



Boston Authors Club

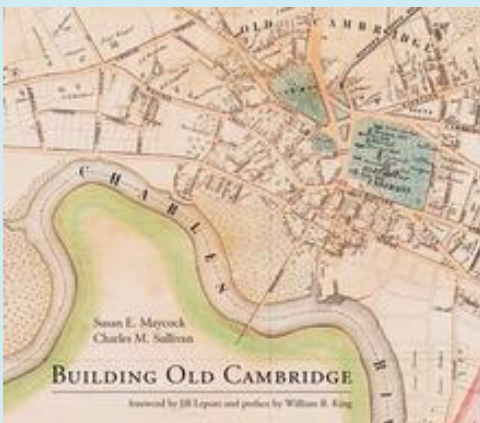
March 2018 News & Events

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Building Old Cambridge by Susan E. Maycock and Charles M. Sullivan



Building Old Cambridge (MIT Press, 2016) explores the buildings and history of the neighborhood that grew up around the original settlement of Newtowne, founded as the capital of Massachusetts Bay in 1630. After Harvard College was established there in 1636, the town became Cambridge in 1638, and the neighborhood that grew up around the early village became known in the 19th century as “Old Cambridge.” Honored as a Julia Ward Howe Finalist in 2017, the book traces the neighborhood’s architecture in the context of its social and economic history, the development of Harvard Square, and changes in industry and transportation.



Q: In its 944 pages, *Building Old Cambridge* ranges from the 1630s settlement to Harvard in the 21st century. If you had to pick one particular time period that you especially enjoyed writing about, what would it be?

Sullivan: More than one specific period, I particularly enjoyed researching and putting together detailed histories of the different residential neighborhoods within Old Cambridge and the many personalities involved in their development. These individuals ranged from West Indian planters building country estates along Brattle Street in the period leading up to the Revolution to long-term Cantabrigians and entrepreneurs laying out of new streets and subdividing their land into house lots for suburban development.

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Maycock: I have always been interested in 19th century residential architecture, and Old Cambridge has a wealth of excellent architect-designed Queen Anne and Shingle Style houses, particularly on Avon Hill. These were interesting to compare to the more vernacular houses designed by builders in the same period. I also enjoyed finding out more about some of the local builders and their work and writing about some of the more unusual buildings, such as a small group of Regency-style houses that were built in the 1840s, including one for a Harvard president and one for a very successful master builder.

Q: Was there a time period or topic that was particularly challenging to cover?

Both: We had to start in the beginning in 1630, but that period is very difficult to research and the 17th century part of the book relies more on secondary sources than we would like. Luckily we had Robert Nylander, a very talented historian, on staff for many years. He was a wizard at understanding 17th and 18th century deeds and documents. We had all of his raw research but we had to get it into a form we could present. Many of the early maps in the book are based on his research.

Q: You are both steeped in the city's history through your work at the Cambridge Historical Commission. Did you come across any surprises or unexpected discoveries while researching and writing this book?

Both: We discovered some communities we hadn't even been aware of, including a village known as Lewisville. This was an African-American community off Garden Street that was founded by freed slaves in the late 18th and early 19th century. It came to our attention when we noticed a "tomb" label on an 1873 map of Cambridge. We had used this map for years but had never seen this. Our curiosity was aroused; who would have a tomb in the middle of a residential area? We did some deed and genealogical research and finally pieced together the story of the Lewis family of former slaves and their descendants. This African-American settlement began to disperse before the Civil War when many of its residents left for Liberia as part of the African immigration movement. By the 1880s it was no longer on the map; the land was subdivided and built up with new houses along Walker Street.

Q The book draws on thousands of archival documents, maps, and images to bring Cambridge history to life. How did you go about selecting specific graphics to include in the book?

Sullivan: The Cambridge Historical Commission has a vast photographic archive. Over the twenty years that this book was in preparation, we did extensive primary source research and combed libraries, archives, museums, and historical organizations to find original maps and images of Old Cambridge. We are particularly proud of having discovered so many images that had never been published before. We tried to choose as many of these as possible, instead of the views that people are used to seeing, particularly for Harvard and Harvard Square.

Q: Do you have any new publication or research projects underway?

Sullivan: We now have fully-researched publications on every neighborhood except Cambridgeport. I'm working up a table of contents, but only time will tell when it might be ready for publication.

Interview by Mary J Cronin



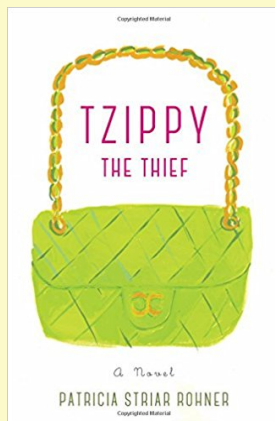
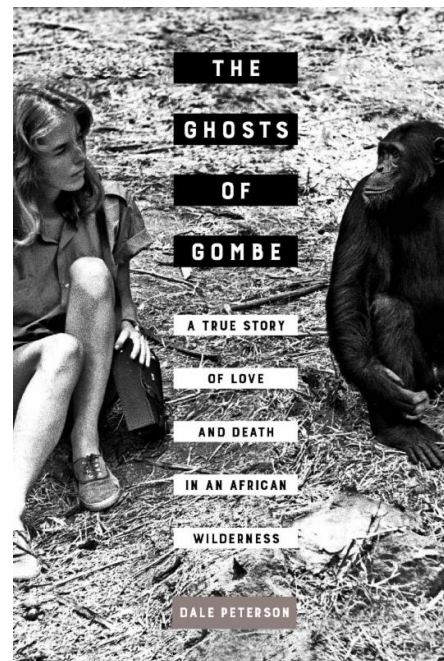
authors!
AUTHORS!

**Forthcoming Books
by BAC Authors**

The BAC newsletter is published the first week of every month. Please send news about your activities, speaking, and new books (along with related pictures) to bostonauthorsclub@gmail.com by March 25 for publication in the March 2018 newsletter.

Two books by Dale Peterson will be published this year, starting in April with **The Ghosts of Gombe** (University of California Press). Dale is Jane Goodall's long-time friend, collaborator, and biographer. **The Ghosts of Gombe** represents in some ways a continuation of his "definitive" biography of Goodall, but with a different focus and perspective. It considers the story of one of Dr. Goodall's young volunteers who, in July of 1969, followed a chimpanzee out of camp and never returned. Her broken body was found six days later at the base of a high waterfall. Did she jump? Was she pushed? Was it an accident? Dale imaginatively returns us to daily life at Dr. Goodall's wilderness camp during the late 1960s in order to create this act of literary forensics. Dale's second book, **The Elephant Reader**, an anthology of literate writings about elephants from Aristotle to the present, will be released by Trinity University Press near the end of 2018.

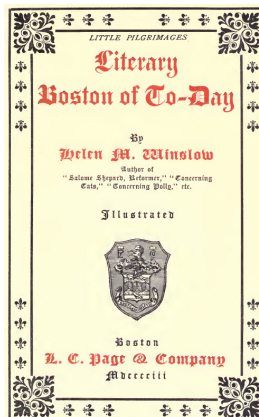
For more details, visit [Dale's webpage](#)



Patricia Striar Rohner won honorable mention for her novel **Tzippy the Thief** at the North Street Book Prize and received a \$250.00 check.

Tzippy is a wealthy widow, feisty, determined, vain and living in Florida. On the eve of her 80th birthday celebration and a visit from her three children, Tzippy confronts the death of a close friend as well as the aches, pains and daily indignities of aging are preying on her mind.

Yesteryear at the BAC by Scott Guthery



Literary Boston in 1903

*In 1903, shortly after founding the Boston Authors Club, Helen M. Winslow published **Literary Boston To-Day**. This book presents 100 sketches of Boston area authors at the turn of the 20th century. Each sketch follows roughly the same outline: personal accolades, genealogical tidbits, selected bibliography, foreign travel, and, finally, club memberships. There are photographs of twenty-five of the authors. Many of the sketches include lengthy descriptions of authors at home in locations that feature "a richly, furnished drawing-room, where a fire of logs is burning in a cheerful blaze, and a gray African parrot is enjoying a place of honour..."*

What might be of more interest to today's Boston Authors Club, however, are the working habits of early twentieth century Boston authors described in the book. For example, in the sketch of Sarah Orne Jewett, Winslow reports:

"Miss Jewett's working hours are in the afternoon, and when she has anything in hand she writes from one until about five. She says that she thinks best in the waning hours of the day, and finds work

easier. She writes on average three and four thousand words daily, although she has sometimes gone as high as eight and even nine thousand words in one day."

And in the entry for Miss Anna Fuller ("a Cambridge woman of charming address, unusual brilliancy, and remarkable powers of observation"), Winslow notes:

"Miss Fuller's impulse is to write off her story in the rough at first, and then to prune and revise it exhaustively. She thinks there is a danger of spoiling the spirit of a story if one potters over the sentences as one goes along; and that there is un wisdom in working against the grain, in trying to force inspiration when the inspiration is not there."

Winslow finishes the description of Fuller's writing habits with "Like many another writer too, Miss Fuller has a feeling that each book she writes is worse than the last, and she is always in the depths of despair before the publication of every one..."

Books were not the only literary output of the authors cataloged by Winslow. Many of them started their literary careers writing for newspapers and submitting articles to the magazines of the day. Their work appeared in familiar literary journals such as the *Atlantic Monthly* and the *North American Review* but also in more specialized publications. The *Youth's Companion* and *Our Young Folks*, for example, were popular outlets for authors of children's stories.

In the introduction to *Literary Boston To-Day* Winslow quotes Roswell Field: "Merely as a matter of general statistics and possibly of general interest, it may be set down that every family in Middlesex County, Massachusetts, boasts a rubber-tree and an author." Winslow goes on to remark that this was "...a statement that made him (Field) the recipient of a small forest of rubber-trees from sympathetic Bostonians."

While she didn't find any budding Emersons, Longfellows, or Lowells in compiling her catalog, Winslow closes her book with an upbeat forecast for the literary scene in Boston: "Already the names of some of these are familiar in the higher ranks of literature, and to them we look for a continuance of Boston's literary fame."



**April 6 to April 8
at the Park Plaza**

The 17th annual Muse and the Marketplace Conference will be held from April 6th to April 8th at the Park Plaza Hotel in Boston. The conference, designed for fiction writers and creative nonfiction writers, features craft classes, discussions, and meetings with agents and editors.

Presenters include fiction and nonfiction writers Steve Almond, Mia Alvar, Christopher Castellani, Peter Ho Davies, Patricia Engel, Ravi Howard, Porochista Khakpour, Min Jin Lee, Celeste Ng, Jim Shepard, and Laura van den Berg; agents Regina Brooks (Serendipity Literary Agency), Katherine Fausset (Curtis Brown), Ayesha Pande (Pande Literary), and Kent Wolf (Friedrich Agency); and editors Christopher Hernandez (HarperCollins Children's Books/HarperTeen), Allison Malecha (Grove Atlantic), Christine Pride (Simon & Schuster), and Steve Woodward (Graywolf Press).

The cost of the conference ranges from \$385 for a single day to \$535 for the full conference and the general registration deadline is April 2nd. Please visit our website for more information or email muse@grubstreet.org with any questions.

REMINDER Renew Your BAC Membership for 2018

Full membership dues are \$50 annually and Associate memberships are \$25 annually for the calendar year. You can join and renew online by clicking here. If you would rather pay by check, please make your check out to **Boston Authors Club and mail it to the following address:**

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