



FALL 2016

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The Cambridge Historian

Published by
the Cambridge Historical Society
Editor, Bruce Irving
Associate Editor, Rosemary Previte
Copyeditor, Luise Erdmann
Designer, The Sketchy Pixel

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ZONING IN CAMBRIDGE

BY DOUG BROWN

Just as we have a place for everything in a well-ordered home, so we should have a place for everything in a well-regulated town. What would we think of a housewife who insisted on keeping her gas range in the parlor and her piano in the kitchen?

—Cambridge Tribune, March 8, 1919



Central Square, c. 1910. Zoning laws sought to separate land uses to make the City more livable.

Photo source: Ebay



The Cambridge Assembly, Ford's 1913 plant on Memorial Drive. A Supreme Court case concerning a nearby lot placed limits on zoning restrictions.

Wikipedia

In 1919, no city understood this better than Cambridge, as its booming factories produced both pianos for the parlor and boilers for the basement. Cambridge provided meat for the freezer, soap for the laundry, cars for the garage, and candy for the children. Rubber, wire, steel, ink, asphalt, chemicals, machine parts, biscuits, books, radios, and furniture poured from its factories in an endless assault on the senses.

Of course, Cambridge had been making everything from bricks to glass to ice for years, but as it approached a peak population of 120,000 in 1925, the prospect of, as one commentator put it, “gas tanks next to parks, garages next to schools, boiler shops next to hospitals” strained the City’s limited geography. Depending on wind direction, the smells were enough to cloud the heads and turn the stomachs of most citizens.

Cambridge wasn’t unique. Beginning in the 1880s, most large cities created health and building codes in response to growing concerns of disease, fire, and overcrowding. Indeed, savvy landowners often employed deed restrictions to limit the uses of their subdivided land and protect values. In Cambridgeport, for example, the trades the Dana family prohibited in its developments included butcher, currier, tanner, varnish maker, ink maker, tallow chandler, soap boiler, brewer, distiller, sugar baker, dyer, tinman, working brazier, founder, smith, and brickmaker.

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Members and Supporters,

As we wind down our year, we are taking stock of the great work we've done so far in 2016. From our Annual Meeting discussion on "How do we house Cambridge's poorest?" to History Café's look at tiny houses as a solution to gentrification, we've explored many of the layers of our annual theme, "Are We Home?" This fall, we look forward to our symposia, "Housing for All?," which is the culmination of a year of asking questions and taking perspective.

Best experienced together, the three evenings will explore the past, present, and future of affordable housing, allowing us a chance to contemplate our own role in creating the Cambridge we call home. I hope to see you at the symposia, where you can share your thoughts on this timely topic.

It takes many hands to accomplish such great work. I want to thank my wonderful team of staff, Council members, and volunteers, who dedicate their time to preserving our collection, planning our programs, and sharing the incredible stories of Cambridge. A special thanks goes to our outgoing Treasurer, Andy Leighton, for his dedicated service to the Society over 20 years. Luckily for me and our new Treasurer, Greg Bowe, Andy has promised to answer all of our questions and remain on the Council. Thank you, Andy, and welcome to Greg!

This summer we said goodbye to our resident fellows, Mark Vassar and Shane LeGault, and thanked them for their many years of watching over the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House and our collections. In May, we welcomed Irina Sandler, our new archivist. Rina has already made great strides connecting with researchers, recruiting interns and volunteers, and making our collections more welcoming to the public. If you are interested in our archives or have a research question you are stuck on, please do not hesitate to contact her.

Every step forward is because of you—our members, supporters, and friends. Our ability to grow as an organization and to make a difference in the community is the direct result of your investment. I hope you will continue to support the Society's work by once again giving generously to our fall appeal. Thank you for your commitment to keeping Cambridge curious!

All the best,

Marieke Van Damme

FROM THE ARCHIVES

BY IRINA SANDLER

Hello everyone! My name is Irina (I go by Rina) Sandler, and I'm the new archivist here at the Cambridge Historical Society. I'm a Minnesota girl and a Simmons Master's in Library and Information Science in Archives Management student. I am so excited to come on board and participate in Cambridge's living history.

The Open Archives in June was a fantastic way to showcase the Society's theme of the year, "Are We Home?," and bring people into our "home." The Bill Cavellini Papers, the collection chosen for the Open Archives, is a behind-the-scenes look into how Cambridge evolved from the 1960s to the 1990s. The fight for tenants' rights through rent control and the Simplex Steering Committee shaped the Cambridge landscape, including the little corner of Central Square where I live. Not only is the collection fascinating, but having Bill himself attend the event was a treat.

In the spirit of access, we opened our doors from noon to 1 pm on the last Sunday of the month through September to let visitors tour and explore the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House and grounds. This is a great way for people to connect with others and see where we "make history happen."



Table, formerly at the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House, recently donated by Douglas White, son of George Nichols White, Jr.

In this issue, we are highlighting a collection item that has been returned to us through the generosity of Lexington resident Douglas White, a son of George Nichols White, Jr. According to Douglas, prior to his father's death in 2002, he had bequeathed to us the table, which was inherited from the Nichols side of the family and probably had been at the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House. This past March, the table was shipped here from Douglas's mother's home in New Mexico.

BREWSTER VILLAGE: HOME OF ROBERT FROST

BY WARREN M. "RENNY" LITTLE

Walk from Brattle Street one block north on Sparks Street and you will come to Brewster Street, named after John Brewster (1813-1886). The Brewster family lived in the Lechmere house, which was formerly located at the corner of Brattle and Sparks streets, now the site of the Holy Trinity Armenian Church.

John owned the land east of Appleton Street. He cut Brewster Street through to Sparks Street, and, in 1884 built four Queen Anne/Stick-style wooden townhouses on the north side of the street to accommodate Harvard professors' widows and lecturers at the college. The houses provided rental income for the family and helped John's son, the ornithologist William Brewster (1865-1919), to support his lifelong interest in birds. The houses were sold in 1920 after William's death. (For more on William Brewster, see the *Cambridge Historical Society Proceedings*, vol. 24, pp. 83-98.)

Thirty-five Brewster Street is located on the west end of the complex, and it was here that Robert Frost lived from 1943 until his death in 1963.



Cambridge Office for Tourism.

The home of Robert Frost for the last two decades of his life

Frost lived on Beacon Hill until he bought 35 Brewster, ensuring a home close to his friends in Cambridge. Frost called the area "Brewster Village." He spent the fall and spring at number 35, traveling to Key Largo, Florida, for the winter and to Ripton, Vermont, for the summer. When he was in Cambridge, Frost wrote poetry well into the night, sleeping until midday. He entertained friends and, according to his lawyer and neighbor Erastus Hewett, he could pick up a topic just where he left off after a long interval between conversations. (See the *Proceedings*, vol. 40, pp. 84-93, for more on Hewett and Frost's relationship.)

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LIVING IN THE HOOPER-LEE-NICHOLS HOUSE

BY MALCOLM FRAZIER, AS TOLD TO HIS DAUGHTER, HOLLY BALLARD

This past spring, Malcolm Frazier, a former resident of the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House, visited with his wife, Constance, his daughter, Holly Ballard, and his grandson, Daniel Malcolm Ballard. Malcolm lived in the house from 1938 to 1951 with his grandmother, Frances White Emerson, who donated the house to the Cambridge Historical Society in 1957.

When and how did you live in the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House?

I came in September 1938 at age nine, just before the Hurricane of '38. My mother was living on a ranch in Nevada, and I came here to attend the Shady Hill School and live with my grandmother, Frances White Emerson.

What do you recall about living there—the house, street, and neighborhood?

I lived on the third floor in the East Chamber “nursery” above my grandmother’s bedroom, and later in the back room on the second floor. I stayed from 1938 to the spring of 1951, when I graduated from college. My grandmother’s chauffeur/handyman, Greg Ware, drove me to school. After attending Shady Hill from grades four to eight, I attended the Middlesex School in Concord. But the house was still my home, even when I was in boarding school.

There were a number of kids my age in the neighborhood, including Andy Leighton, who is now a member of the historical society. During the hurricane, we didn’t lose any trees, but the branches were piled as high as the second story of the house.

In 1944 my grandmother decided not to get a Christmas tree because of the war effort. I saved up my allowance and bought a small tree and hid it under my bed. On Christmas Eve, she relented, but knew something was up when I argued that we shouldn’t get a tree. So, I brought down the Christmas tree, small as it was. She decorated the house traditionally at Christmas and had burning candles in the windows and on the tree. I was terrified the house would catch fire!

When we were older, my younger sister Brooke and I would sit inside the enormous fireplace in the library on small wooden chairs in order to smoke. My grandmother did not approve of smoking, and this was her solution!

For the last two years of World War II, my grandmother put her car up on blocks and walked to the trolley on Mount Auburn Street or to Harvard Square. She enjoyed gardening and always had flowers in the front yard.



Marieke Van Damme

Holly Ballard, Daniel Malcolm Ballard, Constance and Malcolm Frazier

What was needed for upkeep of the house when you lived here?

My grandmother had two maids, a cook, and a handyman until the start of the war, when she had only one maid, a cook, and a handyman/chauffeur. Our maid, Emily, cared for me as a young child and came to my wedding when I was married.

Tell us about your grandmother, Frances Emerson.

As a grandmother, she was strict but fair. My contact with her was limited, but she would read to me every night as a small child. When I was older, I would dine with her and her husband, William Emerson, and she would try to inculcate table manners in me.

She was wealthy and generous, and she cared deeply for her extended family. She had four children, and each of them had four, and so on. Every Christmas, the whole family would gather at my uncle’s house. She was the “glue” that held the family together. When she passed away, she had about 80 descendants.

She valued education and history. Guests would come to see her wonderful collection of William Blake’s written work and paintings. She had the Rossetti Manuscript, which was his original journal. It was the notebook that had “Tyger Tyger Burning Bright” in his own handwriting.

How did she acquire the house?

She bought the house around 1920. Her father, William Augustus White, was a great book collector. He went to an auction in Ireland for a Shakespeare Quarto, which he purchased for only £25, and then researched and discovered was one of a kind. My grandmother and her husband had been renting the house directly across the street, as he was working as the Dean of Architecture at MIT. She fell in love with the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House, so her father sold the Shakespeare Quarto to a friend for \$50,000 and gave it to her to buy the house.

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SPRING 2016 OUTREACH

BY ROSEMARY PREVITE

This past spring, the historical society was involved in two major efforts—the Annual Spring Benefit and the Secret Gardens Tour. The **Annual Spring Benefit**, held at the Cambridge Innovation Center in Kendall Square on May 10, included cocktails and dinner prepared by Jules Catering, and a warm welcome by Tod Beaty, President; Bruce Irving, Councilor; and Executive Director Marieke Van Damme. The featured guest speaker was Lauren Burchfield of greenGoat, which is a “building material reuse charity” that saves discarded building materials and uses them for new projects. In so doing, greenGoat saves the materials, energy, and natural resources that would have been otherwise wasted. Guests were also treated to entertainment by the Mario Layne Fabrizio Trio, an exceptional jazz group of New England Conservatory students, Jonathan Elbaz on piano, Cole Davis on bass, and Mario Layne Fabrizio on drums.

Another highlight of the event was a silent auction, which included some outstanding items donated by many local friends and businesses, including a custom dog portrait, a tour of Cambridge house styles and of the secret gardens of Cambridge; theater, restaurant, concert, and museum tickets from Cambridge to the North Shore to Newport; home renovation and design consultations; IT help to the rescue; and signed copies of books by Saul Bellow, Elizabeth Warren, and Madeleine Albright.

Generous sponsors for the Spring Benefit included Lead Sponsor Hammond Real Estate, Investor Sponsors Ambit

Creative Group and S+H Construction, Gold Sponsor Cambridge Savings Bank, Silver Sponsors Liz Adams Lasser and The Cambridge Homes, Bronze Sponsors Capizzi & Co., East Cambridge Savings Bank, and Leavitt & Peirce; and Friend Sponsors Cambridge 7 Architects, Jan and Joe Ferrara, Fresh Pond Market, QED Systems Inc., and Sarah’s Market & Café. Many thanks to all who participated in this event, the proceeds of which will support the society’s work of promoting and preserving Cambridge’s history.

On Sunday, June 5, at the **2016 Secret Gardens of Cambridge Tour**, the historical society was one of more than 35 participating locations. Despite the rain, hundreds of visitors came to the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House that day, most of whom had a two-fold purpose. The first was to view the magnificent gardens, which have been landscaped and maintained by the Cambridge Plant & Garden Club for decades. The native species viewed by visitors included two pink flowering dogwoods, a historic elm, a mature mountain laurel, and the revitalized grape arbor.

Visitors also stepped inside to tour the historic Hooper-Lee-Nichols House. So many people were impressed with the house and grounds and asked when they could return, we decided to open our doors for tours on the last Sundays of August and September. On both dates, guests heard an overview of the history of the house, and also had the opportunity to view the house and grounds on their own.



Tod Beaty, Bruce Irving, and Marieke Van Damme welcome guests at the May 10 Spring Benefit, held at the Cambridge Innovation Center, Kendall Square.



The Hooper-Lee-Nichols House and grounds

ADVENTURES IN RENT CONTROL

ART BY MADELEINE WITT • EDITED BY ROHO
SPONSORED BY THE MILLION YEAR PICNIC



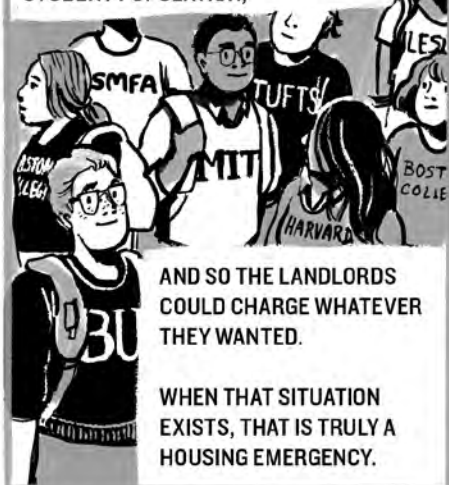
BASED ON ARCHIVED INTERVIEWS
WITH BILL CAVELLINI

IN THE MID-TO-LATE '60S, THERE WERE HUNDREDS OF SLUM BUILDINGS IN CAMBRIDGE. THERE WAS NO RENT CONTROL YET, AND MANY OF THESE PROPERTIES WERE IN TERRIBLE SHAPE. AND PEOPLE WERE PAYING INCREDIBLY HIGH RENTS.



BILL CAVELLINI

...PARTLY BECAUSE THE DEMAND WAS ALMOST UNLIMITED, BECAUSE OF THE STUDENT POPULATION,



AND SO THE LANDLORDS COULD CHARGE WHATEVER THEY WANTED.

WHEN THAT SITUATION EXISTS, THAT IS TRULY A HOUSING EMERGENCY.

THE IDEA OF RENT CONTROL WAS FIRST TOUTED AS AN EFFORT TO PRESERVE DIVERSITY.



... BUT THE MAJORITY OF TENANTS JUST SAW RENT CONTROL AS KEY TO THEIR OWN SURVIVAL—THEIR ABILITY TO STAY IN THE CITY.

THANKS TO THE EFFORTS OF ORGANIZERS, IN 1970 MASSACHUSETTS AUTHORIZED CITIES OVER 50,000 TO ENACT RENT CONTROL, STABILIZING RENT COSTS.

BOSTON, LYNN, SOMERVILLE, BROOKLINE, AND CAMBRIDGE ALL ADOPTED IT.



THE PEOPLE WHO HAD ORGANIZED FOR THE RENT CONTROL REFERENDUM GREW INTO THE CAMBRIDGE TENANTS ORGANIZING COMMITTEE (CTOC), WHICH OVERSAW HOW RENT CONTROL FUNCTIONED.



INDIVIDUAL BUILDINGS ALSO HAD TENANT UNIONS THAT ORGANIZED TO MAKE SURE THINGS WORKED.

I LIVED IN AN OLD BRICK BUILDING ON THE CORNER OF PUTNAM AND BROOKLINE FOR 22 YEARS, FROM 1973 UNTIL '95.



WE HAD THE TENANT UNION THERE—FAIRLY WELL ORGANIZED. WE ALWAYS HAD PROBLEMS WITH CONDITIONS. IF IT WASN'T MICE AND ROACHES, IT WAS NOT ENOUGH GARBAGE CANS.

I WAS THE LEAD ORGANIZER FOR THE BUILDING. AT SOME POINT MY LANDLORD WAS PRETTY FED UP WITH MY ORGANIZING IN THE BUILDING.

THEY SENT SOMEONE TO OFFER ME A BRIBE—AND HE SAID IT IN A SORT OF A BLEAK WAY—

I'LL GIVE YOU 15, MOVE OUT OF THE BUILDING.



AND I JUST LAUGHED AT HIM.

SINCE I WAS THE LEAD ORGANIZER FOR THE BUILDING, I WENT WITH OTHER TENANTS TO A LOT OF HEARINGS AT THE COURTHOUSE TO CHALLENGE EVICTIONS.



ONE OF THE THINGS THAT MANY PEOPLE DON'T APPRECIATE ABOUT RENT CONTROL—

THE PART OF IT THAT HAD TO DO WITH EVICTION CONTROL WAS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS THE PART THAT KEPT A CAP ON RENTS.



NO TENANT COULD BE EVICTED WITHOUT GOING THROUGH A PROCESS:

THE RENT CONTROL BOARD WAS IN CHARGE OF THAT. THEY WOULD HEAR CASES. LANDLORDS HAD TO HAVE A GOOD REASON TO EVICT SOMEBODY. IT WAS USUALLY TENANTS WHO DIDN'T PAY THEIR RENT WHO GOT EVICTED. AND THEY WOULD ARGUE:



THE LANDLORD DIDN'T HOLD UP THEIR END OF THE BARGAIN, CONDITIONS WERE BAD, THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T PAY

ONE TIME, THE ADMINISTRATOR OF MY BUILDING WAS EVICTING THIS WOMAN WHO WAS NOT FAMILIAR WITH NEIGHBORHOOD STUFF. SHE WAS PRETTY UNCOMFORTABLE ABOUT COMING TO THE HEARING TO DEFEND HERSELF.



I TOLD HER I'D MEET HER THERE, BUT WHEN I GOT THERE, SHE WASN'T THERE.

WE WAITED 15 MINUTES AND SHE DIDN'T COME. THE RENT CONTROL HEARING EXAMINER WANTED TO GO AHEAD WITH THE HEARING WITHOUT THE TENANT, BUT YOU DON'T DO THAT. THAT'S UNHEARD OF!



WELL, YOU'RE HERE, YOU COULD REPRESENT,

I'M NOT GOING TO DO THAT.

WELL, I'M GOING TO START THE HEARING

WELL, THEN I'M LEAVING

SO, I START WALKING OUT



AND HE STARTS FOLLOWING ME.

I'M RUNNING AS FAST AS I CAN DOWN THE STAIRWELL.

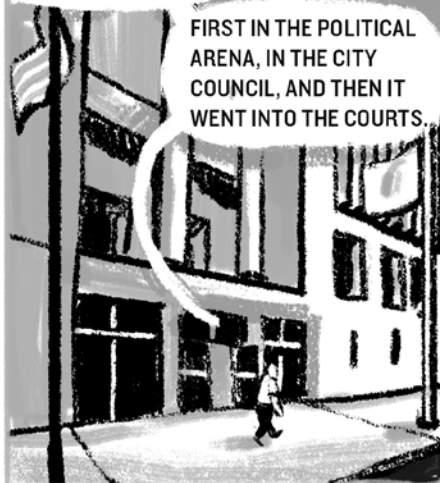
EVENTUALLY, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR INTERVENED



JUST PUT IT OFF UNTIL YOUR TENANT CAN MAKE IT.

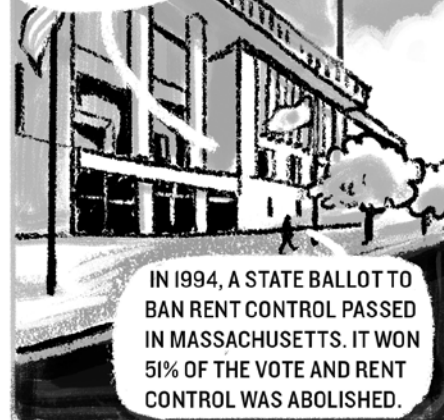
IT WAS FUNNY... AND FOR YEARS AFTER THAT, THE HEARING EXAMINER AND I WOULD MEET IN THE STREET AND SMILE AND SAY HELLO AND REMINISCE ABOUT THAT. (EVENTUALLY, THE HEARING WAS HELD, AND THE EVICTION REQUEST WAS DENIED.)

THE EFFORTS TO GET RID OF RENT CONTROL BEGAN ALMOST AS SOON AS IT WAS ENACTED—



FIRST IN THE POLITICAL ARENA, IN THE CITY COUNCIL, AND THEN IT WENT INTO THE COURTS.

THE OPPONENTS OF RENT CONTROL EXHAUSTED EVERY AVENUE THAT THEY HAD AT THEIR DISPOSAL... UNTIL SOMEONE CAME UP WITH THE IDEA OF A STATEWIDE REFERENDUM.



IN 1994, A STATE BALLOT TO BAN RENT CONTROL PASSED IN MASSACHUSETTS. IT WON 51% OF THE VOTE AND RENT CONTROL WAS ABOLISHED.

2016 CAMBRIDGE OPEN ARCHIVES

BY EMILY GONZALEZ, ARCHIVIST, CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The Cambridge Open Archives celebrated its eighth anniversary in June with a jam-packed program featuring a host of different archives, repositories, and historic sites. Originally created by Gavin Kleespies, this “archives crawl” opens to the public—for free—various archives, special collections, and collecting institutions in the city. This year, 12 sites were featured for six days over two weeks, with the theme “Tales from the Archives.” While all collections generally tell some sort of story, this year’s participants were encouraged to include materials that were unexpected or out of the ordinary.

In the first week, the MIT Museum and the Cambridge Historical Commission hosted tours. The MIT event ranged from the history of hacking at MIT to materials from its impressive Hart Nautical Collection. The historical commission’s two archives interns presented recently processed collections of Cambridge photographer Lois Bowen and philanthropist Frederick Hastings Rindge. In addition, the Schlesinger Library displayed an array of materials ranging from writer and feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s death mask, to suffragette pins, to a girl’s diary from the 1960s. The same day, the Longfellow House’s archivist took visitors on a tour of photographs, letters, and poems relating to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the Washington Elm legend, and Alice Longfellow’s motor travels through Europe.

The Harvard Art Museums Archives displayed an assortment of materials that told the story of its evolution from the Fogg to the present-day organization. The Harvard

University Archives staff discussed several tables’ worth of items, including artifacts of an old fish weir and the documentation of protest and censorship in the *Harvard Crimson*.

The second week brought even more treasures. The MIT Lewis Music Library archivist played an original Victor V phonograph (ca. 1910), and the MIT Institute Archives & Special Collections took visitors through documents about the landfill that would become the MIT campus, and later protests over the Inner Belt highway proposals. Harvard’s Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology presented the work of archaeological artist and explorer Adela Breton through letters and drawings, and the Harvard Semitic Museum showed the evolution of photography in documenting archaeological digs.

Mount Auburn Cemetery and the Cambridge Historical Society rounded out this season’s tours. Mount Auburn presented the history of burial practices—including the beginning of cremation at the cemetery—and the shift from family to individual lots. The CHS discussed its Simplex Steering Committee collection, donated by community organizer Bill Cavellini, who was present to explain how his fascinating and ever-relevant collection came about.

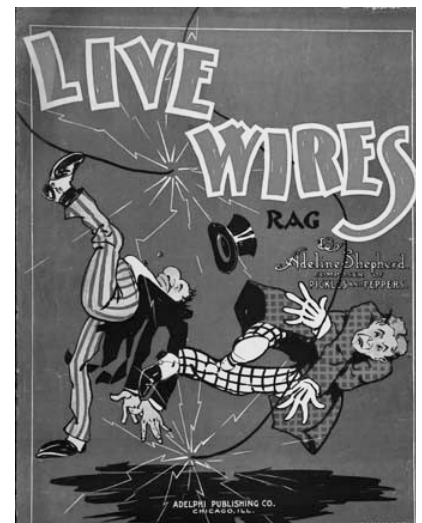
A special thank-you to all the repositories that participated this year, and a big thanks to Kit Rawlins of the Cambridge Historical Commission. Stay tuned for next year’s theme!



Design Research building, Lois Bowen Collection (Cambridge Historical Commission)



Alice Longfellow with her chauffeur Critchell in Italy, 1914. (Longfellow House Washington’s HQ NHS)



Lewis Music Library (MIT Libraries)

"MIDDLES ARE HARD"

BY DIANA LIMBACH LEMPEL

That's what I told the Fellows* at our most recent meeting. These four women—Rayshauna Gray, Bobbie Halliday, Donna Karl, and Kari Kuelzer—took a chance on the Cambridge Historical Society and on themselves by agreeing to be a part of our first Fellowship class and, after refining their research questions, visiting archives and attending workshops. And now they are in the middle of the work.

"Will anyone even care?" one asked.

"It's been like an albatross of guilt around my neck," said another.

Anyone who's undertaken a long research project or creative work understands the truly paralyzing mystery of the middle. In the beginning, things seem neat, straightforward, exciting. We proudly gave each of our Fellows a research workbook and a stack of business cards, and they got started. Donna wants to tell stories of the working class in North Cambridge. Bobbie wants to understand working conditions in Kendall Square during its previous boom in the 19th century. Kari wants to interview her neighbors and figure out what her block was really like when she was growing up. And Rayshauna wonders whether her landlord's story about a house built with illegal Southern pine was true—whether Civil War-era Cantabrigians had compromised their ethics in order to live the good life they wanted.

They undertook their research with enthusiasm, embodying the CHS's civic mission. "Are We Home?" is the question we are asking this year, by which we mean not just "Why are there triple-deckers here?" or "Why is the residential zoning the way it is?" but also "Can I feel at home in a city that I am struggling to afford?" or "Do I have the right to tell the story of the people who lived in my home before me?" or "Can



2016 Fellows Donna Karl, Bobbie Halliday, Kari Kuelzer, and Rayshauna Gray

this really be my home if I am made to feel unwelcome by the language people use and the cruelty and injustice they tolerate?"

In the difficult middle, it feels like real life is getting in the way of the work. One Fellow's research includes sorting through piles of boxes in the basement of her family home, another has been evicted from her apartment by a landlord who wants to renovate and raise the rent. By the end, we'll know that it's all part of the work, and we look forward to learning from the Fellows as they find their way to the next step in their research.

**The Fellows are our "resident historians," selected to research a relevant question regarding housing in Cambridge over the course of several months. We are especially thankful to Charlie Allen Renovations for generously contributing to the Fellows Program this year.*

Brewster Village: Home of Robert Frost, continued from page 3

Frost died in 1963 and the house was sold to James Flanders, an MIT professor and the son of Frost's friend, Vermont senator Ralph Flanders. James died in 1993, and Jean and I bought the house through Realtor Helen Moulton, who was also president of the Cambridge Historical Society at the time.

In a suitcase in the attic, we found Frost's tuxedo, which we gave to the historical society. Frost's granddaughter, Lesley Lee Francis, visited and solved the mystery of the linoleum flooring in the master bedroom, explaining that the poet was afraid of splinters in his feet. We have made renovations that

include updating the kitchen and combining two small bathrooms on the second floor.

The house was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. The Cambridge Historical Commission called it out as part of its program of identifying prominent Cantabrigians, and I continue to give impromptu "lectures" to visitors who come up to peer at the resulting blue oval on the front of the building.

Renny served as Executive Director of the Cambridge Historical Society from 1987 to 1998.

HISTORY CAFÉS, 2016

BY LYNN WASKELIS

As the new Program Specialist at the historical society, I had lots of questions about History Cafés. Below are some of the great answers I received, which I hope inspire you to check out a History Café in 2017, if you haven't yet!

What are History Cafés?

From the spring to the fall of 2016, the CHS Programs Committee planned a series of six monthly History Cafés in bars around Cambridge. Each featured an expert who moderated a discussion about a specific aspect of housing, helping the attendees define the issue, and giving them historical context. After the attendees responded to three open-ended questions about the topic, the moderator read their answers aloud, and sometimes made a game of choosing the “best” one. For example, after a conversation about gentrification, people were asked if they could invent a word or phrase to describe the feeling of “there goes the neighborhood.” Responses ranged from one-word replies like Pinkberried to detailed, thoughtful, and heartfelt paragraphs. These responses were recorded and shared with Envision Cambridge, the City's community-wide program to develop a comprehensive plan for a more livable, sustainable, and equitable Cambridge.

The idea was to have a fun night out, get informed, find your voice and hear others' voices on a multifaceted topic, and perhaps make a new acquaintance!

Where did the idea originate?

CHS's History Cafés were inspired by the worldwide Science Café movement, in which conversations with scientists are held in a bar or other casual setting. After Marieke Van Damme attended a Science Café in Ann Arbor, Mich., she thought the format would translate well to “public history” topics or history applied to real-world issues. The Programs Committee decided to try the concept as a key piece of the CHS's offerings on the 2016 theme of “Are We Home?”

Who is the target audience for a History Café?

The intended audience is first and foremost all curious Cantabrigians. In particular it appeals to those who have not yet formed their impressions of the city, such as newcomers; people whose ties run deep and have formed interpretations; and those who want to better understand an issue, but who may not want to attend a meeting at City Hall. Since attendance has usually been from 20 to 25 people, which was found to be a number conducive to conversation, that is our target for 2017.

Why are they held in bars?

Bars are accessible and social and what might be considered



Marieke Van Damme and attendees at the May History Café at the Asgard Irish Pub, Cambridge

“third spaces” because they're neither domestic (home), nor civic (school, work, city building). Also, bars appeal to young people, a demographic CHS is trying to do a better job of reaching.

How will we know if they are succeeding?

Feedback has been positive! In surveys, attendees liked the format, speakers, and other aspects of the cafés. One young woman joined the CHS after attending a History Café at the Abbey, one of her favorite bars. And this email is from a long-time CHS member:

So I decided that one of my projects for the year would be to lean in ... to make an effort to experience more events. The History Cafés have been very fun—how often do you get a chance for a meaningful conversation with a whole group of new people?

The Programs Committee is developing criteria to evaluate all the CHS programs, and determine what constitutes success. They start from the premise that both attendees and the organization gain the most when people participate in a program series, rather than single events, since continued engagement fosters dialogue and cultivates relationships, which contribute to a more informed and connected community.

As you read this, we are lining up speakers, venues, and funding for the 2017 History Cafés. Plan to check one out, or better yet, commit to attending the entire series!

We welcome your questions, thoughts, and suggestions. Please contact me at lwaskelis@cambridgehistory.org.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

Dear Friends,

This past year, we've been able to conduct some great, innovative programs, including the History Cafés, History Fellows, and Doing History Series. Plus we've hosted our Annual Meeting in March, our Spring Benefit in May, and are planning our Fall Symposia this October and November. And we've published two issues of this newsletter—in the spring and fall—that we've mailed to thousands of our members, friends, and benefactors. But we need your help to continue our vital work of promoting and preserving Cambridge's history. The historical society appreciates your membership and your strong support—we couldn't possibly do it all without you! —*Cambridge Historical Society*



(left to right) Executive Director Marieke Van Damme; CHS Archivist Irina Sandler; volunteers Kim White and Emily Gonzalez at the May 10 Spring Benefit at the Cambridge Innovation Center



At the March 15, 2016 Annual Meeting, Council Members Frank Kramer, Doug Hanna, Andy Leighton, Liz Adams Lasser, Tod Beaty, Bruce Irving; (front row) and Heli Meltzner; Marieke Van Damme, Rosemary Previte, and Council Members Rolf Goetze and Stan Burrows



"Five Senses/Five Centuries" tour guide Daniel Berger-Jones (left) with Shady Hill seventh-graders and their teacher, Patrick Farmer (right rear)



Mayor Denise Simmons, shown with CHS President Tod Beaty, at the May 10 Spring Benefit

History Cafés, continued from page 10

Thanks to our knowledgeable and engaging 2016 experts: Japonica Brown-Saracino, Associate Professor of Sociology, BU; Tim Devin, Artist; Ellen Kokinda, Assistant Planner, City of Cambridge CDD; Rashmi Ramaswamy, Architect; Lily Gray, Business Development at MidPen Housing, CA; Jesse Kanson-Benanav, Chair, A Better Cambridge; Molly Turner, Global Head of Civic Partnerships, Airbnb.

Thank you to our Programs Committee: Kris Bierfelt, Jessica Bitely, Sheree Brown, Diana Lempel, Brad Miller, and Rashmi Ramaswamy.

And to our generous and community-minded 2016 venue sponsors: Hong Kong Restaurant, The Asgard, and The Abbey! We couldn't have done it without you!

Even so, readers of *The Jungle* would have felt right at home in turn-of-the-century Cambridge, with its slaughterhouses and rendering plant employing thousands. Lever Brothers built a soap plant on the site of what is now Technology Square, and the Boston Woven Hose Company, producer of rubber products, installed itself on Broadway, just north of MIT's new campus. Both brought unwelcome olfactory experiences to the neighborhood.

Cambridge began discussing new rules immediately following World War I, and hearings began in 1921. In 1924, an ordinance was approved that was modeled on the Euclidean zoning method, so named because a similar system first appeared in Euclid, Ohio. The new code divided Cambridge into Residential, Business, and Unrestricted districts, each with four height limits ranging from 40 to 100 feet. In effect, the City was overlaid with 12 height and use combinations. It restricted "industries emitting noxious odors, dust, smoke, gas, or noise" to specific zones within the City.

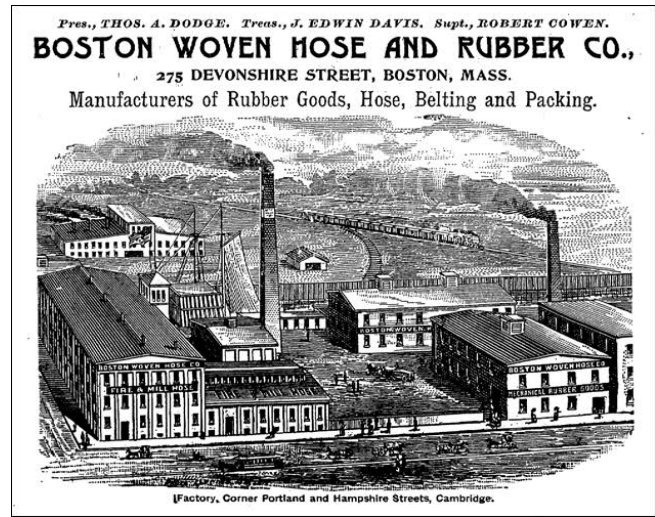
Newspapers of the day were quick to celebrate the progress. The *Cambridge Tribune* noted that "The whole purpose of zoning is to encourage the erection of the right building in the right place." Henceforth, a Board of Zoning Appeal would decide what was right and what was not.

Of course, no sooner was the ordinance passed than people began attacking it. In fact, much of modern U.S. zoning law stems from a single legal challenge to Cambridge's rules. In 1924, Saul Nectow owned several acres of land on the corner of Brookline and Henry streets, next to the Ford Motor plant. Cambridge had zoned a portion of this land as residential, even though it was surrounded by lots designated for industrial use. Mr. Nectow objected and, after an unsuccessful appeal to the City Council, he sued, claiming that he was unable to erect a commercial building or sell the land to a buyer because of this change.

In a previous case, the Supreme Court had ruled zoning constitutional as long as it provided a clear public benefit. "A nuisance may merely be a right thing in the wrong place," the Court ruled, "like a pig in the parlor instead of the barnyard." But in the Nectow case, the Court placed limits on these powers. In its opinion, the Court sided with Mr. Nectow, saying that "[a zoning restriction] cannot be imposed if it does not bear a substantial relation to the public health, safety, morals or general welfare." Where the prior case established the right to enforce zoning, the Cambridge case would limit its reach.

Times change, and so do residents' concerns. In the 1930s,

residents worried about the proliferation of gas stations. By the 1940s, it was large apartment buildings. Sometimes what was once decried is now embraced. A century ago, the *Cambridge Chronicle* reported that "people living in the Fayerweather Street section are much stirred up over the commercializing of that section by the addition of a number of unsightly one-story store buildings." Today, the shops along Huron Avenue are considered neighborhood treasures, and Huron Village is protected by especially restrictive zoning that effectively limits building heights to a single story.



Courtesy of the Cambridge Historical Society

Woven Hose Factory, Cambridge

Such changing concerns led to major rewrites of the zoning rules in 1943, 1961, 1977, and 2000. Less and less do we need protection from big, dirty factories—those have all been shipped overseas—and in any case today's zoning outlaws most heavy industries anywhere in the city: Acid manufacture, glue making, explosives, refining operations, trash incineration, smelting, and meatpacking are all expressly prohibited. Now, the top 25 Cambridge firms employ more than 50,000 workers, and most of those businesses (higher education, biotech, healthcare, software, and R&D) produce no physical product at all. More employees work for Whole Foods in Cambridge today (443) than for the entire city government of 1885 (406). (The City now employs more than 4,000 people.)

This year, Cambridge began yet another review of its zoning code, an effort known as Envision Cambridge. We now seek to reclaim former industrial land for new uses: housing, job creation, parks and open space, and mixed-use retail. Instead of distantly separated uses and the embrace of the car culture, residents now seek enhanced mobility and places to live, work, shop, and play close to one another. Zoning will once more need to evolve if it is to remain relevant to our lives and supportive of our aspirations, both as individuals and as a city.



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Why did she decide to donate it to the Cambridge Historical Society?

I don't know entirely why she decided to donate it, but I'm not sure anyone in the family was prepared for the house's upkeep. My grandmother was a very generous woman and frequently donated and volunteered for charities such as the Red Cross.

What has changed about the house, street, and/or neighborhood?

It is very much the same as it always was, except the exterior was a more pink color. Brattle Street itself has not changed much. The adjacent side street, Kennedy Road, had fewer houses. Appleton Street had open land, a big barn, and an open field.

What did you like the best about living here?

It became the place I learned about family. My grandmother had never raised a small child independently, as she had governesses for her own children. I was lucky because I got a very good upbringing. William Emerson had also never brought up young kids (her children had been grown when they married), but he was so nice to me. If he ever needed to reprove me, he removed



Source: Malcolm Frazier

William Emerson and Frances White at the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House (ca. 1938)

his monocle and just looked at me. His colleagues at MIT called that look “the silver sword with an edge of steel.”

Frances and William Emerson were very happily married, and I learned how to be a husband from him. Every morning, for example, he would take the toast and cut it into uneven halves, and offer her a piece with his thumb firmly on the smaller piece. She would argue that it wasn't fair, and it was a daily ritual. Meals together were very happy, but if they wanted to discuss something without my understanding, they would speak in rapid French. They had both spent World War I in France and were fluent. I could never catch up!

I loved this home and all it meant to me so much that I brought my girlfriend Constance to the house in 1965 to ask her to marry me. To my delight and happiness, she said “Yes”! I would have loved for my grandparents to have met her.

Do you miss living here now? If you had the opportunity, would you live here again?

Everything but the winters! Yes, because my memories were so happy.

LEROY CRAGWELL, 1929–2016

BY RENNY LITTLE FOR THE CAMBRIDGE AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE ALLIANCE

LeRoy Cragwell, a distinguished Cantabrigian, died on June 17, 2016. LeRoy grew up here and knew the city like the back of his hand. He knew everyone, and where they lived, and they knew him. He served on a number of boards and was a longtime participant and supporter of programs at the Cambridge Senior Center.

In 1991, LeRoy became the first chairman of the Cambridge African American Heritage Trail Committee. Eventually the Committee became the Cambridge African American Heritage Alliance, as its mission grew from developing a heritage trail to providing a number of programs of interest and benefit to African Americans and the larger Cambridge community. LeRoy chaired the Alliance for 10 years and served on it for 21 years, until health issues caused him to retire in 2012. He continued in a supportive role as an advisory board member, even after he was admitted to the hospital in 2015.

The list of Alliance accomplishments under LeRoy's wise leadership includes a resource guide for teachers, Black History Month programs, and the establishment of the Susan Revaleon Green speakers' series. These talks by prominent African Americans were held at the Cambridge Historical Society. The accumulation of many noted Alliance activities led to an award of distinction for community service from MIT in 2007.

The Alliance feels that LeRoy is a strong candidate for his own plaque on the Trail to recognize his admirable community service, and for the preservation of Cambridge's African American history. He will be missed.



2016 GRANT AWARDS

BY ROSEMARY PREVITE

This year, the historical society was honored to receive significant grants from both the Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati and Mass Humanities.

The members of the Society of the Cincinnati, founded in 1783, are descendants of officers who served in the Continental army or navy during the Revolution (1775-1783). The Mass. Society of the Cincinnati awards grants to organizations whose activities support the Society's mission, and for projects that focus on the Revolutionary period.

Over the past several years, with the support of the Mass. Society of the Cincinnati, CHS has initiated several interactive projects for the public, including an online interactive map of Cambridge, self-guided walking tours, a cell-phone tour of the American Revolution, a survey of resources available to Revolutionary War researchers, and a classroom guide for local teachers in Cambridge.

This year's \$1,500 grant was used to transfer the outdated cell-phone audio tour of "Cambridge and the American Revolution" to the free smart-phone Yonward app. The tour became available on Yonward this spring, along with several other CHS tours.

The Society also received a Mass Humanities grant for its fall 2016 symposia, "Housing for All?" Mass Humanities—established in 1974 as the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities—supports programs that use history, literature, philosophy, and the other humanities



The Yonward app in use at the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House

disciplines to enhance and improve civic life. This \$7,000 grant will support the symposia's "Conversations," a series of three evening programs drawing scholars, activists, and the general public to examine the past, present, and future of affordable housing issues.

As part of the symposia, the Society will also produce a document reflecting the multiplicity of concerns, stories, and perspectives about housing in Cambridge in 2016. This public document will be shared with the City's Community Development Department, which is in charge of executing Envision Cambridge, the City's master planning process.

Marieke Van Damme notes, "These generous gifts will help the Society further its mission of sharing the stories of Cambridge. We are grateful for the votes of confidence in our work from these prestigious organizations and look forward to working together on these projects."

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Fall Symposia: Housing for All?

THREE THURSDAYS, 6-8 PM

OCTOBER 13, 6-8 PM, CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC
LIBRARY, MAIN BRANCH

How did we get here? What are the challenges? Who is the “we”?

Marjorie Decker, *Mass. State Representative,
Moderator*

Barry Bluestone, *Northeastern University;*

Corinne Espinoza, *Cambridge Community
Center*

Charlie Sullivan, *Cambridge Historical
Commission*

OCTOBER 27, 6-8 PM, CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY CENTER

What have been the successes & failures of affordable housing planning & activism?

Chris Arnold, *National Public Radio, Moderator*

Cheryl-Ann Pizza-Zeoli, *Alliance of Cambridge
Tenants*

Greg Russ, *Cambridge Housing Authority*

Jim Stockard, *The Loeb Fellowship at the Harvard
Graduate School of Design*

NOVEMBER 17, 6-8 PM, CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC
LIBRARY, CENTRAL SQUARE BRANCH

How do we achieve the affordable city?

Japonica Brown-Saracino, *Associate Professor
of Sociology, Boston University*

Caroline Cheong, *Assistant Professor of Public
History, University of Central Florida*

Adam Tanaka, *PhD Candidate, Harvard
Graduate School of Design*

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