



Charley Longfellow: Coming of Age in a Time of Turbulence

Lesson 6: Personal Decision-Making (1864)

Students use what they have learned about Charley Longfellow to speculate on what Charley will do next. They must consider the extent to which Charley's relationship with his father will influence the choices he makes and his articulation of those choices.

Longfellow House-
Washington's
Headquarters NHS

LESSON 6
PERSONAL DECISION-MAKING
1864

Teacher's Notes

Main Objective

This lesson encourages students to consider what they have learned about Charley Longfellow and to speculate on what Charley will do next. In addition, the lesson challenges students to hypothesize about the extent to which Charley's relationship with his father will influence the choices he makes and/or his articulation of those choices.

Guiding Question

What do you think Charley plans to do once he recovers from his bullet wound and why?

Intended Learning Outcomes (Understandings)

By the close of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Describe how word choice and writing style can be used to effectively communicate a message.

Intended Learning Outcomes (Skills)

By the close of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Distinguish between historical fact and opinion.
- Develop a hypothesis using materials from the lesson and documents from past lessons.

Curriculum Connections

History/Social Science

Concepts and Skills

8. Interpret the past within its own historical context rather than in terms of present-day norms and values.

10. Distinguish historical fact from opinion.

English Language Arts

Reading and Literature Strand

15: Style and Language. Students will identify and analyze how an author's words appeal to the senses, create imagery, suggest mood, and set tone, and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.

20: Consideration and Purpose. Students will write for different audiences and purposes.

Prior Knowledge

- The nature of the relationship between Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Charley Longfellow
- The circumstance of Charley’s entry into and exit from the Union army

Teacher Preparation

1. Review lesson plan
2. Ensure students are familiar with content identified under “Prior Knowledge”
3. Review and introduce vocabulary to students
4. Copy Primary Source Packets and Cast of Characters for students
5. Divide class into pairs
6. Post guiding question for the lesson: “What do you think Charley plans to do once he recovers from his bullet wound and why?”

Time

Two fifty-minute class periods

Materials

For Teachers

- lesson plan
- copies of all support documents (primary source docs and CAL epilogue)
- Charlie Longfellow’s sitting room, circa 1864 - 1870

For Students

- Primary Source Packet (one packet for each student)
- Lesson 6: Cast of Characters
- Charles Appleton Longfellow: Epilogue
- Computer to review selections from the 19th century Japanese and Chinese photograph collections made by Charley during his travels on the Longfellow House website:
www.nps.gov/media/photo/gallery.htm?id=F9604876-155D-451F-6759F89627BA876D

Activities

Each student reviews documents, considers what they have learned about Charley, and develops a hypothesis about what Charley will do following his 1863 service with the Union Army. Students then write a letter to Henry Longfellow, as Charley Longfellow. The letter describes what the war experiences have taught Charley, what he is going to do now, and why he has made this choice.

- I. As a large group, study the photograph of Charley Longfellow’s sitting room, circa 1864-1870. Pose the following questions:
 - A. What is in the photograph?

- B. Why do you think it was taken?
- C. What does the room reveal about Charley Longfellow?
- II. Each student should take notes on the class discussion to use as reference during the balance of the lesson.
- III. Distribute copies of the Primary Source Packet to each student. Each student uses information from these documents, their notes from the class discussion, and findings from previous lessons to write a letter from Charley to his father that communicates what he plans to do once he recovers from his bullet wound, and why he has made this decision. Students should think carefully about the content of what they write, as well as the mood and tone of the letter.
- IV. In pairs, students read their letters to one another, then analyze each letter using the following questions:
 - A. What does Charley say he plans to do?
 - B. What are his reasons?
 - C. For what reasons did the student author speculate that Charley would make these decisions?
 - D. What is the mood or tone of the letter?
 - E. Why did the student author choose to use this tone, and what specific words or methods does s/he use to create mood and tone?
- V. In a large group, students discuss findings from pair work, focusing specifically on their hypotheses of Charley's next steps, the rationale behind these hypotheses, their reasoning behind the mood and tone of the letters, and some of the techniques used to create mood or tone.
- VI. What does this discussion reveal about Charley's character and his relationship with his father?
- VII. Distribute epilogue. Have each student read to discover how Charley Longfellow's life concluded.

Resources for Further Research and Discovery

Books

Guth, Christine M. E. *Longfellow's Tattoos: Tourism, Collecting, and Japan*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press. September, 2004.

Laidlaw, Christine Wallace. *Charles Appleton Longfellow: Twenty Months in Japan, 1871 – 1873*. Cambridge, MA: Friends of the Longfellow House. 1998.

Cast of Characters: Personal Decision-Making

Principal Characters

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (b.1807): [HWL] Henry Longfellow was a scholar and educator, translator, poet, compiler of anthologies, and husband to Frances Appleton Longfellow with whom he fathered six children. He was raised in Portland, Maine, and graduated from Bowdoin College in 1825. He was a professor of Modern Language at Bowdoin (1829-1835) and afterwards professor of French and Spanish literature at Harvard College. Longfellow was the first American poet to make substantial sums from his work, and at the turn of the 20th century, copies of his poems sold worldwide in excess of one million. During his lifetime, Longfellow was the most popular and widely read American poet in the world.

Frances Appleton Longfellow (1817-1861): [FAL] Daughter of Nathan Appleton, wife of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and mother to six Longfellow children. Fanny was raised in the fashionable Beacon Hill section of Boston, though the family traveled to Europe with some degree of regularity. Fanny married Henry Longfellow in July 1843, at which point the two set up home in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Fanny was an avid reader and writer, and appreciated the fine arts, theater, and music.

Charles Appleton Longfellow (b.1844): [CAL] The first born of the Longfellow children. In an 1848 journal entry, his mother describes Charley as one who “promises to be the man of action.”

Supporting Characters

Andrew, John A. (1818-1867): Elected Governor of Massachusetts in 1860, Andrew was an abolitionist and an advocate of black regiments. He established the 5th Massachusetts Cavalry Regiment and the 54th Massachusetts and 55th Massachusetts Infantry Regiments. He was re-elected for four successive terms.

Appleton, Harriot (1841-1923): Fanny Longfellow’s half-sister and Charley Longfellow’s aunt. In 1863, Hattie married Col. Lt. Greely Stevenson Curtis.

Appleton, Nathan (1779-1861): Fanny Appleton Longfellow’s father. Nathan Appleton was a member of the Boston Associates - a group of investors who financed the early Lowell textile manufacturing system. Nathan Appleton purchased the Brattle Street home for his daughter and her husband as a wedding present, and proceeded to finance their acquisition of furniture, carpets, and other textiles used in the house interior, as well as a stretch of land that connected the house to the Charles River.

Appleton, Nathan Jr. (1843-1906): Charley’s uncle (Fanny Appleton Longfellow’s half-brother). Nathan Appleton joined the Union army in 1863 and served as 2nd Lieutenant for the

Massachusetts 5th Battalion, Artillery L. Appleton was wounded in action, and brevetted to Captain before leaving service.

Bowditch, Captain Henry Pickering (1840-1911): Grandson of famed Salem mathematician and navigator Nathaniel Bowditch. Captain Bowditch was wounded in his right forearm while leading a charge at New Hope Church. Following the Civil War, he earned a medical degree at Harvard College and became a physiologist. His aunt, Mary Dixwell, was a close friend of the Longfellow family.

Chase, Salmon Portland: Chase was elected to the United States Senate as a Free Soil candidate from Ohio and served from March 4, 1849, to March 3, 1855. He was then elected Governor of Ohio in 1855 and reelected in 1857. In 1860, he was elected as a Republican to the United States Senate; he took his seat on March 4, 1861, but resigned two days later to serve as Secretary of Treasury under President Lincoln. He held this position from March 1861-July 1864. Salmon went on to serve as Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court from December 1864 until his death on May 7, 1873.

Crowninshield, Benjamin W. (1837-1892): Son of a Boston businessman and Captain of the First Massachusetts Cavalry. Brevetted to Colonel prior to leaving service.

Curtis, Lieut. Col. Greely Stevenson (1830-1897): Husband of Harriot Appleton, Curtis was instrumental in raising Massachusetts volunteers during the Civil War. In May of 1861, he joined the 2nd Mass. Volunteer Infantry. Curtis was permanently discharged in September 1864 and brevetted to colonel and brigadier general in 1867. A brevet rank was an honorary promotion given to an officer (or enlisted man) in recognition of gallant conduct or other meritorious service.

Dalton, Dr.: Friend of Mary Longfellow Greenleaf and doctor in the Army Medical Department during the Civil War.

Dana Jr, Richard Henry (1815-1882): Writer, lawyer, close friend and neighbor of Henry W. Longfellow, and father-in-law to Longfellow's daughter Edith. After spending two years (1831–33) at Harvard, he shipped as a common sailor around Cape Horn to California. The narrative of this voyage, published as *Two Years before the Mast* (1840), was written to secure justice for the sailor and has become an American classic of the days of sailing ships. Dana graduated from Harvard in 1837 and entered law practice. Active in politics, he helped found the Free-Soil party and represented escaped slaves who became fugitives with passage of the Compromise of 1850 (Fugitive Slave Act).

Dolben, Richard: Gardener for the Longfellow family.

Dunn, Mary: Nurse or nanny for the Longfellow children from October 1846-October 1850. She was born in Newfoundland, Canada.

Fay, William (Willy): Close friend of Charley Longfellow.

Felton, Cornelius (1807-1862): Close friend of Henry Longfellow and frequent guest at the Longfellow House. He was appointed president of Harvard College in 1860, a position he held for two years until his death on February 26, 1862.

Fields, James Thomas (1817-1881): An American publisher and author who, in 1839, became junior partner in the publishing and bookselling firm known for a time as Ticknor & Fields. He was a close friend, editor, and publishing advisor to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and also served as editor of the Atlantic Monthly from 1862-1870.

Freiligrath, Ferdinand (1810-1876): A radical German political poet of the 19th century and friend of Henry Longfellow.

Gleason, Captain Daniel (Harry) Lawrence: Served in the First Massachusetts Cavalry with Charley Longfellow, then served as Captain of the First Massachusetts Cavalry.

Greene, George Washington: An Italian scholar who Henry Longfellow befriended in 1826 while traveling through Italy studying languages in preparation for his position as Chair of Modern Languages at Bowdoin College.

Greenleaf, Mary Longfellow (1816-1902): Henry Longfellow's younger sister. Mary married cotton trader James Greenleaf and lived down the street from Henry and Fanny Longfellow half of the year, and in New Orleans the other half. Mary's brother, Sam Longfellow, described James as a Copperhead.

Hillard, George Stillman (1808-1879): Close friend of Henry Longfellow; lawyer in practice with Charles Sumner.

Longfellow Sr., Alexander Wadsworth (1814-1901): Henry Longfellow's brother and civil engineer, Alexander was employed on extensive coastal surveys by the U.S. government and lived in Portland most of his life.

Longfellow, Alice M. (b. 1850): Henry and Fanny Longfellow's second daughter.

Longfellow, Annie A. (b. 1855): Henry and Fanny Longfellow's fourth daughter.

Longfellow, Edith (b. 1853): Henry and Fanny Longfellow's third daughter.

Longfellow, Ernest W. (b. 1845): Henry and Fanny Longfellow's second son. In 1848 Fanny Longfellow described Erny as the one who "promises to be the poet."

Longfellow, Fanny (b. 1847): Henry and Fanny Longfellow's first daughter.

Longfellow, Reverend Samuel (1819-1892): Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's youngest brother and biographer, Samuel, was a Unitarian minister and author of many hymns still in use today.

Sam believed in transcendentalism, temperance, and women's suffrage, and strongly opposed the institution of slavery. Sam lived with Henry and Fanny Longfellow while attending Harvard (1844-1846), and continued to live with the family on-and-off until his death in 1892.

Longfellow, Stephen (1776-1849): Henry Longfellow's father. Stephen Longfellow IV attended Harvard College and graduated in 1798. He was admitted to the bar in 1801, and successfully practiced law in Portland, Maine for years. In 1823 he was elected to Congress, a position he held until March 1825.

Longfellow, Stephen (1805-1850): Henry Longfellow's oldest brother.

Longfellow, Zilpah (1778-1851): Henry Longfellow's mother. Daughter of Brigadier General Peleg Wadsworth who served with Paul Revere in the Revolution and later became a member of the Massachusetts Senate and Federal Congress. Zilpah married Stephen Longfellow in 1804 – two years after the death of her sister Eliza – Stephen's first fiancée. Zilpah Longfellow mothered six children. The home in which she raised her children is in Portland, Maine. Today, the house is a museum operated by the Maine Historical Society.

Mackintosh, Mary Appleton (1813-1889): Fanny Appleton's older sister. Mary lived in England with her husband, Robert, and their four children. She and Fanny communicated regularly about parenting, children, and family affairs.

McCartney, William H.: Commander of the 1st Massachusetts Light Artillery, Battery (A).

Osborne, George: Surgeon who served with Charley Longfellow in the First Massachusetts Cavalry; died in action while Surgeon of the Fifth Massachusetts Cavalry.

Pierce, Anne Longfellow (1810-1901): Henry Longfellow's sister. In 1832, she married George Washington Pierce, a classmate and close friend of Henry. Following the death of her husband in 1835, she returned to her parent's home in Portland. Anne lived in the Portland house the remainder of her life. Henry, Fanny and their children made annual visits, usually in the summer, to visit Anne in Maine.

Rand, George: Close friend of Charley Longfellow.

Stanton, Edwin M. (1814-1869): Secretary of War under presidents Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson (1862-1868).

Sumner, Charles (1811-1874): Henry Longfellow's closest friend, frequent houseguest, and faithful confidante. Sumner was a politician and statesman from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. A noted lawyer and orator, Sumner devoted his enormous energies to the destruction of what he considered the "Slave Power" - the conspiracy of slave owners to seize control of the federal government and block the progress of liberty. He served in the U.S. Senate for 23 years, from 1851 until his death in 1874, during which time fought to repeal the 1850

Fugitive Slave Act, denounced the Kansas-Nebraska Act which paved the way for slavery to be extended into the new territories, and gave numerous speeches on the evils of slavery and the danger of growing sectionalism. On May 22, 1854, Sumner was attacked and beaten into unconsciousness in his Senate chamber by South Carolina congressman Preston Brooks for comments made about Brooks' uncle during a speech given two days earlier. Sumner, who suffered from severe head trauma and post traumatic shock, did not attend the Senate for three years, though continued to serve as Senator from Massachusetts until his death on March 11, 1874.

Wadsworth, Emmeline Austin: Fanny Longfellow's best friend; moved to Geneseo, New York following her marriage to William Wadsworth.

Whittier, John Greenleaf (1807-1892): Poet, abolitionist, and friend of Henry W. Longfellow, Whittier was devoted to social causes and reform, and worked passionately for a series of abolitionist newspapers and magazines in the years leading up to the Civil War. Whittier founded the antislavery Liberty party in 1840 and ran unsuccessfully for Congress in 1842.

Primary Source Packet

PUBLIC RECORDS

Duplicate copy of official letter from Dr. Wyman to Union Army, February 19, 1864

I hereby certify thus I have this day examined second Lieutenant Charles A. Longfellow 1st Mass Cavalry and find him suffering from a wound received as the battle of New Hope Church Nov 27 1863 from which I believe he will be sufficiently recovered to return to his post in forty days from the date hereof.

Cambridge, Feb 19th 1864.

M Wyman, MD

LETTERS

Executive Department of Commonwealth of Massachusetts to Henry Longfellow, February 25, 1864

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Department

Boston, February 25th 1864.

H.W. Longfellow, Esq.

My dear Sir:

I shall do all I can to retain your son in the 1st Cavalry and retain his place as long as the condition of the regiment will justly permit me, and the hope of his early recovery continues.

I am faithfully & respectfully

Harry Gleason to Charley Longfellow, June 11, 1864

Holden June 11th 1864

Dear Stringman

Well here I am at home at last and right glad am I. I started last Sunday night & arrived Wednesday eve. nearly played out. am feeling some better to day but havent got over the trip yet.

I wrote Capt. Ben. day before yesterday. havnt heard a word from the Regt. since I left it. I see by the paper that motley has turned up alive & Richmond am very glad of it. but dont quite believe it yet. do you know anything about the source of information...

...How are you getting along has your wound healed yet. you havent said a word about it for a long time. Are you going into service again. if so time, place, &c. I dont believe I shall ever go back to the Regt. again unless I go to settle up my affairs. and no one can blame me if I dont – I Ric a letter from Filly a few days since. he sais he aint any better &c. I dont believe he will ever join the Regt...It has been & cold since I came home – and I sit or lay by the fire all the time a continual string of callers bout me and I get tired to death every day. with there ever lasting tittle tattle...

Well my Dear boy I must bid you a solemn farwell for the present – as I must partake of that disgusting meal known as Tea. I dont see what people were thinking about when they invented that lame apology Write me as soon as usual. remember me to all while I sink into oblivion for the present.

Yours in Friendship

Harry

Benjamin Crowninshield to Charley Longfellow, September 8, 1864

Headqrs Middle Military Division

Near Berryville Va September 8th 1864

My dear Stringman,

I hear of you every little while in my letters from home, but I expect you have got lazy or proud down at Nahant, for you don't write and tell us anything of what is going on.... As I don't know anything about Nahant or any other place at home I shall have to write you about the Valley of the Shendandoah and its military inhabitants at the present time, including myself

My former mournful theme - the 1st Mass Cavalry - is just now played out with me. In spite of all my vows and oaths to the contrary, I am going to be mustered into the old concern at Major. I have many reasons for doing so.. 1st I should be placed in a very unpleasant position if I refused the Commission ... 2nd I don't exactly want to leave the service at present for I really believe the End is not very far off. 3rd I am very much pleased with my present position, and General Sheridan last night told me he would not let me go back to the regiment, that he wanted me to stay with him: and I like him, and my fellow staff officers very much. 4th I don't think I could be of much use just at present at the regiment...

Now something else. I think I have a chance for you out here on a good Division Generals staff. It is an Infantry Command, but with a very fine man. To get the place you would probably have to get a commission in some Massachusetts regiment, which you can easily do.

I don't know what your health is at present nor how you are at all, but I know you did not wish to go out of service. I cannot tell you anything more definite yet, because the thing is not sure.

Still I think it can be arranged if you would like it. the General comes from Mass, but don't of course say anything until we are sure.

Tell me if you would not like that place, if I can get you anything else here. I would so like to have you round, for I think you like the life very much...

What a pity though that the old regiment should not have more heart. They are a rather discouraged and downhearted set, but they can just fight, as we know. Don't you go into any negro regiment, old fellow! You can do well enough in a white one, and I do not believe that they will come to much just at present. There is a great opposition to them in certain quarters, and you put yourself in a false position by joining one. Then they will put you to guard duty, or some such thing. For my own part I believe they will come up in time, but not unless under favorable circumstances. What is Gleason going to do? He will probably be discharged for disability, and what then?...

...There is not much news to tell you, WE expect to have a battle any day, but it is not our policy to fight unless we have a splendid chance, and the enemy is very shy.. I have never seen such splendid marching as this army makes. It is kept in hand, and all ready to go in at any moment. The Rebs of course know it and are very Cautious. Remember me to everybody, and don't forget that you are to come down and see me. Let me know about the position of my staff.

Yrs muchly

B.W.C

Charley Longfellow to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, January 4, 1865

Palermo [Italy] Jan 4th 1865

Dear Papa

Here we are at last after a jolly cruise of two months and am feeling first rate barring being beastly stiff. We were ten days in Malaga and enjoyed ourselves very much...

we had a very long ride passage to Palermo not getting there until New Years day I found a splendid great batch of letters, but was sorry not to find any "Army and Navy Journals," as I am completely in the dark with regard war news. the people out here dont know the least thing about our war. We are at the Tinacria a very good hotel within three or four doors of Mr. Monti's there are sevenal or eight americans in the house, among them General Barlow the great fighter Mr. Monti was very cordial and we have dined with him already...

I should like to go to Alexandria very well but I dont think I have time to do that and yet see Italy besides the fare from here is enormous 64 dollars in gold, it only takes 3 ½ days too. I had rather go some other time when I can stay as long as I like and charge about on camels &c...

Give my love to all the brats and Miss Davie and also to Mrs Dixwell.

ever your loving

Charley

I have it through private sources that Trap is in great danger of bursting dont let him lie on that regester after a hearty meal or he certainly will Tell Earny to say lots of sweet things to Squirley for me

Charley Longfellow to Henry Longfellow, April 25, 1865

Paris April 25th [1865]

...By Alices letter you will see how we went to Venice and then through Germany to Paris. The weather has been lovely eversince we arrived, and I am feeling very well indeed but still get played out very easily indeed, which is very discourageing and has made me feel quite blue at times as I had set my heart on getting strong in time to have one more shy at the Rebs this spring, and I dont think I should have left home at all only I felt so confident I should be able to join the army in March, and I cant help having a sort of sneaky feeling sometimes at not having done more for my country in the only chance time I shall ever have of fighting for her perhaps

Well I have done all I could I suppose, and that is one comfort you would not like to think three years from now that you had had a son old enough to go and that he had stayed at home like a sneak, would you now? honest indian?...

IMAGES

Charley Longfellow's Sitting Room, circa 1864 – 1870



Charley Longfellow and Harry Gleason



Charles Appleton Longfellow: Epilogue

So what became of Charley after being wounded at War? His wound was slow to heal. Although members of his regiment encouraged his return to the battlefield, and he worried that if he failed to return he would be thought a “sneak,” in the end he did not return. Charley’s decision undoubtedly came as a relief to his father. His doctors believed a change of scenery would help the healing process, so he turned to yachting and in July 1866 travelled to England on his Uncle Tom’s sloop, the Alice. The trip took nineteen days and set a new transatlantic record—a feat that earned international acclaim and fed Charley’s appetite for fast paced adventure. This was the first in a series of global travels that defined Charley’s adult life and allowed him to distinguish himself from his father. As his mother predicted, the four-year-old who demonstrated such “strong will and curiosity” did indeed grow up to be “a man of action.”

In 1868, after a lengthy stay in Paris and a three month trip through Russia, Charley joined his family for a portion of their Grand Tour of Europe (1868-1869). Charley soon lost interest in the Grand Tour with its focus on “old classics and the like,” and in July accepted an invitation to go to India. He travelled through India for fifteen months, describing the unfolding scenes and documenting his adventures in rich journal entries and photo collections. As with all of his travels, Charley made a point of “trying on” if not immersing himself in the culture and lifeways of his hosts. He also sought out the fantastic: he hunted leopard in the country’s northern jungles, trekked the rugged terrain of the Himalayas, and forged unpredictable rivers with the aid of inflated buffalo skins. Charley returned home in fall of 1869.

After a brief stay with family, Charley set off for the west coast in the summer of 1871—a trip made possible by the 1869 completion of the first transcontinental railroad. On June 1st he telegraphed his father with news that he had “suddenly decided to sail for Japan.”

While seemingly a spur-of-the-moment decision, Charley’s travels through Japan and Asia continued for almost two years, and probably would have lasted longer if he hadn’t fallen into debt. Japan, which had just opened its borders to foreigners, held a particular fascination for Charley.

Charley settled in the Tokyo area for almost two years, purchasing and remodeling a samurai dwelling, and enjoying local diversions such as tea houses, boating, wrestling, and kabuki (theatre). During his stay, Charley picked up “half a shipload” of Japanese objects – everything from furniture, household items, and clothing, to objets d’art, screens, fans, and four carefully arranged and labeled albums containing 350 photographs. Charley’s intense appetite for collecting kept his family busy with trips to port to pick up the many trunks he shipped home. One friend joked that the Longfellows would need “an addition to the house” to accommodate all of Charley’s “boxes.”

In February 1873 Henry warns that Charley has overdrawn his accounts and “will soon have nothing left.” At the end of the month Charley leaves Japan after “selling out everything.” Rather

than return home, Charley continues his travels through Asia – spending time in China, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand before returning to Cambridge in 1874. Thereafter his trips were shorter and interspersed with yachting voyages. Between 1875 and 1891 Charley traveled to Cuba, Mexico, Scotland, Ireland, the Canary Islands, Madeira, Italy, North Africa, Turkey, France, the West Indies, Egypt, Scandinavia, Spain, Portugal, Wales, Colombia, Australia, and returned several times to England and Japan.

Charley never married nor did he build a house on his family's Cambridge land, as did his brother Erny and sisters Edith and Annie. Instead, he took an apartment on Beacon Hill in Boston to which he returned between journeys. During the last months of his life however, he moved back to his family's Brattle Street home where his sister Alice cared for him until his death of pneumonia in 1893. Charley, along with his parents and siblings, is buried in the family plot at Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge.

Today, the Longfellow House in Cambridge, Massachusetts is managed by the National Park Service. The house and its associated collections reveal a lot about the Longfellow family, individual family members, and the time period in which they lived. The furniture, ornamental pieces, and household items Charley collected during his world travels can be seen much as visitors would have seen them more than a century ago. Historic homes and their associated collections offer tantalizing clues for learning about past occupants and the world in which they lived. In the case of the Longfellow House, the house and collections offer opportunities for better understanding Charley, his family and the turbulent and rapidly changing times in which they lived.

While Henry Longfellow was a famous poet and academically schooled man of letters, his first born son, Charley, was an explorer and collector. Other wealthy Victorian travelers published accounts of their travels, however, Charley never published. Charley Longfellow's story can be "read" through the private writings and personal belongings he left behind, and the accounts left behind by others.

At the end of the day, who was Charley Longfellow? He was a son, loving sibling, fighter, traveler, collector and adventurer. But in many ways, Charley's life defies such simplification. Charley ran away from home to fight in a war—a war over the identity and future of the young republic. The Civil War was a conflict of identity and independence. How strongly could federal law bind states?

The Civil War was certainly a turning point for America. Was it also a turning point for Charley? It's hard to know. Charley focused his adult years on defining himself in terms of the places he visited, the different ways of life he encountered and adopted, and his role as purveyor of distant goods and tales for family and friends who preferred to "travel" from their armchairs and prescribed station in life.

We cannot know the ending Charley would have written to his story, or even what he thought of his life had he had the chance to reflect. But does that make his story any less satisfying? Just as Charley struggled to find and define himself, so too do we all. As we move through life, we continually define and redefine ourselves, and in so doing, like Charley, we leave our mark, not only on those around us, but on history as well.