**The Colonial Society of Massachusetts**

Minutes of the 124th Annual Meeting of the Membership

Held at the Society’s House

87 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston

17 November 2016

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

The reading of the minutes of the 2015 Annual Meeting was waived.

**1. By-law amendment.** Vice President Dan Coquillette gave an overview of the need for the two amendments, the texts of which were mailed to members along with the Annual Meeting invitation. He then read the amendments:

To amend Article V, Section 1 as follows (deletion in brackets, addition in bold):

Sect. 1. The Officers of the Society shall be a President, {three} **four** Vice-Presidents, a Recording Secretary, a Corresponding Secretary, a Treasurer, and an Editor of Publications, and a Council composed of these officers and of three other members.

To amend Article XI, Sect. 9 as follows:

Sect. 9. It [the Council] shall appoint, annually, at the Stated Meeting in December, {two} **three** members of the Finance Committee**, one of whom will be appointed Chair,** who shall {,with the Treasurer,} compose that Committee. {The Treasurer shall be Chairman of the Finance Committee and} **The Treasurer will be an ex officio member of the Committee. The Chair** may call meetings at pleasure, at which a quorum shall be two members.

Clear text of amended version: Sect. 9. It [the Council] shall appoint, annually, at the Stated Meeting in December, three members of the Finance Committee, one of whom will be appointed Chair, who shall compose that Committee. The Treasurer will be an ex officio member of the Committee. The Chair may call meetings at pleasure, at which a quorum shall be two members.

Dan noted that these were approved by Council at its meetings on 16 April 2016 and 16 June 2016, and now required a vote of the membership.

**Voted:** To amend the by-laws of the Society as noted above. Approved unanimously.

**2. Report of the Membership Committee.** Celeste Walker, chair of the committee, said the membership of the Society stands at 323 members: 185 resident members, 126 non-resident members, and 12 honorary members.

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

Philip Cash, a resident member since 1979, died in January 2014

Maurice Frye, of Boston, a resident member since 1991, died in 2015

Lewis Rohrbach, a non-resident member since 1994, died in January 2016

George Lawson Wrenn, a non-resident member since 1965, died in January 2016

Richard C. Kugler, a resident member since 1976, died in March 2016

Roderick D. Stinehour, a non-resident member since 1985, died in July 2016

George Sprague, a resident member since 1992, died in August 2016

F. Gorham Brigham, a resident member since 1988, died in September 2016

Members stood for a moment of silence.

Eric Schultz, a resident member since 2009, resigned in April 2016

The Society welcomed the following new members:

***Resident Members***

Edward A. Andrews, of Providence

John L. Bell, of Boston

Paul J. Erickson, of Worcester

Kemble Widmer, of Newburyport

Catherine Brekus, of Cambridge

Elisa New, of Cambridge

Jennifer Roberts, of Cambridge

***Non-Resident Members***

Sally Hadden, of Kalamazoo, Michigan

Jeffrey Bolster, of Durham, New Hampshire

Joanne Freeman, of New Haven, Connecticut

John J. McCusker, of San Antonio, Texas

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

For resident membership:

Peggy Burke, Director of the Concord Museum

Elizabeth M. Covart, history blogger and producer of Ben Franklin’s World podcast

Thomas Michie, Russel B. and Andree Beauchamp Stearns Curator of Decorative Arts and Sculpture at the Museum of Fine Arts

For Non-Resident membership:

Andrea Cremer, writer of historical fiction

Emily Blanck, Associate Professor in History at Rowan University

Ruma Chopra, Professor of History at San Jose State

Jonathan Den Hartog, Associate Professor of History at University of Northwestern in St. Paul

**3. Report of the Treasurer**

President Friary then yielded the chair to Ellen Dunlap for the election of officers. Ellen invited Robert Martello to take the podium.

**4. Report of the Nominating Committee.** Robert Martello, chair of the Nominating Committee, thanked the other members of the committee, and read the slate of nominees:

President Donald R. Friary

Vice Presidents Robert Allison, Dan Coquillette, Susan Lively, Celeste Walker

Recording Secretary Leslie A. Morris

Corresponding Secretary Martha J. McNamara

Treasurer Thomas R. Appleton

Member of Council,

3-year term Nathaniel Shiedley (2019)

Continuing members of

Council Thomas Paine (2017), Beth Anne Bower (2018)

There were no nominations from the floor. Ellen Dunlap 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.

**5. Report of the Curator.** Elton Hall’s report is appended.

**6. Report of the Editor of Publications.** John Tyler’s report is appended.

**7. Report of the President.** Don Friary’s report is appended.

The meeting adjourned at 6.50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie A. Morris

Recording Secretary

**Report of the Curator, Elton W. Hall**

Last year I reported on a number of projects that were planned or in the works. Now I am happy to be able to report that some have been accomplished, and others have moved along. The most noticeable is the painting right in front of you, which along with its frame looks a lot better than it did the last time you saw it. This is thanks to the interest of Robert Severy, who provided for the conservation with a gift in memory of his old friend and our long-time Editor of Publications, Walter Muir Whitehill. I’m sure that Walter, who was principally responsible for our acquisition of this house and its furnishings, would be very pleased and grateful. Down stairs in the dining room, please take note of the pastel portrait of Stephen Higginson, Jr., first owner of this house. With regard to the history of the house, it is our premier artifact, but when it arrived here years ago, it had a very noticeable water stain covering a large portion of the surface. Through the generosity of David Burnham, both the portrait and its frame have been very skillfully restored by the Williamstown Art Conservation Center.

Two of our most important pieces of Boston furniture have also been restored to pristine condition. Both are believed to have been made by Isaac Vose and are part of the Parkman family gift. You have all seen the bookcase in the dining room as you gathered around the table for refreshments there, but the other piece, the child’s sleigh bed has not recently been in the rooms usually frequented by members. It is now set up in the third floor room, originally the master bedroom of the house, and currently the Editor’s office. We invite you to go up and have a look at it.

Those of you who have read the recent newsletter already know all of this and more. You also may have noticed that for the first time we have illustrations in color. While there has not previously been an urgent need for color, as I began to prepare that article, it occurred to me that while black and white illustrations would be serviceable, the objects would look smashing in color. I put the question to John Tyler, who replied that if I would supply high-resolution files, he would do it. Thanks to Robert Mussey and the conservators for providing them. Thanks to John for his enthusiastic response to the request.

We continue to proceed in an orderly fashion with the management of our possessions. The thorough survey of furniture that Robert Mussey began last year has been completed, providing a comprehensive record of the qualities and condition of that. Part of that collection includes eight large mirrors, some of which are believed to be of local manufacture. They present a few additional problems due to the size of some of them and the fragility not only of the glass but of the gold leaf on gesso decoration. Fortunately, Richard Nylander, Chair of the House Committee, possesses considerable knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject. Last winter Robert and Richard organized a day in which a team of art handlers with all the necessary equipment, a couple of conservators, and curators arrived at the house to take the huge mirrors down so that they could be properly inspected, front and back, and evaluated for treatment. It was a mighty undertaking, but it all went smoothly. Alas, they did not find anything as exciting as a label or signature on the back of anything, but they did gather much useful information, and laid to rest any lingering anxiety that perhaps there was undiscovered information lurking out of sight. The conservators produced proposals for treatment of the mirrors that will help us establish priorities.

Pleased with the work that Carmichael Art Conservation has done on two of our paintings, we have engaged them to survey all our oil paintings which have not been conserved during our ownership of them and provide proposals and cost estimates for their treatment.

It has been many years since the security system was first installed in this house. When the three rental units were renovated, everything was brought up to code except for the alarms in this part of the house. Aside from that, there is the problem of having four separate units, among which the alarms are are not connected. Mindful of these things and also of the fact that since our alarm was first installed, the technology has so far advanced, that many improvements are readily available, which would have been unreasonably expensive fifty years ago, we had a firm with extensive experience in working for museums, make a survey of all our property and recommend improvements. The results were long in coming, but we are now ready to invite a proposal from our alarm company to carry out the recommendations. We hope to move that along as expeditiously as we can.

Robert Frost observed that, “Something there is that does not love a wall.” We have a substantial wall on our east side, which serves a very important purpose. About thirty years ago, when I first became involved with the Society, I observed that pieces of mortar had been falling out of the wall onto the sidewalk along the drive up to the carriage house, and even some stones were coming loose. I discussed the problem with our fellow member and then neighbor Lawry Coolidge, saying that while I did not know which of us owned the wall or was in fact responsible for its maintenance, I did believe that we shared a compelling interest in not having it tumble over into our driveway, taking a portion of his land with it. We agreed to have it repaired and share the cost. But the forces of the New England climate continued to work away on the wall and recently we began to notice more erosion of the mortar. But before the situation became sufficiently acute to spur me into action, I was very happy to receive a message from our relatively new neighbor, Mrs. Hostetter, that she was preparing to have her wall repaired, and as it would require masons working from our driveway, she wanted to let us know and hope it would not be any inconvenience to us. I joyfully and gratefully assured her that it would be no trouble at all, and we would be glad to cooperate with her. Sometimes things work out better than one might have hoped.

Frost also remarked that “Good fences make good neighbors.” In our case, the fence is a very handsome, very old, and sadly deterorated iron railing along the top of the granite block wall along the sidewalk in front of both this house and our neighbors at 89. As part of a project being undertaken by those neighbors, Shep Perkins and Lisa Mullan, to correct various problems with their driveway and the space between them and the sidewalk, they contacted us about the condition of the fence and supporting wall, as it would be highly desirable to have both halves treated the same way. Close inspection of the iron fence revealed more difficult problems than are seen at a casual glance. Fortunately we have as a valued member of our House Committee the experienced preservation architect Lynn Spencer who has been providing sound advice on this and many other matters regarding the fabric of the house. This project is still in the planning stage, but I’m confident that with our expertise and good will, we will reach a solution that makes all parties happy, including the Beacon Hill Architectural Commission.

Among the victims of the winter storm was the garden along the front foundation, which was first smashed by the falling ice and later trampled flat by scaffolding and workmen. Once the area was cleared, it was obvious that something must be done. I discussed it with Tom Paine, who has both professional knowledge and personal interest in that area, but was side-tracked by other things before I managed to accomplish anything. It was our careful editor who noticed that the planting season was coming its end, and the garden had remained in its forlorn state. He renewed the conversation with Tom, offered to take hold of the project, and produced prompt and satisfactory results. Thank you, John, for making us look so much better.

And as always, thanks to all of you who come to the house, make use of it, enjoy it, and support our efforts to be good stewards of our fine old home.

**Report of the Editor of Publications, John W. Tyler**

I can report to you that Boston Furniture, 1700-1900, is coming along nicely. Earlier this week I was at Kirkwood Printers in Wilmington, MA checking the colors in the first sheets to come off the press. I should warn you it has a coral pink dustjacket that takes its cue from the new upholstery of the Isaac Vose sofa in the far room which the editors chose as the cover girl image for the book. I had hoped to be able to demonstrate the ebook version for you tonight but that encountered some last minute complications and isn’t quite ready yet. The ebook will have the same features that I showed you last year with volumes 4 and 5 of the Bernard Papers: you can jump forward to any article you choose from the table of contents; you can hover over a footnote number and read the reference without losing your place; you can jump from the index to the page reference and back again without sticking a finger in the back of the book to keep your place in the index; and perhaps, most importantly of all, you can search for a phrase or any combination of words not in already in the index.

Winterthur has asked us to hold off releasing the ebook for six months in order to allow them to sell more copies of the hardback version. We’re still uncertain how much effect the availability of the ebook on the internet will have on purchases. Some say greater awareness of the volume achieved on the internet will stimulate sales; others imagine that colleges and universities (our principal market) will not buy hard copies when an electronic version is readily available to their students. As Louis XIV said in response to any inconvenient question from his courtiers, “On verra,” “We shall see.” Certainly more people see our publications when we publish in two formats. Our standard print run is now 800, which often leaves as many as 200 copies per volume in the basement, and even our most popular titles rarely sell more than 4-5 copies a year after the first year or two of sales. Contrast this with the 1500 hits per month Volumes 4 and 5 of The Bernard Papers were attracting after they first appeared on the internet.

Your copies of the case-bound book should be ready, with luck, sometime before Christmas. Be prepared for a big package. Though it doesn’t rival the density of mass of The Boston Overseers of the Poor, its trim size (8 ½ by 11) is larger than anything we have ever done before, and with double columns and 430 color illustrations it packs in quite a lot of information. It’s quite a handsome book, as you can see.

People always want to know what’s next on the publication list. With the caveat that answering this question is somewhat akin to predicting what the rupee value of the dollar will be four months hence, I would venture to say that in 2017 we should be working on The Correspondence of George Thacher, edited by William DiGiacmantonio. Thacher was a Federalist Congressman from the District of Maine in the First Federal Congress, a judge in both Massachusetts and Maine, and a key figure in the early Unitarian movement. 2018 should see the curious Diary of Josiah Cotton Jr., who retired to his study for several days at the start of each new year to transcribe the events of the previous month in his locality (Plymouth), the province, and the world. Cotton was also involved in missionary work with the Indians and left behind an important Wampanoag word list.

I think Volume 2 of The Correspondence of Thomas Hutchinson should be ready in 2018 as well. I’m already at work annotating Volume 3 which covers 1770 and the Boston Massacre, a year in which Hutchinson wrote more letters than any other single year in his life. I remember when fielding questions in this room at the publication party for Volume 1, someone asked if I had discovered a ‘smoking gun’ in the letters that would fundamentally change our outlook on the man. The question left me gawping like a fish out of water, but with Volume 3, I think I have a better answer. It’s not an entirely original insight with me, but I don’t think I had understood before working with his letters from 1770 how much political paralysis in England hamstrung the ministry’s ability to respond to the non-importation crisis and the colonists’ increasingly broad challenges to Parliamentary sovereignty. In early 1770 the faltering administration of the Duke of Grafton was so embroiled in the controversy over their exclusion of John Wilkes from his seat in Parliament that they couldn’t muster a consensus in Parliament about what to do about American affairs. Parliament in 1770 was remarkably like our Congress for the last three or four years: majorities were so thin and partisan differences so bitter that little could be done, leaving Hutchinson and others far from the center of power anxiously waiting for instructions that never came.

2019 should see the sixth and final volume of The Bernard Papers by Colin Nicolson and perhaps The King’s Chapel Records edited by James Bell and James Mooney. In 2020 and beyond, we may begin to see the first fruits of The Diary of William Bentley, edited by Tom Knoles, and perhaps The Diary and Account Books of John Hull, edited by David Hancock and Mark Peters. Tom Knoles has been extraordinarily industrious in his efforts with this gargantuan project. He estimates it totals 2,100,000 words. The 1910 edition that scholars have been using is about 934,000 words, so those editors omitted over 55 per cent of the original. Even more interestingly, there appears to be little consistency concerning what the earlier transcribers left out. Tom estimates that, thanks to the Antiquarian Society in giving him extra time to work on the project, he’s now about 17 per cent through. So, go, Tom, go!

2020 will also bring us to the 400th anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims. Several Colonial Society scholars are contemplating a new edition of William Bradford’s Of Plimoth Plantation. We are also key participants on a consortium of organizations called New England Beginnings. I wrote about this group in the Newsletter and urge you, if you have not had a chance to do so, to look at their website NewEnglandBeginnings.org to give you an idea of how exciting the links page might be on our own new website might be when it is ready.

During the past twelve months while we’ve been moving forward with the production of new printed books, we have been busily digitizing our backlist of publications, and I’m pleased to report that all 85 volumes of our previous publications have now been scanned, gone through Optical Character Recognition, and verified, so that they will be ready to be loaded onto our new website when it is ready in the early months of next year. Each volume will have all the same features that I described earlier in my report on Boston Furniture. The website itself will roll out in two phases. Version one will feature a new look, easier navigation, and a platform for our entire list of digital publications. The second phase will facilitate the crowd sourcing of documents as Ken Minkema and Jeff Cooper have already experimented with so successfully on Samuel Phillips Diary from Rowley. So great things are coming soon, probably in the mid-winter, when while snowbound, you will have ample opportunity to explore the new website.

One of our members mentioned to me how much she looks forward to the Annual Dinner and the reading of the Mayflower Compact. For her, it is the start of the Thanksgiving holiday. I’ve been amused while observing all the preparations for the big 2020 anniversary how my summer hometown of Provincetown has once again been caught flatfooted Plymouth in wresting away the mantle of the Pilgrims. Each day I listen to the Provincetown Town Crier as he visits the restaurant adjacent to my condo every day at lunch to remind tourists that the Pilgrims landed first in Provincetown and that the Compact was written aboard the Mayflower in Provincetown Harbor. He usually concludes by leading the assembled diners in a rousing chorus of George M. Cohan’s “It’s a Grand Old Flag.” What that has to do with the Pilgrims, I have yet to learn.

But how did the Pilgrims spend that oh-so-important thirty-one days in Provincetown from first landfall on November 11 until December 20 when they disembarked perhaps on Plymouth Rock or perhaps not? Certainly, part of the time was spent stealing corn from the Indians and looking for fresh water. There still is no fresh water in Provincetown; it’s piped in from wells in Truro. Convinced of the unsuitability of Provincetown, they sent out an advanced party to search for a better place to settle for the winter. Several of the leaders of the group, including such worthies as William Bradford, Myles Standish, and the Elder Brewster set out in the Mayflower’s shallop, a small open boat 25 feet in length, to explore by short jumps the northern side of Cape Cod. On the morning of Decemeber 16, 1620, the party left what was to be the future site of Sandwich, quite near the present mouth of the Cape Cod Canal, and headed north for Plymouth Bay, a short distance that takes the New York Yacht Club only two or three hours on their biennial summer cruise.

On that particular day, however, it began to rain and snow. By the middle of the afternoon, a strong southeast wind had begun to build and the sea became very rough. Running with the wind behind them, the shallop began to founder shipping icy water over the stern. At this point, their rudder broke! William Bradford notes in his journal that it “was as much as two men could do to steer her with a couple of oars. But their pilot bade them to be of good cheer for he saw the harbor.” Since the storm was increasing and night was coming on, the Pilgrims bore as much sail as they could in order to pass through the dangerous entrance to Plymouth Bay before dark. “But herewith,” writes Bradford, “their mast broke in three pieces, and the sail fell overboard. Yet by God’s mercy they recovered themselves,” and having the flood tide with them, they struck out with their oars for the harbor. As they drew nearer to the mouth of the Bay, the pilot announced that he had been deceived by the shoals that guard the entrance and cried out, “Lord be merciful: he had never seen such a place as that before.’ And he and the master’s mate would have run her ashore in a cove full of breakers. Yet one lusty seaman called out to the oarsmen, “About with her or we are all cast away,” which Bradford notes, “they did with speed.”

By nightfall, the adventurers found themselves anchored in the lee of Clark’s Island, safely within Plymouth Bay. And when the next day dawned bright with sunshine and a crisp northwest breeze, the Pilgrims looked on the forbidding shoreline that was to be their new home. Moved to prayer, they fell on their knees, thanking God for his mercies. “What,” Bradford asked, “could now sustain them but the Spirit of God and His grace? May not and ought not the children of these fathers rightly say: ‘Our fathers were Englishmen which came over this great ocean, and were ready to perish in this wilderness: but they cried unto the Lord, and He heard their voice, and looked on their adversity. Let them therefore praise the Lord because he is good: and His mercies endure forever. Yea let them which have been redeemed by the Lord shew how he hath delivered them from the hand of the oppressor. When they wandered in the desert wilderness out of the way, and found no city to dwell in, both hungry and thirsty, their soul was overwhelmed in them. Let them confess before the Lord his lovingkindness and His wonderful works before the sons of men.” Happy Thanksgiving to one and all.

**Report of the President, Donald F. Friary**

Thank you, John and Toby and Thomas, for reports that are most encouraging. It has been a good year--a very good year--for the Colonial Society. We had a successful restoration of the 2014-2015 winter storm damage to this house, thanks to the expert guidance of Lynne Spencer and her firm, Spencer & Vogt Group Architecture/Preservation. Inside the house conservation planning and treatment continued under the oversight of House Committee chair Richard Nylander and members Robert Mussey, Lynne Spencer, Charles Sullivan, and Barbara Ward. The generosity of two members, Robert Severy and David Burnham, made possible the conservation of two important paintings, the dramatic European landscape over the fireplace in this room and a lovely pastel on parchment portrait of Stephen Higginson, signed on verso “C Hayter . . . London 1820” that you will find in the dining room. Robert Mussey completed his survey of the conservation needs of the furniture in these rooms, and conservation surveys of the paintings and of the 85 plus prints and other works on paper are being arranged by Toby Hall and Donald Friary, respectively.

As John Tyler has told us, our traditional publications continue to appear at a steady pace. Boston Furniture, 1700-1900, will soon be issued. Later in 2017, the letters of George Thacher, a congressman from Biddeford, when Maine was still part of Massachusetts, edited by William Di Giacomantonio, will follow, and perhaps in another year the Josiah Cotton papers edited by Douglas Winiarski. Thomas Knoles of the American Antiquarian Society is working diligently on a new, expanded edition of the diary of the Reverend William Bentley of Salem. The major accomplishment of the current year has been the digitization of all eighty-five volumes of the Society’s publications and the creation of a new website to make them accessible to scholars, students, and the general public throughout the world.

The new website has been accelerated by a challenge grant from an anonymous source in honor of Pauline Maier, the longtime chair of the Society’s Committee on Publications. The challenge was made in December. In January the Development Committee--Susan Lively, Chair, Toby Hall, Henry Lee, Anne Grimes Rand, and Alan Rogers, with advice and assistance from John Tyler, moved into high gear and early in April an appeal was mailed to all members. By early June our goal was reached, thanks to the generosity of a leadership core (seven members at $1,000 each; twelve at $500) and eighty-five others ranging from $20.00 to $400.00 for a total of $29,955 received to date. If anyone would like to bring the total up to $30,000, Susan Lively is here and will be happy to talk to you. Thank you, all of you!

The Committee on Publications chaired by Kenneth Minkema and including Robert Charles Anderson, Christopher Jedrey, Celeste Walker, and two new members, David Hall and Catherine Brekus, has worked closely with Editor of Publications John Tyler in arranging the digitization of all past volumes for presentation on the new website and the creation of the website with help and advice from Jim Baker and Bob Mack, who have managed our existing website and our Membership Directory website, respectively, for some years

A publication of central importance to the Colonial Society is the New England Quarterly, which has received financial support from the Society almost since it began publication in 1928. As you know, a subscription to the NEQ is a benefit of membership in this society. If you are not already receiving it, you can arrange with our Office Administrator, Mary Blunt, to have it, in print or online, or both. Mary Blunt is a key element in the administration of the Colonial Society. She is here with us this evening; if you have not already met Mary, I hope that you will tonight. Recently, Virginia DeJohn Anderson of the University of Colorado has agreed to serve as our liaison to the NEQ, reviewing each issue and keeping the Council informed of trends in scholarly journal publishing, as well as helping to make the Whitehill Prize known in academia. We are grateful for her participation in this important feature of the Colonial Society.

The Marketing Committee chaired by Susan Goganian presented a program on June 2 honoring two members and their recently published books, Peter Benes’s For a Short Time Only: Itinerants and the Resurgence of Popular Culture in Early America and Mary Sarah Bilder’s Bancroft Prize-winning Madison’s Hand: Revisiting the Constitutional Convention. The committee also planned a launch of the Boston furniture publication that was originally scheduled for October 2016, but had to be postponed to March 2017. Recording Secretary Leslie Morris organized a salute to Vice-President Dan Coquillette’s and Bruce Kimball’s On the Battlefield of Merit: Harvard Law School: The First Century on June 22.

The Membership Committee chaired by Celeste Walker vets nominations made and seconded by members. I encourage you to think of scholars and practitioners in early Massachusetts history who could become valued members of the Society. I remind you of the procedure. A current member who wishes to nominate a prospective member asks whether the candidate is interested and, if so, requests a curriculum vitae, then writes a letter to Celeste Walker, Chair of the Membership Committee, and recruits another member to second. The committee then considers the nomination and, if favorable, forwards it to the Council at one of its regular meetings. If the Council approves, the name of the nominee is read at the next meeting of the membership—Stated Meetings in December, February, and April and the Annual Meeting in November. At the following meeting a vote is taken from those members present. Next, our Corresponding Secretary, Martha McNamara, writes to the successful candidate to inform her or him of election. Celeste has read the names of those elected since the 2015 Annual Meeting.

In addition to these committees several individuals serve the Society in key roles. Susan Lindsey Lively represents us on the New England Regional Fellowship Consortium, reviewing proposals for fellowships that enable scholars, including graduate students, to conduct research at three or more participating libraries and museums. The Colonial Society fellowship that is awarded each year for research in New England colonial history was given this year to Mary Draper, a doctoral student at the University of Virginia, for her project "The Urban World of the Early Modern British Caribbean."

Two other committees that do real service to the Society are the Graduate Student Forum Committee chaired by Bob Allison and including Bob Gross and Susan Lively, and the Walter Muir Whitehill Prize Committee of Fred Anderson, David Hall, and Mary Beth Norton. Both committees exercised due diligence this year and found submissions sparse. The Graduate Student Forum was cancelled and the Whitehill Prize was not awarded. Consequently, the Council has discussed the decline of interest or of response to these programs and is making a concerted effort to promote both. I encourage all our members to make these programs better known to colleagues and to graduate students.

Revolution 250, originally convened here at the Colonial Society by Bob Allison and Martha McNamara, has grown in participation and activity, grown so much in fact that it can no longer meet here. This consortium of historic sites and organizations has a continuing program of recognition of the events leading to the American Revolution that occurred in Boston. Bob and Martha will keep you informed on our website and through e-blasts of Revolution 250 developments.

The year just passed has been one of considerable accomplishment. The forthcoming year will be one of celebration; it is the 125th anniversary of the establishment of the Colonial Society in 1892. A committee chaired by Council Member Beth Bower and including Toby Hall and John Tyler for institutional memory, Susan Goganian, Susan Lindsey Lively, and Brenton Simons is planning a year-long series of events and programs that will salute the many facets of the Society’s life and work—the publication of Boston Furniture, 1700-1900 with an event in March that will include tours of this house and its very distinguished furniture and looking glasses, the launch of our new website, a series of presentations at our Stated Meetings by past participants in the Graduate Student Forum, a celebratory 125th anniversary Annual Meeting and Dinner, a commemoration of the Society’s first meeting on January 18, 1893, and a tour especially for CSM members of Robert Mussey and Clark Pearce’s exhibition, The Boston Classical Furniture of Isaac Vose, 1815-1825, at the Massachusetts Historical Society.

Let us now begin the celebration of 125 years of the Colonial Society’s service to the historical profession, to teachers and students at all levels, and to the reading public by adjourning to the drawing room adjacent or to the dining room below stairs for refreshments, conversation, and reflection on the Society’s many accomplishments in the past and for the future.