

1. 105 Brattle Street - Phillis Wheatley
"To His Excellency General Washington" (1775)

Born in West Africa in 1753 and sold into slavery in Boston, Phillis Wheatley rose to literary prominence while still a teenager and gained fame throughout the transatlantic world. In 1775, Wheatley wrote a poem entitled "To His Excellency General Washington" and sent a copy to the leader whom she so admired. Washington, impressed with her talent, invited Wheatley to an audience at his Brattle Street headquarters. Historians continue to debate whether the meeting ever took place.

*Procced, great chief, with virtue on thy side,
Thy ev'ry action let the Goddess guide.
A crown, a mansion, and a throne that shine,
With gold unfading, Washington! Be thine.*

2. 3 Berkeley Street - William Dean Howells
Suburban Sketches (1872)

William Dean Howells, regarded by his contemporaries as the "Dean of American Letters," lived at 3 Berkeley Street from 1870 to 1872. Upon moving to Cambridge in the late 1860s, he crafted observations about his new home into a short novel, *Suburban Sketches*, which exemplifies his trademark realist style. This fictionalized account of Cantabrigian life incorporates subjects from fire hydrants to birdsong, and highlights Howells's perception of Cambridge as a "frontier" between city and country.

The neighborhood was in all things a frontier between city and country. The horse-cars, the type of such civilization - full of imposture, discomfort, and sublime possibility - as we yet possess, went by the head of our street, and might, perhaps, be available to one skilled in calculating the movement of comets; while two minutes' walk would take us into a wood so wild and thick that no roof was visible through the trees.

3. 52 Brattle Street - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
"The Village Blacksmith" (1840)

The plaque here marks the site of the "spreading



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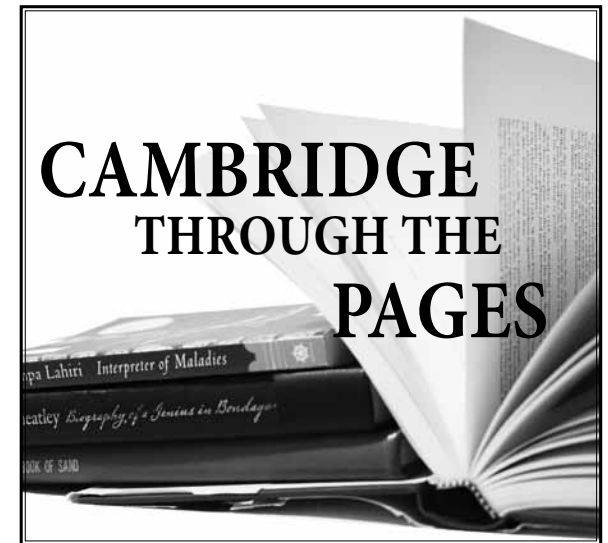
Since 1957 the Cambridge Historical Society has been headquartered at the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House at 159 Brattle Street, one of two 17th century buildings in the city of Cambridge.

We are currently running a capital campaign to raise the money to restore this important structure. To learn more, please visit:

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A Cambridge Historical Society Walking Tour

By Lucy Caplan

Made possible by the Cambridge Heritage Trust



chestnut-tree” described by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in his poem “The Village Blacksmith.” The poem hails the virtues of Dexter Pratt, a Cambridge blacksmith whom Longfellow praised as a model of hard work, honesty and piety. When the chestnut tree was cut down in 1876, a group of Cambridge children raised money to have a chair constructed from its wood and presented it to Longfellow as a birthday gift.

*Under a spreading chestnut-tree
The village smithy stands;
The smith, a mighty man is he
With large and sinewy hands;
And the muscles of his brawny arms
Are strong as iron bands.*

4. 132 Mount Auburn Street - Pauline Hopkins *Of One Blood* (1903)

Take yourself back in time to a late summer evening at a luxurious Mt. Auburn estate -- which just happens to be next door to a haunted house. In Pauline Hopkins’ novel *Of One Blood*, events at such a house trigger a series of fantastical occurrences: time travel, drownings, love triangles, mesmerism and more. Hopkins, a prominent African-American author and social thinker in turn-of-the-century New England, was also renowned as an editor and musician.

The Vance estate was a spacious house with rambling ells, tortuous chimney-stacks, and corners, eaves and ledges; the grounds were extensive and well kept telling silently of the opulence of its owner. Its windows sent forth a cheering light.

5. Larz Anderson Bridge - William Faulkner *The Sound and the Fury* (1929)

In William Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury*, the emotionally tortured Quentin Compson, who has traveled to Cambridge from his Mississippi home to study at Harvard, commits suicide by jumping off a bridge into the Charles River on June 2, 1910. Walk to the middle of

It’s your new addiction. You run in the morning and you run late at night when there’s no one on the paths next to the Charles. You run so hard that your heart feels like it’s going to seize.

8. Cafe Pamplona, 12 Bow Street - Jhumpa Lahiri *The Namesake* (2003)

Cambridge locales crop up throughout Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*. The novel begins with the birth of the main character, Gogol Ganguli, at Mount Auburn Hospital, and recounts his childhood in a Central Square apartment. When he returns to the city years later with a girlfriend, they have lunch at Cafe Pamplona. Their discussion there touches upon many challenges with which Gogol has struggled, particularly that of resolving what Lahiri has called the “question of allegiance” facing the children of immigrants.

They have lunch at Cafe Pamplona, eating pressed ham sandwiches and bowls of garlic soup off in a corner.

9. Cafe Algiers, 40 Brattle Street - Andre Aciman *Harvard Square* (2013)

Andre Aciman’s most recent novel, published in April 2013, centers around a friendship between an Egyptian graduate student and a Tunisian cab driver that begins on a hot summer afternoon in Cafe Algiers. Inspired by Aciman’s personal experience, the novel integrates beautiful descriptions of Harvard Square with explorations of the complex connections between two unlikely friends, and highlights the very different lives that coexist within Cambridge.

One could spend an entire day at Cafe Algiers. It was a tiny, cluttered, semi-underground cafe off Harvard Square that held no more than a dozen tiny, wobbly tables and that looked like a miniature Kasbah about to spill on the floor.

the bridge, on the eastern side, and you will see a small plaque that commemorates his death: “Quentin Compson. Drowned in the odour of honeysuckle. 1891-1910.” No one knows who created the plaque, which first appeared in the mid-1960s.

I began to feel the water before I came to the bridge. The bridge was of gray stone, lichen, dappled with slow moisture where the fungus crept. Beneath it the water was clear and still in the shadows, whispering and clucking about the stone in fading swirls of spinning sky.

6. Bench by the Charles River - Jorge Luis Borges “The Other” (1972)

The Argentinean writer Jorge Luis Borges, a pioneer in the genre of magical realism, wrote a story late in life entitled “El Otro” (“The Other”). It takes place upon a bench along the Charles River and features an encounter between younger and older versions of the same man. The two enter into a bizarre sort of family reunion, both trying to discern whether their implausible meeting truly is occurring. The meandering river, symbolic of Borges’ nonlinear sense of time, enhances the story’s mysterious ambience.

It was about ten o’clock in the morning. I sat on a bench facing the Charles River. Some five hundred yards distant, on my right, rose a tall building whose name I never knew. Ice floes were borne along on the gray water. Inevitably, the river made me think about time.

7. Running path by the Charles River - Junot Diaz *This Is How You Lose Her* (2012)

The final and most complex story of Junot Diaz’s collection *This Is How You Lose Her* is set in Cambridge. The protagonist, Yunion -- whose life story parallels Diaz’s own -- is a Dominican immigrant who grew up in New Jersey and now teaches writing in Cambridge. After a traumatic breakup, he takes up running along the Charles in an effort to turn his life around. The story captures Yunion’s conflicted relationship with a city which, to him, never quite feels like home.