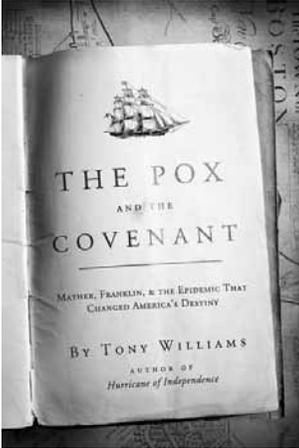


BOOK REVIEWS

The Pox and the Covenant: Mather, Franklin, and the Epidemic That Changed America's Destiny. By Tony Williams. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, 2010. 277 pages. \$24.99 (hardback).



Smallpox has a long history. A pathogen akin to the smallpox virus arose in prehistoric Africa in livestock or game. Close contact between these animals and humans enabled the virus to spread to people, in whom it evolved into the smallpox virus. Migrants carried the virus to Asia and Europe, though when is difficult to tell. Smallpox may have plagued the Chinese as early as 1000 BCE, though some authorities favor a later date, about 250 BCE, when the Huns brought it to China. Smallpox may have afflicted India about the time of Christ, though others favor transmission to India about the seventh century CE. Thucydides described

what might have been a smallpox epidemic in 430 BCE in Ethiopia, Egypt, Libya and Greece.

In *The Pox and the Covenant*, historian Tony Williams uses a 1721 smallpox outbreak in Boston to examine the religious and scientific responses of the Puritans to calamity. That May a British ship, sailing from Barbados to Boston, carried the contagion. In the early stages of the voyage, the smallpox virus likely clung to clothes or a blanket, infecting a black sailor too late in the voyage to be detected and quarantined before the ship landed. He became symptomatic once in Boston but by then had already contaminated other people.

True to their Puritan heritage, many Bostonians believed that the ensuing epidemic was God's punishment for sin. Williams, estimates a mortality rate of 25 percent, a figure he might have obtained from a calculation by Benjamin Franklin. They flocked to churches to renew their covenant with God, unaware that such gatherings increased the likelihood that the virus would spread. And spread it did.

The epidemic thrust Cotton Mather, *The Pox and the Covenant's* central figure, to the fore. As a minister he had a duty to comfort his congregation,

to pray with them, and to offer spiritual guidance. But Mather also confronted smallpox as a scientist. The description of Mather as a man of the Enlightenment might be *The Pox and the Covenant's* principal achievement. This book may disappoint readers expecting to find conflict between religion and science. The ministers of Boston, led by Mather, spearheaded the first inoculation campaign in North America in 1721. Europeans apparently learned about inoculation from the Turks in the early eighteenth century. And it was already known that those who survived an infection were thereafter immune to smallpox, a fact that must have led to the first efforts to inoculate the susceptible against the disease. Inoculated people contracted the disease, usually in mild form—though a small number of them died—and the inoculated were contagious during the period of infection.

Only one physician, Zabdiel Boylston, complied, inoculating 242 Bostonians by the epidemic's end. The rest of the medical community opposed inoculation. These physicians had not read the latest medical studies about smallpox, as Mather had, and they—not Boston's ministers—used Scripture to impede medicine, asserting that because the Bible did not mention inoculation, it was contrary to God's will. The fact that physicians quoted Scripture may seem odd, but it derived from the Puritan belief that anyone, not just those with theological training, could and should read Scripture. Rather than a conflict between science and religion, Williams describes events surrounding the 1721 epidemic as a case of religion, in the form of Mather, uniting with science.

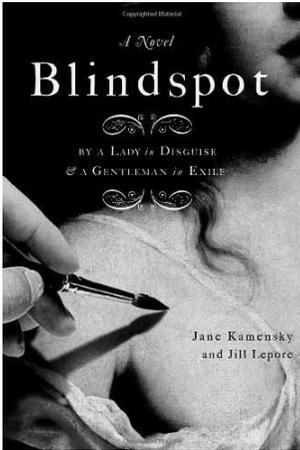
The book's subtitle promises treatment of Franklin, though he emerges as a minor figure. At the time of the outbreak, Franklin's older brother James was the senior partner in the brothers' newly launched newspaper, the *New England Courant*, and perhaps for this reason Williams devotes more space to James than to Benjamin. The newspaper published attacks against inoculation and the ministers, though whether the Franklins held these views is unclear. Perhaps they simply realized that sensationalism sold copies. Ben Franklin might have been agnostic about the efficacy of inoculation in 1721, though he emerged its champion in 1730.

The epidemic infected nearly 6,000 Bostonians and killed 844. In Williams' view, the epidemic of 1721, catastrophic as it was, marked the passage from Puritan religiosity to Enlightenment science. As the epitome of the Enlightenment, Franklin, not Mather (despite his contributions to the Enlightenment), has come down through history as the more celebrated American. Williams regards the 1721 epidemic as validation of Thomas

Kuhn's notion of a paradigm shift. The scientists and physicians who initially opposed the novelty of inoculation eventually accepted it. At the end of the eighteenth century, Edward Jenner developed the method of vaccination against smallpox, an innovation that seems to have ended the threat from "the greatest killer in human history" (5).

Christopher Cumo is an independent scholar who received a Ph.D. in history from The University of Akron.

Blindspot: A Novel of Art, Passion, and Politics in the Age of the American Revolution. By Jane Kamensky and Jill Lepore. New York, NY: Spiegel & Grau, 2009. 528 pages. \$15.00 (paperback).



Blindspot is an occasionally raunchy comedy of manners skewering the pretensions of upright and pious Bostonians in the age of the American Revolution. It's a love story, a murder mystery, an art appreciation, and a history lesson presented in a most entertaining manner. Like all good historical fiction, this novel depicts an era by conveying a sense of place and atmosphere often lacking in non-fiction.

The multiple, interwoven plot lines are cleverly presented by two distinct voices: our heroes Stewart Jameson, artist, and Fanny Easton, fallen woman. Background and context are provided through the use of contemporary newspaper articles which keep the narrative moving without the need for much explanatory exposition. Fanny disguises her gender in order to survive her jarring fall from grace, and of course is hired as an apprentice by Stewart. The resolution of the love story is never really in doubt, but the situation does lend itself to much bawdy humor and double entendre, and illustrates the contemporaneous attitudes toward homosexuality.

In many ways, this novel delights in skewering the self-importance and hypocrisy of the residents of "the Hub." A city that viewed itself as preeminent and cosmopolitan, Boston is seen as a provincial backwater by Europeans. A city that is a self-described beacon of liberty is seen to harbor deeply held racist views in keeping with its mostly hidden slave population.

And a religious people prone to invoke divine mercy are seen to possess near medieval attitudes on crime and punishment.

The murder mystery pits our sympathetic main characters against a villain you can love to hate. Along the way, the reader will learn in a most agreeable way about the politics of the Stamp Act, slavery in New England, and art. Who knew that the mixture of ingredients to make just the right shade of paint was an art in itself back then?

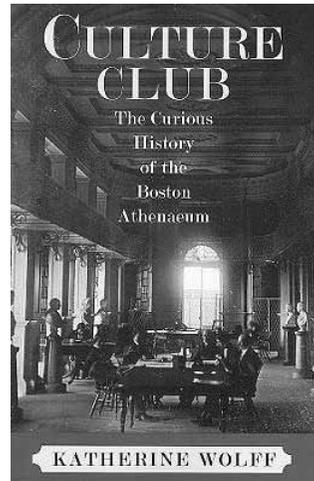
A recurring theme throughout the book is that “a painter must paint.” True for any artist in any medium in any time, it’s illustrated by Stewart and Fanny’s devotion to their art even under the most trying of circumstances.

This book will have you guessing, will make you smile, and will make you want to keep reading. If you are new to historical fiction, it’s a great introduction. If you are already familiar with the genre, you should certainly add this book to your collection.

Stephen Donnelly is a consultant for the insurance industry and a Westfield State University alumnus.

***Culture Club: The Curious History of the Boston Athenaeum.* By Katherine Wolff. Amherst/Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009. 224 pages. \$ 26.95 (paperback).**

Katherine Wolff’s *Culture Club*, her account of the founding of the Boston Athenaeum in 1807, is an eminently readable piece of scholarship on one of nineteenth-century Boston’s most influential arbiters of culture. Published during the Athenaeum’s extended bicentennial celebrations, the book’s stated aim is to uncover what Wolff terms the “elusive idea of American high culture” by examining an institution that was at once both self-proclaimed and publically recognized as a gatekeeper of privilege (xi). For her history Wolff draws on private letters, architectural plans, contemporary publications such as newspapers and pamphlets, fine art, prior scholarship, and archival artifacts, many of which are proprietary.



Wolff's contribution to the plethora of studies on Brahmin Boston, and on the Athenaeum in particular, is her detached interrogation of both text and artifact to explore this institution through the development of the public and private identities of its members, aspirants, and critics. As such, the book succeeds remarkably in also revealing through portraiture the conflicts and ideals of America's nascent industrial and antebellum years.

As Wolff explains, the Athenaeum at its inception served as a private space where paying subscribers were granted access to a reading library, an art gallery, and a salon for congenial conversation among one's social peers. Many of the members, like Josiah Quincy, boasted colonial lineage, while others came from the industrial or professional classes. Members (read: men) also varied in their literary and academic expertise and aspirations. What united these men was a desire to preserve both the refinements and exclusions of their class and what Wolff calls the cultivation of a "restrained attitude toward public democracy" (7). Wolff describes the variety of this membership by describing representative examples of archetypes, such as the intellectual (George Ticknor, Harvard scholar and professor), the administrator (Josiah Quincy, mayor of Boston), the businessman (Nathan Appleton, successful manufacturer) and the amateur (William Smith Shaw, bibliophile and collector). Her introduction weaves an understanding of the Athenaeum as an assembly of "conflicted elite," a gathering of the powerful and connected who sought to uphold standards of gentlemanly conduct while engaged in the political and social conflicts roiling beneath its civilized exterior.

The book is divided into three sections, which organize her first-rate scholarship into key concepts relative to purposes and ideals of the institution. She terms these concepts and ideals Enterprise, Identity, and Conscience. Each section proceeds through two chapters that juxtapose the variety of ways the purposes and ideals are manifested through the members and the organization's "institutional discourse." Each chapter examines the important social issues of the day through biography, and this literary device illuminates simultaneously both the persons and the institution itself, while providing context for the great issues of the day.

The first section, Enterprise, traces the founding of the group and its reliance on British norms of personal and intellectual cultivation. Here, Wolff describes the Anthology Society, the literary predecessor of what was to become institutionalized as the Athenaeum. She also

portrays the institution's preoccupation with acquisition and legacy, in the person of William Shaw, whose initial collection of books and visual art became the seed of the Athenaeum's library.

In *Identity*, the second section, Wolff traces the development of the Athenaeum's distinguished record of literary and artistic patronage through a brief biography of Hannah Adams. Adams, a reputable scholar, wrote the *History of New-England*, long considered to be the first serious treatment of the region's theological and colonial beginnings. Adams was granted membership, resources, and access to the Athenaeum while at the same time "troubling" the male membership through her mere presence as a female in their midst, and here Wolff is her best at describing this central tension among the "conflicted elite." This section and its chapters highlight the ways in which the Athenaeum both deftly and awkwardly navigated public and private conflicts. Wolff is sympathetic and objective in her assessment of the Athenaeum's attempts to remedy Adams' suspect treatment at the hands of a fellow historian, and argues convincingly that Adams subverts the institution's status and resources to further her own intellectual pursuits.

Finally, in the third section, *Conscience*, Wolff outlines two other central tensions of the institution, its positions on abolition and on maintaining its subscription membership structure. During the 1830s and 1840s, Boston solidified its reputation as the center of anti-slavery activity in the North. Many of the wives and daughters of the Athenaeum's members conducted fund-raisers and other organized public displays of resistance to slavery. Wolff sums up this tension elegantly, writing, "In essence, the Athenaeum at midcentury operated within a context of contradiction—sustaining an environment of benevolent authority while simultaneously taking no public stand on the question of the day . . . the problem of slavery became a tightrope on which members precariously balanced" (110).

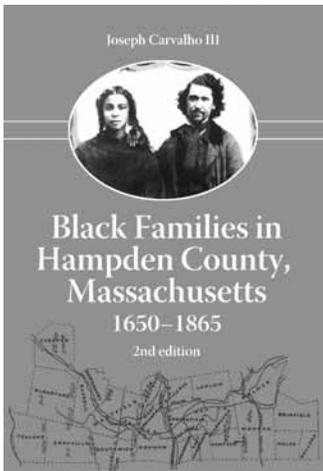
Again, Wolff offers a simultaneously sympathetic yet objective explanation for the elite Bostonians' resolution of this tension by describing the ways their considerable intellectual and aesthetic leadership overshadowed their lack of moral leadership on the issue of slavery. In the chapter "Pamphlet War," Wolff sheds new light on the Athenaeum's influence on the development of public libraries. More specifically, she portrays the tensions among the elite within and without the Athenaeum over whether to combine the Athenaeum with the Boston Public Library, the nation's first experiment in establishing a

tax-supported and publically accessible library. The pamphlet campaign waged by two Athenaeum members, George Ticknor (a supporter) and Josiah Quincy (an opponent), and their respective positions on the merger embodied the conflicting tensions of public and private purpose. That the Athenaeum elected to remain an independent subscription library, even to this day, does not obscure or diminish its influential role in the development of public libraries and the expansion of popular education.

This well-researched study is both satisfying and erudite, itself symbolizing the institution it illuminates within its pages. Wolff concludes that the “simple dedication to gather for aesthetic, intellectual and social refreshment is perhaps the Athenaeum’s greatest legacy” and suggests that the Athenaeum continues to provide an alternative to what she perceives as the increasingly solitary pursuits of Americans (151). Her book offers the reader the same, an intellectual and literary refreshment in the company of an articulate and knowledgeable guide.

Julia Zoino-Jeannetti is an assistant professor in the Education Department at Framingham State University, Framingham, MA.

***Black Families in Hampden County, Massachusetts: 1650-1865.* 2nd edition. By Joseph Carvalho III. Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2011. 400 pages. \$29.95 (hardback).**



The publication of the first edition of *Black Families in Hampden County, Massachusetts* in 1984 made its author, Joseph Carvalho III, a minor celebrity. He appeared on television, presented his research at conferences, and fielded inquiries from the public and local historians wishing to pursue similar studies. His second edition, which extends the chronology ten years to 1865, seems certain to increase his renown. The 400 pages of the second edition nearly double the 211 pages of the slender first.

For this new edition, Carvalho rewrote the preface, the importance of which lies in his careful review of new developments in

genealogical and family research since 1984. Chief among these developments has been the proliferation of online databases. Indeed, Carvalho used Ancestry.com to good effect in tracing the details of several people's lives. In the preface the author credits the interest in family and genealogical studies in the 1970s and 1980s with piquing his curiosity. He chose Hampden County, Massachusetts, because of its importance as a region of African American settlement. His disappointment that local histories of the region neglected African Americans led him to correct this oversight with this study. To the preface the author added new and expanded acknowledgements, as the list of people who aided him lengthened with the passage of time.

The introduction is likewise longer and more detailed than its counterpart in the first edition. It provides the context in which black individuals and families prospered or languished over the more than 200 years that this book covers. Carvalho cogently traces the history of Hampden County from its founding in the seventeenth century to 1865. Shortly after its founding, the first African American indentured servant, Peter Swinck, settled the region. After his term of indenture ended, Swinck became a successful landowner, proof that upward mobility was possible from the earliest days of Hampden County's existence. This impression gains strength from the prosperity of Rocco, a slave who bought his freedom and land in seventeenth-century western Massachusetts.

Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Massachusetts had both slaves and freedmen and women. Even Massachusetts' abolition of slavery in 1780 did not end the practice for several years, notes Carvalho. Western Massachusetts' black men of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries emerge from Carvalho's research as capable soldiers in the militia, the Continental Army of the American Revolution, and the Union Army during the Civil War. For example, Philip Anderson, born in the Caribbean, was the slave of a British officer. During the American Revolution, Anderson escaped to the Continental Army where he served for the war's duration. By the late eighteenth century, categories of race and class appear to have hardened, as Carvalho finds a number of blacks languishing as domestic servants and farm laborers. Laborers did not stay long in one place, forced by circumstances to move frequently. This way of life was hard on black families, many of whom lost children to the tumult of daily existence.

By the nineteenth century, the established black families of western Massachusetts were marrying migrants from Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. By then the African Americans of western Massachusetts were choosing occupations besides agriculture. Given the importance of the African American community, it seems surprising that

Springfield's first black church dates only to 1844. By the mid nineteenth century, Springfield had become a destination for runaway slaves from the South. The white elites of Springfield tended to support emancipation.

The core of Carvalho's book is a comprehensive, alphabetical list of African Americans. Some individuals receive brief treatment because of the dearth of records, but in other cases Carvalho amasses a person's date of birth and death, military service (if any), the names of spouse, parents, children and grandchildren, place of residence, occupation, cause of death, place of burial, and sources of information. The cause of death must have been difficult to determine because Carvalho supplies it for only a handful of individuals. For a sense of the completeness of Carvalho's research, one need only consider the life of Ruth Cox. A runaway slave who changed her name to Harriet, Ruth lived with Frederick Douglass between 1844 and 1847 and married Frank Perry. The couple were later befriended by John Brown. Carvalho documents the several residences Harriet and Frank occupied, where and when she died, where she was buried, and the names of her children and grandchildren. This information is more complete than some of today's newspaper obituaries. With depressing regularity, the individuals Carvalho documents were farm laborers, though some made the transition to farm owner. Other occupations included soldier, barber, railroad conductor, cook, plumber, ice merchant, steward aboard a steamship, minister, carpenter, restaurant and tavern owner, hairdresser, and real estate agent.

Black Families in Hampden County, Massachusetts is so engrossing that the reader may wish to know more. For instance, how large a proportion of Hampden County's African American community did Carvalho document? What was the mean life expectancy of men and women in this study? Carvalho mentions stillborn infants and, at the other end of the age spectrum, a 113 year old man. Others lived to be 98, 97 and 87, all remarkable ages even by today's standards. One might wish to know the mean length of residence at one locale given the mobility of the African American population. What proportion of Carvalho's sample was free? What proportion was slave before 1780? How many children did the average African American couple have, and how many survived into adulthood? Perhaps these questions will spur additional scrutiny of Hampden County's black families. Until then, Carvalho's work should be the standard by which family and genealogical research is measured.

Christopher Cumo is an independent scholar who received a Ph.D. in history from The University of Akron.

Capturing Japan in Nineteenth-Century New England Photography Collections. By Eleanor M. Hight. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2011. 228 pages. \$119.95 (hardcover).

The opening of Japanese ports to Americans following the arrival of Commodore Perry at Edo (Tokyo) Bay in July 1853 and the Treaty of Kanagawa in 1854 was a momentous event in the history of Japan that paved the way for cultural as well as economic exchange. The American transcontinental railroad, completed in 1869, and the Occidental and Oriental Steamship Company, which established a regular connection between the U.S. and Japan, ca. 1874, both helped make Japan relatively accessible to travelers from New England and elsewhere by the mid-1870s. *Capturing Japan in Nineteenth-Century New England Photography Collections*



traces the experiences of six New England travelers to Japan who gathered photographic documentation of a culture they believed would soon vanish because of the unstoppable pressures of industrialization, international commerce, and Westernization.

Eleanor M. Hight, Professor of Art History at the University of New Hampshire, describes the personal background and transformative experiences in Japan of unrestrained Charles Appleton Longfellow, son of Henry and Fanny Longfellow; zoologist Edward Sylvester Morse; surgeon William Sturgis Bigelow; socialite and art collector Isabella Stewart Gardner; historian Henry Adams, great-grandson and grandson of two American presidents; and schoolmistress Mary Alice Knox. Some went to Japan to escape the moral strictures of New England society, others for research, cultural enlightenment, or financial expediency. Hight looks closely at the tourism and collecting practices that influenced the flowering of “Japonisme” in late-nineteenth-century Boston and environs. The term was coined in 1872 by Frenchman Philippe Burty “to describe the West’s fascination with the newly revealed culture and its influence on Western art and thought” (1).

Boston became the U.S. center of enthusiasm for Japanese culture largely because of its post-Civil War prosperity and preexisting China-trade connections to the Far East. Boston-area cultural institutions accumulated

significant collections of Japanese ethnographic artifacts and art. The Boston Museum of Fine Arts, for example, acquired the largest collection of Japanese art outside Japan. Other important collecting institutions included Harvard University's Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston. Interspersed among older art forms in these repositories are nineteenth-century photographic collections acquired in Japan and brought back to New England by American travelers.

The book focuses on commercially produced images purchased by travelers, most of which were chosen from existing stock, but some of which were specially commissioned. Charles Appleton Longfellow, who enjoyed a wanton existence during his Japanese sojourn, posed for pictures with bebies of geisha and spent \$20,000 in one year. A letter from his impatient father (the famous poet) warned Charles that his property was being frittered away, that he was already "sufficiently Japanned," and that he should come home as soon as possible (20). Sturgis Bigelow, a Harvard-educated MD and the son and grandson of prominent medical men at the Massachusetts General Hospital, converted to Buddhism while in Japan. His father, Dr. Henry Jacob Bigelow, did not approve. Pictures that Sturgis commissioned include studio shots of him posing as a devout Japanese pilgrim.

Hight examines the role of collectors in "shaping a photographic market in Japan for foreigners," and addresses ways in which photographs "imprint mental images and suppositions about newly encountered peoples and places on their viewers" (3). She also analyzes what travelers wrote in diaries and letters home about their experiences in Japan. "[P]hotographs can document real experience while simultaneously creating an imaginary one," she explains, pursuing the "dual nature of photography" further by examining the photographs acquired by New Englanders, their individual motives for travel to Japan, the production and consumption of pictures, and their display and reception in America. "Together these. . . factors shaped the uses and. . . meanings assigned to the photographs at the time, [enriching] our understanding of photography's relation to colonialism, travel, and the construction of cultural knowledge in the later nineteenth century" (4).

Photographs reproduced in the book show Mt. Fuji and other notable landscapes, roads, shrines, villages, temples, and gates, depicted without modern intrusions. They also show people, like sad prostitutes in a cage, demure geisha, grim Ainu, sake vendors, sumo wrestlers, priests, kendo (bamboo sword fencing) opponents, and eroticized poses of "sleeping beauties"; as well as occupations like rice and tea cultivation, barbering, doctoring, laundering, and picture coloring. One of the more striking juxtapositions

shows studio photographs titled “Samurai Before” and “Samurai After.” The same Japanese man poses with traditional Samurai robes and weapons in a “before” scene and reappears awkwardly on a facing page in Western suit, top hat, and white gloves. The effect is bizarre (144-145). An especially gruesome photograph from the 1860s shows crucified or beheaded culprits at an execution site (with heads impaled on a fence). A few pictures illustrate how Japanese artifacts or ideas found a home in Massachusetts, for example, Charles Appleton Longfellow’s “Japan Room” in Cambridge and a Japanese garden in Brookline.

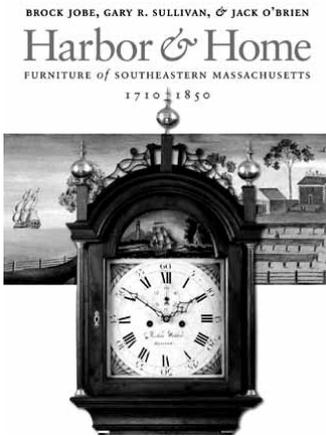
Preconceived notions of what Japan should be—often, it seems, in opposition to what Boston had become—directed New Englanders in their choice of photographs to bring home. These decisions, in turn, governed the choices made by photographers, who aimed to capture, or stage, the types of images that foreign visitors wanted to buy. “For New Englanders, photographs offered a way of knowing Japan, but most important for this group, they also offered a . . . vision of an ‘Old Japan,’ free from the encroachment of modernism” (190).

The book, although pricey for a volume of its size, is well-designed and beautifully illustrated with many examples of nineteenth-century photographs, including eleven color plates reproducing hand-colored photographs and one showing a collector’s album cover. Typographical errors appear here and there, for example, the poet Longfellow’s middle name was “Wadsworth,” not “Wordsworth” (17). But these are minor points. All things considered, *Capturing Japan in Nineteenth-Century New England Photography Collections* is an entertaining, informative, and highly readable account of an important facet of American cultural history.

Jeffrey Mifflin, archivist and curator of the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, is the author of many articles on historical and archival topics.

***Harbor & Home: Furniture of Southeastern Massachusetts, 1710-1850.* By Brock Jobe, Gary R. Sullivan, and Jack O’Brien. Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2009. 458 pages. \$75 (hardcover).**

Harbor & Home is the type of work that carries scholarship into context. This masterful and definitive work establishes the furniture of Southeastern Massachusetts as a specific and unique furniture style. With the Cape and Islands falling in between the stylistic beacons of Boston and Newport,



the distinctive style of the region was overshadowed. The exhaustive research put into this project finally brings to light the unique and important role this region has had on the American decorative arts and style of that period.

The book's layout as a hardcover compendium to the Southeastern Massachusetts Furniture Project is an asset to presenting the material. The book includes three introductory chapters that provide an overview of furniture making in the region followed by a catalog of items with photographs and detailed descriptions of each. By presenting piece by piece (a total of

106 are presented), the scholarship of the project emerges. Examples of this are plates 13.1-17, where side chairs are shown from different towns during or close to the same period. The chair splats show the stylistic differences of the craftsmen and towns while maintaining a similar stylistic motif. Having the numerous color examples laid out in progression reiterates the stylistic nuances that the book points out.

The introductory chapters give a valuable overview of the region. While the overview accomplishes the task of giving a sense of place for the craftsmen and examples they produced, the entire introductory section is only 44 pages. This portion of the book is interesting and engaging, leaving one wishing for 44 pages more of the writing. The catalog portion of the book gives further personal and town histories, carrying over the material of the introduction section. This layout and approach was used in Jobe's earlier work *Portsmouth Furniture: Masterworks from the New Hampshire Seacoast (1993)*. The use of the appendix list in *Harbor & Home* is considerably stronger than *Portsmouth Furniture*, but does lack the photographs of maker's marks and signatures that *Portsmouth Furniture* documents.

The appendix of the book is the real treasure of the project. A total of 1059 craftsmen of the region are not only identified, but their specific craft and towns are also indexed. This list is nothing short of monumental. One example of the detailed information included is "number 216, Bartlett Coffin, a Nantucket turner and chairmaker at work prior to 1794. Nantucket County probate record from 1794. Inventory includes turning tools, wheel, and chair timbers." The appendix goes further and shows details of

craftsmen-apprentice relationships and other connections that were present in the region.

Harbor & Home is an important and accomplished work in merging the decorative arts of Massachusetts' coast to the local histories that created them. It is one of the more significant recent publications in terms of adding new detailed scholarship to an overlooked stylistic region of decorative arts. While Jobe's 1984 publication *New England Furniture: The Colonial Era* gives one of the finest overviews and looks at the entire region, *Harbor & Home* carries this scholarship to a new level. This work has a strong appeal to a wide audience. *Harbor & Home* will easily appeal to the decorative art collector of Americana, but is also a certain must for the professional or scholar in both New England and Americana decorative arts. Brock Jobe's passion for the subject and region, along with his scholarship distilled from years of work, are on full display in *Harbor & Home*.

Adam Krakowski has a MS degree in Historical Preservation from the University of Vermont and is currently working as a conservator with Meeting House Furniture Restoration, based in Quechee, Vermont.

***The Prendergast Letters: Correspondence from Famine-Era Ireland, 1840-1850.* Shelley Barber (ed). Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006. 202 pages. \$29.95 (hardback).**

The Prendergast Letters assembles forty-eight letters, most of which James and Elizabeth Prendergast sent from Ireland to three of their children in Boston, Massachusetts. Boston College's John J. Burns Library houses this collection. The letters treat several topics, the most consequential being the Irish Potato Famine, a famine caused by the failure of the Irish potato crop between 1845 and 1849 that became one of the defining events of the nineteenth century and the last subsistence crisis in Europe.

In an October 1845 letter, James Prendergast, the family's patriarch, first refers to a blight that struck the potato crop. Caused



by the fungus *Phytophthora infestans*, the blight destroyed much of Ireland's potato crop—a major food source for Irish tenant farmers. The blight was particularly devastating because of Ireland's monoculture, a result of the tenant system in which English landowners demanded such high rents that Irish farmers could afford to devote only small parcels of land for their own needs. Farmers grew potatoes because it was a nutrient- and calorically dense subsistence crop. The average Irish laborer ate as many as fourteen pounds of potatoes per day along with milk and cabbage. This diet, though monotonous, provided at least 5400 calories (an amount that suggests how arduous work was). But potatoes infected with the blight rotted in the ground, and even those that farmers managed to harvest deteriorated soon afterwards. In the ensuing famine, one million perished and another 1.5 million left Ireland for North America, many settling in Boston.

The Prendergast letters offer a first-hand account of the famine and the national response to it. For example, in a letter to his three children in Boston dating after September 30, 1845, James Prendergast termed the blight “the dreaded calamity” and noted that had Parliament met to decide what to do (94). A December 1845 letter from James observed that famine had not yet gripped his locale. Parliament had created a commission, but its efforts had no results. Whether this commission included scientists is uncertain, but its members, with or without scientific guidance, could not determine the cause of the blight. James' letter of August 11, 1846, sounded a hopeful note despite his observation that “the Potatoe [sic] crop is much worse than the last” (98). He hoped for Parliament to act, but what he expected from it is unclear. His letter of November 20, 1846, was bleak, as if for the first time he perceived the threat of famine. Even the grain harvest yielded less than expected. Prendergast understood that Ireland needed foreign imports of food. Several other letters are in this vein, though it is important to note that James Prendergast and his countrymen were not alone. The potato crop failed throughout northern Europe as it had in Ireland after 1845. Misery was ubiquitous.

The Prendergast children who immigrated to the United States fared better than their parents. Of the six children of James and Elizabeth Prendergast, three immigrated to Boston: Julia, along with her husband Cornelius Riordan, and brothers Jeffrey and Thomas. These children knew that their parents were old, ailing, and in distress. Over several years the children sent James and Elizabeth 139 pounds sterling, an amount worth more than \$15,000 today. This money sustained the parents and is evidence that the children must have earned a decent wage in Boston. James Prendergast advised his sons to draw on their connections to other Irish men and women in Boston, and perhaps

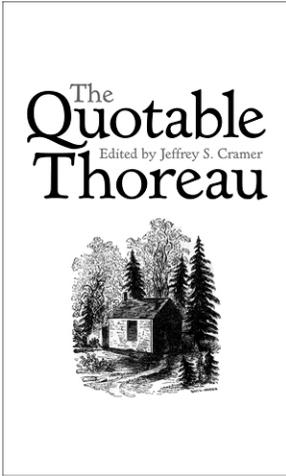
they helped Jeffrey and Thomas find work. Thomas was a coachman and Jeffrey a stabler. Julia might have relied on her husband's income, or perhaps she worked as well. James hoped his children would return to Ireland, but they never did. Like many other immigrants, the Prendergast trio sunk permanent roots in the United States. Boston in particular was a magnet for the Irish, who found work as laborers, dockworkers and firefighters. The Potato Famine quickened the pace of emigration from Ireland, and by the late nineteenth century Boston had a sizeable Irish enclave.

Once established in Boston, later generations of the Prendergast family achieved wealth and status. In this respect they epitomized the American Dream. The chapter "The Prendergast Family in America," contributed by Marie Daly, traces the Prendergasts' rise to prominence. Some members of the family earned enough money to buy property, which they passed to their heirs. At least two members of the family, James T. and John, were realtors. At his death in 1898 John held property worth \$18,000. Owning his own company, James Maurice Prendergast was prominent enough to consider campaigning for mayor of Boston, and as a philanthropist he donated money to Catholic charities and twenty acres to the Boston Association for the Relief and Control of Tuberculosis, which named the Prendergast Preventorium after him.

In addition to the letters and Daly's chapter, *The Prendergast Letters* contains a preface, an introduction, a chapter on the Prendergasts who remained in Ireland, a glossary, and a list of books and book chapters for further consultation. Although the letters focus on events in Ireland, the book provides the context to illuminate the fortunes of one family in the United States. *The Prendergast Letters'* principal value is in using the hopes, aspirations, and fears of one family to link both sides of the Atlantic. It will be a resource for students of immigration, ethnic studies, the Potato Famine, and social history. More studies of this kind are needed to give historians insight into the social, economic, and biological forces that shape human existence.

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The Quotable Thoreau. By Jeffrey S. Cramer (ed). Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011. 552 pages. \$19.95 (hardcover).



Few American writers have been more revered, and few are more puzzling, than Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), whose simple gravesite at the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery in Concord, Massachusetts, is a pilgrim's destination for environmentalists as well as proponents of civil disobedience. Jeffrey Cramer's new compilation of Thoreau quotations draws upon a variety of sources (including journals, articles, books, and letters) that give voice to Thoreau's many opinions and illustrate various aspects of his multifaceted life. An insightful preface, introduction, and biographical timeline orient readers to important people, circumstances, and events in Thoreau's life, which often provide the necessary background for full understanding of the quotations.

Cramer, curator of collections at the Thoreau Institute at Walden Woods, is well equipped to edit this welcome addition to the extensive literature surrounding the tangled thicket of Thoreau's personality and thought. Whenever possible, the editor relied on the Thoreau Edition of the *Writings of Henry D. Thoreau*, an ongoing project of Princeton University Press. For texts not yet available in the Thoreau Edition, he reverted to the less reliable Houghton Mifflin editions of 1906, cross-checking quotes against manuscript sources to ensure accuracy (xix). "The selections. . . were chosen not only to present the iconic Thoreau—social reformer, civilly disobedient citizen, environmentalist, self-reliant thinker—but also to show the man who thought about such varied topics as food, love, God, cities, women, and everything else that fell within his scope" (xiii). The volume brings together more than 2,000 passages on 150 topics. The quotations are arranged under rubrics such as "Freedom and Slavery," "Government and Politics," "History," "Individuality," "Nature," "Simplicity," "Society," "Solitude," "Walking," "Wildness," "Writing and Writers," and "The Animal in Us." Sections of special interest include: "Thoreau Describes His Contemporaries"; "Thoreau Described by His Contemporaries"; and "Questions," which posits an assortment of open-ended inquiries (addressed to himself as well as his readers) considered by Thoreau in his ceaseless striving for self-awareness.

Many quotations included in the book concern more than one theme and could have been assigned to more than one category. A slender index attempts to ameliorate this problem, and does so to a limited extent. But readers used to the more generous indexing available in collections like Bartlett's Familiar Quotations may find the index provided here difficult to use. One of Thoreau's more famous statements, "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation" is, for example, found in the section titled "Human Nature: The Mass of Men," but is not indexed under "desperation," "life," "masses," or any other appropriate entry (148).

"This world is but a canvass to our imaginations," Thoreau wrote in *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (xxx). He typically used exterior surroundings as a canvas against which to develop and express his thoughts. *Walden*, Cramer suggests, is "not a book about a man living in the woods but one about a man living" (xxxiv). Thoreau's "thoughts on living deliberately, on how we should live our lives, and on the influence of nature merged into a truly American work at a time when literature in the United States was just beginning to find its voice" (xxx).

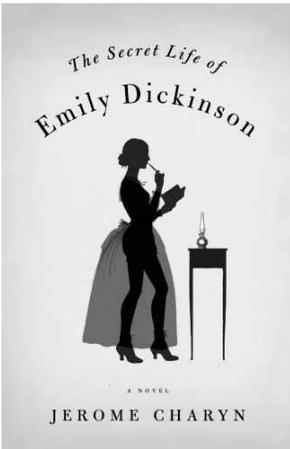
Thoreau was a vegetarian who ate meat, a pacifist who condoned violence, and a conservationist who surveyed woodlots to earn money (xxi). He had many convictions, but was jealous of his time and chose not to devote himself to any movement, not even to the abolition of slavery. He did not thereby disavow emancipation and reform, but rather "turn[ed] inward toward self-emancipation and self-reformation" (xxxii). "In the collection," Cramer warns, are "contradictory statements on the same theme," positions that do not "always fall clearly on any one side of a debate" (xiii). Thoreau's opinions, even within the same passage, often need to be puzzled out like the interpretation of a prose poem, or the solution to a riddle. Ralph Waldo Emerson, Thoreau's sometime mentor, acknowledged his younger friend's many talents, but expressed exasperation about his argumentative disposition: "Always some weary captious paradox to fight you with, and the time and temper wasted" (448). It may well be that the iconic Thoreau who serves as a symbol of civil disobedience and environmental preservation is superior to the quirky, cranky, and inscrutable man who inhabits the pages of *The Quotable Thoreau*.

The text is nicely complemented by evocative illustrations from the collections of The Thoreau Society and The Thoreau Institute at Walden Woods. Compactly and durably bound in green cloth, the volume fits neatly into knapsack or coat pocket, and seems ideally suited for an afternoon's saunter in the woods. *The Quotable Thoreau* is not meant to be read all at once. It should, rather, be savored bit by bit for maximum engagement,

preferably in outdoor settings at various times of the year. Readers would be well advised to digest a page or two each day, consider the passages, and accept or reject them according to preference. Thoreau might have quibbled with your objections, but he would have approved your individuality. “Could a greater miracle take place,” he wrote, “than for us to look through each other’s eyes for an instant?” (15).

Jeffrey Mifflin, Archivist and Curator of the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, is the author of many articles on historical and archival topics.

***The Secret Life of Emily Dickinson.* By Jerome Charyn. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010. 348 Pages. \$ 24.95 (Hardcover).**



Among Jerome Charyn’s achievements are being named a finalist for the Pen/Faulkner award, winning the Rosenthal Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and *The Secret Life of Emily Dickinson*. His latest novel brings us into the mind of one of America’s most significant writers. Charyn tracks Dickinson’s life from her schooldays at Mount Holyoke in 1848 and closes with her death in 1886. The book’s language resonates in a harmonious unison of sexuality, fact, fiction, comedy, and tragedy, and chimes with alliteration, assonance, consonance, and cacophony. Postmodern readers will find Charyn’s new book a detailed look into the life of Emily Dickinson.

The novel opens on a snow filled New England day. Snow is an important element in the novel’s setting because it signifies a typical New England winter and the domestication Dickinson experienced in her life. What brings emphasis to the Dickinson home and Mount Holyoke are the snow-covered roofs and window panes that keep whatever energy is mounting enclosed within their walls. Readers can almost picture Dickinson sitting by the window composing her poetry and letters. This imagery is presented in the photos that begin every section. Included in the pictures are those of Dickinson’s home, clothing, and school. In my estimation the photos are excellent introductions to each part of the book.

Jerome Charyn's plot is one of profound allegory, triumph, and imagination. It starts in rural New England with a young Emily Dickinson observing Tom the Handyman rescuing a baby deer from the winter snow. The scene, like the rest of the novel, is rendered in Dickinson's own first-person voice:

Then came the melody of Tom's design. He is not on a meandering march. He is searching in the snow. He sinks again, & I fear that Siberia has swallowed him until he rises up with a creature in his arms, a baby deer frozen with fright, looking like an ornament on some cradle & not a living thing. It must have wandered far from its family & panicked in the snow. Lord, I cannot see its eyes. But Tom the Handyman keeps the stunned little doe above his head & tosses it into the air as you would a sack. And what seems like an act of consummate cruelty isn't cruel at all. The little doe unlocks its legs and starts to leap. What a silent ballet before my eyes! A baby deer gliding above the snow, conquering our little Siberia in half a dozen leaps, & disappearing into the forest, while Tom watches until the doe is safe (20).

Although the doe runs off on its own and is never again seen, it remains a symbol of purity and innocence.

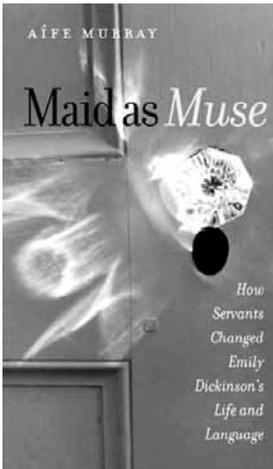
Structuring the story around Dickinson's poetry and letters, Charyn imagines times in Dickinson's life when she would contemplate herself, family, and New England. In the preface, Charyn writes that he set out to capture Dickinson's voice, with "all its modulations and tropes" (13). Indeed, the novel offers an excellent mixture of powerfully alliterative language and exceptional narrative structure that let the reader penetrate into Dickinson's home and mind, ultimately to discover what Charyn terms her secret life. Dickinson's simple white cotton clothing remains a sign of nineteenth century femininity, particularly "The Cult of True Womanhood," a term historian Barbara Welter used to describe the values of piety, submission, virtue, and domesticity to which middle and upper class white women of the nineteenth century were expected to conform. Scholars of her work have noted that her elusive, satiric, and gothic writing style allowed Dickinson to defy being categorized as subservient.

Charyn aims his novel at readers of nineteenth century American literature and is one that his audience will enjoy for its linguistic innovations and detailed imagery of Dickinson's life, conflicts, and family. *The Secret Life of Emily Dickinson* is a relevant novel to Massachusetts history that explores

the development of perhaps the most significant female poet in American literature in an area that has traditionally been defined as the core of United States culture. Emily Dickinson remains an important writer in the American canon for her influence on poetic convention.

Gerardo Del Guercio teaches English at the Royal Military College (Saint-Jean), and his first book, The Limits of the Law: The Fugitive Slave Law in Frederick Douglass' 1845 Narrative and Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin, is forthcoming from the Edwin Mellen Press.

Maid as Muse: How Servants Changed Emily Dickinson's Life and Language. By Aífe Murray. Durham, New Hampshire: University of New Hampshire Press, 2009. 299 pages. \$35.00 (hardcover).



Maid as Muse: How Servants Changed Emily Dickinson's Life and Language demonstrates that the poet's association with "the working classes" had direct, profound influence on the Amherst poet's productivity and artistry. The book is therefore useful to social historians as well as scholars of literature. The general reader will enjoy the intriguing "upstairs/downstairs" characters in a great American context that Murray vividly brings to life.

Emily Dickinson was a white, middle-class woman in a century of strife, including slavery, wars against American Indians, westward expansion, and the Civil War. Murray also notes that in 1850, when Dickinson was twenty years old, there were for the first time in U.S. history more "wage-earners" than the self-employed or those with independent means (146). Dickinson is often portrayed as a reclusive genius removed from that context of conflict and change. However, as Adrienne Rich writes in *What is Found There: Notebooks on Poetry and Politics*, that is one of "the masks [Dickinson and Walt Whitman] created for themselves and those clapped on them." And Murray's book argues that, despite the poet's efforts to retreat from society, she ran a quite porous—perhaps hierarchical, but hardly aristocratic—American household.

Dickinson daily interacted with European immigrant, Native American, and African American servants and laborers. Murray explores their lives and also finds convincing evidence of ways Dickinson's poetic syntax reflects their speech "mixed with English vernacular" (18). Her early correspondence indicates disdain for them, but her feelings changed over time. In accord with a Yankee upbringing, "Emily hadn't wanted poor people visible," Murray asserts, but "eventually she desired to get lost amid their invisibility" (173).

The author's research was challenging because of nonexistent or incomplete records of these individuals from classes and races marginalized by the prevailing culture. However, one personality left a clearer trail, both in surviving documents and between the lines of Dickinson's poetry. Irish immigrant Margaret Maher, known as Maggie, served as a maid for the Dickinson family for thirty years. Often working with Emily in the kitchen, she became "as much a soulmate as a servant," and ultimately, tended to the poet on her deathbed (20).

The presence of Maggie and other housekeepers provided impetus for the "mistress" to become an incredibly prolific and innovative writer. The young Dickinson bemoaned how housekeeping stole her "mind, and soul" (73). *Maid as Muse* makes a solid case that Dickinson had time to write significantly more poems and letters when there was a servant in the house. That correlation, however sensible it may appear, has been overlooked by other scholars. Murray actually quantifies it.

On the other hand, without any daily chores, Dickinson might have lacked a key source of inspiration. While our mythic view of her is one of meditative isolation, she was in fact usually busy and interactive. Murray writes, "If the parlor was the fixed façade of Puritan Amherst, the kitchen was the nexus, the most creative room in the house dominated by a mix of voices and purposes" (99). Emily Dickinson worked and wrote there, scribbling poems on recipes or bills for milk, influenced by the language of her milieu. Juxtaposing Maggie's letters, family recipes, and Emily's works-in-progress helps to elucidate potential sources of her exceptional punctuation, cadence, and verbal invention.

Murray's book makes important observations about the regard Emily Dickinson grew to have for members of the so-called "underclass." First, before her death, Dickinson did not elect relatives or leading citizens to be her pallbearers, as was the custom. Instead, she chose her family's mostly Irish "faithful workmen," a clear indication of affinity (187).

Second, and most significantly, she entrusted Maggie with her literary legacy, storing finished poems in Maggie's trunk, and asking her maid to burn them upon her death. In "a spirited, defiant act," Maggie refused (204).

Murray makes the case that Maggie must have rebelled not only out of affection for the artist, but also out of respect for the art. After all, Margaret Maher grew up in Tipperary, a “locus of literary interest” in Ireland (207). Her regard for the poet led her to clean Mabel Loomis Todd’s house, without compensation, solely because Todd was engaged in “editing Miss Emily’s poems” after her death (205). Moreover, the only existing daguerreotype portrait of Dickinson was in Maggie’s hands. She provided it to illustrate the first publication, posthumously, of Dickinson’s poems.

Murray enlivens this story of “invisible” relationships with several fictionalized narratives of what might have occurred. These passages—along with some speculation, and riskily “blurring the writer’s narrative voice with the actual person”—might enhance the book for some readers and detract from it for others (169). For scholars, she thoroughly substantiates her conclusions through interviews with the servant descendants, an extensive bibliography, photographs, and chronologies of both the Dickinsons and their employees. An appendix includes a “gem” Murray’s research uncovered, a previously unpublished essay by Josephine Pollitt Pohl that prefigured Murray’s work.

It is hard to imagine what our view of Emily Dickinson would be today had the loyal, insightful Maggie not preserved those handwritten manuscripts and that now-iconic photographic image. Fortunately, Aífe Murray’s detective work, in turn, preserves this compelling story of Margaret Maher and other hitherto invisible muses who influenced the poet.

Jeanne Julian, former communications administrator at Westfield State University, lives in North Carolina.

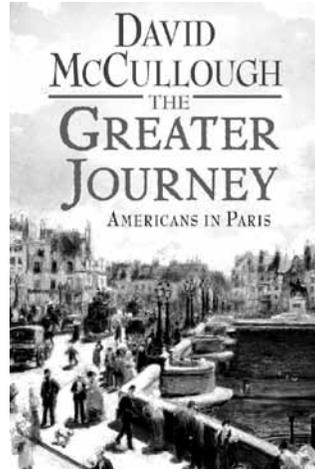
***The Greater Journey: Americans in Paris.* By David McCullough. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011. 558 pages. \$37.50 (hardcover).**

David McCullough’s *The Greater Journey* follows the stories of Americans who traveled to or established residence in the alluring French capital between 1830 and 1900. Significant events and developments in fields such as art, medicine, and technology intersected with the lives of many talented American sojourners in Paris, and ideas and influences absorbed in France found their way in due course to the North American homeland. The book is based upon detailed research in correspondence and diaries, as well as other primary and secondary sources. The experiences, perceptions, and

accomplishments of the expatriot individuals chosen for inclusion add up to a compelling, if somewhat digressive, reading experience.

Prominent among the Americans in Paris were visitors from Massachusetts. Bay Staters whose Parisian adventures are recounted in the book include historian Henry Adams; novelist Louisa May Alcott; telephone inventor Alexander Graham Bell; physician Henry Bowditch; clergyman Phillips Brooks; architect Charles Bulfinch; Harvard President Charles W. Eliot; poet and transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson; feminist Margaret Fuller; American impressionist Childe Hassam; novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne; Harvard Medical School professor, poet, and “breakfast table” wit Oliver Wendell Holmes; painter and illustrator Winslow Homer; novelist and *Atlantic Monthly* editor William Dean Howells; scientist Charles Jackson; physician James Jackson, Jr.; novelist and literary critic Henry James; psychologist William James; poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow; painter and inventor Samuel Morse; abolitionist Charles Sumner; and surgeon John Collins Warren, followed by his son, Jonathan Mason Warren. After travels in France and elsewhere, socialite Isabella Stewart Gardner started an eponymous museum still frequented in Boston’s Fenway neighborhood, reflecting her sui generis character as well as the fascination that well-situated Americans harbored for the culture and cultural trappings of the old world.

The most striking aspect of this beautifully printed volume is the well-stocked, 48-page assortment of color and monochrome plates, including genre scenes, cityscapes, architectural views, portraits, journal entries, lecture and exhibit tickets, technical illustrations, reproductions of influential art works, and scenes depicting art studios and galleries. Pictures showing the Atlantic cable being laid, Communard corpses on public display, Gambetta’s daring balloon escape during the Siege of Paris, and a French diligence (i.e., a stagecoach) share space with portrait photographs and paintings of the book’s many *dramatis personae*. French notables like Baron Haussmann, Napoleon III, Empress Eugenie, and Pierre-Charles-Alexandre Louis are depicted along with scores of Americans who traveled to Paris to learn medicine, polish artistic technique, have broadening experiences, or indulge in pleasures not readily available—or socially condoned—in the United States.



The book places welcome emphasis on the visual arts. Textual descriptions and visual depictions of artists at work effectively complement one another. Numerous color plates of artists practicing their craft include: Augustus Saint-Gaudens sculpting a bas-relief (plate 64); John Singer Sargent perfecting his compact gem, “The Breakfast Table” (plate 77); and art students intent upon their work at the crowded Académie Julian (plate 81).

Samuel Morse went to Paris to study painting, but eventually became more famous as the inventor of the telegraph. His ideas for a system for sending messages electronically were based on his observations of French semaphore communications, but Harvard chemist and physician Charles Jackson later claimed that Morse stole the concept during shipboard conversations the two had while returning from France in 1832. Morse was also the first American to bring back news from Paris of Louis Daguerre’s photographic process. His enthusiastic description of daguerreotypes, published in the *New York Observer* in April 1839, was quickly picked up and disseminated by other newspapers around the country.

Charles Sumner, a lawyer who later became a Massachusetts legislator and renowned abolitionist—and was nearly caned to death on the floor of Congress by a pro-slavery brute—recorded his youthful impressions of Paris in a carefully kept journal. His opinions about civil rights were guided and shaped by what he observed. A journal entry from 1838 commends the positive reception afforded black students at the Sorbonne, conjecturing that the gulf between blacks and whites in the U.S. was “derived from education, and does not exist in the nature of things” (131).

The book’s most cohesive chapter, “The Medicals” (103-156), follows the experiences of young American doctors and medical students who flocked to Paris seeking practical training less easily attained at home. Between 1830 and 1860 some 700 Americans went to Paris to study medicine, “and nearly all returned. . . greatly benefited by what they had learned” (132). The intrepid Elizabeth Blackwell studied in Paris because adequate medical education was unavailable for women in America. She returned to the U.S. as the country’s first female doctor and founded the New York Infirmary and College for Women, a hospital run entirely by women.

The highly regarded doctor Pierre Louis was particularly sought after by American “medicals,” and his observations “gave impetus to the scientific study of medicine in the United States” (133). One of the principal attractions of Paris for medical and surgical study was the cheap and legal acquisition of cadavers for dissection. The scant supply of bodies in the U.S., hampered by various laws, led some to resort secretly to grave robbers or their accomplices. Before 1831, the sale of human bodies in Massachusetts was illegal; a new law

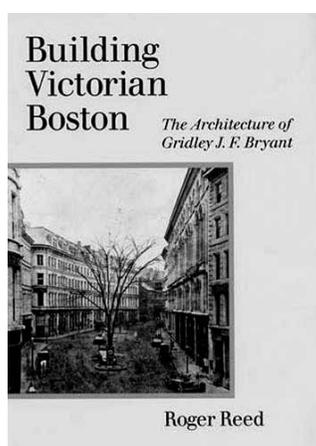
thereafter “permitted only. . . corpses buried at public expense, which meant mainly the bodies of those who died in prison” (115). In Paris, corpses were openly delivered by the cartload. The stone-floored Amphithéâtre d’Anatomie could accommodate six hundred anatomists or anatomy students at the same time. “Disposal of. . . discarded pieces was managed by feeding them to dogs kept in cages outside” (117).

Although the book’s evocative episodes incorporate many stories brimming with human interest and colorful details, the overall presentation seems rambling and somewhat disorganized. Characters are often introduced and then dropped for many pages, the text jumping from one person or scene to another with an aplomb usually reserved for novels. This narrative device builds anticipation, but its overuse in a work of history can strain a reader’s patience. *The Greater Journey* is nevertheless a treasure trove of gripping anecdotes about adventurous people and the paths whereby French ways influenced American culture in the mid to late nineteenth century.

Jeffrey Mifflin, archivist and curator of the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, is the author of many articles on historical and archival topics.

***Building Victorian Boston: The Architecture of Gridley J. F. Bryant.* By Roger Reed. Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007. 256 pages. Illustrations. Plans. \$39.95 (hardcover).**

The names Charles Bulfinch, Alexander Parris, and H.H. Richardson immediately spring to mind when one thinks about nineteenth-century Boston architecture. But architect Gridley James Fox Bryant was even more prolific, responsible for hundreds of public, commercial, and domestic projects in Boston as well as smaller cities and towns throughout New England. He designed more buildings between 1840 and 1880 than any other Boston architect and dominated the local profession between 1850 and 1872. He is less known today than other leading architects because much of his life’s work was destroyed by the catastrophic Boston fire of 1872. Roger



Reed's well-researched monograph about Bryant's life and career does much to restore him to his rightful position in the history of architecture.

Bryant did not leave behind a centralized archive documenting his projects. Reed conducted extensive research, perusing original drawings, specifications, construction contracts, floor plans, published renderings, newspaper descriptions, correspondence, and historical photographs owned by a variety of libraries, public records offices, museums, and historical societies. The book synthesizes these scattered troves of information into a coherent, well-illustrated narrative detailing Bryant's career. Background information found throughout the book affords an interesting, more general view of the architectural profession in New England at a time when quaint communities were being transformed by railroads and commerce, and Boston was emerging as a metropolis.

One of the keys to Bryant's success was his familiarity with construction techniques and construction management, skills he acquired during early years of employment before receiving any architectural commissions. Another factor was his knack for self-promotion. He often distributed illustrated leaflets promoting his designs and was adept at getting publicity by means of the illustrated press. Reed does an excellent job of describing how architects, builders, and clients interacted in mid-nineteenth-century New England. Waterfront warehouse lots, for example, were often sold before construction; arrangements specified that client and architect would share the costs of driving the pilings needed for a firm foundation. Details about costs and compensation are illuminating and somewhat surprising. For example, the old Boston City Hall—designed by Bryant with Arthur Gilman, 1862-1865—cost \$505,000, of which \$11,000, or about two percent, went to the architects.

Bryant's many noteworthy projects included Harvard Medical School (1846-1847) on North Grove Street, adjacent to the Massachusetts General Hospital; Mariners House (1846) in Boston's North End; the Suffolk County Jail (a.k.a. the Charles Street Jail, 1848-1851); John Tucker Daland House (1851-1852), Salem; Ballou Hall (1852) at Tufts College, Medford; Massachusetts State House additions (1853-1856); the Weld-Beebe Block at Winthrop Square, Boston (1860-1862); the Boston City Hospital (1862-1864); and numerous business blocks, prisons, schools, town halls, and warehouses. Many of his projects with Gilman featured mansard roofs and showed other influences of France's Second Empire style to a point where it could be said that the "Athens of America" was being transformed in the mid-nineteenth century into the "Paris of America" (130).

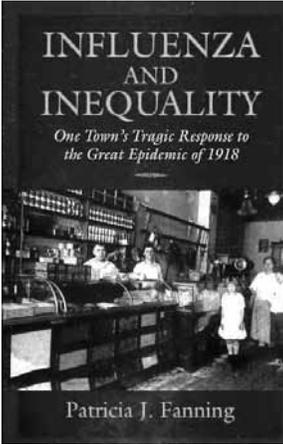
Reed attempts to sort out the complex arrangements that Bryant maintained with his collaborators, salaried employees, and architectural students. His only formal partnership was with Louis P. Rogers, but many projects benefited from the unspecified contributions of others. Bryant's firm was noted for its ability to adapt to circumstances, and some of the conditions under which he worked were more than a little challenging. He is best remembered not "as a man of remarkable genius," but rather "as a hard and constant professional worker. . . . In an age when there were no standards for determining who could call himself an architect, Bryant rose to the head of his profession by establishing a reputation as a man who, in the best tradition of the nineteenth century, could get the job done" (173).

The book contains a well-chosen bibliography and lists extant architectural drawings and lithographic renderings related to Bryant's projects, indicating which repository owns each document. A useful chronology of significant projects (1838-1890) is found in Appendix 2. Endnotes anchor the text by citing documentary resources while also furnishing a wealth of supplementary detail. The numerous illustrations (elevations, historical photographs, woodcuts, etc.) are often beautiful as well as informative (see, for example, the view of Franklin Street toward Devonshire Street, 88; Arlington Street Church, 127; and Lynn City Hall, 134).

Many of Bryant's buildings are described in daunting detail employing an architect's precise vocabulary, and the absence of a glossary of architectural terminology is the book's only serious shortcoming. Assiduous readers lacking the requisite expertise may find themselves running repeatedly to an architectural dictionary for clarifications. *Building Victorian Boston* is not likely to be read in its entirety by non-specialists, but most readers will relish the illustrations and should have little difficulty understanding the less technical portions of the text.

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Influenza and Inequality: One Town's Tragic Response to the Great Epidemic of 1918. By Patricia J. Fanning. Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010. 167 pages. \$22.95 (paperback).



The consensus among historians and scientists is that the influenza pandemic of 1918 and 1919 was the worst outbreak of disease in history. The virus struck in three waves. The first, in spring 1918, was comparatively mild and followed a typical flu pattern. While many became ill, the number who died, largely children and the elderly, was not alarming. Perhaps because the first wave of flu was not especially lethal, public health officials and the public were unprepared for the second wave in autumn 1918. The results were catastrophic, in part because the virus might have mutated into an astonishingly virulent form that was particularly lethal to young adults.

Those not killed by the virus itself often succumbed to a secondary infection of pneumonia. The third wave, ending in 1919, was not as virulent as the second, but when it ran its course, the pandemic had killed twenty-five to thirty million people worldwide, though some scholars believe the figure might be higher. Five hundred thousand to 750,000 perished in the United States alone.

Known as the Spanish flu, the Spanish Lady or, more generically, the gripe, the pandemic of 1918 and 1919 is the subject of Patricia J. Fanning's *Influenza and Inequality*, a work focused on one community, Norwood, Massachusetts, where her grandparents, parents, and she had lived. The narrative is a personal one because her paternal grandmother died during the outbreak, a fact that Fanning's father never mentioned. Fanning's history is social and political, addressing how Norwood's leaders fared so poorly in combating the disease. In the nineteenth century, Norwood grew as industries attracted immigrants: Germans, Irish, Swedes and Finns at first and, at the turn of the twentieth century, Lithuanians, Poles, Italians, Syrians, and Lebanese. These immigrants did not readily assimilate into the Anglo-Saxon culture of the elites but formed their own enclaves. Swedeville housed Swedes and Finns, Dublin the Irish, and the Flats to the south the immigrants of southern and eastern Europe. The inhabitants of the Flats were poor, living four families to a space that should have accommodated only one. The tenements of the district were overcrowded and unsanitary. The elites of

Norwood took little notice of these immigrants, and when they did they stereotyped them as ignorant, mentally and physically deficient, unsanitary, and lazy. Progressives believed that they could educate immigrants to be industrious, civic minded and patriotic. Progressives held out the prospect of Americanization. Nativism, which also had its adherents in Norwood, held that immigrants harbored diseases and radical ideologies. They could not be rehabilitated and were best kept out of Norwood and the United States.

Influenza assailed Norwood in September 1918, with the first fatality on September 19 being a poor, immigrant woman. Norwood's authorities initially denied that the outbreak was serious. When they belatedly acknowledged reality they opened a second hospital near the center of town, apparently some distance from the ethnic enclaves. Because it was in an area unfamiliar to immigrants, they feared going to it. As late as 1921 a survey of Italians, Russians and Poles noted that they thought of hospitals as warehouses for the dead and dying and refused to go to them. In 1918 health officials, sensing the reluctance of immigrants to be hospitalized, had inspected the tenements of the Flats for flu victims. No one intruded on the elites in this way. The authorities blamed immigrants for their plight, noting the unsanitary conditions under which they lived. One physician, observing the presence of flies in immigrant dwellings, believed that these insects transmitted influenza from person to person. Beset by a malady that they did not understand, immigrants tried folk remedies without success. Italians wore necklaces of garlic, but these were impotent against the virus. Norwood's immigrants were treated no better in death. Those without a family were buried in unmarked graves. The names of immigrants were misspelled on death certificates and grave markers. Norwood was not an isolated story of injustice. Blacks in Newark, New Jersey; Latinos in San Diego, California, New Mexico and San Antonio, Texas; Japanese in Oregon and Fresno, California; and native Alaskans and Native Americans in several localities all died in disproportionate numbers.

Historians once thought that the pandemic struck down its victims irrespective of class or ethnicity. Fanning dispels this error, demonstrating that immigrants and the poor in Norwood died in disproportionate numbers. When influenza had completed its conquest, 66.7 percent of Norwood's dead were immigrant adults and 11.1 percent the children of immigrants. By contrast, only 22.2 percent of fatalities were U.S. born adults. No child of a U.S. born parent died in Norwood of influenza. More than half the dead had lived in the Flats. Also hard hit were Dublin, Swedeville and the enclave of Cork City. Lithuanians, Poles, Italians, and Irish composed the largest number of dead.

Like Alfred W. Crosby before her, Fanning wonders why many Americans either do not know about the pandemic or do not regard it as a central episode in their history. Coming at the end of World War I, influenza did not dislodge the war from the headlines. Moreover, the pandemic swept the world quickly. Humans did not live under a death sentence for years as they had during the Black Death of the fourteenth century. Perhaps the most disquieting reason for the pandemic's transience in America's memory is that a large number of its victims were members of marginalized groups. The immigrants and poor were easily forgotten.

Although Fanning is a sociologist, *Influenza and Inequality* is history. She uses primary sources—newspaper articles, local government reports, institutional documents, memoirs, diaries, letters and oral histories—in her study. This well-researched and written account should attract students of history and science. Fanning concludes this work with two appendices listing the names of the people who died of influenza during Norwood's epidemic. The dead are forgotten no longer.

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