



# Longfellow House Bulletin

Volume 9 No. 2

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

December 2005

## New Book on Longfellow Sheds Light on His Domestic Life

Christoph Irmscher's new book *Longfellow Redux* includes a detailed look at Henry Longfellow's domestic life at Craige House and the drawings and stories that he created for his children. Forthcoming from the University of Illinois Press this spring, the book contains many images and excerpts from texts never published before.

What the title suggests, says Irmscher, is that "the time has come to take another look at Longfellow." He reminds us that Longfellow "pretty much invented poetry as a public idiom in the United States and abroad, and was then shunned by later generations of writers precisely because of it."

Unlike other commentators on Longfellow, Irmscher looked at letters written to Longfellow by others and at his unpub-



"Longfellow Christmas Scene" by Edith Longfellow, age nine, 1862

lished works. *Longfellow Redux* examines the poet's connection with his audience through his voluminous correspondence with fans both at home and abroad. His relationship to his family paralleled that

with his readers. "His accessibility and lack of arrogance were proverbial," says Irmscher. He presents a personal view of a man with a strong interest in family life who became a single father of five children when his wife died tragically.

The author also explores Longfellow's "obsession with travel," the many translations of his works, and the implications of both. An immigrant to the U.S. from Germany, Irmscher received his Ph.D. in English from the University of Bonn. Currently Professor of English at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, he is working on a cultural biography of Louis Agassiz, a close friend of Henry Longfellow, for the University Press of Virginia.

(See related article on page 5.)

## Children of the Vassall-Craigie-Longfellow House Re-enacted

The Concordant Junior Volunteers, a group of eleven seventh- through twelfth-graders from the Boston area, will re-enact the characters of various children who lived in the Vassall-Craigie-Longfellow House during the eighteenth through early twentieth centuries. The students have spent much time researching the stories of the families who lived or spent time at the House. The performances will take place on Saturday and Sunday, December 3rd and 4th from 1 to 4 P.M.

Each volunteer will assume the role of a particular individual whom they have studied, and s/he will be stationed in the House's first-floor historic rooms. Written by the volunteers themselves, the re-enactment places the characters in the rooms chronologically so



Concordant Junior Volunteers who helped out on Family Day, September 2005

that viewers walking through the House begin in 1774 during the Vassall occupancy and end in 1939 during Harry Dana's time. In the process visitors will be able to question—for example—young John Vassall in

the dining room, talk with Mrs. Craigie's boarder Sally Lowell on the staircase, or hear Annie Allegra Longfellow play the flute in the music room. These and eight other characters are willing and able to discuss books, popular music, and presidential anecdotes of his/her time.

To enhance the re-enactment, many objects from the Longfellow National Historic Site's large collection of nineteenth-century children's toys, books, clothing, and art will be on special display.

Besides combing through the archives at the House and other libraries to develop their characters, the students interviewed people who knew children at the House or had been at the House as a child. They interrogated Longfellow's great-

(continued on page 2)

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All images are from the Longfellow National Historic Site collections, unless noted otherwise.

granddaughter Frankie Wetherell, and the daughter of Alice Longfellow's gardener Michael Gaffney, Kathleen Lambert, who is now ninety years old. Wetherell told stories of her aunts who grew up in the House, and Lambert recalled many memories of living at the Longfellow House in the summer months for twenty years while Alice traveled in Europe.

Nancy Joroff began the Concordant Junior Volunteers program fourteen years ago as an extracurricular activity for middle- and high-school students. A former K-12 teacher with a doctorate in education, Joroff had worked with Orchard House, Louisa May Alcott's home, and their children's programs. The programs ended after children reached age eleven. "The participants had learned so much. Now that they were finished, why let them go?" she asked.

Joroff decided to begin her own program, originally known as the Junior Volunteers of Concord, using the next age group of young people in order to help local museums, which she felt always needed "an extra set of hands." Joroff realized that "children could do the same things at museums that the adults could—leading tours, greeting people, sitting and guarding collections, even preparing educational materials."

The junior volunteers' training is thorough and intensive. It begins in the summer with a visit to a different historic museum in the area each day for nine days. Leslie Wilson, head of special collections at the Concord Free Library, instructs the students on doing primary document research. They also undergo "living history" training with Tom Reiff, a professional actor and former historic guide, who uses role-playing exercises to practice vocabulary and etiquette of the time period. Some of the volunteers sew their own costumes from historic patterns. Throughout the year, the young people volunteer at historic museums, including helping out at Longfellow House events.

Since the Concord Junior Volunteers have always drawn young people from communities beyond Concord, they chose last year to re-name themselves the Concordant

Junior Volunteers. The students who comprise the group attend both public and private schools or are home-schooled and come from nine different Massachusetts communities. Joroff characterizes them as a self-selected group of young people with a strong interest in research and history, not just kids who want to dress up in costumes. Most students return to the program year after year for as long as they can. Catherine Dixon, a home-schooled twelfth-grader who plays Annie Allegra Longfellow, has been in the program for six years. Joroff finds these junior volunteers through word of mouth.

In addition to creating living history programs, the Concordant Junior Volunteers write researched articles about events in the time of Louisa May Alcott for a quarterly newsletter called "The Scrapbaggers." They each take turns editing and publishing.

Nancy Joroff hopes to "build a sense of volunteerism" in her students. Her earliest graduates are now in their late twenties, and "Almost all of them volunteer for something," she observed proudly.



"Henry Longfellow" by son Ernest, age seven, 1852



"Annie Longfellow" by sister Edith, age eight, 1861

**Henry W. Longfellow's letter to Charles Sumner, January 30, 1859:**

*It is Sunday afternoon. You know, then, how the old house looks,—the shadow of the library, and the sunshine in the study, where I stand at my desk and write you this. Two little girls are playing about the room,—A[nnie] counting with great noise the brass handles on my secretary, "nine, eight, five, one," and E[dith] insisting upon having some paper box, long promised but never found, and informing me that I am not a man of my word!*

## Interview with a Friend...Meet Heather Moulton

This fall Heather Moulton became the third president of the board of the Friends of the Longfellow House. She worked for many years in the architecture business as a director of communications, and in press relations and publicity for a number of design firms in the Cambridge area.

**Longfellow House:** Are you an architect by training?

**Heather Moulton:** No, I am a writer. I majored in modern languages and minored in comparative literature. I worked with architects for about twenty-five years and retired from consulting work when our son was eight.

**LH:** Do you live in the neighborhood?

**HM:** I live nearby in a Ralph Adams Cram house that we restored five years ago. Prior to that I lived in another old house around the corner on Buckingham Street for twenty years.

**LH:** So you've been a long-time neighborhood resident?

**HM:** I'm from this area originally. I grew up in Concord, and so did my husband. Cambridge has always been part of our lives, and Cambridge—from the literary and historical point of view—is very connected to Concord.

**LH:** How did you come to be interested in historic houses?

**HM:** My first job was as a guide at the Louisa May Alcott House—the Orchard House—in Concord when I was sixteen. I took a hundred people a day from all over the world through the house. It gave me some insights into the challenges of interpreting and preserving the past. Also, the architectural firms I worked for were not specifically involved in historic preservation, but it was often a part of their work.

**LH:** What is your particular interest in the collections of the Longfellow House? What resonates with you?

**HM:** The House itself is of great interest to me. I really do think it's one of the most beautiful residences in the United States, and it just happens to be a period of architecture that I especially like. Its Washington history, its political history, its literary background, its art collection are all important to me. The House has a lot to offer the public from every point of view, which is what is so great about it. It's not just the collections, it's the life of the family, it's the history of Longfellow and all the other owners, and it's one of the few houses in this area that really has been preserved.

**LH:** How did you first come to the House?

**HM:** What brought me to this role in the House, being part of the Friends group, was watching the beginning of the capital campaign for the restoration of the garden. The House had been closed for a number of years and therefore was off my radar screen. Then I was invited to an event early in the campaign, and I saw they could use a helping hand. With my background in preservation and publicity, this seemed like a good fit. My son was off to college, so it was a good time to make a commitment.

**LH:** As the new president, is there a par-



ticular project you'd like to work on?

**HM:** At the moment I think that the Friends' major job is to provide financial support wherever we can to the Park Service for their programs and events and maintenance of the garden and anything else we can contribute to. The garden project was a big undertaking, and I think its ongoing success is going to require some additional help from us. It's the way I felt when I was working for design firms—my role was a very secondary and supportive one, and that's how I view the Friends. I think that we probably can be more active in advocacy and seeing what we can do to assist in Washington. We can continue to fundraise to help with the ongoing restoration of parts of the House. Things will come up based on the needs of the Park Service.

**LH:** Any ideas about fundraising?

**HM:** One of the things I've tried to do in the time I've been here is to break down some of the big tasks. I suggested [for example, in the garden project] saying "You can donate this tree." People could "buy" roses

for their mothers for Mother's Day, for instance. It helped people to know that their dollars were going for something specific. I thought we might try to do this inside the House as well. If there's a particular piece of furniture that needs to be restored or a fabric that needs to be recreated, we might keep a list of things like that as we go on.

**LH:** Do you have ideas for making this House a more prominent museum?

**HM:** I know we'd like to be recognized nationally and internationally. However, one of the major assets of the House is that it's a smaller scale that people can understand better. This was someone's home. Because of the nature of the institution, it won't change. In a way it's like the Gardner Museum, which—although it was designed as a museum—is a very personal place. The Longfellow House will never be altered and become something other than what it has been in the past, which is its strength. It's a matter of getting the word out so more people will know about it.

In Cambridge we do suffer from the Longfellow House being taken for granted. When you say to people who've lived in Cambridge for fifty years "Have you ever been to the Longfellow House?" they're embarrassed to say "no." But it's like that in New York, too. People who live next to the Met don't go there every day.

**LH:** How do we pull those neighbors in?

**HM:** Because of restrictions at the site, we can't hold gala dances in the library. The farther removed people are from the source, the less they feel connected. I think our great successes and the reason a lot of people are attached to the House are because of the summer programs. It allows them to be there and nip into the House for a tour.

Part of our mission is helping people understand that, with the current decrease in government funding, the Park Service is able to keep things only at a bare minimum, and anything else that we want to do to make the House more useful and valuable in the community is going to come from our involvement. It's like public television. The House has actually been faring pretty well compared to a lot of other sites—

**LH:** Thanks to the Friends.

**HM:** —and thanks to the able NPS staff. I am very impressed at the amount of knowledge they have and are able convey. To have people working here who truly love the site and have a real interest in all aspects of what goes on makes all the difference.

## Children of the Vassall-Craigie-Longfellow House

Ever since the yellow Georgian house was built at 105 Brattle Street in 1759, children have enlivened its rooms. Records show that several children were born to Elizabeth and John Vassall Jr., the House's first owners and Loyalists who fled Cambridge on the eve of the American Revolution. Several children were also born to the Vassalls' slaves during this time. Nathaniel and Mary Tracy, who lived in the House from 1781 until 1786 following its use as Washington's headquarters, had about a dozen children, one or two of whom were born in the House.

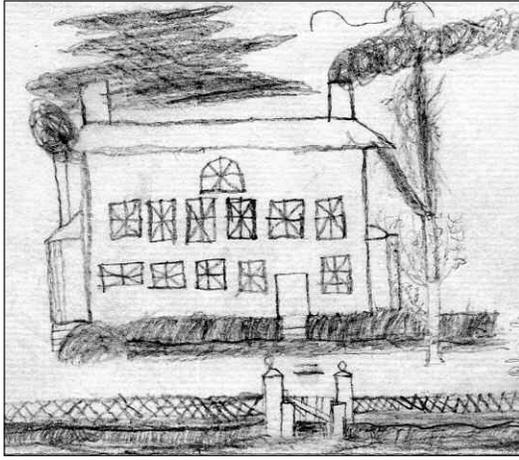
We know little of the lives of these children, but the lives of Henry and Fanny Longfellow's children were extensively documented from the time they were born. The proud parents recorded achievements and anecdotes in their journals and letters, which remain in the House archives. Henry himself carefully labeled his children's drawings. Over six hundred of these drawings by the Longfellow children still exist in the House archives. This extraordinary collection of childhood drawings records the interior of the House, family members, famous visitors, the neighborhood, and favorite vacation spots. Almost all are annotated with the child's name, date, and location of the work. From childhood scribbles to more accomplished renderings, the Longfellows seem to have saved them all.

In June 1844 Fanny gave birth to their first child, Charles Appleton Longfellow. She wrote to her father, "The baby thrives apace and is growing fatter and heavier every day; all the household are devoted to him and are wretched if he cries." Over the next eleven years the Longfellows had five more children, all but one of whom lived to adulthood: Ernest Wadsworth Longfellow (1845-1921), Frances Longfellow (1847-1848), Alice Mary Longfellow (1850-1928), Edith Longfellow (1852-1915), and Anne Allegra Longfellow (1855-1934).

Henry would often take his children on trips to downtown Boston, to the Harvard College Library, or to see the printing press

in Cambridge which reproduced his works. Charley was "struck dumb with astonishment at seeing the steam presses in motion, their wheels flying about," Henry recorded in his journal on December 5, 1846.

The Longfellow household was extremely active with a great variety of pets,



Drawing of Longfellow House by Charley, age seven. c. 1851

prominent guests, musical and theatrical productions, dances, doll parties, birthday and holiday parties. Henry described one of these on December 31, 1858: "Children's party. E[dith] disguised as the Old Year, in great beard and boots; little A[nnie] as the new year, with a wreath on her head. Then, acting of charades and tableaux, with great fun." Neighbor children as well as the Longfellow cousins from Maine—Mary King Longfellow and her brother Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow—were often at the House.

The poet's three daughters gained much fame through his popular poem about them, "The Children's Hour," written in 1859. He depicted them as "Grave Alice and laughing Allegra, and Edith with golden hair." Apparently, the girls delighted in surprising and interrupting their father in his study where he worked at home almost all the time.

The young couple kept everything—from the children's books, toys, shoes, and clothing to the children's own letters, scrapbooks, class lessons, journals, drawings, and works of art. Professional photographers captured hundreds of images of the children. Most of these items are still preserved at the House.

Stories and handwritten newspapers by the children show their daily home life and the adults often participating in their

games, social gatherings, story telling, journal keeping, and art projects.

An especially rich record of the life of the children is portrayed in a monthly handwritten newspaper called "The Secret" produced by Annie and Edith Longfellow in 1865-1866. It contained stories of their daily lives as well as puzzles and rebuses they composed. Written by several children—including Annie, Edith, cousin Alexander, and neighborhood playmates—the publication was distributed to their family and friends. Some of Henry Longfellow's friends—for example, George Washington Greene, a scholar of Italian and member of the Dante Club—also contributed to the newspaper.

The children wrote a number of especially amusing stories about their cats, dogs, and birds. In "The Insult," Annie Longfellow wrote: "As Trap Longfellow was going down the street the other day, he met a little girl coming up with her father. The little girl said 'Oh papa! What an ugly dog!' The Papa answered 'Why ugly, my dear? He seems to be a very good little dog'. 'Yes,' said the little girl, 'but he has got a body just like a pig!' Poor Trap!"

This tradition of creating a newspaper continued with Longfellow's grandchildren. Annie Longfellow and her husband Joseph Thorp summered in Maine on Greening's Island with their five daughters:

Erica, Anne, Priscilla, Alice, and Amelia. From 1903-1905 these children published their weekly newspaper called "The Greening's Island Herald." Each edition of this newspaper was made up of twelve double-



Josie Ames with Alice, Edith, & Annie Longfellow (l. to r.), 1865

sided pages and included great detail concerning visitors to the island, games and other activities, and even the weather forecast. This wonderful record of the next Longfellow generation is preserved by Frankie Wetherell, great-granddaughter of the poet and daughter of one of the writers. The Concordant Junior Volunteers (see page 1) used these newspapers as part of their research on the children of the Vassall-Craigie-Longfellow House.

## Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's Stories and Drawings for His Children

Christoph Irmischer deems his *Longfellow Redux* “an essay in four parts.” One of these parts, “Fatherhood and Authorship,” focuses on the subject of Longfellow’s private domestic life. Irmischer based much of this portion of his research on Longfellow’s unpublished stories and drawings for children at Harvard University’s Houghton Library as well as on his journals.

All of Longfellow’s stories for his children derived from their life together. The autobiographical adventures chronicle the children, himself, his wife, and their dogs.

The most elaborate of Longfellow’s narratives for his children was “Little Merrythought,” which he began writing in 1847 when Charley, his oldest child, was three. Longfellow continued working on it for years, and the initial cast of characters grew to include Ernest and the daughters as well. “The vignettes are hilarious, especially the one about Edith learning French—my favorite,” said Irmischer.

Speaking from the point of view of an “orphaned” wishbone the children (most likely) had ripped from the Longfellow family’s Christmas turkey and then dressed in dapper clothes, Little Merrythought acts as a benevolent spy in the Longfellow household. Thanks to his diminutive proportions, Merrythought is able to comment freely and often quite irreverently on the relations between Papa (“a rather portly man, with a bright red waistcoat”) and Mama (“very beautiful”) and their children: brown-eyed Erny (“a dreamy little boy, who sucked his thumb”) and the older, boisterous Charley, also known as “Infant Terrible,” with “grey eyes snapping like steel traps.”

Having Merrythought, the disinterested narrator, tell the story of the poet’s family allowed Longfellow to turn the lens unsparingly upon himself. One morning, for example, the boys surprise the father as he is shaving in his dressing-room and making funny faces under the impact of the freshly sharpened razor. Merrythought remarks that Longfellow covered with soapsuds looks to his children like a buffalo “with his horns sawed off.” Catching his strange

reflection in the mirror, the father himself “could not help laughing to see what a grotesque figure he really made, with his hair in disorder, and his upper lip projected, as if he were going to whistle. Perhaps he reflected, also, that every morning of his life he made just the same exhibition of himself, without being conscious of it.”

Longfellow’s other tales for children, “Peter Piper” and “Peter Quince,” are picture stories about someone who appreciates the comfort of home yet also has a passion for travel, as Longfellow did. Both Mr. Piper and Mr. Quince, however, had a talent for getting themselves into situations the cautious Mr. Longfellow would usually avoid, such as falling out of his balloon. The drawings are quite sophisticated, and the narrative is subtle. Like Longfellow, Peter Piper was cosmopolitan and enjoyed a haircut or a warm bath in France—an opportunity for



Illustration by H.W. Longfellow, 1860s

Longfellow to supply some catchy captions in French so that his children would practice their foreign language skills.

The journals—most of which remain unpublished—are also an eloquent testimony to the “keen, almost maternal, interest Longfellow took in the development of his two sons and three daughters,” says Irmischer. Here, the proud father carefully noted any additions to his son Charley’s vocabulary (“Aw! yide!” for “omnibus ride” and “gugle-gugle muck” for “turkey’s egg”). On December 14, 1846, he described in detail staying up one night and wrapping his younger son in wet towels which he “changed every half hour” when Erny—his pulse “flying and throbbing like quicksilver”—was running a fever.

In Longfellow’s study, which was “more like a family room than the *sanctum sanctorum* of poetry, the boys would use their blocks to build imaginary fountains, and the girls would hold birthday parties for their dolls,” says Irmischer. The poet recorded in his journal on November 20,

1846, that on evenings when Longfellow came home later than usual, Charley would only reluctantly go to bed “with a broken heart because he could not kiss Papa.”

When his sons became old enough to attend school, Longfellow unashamedly mourned their daily departure and expressed his fear that he had been deposed from his

central role in their lives. On June 10, 1850, he wrote, “I look after them as they go down the gravel walk . . .eager, happy, full of life, and something of sadness mingles with my feelings of joy. I remember how weary school used to be to me. As yet, it has not lost its novelty for them. I do not move them half like schools.” He knew that fatherhood, as he wrote in one of his letters, was a “particularly difficult role to play.” But

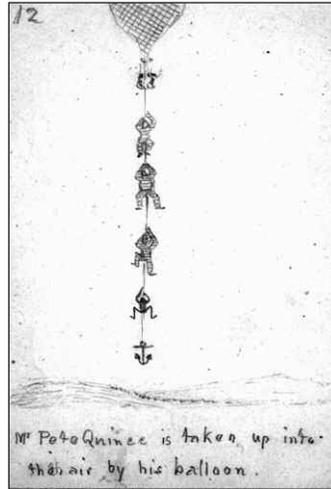


Illustration by H.W. Longfellow, 1860s

he loved playing it, and he played it well, notes Irmischer.

Hundreds of children’s drawings in the House archives also show evidence of Longfellow’s practice of drawing for and with his children. There are drawings clearly worked on by both Henry and his children, demonstrating that father and children enjoyed this activity together.

Longfellow’s journals and the drawings and stories he produced for his children reveal that he was “a devoted father and, in many ways, a rather non-traditional one,” especially in mid-nineteenth century New England, according to Irmischer, who refers to what he calls Henry’s “democratic view of fatherhood.” Longfellow imagined the family not as the playground of patriarchal power but as a potentially egalitarian space, inhabited by people with different but equally interesting personalities: a space in which the father and his children were—to adapt Longfellow’s line from “The Children’s Hour”—truly “matches” for each other. In his book, Irmischer argues that “the same lack of hierarchical thinking also influenced Longfellow’s conception of literature as a transnational conversation carried on across social and linguistic boundaries. For him, the poet was less Emerson’s ‘liberating god’ than the distributor of cultural goods democratically shared by authors and readers alike.”

## Recent Visitors & Events at the House

People from all walks of life have always come to the Longfellow House for cultural activities. Today the House continues to host numerous people and events. The following items represent only a small portion of what has taken place here recently.

Over 2,000 people attended the annual **Longfellow Summer Festival** on weekends during July and August. Among the highlights were **Longy School of Music's** performance of Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*, directed by **Jane Struss**, which drew 400 people. An original play by teacher **Stephanie Kelsch**, *The Poet's Daughter*, was staged twice, starring sixteen-year-old **Emily Wright** as Alice Longfellow. We hope to make it a regular part of our program in the future.

Our annual **Family Day** in September attracted almost 200 people. Following games and activities in the garden, Friends of the Longfellow House President **Heather Moulton** and New England Poetry Club President **Diana Der Hovanessian** presented the Friends' annual poetry awards to twelve students from Boston area schools, elementary through high school.

**Maria Di Raimo**, Harvard University graduate student in Museum Studies, spent the summer months as an intern at the House developing a Longfellow House art tour for children and families to make the collection accessible to young people.

This summer **Bruce Harris**, executive director of the **Literary Trail of Greater Boston**, premiered the Cambridge Literary Trail tour, which will continue throughout the year. For more information: [www.literarytrailofgreaterboston.org](http://www.literarytrailofgreaterboston.org) Under his direction, several Youth Conservation Corps Boston-area high school students researched and presented the story of the Vassall slaves at the house.

In July **Peter Gilmartin** and **Primary Source**, a Watertown-based organization that promotes history and humanities education, held a one-week seminar at the House entitled "The Flight of the Peacock: Exploring Chinese Literature from the Earliest Times to 1900." Fifty Boston-area teachers participated.

**Ben Sommer**, a junior at Cambridge Rindge and Latin school, spent many hours this summer working behind the scenes assisting the museum staff at the House.

In November for the third year, the **Teachers as Scholars** program was held at the House. Entitled "Washington Takes Command: The First Year, 1775-1776" its featured scholar, historian **Pauline Maier**, presented a lecture to sixteen teachers.

Massachusetts Historical Society director **William Fowler**, author **Anne Bernays**, **Bruce Harris** (see above), and descendant **Rosamond Wild Dana** participated in a public reading of Richard Henry Dana Jr.'s *Two Years Before the Mast*. The November event celebrating the re-issuing of this classic was co-sponsored by its publisher, Library of America; the NPS; and the Friends of the Longfellow House.

Every year the House partners with local universities to offer internships for students. **Alice Ebenhoe** and **Jeremy Dibbell**, students at Simmons College, are working in the archives to develop a detailed finding aid for the Dana Collected Correspondence.

In early December **Werner Sollors**, professor of English at Harvard University and founder of the **Longfellow Institute**, co-hosted with the NPS a conference at the House for the editors and editorial board of Harvard University Press's upcoming publication of a literary history of the United States.

## Longfellow Children's Toy Collection



Among its many collections, the House Archives hold approximately ninety children's toys from the nineteenth century which had originally belonged to the Longfellow children. Dolls, their clothing, furniture, and accessories form a large portion of the toy collection. Some of the most interesting individual toys are a clockwork mechanical man, a set of games from France, and a coral rattle. Also of interest are farm animals, card games, a chess set, a Chinese checkers set, and toy figures including a Laplander riding a reindeer, and a Turk mounted on a camel. (See photo above.)

We have written information about some of the toys through family letters and journals. On January 2, 1849, Fanny Longfellow recorded: "The presents arrived... a knight on horseback for Charley beautifully executed, as also a camel with driver & pack for Erny. The children in great delight. Charley said 'I never had such a beautiful toy, did I?' & placed all his little merry men in a circle round it to admire."

Occasionally, these toys appeared in Longfellow's writings. In "Little Merrythought," Longfellow described and illustrated his son Erny's cockerel waking him up. The author based the episode on Erny's toy rooster, only a few inches tall, which was carved from wood and painted, and now lives permanently in the House toy collection.

*Henry W. Longfellow's Journal,  
September 14, 1850:*

*Two pleasant walks I had with the children. The interest with which they invest in common things is quite marvelous. Their young eyes are like the eyes of Apollo seeing all things in a poetic light.*

## Fanny Longfellow Recommends Children's Books

More than fifty books for young children—including volumes of fairy tales, poetry, novels, and primers—remain today as the children's book collection in the House archives. Mostly from the 1840s and 1850s, many are inscribed to the Longfellow children from their parents, uncles, aunts, and family friends. Fanny Appleton Longfellow expressed her interest in and knowledge of children's literature in her April 16, 1852 letter advising her friend Emmeline Austin Wadsworth:

"I will gladly aid you in enlarging little Austin's library . . . It is not easy to find very good [books] for a young child, and I remember in my despair, I often thought of

writing some myself, knowing so well what pleased my own children. They liked always stories of simple truth, without being spiced with horrors or with fairy fancy, but as they get older their tastes are less innocent. I rather prefer the English books to the American ones, for these latter are so apt to have Yankee expressions or Calvinistic ideas, but the Rollo books have always had a good reputation. My children have only *Rollo Learning to Talk*, which has short stories, and they always liked it much when little. *Little*

*Annie's First Book* is a good one to learn to read by (American). Then *Little Mary's Treasury of Elementary Knowledge* (English) is an excellent book, having many charming pictures and comprising eight books more from young lore to older. Erny calls it his Bible because it has the Bible history simply explained and so well illustrated that he has learned every important fact by the pictures.

Then *Pleasures of the Country* by Mrs. Myrtle is a charming book with capital stories, and if a little too old for Austin, he would enjoy the highly colored and truly English pictures by Gilbert and would soon grow up to the text.

"Then *Willy's Rambles* by Jane Marcet, is a very nice book about the building of a house, not too old. And Jane Taylor's *Nursery Rhymes* is always a favorite, and *Rhymes, Chimes, and Jingles*, which you probably have. My children have any quantity but not many they care to hear twice except these I mentioned. *The Illustrated Book of Songs for Children* is a beautiful book, adorned by Birket Foster, and among fairy books *Gammer Grethel* always holds a place."

Some of the books listed in this letter can still be found at the House.



Fanny reading with sons Charley and Erny, c. 1849

### 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.

Professor of German Studies at the University of Cincinnati, Richard E. Schade inquired about Longfellow's translations of the epigrams of seventeenth-century poet Friedrich von Logau for a paper on "Longfellow's reception of German culture and literature." Longfellow was the first to translate Logau into English.

For his play on Longfellow's writing of the poem "Christmas Bells," Bruce Carl Aronson of Huntington Beach, California, sought a photo of Charley Longfellow's room where he recovered from his Civil War wound and advice about a possible scenario.

For a history of the Cambridge Garden Club, Annette LaMond examined the prints from Joseph Thorp's glass-plate negatives for images of early gardens in Cambridge. Joseph's sister, Sarah Thorp Bull, was a charter member of the club.

### Upcoming Events

**Holiday Program with the Concordant Volunteers.** Saturday & Sunday, December 3rd & 4th from 1 to 4 P.M. "Children of the Vassall-Craigie-Longfellow House" re-created in the House. (See page 1.)

**Dramatic Readings from *A Christmas Carol*** to celebrate Dickens's and Longfellow's friendship. Friday, December 9th at 6:30 P.M. at the Episcopal Divinity School.

**"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. Monday, February 6, 2006, from 3 to 5 P.M. at the Cambridge Historical Society, 159 Brattle Street.

**Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Birthday Celebration.** On Saturday February 25, 2006, at 10 A.M. celebrate the poet's 199th birthday at Mount Auburn Cemetery's Story Chapel with a wreath-laying ceremony, reception, and special lecture and booksigning by Longfellow biographer Christoph Irmscher. Co-sponsored with the Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery. **Educational Programs** available late February through May, two days per week: "Inside the Walls of Castle Craigie," House tour for grades 3-6.

"All are Architects of Fate," neighborhood walking tour for grades 7-12.

**Mother's Day Annual Event.** Come stroll the newly restored Longfellow garden and grounds amidst lilacs in bloom. Sunday, May 7, 2006, from 1 to 4 P.M.

### Longfellow House in the Media

In the *Cambridge Chronicle's* Growing Older column on October 13, 2005, Richard Griffin wrote of his appreciation for Longfellow's poetry and mused about his recent visit to the House in a thoughtful article called "Longfellow's Legacy Lives On in His Old House."

In response to the National Parks Conservation Association's "State of the Park" report on LNHS, the *Boston Globe*, the *Boston Herald*, and the *Cambridge Chronicle* all ran pieces from August 18 to 23, 2005, discussing the funding needs that challenge America's national parks.

## 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 a child's dress which belonged to Henry's daughter, Alice Mary Longfellow. Probably worn for special occasions when she was less than twelve years old, the dress has a royal blue satin basque bodice gathered at the waist and neck and an eyelet lace skirt with four flounces. A dark blue velvet jacket with straight sleeves attached and trimmed with eyelet lace and velvet bows on the back is shown accompanying the dress. This outfit was found in the attic in the summer of 1977.

The Longfellow House clothing collection of attire for all ages and genders includes about thirty garments worn by the Longfellow children. Fanny Longfellow had carefully wrapped, labeled, and dated the first pair of baby shoes worn by each of her children. Several girls' dresses, a boy's lounge jacket, shoes, socks, bonnets, caps, and Alice Longfellow's "Evangeline" costume have also survived the years.



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