland, where his forebears have lived for 13 generations. He lectures occasionally on historical subjects and, in addition, composes a weekly one-page commentary on the *Book of Common Prayer* Sunday Propers that reaches some 400 persons in England and America.

Kenneth P. Minkema is the Editor of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* and the Jonathan Edwards Center & Online Archive, Assistant Adjunct Professor of American Religious History at Yale University, and in 2004 was appointed the Executive Secretary of the American Society of Church History. Besides publishing numerous articles on Jonathan Edwards and topics in early American religious history in professional journals, he has edited volume 14 in the *Edwards Works, Sermons and Discourses: 1723-1729*, and co-edited *A Jonathan Edwards Reader*, *The Sermons of Jonathan Edwards: A Reader*, and *Jonathan Edwards at 300: Essays on the Tercentennial of His Birth*. He has also co-edited for the CSM *The Sermon Notebook of Samuel Parris, 1689-1694*, dealing with the Salem witchcraft crisis, and *The Colonial Church Records of Reading and Rumney Marsh, Massachusetts* (just published this summer). Among other projects, Dr. Minkema is currently part of a team that is preparing Cotton Mather’s “Biblia Americana” for publication by the Massachusetts Historical Society.

Edmund S. Morgan writes that Yale University Press published his *Not Your Usual Founding Father: A Benjamin Franklin Reader* in October 2006. In May 2006, the Pulitzer Prize Committee issued a special citation commending him for “a creative and deeply influential body of work as an American historian that spans the last half century.”

William Pencak, Professor of History at Pennsylvania State University, writes that his book, *Jews and Gentiles in Early America (1654-1800)*, published by University of Michigan Press in 2005, was a runner-up for the National Book Award for American Jewish History.

Carla Gardina Pestana accepted a position in 2003 at

Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, as the W. E. Smith Professor of History. Her recent publications include *The English Atlantic in an Age of Revolution, 1640-1661* (Harvard University Press, 2004, to be issued in paper in 2007); “The Problem of Land, Status, and Authority: How Early Governors Negotiated the Atlantic World,” *New England Quarterly* LXXVIII (December 2005): 515-46; “English Character and the Fiasco of the Western Design,” *Early American Studies* 3 (Spring 2005): 1-31; “Martyred by the Saints: Quaker Executions in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts,” in *Colonial Saints: Discovering the Holy in the Americas, 1500-1800*, ed. Allan Greer and Jodi Bilinkoff (Routledge, 2003), 169-91; “A West Indian Colonial Governor’s Advice: Henry Ashton’s 1646 Letter to the Earl of Carlisle,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 60 (2003): 383-422; “Cultures of Colonial Settlement,” in *Blackwell Companion to American Cultural History*, ed. Karen Halttunen (Blackwell Publishing, forthcoming 2006); “Nineteenth-century British Imperialism undone with a single shell fragment: a response to Jack Goldstone’s ‘Europe’s Peculiar Path,’” in *Unmaking the West: Exploring Alternative Histories of Counterfactual Worlds*, ed. Philip E. Tetlock, Richard Ned Lebow and Geoffrey Parker (University of Michigan Press, forthcoming 2006); “Between Religious Marketplace and Spiritual Wasteland: Religion in the British Atlantic World,” *History Compass Viewpoint* (Blackwell Publishing, 2004); “Catholicism, Identity and Ethics in *The Sopranos*,” in *A Sitdown with the Sopranos: Watching Italian-American Culture on TV’s most talked-about series*, ed. Regina Barreca (Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 129-148. She also contributed to the new *DNB*, including a long essay on Hugh Peter, and held a Sabbatical Fellowship from the American Philosophical Society in 2002-3.

David Proper retired in 1995 after 25 years as Librarian at Historic Deerfield, Inc., and the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, of Deerfield, Mass. Back in New Hampshire, he has been active with the Historical Society of Cheshire County in Keene and has served on its board of trustees. Until recently he was a member of the State of New Hampshire Historic Resources Council and remains on the “speakers bureau” of the New Hampshire Humanities Council, speaking about New England community and town bands, and Lucy Terry Prince, the black pioneer poetess. He has a weekly local and regional column in the *Keene Sentinel* and a compilation of selected articles was published by the Historical Society of Cheshire County in 2002, as *A ‘Keene’ Sense of History*. He is a member of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and the United Church of Christ in Keene, as well

as a couple of community band organizations. He writes that he doesn't get down to Boston as much now and misses the city. Nevertheless, he enjoys retirement, good health, and so many pleasant memories of many good friends and times in the "Hub." He would welcome hearing from friends and associates. He can be reached by mail at 51 So. Lincoln St., Keene, NH 03431, by telephone at (603) 352-0170, and by email at prope@webryders.net.

News of Outreach

The Colonial Society joined with the National Park Service and Discover Roxbury to help with research into the Revolutionary era in Roxbury. The Colonial Society offered small stipends to Aja Crockett and Beatrice Greene, students at Roxbury Community College and docents for Discover Roxbury, to allow them to research Roxbury's history at the Massachusetts Historical Society. This exciting venture has begun to uncover the rich history of Roxbury, which was the front line of the patriot forces during the siege of Boston.



The next Graduate Student Forum will take place at 87 Mount Vernon Street on Friday, April 27, 2007. We will again host promising graduate students from around the country, who will look to Society members for counsel and comments. At the end of the day, Gordon S. Wood of Brown University will offer his own reflections.

Publications Committee Approves New Project

This past winter the Publications Committee approved another proposal from Fellow Member Neil York, co-editor with Dan Coquillette of the four-volume *Portrait of Patriot: The Major Political and Legal Writings of Josiah Quincy Jr.* This time York intends to collect and edit the writings of Henry Hulton, a member of the American Board of Customs Commissioners first appointed in 1767 as part of Charles Townshend's plans to revise and enhance North American revenue. Hulton remained in the Boston area for nine years before returning to England at the time of the evacuation of Boston in March 1776. He left behind a two-volume letterbook with correspondence dating between 1768 and 1780, now

housed at Harvard's Houghton Library.

Hulton also wrote a 397-page history of the coming of the Revolution, which although microfilmed in 1962, has never been published. Although Hulton's "Some Account of the Proceedings of the People in New England from the Establishment of a Board of Customs in America, to the breaking out of the Rebellion in 1775," bears some similarities to Peter Oliver's and Thomas Hutchinson's accounts of the same events, it departs from other Loyalist sources by taking a more long-term and somewhat detached view of events. He moves beyond demonizing Patriot demagogues to attempt to identify some of the impersonal forces at work in the separation of the colonies from Great Britain.

This spring York has been gathering together other writings by Hulton, which include some additional unbound letters (at Harris Manchester College, Oxford), an account of his travels (at the John Carter Brown Library), a set of "observations" (at Boston University), essays and poems (at the William Clements Library), directions on proper child rearing (at the Norfolk Record Office), and miscellaneous pieces at the British Library and the Public Record Office.

Report on the House

By ELTON HALL

THIS YEAR our fine old house on Mount Vernon Street reached its bicentennial. Happily for us and for the house, we were able to celebrate the milestone with the completion of a fifteen-year systematic overhaul of the house. The project began with the carriage house, which was in serious need of attention. Instead of simply securing and stabilizing it to remain an empty carriage house without a useful program, the House Committee proposed renovating it into an attractive dwelling that would produce a stream of rental income for the maintenance of the main house.

With that project complete and successful, we turned our attention to the ell, an 1860s addition to the rear of the original Bulfinch house. That became two rental units: a flat on the ground floor and a duplex on the second and third. In carrying out that work, architect James Block was able to develop a scheme that allowed the preservation of the 1890 Ogden Codman-designed billiard room as the living room for the duplex, as well as some nice features on the third floor.

With the secondary parts of the property in good order and rent-paying tenants in residence, restoration of

the Bulfinch house began. Many will remember that the house was closed for about a year as major work was undertaken to stabilize the structure. We had learned that Bulfinch the amateur mechanical engineer was not in the same league as Bulfinch the gentleman architect. Moreover some structural elements had been cut during the course of later alterations that weakened the structure. Accordingly, walls were opened for the insertion of joist hangers, angle irons, ledgers, and other (now hidden) steel work to tie the house together securely. Openings in the plaster provided a good opportunity to re-wire and upgrade the plumbing throughout the house as well. The house is now "backed, bolted, braced, and stayed," fitted with new windows bearing thermal and ultraviolet filtering glass, two and a half modern, handsomely appointed bathrooms, and resplendent in fresh paint.

The contents of the house have now become the focus of the House Committee's attention. Although never intended as a museum, the furnishings of the house include some objects of outstanding quality and historical association. We are now engaged in a program of conservation of the objects in the house, prioritizing the work on the basis of intrinsic importance, historical association, and prominence in the house. Service to the historical community may also be a factor. When asked for the loan of two Pembroke tables from Newport, Rhode Island, one labeled by John Townsend, we moved them to

the head of the list and had them carefully restored for inclusion in the Townsend exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. They are now back in our library, looking very handsome. In response to a request for the loan of seven etchings and two empire chairs for an exhibition on the Classic taste in America organized by Groton and Brooks Schools to take place this fall, we took the occasion to have those objects restored for the exhibition and eventual return to enhance the appearance of the house. The Rembrandt Peale copy of the Borghese Sibyl and the portrait of the Rev. Edward Channing have been restored, and the Feke portrait of Mary Channing is presently undergoing restoration.

While it cannot be said that the bicentennial of the house was the original target for completion of the restoration, that is the way it worked out. The event was recognized at the April stated meeting with a tour and a talk by fellow member Thomas M. Paine, whose family owned it for most of its life as a private residence. The house is now in a condition to serve the Colonial Society and the larger community of historians for many years to come. Throughout this project fellow member Donald Wing has served as clerk of the works and our point of contact with the architect and contractors. We are very much indebted to Don for his constant attention and the highly satisfying result it has produced.



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