



The Newetowne Chronicle

A publication of the Cambridge Historical Society

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Summer 2008
Volume VIII—Number 2

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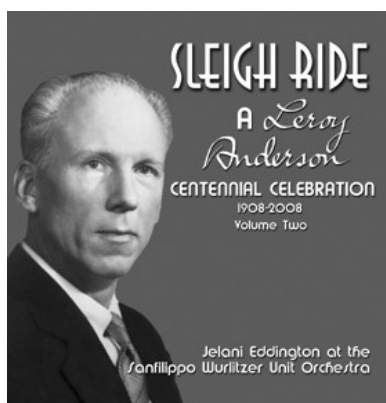
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PEOPLE AND PLACES

Composer Leroy Anderson: Cambridge Born and Bred

By Jane Anderson Vercelli

While the entertaining music of Leroy Anderson is heard all over the world today, the composer who wrote “Sleigh Ride” was born, raised, and educated in Cambridge, thanks to his Swedish parents, who immigrated as children to the United States. They chose to make Cambridge their home because they wanted Leroy and his brother to be educated at good schools and to qualify for scholarships to Harvard College.



This recent CD of Leroy Anderson's music features the world-premiere recording of the “Cambridge Centennial March of Industry”—a newly discovered unpublished composition.

During his lifetime, Anderson arranged, conducted, and composed mostly instrumental music, including the whimsical “Syncopated Clock,” “Waltzing Cat,” and “The Typewriter,” and the rousing “Bugler’s Holiday.” The lilting “Sleigh Ride” is the exception. So many people know lyricist Mitchell Parish’s opening words, “Just hear those sleigh bells jingling,” that they often refer to the song as “Sleigh Bells.”

The centennial of Anderson’s birth in 1908 is being celebrated in concerts around the country and the world. On September 3, at the Hatch Shell in Boston, the Boston Landmarks Orchestra under the direction of conductor Charles Ansbacher will dedicate part of its concert, titled “Red Sox and Apple Pie,” to Anderson’s music.

Leroy’s father, Bror Anton, the seventh of eight children, was born in Ovarp near Kristianstad in southern Sweden and immigrated with his family to Chicago in March 1882. A graduate of North Park College in the 1890s, he moved to Philadelphia and then to Cambridge, where he worked for the post office his entire life. As a young man, Bror played mandolin and banjo.

Leroy’s mother, Anna Margareta, was born in Stockholm, the youngest of four daughters of Bengt Jonsson (later Johnson) and Maria Lovisa Horling. The family immigrated in 1887 to Worcester and then to Cambridge. Bengt, a fine woodworker, built Victorian piano cases for the Ivers and Pond Company of Boston. The most musically gifted of the four daughters, Anna played piano, organ, and guitar, and was excused from doing housework to protect her hands.

(continued on page 6)

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The Newetowne Chronicle is published three times a year by the Cambridge Historical Society.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

In Appreciation

As we welcome our new executive director, Gavin Kleespies, (see page 3), I would like to extend recognition and appreciation to Karen Davis and Lewis Bushnell for their valued service to the Historical Society.

Karen has had a long and valued association with the Society since becoming a member in 1984. She served on, and then chaired, the program committee for many years. She was elected to the council in 1998 and then elected vice president in 1999, serving until 2003. That July, she was appointed interim director, and in January 2004, Karen and Lewis were appointed executive and associate director, respectively—the two posts representing one full-time position. Before his appointment, Lewis had contributed many volunteer hours to establishing the CHS website, which has become a valuable resource.

During their directorship, Karen and Lewis benefited the Society in many ways, some of which deserve special mention:

- A program of developing business sponsors for the annual spring benefit was

initiated by Karen, greatly increasing contributions.

- Karen created a resident archivist position by reassigning resident fellow Mark Vassar to this important function.
- Aided by Lewis's publication production and photography skills, the Society's newsletter, *The Newetowne Chronicle*, was expanded to 12 pages and improved.
- The Society now has a more visible face in the community thanks to their attendance at the meetings and programs of various Cambridge organizations.

These are some of the efforts that deserve our recognition and appreciation. I can say without question that the Cambridge Historical Society is a more effective repository of Cambridge history thanks to Karen Davis and Lewis Bushnell.

As a footnote, Karen has stated that she has no intention of "fading away" and will continue to contribute to the Society over the coming months and years, for which we are most grateful.

Ted Hansen

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Make the past a thing of the present! Join the Cambridge Historical Society.

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or visit us online at www.cambridgehistory.org

FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Bricks of Cambridge

Courtesy of Gavin Kleespies



Gavin Kleespies became the Society's sixth executive director on June 25.

I've been trying to think of how to introduce myself and describe both my background and my interest in local history, and I've come to the conclusion that it has to be about the bricks.

My first job in high school was as a tour guide in Old Cambridge, giving hour-and-a-half to two-hour walking tours of Harvard Square. Being only 13, I was incredibly nervous. This was especially true when I was giving tours to people who had expected someone with a little more gravitas to explain the veritas sign to them, or to families dragging along their disengaged teenage children (who were often older than I was).

My solution was to learn as much as I could about everything along the tour route. I talked to people and listened to their stories. I learned that, for most people, the best tours are not ones where you see some building that is incredibly old or designed by a famous architect, but ones in which you hear the stories behind these facts—stories you did not expect. What happened in the building over all these years? How has the community around it changed? How did the architect treat his assistants? Did you know that the bricks that built this were fired in the North Cambridge brickyards? Did you know that Cambridge was a major industrial town? Stories were what caused people to engage with items on the tours and what they actually remembered from them.

The more stories I learned, the more I was able to connect one story to the next. This made me a bore to most of my friends. I could not walk down the street without telling some story about every other building, or getting excited about a brick in the sidewalk that had NEBCO stamped on it, explaining that this was a brick made by the New England Brick Company, right up the street in North Cambridge.

So, when thinking about how to introduce myself, I thought I could mention that I've worked in local history for 15 years in three different states. I could mention that I have a graduate degree from the University of Chicago or that, while I was the executive director of my last historical society, its membership grew from 150 to 900.

But none of that is really what qualifies me for my new job. What qualifies me is that I get truly excited about bricks and the stories beneath them. I am glad to be back in Cambridge, and look forward to meeting many new people and learning many new stories.

Gavin Kleespies



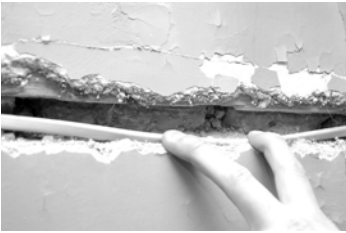
This ca. 1910-1950 brick was produced by the New England Brick Company, which had brickyards in North Cambridge. Mounted on a wood board, it is among the artifacts, photographs, business records, pamphlets, and periodicals in the NEBCO collection of the Cambridge Historical Society.

The House Speaks

By Karen Davis

During the process of replacing the electrical system at the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House, we discovered a brick lining in the exterior walls and thick vertical planking under the plaster in the front hall. While these solid surfaces made snaking the new wiring a challenge for the electricians, we are delighted to know more about the construction of our old house.

The brick in the exterior walls—called nogging—provided insulation and is not structural.



Channel cut for wiring reveals brick nogging. Adjacent photo shows re-plastered channel.

According to one expert on the process, “the frame of the dwelling was erected and sheathed, and the spaces between the posts and studs were then filled with

soft brick laid dry or in a clay or lime mortar. Representing an added expense in both labor and materials, such brick nogging is encountered in only a small percentage of houses.” (James L. Garvin, *A Building History of Northern New England*, 2001, p. 53.)

Further investigation would help to date the nogging at the HLN House, but given the documentary history, it is likely that it dates to at least the early 18th century.



Brian Powell determining paint sampling locations.

Vertical planks were found under the plaster in the front stair hall. According to the electrician, the planks are about 3 inches thick, and they rise from the floor to the ceiling. This indicates that the stair hall was once finished with

wood paneling, which was typical of the 17th and early 18th centuries. The planks stop at the beginning of the projecting portico, which was added in the mid 18th century.

Now that the house is completely rewired, we are preparing to restore and paint the interior. But before we do, we are taking advantage of an opportunity to analyze the historic paint colors and to learn more about the evolution of the



Brian Powell (center), with Karen Davis and Charlie Allen, examining framing near an exposed corner post in the east chamber.

house in the process. Architectural conservator Brian Powell has taken nearly 200 paint samples from five of the oldest rooms in the house. By comparing the layers of paint on the various samples and then synthesizing that information with documentary evidence, he will be able to roughly date significant alterations. Once we know when a particular room reached its present appearance, he will determine the historic color scheme for that room. His work with a field microscope (see photo lower left) has already led to intriguing theories. At the conclusion of the paint analysis, Brian will present his findings in a detailed report and in a lecture and tour at the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House.

The electrical project, including the paint analysis, interior refinishing, and restoration of the grounds, was made possible by your contributions together with the pro bono work of Charlie Allen of Charlie Allen Restorations and the city's Institutional Preservation Grant program—which is funded by the Community Preservation Act and administered by the Cambridge Historical Commission.

Honor Roll

The Cambridge Historical Society wishes to recognize the extraordinary contributions of the following businesses and institutions.

The Cambridge Savings Bank for underwriting the publication of *A City's Life and Times: Cambridge in the Twentieth Century*.

Robert Wilson, Cambridge Savings Bank president and CEO, receiving a certificate of appreciation from CHS president Ted Hansen



Charlie Allen, President of Charlie Allen



Restorations, for leading the facility committee, serving as general contractor for the roofing, balustrade, and chimney project in 2005-2006, and the electrical project in 2007-2008, as well as for his leadership donations to our operating funds.

The Cambridge Historical Commission for creating the Institutional Preservation Grant program and awarding the Society the essential funding that made our major building projects feasible.

The Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati for funding annual grant requests, which enabled us to restore our Lillie models, conserve 18th-century letters, and present numerous programs related to the American Revolution.

Barbara Mangum restoring one of the Lillie models of early Brattle Street houses.



Ambit Press for underwriting the cost of the invitations to our spring benefits for the past eight years.

The Cambridge Plant & Garden Club for their ongoing care of and dedication to the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House gardens and grounds.



The Cambridge office of **Hammond Real Estate** for their annual gift of 40 or more CHS memberships to new homeowners for 10 years.

Novartis Institutes for BioMedical Research for underwriting the Society's Grand Centennial Celebration and hosting it at their magnificent laboratory in the former NECCO factory.

Novartis's Jeff Lockwood (right) in 2005 with Karen Davis and Lewis Bushnell at "From NECCO to Novartis"



We also thank the following individuals for contributing their time and talent: **Luise Erdmann** (copyeditor), **Michael Hanlon** (landscaper), **Philip Clendaniel** and **John Altobello** (AV initiative), **Susan Swan** and **Jen Bonislowski** (archives volunteers), **Chip Allen** and **Stephen Huenneke** (IT consultants).

Composer Leroy Anderson

(continued from page 1)

Courtesy of Jane Anderson Vercelli



Anna and Bror Anderson with their sons Leroy (left) and Russell

Anna and Bror, whose nickname was Ed, met and married in October 1904, when both were 25. They lived with Anna's parents and two unmarried sisters in the family house at 269 Norfolk Street, Cambridge, where Leroy was born on June 29, 1908.

In 1909, Anna and Ed bought land at 12 Chatham Street. The next year, they took out a mortgage to build a three-decker house, which still stands. By all accounts, their home was filled with music. Anna played piano and taught Leroy as soon as he could reach the keys. Once Leroy could play, he accompanied Anna on guitar. In time, Leroy also learned to play organ, tuba, accordion, and double bass.

Edith Anderson Nelson, Leroy's cousin, vividly recalled those early-20th-century years: "Church youth groups in Cambridge would rent sleds used for commercial deliveries and then sell tickets for sleigh rides. Nobody cleared off the streets in those days, and the snow was packed because everything was delivered in pungs (sleds) during the winter.... so you could go just about anywhere on a sleigh

ride." Edith recalls Ed asking Anna, "Remember those sleigh rides we took?"—to which Anna's response was "Shhhhhh!"

After graduating from Cambridge Grammar School in 1921 and Cambridge High and Latin School in 1925, Leroy entered Harvard as a member of the class of 1929. There he arranged and composed music for the band, played trombone, and eventually became the band's director. In 1936, the manager of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, George Judd, also a Harvard alumnus, asked Leroy to arrange Harvard songs for the Boston Pops, beginning a collaboration with its director, Arthur Fiedler, that lasted for the rest of Leroy's life.

Over the years, Leroy Anderson's ties to his home town remained strong through his relationship with the Pops. Fiedler premiered Anderson's compositions and asked him to arrange music for the Pops, including selections from Gershwin's *Girl Crazy*, which



The Anderson house at 12 Chatham Street

Anderson completed shortly before he died on May 18, 1975 at his home in Woodbury, Connecticut. His widow, Eleanor Anderson, continues to live in Woodbury, promoting her husband's legacy.

Among the concerts featuring Anderson's music and celebrating the centennial of his birth, the largest of all—consisting of 750 musicians and singers—was held on April 26 in Kristianstad, Sweden. The Boston Pops scheduled an Anderson tribute on June 3, with a performance of his *Piano Concerto in C*.

Jane Anderson Vercelli of Thompson, Connecticut, is Leroy Anderson's daughter.

Field Trip: The Edmund Fowle House

By Michael Kenney

With winter approaching, General George Washington drafted an urgent appeal for supplies to James Warren, president of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress.

The letter—dated November 2, 1775, and now in the collection of the Cambridge Historical Society—was dispatched to Watertown, where the congress had begun meeting as a government-in-exile three days after the battles at Lexington and Concord. It would have been delivered to the house that Edmund Fowle had built just three years earlier, which had been requisitioned as a meeting place for the executive council.

Washington was responding to a visit to his headquarters in Cambridge the day before by three members of the council. “When [they] were here yesterday,” Washington writes, “I told them that I did not believe we had more than four days stock of wood before hand—I thought that we had scarce four hours, and that different Regiments were upon the point of cutting each others throats for a few standing locusts near their encampments to dress their victuals with.”

Washington’s requests were apparently heeded, for a few weeks later, Warren wrote to Samuel Adams, a Massachusetts delegate to the Continental Congress meeting in Philadelphia, describing “the Capital matters we are engaged in—regulating the Militia, paying of the Soldiery, aiding and assisting the Quartermaster General in Supplying the Army with Hay and wood, two very scarce Articles.... and in short every thing else.”

The Fowle House, from which the council ran

the war while the British occupied Boston, has now been carefully and faithfully restored by the Watertown Historical Society. Cambridge Historical Society members should consider making a field trip to the Fowle House in the coming months.

Restoration began in 2005 with a grant of \$500,000 from the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Much of that went for architectural investigation and documentary research. Additional grants and in-kind restoration work by students at the North Bennet Street School brought the cost close to \$1 million.

“We just kept finding things we didn’t know about,” said Joyce Kelly, who recorded the restoration process for the Watertown Historical Society’s newsletter—fireplaces that had been boarded up and woodwork that had been covered over when bedrooms were built and later, when the house was moved from its original location on Mt. Auburn Street and converted into a side-by-side two-family dwelling.



Opening day at the restored Edmund Fowle house in Watertown

A major discovery, by architectural conservator Andrew Ladygo, was that the council’s meeting room on the second floor was L-shaped, a determination he made after finding that the original ceiling plaster extended the full length of the right side of the house and halfway across the rear. Another discovery in the meeting room suggests the haste with which the room was fitted out for the council. The paneling of the fireplace surround was placed after the wall was plastered—probably, said restoration architect Wendall C. Kalsow, “because the carpenter was late on the job.”

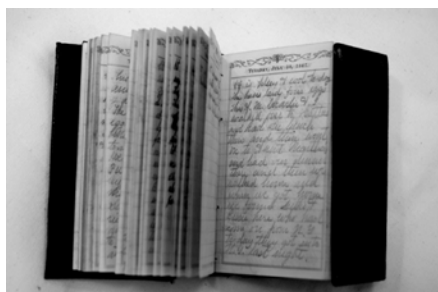
The Edmund Fowle House, at 28 Marshall Street, is open the third Sunday of the month. For information, visit the Watertown Historical Society’s website: www.historicwatertown.org.

FROM THE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVE

Mark Time

by Mark Vassar

Three archives interns from Simmons College—Joey Grant, Anne Geiersbach, and Stephanie Call—worked diligently over the spring semester to assist us in preparing our collections for use by researchers.



John White Treadwell Nichols's 1867 diary, which he wrote while growing up at the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House.

Joey produced a finding aid to our collection of Nichols Family Papers, which documents a family that lived in the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House from 1850 to 1892. The collection consists of the diaries of Susan Treadwell Nichols and her son John White Treadwell Nichols, copies of George Nichols's correspondence, photographs of the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House, and letters that record or reflect on work done on the house in the mid- to late 19th century. We are happy to report that Joey will be continuing as a volunteer during her break from school.

Anne worked on the Henderson-Vandermark Papers, deposited two years ago by Henderson descendants Peter and Henry Vandermark (see fall 2006 newsletter). The Hendersons settled in North Cambridge in 1840, but the family is best known



John J. Henderson built the Henderson Carriage Building at 2067 Massachusetts Avenue in 1892.

for founding a major Cambridge enterprise—the Henderson Brothers Carriage Company—in 1869. The collection consists of correspondence, diaries, photographs, and memorabilia documenting the Henderson and Vandermark families, as well as such social organizations as the Cantabrigia Club. Anne, too, is volunteering at the CHS this summer to complete a finding aid for the collection.

Stephanie created a finding aid for the Gutheim Family Papers, which we received from the estate of Marjorie Gutheim in 2006. Another



Native Cantabrigian Marjorie Gutheim in 1945, when she began teaching at Mount Vernon Seminary in Washington, D.C.

Simmons intern, Amy Greer, did the preliminary processing last year. Beginning with Amy's plan, Stephanie worked her way through twenty-eight boxes of material, culling the papers down to suit our collection policy. The collection consists of photographs, correspondence, diaries, and scrapbooks of

both Marjorie Frye Gutheim and her father, Herman Gutheim, who was chief of the Cambridge Fire Department. Thus the papers document, not only the family's history, but that of our fire department as well.

As always, our thanks go out to our interns from the Simmons Graduate School of Library and Information Science. Without their assistance, access to our collections would be delayed for quite some time.

The Mandamus Council

On September 1, 1774, Judge Joseph Lee, perhaps fearing for his life, wrote to British General Gage: "I find that establishing such a Council has so universally inflamed the minds of the People of the Province, and excited such tumult and disorders in various parts of it, as threatens a catastrophe greatly to be dreaded, and exposes the Members of the Council to such continual injuries and insults as I am unable to sustain."

Lee, owner of what is now the Society's headquarters at 159 Brattle Street, was referring to the mandamus council, a governing body of 36 loyalists appointed by the king to replace the elected government officials in Massachusetts. The establishment of the council was one of several coercive acts passed by Parliament in 1774 to punish the colonies and to single out Massachusetts for the December 1773 Boston Tea Party. Serving as president of the mandamus council was Lt. Governor Thomas Oliver, who owned what is now the Harvard president's house, at 33 Elmwood Avenue.

On September 1, 1774, an incident took place that could have started the Revolution. General Gage had learned from his Cambridge spy William Brattle that various towns had removed their stores of gunpowder from the Provincial Powder House, which still stands in Somerville's Nathan Tufts Park. So Gage dispatched 260 troops to seize the remaining powder.

Outraged patriots directed their anger at the hated mandamus councilors, leading to Lee's resignation that very day. The next day an angry mob made its way down Brattle Street to Oliver's house, demanding his resignation. After being harassed for several hours, Oliver signed the letter of resignation, to which he added: "My House at Cambridge being surrounded by about Four Thousand People in Compliance with their Commands I sign my Name." In the following months, Oliver, Lee, and other wealthy Cambridge loyalists—the Tories—left their homes for sanctuary in Boston. Judge Joseph Lee was the only Brattle Street Tory to return, which he did in 1777.

Compiled by Karen Davis from CHS files

Calendar of Events

Saturdays, August 9 and 16

Cambridge Discovery Days:

From Settlement to Revolution

Free walks, tours, and other activities organized by the Historic Cambridge Collaborative run concurrently throughout the city. The CHS will offer the following:

Both days, 10:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

Hunt for History: A Tory Row Quest

Grab the kids and follow clever clues on the special Quest Map to explore Brattle Street before and during the American Revolution. Maps may be picked up in advance at the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House, the Longfellow National Historic Site, or the information kiosk in Harvard Square.

August 9, 10:00–11:00 a.m.

August 16, 1:00–2:00 p.m.

The Oldest House on Brattle Street

Place: 159 Brattle Street

Tour the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House to see rooms that date to the 17th and 18th centuries. Your guide will trace their architectural evolution while telling stories about the people who lived here and how their lives intersected with the history of Cambridge and the nation.

Sunday, September 14, 2:00–4:00 p.m.

Private John W. Harvey and the Elite Massachusetts 5th Cavalry of the Union Army

Collaborative program with the African American Heritage Alliance

Place: 159 Brattle Street

Cambridge native Joan Qualls Harris will speak about her research and book on her ancestor, who served in the first free black volunteer regiment from Massachusetts.

Details on these and other programs will be posted on our website as they become available. Members will receive invitations and brochures.

SPRING BENEFIT

From Empty Space to the Infinite Corridor: CHS Celebrates MIT



A string quartet from the Longy School of Music performed as attendees gathered in MIT's Morss Hall.

Posters (below center) provided by the MIT Museum illustrate phases of MIT's 1916 construction and development.



Presenters (l to r) Christian Hedrick, Bob Simha, Jay Keyser, and Charles Sullivan



Prof. Emeritus Jay Keyser (left) described MIT's ingenious pranks—"hacks."



Bob Simha (below left), MIT Director of Planning Emeritus, described the evolution of the campus.



Charles Sullivan, executive director, Cambridge Historical Commission (below right), described the political and physical landscape surrounding MIT's move to Cambridge.

MIT President Emeritus Paul Gray (below, via DVD), summarized MIT's contributions to research, education, and the national welfare.



Architect and MIT doctoral candidate Christian Hedrick (far left) led a campus tour after speaking on the design of MIT's 1916 buildings.



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

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Susan S. Poverman

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For the Record

Thank you to Steve Surette, who alerted us that our information suggesting that Ezra Abbot was principal of the Cambridge High School is incorrect (winter 2008). Surette wrote: "As a student (not an expert) of history of our high schools, I am not aware of his position as Principal of the old Cambridge High School. If the term is meant to be what we understand today as Principal—the same as Master or Headmaster, I can find no record of his tenure as such.

"Cecil Derry (CHS *Proceedings*, Vol. 15, 1954, p. 96), long considered the expert on this subject, has said that Elbridge Smith (1847-56) served as Master with no breaks, resigning in July 1856 (*Cambridge Chronicle*, Aug. 2, 1856) and succeeded by Osgood Johnson (1856-57) on the same day. William Bradbury, a longstanding teacher and headmaster of later years, himself, took over temporarily to finish 1857."



FAQ: What was a mandamus councillor?
See page 9.

The Mission of the Cambridge Historical Society

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

THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
The Hooper-Lee-Nichols House
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"Planning for the future without a sense of the past is
like trying to plant cut flowers."

Daniel Boorstein
History News, Summer 2000