



# The Newetowne Chronicle

Summer 2011  
Volume XI Number II

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## The Newetowne Chronicle

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[www.cambridgehistory.org](http://www.cambridgehistory.org)

## Making History Accessible

By Michael Kenney



Cast of *Pomander Walk*, ca. 1900, performing for the Cambridge Social Dramatic Club in the Brattle Theater (4A.0022 CHS)

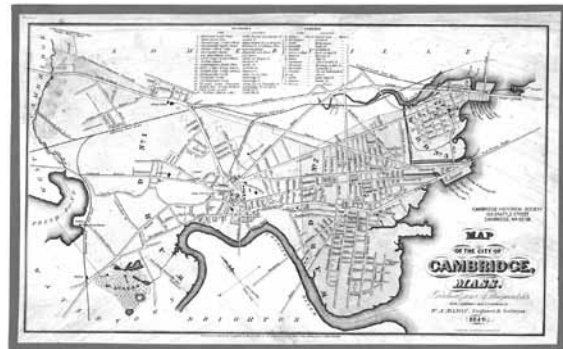


This ca. 1916 image shows the entrance hall and staircase of 55 Fayerweather Street (1905), the home of Harvard librarian Alfred C. Potter. (3A.0102 CHS)

Still filed away in the Society's archives were maps tracing the city's development, beginning in the 17th century, and photographs of its life and times.

That month saw the start of a multifaceted project, making these archival treasures available for study and inspection by the wider public. Led by Executive Director Gavin Kleespies, the project involved CHS staff members and interns, as well as professionals in the fields of archival photography and preservation.

This special edition of *The Newetowne Chronicle* documents that project with articles by many of those who worked on it. The results of the project itself – including maps and photographs – will soon be available online at [flickr.com](http://flickr.com) and through the Society's website, [cambridgehistory.org](http://cambridgehistory.org).



W. A. Mason's map of the City of Cambridge, 1849



This ca. 1890 image shows the Little Block, at 1350-1362 Massachusetts Avenue, where the Holyoke Center stands today. (4A.0022 CHS)

When the reorganized Hooper-Lee-Nichols House opened in December 2009, it was an opportunity to display objects from the Society's collections – Revolutionary furnishings, 19th-century children's toys, and equipment from the city's industrial history.

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The Story of Our Historical Photo Collection By Mark Vassar

We have just finished digitizing the 2,500 historic images that make up the Society's Image Collection. This includes photographs, stereographs, etchings, prints, watercolors, and glass plate negatives of Cambridge neighborhoods, buildings, individuals, and social organizations. The bulk of these images were created between 1865 and 1922.

The first donations came from J. Henry Blake and Sarah H. Swan in 1906, the year after the Society was founded. Donations have continued to the present.

The collection is broken up into six series: neighborhoods; churches; buildings; social organizations, objects, and events; Harvard buildings; and people.

Cambridge Neighborhoods consists of photographs, prints, etchings, etc., of squares and landmarks in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Notable subjects are Harvard Square, Mount Auburn Cemetery, the Cambridge Arsenal, Fort Washington, and the Washington Elm.

Cambridge Churches consists of photographs and prints of churches and divinity school buildings. Several of the churches in this series are no longer standing, having been replaced by later churches or demolished or moved.

Cambridge Buildings consists of photographs, prints, and paintings of houses and other buildings. Many of the subjects in this series have been replaced by later houses or commercial buildings or have since been moved.

Social Organizations, Events, and Objects consists of images of groups, modes of transportation, etc. Several of the photographs include school groups, firemen, military groups, and clubs. Images of transportation include horse-drawn carriages and trolleys, motor vehicles, and trains.



Francis James Child, undated (6.026 CHS)

Harvard Buildings consists of photographs and other images documenting the buildings, gates, grounds, etc., of Harvard University. Most of these come from Harvard class albums.

People, the largest series, consists of images of many individuals, most of whom were either residents of Cambridge or important to our history in some manner. A number of them are Harvard University professors, including Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and James Russell Lowell. The bulk of these images, however, are paintings, photographic portraits, and snapshots of ordinary Cambridge citizens.

This newsletter is coming to you through the generous sponsorship of



## Building the CHS Digital Collection By Cynthia Brennan

Loyal readers of *The Newtowne Chronicle*, along with recipients of our emails and mailings, have surely noticed our increasing emphasis on digital archives and Web content over the past few years. The CHS has been essentially creating a new collection for its archives: the CHS Digital Collection. This material makes our history available in innovative ways to a broader audience and comes from three sources.

Digitized material from our archives gives new life to our physical collections. Through the creation of scans and item-level catalog records for our Image Collection, a flexible, searchable database will be available online. The physical objects are available only by appointment and are organized in boxes by subject or street address. The digitized collection allows sorting by photographer, date, keyword, or other factors and will be available online. The images will be easily available for researchers, used online in virtual exhibits, and more. This year-long project has been supported by the Institute for Museum and Library Services, the Council of the Cambridge Historical Society, and the Gund Family.

The work to digitize the *Proceedings of the Cambridge Historical Society* is ongoing. As we continue to scan pages into OCR text, we have been helped by a technical volunteer, Dov Frede, who wrote a standard procedure for implementing the Extensible Markup Language (XML), compliant with the Text Encoding Initiatives (TEI) guidelines. With Frede's help, we have begun developing the code that will transform the TEI text into code for the Web. This project has involved the help of many volunteers who have given hundreds of hours of their time.

The second source of material is the electronic content created by the CHS and its volunteers.

New walking tours, Web exhibits, oral histories, and photographs of buildings and events in Cambridge exist only in digital form. These resources are as valuable as the physical material in our archives; therefore, we are ensuring that they remain safely stored and backed up. In addition to secure storage, the rapidly expanding body of born-digital collection material requires attention to

ensure accurate, standardized systems of organization and file naming. Without this step, we could easily lose track of our files; if the content isn't organized or can't be searched, it loses any future usefulness.

In addition to evolving standards for digital content, we have been recovering files from the CHS vaults that have been hidden throughout the office on floppy or Zip disks, sometimes in file formats that have become obsolete. Our volunteer Sarah Margerum is copying these files from the optical

storage disks onto our server. Her project is described on page 6.

Finally, the content we gather from our members and the greater Cambridge community through our interactive programs forms an important component of our Digital

Collection, allowing new material to be constantly deposited in our collection.

Our annual Photo Scanning Day invites the community to have historic family photos scanned, and a copy is stored in our collection. A workshop instructing members on scanning and digitization informed our members about the best ways to digitally share and preserve their own history.

Each of these projects is a facet of how the CHS is moving into the digital era, keeping Cambridge's history alive and vibrant into the future.



Meigs elevated railway, ca. 1887. Near Lechmere Point  
From the CHS Image Collection (4C-0006-CHS)



Baby doll stroller parade, North Cambridge, July 1969.  
Scanned from the personal collection of Sandra Dolan.



## CHS Summer Interns

### Kristin Powers



Kristin is an aspiring photographer and exhibit designer. She has worked extensively with the Pilgrim Hall Museum in Plymouth, Mass., and is currently working toward a certificate from Tufts' Museum Studies program. She will help us design the online components of our Candy Land Tour, Lois Lilley Howe Tour, and an exhibit of the photos we scanned during our scanning day last summer. She will also help Cynthia Brennan establish a CHS style sheet. You can see her work at [www.powersforhire.com](http://www.powersforhire.com).

### Tim Hurley



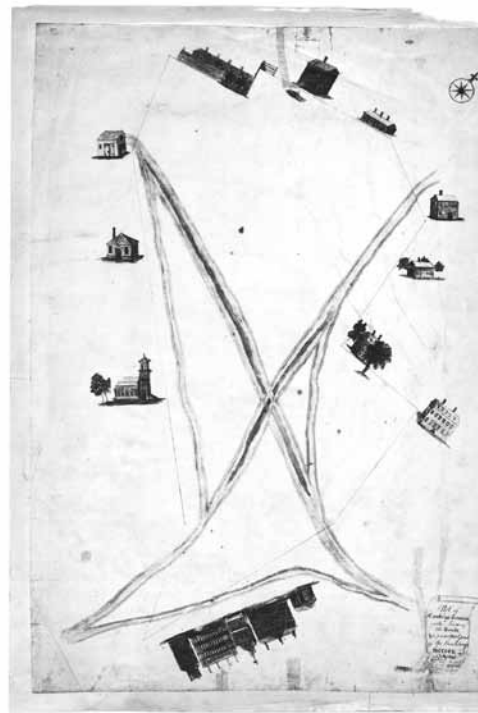
Tim, a student at Washington College in Maryland, is helping us document all the monuments in Harvard Square. We are defining a monument as an object erected to be an enduring marker to commemorate a person, event, or historic structure, and we are defining Harvard Square as any place within half a mile of the subway stop. If you know of a hidden marker, please tell us. The histories of these monuments will become a webpage and a self-guided tour later this year.

## Iconic Historic Maps: Where to Find Them

By Michael Kenney

The MBTA's "spider map" of subway and commuter rail lines is among the most widely used maps in today's Cambridge.

But it has an iconic ancestor from 1781, a weblike construction of the roads through the Cambridge Common that is one of the 220 maps that were digitized, along with architectural plans and large-format photos, by the Cambridge Historical Society. These digital images are available through the CHS office today and will soon be available online.



Cambridge Common caught in a 1781 web: Harvard buildings at the bottom, Christ Church on the left, with a Revolutionary War barracks at the top.

The maps depict Cambridge from the 1600s to the present, including those by such prominent 19th-century cartographers as H. F. Walling, W. A. Mason, and J. G. Chase. Plans of Revolutionary War fortifications are of special interest. The Society's collection will be a significant addition to the other online collections of Cambridge maps.

The Harvard Map Collection includes

hundreds of digital maps of locations across the world. This includes over 70 digital maps of Cambridge and Boston, including James Hayward's surveys from the 1830s; the Hopkins and Bromley atlases from 1894, 1903, 1916, and 1930; and the precisely drawn Sanborn fire insurance maps from the early 1900s.

<http://hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/maps/>

From the Norman Leventhal Map Collection at the Boston Public Library comes "Boston and Beyond," an online "bird's-eye tour" that includes a detailed 1877 view of Cambridge (buildings, trees, even ships on the river) from an imagined vantage point above Brighton. The BPL has 35 other Cambridge maps available online. <http://maps.bpl.org>.

An April 14, 2010, flyover of Cambridge produced a map for the city's Geographic Information System (GIS) that can be zoomed in to reveal what was going on in your neighbor's backyard. It's on the city's website and can be compared with views from 1947 and 1865. GIS also has a wealth of maps available, everything from the locations of bus shelters in the city to the boundaries of the city's zip codes.

[www2.cambridgema.gov/GIS](http://www2.cambridgema.gov/GIS)

Among commercial sources is WardMaps, a Cambridge dealer in maps and cartographic gifts, which has been licensed to sell reproductions of some 90 maps from the Society's collection.

Also available from WardMaps are atlases by G.W. Bromley Co. as well as MBTA maps and memorabilia.

<http://wardmaps.com/>

You can find links to many of these maps, as well as a host of other resources, on the [cambridgearchives.org](http://cambridgearchives.org) website.

[www.cambridgearchives.org/Other-places.html](http://www.cambridgearchives.org/Other-places.html)

## CHS Map Collection Goes Online By Molly Frazier

The Cambridge Historical Society will soon put online its extensive collection of digitized maps and plans. This exciting collection, an invaluable historical resource spanning four centuries, provides information on landmarks, architectural details, property lines, topographical features, and census data for the Cambridge area and beyond.

To make these cartographic materials accessible online, digital photographs were created and saved on the CHS server. This was a large, technically complicated process that CHS was able to accomplish thanks to a significant donation of time from the technical photographer Matt Pearson (now at Stanford, previously at the Northeast Document Conservation Center). The maps will soon be uploaded to the CHS Flickr page and [cambridgehistory.org](http://cambridgehistory.org). Users can search for specific maps or plans with a helpful guide. This “finding aid,” as it’s called, contains an itemized list of the maps and plans, which are linked to over 300 individual cartographic files. Each item was catalogued with details like map or plan title, author, publisher, printer, date of publication, dimensions, scale, and any other relevant information, including interesting annotations.

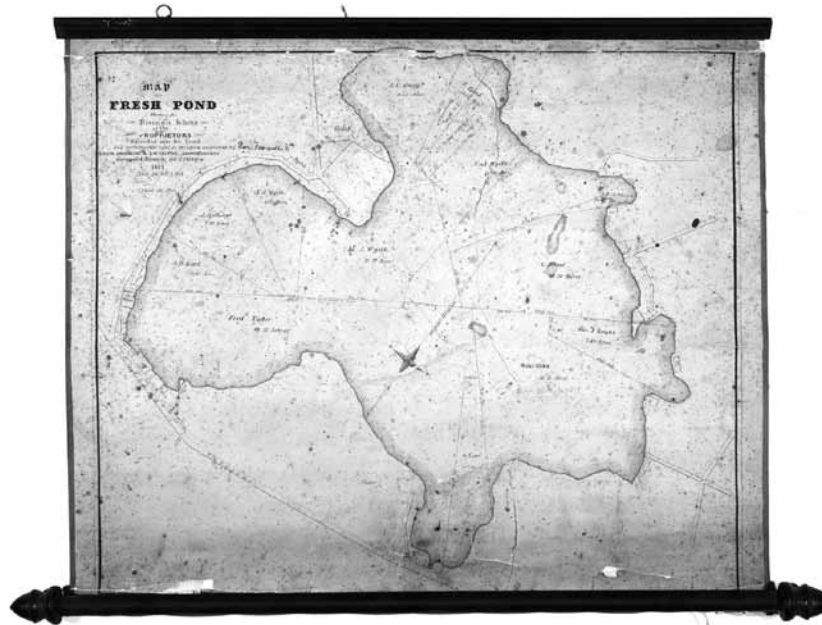
Most of the cartographic materials concern Cambridge, but many others relate to Boston, the Charles River area, and surrounding locales in Middlesex County. Early maps

from the 17th century depict Cambridge as it was first settled and as a growing cluster of developments. Later maps show Cambridge’s growth as it became a city in the mid-1800s. The 20th-century maps show Cambridge as it is today. Our comprehensive blueprints collection contains plans for historical homes and sites throughout Old Cambridge, Cambridgeport, the Charles River area, and beyond.

The collection also holds material, some dating back to the mid-18th century, from the personal papers of Francis Dana. Dana, a significant figure in Cambridge history, was one of the delegates to the Continental Congress during the Revolutionary War and a Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts. The Dana maps and plans are primarily from two bound volumes, hand-rendered by Francis Dana himself. They indicate property lines or proposed developments, and in some instances they serve as deeds.

The donors of most of these maps and plans are unknown. Many of

the materials are original, fragile, and unique, and therefore have not previously been available to a wider public. The CHS has taken great measures to preserve these pieces of the past so that researchers and history buffs can enjoy the collection for years to come.



1841 map of Fresh Pond, showing the property lines extending into the pond to denote ice harvesting rights.



W. A. Mason and Sons 1878 map of Cambridge, showing the Charles River before it was dammed and the partially reclaimed Cambridgeport.

## CHS Summer Interns

## Anisa Aull



Anisa, a student at Barnard, is working with us on two projects. Two days a week she is researching the history of industry in Cambridgeport for both our upcoming Industry in Cambridge website and the Cambridgeport History Day in October. She is also spending two days a week scanning the *Proceedings*, the Society's journal from 1906 through the 1990s. We have been digitizing the *Proceedings* for over a year. Anisa just finished volume 33 of 44.

## John Strachan



John, a Revolutionary War reenactor, is a student at UMass Amherst. He is working with us to research and design two walking tours that explore the American Revolution in Cambridge. One will be a tour of the seven Tory Row mansions along Brattle Street; the second will explore the encampment of the Continental Army in Cambridge from 1775 through March of 1776. Thanks to a grant from the Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati, both of these will be printed as self-guided tours.

Managing Digital Records By Gavin W. Kleespies

A tremendous amount of 20th-century history is being lost. Across America, thousands of small educational institutions are holding immense amounts of information on their communities, artists, businesses, families, immigration, and religious traditions. Much of this information is saved on disks, external drives, and CDs. As time passes, however, this information becomes inaccessible.

While large museums and libraries have budgets for IT professionals, long-term data management plans, and regular technological updates, small organizations often struggle to maintain regular operations and have left data management on the back burner.

CDs degrade and are reliably readable for only 5 years; in the wrong conditions, they can degrade much faster. Most computers sold today do not have optical disk drives, and very few people still use external Zip drives; however, material is stored



on those formats that exists nowhere else. So nonprofits across the country are opening up boxes of CDs and disks that they no longer have the drives to read.

The Society is trying to buck this trend. We have a volunteer, Sarah Margerum (above), who is helping us copy all of our old floppy and Zip disks and CDs onto our new 2-terabyte RAID drive server (built thanks to the volunteer help of Stephen Huenneke and Chip Allen). This, along with a data management plan we are developing, will allow us to maintain access to our old records and all of the research currently being done by CHS staff and volunteers.

Cambridge? Or Marblehead? By Michael Kenney

Responding to the Winter 2011 story "1861: The Civil War Comes to Cambridge," Pam Peterson, of the Marblehead Museum & Historical Society, disputed the claim that Cambridge's Company C, 3d Volunteer Regiment, was "the first unit raised in Massachusetts."

According to Peterson, three Marblehead units "arrived in Boston on

April 16 at 8:00 a.m. and marched to Faneuil Hall," while the Cambridge unit "reported April 17 at the State House."

But, Peterson wrote in a gracious note, "we can all celebrate being first."

A DVD, "Marblehead and the Civil War," is available from the Marblehead society (call 781-631-1768).

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# Culinary Cambridge Cooks Up a Storm

By Daphne Abeel

"Culinary Cambridge," the CHS fundraiser at the Middlesex Lounge on May 22, traced the arts of preparing and serving good food in Cambridge.

Barbara Wheaton, honorary curator of the Culinary Collection at Radcliffe's Schlesinger Library, paid tribute to Julia Child, who "opened doors. She made good cooking possible and fun" with *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*.



Gus Rancatore speaking, with Mary-Catherine Deibel, Holly Heslop, Barbara Wheaton, and Jinny Nathans listening. Photo by Susanna Segat

Wheaton recalled her first trip to the Window Shop on Brattle Street. "I felt I'd arrived in a place that was very sophisticated," she said. "I was completely snowed... I'd had very little experience of ethnic cuisine." Eating Sachertorte and Linzertorte, she felt "like a European."

Holly Heslop, co-owner of five restaurants and clubs, described the changes she has seen in Cambridge over the past 30 years.

"When we opened Christopher's in Porter Square, it was still a bit of a dicey neighborhood," she said. "Early on, we were catering to heavy drinkers and once found two people passed out in the bathroom. I remember one customer asking,

'What's with this guacamole? Where do you get the moles and why is it called guaca,' Moving on, she has "aspired to run neighborhood restaurants and to serve a diverse community."

Deborah Hughes and Mary-Catherine Deibel, owners of UpStairs on the Square, successor to Upstairs at the Pudding, talked about fixing up the original location and then moving to their present site, above Grendel's.

Closing the program, Gus Rancatore, founder of Toscanini's, talked about the heyday of ice cream, led by the legendary Steve Herrell, who started Steve's Ice Cream in Somerville.

Rancatore got his start working for Herrell, first as a store cleaner, then as a scooper and a

server.

"We were never considered insiders in Somerville. The police hated us. People stole our tables," he said. "Sometimes, working there was like being in *The Sopranos*."

Rancatore started Toscanini's on Main Street in 1981 with the aim of being "innovative," making ice cream that included flavors from other cultures. "We've done well," he said, "and a tremendous amount of credit has to go to Steve Herrell, who embodied the concept of the microbusiness and the artisanal approach to food."

A video of the fundraiser will be aired on CCTV; a short interview can be seen now at [www.cctvcambridge.org/node/79391](http://www.cctvcambridge.org/node/79391).

## Thank you

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	Nancy Woods
	Dorothy Shore Zinberg

## Test your knowledge!



This photo was taken in Cambridge at a well-known industrial site. Do you know where it was? You can see the product of this company all over Harvard Square and even in Harvard Yard. You've probably walked past its name hundreds of times without noticing it. The correct answer will be posted on our Facebook page. (1E-0017-CHS)



Keep up with CHS news on Facebook and Twitter.

## Upcoming Events

The Cambridge Discovery Days

August 6, 2011

Candy Land - A Tour of Candy Making in Cambridge

August 13, 2011

The Works of Lois Lilley Howe, America's First Woman Architect

Both August 6 and 13, 2011

The Cambridge Historical Society's Third Annual Photo Scanning Day

– Bring a photo taken in Cambridge.

We will scan it and give you a free

Toscanini's ice cream, courtesy of

Gus, Mimi, and the Toscanini's crew.

September 11, 2011

Judy Richardson speaks about her book,

*Hands on the Freedom Plow: Personal Accounts by Women in SNCC.*

This program is sponsored with the African American Heritage Alliance.

October 1, 2011

Cambridgeport History Day in Dana

Park. Come for tours, If This House

Could Talk..., and more.

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Cambridge, MA 02138

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The Cambridge Historical Society is pleased to announce that *Rediscovering the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House* won second place in the NEMA Award Competition for books under \$10. Winners in other categories include the Museum of Fine Arts, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Historic New England, and the Peabody Essex Museum.