**The Colonial Society of Massachusetts**

Minutes of the 122nd Annual Meeting of the Membership

Held at the Society’s House

87 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston

20 November 2014

President Donald R. Friary called the meeting to order at 6.00 P.M.

The reading of the minutes of the 2013 Annual Meeting was waived.

**1. Report of the Membership Committee.** Celeste Walker, chair of the committee, reported that the membership of the Society stands at 322 members: 188 resident members, 122 non-resident members, and 12 honorary members.

During the past year, the changes in membership were as follows:

David B. Ingram, a resident member since 1990, died on July 2

Michael Kammen, a non-resident member since 1964, died on November 29, 2013

Caleb Loring Jr., a resident member since 1988, died November 24, 2013

William Pencak a non-resident member since 1987, died on December 9, 2013

Jesper Rosenmeier, a resident member since 1994, died on April 3

Members stood for a moment of silence.

Celeste reported one resignation from William Tramposch, a non-resident member since 2000. The following new members were welcomed:

***Honorary Members***

Drew Faust, of Cambridge

Henry Lee, of Boston

Mary Beth Norton, of Ithaca, NY

Gordon Wood, of Providence, RI

***Resident Members***

Margaret Bendroth, of Boston

Robert Cordy, of Boston

Leslie Eckel, of Boston

Nonie Gadsden, of Boston

Samantha Nelson, of Boston

Richard Pickering, of Plymouth

Lynne Spencer, of Boston

Justin L. Wyner, of Boston

***Non-resident Members***

Richard J. Bell, of College Park, Maryland

Edwin G. Fischer, MD, of Newport, R.I.

Heather M. Kopelson, of Tuscaloosa, Alabama

Christopher P. Magra, of Knoxville, Tennessee

Sarah Rivett, of Princeton, NJ

The following nominations, approved at the June and September Council meetings will be voted upon at the Society’s December Stated Meeting.

Jennifer Anderson, of Stony Brook, NY

Evan Haefeli, of College Station, Texas

Michael Hill, of Fredericksburg, Virginia

Peter Mancall, of Los Angeles, CA

Celeste then thanked the other members of the committee: Lorna Condon, Marla Miller, Alan Rogers, John Tyler, and Donald Friary.

**2. Report of the Treasurer.**

President Friary then yielded the chair to Christopher Jedrey, for the election of officers.

**3. Report of the Nominating Committee.** James O’Toole, chair of the Nominating Committee, thanked the other members of the committee, Karen Nipps and Nathaniel Sheidley, and read the slate of nominees:

President Donald R. Friary

Vice Presidents Robert Allison, Dan Coquillette, Celeste Walker

Recording Secretary Leslie A. Morris

Corresponding Secretary Martha J. McNamara

Treasurer Thomas R. Appleton

Member of Council, Thomas Paine (2017) 3-year term

Continuing members of

Council Robert Bellinger (2015), Lorna Condon (2016)

There were no nominations from the floor. Chris Jedrey moved the slate of officers and councilor.

**VOTED:** To approve the slate as read. Approved unanimously.

President Friary resumed the chair, and thanked the membership.

**4. Report of the Curator.** Elton Hall began by thanking the many members who have volunteered their help on the House Committee. In particular, he thanked Robert Mussey, who took digital photographs of all of the rooms in the house, and much of the furniture. The backup copy of these photos is kept in the Treasurer’s office. Member Lynne Spencer, and her colleague Patrick Guthrie, oversaw the installation of an HVAC system for the first and second floors. Repairs to the house this year included the replacement of the hot water heater, which failed on the day of the Pauline Maier symposium.

Work nears completion on the inventory of the House contents; this is preliminary to an appraisal for insurance purposes, to be done by Skinner.

Last winter there was an auction of the estate of Charles Paine Fisher, a son of the donor of this house. Don, Tom Paine, and Toby met at Skinner’s to view the auction. Tom Paine purchased Hannah Farnham Lee’s collection of her own books, many of which were written while she lived here in the house. The books are now shelved in the library. Toby also thanked Robert Severy, who underwrote the conservation of a landscape painting that hangs in the dining room. Toby also thanked Don Friary and the Marketing Committee by giving a book launch for his book on Rocky Stinehour this year.

**5. Report of the Editor of Publications.** John Tyler said that during the past year, two new books joined the long shelf of blue and gold Colonial Society bindings: the first volume of *The Correspondence of Thomas Hutchinson* and the sixth and final volume of *Portrait of a Patriot: The Major Political and Legal Papers of Josiah Quincy Jr.* John then provided a summary of the events in Hutchinson’s life that were covered in this first volume, describing Hutchinson as a remarkable man with an remarkably clear prose style, eloquent, a man who took pride in his accomplishments and talents. He never really understood the wave of popular politics that swept over him in the 1760s and ‘70s; it was a new and unanticipated phenomenon. He was conscientious to a fault, a bit legalistic and inflexible in his thinking. Josiah Quincy Jr., of course, did not have a good word to say about him, as this last volume, containing his newspaper contributions, amply shows.

Volumes 4 and 5 of *The Papers of Francis Bernard* are already in production and they will be the first Colonial Society volumes to be produced simultaneously as both traditionally bound books and in an electronic format. Editors Brock Jobe and Gerry Ward are hard at work on the 19 essays that were originally presented at the conference “New Perspectives on Boston Furniture, 1630-1860” cosponsored by the Colonial Society and the Winterthur Museum in March 2013. Next to appear will be Douglas Winiarski’s edition of the Josiah Cotton diary and the Letter and Account Books of John Hull edited by David Hancock and Mark Peterson. Earlier this fall the Publications Committee approved a new proposal from Fellow Member Thomas Knoles for a revised and more complete version of the diary of Salem minister William Bentley (1759-1819), that wonderful treasure trove of information about Salem in the Federal period.

**6. Report of the President.** Don Friary began by thanking Thomas, Toby, and John for their encouraging and informative reports, remarking he was particularly happy about the digitization now being pursued by the Publications Committee.

Converting the back list will be a key contribution to scholarship, making the Society’s important publications searchable.

Don reminded members that the Society is among the major supporters of the *New England Quarterly,* and it is available to members, on request, either in print or online or both.

The Society and the *NEQ* each year offer the Walter Muir Whitehill Prize, awarded for an essay on early American history not previously published. A committee of members--Fred Anderson, Professor of History at the University of Colorado; David D. Hall, Bartlett Research Professor of New England Church History, Harvard Divinity School; and Mary Beth Norton, Mary Donlon Alger Professor of American History at Cornell University--reviews the essays. The prize was awarded this year to Ian Saxine, a Ph.D. candidate in history at Northwestern University, a student of member Timothy Breen. His essay, “The Performance of Peace: Indians, Speculators, and the Politics of Property on the Maine Frontier, 1735-1737,” was published in the September 2014 issue of the *NEQ*.

Susan Lindsey Lively continues to represent the Society at the New England Regional Fellowship Consortium. The Colonial Society is this year sponsoring Amy Ellison of Boston University for her project, “’To Bring Liberty to the North’: The Invasion of Canada and the Coming of American Independence, 1774-1776.” Amy Ellison, like Ian Saxine, has also been a participant in the Graduate Student Forum.

The 2014 Graduate Student Forum was held on June 6 with Professor Robert Gross of the University of Connecticut as moderator. Nine presentations by students from across the country elicited stimulating discussion. The program followed the format introduced in 2013, in which each presenter focused on a specific document central to the dissertation’s research and analysis. The 2015 Graduate Student Forum will be held on Friday, May 29.

The Colonial Society’s efforts to foster knowledge and understanding of early American history among younger students and the general public was focused this year on the Boston Historic Sites Consortium, convened here at 87 Mount Vernon Street by Bob Allison and Martha McNamara. Representatives of several historic sites in Boston met regularly to seek ways to collaborate, in order to integrate the view of colonial and revolutionary Boston experienced by school groups and the public. The Society has also hosted members of the Decorative Arts Trust and the Massachusetts Historical Society

Programs have included: May 15, a book party for Cornelia Hughes Dayton of the University of Connecticut, co-author of *Robert Love’s Warnings: Searching for Strangers in Colonial Boston*, which relied on the Society’s publication, *The Eighteenth--Century Records of the Boston Overseers of the Poor*; and Toby Hall discussed his most recent project, *Printing as a Way of Life: Rocky Stinehour and the Stinehour Press.* On June 11 the society remembered our valued colleague and dear friend Pauline Maier, who served for many years as Chair of our Committee on Publications, with a panel discussion focused on scholarship of the American Revolution. Bernard Bailyn, Mary Beth Norton, Gordon Wood, Mary Sarah Bilder, and Robert Martello each spoke eloquently about Pauline’s very significant contributions to the field. On October 15th, we celebrated the publication of volume one of *The Correspondence of Thomas Hutchinson*, edited by John Tyler with Elizabeth Dubrulle. Events like this are planned and promoted by the Society’s Marketing Committee. The committee is chaired by Susan Goganian, who is working with a committee that includes Margaret Bratschi, Brenton Simons, John Tyler, David Warrington, and Nina Zannieri.

The Membership Directory was mailed to all members in September, the result of several years’ effort by the Membership Directory Committee chaired by David Ames and including Benjamin Carp, Susan Goganian, Robert Mack, Karen Nipps, and John Tyler. The committee’s first task was to create an online membership directory that can be updated; please keep your own information current. Don thanked especially Bob Mack for bringing his considerable expertise to preparation of the online directory.

The House Committee chaired by Richard Nylander has been an active and productive group. Robert Mussey has photographed every room of the house from several angles for the record and has photographed many individual objects, especially furniture, and will soon begin a conservation assessment of the furniture. Charles Sullivan has contributed his expertise in architectural history and preservation in surveying the house and spotting areas in need of attention. Lynne Spencer arranged to contribute the services of her firm, Spencer & Vogt Group, Architecture Preservation, in specifying the HVAC installation that was carried out ably by mechanical contractors, Keyes North Atlantic, and the expert carpentry of Essex Restoration.

Last December an insurance appraisal of the house was made to bring coverage up to date. The value of a Beacon Hill property prompted our auditors to raise the question, as they do periodically, as to whether the Society should retain such a valuable property. Exercising due diligence, the Council discussed this issue and concluded unanimously that 87 Mount Vernon Street should continue to be the Society’s headquarters. Among the strong points made in that discussion were the substantial income received from our residential rental units, the restricted endowment that was given with the house, the value of having a centrally located headquarters not simply for meetings, but because it gives our members a real sense of identification with the Society, and the Society’s responsibility of stewardship of a very significant architectural monument that, in private hands, would almost certainly be compromised.

87 Mount Vernon Street has new inhabitants this year. Boston By Foot, a not-for-profit organization that offers tours given by volunteers of many parts of Boston on various themes, is occupying the first floor office formerly let to the Friends of the Public Garden. John Tyler, our Editor of Publications, who retired in June after 36 years of teaching history at the Groton School, is occupying the fourth floor during the winter months as he continues editing the correspondence of Thomas Hutchinson.

The Society’s house yields substantial income on the rental of three residential units to the rear. We also have significant income from our endowment, administered by Loring, Wolcott & Coolidge. The endowment had a substantial augmentation this year as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy from Muriel Hamilton, a quite anonymous friend of the Colonial Society who had had no formal relationship with us. Our programs rely on income from endowment that has been built over many years by bequests like this. The sale of publications also brings income, as does our Annual Fund. In this past year, 2013-2014, the Annual Appeal and other annual gifts yielded a total of $27,710, as opposed to $22,015 in the previous twelve months. $2,000 was received from the Samuel Eliot Morison Circle of givers. An additional $8,050 was given by Frederick Jackson Turner Circle donors. $14,160 was contributed by members giving anywhere from $10.00 to $750.00. Other gifts--to the William B. Fowler, Jr., Fund for Outreach, to the Walter Muir Whitehill Prize Fund, and in memory of Pauline Maier--yielded $3,500.00. We are most grateful for these gifts from our members. They express confidence and loyalty to the Colonial Society of Massachusetts. They also enable us to take new initiatives and to sustain the activities that fulfill the mission of the Society and make us all proud to be a part of that.

Don thanked members for their interest in the Colonial Society, for the financial, in-kind, and volunteer support that members so generously give, and for member’s participation. He encouraged all to frequent 87 Mount Vernon Street for these Annual Meetings that are so collegial and congenial, for special events, and for the Stated Meetings that are a long tradition with us.

The meeting adjourned at 6.50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie A. Morris

Recording Secretary *in absentia*

*Compiled from written reports submitted*

*by those presenting*