



# Longfellow House Bulletin

Volume 9 No. 1

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

June 2005

## Garden Fundraising Campaign Nears End: Rehab Well Underway

After a three-year capital campaign to raise funds to rehabilitate Alice Longfellow's garden, the Friends of the Longfellow House have virtually achieved their million-dollar goal. Most of the rehabilitation work is now complete or underway.

Major improvements have occurred in all sections of the grounds of 105 Brattle Street, including the welcoming forecourt in front of the House, Alice's sitting garden, the East Lawn which has been the site of many events, and the Colonial Revival formal garden in the rear.

Visitors to the newly renovated formal garden will notice the most dramatic changes. Perhaps most striking, the missing Colonial Revival pergola, designed by the landscape architect Martha Brookes Hutcheson, has been reproduced and once again provides not only a focal point but also a private and shady spot, a "resting



Looking through the pergola towards the carriage house, 1905  
place of the spirit" and a "place of inspiration and promise," as Hutcheson wrote in her 1923 book *The Spirit of the Garden*.

Gardeners have planted all the replacement ornamental flowering fruit trees in the

formal garden, except for the flowering apricot. The Hutcheson gate is once again in line with the pergola, and the lattice fence has been returned to its historic location. The pathways have been widened to their original dimension.

Yet another significant change has taken place alongside the formal garden. In order to recreate the natural screen between the Longfellow property and the neighbors, a num-

ber of pine and spruce trees had to be removed because, through lack of pruning, they had grown too high and their roots had invaded the garden. A newly planted

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## Hutcheson's Design Rehabilitated for Its Centennial Anniversary

This year marks the centennial of the implementation of Martha Brookes Hutcheson's design for the formal garden behind the Longfellow House with the installation of many of its original elements.

Alice Longfellow, the poet's oldest daughter who lived on in the House after her father's death, hired landscape architect Martha Brookes Hutcheson (1871-1959) to re-establish the formal garden that she had known since childhood. She engaged Hutcheson to base her plan on the Persian design of her father's flower garden, drawn up in the 1840s by English landscape gardener and florist Richard Dolben.

Martha Brookes Hutcheson wrote in a letter in response to the Historic American Building Survey in 1936, "The Longfellow Garden at Cambridge I overhauled entirely. It had gone to rack and ruin. I reset box in the Persian pattern which the poet had



Aerial view of the Longfellow House formal garden, 1935

originally planned, for sentiment, which pleased Miss Alice Longfellow very much. Then I added arbors, gates, fence, etc. making of it a garden which Miss Longfellow could go to, and, if she chose, close gates

to visitors as she grew older."

A young landscape architect at the time, Martha Brookes Brown (later Hutcheson) had attended both M.I.T and Harvard's

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Printed by Newprint Offset, Waltham, Mass.



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## Garden Rehab Well Underway *(continued from page 1)*

screen consists of pines, serviceberry trees, holly trees and shrubs, and junipers.

Numerous smaller plantings are now installed in the formal garden. Bordering the paths is a boxwood hedge, composed of 1700 little-leaf Korean boxwoods. Many varieties of roses are in the ground along with Hungarian lilacs and bush honeysuckle. This spring and summer 1200 perennials will be added. Much care has been taken in choosing flowering plants “to replicate the original palette,” said Mona McKindley, an NPS gardener who has worked on this project.

A small portion of the work on the formal garden remains. Next spring and summer McKindley says they will plant many annuals and bulbs and what she calls the “fussy” perennials. In 2007 visitors will finally see everything in place and all plants blooming.

The current formal garden rehabilitation is based on a combination of Martha Brookes Hutcheson’s 1904 design of the garden’s infrastructure (pergola, fences, boxwoods, etc.) and landscape architect Ellen Biddle Shipman’s plans twenty years later to resuscitate the garden’s aging plantings and redesign the beds with a more three-dimen-

sional planting scheme. There are no extant drawings or plans for the Hutcheson garden, but there is considerable photo documentation offering much visual information. The Longfellow House collection, however, contains extensive archival documentation for the Shipman garden rehabilitation, which replaced the plantings yet respected and did not reconfigure Hutcheson’s earlier garden design.

The Brattle Street forecourt in front of the House also displays some striking improvements. Besides planting replacement elms for the trees that had died and widening the front walkway and other paths, McKindley and the NPS team have once again planted roses in position to climb the House facade’s white pilasters as they did historically. They have also replaced the climbing vines on the portico.

The Park Service chose to rehabilitate the formal garden to reflect work accomplished during Alice Longfellow’s occupancy of the House from 1904 to 1928. This decision preserves the continuum of garden history, including contributions made earlier by Henry Longfellow, and captures the important efforts of the landscape architects who worked with the family over time.



Alice Longfellow with her nurse, 1920s

## Martha Brookes Hutcheson *(continued from page 1)*

Bussey Institution, a school of agriculture connected with the Arnold Arboretum. She had started a small practice in Boston in 1901, and during the next thirty years she designed over fifty residential gardens in Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, and New York. In 1920 she was one of the first three women to become full members of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

“I regret having to write you that there was no original plan of the Longfellow Garden when I took it in hand,” Hutcheson continued in her letter. “I added all arbors, gates, etc. but I based the flower beds on the ghost of those which existed, as Miss Longfellow told me that her father, the poet, had laid out the original plan, taking the flower bed shapes from a Persian pattern. Though I thought it an ugly idea, it

was nevertheless so in keeping with the way things were done at the period that I felt it was interesting to reset the box borders in the original flower bed pattern so long as Longfellow, himself, had done it originally. I felt that it was a way in which one of my generation could pay him an homage. This pleased Miss Longfellow very much.”

Hutcheson’s critically and commercially successful book *The Spirit of the Garden* was widely praised for its illuminating discussion of the principles of garden design. It was one of the first books to encourage the use of native American plants and conservation of America’s “vast natural beauty.” *The Spirit of the Garden* contains many photographic illustrations of European and American gardens, several of which were designed by Hutcheson—including photos of the formal garden at the Longfellow House.

## Interview with a Longfellow Descendant...Mary Hunting Smith

Mary Hunting Smith is a great granddaughter of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Her mother was Priscilla Thorp Smith, youngest daughter of Anne Longfellow Thorp whom the poet immortalized as “laughing Allegra” in his poem “The Children’s Hour.” As a young girl, Mary Smith was often pictured in photographs taken in the garden (see photos on pages 9 and 10). She shared her reminiscences and walked in the garden with us at the Longfellow House.

**Longfellow House:** Were you born here in Cambridge?

**Mary Smith:** No, I was born in New York City. I was brought up in the Village on MacDougal Street until I was about six, and then we moved to Greenwich, Connecticut, which is where I grew up.

**LH:** Who were your parents?

**MS:** My mother was Priscilla Alden Thorp. There were five Thorp daughters, and she was the youngest. My father, A. Calvert Smith, grew up in Omaha, but his family came from Quincy, Massachusetts. They’re related to John Hancock. My grandfather was a railroad man with the old Northern Pacific. He traveled a lot and was based in Omaha in the early days.

**LH:** What brought your father to New York City?

**MS:** First he was a reporter on the old *New York Sun*, and then after he got married, he got into investments. He was on Wall Street for a long time.

**LH:** And you attended Radcliffe College?

**MS:** Yes, I did. My mother went to Radcliffe, and Frankie [my sister] and I both went to Radcliffe. I started out to do biology and discovered that I had to do years and years of chemistry and physics, none of which I ever had and I had no ability for at all, so I changed to music. I graduated in the music department. Music was one of the earlier departments at Harvard where men and women took classes together—probably because most of the men were off in the war.

**LH:** What year did you graduate?

**MS:** Well, I’m in the class of ’44, but I graduated in ’43 and went into the navy so I got out early. I was in the navy until ’46, and by this time my father was at Harvard. He was the secretary to the corporation and the assistant to President [James Bryant] Conant. My parents had moved to Cambridge while I was at Radcliffe, so after the war I came back to Boston. Soon enough I got to work for the Boston Symphony, which I did

for many, many years after that.

**LH:** What did you do for them?

**MS:** I did everything. I started out as secretary in the program department, and when I finally left, I was assistant manager. I worked my way up through all kinds of other jobs in the orchestra. I was with them almost twenty years. And then I moved to New York and worked for a music publisher and for the New York Philharmonic for a while. I was the registrar at the Juilliard School for about ten years.

**LH:** To backtrack a bit, was it unusual for a woman to join the navy when you did? Were you sent overseas?



**MS:** Well, a lot of women were going into the navy in World War II. I did something called communications, which is mostly unmentionable because we’re not supposed to talk about it. The army WACs went overseas towards the end of the war, but the navy WAVES, except for nurses, stayed at home. I was stationed in Washington. There were a lot of women, and we worked watches around the clock.

**LH:** While you were growing up, did you visit Cambridge and the House?

**MS:** My grandparents lived down the street from the House at 115 Brattle Street, and we came quite a lot to visit them. I used to stay there for Christmas. Some time later we spent time here at the House on our way to Maine, where we went for the summers. The family had an island off Mt. Desert, which Grandpapa Thorp had bought, between Southwest and Northeast Harbors. On our way we would stop off for the night sometimes and stay in the House. I slept in the wedding ring room once.

**LH:** Who was living in the House then?

**MS:** Uncle Harry Dana was the only person who was here. I may have stayed here when Aunt Alice was still alive, but I don’t remember her. I do remember Uncle Harry. He was in the back quarters somewhere with his big library and his papers. He sort of terrified me actually. I don’t think he was very fond of children. He didn’t know what to say to me, and I certainly didn’t know what to say to him. When we stayed, we didn’t see him unless he wanted to be seen.

**LH:** There are a number of beautiful pictures of you in the garden.

**MS:** I remember the old garden, but I don’t remember these things the pictures are of, although I remember hearing about Mr. Gaffney. I see you have boxwood in the new garden. Boxwood is what I remember about the old garden. When the sun was warm, the box would smell wonderful. I’m glad that there’s still boxwood there.

**LH:** Was the garden a special part of the House in your memory?

**MS:** It was somewhere they took me out to play, so I did spend time there. I was five or six when these pictures were taken. Then when I was older, I’d walk out there. The thing I know about, although I never went to one, was the fairs they used to have. I talked to Carol Bain [neighbor and childhood friend] when she was here last summer for the Longfellow’s teddy bear’s one-hundredth-birthday celebration [during the Summer Festival’s “Family Day”]. She said the only thing that’s missing is the pony rides they used to have up and down the driveway when they had the fairs.

**LH:** What do you feel is your connection with the House today?

**MS:** I think what’s been done here is just marvelous. It looks the way it always looked except that things have been replaced that needed to be replaced. I was awed by the fact that they did the drapes and the carpets and copied what was there before. The family looked around for things from the House still in their possession. I had Uncle Charley’s square sake warmer, which I was happy to send back for the collection of his Japanese memorabilia. I’m just delighted in your archives. They’re so impressive. You have so much information and so many good photographs. To have a place where the family pictures and documents can be kept is just wonderful, and of course I’m thrilled to have helped identify some of the people in the pictures.

## Vassall-Craigie-Longfellow House: A Landscape Through the Years

The garden rehabilitation project has provided an opportunity for the NPS staff and researchers to contemplate the changing appearance and use of the land upon which the House sits through hundreds of years of history as well as its importance to the Longfellow family. The parcel varied in size and shape, but continued in Henry Longfellow's time to stretch from his house on Brattle Street, just a quarter of a mile west of Harvard Square, to the Charles River.

Evidence suggests that Native American groups were present on the site as early as 4,500 years ago. The garden rehab enabled archeologists to examine the grounds of the House. They discovered remnants of a Native American hearth-site and related artifacts under the driveway. The site's proximity to the Charles River would have made it a desirable place for indigenous people to live.

In preparation for the installation of new elm trees in the forecourt, an archeological crew uncovered the stone foundation of a building from the early 18th century. Close to the street but at a different angle than the present house, this earlier foundation may have been part of the house of Colonel John Vassall, one of Cambridge's largest landholders, who had bought this six-and-a-half-acre house lot and ninety adjacent acres for farmland, salt marsh hay, and fruit orchards.

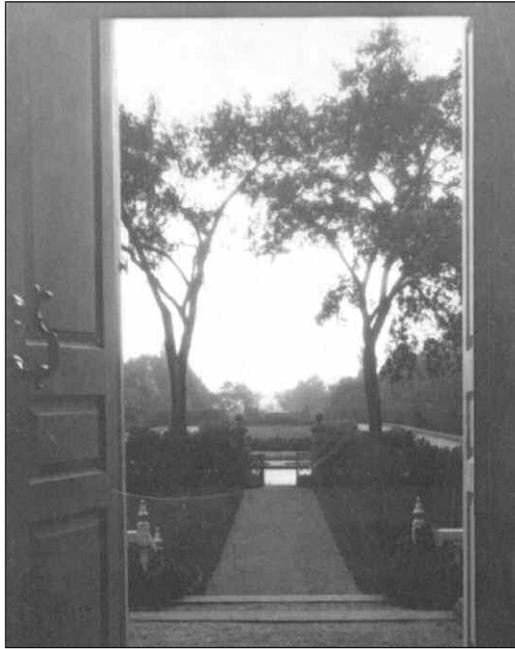
His son Major John Vassall demolished his father's house and built up the terraces upon which he constructed the current House in 1759. This Loyalist family lived here until 1774, when they fled to Britain.

George Washington used the property as his headquarters from July 1775 until April 1776. Nathaniel Tracy bought the House with its six-and-a-half-acre lot and the surrounding 140 acres. He remained until 1786.

When Andrew and Elizabeth Craigie lived in the House from 1791 to 1841, they added greenhouses. "The Craigies transformed their property into a picturesque farm, or *ferme ornée*, adorned and embellished with fixtures and plant materials, both exotic and indigenous," wrote Catherine Evans in the LNHS's 1992 *Cultural Landscape Report*. "Craigie's improvements to both the mansion and grounds were so grand the property was commonly referred to as the 'Castle Craigie.' The Craigies also supported the development of horticulture in the Boston area. Andrew Craigie donated three acres of

land to Harvard College for its Botanic Gardens in 1805. The most advanced horticultural information and material was essentially at their back door, and Botanic Garden records indicate that Madame Craigie frequently purchased plants there."

Henry Longfellow got to know the widow Elizabeth Craigie when he first became her tenant in 1837. Soon after he wrote of her: "She was eccentric to the last: rose late in the morning and sat up at night. Her dress was a turban and usually a slate-



Looking out front door of the House towards river, c. 1900

colored gown.... She used to say she saw God in nature.... She had a passion for flowers and cats—and in general all things living. When the canker-worms came spinning down from the elm-trees, she would sit by the open window and let them crawl over her white turban. She refused to have the trees protected against them and said, 'Why, sir, they have as good a right to live as we, they are our fellow worms.'

From Mrs. Craigie's heirs, Nathan Appleton purchased the House and five acres of land as a wedding gift for his daughter Fanny and her new husband, Henry Longfellow. When her father was considering buying the property, she wrote to him in September 1843, "We have duly considered and discussed the question of remaining here, and I think that, all things considered, we could not do better elsewhere. The house is large enough to introduce every modern comfort we should desire, and there is no position in Cambridge that can compare with it for the views and air.... If you decide to purchase,

it would be important to secure the land in front, for the view would be ruined by a block of houses." By the time the Longfellows arrived, properties had been subdivided and owners no longer farmed their land.

In an 1843 letter to his friend the German poet Ferdinand Freiligrath, Longfellow described his new property and his feelings for it: "We are living at my old lodge in Cambridge. All literary occupation is however suspended. I am as idle as a lord, and have some idea of what a man's life must be who can neither read nor write. I have taken to planting trees and other rural occupations, and am altogether rather a useless individual. To be more particular, we have purchased an old mansion here, built before the revolution, and occupied by Washington as his headquarters when the American Army was in Cambridge. It is a fine old house, and I have a strong attachment from having lived in it since I first came to Cambridge. With it there are five acres of land.

"The Charles River winds through the meadows [in front] and in the rear I yesterday planted an avenue of Linden trees, which already begin to be ten or twelve feet high. I have also planted some acorns, and as the acorns grow for a thousand years, you may imagine a whole line of little Longfellows, like the shadowy monarchs in Macbeth walking under their branches, through countless generations, 'till the crack of doom,' all blessing the man who planted them."

Alice Longfellow later described her father's pleasure in the House's grounds: "He was much interested in planting new trees and shrubs, and laying out an old fashioned garden. The plan of the somewhat elaborate flower beds was his own design, surrounded by low borders of box, and filled with flowers. He was not a botanist nor a student of flowers, but he found a little amateur landscape gardening a very agreeable pastime. Behind the garden was a path shaded with tall pine trees, and was one of my father's favorite walks. There was a small green summer house, and a rustic bridge over a little brook that flowed through the garden. He devised a rustic stairway, and a platform with seats in an apple tree, where many pleasant hours were spent taking the after dinner coffee on spring afternoons among the blossoms, or talking with friends: while to the children it was the favorite spot of all."

# A Look Back at the Capital Campaign for the Garden

When the Friends of the Longfellow House initially undertook the project to fund the rehabilitation of the Longfellow NHS grounds and gardens, the five-year-old group had more enthusiasm than experience at conducting a capital campaign. Nonetheless, the Friends mobilized with energy and inventiveness and in three years raised almost \$1 million. Many individuals contributed time and money to a campaign that proved a successful collaboration between the Friends and the National Park Service.

## Background

Between 1991 and 1997 NPS historic landscape architect Lauren Meier oversaw the research and writing of the three-volume Cultural Landscape Report for the National Park Service. It described the history of the Longfellow House landscape and the existing conditions, analyzed the significance and historic integrity of the landscape, and proposed three alternative treatments. The first possible treatment of the existing landscape was to do nothing at all. The second called for a rehabilitation of the garden and grounds with small changes as necessitated by the availability of plants and materials, and the third choice was for a restoration of exactly what had been there previously. The NPS decided on rehabilitation.

## Initial idea for the project

Frances Ackerly, a distinguished educator and one of the founding Board members of the Friends of the Longfellow House in 1994, was the inspiration for the garden rehabilitation project. She thought the garden rehab was “something the Friends ought to do” since it would be difficult for the Park Service to do by itself because of the substantial funds needed. To her, the garden and grounds seemed an important part of the Longfellow House and would complete the historical setting accurately. She was bothered to think that visitors to the House would not know that “the grounds were not historically correct,” and she sought to bring the landscape up to the same level of authen-

ticity as the House. At a Friends board meeting in 1999, she first raised the idea of a capital campaign for the garden. “At subsequent board meetings, I would raise the idea, and I kept persisting,” said Ackerly.

When Barclay Henderson became president of the Board of the Friends of the Longfellow House in June 1998, he named the garden as one of his main interests. “I hoped rehabilitating the garden and bringing it back to its former glory under my



Board Members Frances Ackerly, Barclay Henderson, and Susan Wood with NPS's Supt. Myra Harrison, Director Fran Mainella, & Jim Shea, 2004

chairmanship would be my legacy to the Longfellow House,” he reminisced. Henderson had a longstanding connection to the garden and grounds as the person who made the summer festival possible for many years. His wife, Minako, a landscape architect also active in the Massachusetts Horticultural Society and public garden efforts, had an influence on his interests. Together they have traveled to various parts of the world to look at significant and historic gardens.

## Beginning to implement the idea

“I remember Frances standing up and raising the flag and saying we’re going to charge up that hill,” said Henderson. Beginning in 2000, members of the Board—Polly Bryson, Charlotte Cleveland, Nancy Freyberger, Barclay Henderson, Lynne Spencer, and Susan Wood—met once a month over breakfast at Frances Ackerly’s house and formed a Capital Campaign Committee. The group drew in people who hadn’t volunteered for committees before, and it grew over time to include about a dozen Board members.

Susan Wood, a financial planner and consultant, was drafted to head the committee. “Susan transformed it from a breakfast party to a well-organized movement with agendas, budgets, and contacts,” Henderson stated.

The Friends had never conducted a fundraising campaign for a large project before. “We had a steep learning curve. This was a capital campaign without the institution or the infrastructure,” said Wood. Board member and Harvard Business School senior lecturer Laura Nash added, “Every aspect had to be hammered out and invented. Some people had worked on larger campaigns with more precedent or a large staff. No one was used to doing the legwork themselves. We had no mailing list other than the Friends’.” The monthly breakfast meetings continued for several years. “The Friends had to decide how to budget, how to spend money as they went along,” Nash continued. “We had to define what the Friends would be able to take on and to work out the respective roles of the Friends and the Park Service, keeping in mind their rules about fundraising.”

At an early meeting, they passed out pieces of paper and asked people to write down what they could contribute. “It came out to about \$60,000,” according to Henderson. “This was enough to get us started and also hire a consultant, because we ourselves did not have the qualifications to raise a million dollars.”

## The help of professional fundraisers

Jane Bowers, the first professional consultant hired by the committee, felt it was important that the Board support the campaign, and she was impressed by the initial outpouring. Bowers shaped the initial case statement, and defined the needs of the campaign and the stages of the rehab and fundraising. “Jane was instrumental in getting us off the ground,” said Henderson. “Among other things, she taught us how to ask for money. None of us felt comfortable doing that, but she would sit us down and

*(continued on next page)*

Dear Readers,

Several years ago, the dream of recreating the Longfellow landscape seemed a distant possibility, and the needed funds seemed far beyond what the Friends of the Longfellow House might be able to raise or the National Park Service could ever muster.

Nonetheless, buoyed by the visionary leadership of President Barclay Henderson, the Friends decided the grounds were too important to the House to retreat from this challenge. They formed a capital campaign committee, ably led by board member Susan Wood. The committee achieved its impressive fundraising goal, the results of which we celebrate with this issue.

Today the pergola, paths, boxwood, other shrubs, and trees are in place. This spring/summer and next, the heritage roses and extensive perennials will be introduced. Some cultivars are so rare that it has taken serious detective work to locate growers, but by the fall of 2006, the full garden will be planted. In succeeding summers, as the garden begins to flourish, the lavish Colonial Revival concept will unfold. Then we'll experience fully the garden Alice Longfellow created a century ago, in memory of her father and recalling the flower garden he'd planted.

The National Park Service accepts this remarkable gift with enormous gratitude to its many donors, whom we and the Friends honor with this issue of the *Bulletin*. This private garden is now a unique public one and a permanent part of the Longfellow experience. We commit to its careful maintenance as long as we are stewards of the Longfellow legacy, and know that millions of visitors will be instructed and refreshed by its beauty.

Myra F. Harrison  
Superintendent  
National Park Service



rehearse us. It was great.”

In the spring of 2002, the committee hired consultant Judy Green, who had helped the Harvard Lampoon's capital campaign, to assist with the implementation of the fundraising plan. “Judy was effective after we had gotten something going. She came up with lists of contacts and instructions for how to approach them,” said Henderson. “She was super-organizational,” added Wood.

A professional landscape architect who works on historic garden spaces and a Board member, Carol Johnson helped the committee understand the garden's historical significance and its importance to the community through discussions and a field trip to the Codman House in Lincoln to see the pergola they had rebuilt. Garden historian and Radcliffe Institute faculty Judith Tankard joined the Garden Subcommittee and gave an informative presentation which conveyed the unique qualities of the garden and its features. “We used this to inspire us when we approached donors,” said Wood.

#### **Fundraising events**

The capital campaign was officially launched in September 2002 at the thirtieth-anniversary celebration of the NPS's stewardship of the House. The garden committee greeted the array of prominent guests—Ted Kennedy, Hillary Clinton, David McCullough, and Keith Lockhart—with tables displaying informational posters and bags of tulip bulbs announcing the capital campaign. Bobbie Greene, director of Save America's Treasures, stopped by these tables and learned of our plans.

A series of intimate fundraising “breakfast teas” began in the winter of 2002-3. The Friends and NPS had compiled a list of people from Cambridge who were active in other garden initiatives, historic preservation, or educational projects, and local businesses. From this list the Friends invited a handful of people each time to chat informally in the carriage house and view drawings of the garden past and future. “It was very personalized, very grassroots,” said Laura Nash, who organized the teas along with Polly Bryson, Molly Nye, Meade Fasciano, Anne Lowell, and Heather Moulton. Guests—some of whom were unfamiliar with the House and

archives—were treated to a tour by the Park Service. They were often astounded by the variety and extent of the House's holdings.

“We also piggybacked with the House events that might mesh with the garden, such as Family Day, to publicize the capital campaign,” said Nash.

#### **Building the pergola**

The committee decided that if people could begin to see actual improvements in the garden, they would be more inclined to contribute. Board member and architect Peter Ambler led the Pergola Committee. In early 2001 “Bill Ackerly stepped up at a time when we really needed it,” stated Henderson. William Ackerly, a prominent psychoanalyst and Frances's husband, jumpstarted the implementation of the garden project with a \$200,000 gift he had received in his honor from the Richard B. Simches estate.

With this most generous contribution the Friends contracted Walpole Woodworkers to build the pergola, the dramatic visual proof that the garden rehab was underway. Walpole Woodworkers also contributed by lowering their initial bid and donating part of their services. The Park Service based construction drawings on period photographs, pergola remains, and archeology by NPS's Steven Pendery, and NPS's Richard Chilcoat supervised construction.

#### **Critical support**

“There were some other breathtaking donors,” said Wood. In addition to Bill Ackerly, “without Barclay Henderson and his support through the Henderson foundation, we wouldn't have gotten going.”

In 2003 Save America's Treasures (SAT), a national public-private initiative which funds preservation projects, delighted the Friends and the NPS with a \$200,000 donation, their first-ever grant for a landscape rehabilitation. “Bobbie Greene saw the garden display at the thirtieth-anniversary event and encouraged us to apply for a Save America's Treasures grant,” said Wood. Even though SAT had previously given grants only for restoring structures or for collections, the SAT grant to the garden rehab underlined the historic significance of the Longfellow landscape as a national treasure. “Receiving the SAT grant helped to get other grants,” said Nash. “It helped reinforce the value of this project.” Save Amer-

ica's Treasures required a matching grant, which was provided by the many individual gifts to the capital campaign.

#### **Working with the community**

The next phase of the capital campaign for the garden involved an outreach to a greater number of people, who were invited to cocktail parties at the homes of Heather Moulton and Barclay Henderson.

Numerous smaller donations made up the bulk of the campaign. "It was a community effort with many people participating," said Nash. Longfellow descendants embraced this project, and neighbors and local businesses contributed. "Our best success was stimulating interest one on one."

Friends also reached out to garden clubs and invited them to the carriage house for tea, a slide lecture, and tours. Between forty and fifty members of the Cambridge Plant and Garden Club attended and responded with a generous donation. The committee felt "an informal camaraderie" with and contacted other Cambridge organizations—Mt. Auburn Cemetery, the Cambridge Historical Commission, and the Cambridge Historical Society—a number of whose members came to events and were most supportive.

#### **National Park Service**

"One of the pleasures [of the garden project] was working with the National Park Service," said Wood. "They are a most delightful group of people—so dedicated, knowledgeable, and keen to educate the public. They see their mission as making history meaningful to visitors, and they were equally enthusiastic about doing this for the garden."

The capital campaign was a monumental

collaboration with the NPS. "The Park Service and the Friends worked hand in hand on this project," said Jim Shea, director of the Longfellow House, "and you know the NPS cannot solicit funds." The NPS helped Friends to organize fundraising events, and the Friends used funds to implement the NPS's plan. Friends purchased plants that the NPS ordered, and vetted contractors. NPS regulations and historic district status required public presentations to inform the neighbors and city of the project. At public meetings NPS superintendent Myra Harrison and several Friends spoke as Cambridge residents and people involved with the rehab to apprise neighbors and city officials.

#### **Side benefits**

The capital campaign created interest in the Longfellow House and pulled in people not previously involved. "Even people who didn't give money learned about us—the House, the archives, the garden," said Shea. The main committee formed a Garden Subcommittee, comprised mainly of neighbors who were not Board members. The campaign also brought in many visitors, and new Board members such as Heather Moulton, who saw to it that the Longfellow garden became one of the stops on the yearly Secret Gardens of Cambridge tour, attracting garden lovers from all over.

"One of the exciting things to come from the campaign was to hear other people's ideas about future uses of the garden for educational and public purposes," Nash recalled. "The ways in which the public will continue to support this 'new dimension' to the House will keep growing."

Dear Readers,

The National Park Service had a detailed historical survey and plan for the Longfellow House garden restoration project going back many years before we became involved in 2000. Since Congress had appropriated more than \$2 million in funds for rehabilitating the House, we felt that the government was unlikely to fund our garden project for many years to come. The Friends had no experience in raising funds for anything and were awed by the challenge of a \$1 million campaign. Frances Ackerly deserves credit for offering to lead a band of the least qualified fundraisers ever to gather and for making the restoration plan a reality. Susan Wood, our Campaign Chair, brought the organizing skills and dedication necessary, and now five years later we have a restored garden.

Even today as I write this note, I cannot fathom why so many of you Cambridge neighbors, local companies, and semi-public agencies responded to our appeal with such generosity! Surely you had received more professional solicitations from talented fundraisers campaigning for deserving projects. Nevertheless, the fact that you did respond often and generously brought encouragement and pride to all of us Friends of the Longfellow House. In the coming years, every time we walk through the beautiful and historically authentic grounds, we will remember with gratitude your wonderful contribution that made this piece of ground such a very special place.

The Longfellow National Historic Site and all of Cambridge is better for what you have done.

Barclay Henderson  
President

Friends of the Longfellow House



The rehabilitated pergola in the formal garden, 2005

*The Friends of Longfellow House wish to thank all who contributed their time, energy, and finances to the Capital Campaign:*

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## Use of the Longfellow Garden and Grounds: Then and Now

Known for twenty-five years as the site of the Longfellow Summer Festival's musical and literary performances, the Longfellow House's garden and grounds have also played a role historically in the public and private lives of the Longfellow family. They have served as the setting for many family gatherings and private events ranging from intimate family traditions, such as Easter egg hunts, to more formal occasions, such as weddings. Mary Hunting Smith was captured with her Easter basket in a charming image by a relative. In 1912 the sumptuous wedding of Ned Dana, Edith Longfellow Dana's son, was well documented in his uncle Joseph Thorp's photographs.

But the garden and grounds also played host to a long tradition of public gatherings held by the Longfellows for charitable and educational organizations.

The poet's daughter Edith wrote to her older sister Alice on June 4, 1899, "The Social Union Garden Party is to be June 14th, when we shall have the usual festivities." A flyer found in the House archives not only tells us that it took place "on the grounds of the Longfellow Estate, Brattle Street," but also "Active preparations are being made for a Lawn Party which shall, if possible, excel in variety and attractiveness those of former years."

In 1871 Henry's brother Rev. Samuel Longfellow had been a co-founder of the Cambridge Social Union, for which the lawn party sought to raise money. By the late nineteenth century many American communities had set up "social union" organizations where "restless young men and women might combine entertainment with intellectual self-improvement." By 1889 the Cambridge Social Union had enough funds to purchase the old Brattle House and the lot next to it for \$9,000 to build a multipurpose space (now the Brattle Theater) designed by Henry's nephew Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow Jr. (In 1938 the Cambridge Social Union became the Cambridge Center for Adult Education.)

Probably similar to the lawn parties of previous years, the 1899 program offered for an admission fee of 50 cents for adults and 25 cents for children a schedule of activities

from 3 to 10:30 P.M. In addition to having "cooling drinks," afternoon tea, cake, and supper, one could watch various bands, concerts, and a Punch and Judy show, ride a donkey, have one's fortune told, participate in children's games and "athletic sports," or have a silhouette drawn.

Prior to the Social Union lawn parties each year, on Memorial Day from 1885 to 1905 Alice Longfellow invited the Radcliffe graduates to her house. In 1879 along with six other women, Alice

had founded Radcliffe College. She was involved with various fundraising efforts for the college and established a traveling fellowship for Radcliffe graduates. A number of the early Radcliffe commencements took place in the Longfellow House library followed by tea in the garden. On September 22, 1905, Radcliffe alumnae from 1885 to 1905 commemorated Alice's involvement with Radcliffe



Sketching in the garden, late 1920s



Mary Smith with Easter basket, 1925

by presenting her with a silver cup and reading poems composed for the occasion.

Eleanor Curtis Hopkinson, a cousin of Alice Longfellow, lived at the House with her husband Charles Hopkinson—the well-known painter—and five daughters from 1923 to the 1940s during the winter months. Eleanor hosted special gatherings at the House, including summer garden events. She may have used these occasions to raise funds for her family's various charities.

Harry Dana, who lived in the House after his aunt Alice's death in 1928, continued the tradition of both charitable and educational garden events. Perhaps using the Social Union lawn parties as his model, he held elaborate lawn fetes from 1929 to 1938 to benefit the Cambridge Neighbor-

hood House, a settlement house in East Cambridge for immigrants. He also invited "The graduate students at Harvard University and Radcliffe College" to attend a garden party "through the courtesy of the Trustees of the Longfellow House and the descendants of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow," reads a printed card in the House archives. These garden parties were held in July from 1938 to 1949.

### Recent Research at the House

*The Longfellow House archives contain over 775,000 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.*

Members of the American Historical Print Collectors gathered at the House for a tour of the print collection and special lecture by Lauren Hewes, consulting curator at the Print Council of America. In 1995-1996 Hewes was the chief cataloguer of the Longfellow site's collection of over 1200 prints. She illustrated her talk with many of the prints in the House's collection.

Stephanie Kelsch and Emily Wright, a teacher and student from Westwood High School respectively, examined Alice Longfellow's papers and photos to prepare a first-person interpretation of the young Alice, which Emily will perform for Longfellow NHS.

Dianne O'Neill, a curator at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, came to examine an engraving of Evangeline by James Faed (1821-1911) after a painting by his brother Thomas Faed (1826-1900). The gallery had recently received a similar print which she wanted to compare for purposes of identification. In the process she became interested in the different number of fingers in each version of the print.

## Adjoining Longfellow Properties As One Landscape

A recent report by Susan Doolittle at the Landscape Institute of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University reveals much information about the landscape history of the three contiguous properties on Brattle Street in Cambridge occupied by the poet's three daughters. Entitled "Historic Connections in Three Longfellow Properties: A Contemporary Design," the report describes paths running parallel to Brattle Street which originally connected the properties and certain shared backyard features.

Before his death in 1882, Henry Longfellow made provisions for his property to be subdivided into house lots for his children. Alice Longfellow remained in the original Longfellow House, while her sisters each built a house on the two adjacent lots directly to the west, in the same year but designed by different architects. Edith Longfellow married Richard Henry Dana III in 1878. They built a picturesque Queen Anne style house with deep red shingles and tan trim at 113 Brattle Street in 1886. After Anne Longfellow married Joseph Thorp Jr. in 1885, they built a house and stable at 115 Brattle Street in 1886 also. The style of their clapboard house reflected that of the Longfellow House, as did the yellow paint with white trim.

In 1922 the landscape designer Paul Frost, who also designed Longfellow Memorial Park on land owned by the poet between the Longfellow House and the Charles River, created a plan for the grounds of the Dana house. The Dana landscape plan included features that related to the neighboring Longfellow House grounds such as a lilac hedge along the driveway which matched the one on the opposite side. A large gap in the center of both hedges allowed for a view between the Longfellow forecourt and the Dana front lawn. Although Frost's drawings exist, it is not clear how much of his plan was executed.

A historic layout map from around 1890 shows the Thorp and Dana properties side by side in a scheme which appears unified. The fronts of both houses form a straight line. The west side of the Dana house is bordered by a driveway, which is a mirror image of the driveway along the east side of the Thorp house. No large trees separate the houses, and walks parallel to the front facades almost line up. There is a feeling of one long, only slightly punctuated front yard for both houses.

"The Dana and Thorp House land-

scapes were closely connected when the properties were the homes of the Longfellow daughters," writes Susan Doolittle. "Old photographs show front and back connecting pathways. A common driveway from the street branched out to each house and joined again in the rear leading to the stable. The stable [on the Thorp property] may have been shared as well, since there was no mention of a barn for the Dana House at the time the dwellings were built. The front paths connecting the two houses continued on to the Longfellow House, and the facades of the three mansions on their terraces lined up in a stately procession."



Mary Smith, Anne Thorp, & Michael Gaffney, 1927

By envisioning the connecting landscape features, one can imagine the closeness of the members of this family compound and how they went back and forth to one another's houses. They shared the leisure areas of their back yards, and they also employed the same gardener to tend the grounds [see sidebar].

The path connecting the Longfellow House to the Dana property will be reconstructed as part of the Longfellow garden rehabilitation. The Lincoln Land Institute now owns both the former Dana and Thorp properties. Doolittle's report proposes a master plan for the landscape redesign for both these properties yet states the importance of the historic relationship of the houses, "characterized by openness and connection to each other and to the Longfellow House. This early relationship is the key to uniting the properties in the present. Unification in a way that recalls the historic character of the property is the underlying element of the new design."

### Michael Gaffney, Gardener

Beloved by the extended Longfellow family, Michael Gaffney worked for almost three decades as the gardener for all three of Henry's daughters, who lived in houses side by side at 105, 113, and 115 Brattle Street.

According to Michael Gaffney's daughter Kathleen Lambert, who was born in 1915 and lived in Cambridge until recently, her father was born in 1880 in Roscommon County, Ireland, but moved to England and married an Englishwoman. He served four years during World War I in India and Egypt. In 1923 he moved his family to the Boston area where he had a sister, "Aunt Bea," who worked for the Dana family as a cook. On Aunt Bea's recommendation, Richard Henry Dana III hired Michael Gaffney as a chauffeur. "We moved immediately into the Dana House on Brattle Street. It was the first house we lived in after arriving in the United States," said Lambert.

In 1924 the Gaffney family started to work for the other Longfellows also. From the numerous signed receipts for plants received and paid for in the House archives, we know that Gaffney worked directly with Alice Longfellow and Ellen Biddle Shipman to buy plants for the Shipman garden. The Gaffneys lived in the Longfellow House while Alice Longfellow traveled in Europe and during many summers, and they continued to live there during Harry Dana's time.

When Gaffney retired in 1953 and moved to California and Wisconsin, the family ensured his well-being. "I remember one of the things we had to do was sign off on part of our inheritance for Mr. Gaffney's retirement," said Frankie Wetherell, Longfellow's great granddaughter. "We all contributed a certain amount so he could have a pension." Her aunt Anne Thorp Jr. had suggested this.

Anne Thorp Jr. kept up a warm correspondence with him in the 1950s and '60s. "I'm sure you know how much we all care for you and how grateful we are for all you have done for us for so many years," she wrote to him in 1961. "You are so much a part of this whole place that we can never think of it without you and will always miss you."



Michael Gaffney, c. 1950

## Longfellow House in the Media

The December 2004 issue of *Traverse, Northern Michigan's Magazine*, featured an article by Elizabeth Edwards about the Hiawatha pageants that were performed until the 1930s. The Longfellow family attended the first performance in 1900 which took place on an island in Lake Huron. Later the pageant was moved to Petoskey, Michigan. The article included several photographs of the event from the House archives.

Public television's "This Old House" will be renovating a house on Sparks Street in Cambridge and will be filming at the Longfellow House for supplemental material. Jared Sparks, for whom the street was named, also lived at the House as a boarder of Mrs. Craigie at the same time as Henry Longfellow in the 1840s. The show will be aired this September or October.

For his new book *1776*, historian David McCullough came to the House with his friend Senator Alan Simpson to explore from basement to attic its associations with General George Washington. A researcher for McCullough spent time poring over the various Revolutionary War-related letters and documents in the House archives.

Scott Kirkwood, senior editor, described the Longfellow NHS as the "home to a general who would become president and a poet who would become world famous" in

## Longfellow Summer Programs 2005

Sponsored by Friends of the Longfellow House, New England Poetry Club, & Longy School of Music

*All programs take place on the side lawn at Longfellow NHS and are free and open to the public. Seating is limited so blankets and lawn chairs are welcome. No parking available.*

**Sunday afternoons July-September 1-4 P.M. Painting and Writing in the Garden:**  
Art and writing materials are free for children and adults

**Sat. July 2, 10 A.M.** NPS ranger Paul Blandford conducts a walking tour, "The Human Side of George Washington," focusing on his time in Cambridge during the Siege of Boston, 1775-1776. Tour begins at Longfellow NHS.

**4 P.M.** "The Tempest Within: Washington's Struggle with Slavery," a dramatic presentation based on Washington's own words about his struggle with slavery and the presence of free blacks in the Continental Army.

**Sun. July 3, 4 P.M. Poor Richard's Penny** performs colorful vocal and instrumental music from the time of our nation's inception.

**Sat. July 9, 10 A.M.** NPS ranger Paul Blandford conducts a walking tour, "The Human Side of George Washington," focusing on his time in Cambridge during the Siege of Boston, 1775-1776. Tour begins at Longfellow NHS.

**11 A.M.** Bruce Harris interprets and performs as Peter Salem, a former slave who gained his freedom by enlisting in the Continental Army.

**2 P.M.** "The Poet's Daughter" is a costumed performance about 16-year-old Alice Longfellow, Henry and Fanny's oldest daughter who lived at 105 Brattle Street her entire life. Written by Stephanie Kelsch and performed by her student.

**Sun. July 10, 4 P.M. Synergy Quintet Brass Ensemble** with a repertoire ranging from early Renaissance to the modern era, with composers such as Mouret, J. S. Bach, Handel, Sousa, and Gershwin.

**Sun. July 17, 4 P.M. Marge Piercy**, poet and novelist, whose most recent book is *Sex Wars: A Novel of the Turbulent Post-Civil War Period*, will read from her works. Book signing.

**Sun. July 24, 4 P.M. The Marriage of Figaro**, a fully-staged opera by Mozart, presented by Longy School of Music continuing education students in English with dialogue interpolated in place of the usual recitatives.

**Thurs. July 28, 11 A.M. Tobias Vanderhoop: Traditional Aquinnah Wampanoag Songs and Stories** presented by the Cambridge Arts Council and Longfellow NHS in recognition of the 150th anniversary of the publication of Henry Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha*.

**Sun. July 31, 4 P.M. Richard Wilbur**, Pulitzer Prize-winning author, reads from his works. Book-signing.

**2 P.M.** "The Poet's Daughter" is a costumed performance about 16-year-old Alice Longfellow, Henry and Fanny's oldest daughter who lived at 105 Brattle Street her entire life. Written by a teacher and performed by a student.

**Sun. Aug. 7, 4 P.M. Ha Jin**, 2005 PEN/Faulkner-award winning author, and **Diana der Hovannessian**, poet and president of the New England Poetry Club, present *Other Voices*, readings from their new works. Book signing.

**Sun. Sept. 18, 1-5 P.M. Family Day:** event features poetry writing, painting, and drawing for all in the Longfellow garden and 19th-century games, plus presentation of the Longfellow Student Poetry Awards.

the Spring 2005 issue of *National Parks*, the magazine of the National Parks Conservation Association.

On April 10, 2005, the *Boston Globe* Sunday New England Travel section recommended the Longfellow NHS along with two other historic houses, allowing one to "Journey

back with tours of the nearby estates of a former governor, a suffragette, and a poet."

The same issue of the *Boston Globe* displayed a photo of Charley Longfellow's tattooed chest for an article about Christine Guth's recent book entitled *Longfellow's Tattoos: Tourism, Collecting, and Japan*.

## 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 garden tool collection from the Longfellow House.

Seventy-four implements or pieces of equipment from the 19th and early 20th centuries used to maintain the Longfellow gardens and grounds have been catalogued and stored. They range from trowels, garden stakes, and shears to lawn mowers, rollers, and wheelbarrows. Some of these bear the names of manufacturers or even the owners—a number of wooden handles were inscribed with Alice Longfellow's initials "AML."

Pictured below are three tools possibly used by gardener Michael Gaffney: a long-spouted galvanized metal watering can whose label says "Wotherspoon Watering Pot, Pat. April 17, 1894," a wooden-handled lawn mower with heavy metal wheels cast with the words "Philadelphia Lawn Mower Company" and "1924," and a lawn rake with wood teeth and handle and long curved metal braces from the Rugg company, a Massachusetts business that still exists today.



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