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Summer 2006
Volume VI—Number 2

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PEOPLE AND PLACES

Maria Baldwin, 1856–1922: “An Honor and a Glory”

By Daphne Abeel

Cantabrigian Maria Baldwin, a gifted and imposing African-American educator of the early 20th century, has never lacked recognition. During her lifetime and after her death, she was praised and then remembered. She was exceptional for her era and perhaps for all eras, attracting the attention of the entire community with her engaging personality and great skills as a teacher and administrator.



The most recent acknowledgment of her lasting influence and reputation came just five years ago, when the old Agassiz Elementary School, at the corner of Oxford and Sacramento streets, was replaced by a new school building named in her honor, ensuring her permanent presence in the annals of Cambridge education.

The poet E. E. Cummings, another Cantabrigian and her pupil for a time, wrote of her in an autobiographical reminiscence, “Never did any demidivine dictator more gracefully and easily rule a more unruly and less graceful populace.

Her very presence emanated an honor and a glory: the honor of spiritual freedom—no mere freedom from—and the glory of being, not (like most extant mortals) really undead, but actually alive.”

Born and educated in Cambridge, Baldwin graduated from the Cambridge Teachers Training School in 1875. Unable to find a job in her hometown, she taught briefly in Maryland, but as a result of demands by the black population of Cambridge, she returned to teach primary grades in 1882. In 1889, she was appointed principal of the Agassiz School and remained in that position for 24 years. When a new Agassiz School was built in 1916, she was appointed master, one of only two women to hold that position at the time.

In 1917, a column titled, significantly, “Men of the Month,” appeared in *The Crisis: A Record for the Darker Races*, a publication of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, edited by W.E.B. Du Bois stated: “Miss Baldwin, thus without doubt, occupies the most distinguished position achieved by a person of Negro descent in the teaching world of America, outside cities where there are segregated schools.”

(continued on page 6)

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FROM THE PRESIDENT
It Was a Glass Act

This year's benefit, A Touch of Glass, kept up the pace of our increasingly successful annual fundraising events. Through the generous contributions of our members, sponsors, and friends, we raised nearly \$21,000, which will help support the operations of your Society.

Held at Avon Place Glass on Sherman Street, some 90 people enjoyed an afternoon devoted to glass, both old and new (see page 7). Susan Maycock, survey director of the Cambridge Historical Commission, described the rise and fall of the New England Glass Company of East Cambridge. Fred Meyer, a Cambridge Realtor, and Dr. Edward Nalebuff gave their perspectives on collecting antique glass, especially that produced by the New England Glass Company. Ron Bourgeault, the owner of Northeast Auctions in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, looked at antique glass from an appraiser's perspective.

Andrew Magdanz, co-owner of Avon Place Glass, demonstrated glass blowing. Fred Meyer displayed his collection of New England glass. Ron Bourgeault and Rebecca Davis appraised antique glass brought by those attending. Ron also gave the Society an Amberina pitcher made in Cambridge. This, along with two master saltcellars donated by Renny Little, are now on display at the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House, allowing us to mention the New England Glass Company during our tours.

Among those who deserve recognition and thanks for making this benefit possible are Andrew Magdanz and Susan Shapiro, owners of Avon Place Glass; the Society's Development Committee, under Paula Paris, for its planning and organizing efforts; Bob Crocker and Karen Falb, who served as event co-chairs; all the presenters for volunteering their time and talents; and our staff, led by Karen Davis and Lewis Bushnell, for pulling it all together.

Ted Hansen



In 1883, the engraver Joseph Locke, chief designer at the New England Glass Company, patented Amberina, an early type of richly colored glass that fades from a deep red to gold. The small Amberina pitcher at left was given to the CHS by Ron Bourgeault, the owner of Northeast Auctions in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Impressed into the saltcellars pictured at right is a rare design of a basket of flowers and, on the bottom, the name of the New England Glass Company. Given to the CHS by Renny Little, the salts appear to date to the late 1920s or early 1930s.



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Marjorie, Foster, and Bart

The CHS will receive \$10,000 from the estate of Marjorie Gutheim, a beloved member who died last year. Her gift started us thinking about other bequests, particularly those from Foster Palmer and Bart Brinkler. We wanted to take a moment to remember the lives of these three quietly generous people who made lasting contributions to the Society.

Marjorie Frye Gutheim (1916–2005)

“She mixed reason with pleasure and wisdom with mirth” was the description of Marjorie in her Cambridge High and Latin Yearbook. CHS members remember her as an active and productive volunteer who spent countless hours cataloguing manuscripts, leading tours, and preparing refreshments.

Marjorie F. Gutheim at the time of her high school graduation in 1933.

Photo from the Cambridge High and Latin yearbook in the CHS archives.



Born in Cambridge, Marjorie’s family lived for a time on Bigelow Street, moving to Huron Avenue during her elementary school years. Her father, Herman Gutheim, was chief of the Cambridge Fire Department. Marjorie had two major careers, one in education and the other as an editor. She graduated from Radcliffe with an A.B. in History in 1937, received a master’s in teaching from the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 1938, and her Ph.D. in American History from Columbia in 1955.

She began her career in education in 1943, after working as a secretary at Christ Church, Cambridge, where she was a member. In 1945, she began to teach at Mount Vernon Seminary in Washington, D.C. (now a satellite campus of

George Washington University), serving as dean from 1962 until 1969, when the school closed its 93-year-old girls’ seminary. She moved back to Cambridge and became associate editor at the Massachusetts Historical Society, where she transcribed the Winthrop papers and created a 20-volume index to the MHS proceedings. After retiring in the 1980s, she began to volunteer at the CHS and the MHS. She died on December 3, 2005, and is buried at Mount Auburn Cemetery.

Foster McCrum Palmer (1914–2002)

A noted Harvard librarian, Foster is remembered as a solid supporter and an active member of the Society. An amateur historian with a special interest in rapid transit, he presented a paper called “Horse Car, Trolley, and Subway,” which traces the development of public transportation in Cambridge (*CHS Proceedings*, vol. 39). In the 1970s, he was a member of the CHS Council, serving as editor. His bequest to the Society came to just over \$5,000.

Born in Kansas City, Missouri, Foster did his undergraduate work at Washington and Lee University in Virginia and received his master’s in library science from the University of Michigan. In 1944, he began work at Harvard’s Widener Library as a reference assistant, becoming associate university librarian in 1965. A classification specialist, he was an early proponent of the application of computers to libraries. After retiring in 1974, he went back to work as acting director of the Countway Library of Medicine at Harvard. Foster lived in Watertown with his wife, Doris, who predeceased him. He died on February 2, 2002, leaving generous bequests to many historical and preservation organizations.

Bartol (Bart) Brinkler (1915–1993)

The largest bequest the Society received in recent memory came from the estate of Bartol Brinkler, who left \$115,000 as well as antique furniture, rugs, paintings, and other objects. A Harvard librarian for 35 years and a CHS member for over 13 years, Bart is remembered as the CHS’s librarian. To honor this commit-

ment and his financial contributions, the Society dedicated its research library to him, placing a brass plaque on the door.



This photo, believed to be Bart Brinkler, ca. 1937, was left by him with his bequest.

CHS Archives

Born and raised in Portland, Maine, Bart received his master's and doctorate from Princeton University. After serving in the army, he went to work at Widener Library, rising to head the classification and cataloguing department and making major contributions to his

field. He lived in Cambridge and had a summer cottage on Herrick Mountain in New Vineyard, Maine. He died on October 1, 1993.

We are grateful to Marjorie, Foster, and Bart for their dedication to the Society during their lives and for leaving bequests that generate income to ensure the future of the Society. These legacies are the gifts that keep on giving.

Karen L. Davis

MAY PROGRAM

Hidden Treasures: The Massachusetts Archives

The inconspicuous granite block building on Dorchester Bay houses the State Archives, the Commonwealth Museum, and the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). The Archives preserves, secures and makes accessible records for the State of Massachusetts. On May 13, assistant archivist Michael Comeau talked to us about the founding of our nation, as he showed and placed in context such documents as the 1629 Charter of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the Massachusetts copy of 1789 Federal Bill of Rights, Paul Revere's original copperplate of the Boston Massacre, and an invoice Revere submitted to the Committee for Public Safety for his work.



Mark Vassar displays floor plans of Cambridge's Odd Fellows Hall. Michael Comeau (seated) showed rare documents for this special viewing

The CHS archivist Mark Vassar, who also works for the State Archives, showed a number of Cambridge items, including a muster roll of Cantabrigians called for duty during the Lexington Alarm. Mark then led the group on a tour of the building, explaining the type of research material they could expect to find. He also gave a short gallery talk noting the Cambridge connection to the current exhibition, "Le Grande Dérangement: The Acadian Exile in Massachusetts, 1755-1766," which he researched, designed, and installed.

Karen Davis completed the tour with a look at the MHC's publicly accessible files on historic buildings. For information on the Archives, visit www.state.ma.us/sec/arc.

Sally Hild

IT volunteer needed

We are looking for a volunteer to help us maintain our office computer infrastructure and to advise us on upgrades and security. Ideally, this person could donate about two hours a week. If interested, please send write to lbushnell@cambridgehistory.org and include the best time to call you.



DANA FELLOW EVENT*

The American Meteorological Society

Our visit to the American Meteorological Society (AMS) brought together a piquant mix of old Boston culture, handsome architecture, and the contemporary scientific world. The building that now houses the AMS was built for the American statesman Harrison Gray Otis and is the third house designed for him by Charles Bulfinch, the nation's first American-born architect.

Karen Davis discussed the life and accomplishments of Charles Bulfinch (1763–1844), noting his family ties to Cambridge. Bulfinch, perhaps best known for the Massachusetts State House, was the architect of several important Cambridge buildings, including the Middlesex County Courthouse in East Cambridge.

Karen then described the characteristics of a Federal period mansion that are seen at the Third Harrison Gray Otis House, which was built in 1806. The stately charm and beautiful proportions of a family home endure, but its rooms now house a thoroughly up-to-date scientific organization that studies and reports on global weather systems.



The Third Harrison Gray Otis House at 45 Beacon Street.

Our hostess, Jinny Nathans, a CHS member and the librarian and archivist at the AMS, presented an overview of Otis's life and described the use of the house during his occupancy, which lasted until his death in 1848. Otis

served both in the Massachusetts legislature and the U.S. Congress and was mayor of Boston from 1829 to 1831.



Photos by Lewis Bushnell

Jinny Nathans (left), in the library of the American Meteorological Society, led us on a tour of the organization's headquarters.

The AMS, founded in Boston in 1919, acquired the house in 1958. In 1960, the building was renovated to create offices and a library. Today, 45 people work in the building. The AMS publishes eight journals. The library shelves are lined with titles such as the *Journal of Applied Meteorology* and the *Monthly Weather Review*.

Perhaps one of the most striking aspects of the renovation is the brick carriage house, which now incorporates two levels of office space that have been sensitively designed to have minimal impact on the original building. The tour of the house provided a dramatic demonstration of how historic structures can be transformed for modern use while preserving their architectural integrity.

Daphne Abeel

E-mail Jinny at jnathans@ametsoc.org/ams if you missed the tour. She will be pleased to set up a time to show you around.

*Named for Richard Henry Dana III, the Society's first president, Dana Fellows make annual contributions at or above the \$100 level.

We want to thank Trader Joe's and Royal Pastry for contributing refreshments to the event.

Maria Baldwin

(continued from page 1)

As master of the Agassiz School, Baldwin oversaw 12 teachers, all white, who taught more than 500 students, most of them from old Cambridge families and many the children of Harvard professors. Baldwin continued her studies at Harvard and Boston universities, and at her home (196 Prospect Street), she held weekly reading classes for black students.

She was influential far beyond the classroom; she lectured widely and belonged to many civic organizations, including the Twentieth Century Club of Boston, the Cantabrigia Club, and the Robert Gould Shaw House Association. She counted among her friends and associates such leading lights as Edward Everett Hale, William Monroe Trotter, Archibald Grimke, and Charles W. Eliot, president of Harvard.



Baldwin died suddenly of a heart attack in 1922, after giving a lecture at the Robert Gould Shaw House Association meeting. Her funeral, at Arlington Street Church, was attended by many, including President Eliot. The same year, a memorial tablet was placed in the hall of the Agassiz School. It hangs today in the Maria Baldwin School. In 1950, a women's dormitory at Howard University was named after her.

In 1990, the play *Miss Baldwin of Agassiz*, by Carol E. Hantman, was performed at the Agassiz School for the first time and has been repeated since. Her bright legacy seems assured.

Garden Delights



Lewis Bushnell

Volunteers from the Cambridge Plant and Garden Club paused during one of their visits to prepare our garden for viewing at the seventh annual Secret Gardens of Cambridge, sponsored by the Friends of the Cambridge Public Library. Pictured (from foreground): Esther Pullman, Virginia Hathaway, Elizabeth tenGrotenhuis, and Annette LaMond. Beth Meyer, past president of the club as well as a former CHS councilor, wrote, "Thanks so much for letting our members share in the joy of landscaping and planting in the garden. We consider the garden one of Cambridge's treasures." We thank the CP&GC and Michael Hanlon, who also donates his time, for their dedication, hard work, and community spirit.

MayFair on May 7

Did a creek once flow through Harvard Square?* Hundreds of people who visited the CHS booth tested their knowledge of Cambridge history with question-and-answer cards posing such queries. They were also encouraged to help themselves to a number of our publications, including *The Cambridge Rindge and Latin School*, which normally sells for \$6.

Joining us were representatives of Longfellow House and Mount Auburn Cemetery. On behalf of all three organizations—members of the Historic Cambridge Collaborative—we thank the Harvard Square Business Association for organizing the event and for providing the booth.

*Yes. It followed the curve of Eliot Street.

Ted Hansen

Discovering Cambridge: A Touch of Glass

Members and guests gathered at Avon Place Glass to celebrate a part of the city’s history that had all but disappeared from memory—that of the New England Glass Company, once the largest glass factory in the world.



Left and below: Our host, Andrew Magdanz delighted attendees with a demonstration of how to make fine art glass—in this case, a large pitcher similar to those made at the New England Glass Company in the 19th century.



Left: Collector Dr. Edward Nalebuff described Amberina, a colored glass invented at the New England Glass Company. (See page 2.)



Left: Fred Meyer displayed pieces from his collection of New England Glass, noting the distinctive “ring” of flint glass.



Above: Ron Bourgeault and Rebecca Davis (seated, left) of Northeast Auctions appraised objects from family collections.



Left: Susan Maycock traced the history glass-making in East Cambridge, where it was the first major industry.

FROM THE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVE

Mark Time

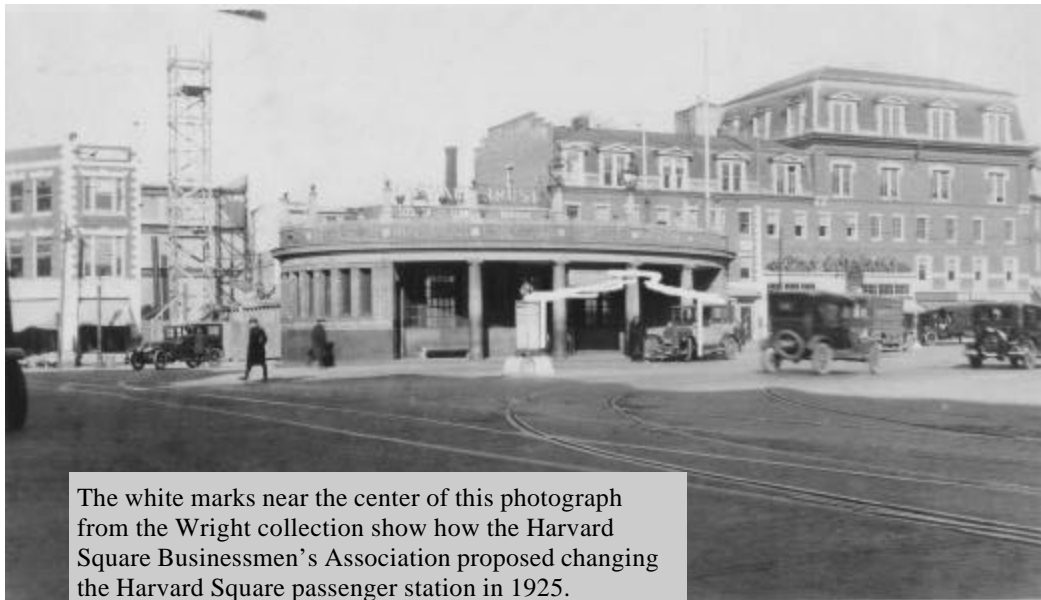
by Mark Vassar

The Lois Lilley Howe Photographic Collection and the George G. Wright Collection—both recently processed—contain some interesting tidbits of Cambridge history.

Lois Lilley Howe (1864–1964), one of the first women in the country to become an architect, was a lifelong Cantabrigian and a vice president of the Cambridge Historical Society. The Howe collection, processed by volunteer Chris Lenney, documents three of her passions: gardening, architecture, and photography. The bulk of the collection consists of glass plate negatives taken by Howe. Contained in the series are images of Cambridge gardens and flowers, Cambridge houses (some designed by Howe), and posed images of several Cambridge residents. Although access to the negatives themselves is restricted to ensure their preservation, prints of many are available for viewing. Also in the collection is a series of photographic prints entered into competition by Howe and James Wells, who were both members of the Cambridge Photographic Club. Most of these are early-20th-century images of the Charles River .

George G. Wright (1848–1928), also a lifelong Cantabrigian, was a businessman and amateur historian who saved pamphlets and other printed material on Cambridge clubs, agencies, and associations, which he bound into some 160 volumes. These and other materials making up the George G. Wright Collection were given to the CHS many years ago. A card catalogue was created for the bound volumes, but loose personal papers and ephemera documenting the business and political history of the city remained unprocessed until Simmons College intern Megan Cox took on the project. In addition to Wright's personal and business correspondence, the collection contains a large amount of ephemera from the various clubs and organizations to which he belonged. Of note are documents of the Harvard Square Businessmen's Association (now the Harvard Square Business Association) from the time that Wright served as its secretary. Particularly interesting are items that illustrate the organization's efforts to alter the Harvard Square passenger station.

These collections are among many that illuminate the fascinating history of Cambridge.



The white marks near the center of this photograph from the Wright collection show how the Harvard Square Businessmen's Association proposed changing the Harvard Square passenger station in 1925.

SOCIETY NEWS

From Tremont Street to Brattle Street: The Balustrade on the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House

By Charlie Allen and Karen L. Davis

Repairing the worn balustrade atop the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House proved to be the most challenging aspect of the major roofing project recently completed by the Society.

shaped balusters in half lengthwise (they are flat at the back), lined them up vertically with the window pattern of the house, and created solid panels to link the sections. Each of the five baluster sections is composed of a frame containing five half balusters flanked by a quarter one at the junction with the solid panels. Molded top and bottom rails tie the entire structure together.

In 1980, the balustrade was found to have rotted top and bottom rails. These were replaced with new stock. The top rail was clad with aluminum and blocks were placed beneath the



Photo by Lewis Bushnell

Bob Leonard and his assistant reassemble the restored balustrade.

The venerable history of the balustrade, which was salvaged from St. Paul’s Church in Boston and added to the house in 1853, is documented in the “Reminiscences” of Susan Nichols, who moved in to the house in 1850. St. Paul’s, which still stands at 138 Tremont Street in Boston, was designed in 1819 by Alexander Parris and was the first temple-front, Greek Revival building in Boston. The chancel has been remodeled numerous times, most recently in the early 20th century by Ralph Adams Cram.

It appears that the carpenter who fashioned the balustrade for the Nichols family cut the vase-

bottom rail to lift the balustrade off the surface of the roof. More repairs were made in 1995.

In April of 1997, following a major snow-storm, the balustrade was found hanging off the roof. The Society stabilized it with metal braces, which were shored up again in the winter of 2003.

“As the house looked very low for its breadth, we purchased the discarded railing of the chancel of St. Paul’s Church in Boston to serve as a facade giving more height.”

Susan Nichols, “Reminiscences”

The original balustrade had been built in place on the roof. Due to its poor condition, scaffolding was erected and the balustrade taken to the shop of Charlie Allen Restorations last winter. Cutting it into manageable sections while saving as much historic fabric as possible created

a memorable challenge. The work was further complicated, for the structure had bowed and racked over its 153 years on the roof. Most of the elements had been replaced over time. Only the quarter balusters and most of the frame appeared old enough to have dated to the original chancel rail.

New molding knives were cut and the deteriorated moldings were replicated and replaced. All new and original elements were back-primed and received two coats of finish paint. The sections were reassembled and transported to the house, where they were hoisted up and set back into position. With proper maintenance, they should last for another 150 years.

The History of Fresh Pond



The Fresh Pond Hotel was located on what is now Kingsley Park overlook.

Lithograph about 1845.

On March 19, Jill Sinclair spoke to a capacity crowd at the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House about the history of Fresh Pond, one of Cambridge's treasured historic landscapes. Co-sponsored by the CHS and the Friends of Fresh Pond Reservation, the illustrated talk was drawn from Jill's thesis, "Shifting Patterns, Shifting Significance: The Design and Social History of Fresh Pond Reservation." We thank her for the talk, for her contribution to Cambridge history, and for giving the CHS a copy of her thesis.

Calendar of Events

Tuesday, June 27

Time: 6:00–7:00 p.m.

Benjamin Franklin: A How-to Guide "The Circulation of Knowledge"

CHS members are invited to a private reception and gallery talk at the Houghton Library. The exhibition commemorates the 300th anniversary of Franklin's birth.

Saturdays, July 1 and 8

Time: 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m., rain or shine

Cambridge Discovery Days

Free tours throughout the city

Under the auspices of the Historic Cambridge Collaborative, the CHS will offer the following tours. On July 1, "Discovering History through a Child's Eyes" led by Sally Hild, "The British Loyalists of Brattle Street" led by Ted Hansen. On July 8, "The Oldest House on Brattle Street" led by Lewis Bushnell, "What Style Is It?" led by Karen Davis.

Please see the CHS Web site for details on our tours. A brochure listing times and meeting places for all tours will be mailed to CHS members and posted at www.cambridgema.gov/historic/walks.html.

Wednesday, August 9

Time: 5:30–7:30 p.m.

Charles River Cruise

\$40 for members; \$50 for nonmembers

Can you name the 10 bridges that cross the Charles from Cambridge? Join us for the fascinating story of each one as we pass under them on our summer cruise. Researched and narrated by past CHS president George Hanford. Board at the CambridgeSide Galleria. Hearty hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar. Reservations required.

Sunday, September 10

Time: 2:00–4:00 p.m.

Lecture and Walking Tour of Mount Auburn Cemetery

Details to come...

Ongoing

Tours of the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House Tuesday and Thursday at 2:00 and 3:00 p.m. \$5; free for CHS members. Call to arrange a group tour.

We would like to thank the following businesses and individuals for supporting the Cambridge Historical Society through contributions to our spring benefit.

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Make checks payable to the Cambridge Historical Society and mail to 159 Brattle Street, Cambridge, Mass. 02138.



Can you identify this?

- a. A chancel rail.
- b. A balustrade.
- c. A figure-ground problem.
- d. There are too many gray areas to call.

See page 9.

The Mission of the Cambridge Historical Society

The Cambridge Historical Society acts as a living repository for Cambridge's traditions and history. It maintains property entrusted to it and collects, preserves, and interprets items of historical and antiquarian significance. The Society encourages research and involvement in these efforts by its members and the community at large. In so doing, it promotes a better understanding of history as an important factor in the everyday affairs of the city and its residents.

THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
The Hooper-Lee-Nichols House
159 Brattle Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

“We should aim to comprehend historical figures as part of their time, understanding their limitations and where they broke new ground....”

Jeremy A Stern

in a letter to *The Boston Globe*, Thursday, April 27, 2006