



Longfellow House Bulletin

Volume 6 No. 2

A Newsletter of the Friends of the Longfellow House and the National Park Service

December 2002

Longfellow House Celebrates 30 Years with the National Park Service

On September 14, 2002 with distinguished guests and speakers and the music of the Boston Pops, the National Park Service celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of its stewardship of the Longfellow House. The rededication took place with great fanfare and an overflowing crowd of more than 350 people on the grounds of the House.

Following a musical introduction by the Boston Pops Brass Ensemble, Cambridge Mayor Michael Sullivan read a city council resolution proclaiming the day "Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Day."

Longfellow National Historic Site's Superintendent Myra Harrison described each speaker's "personal link" with the Longfellow House. Mayor Sullivan's father had been mayor of Cambridge in 1972 when the Park Service assumed stewardship



(Left to right) Don Murphy, David McCullough, Hillary Clinton, Edward Kennedy, Myra Harrison, Keith Lockhart

of the House. Don Murphy, Deputy Director for External Affairs of the NPS, "is a published poet with Longfellow volumes in his office," noted Harrison. Historian David McCullough first brought public

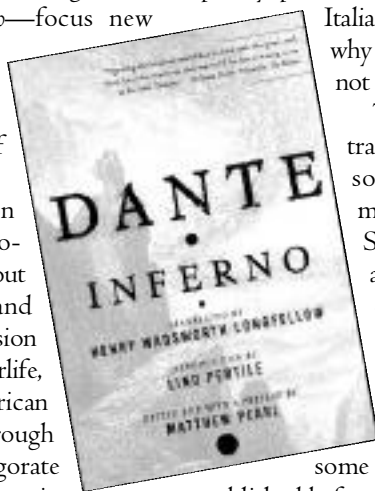
attention to the plight of the House. Sen. Hillary Clinton designated the House a Save America's Treasures site, which resulted in significant funding. Former Poet

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Two New Books Make the Longfellow-Dante Connection

Two books to be published in February 2003—a historical novel by Matthew Pearl and a new edition of Longfellow's translation of the *Inferno*—focus new attention on one of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's greatest scholarly achievements: his translation of Dante's *The Divine Comedy*.

Longfellow's translation made Dante's epic, a controversial and difficult work about the depths of human evil and tragedy in the form of a vision of traveling through the afterlife, accessible to a wide American audience from the 1860s through the 1950s and helped reinvigorate interest in Dante in other countries as well. "A translator, like a witness on the stand, should hold up his right hand and swear 'to tell the truth, the whole truth'..."



wrote Longfellow. In 1980 the late James Merrill, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for poetry, praised its "priceless fidelity" to the Italian and lamented, "Why, oh, why is the Longfellow *Comedy* not in print?"

The first book of that translation, the *Inferno*, will soon be available again after more than forty years. Scholar Matthew Pearl has assembled the text of the original 1867 Ticknor and Fields edition together with all the corresponding notes Longfellow prepared over his lifetime, some of which have never been published before. This authoritative volume includes helpful prefaces by Pearl and Prof. Lino Pertile, Longfellow's current successor as teacher of Dante at Harvard University.

Matthew Pearl has also written an entertaining fictional exploration of the Cambridge literary group who were fascinated by Dante. *The Dante Club* is a murder mystery set in the Longfellow House, Cambridge, and Boston in 1865, with Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and his colleagues caught up in a murder investigation. Although some of the events in the novel are purely fictitious, Pearl thoroughly researched his historical characters and feels his characters' personalities, actions, and beliefs are accurate.

The real Dante Club was comprised of a group of scholars whom Longfellow invited to help him translate the *Comedy* and to promote the appreciation and study of Dante in America. Members included fellow writers James Russell Lowell, James T. Fields, and Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes. For Longfellow himself, this work sustained

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A Night with the Dante Club at Craigie House

“To enliven the Winter,” Longfellow wrote in November 1865, “I have formed a Dante Club, consisting of Lowell, Norton and myself; meeting here every Wednesday evening, with a good deal of talk, and a little supper.” The Dante Club held meetings through May 1867. Although there were no official records maintained for the informal translation group, Longfellow and his colleagues left us with a sufficient amount of information about the club’s activities to imagine the experience of a typical night.

Longfellow welcomed the members at the door for the seven-thirty meetings. They might find a new guest in attendance, such as Louis Agassiz or literary critic Edwin P. Whipple. James Russell Lowell and Charles Eliot Norton were the central contributors to the Club, and attended most meetings. Poet and medical professor Oliver Wendell Holmes, historian George Washington Greene, and publisher James T. Fields were frequent participants.

These well-known poets and scholars gathered in the study and discussed the latest news of politics or literary Boston. If you were a guest on this night, Dr. Holmes



might whisper to you that it is a good thing you had arrived on time, explaining that Longfellow never stopped a Dante Club meeting in the middle, even if someone knocked or rang the bell.

When Longfellow announced “School-time,” all in attendance drew chairs up to the center table of the study. Longfellow passed out copies of the evening’s cantos from *The Divine Comedy* in Italian and proof sheets of his own translation of the cantos into English.

The host informed the members which suggestions he accepted or declined from the previous session. He would then read aloud from his latest translation, pausing when dissatisfied with the language or style of a verse, a signal for the members to offer any suggestions or comments.

After progressing through two cantos, Longfellow placed his papers on the table. “Now, gentlemen, school is over, and we will have some refreshment for our labors.”

Supper in the dining room began with oysters. An expected supper guest had not yet arrived, and as punishment Longfellow invited the table to enjoy his portion of oysters. The evening concluded around one a.m.

Longfellow-Dante Connection (continued from page 1)

him through the painful aftermath of his wife Fanny’s death by fire when he, like Dante, felt like a lonely wandering exile.

In *The Dante Club*, these writers face opposition from old-guard scholars who see the medieval Catholicism of the *Comedy* as foreign superstition, potentially as corrupting as the immigrants arriving in Boston harbor. As this literary conflict heats up, Boston and Cambridge suffer a series of mysterious murders. Only the members of the Dante Club recognize that the style and form of these killings are stolen directly from the hellish torments of the *Inferno*—only the Dante Club can “read” the killings properly. But as men of letters, sheltered by their wealth and scholarly lives, do Longfellow and his friends have what it takes to stop the killer?

Teaming with a character named Nicholas Rey—the first and only black member of the Boston police force—the Club sets out to investigate the murders and preserve Dante’s literary status. As the Ital-

ian poet had done, they must bridge the gap between life and literature and face the sinful urges of mankind.

Fanny Appleton, letter to her cousin Isaac Appleton Jewett, Jan. 25, 1841:

I am every day plunging into the very depths of the 'Inferno,' looking in on the fiery sepulchers, where the nobly grand Farinata glares...or admiring the majestic flame which enwraps Ulysses like a cloak... [T]his is like the opening of the seventh seal to me...such supernatural languages and conceptions it flames with...It is like the testimony of an eyewitness, and if not executed so wonderfully, its formal arrangements would shock the imagination. I read it with a warm-souled Italian who explains admirably to me the different allusions, and many charming little flights to bella Italia are we tempted to thereby.

Interview with a Friend...Meet Matthew Pearl

Matthew Pearl is editor of the new edition of Longfellow's translation of Dante's *Inferno* and author of a novel, *The Dante Club*. He graduated from Yale Law School (where he wrote this novel) in 2000, and from Harvard College in 1997 *summa cum laude* in English and American Literature. A year later he won the prestigious Dante Prize from the Dante Society of America for his honors thesis. Pearl currently lives in Cambridge.

Longfellow House: When did you first become interested in Longfellow?

Matthew Pearl: When I was an undergraduate, I combined my interests in both nineteenth-century American literature and Italian literature and wrote my senior thesis on the Dante Club. That was so much fun and so enriching that I wanted to do more. You can't ask for a work of amazing scholarship and amazing importance in literature that has more of a human side than Longfellow's translation of *The Divine Comedy*.

LH: Were you already familiar with the Longfellow House?

MP: I visited the House several times including on the very last day before it closed—I wanted to take it all in. I was surprised at how much of a person's life you can soak up and absorb from a house. The staff succeeds in keeping so much of a sense of every family member's spirit here in the House. It's really tangible.

LH: What got Longfellow and his friends interested in Dante?

MP: Each of the members of the Club had a slightly different approach. One common denominator for all of them was that the 1840s was a time when we were really searching for an American literature and trying to figure out what that meant. And of course Longfellow went on to write *The Song of Hiawatha* as an American epic. So at first glance there's something almost counterintuitive about the Club members' obsession with a thirteenth-century Florentine exile.

LH: Of course, at the time, the wags had it that Florence was the Boston of Italy.

MP: There was a connection in terms of the literary spirit. There was the drive to create a native literature, but there was also an impulse to not neglect a fuller understanding of literary history from around the world. Dante presented an unusual and appealing figure. In Longfellow's view, Dante had been abandoned by Europe, and his writing had been manipulated for political purposes. Voltaire, for instance, thought he was dangerous and barbarous.

Dante was not only an exile in life, he was an exile in literature. Longfellow emphasized his homelessness and exile status. From an American perspective, that was particularly appealing. Here was an amazingly rich tradition that didn't have a home. Their task could be to make America the new Florence, the new home for Dante. One Italian scholar later in the nineteenth century called America the "new Ravenna." Ravenna is where Dante is buried, so the new memorial for Dante became America.

LH: In bringing Dante to America, how did Longfellow and his colleagues reinvent him?



MP: James Russell Lowell was probably the most aggressive in Americanizing Dante. In his essay on Dante, Lowell argues that his politics, which were actually extremely bizarre even for Dante's time, were similar to an American vision of democracy. Longfellow was much better at balancing different cultural and historical perspectives than Lowell; he really did appreciate the historical meaning of Dante's work.

LH: Was there also a fashion for Dante in popular culture?

MP: Yes, because of the Dante Club. Longfellow's 1867 translation went through four printings in the first year. Later on, the 1881 formation of the Dante Society of America was the real signal of popular interest. The Society's mission was to promote Dante and to collect related books for libraries. The original meetings were held at the Longfellow House. The Society resurrected the spirit of the Club near the end of Longfellow's life and is still a major organization today.

LH: It seems Longfellow had a particu-

larly passionate engagement with Italy.

MP: He traveled there first in 1827; that was when he first learned Italian. He read Dante then, and immediately his passion for Italy was channeled through Dante.

LH: So Dante was Longfellow's Virgil?

MP: Yes, Dante was his guide through Italy. Longfellow's relationship with European culture was extremely impressive and thorough, and Italy is no exception.

LH: When did you say to yourself, "This is a novel!"?

MP: While I was in Law School I reworked a chapter of my senior thesis that the Dante Society wanted to publish; it was on Longfellow, Dante, and Emerson. In the midst of studying law, I found myself thinking a lot about the human story of Longfellow and his friends translating Dante. It seemed to me there was a wonderful story to be told that went beyond the academic realm or beyond even a non-fiction story. We don't really know their conversations in the Club meetings. There are mentions in letters and journals, one newspaper article, but really so much that could only be done through fiction. So I decided to try it.

I began the novel with the Dante Club at its center. Within the novel there's an additional layer of intrigue and mystery. That went with the territory of creating a story around an historical group in the way that Dante did for himself. Dante's poem is about him—the protagonist is Dante—but it's thrust into a high-stakes experience of violence and drama that he has to work through while encountering historical and literary characters. That was my model for inventing a plot around the Dante Club.

LH: And the translation of the *Inferno*?

MP: The Longfellow translation has been out of print for almost fifty years. Along with the novel, Random House agreed to an edition. I discovered notes that Longfellow had written in later years that he wanted incorporated into his notes for the translation. We restored what Longfellow intended at the end of his life. This should be an authoritative edition. I've used the original 1867 text of the translation. If it does well, I hope they'll consider bringing out Longfellow's translations of *Purgatory* and *Paradise*.

LH: What would you consider the ideal response to these two books?

MP: I'd like to encourage a new look at Longfellow as a brave and groundbreaking scholar and poet, along with a renewed appreciation of Dante.

Longfellow Descendants Hold Family Reunion at House

Over seventy members of the Dana and Thorp families gathered at the Longfellow House over the July 5th weekend to become better acquainted with their family history and each other. These families comprise all the direct descendants of Henry and Fanny Longfellow, whose daughters, Annie Allegra Longfellow Thorp and Edith Longfellow Dana, were their only children who had children of their own.

This was the first large reunion of all Longfellow descendants in many decades. "There was a Dana reunion about fifteen or twenty years ago at the home of Nina Dana in Washington, Connecticut," recalled Melanie Dana of Somerville, Massachusetts, the chief organizer of this year's event. "People



Touring the House archives

stay only very loosely in touch, although the older crowd has been more in touch. At the reunion many family members met for the first time."

Anne Guest, who lives in London, had the idea to hold a reunion and to coordinate it with the reopening of the House. She enlisted her grand-niece Melanie Dana to contact relatives and "get the ball rolling." Melanie Dana sent out letters to more than one hundred twenty relatives.

National Park Service staff offered reunion attendees a wide array of activities, including a tour of Mount Auburn Cemetery with stops at the graves of Longfellow, Dana, and Thorp family members, a visit to the home of Edith Longfellow and Richard Henry Dana III, a talk on the Danas in the American Revolution, and information about the extensive collection of family papers recently catalogued in the



Dana and Thorp family members at the reunion

House archives and a glimpse at some objects stored there.

The weekend stirred up many memories. "I remember the House very well from when I was young and stayed in a room on the top floor with a view across the park to the river," said Maria C. Willcox. "I remember cooking in the old kitchen during a visit in the early 1970s with my cousin Ann (Hutchinson) Guest and her husband Ivor. Ann's niece, my cousin Marsali Hutchinson, was living in the House at the time.

"My mother, Eleanora Carroll Skinner, used to tell how she and her twin sister, Henrietta Dana Skinner, spent their earliest years next door to the Longfellow House with their great-uncle, Richard H. Dana III. Their father, Richard Dana Skinner, was in France at the time, fighting in World War I. The two girls learned to knit for the soldiers at the age of two, and remained lifelong knitters of great ability.



At Mt. Auburn Cemetery

"My grandfather's mother, Henrietta Channing Dana was privately educated at the Longfellow House with the Longfellow children and wrote about this experience in her book *An Echo from Parnassus*. She was the youngest child of Richard Henry Dana Jr, author of *Two Years Before the Mast*, and tells in her book also of 'walking in the garden reading Petrarch with Papa.'"

Helen Glancy told a story from the 1930s about "Uncle" Harry Dana when she and her sister Anne were in the Beaver

Country Day School glee club's performance of Spanish Christmas carols at Symphony Hall: "No sooner was our program concluded when the doors at the back of the hall opened and in came a scruffy crowd waving big red flags and lustily singing the 'Internationale.'"



Visiting Edith Longfellow Dana's house

At the head of this motley group was Uncle Harry. Anne and I cringed in embarrassment and tried to duck out of sight behind the onstage console of a mighty Wurlitzer organ."

After the reunion, Amy Thorp Dickinson mused: "I got a renewed sense of family from realizing that the love of travel and the interest in diverse peoples has passed down through the Thorps to my generation. It is so easy to forget how much our ancestors bequeathed to us intangibly."

Melanie Dana echoed a common chord: "I was very grateful to and impressed by Jim Shea and all his staff. They pulled together a wonderful event. The House looks marvelous, and the archives are now organized, catalogued, and kept so carefully. I look forward to hearing about more wonderful discoveries and hope they can provide material for further scholarship, especially in the area of women's lives, a sentiment many family members expressed to me at the reunion."

Henry W. Longfellow's Journal,

June 9, 1840:

Read five cantos in Dante's Inferno. I am struck with the prevailing desire of fame everywhere heard. Above the wailings of the damned spirits, the groaning branches of the accursed forest, the hollow roar of the falling Phlegethon, the shrieks, the curses, and howlings of despair...I know of no book so fearfully expressive of human passion as this.

Longfellow House Celebrates 30 Years with the National Park Service

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Laureate Robert Pinsky, like Longfellow, is a translator of Dante. And it was appropriate that Keith Lockhart, conductor of the Boston Pops, was there since Longfellow had attended the very first concert of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the parent organization of the Pops.

When Harrison described Sen. Edward Kennedy as a “long and constant friend” of the House, he dabbed mock tears with his handkerchief. He brought the House’s needs to the attention of Congress “by competitively reciting ‘Paul Revere’s Ride’ with Sen. Byrd, thus engaging in the first senatorial Longfellow poetry slam,” quipped Harrison



Jean Danton, soprano, and Keith Lockhart on piano that took place in the House when George Washington occupied it. “Remember, this isn’t a theatrical set...[it is] an authentic, incomparable American treasure....This house in particular is haunted by a cast of characters that is almost unrivaled by any structure in the country with the possible exception of the White House and Independence Hall.” He presented the dilemma of Washington at age 43, a “young man who had never commanded an army in his life...I would give a great deal to have sat in that room, to have been



David McCullough speaking, Myra Harrison, and Keith Lockhart to the delight of the crowd.

Speaking next, Don Murphy acknowledged the enthusiastic audience: “The smiles on your faces really tell the story of what this event is all about. I’ve never seen such a radiant crowd.” Murphy spoke of his lifelong love of poetry and his feeling that “the poet speaks to the human spirit.” As a tribute to Longfellow, “to return to Longfellow some of the joy he gave to me,” Murphy read his own original verse with the recurrent invocation “Longfellow, O Longfellow,” drawing a huge round of applause.

David McCullough first expressed his gratitude to the Massachusetts senator—“Nobody has done more to make this happen than Sen. Kennedy”—and went on to describe in vivid detail some of the dramas

at his side as he wrote the orders of the day,” said McCullough.

Hillary Clinton paid tribute to the “extraordinary House:” “In



Sen. Edward Kennedy and Sen. Hillary Clinton speak with Museum Manager Jim Shea before the ceremony

the wake of the past year it is so important for us to become more firmly grounded in our own history.” She saluted the NPS as “truly one of America’s treasures itself.” Clinton also “recognize[d] State Rep. Alice Wolf who was instrumental in obtaining \$300,000 in funding from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to match the \$300,000 from the Save America’s Treasures award.”

Keith Lockhart discussed the Longfellow family’s interest in music. He conducted an excerpt from “The New World Symphony” by Antonin Dvorak, who cited “Hiawatha,” read in Czech, as a literary

inspiration. There followed two musical settings of Longfellow poems by Charles Ives and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor.

Frequently directing his comments to the students of the Cambridge Summerbridge program who performed a Longfellow-inspired rap song, Robert Pinsky spoke of creating and re-inventing. Longfellow “was aware that Americans weren’t held together by a mythological origin. He set out to create an American mythology. His poems were deliberate attempts to help hold us together, to help give us the kinds of commonality that we need to be a people.”

Concluding the ceremonies, Kennedy complimented the NPS as “one of the very special jewels of national service.” He continued, “This is a glorious and wonderful day. I think it is appropriate that we take time out to celebrate a special part of Amer-



Sen. Edward Kennedy, Victoria Reggie Kennedy, and David McCullough speak with Superintendent Myra Harrison

ica’s history and tradition...In so many ways this magnificent and treasured place that we call Longfellow House is a window into the earliest days of our own American history. It’s true: George Washington slept here...the sense of history here is palpable.”

Kennedy also pondered Longfellow’s passion for travel, his appreciation of diverse cultures, and the lessons to be drawn from this. “The world is our neighbor, now more than ever. We must reach beyond ourselves...beyond our borders.” The senator quoted the poet: *Lives of great men all remind us/We can make our lives sublime,/And, departing, leave behind us/Footprints on the sands of time./Footprints, that perhaps another,/Sailing o’er life’s solemn main,/A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,/Seeing, shall take heart again.*

“Longfellow has left us all with a magnificent legacy of optimism and hope,” he declared. “His faith in the future of America continues to inspire, and his footsteps are indelibly imprinted on our soul.”

Recent Research at the House

The Longfellow House archives contain over 700,000 manuscripts, letters, and signed documents and are used extensively by researchers from around the world. Here are a few recent researchers of the several hundred who use the archives annually.

Philander D. Chase, the University of Virginia's Editor-in-Chief of the Papers of George Washington, inquired about George Washington's letters in the House archives. Historian David McCullough informed him about the existence of these letters after learning of them at the 30th anniversary celebration. The archives hold three letters written by George Washington, only one of which has been published or recorded. The other two are unknown to most scholars. One of these appears to be the last letter Washington wrote from his Cambridge headquarters in April 1776.

Dr. Robert F. Haggard, Associate Editor of the Papers of Thomas Jefferson at the Thomas Jefferson Foundation in Charlottesville, Virginia, contacted the House in search of any Jefferson material for the "retirement series," materials from 1809-26. The site has one letter dated December 12, 1801 from Jefferson to William Ellery, the father-in-law of Francis Dana and signer of the Declaration of Independence.

For her work on Longfellow's relation to Dante, Wai Chee Dimock, an independent researcher, inquired as to the whereabouts of Longfellow's translation of Schelling's essay "Dante in a Philosophical Point of View." After much searching, she discovered it in the first edition of Longfellow's *Prose Works* at Harvard's Houghton Library.

Attilio Brilli is editing a book for Federico Motta Editore publishing house in Milan, Italy, on "Su questo Lago sublime: Il Lario nell'immaginario occidentale" [On this sublime lake: The Lario in the western collective imagination]. He plans to include a painting in the House by Ernest Wadsworth Longfellow called "View of Cadenabbia," a small oil painting on the blue entry wall depicting a town on the banks of Lake Como about which Longfellow wrote a poem.

Upcoming Events

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Birthday Celebration. On Saturday February 22, 2003 at 10 A.M., celebrate the poet's 196th birthday at Mount Auburn Cemetery's Story Chapel with a wreath-laying ceremony, reception, and special lecture by Longfellow NHS park ranger Paul Blandford on the significance and impact of George Washington's residency in the Brattle Street house on Longfellow, his family, and friends in the nineteenth century. This annual event is co-sponsored with the Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery.

New Dante Books Publication Party.

On Sunday, February 9, 2003 at 3-5 P.M. Washburn Lounge, Episcopal Divinity School with Matthew Pearl, author of *The Dante Club*, leading a Dante-theme tour of the Longfellow House and reading from the new edition of Longfellow's 1867 translation of the *Inferno*.



Recent Discovery & Donation: Historic Glass-Plate Negatives Reveal Photographer

In late August on the final day of moving from her family house, Elizabeth Brooks West unexpectedly came upon five cartons of glass-plate negatives, most in original boxes, in the attic of her recently deceased father's home at 115 Brattle Street. Her father, Arthur Brooks Jr., had bought the house in 1956 from his friends the Thorps—children of Henry's daughter Annie Longfellow Thorp and her husband, Joseph Thorp Jr. Although Ms. Brooks grew up in this house, she had no recollection of these boxes that must have been tucked away in the attic eaves for about one hundred years.

Ms. West immediately called Jim Shea, director of the Longfellow House, and offered the boxes to the House archives. Upon examination many of the boxes displayed original pencil descriptions of subject matter and dates from 1890-1910. Anita Israel, Archives Specialist at the House, determined the 423 glass-plate negatives were of photographs taken by Joseph Thorp Jr. A number of the plates were the

negatives of important historic photographs in the Longfellow House collection for which the name of the photographer had never been known.

Some of these well-known historic photographs for which the matching negatives were discovered include Alice Longfellow in the parlor of the Longfellow House, Mary King Longfellow in a kimono in front of a Japanese screen, and the Dana children in



Glass-plate negative photo by Thorp, May 1895

colonial costume. Other photos depict various individuals and groups of the Thorp, Dana, and Longfellow families and their homes in Cambridge and Manchester, Massachusetts, and Maine. The glass-plate negatives were found mainly in three sizes: 5 x 7, 6 x 8, 8 x 10, and one 4 x 5. Because most of the boxes had gotten wet, the gelatin had softened, and many of the plates had stuck together. In some cases, mold had grown and destroyed part of the image. The Northeast Document Conservation Center in Andover will assess the conservation needs of the collection, determine costs, and decide on a course of treatment.

This donation represents a large and important addition to the Longfellow House historic photo collection of over 10,000 images pertaining to the House, its visitors, and the Longfellow, Dana, and Appleton families from the 1840s to the 1940s. The collection is now fully catalogued in a computer database with matching finding aids, thanks to funding from Fidelity Investments.

Longfellow House in the Media

On July 10, 2002, both the *Cambridge Chronicle* and the *Somerville Journal* featured Candi Carter's article entitled "Longfellow Reunion Brings Family History Alive," which described the Danas' and Thorps' gathering.

Peter Terzian, former employee of the Longfellow NHS, wrote a piece for Long Island's *Newsday* newspaper on July 21, 2002 called "Deja View of Refurbished Poet's Home."

Frances J. Folsom wrote three articles: "Longfellow Slept Here—His Cambridge Home Re-opens to the Public After Major Rehab" in the *New York Post* of August 20, 2002; "Historic Longfellow House Re-opens, Offering Glimpse of the Past, Once Again" in AAA's September 2002 *Horizons Magazine*; and "Poetic Masterpiece—Longfellow Home Filled with History of Poet's Life" in the *Sunday Telegraph*, Nashua, New Hampshire, of September 22, 2002.

New England Cable News ran extensive coverage from September 14 through 16, 2002 of the rededication ceremony and 30th anniversary celebration and featured interviews with Senator Kennedy and the National Park Service's C. Sue Rigney.

In its Holiday 2002 issue, the *Catalogue of Antiques & Fine Arts* covered "Highlights of the 30th Anniversary and Rededication of the Longfellow National Historic Site."

Layne Longfellow has recorded personal interpretations of his distant relative H.W. Longfellow's poems and set them against a contemporary musical background on a new CD, *Longfellow Reads Longfellow: Dreams That Cannot Die*, with the texts of the original poems, liner notes, and historic illustrations. Available at: www.laynelongfellow.com.

In her illustrated anthology *When Christmas Comes* (England: Sutton, 2002), Anne Harvey includes several delightful letters from Fanny Longfellow to her children as she pretended to be Santa Claus.

Inscribed on the Longfellow garden sundial, from Dante's *Purgatoria*, xii, 84:
Pensa che questo di mai non ragiorna.
Longfellow translated this as:
Think that this day will never dawn again.

Longfellow's Treasured Print of Giotto's Dante

The Longfellow House preserves a print based on a Giotto fresco of a portrait of Dante that held special significance for Longfellow and American Dante enthusiasts. For his 1867 translation of *The Divine Comedy*, Longfellow encouraged Charles Eliot Norton to write an essay on the portrait. Norton presented a copy of the print to Ralph W. Emerson, who hung it prominently on his study wall. James Russell Lowell and Thomas Parsons both devoted poems to the portrait. One year Lowell presented a copy of the Giotto print to each student who had completed his Dante class at Harvard.

Richard Henry Wilde, a minor poet and former U. S. Congressman in Florence to work on a biography of Dante, discovered references to a Giotto fresco, circa 1290 to 1300, that included a portrait of Dante painted on the walls of the Bargello. Because the walls had been whitewashed over the centuries, there was no sign of the fresco. In 1841, Wilde enlisted the help of English antiquarian Seymour Kirkup to remove the layers of whitewash, revealing one of the only portraits of Dante painted in the poet's lifetime. The



portrait was relatively undamaged except for a nail hole around the left eye and cheek. Fortunately, Kirkup traced the portrait—shortly thereafter Florentine officials altered the fresco almost beyond recognition to remove the politically charged colors of white, green and red on Dante's cap and clothes.

The Arundel Society eventually secured permission to reproduce the Kirkup drawing in 1859 (seen here). Longfellow praised the portrait in a letter to his friend Blanche Macchetta: "Happily, I possess a correct drawing of the original. . . . There is a boyish expression about the lips. . . . which lends a charm not seen in those of a later date, and even the nose is without the accustomed sharpness." Longfellow kept four different versions of the Giotto in his collection: the standard Arundel facsimile, two versions with the eye restored, and a tracing by Kirkup.

The portrait not only fascinated Longfellow and his friends for its importance as a Dante relic, but also because an American had rediscovered it, reflecting the significance of America's growing Dante movement.

New Research Fellowships Awarded

The Friends of the Longfellow House has awarded research fellowships to two scholars who will use the House archives and library and, coincidentally, will both explore the international outlook of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Colleen G. Boggs received the Diana Korzenik Fellowship to help complete her book tentatively titled "The American Translation: Romantic Language Theory, Intertextual Practices and the Transatlantic Nation, 1790-1890." She is an assistant professor of English at Dartmouth College who earned her Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. Fluent in French and German, Boggs will study Longfellow's work as a translator and widely translated poet.

Literature in translation is both uprooted yet tied to its national origin, Boggs notes, so it is a useful path for exploring ideas of poetic language, nationalism, and artistic influence. She plans to study volumes in the Longfellow library and family papers to learn how family members approached the study of new languages.

Boggs's study examines similar issues in the work of Phillis Wheatley, Margaret Fuller, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Walt Whitman.

Through the Friends' Stanley Paterson Fellowship, Patricia Roylance will research material for a chapter on Longfellow in her dissertation. She is working on how Longfellow's ideas of a nationalist literature shaped his writing. While such authors as Ralph Waldo Emerson have been credited with creating an American literature by insisting on a culture independent of Europe, Longfellow embraced the influence of Italian, Mexican, Dutch, and Scandinavian arts and letters while choosing to write about American topics. Roylance therefore calls Longfellow an "International Nationalist."

Roylance plans to survey foreign literature in the Longfellow House library, and will also examine the family's art collection and travel accounts to understand the household's cosmopolitanism. Having graduated *magna cum laude* from Harvard College, she is now a Ph.D. candidate in the English Department at Stanford University.

Spotlight on an Object

In each issue of the newsletter, we focus on a particular object of interest in the Longfellow House collection. This time our spotlight shines on the box in Longfellow's study where he kept fragments of Dante's coffin and materials relating to their discovery.

According to Longfellow's grandson Harry Dana, in 1865 an Italian mason while excavating in Ravenna chanced upon a casket with an inscription stating it contained Dante's bones. The mason gave four coffin fragments which had broken off and a parchment voucher, endorsed by two witnesses, describing the discovery to the librarian and custodian of antiquities, Luigi Casamenti. That month Italy was celebrating the 600th anniversary of Dante's birth, and the discovery caused a great sensation. A tomb was erected in Ravenna to contain the coffin and Dante's bones. A pamphlet proclaimed the discovery.

Three years later, the four coffin fragments were presented to the U.S. Consul General in Italy, possibly by Casamenti. In 1872, the Consul General's wife decided to give these coffin fragments to Henry Longfellow, whose translation of *The Divine Comedy* had been published on that same 600th anniversary. In return he gave her one of the ten sets of his first translation of *The Divine Comedy*.

Longfellow kept the fragments in a small glass-covered box—together with the parchment voucher, a photo of the mason, and a copy of the pamphlet—near his desk where they remain today.



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