The Catharine Maria SEDGWICK SOCIETY Newsletter

Volume 5, Number 2, Fall 2004

In This Issue

Another Perspective on the Lenox Portrait

Patricia Larson Kalayjian
California State University, Dominguez Hills

I read with great interest the article by Lion G. Miles in the Spring 2004 edition of *The Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society Newsletter*. Entitled "A New Look at Catharine Sedgwick," Miles' essay asserts that an 1813 portrait of Sedgwick, painted by noted Albany portraitist Ezra Ames, has been rediscovered in Lenox. Miles describes the process by which he came to make this assertion, including his purchase of a letter written by Catharine herself to her brother Theodore, asking him to arrange shipping for a painting for which she had sat. Miles explains that, due to the wording in Ames's records, the heretofore "unlocated" painting had long been assumed to be of Theodore. Miles' discovery and shrewd interpretation of the letter from Catharine to Theodore (who redirected the letter to Ames) seems to affirm the author's conclusion that Ames' portrait was of Catharine and not Theodore. This excellent sleuthing holds out the hope that Ames' 1813 portrait of the young Catharine might be located and take its place among the few known representations of Sedgwick.

Unfortunately, I must disagree with Miles' conclusion that the portrait pictured in *The CMSS Newsletter* (reprinted on page 4 of this issue) is the painting in question. The basis for my disagreement with Miles' conclusion is simple: the dress of the sitter announces that this is a portrait painted sometime in the late 1830s or early 1840s.

As has always been the case, fashions change; "the history of fashion is an endless chain of ever-changing forms which pass—usually smoothly and imperceptibly—from each phase to the next" (Braun-Ronsdorf 7). If alterations in 19th-century styles did not occur as quickly as fashion evolves today, they nevertheless happened, and an eye acquainted with 19th-century women's fashion would see in the featured portrait unmistakable evidence of fashions not in vogue until well past 1813. Although only the torso is depicted, enough details of the subject's dress, hair, and headpiece are visible to argue irrefutably for a dating c. 1840. (*CMSS Newsletter* editor Ellen Foster was kind enough to supply me with a scanned version of the portrait that reveals clearly the draping of a shawl over the subject's arms, a detail somewhat obscured in the printed version.)

In the case of portraiture—where a specific sitter is being re-

Continued on page 3

The Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society Newsletter
is published at least once annually as a benefit of membership in the Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society.

◊◊◊

Please direct inquiries as follows:

Newsletter Submissions/Queries and Announcements for Electronic Distribution

Until December 31, 2004, contact:
Ellen Foster, Editor
efoster@pathway.net

Membership

Deborah Gussman, gussmand@loki.stockton.edu

First Vice-President, Programs

Patricia Larson Kalayjian, pkalayjian@earthlink.net

Second Vice-President, Programs

Lisa West Norwood, lisa.norwood@drake.edu

Sedgwick Society Website

http://www.salemstate.edu/imc/sedgwick
Lucinda Damon-Bach,
lucinda.damonbach@salemstate.edu

Acknowledgments

Sincere thanks to **Dr. Christopher Reber**, Executive Dean, Venango Campus, and **Dr. Steve Johnson**, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Clarion University, for financing the printing and postage costs of this issue.

Special thanks to **L. F. Tantillo** for sharing his historical paintings of Stewart Dean and Dean's *Experiment* with us. Those interested in Tantillo's work can view his paintings online at www.lftantillo.com, visit Tantillo Gallery, 488 Broadway, Albany, New York, or call 518-689-1212 for further information.

Later in this issue, you will read of my resignation as the Society's Vice-President, Communications and the call for nominations to fill that office — and I encourage you to respond to this opportunity.

Before I step down, I want to thank the many members of the Society who have shared their works-in-progress as well as completed projects with a wider audience through the newsletter. Without this willingness to share ideas and interpretations, there could be no newsletter—and I hope that you will agree that we have much to say in these pages.

I look forward to continuing to be part of the Society and wish the best to my successor.

— Ellen Foster

Figure 1: White Summer Dresses, 1807– 1815
Source: Braun-Ronsdorf, Illustration 38

Continued from page 1 — Another Perspective on the Lenox Portrait

imagined in a two-dimensional visual medium—art historians often use the details of dress to assign specific dates to paintings. Costume reveals much about portraits (not merely dates but also the sitter's class and other social data), and portraits also give us details of clothing at particular times and locations:

> Looking at a range of works of art with figures in them, from painted vases and frescoes to magazine illustrations and movie stills, one can see at once how the construction of clothing itself has changed over time and differed among people…. But the differences in clothes themselves perhaps obscure another important fact: that the formal properties of the work of art itself do not mask but, rather, illuminate the basic evidence about what people used to wear. (Hollander xii)

Of course, there are portraits done in which the subject is dressed in clothing meant to evoke another, earlier era, and there are always individuals whose clothing is not at the height of fashion. But neither of these circumstances pertains to the portrait in question. The woman in the Lenox portrait is dressed in clothes c. 1840, so the portrait's date could only be later—not earlier as Miles suggests.

Had the portrait indeed been from 1813, we would expect to see a style of clothing from what is known in fashion history as the "classical" or "Empire" period, roughly corresponding to the period from the French Revolution through the Napoleonic Era, 1787-1815. This clothing trend was dominated by verticality; dresses were often of gauzy material (especially fine white muslin), always had a high waist, hung loose on the body, and were frequently cut low across the bosom (Figure 1); the more demure daytime dress often filled in the neckline with a chemisette, an inset that went up to the throat (Figure 2). Women accentuated the vertical by piling their hair atop their heads (Moore 34-45; Payne 475-488; Braun-Ronsdorf 9-39).

Late in the Empire period (which began to expire around 1815) and into the next fashion epoch, the Romantic era, other fabrics and colors gain popularity: "[N]ew inventions had enabled the textile industry to produce additional shades of color, which allowed for even more variety in fashion. There was also a new abundance of materials with patterns—which meant that pure white was superceded" (Braun-Ronsdorf 43). Waistlines drop gradually, and, by the early-1830s, an

Continued on page 4

Figure 2: Day Dress, 1805-1810
Source: Braun-Ronsdorf Illustration 32

Continued from page 3 — Another Perspective on the Lenox Portrait

opposing trend reaches its peak; the enormous balloon or *gigot* (leg-o-mutton) sleeve becomes the definitive feature (Figure 3, page 5). As can be seen from fashion plates of the period, the emphasis is now horizontal as far as the bodice is concerned. As the decade of the 1830s progresses, sleeves gradually reduce in size, although the long sleeve remains the most popular. A typical day-dress of the late 1830s had a bodice that extended (nearly) to the natural waist, still emphasized the horizontal line across the bosom ["The V-shape emphasized shoulder width and helped to minimize waists" (Payne 501)], and had a sleeve with a great deal of fabric that was now confined, however, into pleats or tucks (Figure 4, page 5) (Moore, 50-57; Payne, 497-507; Braun-Ronsdorf, 41-71). The costume of the young woman in the Lenox portrait (right) closely matches the styles described above for the late 1830s or early 1840s.

In addition to doing traditional research in 19th-century women's clothing, I also contacted directly two authorities on the subject. Both Karen Augusta, owner of Antique Lace and Fashion, and Titi Halle, owner of Cora Ginsburg LLC, deal in authentic antique clothing, work with collectors and museums (both in acquisitions and deaccessions), date and authenticate textiles, and, on a more popular note, appear regularly on the PBS series *Antiques Roadshow* as costume authorities. I sent each a scanned image of the portrait and asked if she would be so kind as to offer her opinion on the painting's date and her reasons for her conclusion; both were happy to comply.

Augusta's response was to date the portrait between 1838 and 1845: "Definitive early 1840s details include: wide-shoulder/horizontal emphasis of the bodice neckline with plating over the bust, elongated waistline, lace fichu also emphasizing a wide shoulder, side ringlets in her hair." Because it obscures a large part of the sleeve, the sitter's shawl prevents exact dating, but later "in the 1840s a modified bell sleeve became popular [while] this looks like the gigot sleeve of the late 1830s/early 1840s." Halle shared the portrait with costume historian Michele Major, and this is their response:

> Based on the sitter's style of dress, hair, and headdress, the portrait probably dates between 1838-1841, and perhaps more precisely 1839-1840.
>
> In terms of the dress, the most noteworthy features for dating are the wide open neckline, pleated bertha and pleated upper sleeve… . The open neckline and pleated bertha are characteristic of the late 1830s—by the early 1840s, women's day dresses had a high, round neckline …. The hair worn by the sitter and her cap are also consistent with the late 1830s (ca. 1840). In the first half of the decade, the curls were shorter and higher around the face—less ringlet like—often with curls at either side of the forehead. The more pronounced 17th-century influence of long ringlets is seen at the end of the decade. The sitter's ribbon headdress—worn off the face but full and low over the ears—is typical of this date.

After I received these responses to my query, I sent each of my experts a second question: what would you say to dating this portrait at 1813? The responses were much briefer but more emphatic. For Augusta, 1813 was "not possible!" Halle agreed: "It is absolutely impossible that this portrait is 1813."

While Miles has done Sedgwick scholars a great service in identifying the likely existence of an 1813

Lenox Portrait — Courtesy of Mr. Frank Newton

Continued from page 4 — Another Perspective on the Lenox Portrait

Ames portrait of Catharine Sedgwick, we will have to continue searching for that portrait of Catharine—certainly a worthy endeavor. The Lenox painting, which I hope I have proven is from a date closer to 1840, cannot be an Ames; the artist died in 1836. However, the portrait's location in a Berkshire area so closely identified with generations of Sedgwicks, not to mention a perceived family resemblance, might lead one to research other Sedgwick descendants as the possible subject of the disputed work.

Works Cited

Augusta, Karen. "Re. Portrait." E-mail to the author. 10 June 2004.

Braun-Ronsdorf, Margarete. *Mirror of Fashion: A History of European Costume 1789-1929.* New York: McGraw Hill, 1964.

Halle, Titi. "Re. Portrait." E-mail to the author. 12 July 2004.

Hollander, Anne. *Seeing through Clothes*. New York: Viking, 1978.

Moore, Doris Langley. *The Woman in Fashion*. London: Batsford, 1949.

Payne, Blanche. *History of Costume: From the Ancient Egyptians to the Twentieth Century*. New York: Harper and Row, 1965.

Editor's note: Larson's findings were shared with Miles prior to this publication; he concurs with Larson's findings. Our thanks to both of these scholars for this engaging discussion regarding the Lenox portrait.

Figure 3, above: Lady's summer dress and gentleman's riding habit, 1833, Illustration 107

Figure 4, below: Promenade dress, 1837, Illustration 115
Source: Braun-Ronsdorf

In Search of Perdita

Gilbert and Valeria Lewthwaite

On December 16 and December 23, 1826, Maryland's *Easton Gazette* published a two-part short story entitled "Modern Chivalry" by Catharine Maria Sedgwick, the Jane Austen of early American letters. The story subsequently appeared in 1827 in the *Atlantic Souvenir* and was reprinted in 1832 in Mary Russel Mitford's *Lights and Shadows of American Life*. Re-named "The Chivalric Sailor," – Sedgwick belatedly discovered an earlier work with the title "Modern Chivalry"—the story was again printed in Sedgwick's *Tales and Sketches* in 1835.

"The Chivalric Sailor" tells the story of a teen-age English girl who, in 1768, disguised herself to be hired as a ship's cabin boy so that she could elope with a young Virginian gentleman to the colonies. Her beau failed to join the ship, leaving her to her own devices. Her gender was discovered during a bibulous celebration of the boat's safe arrival in the Chesapeake Bay. On docking in Oxford, then one of Maryland's main ports of entry, she was put to work in the scullery of the captain's home. She refused to give her name to protect her refined English family, and was called simply "Perdita," Italian for "lost woman" and the name of the abandoned princess in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*.

Perdita's plight became the talk of Oxford. It intrigued a local apprentice sailor, named Frank Stuart in Sedgwick's tale. Frank found Perdita crying under one of the estate's apple trees. Touched by her loneliness, he eventually agreed to smuggle her back to England. He hid her among his ship's tobacco hogsheads and persuaded the crew to keep her presence secret from the captain. On arrival in Portsmouth, he raised her coach fare to London through a collection from the crew. She gave him a gold ring in return for his chivalry.

Back home in England, Perdita, instructed by her angry father to mend her unpredictable ways, married a man many years her senior, who became governor of the Caribbean island of Antigua. According to Sedgwick, Stuart went on to command an American privateer in the Caribbean in the American War of Independence. On one of his privateering raids against English ships in the Caribbean during the American Revolution, Stuart was told by the captured English captain that he had two women passengers on board – the wife and the mother of the governor of Antigua. Stuart recognized Perdita as she boarded his ship, but she did not notice him. He sent a note to her cabin re-introducing himself and enclosing the gold ring as proof.

Chivalrous as ever, he flew the flag of truce from his masthead and entered the enemy harbor at Antigua to deliver the women safely to the governor's mansion. Some time later, Stuart's vessel was chased by English privateers into the French-controlled harbor of the island of St. Christopher, or St. Kitts. After a short but violent battle, Stuart, wounded, was captured and his vessel and crew taken to Antigua. There he was put in front of the governor, who recognized his name and previous chivalry. In gratitude, the governor, instead of throwing him in irons, invited Stuart to be his guest, re-introduced him to Perdita and arranged for his ship to re-equipped and freed.

Although she used fictitious names in recounting the story, Catharine Sedgwick declared in the opening paragraph that "the leading incidents of the following tale are true – that they form, in that district of a country where some of the circumstances transpired, a favourite and well authenticated tradition – and that our hero boasts with well-earned self-complacency that there is no name better known than his from 'Cape May to the Head of Elk.' That name, however honourable, must be suppressed, and we here honestly beg the possessor's pardon for compelling him for the first time in his life, to figure under false colours."

We came across the romantic adventure of "Modern Chivalry" while researching the history of the tea trade. We decided to follow the clues to try to discover who Perdita, the mystery woman of Oxford, Maryland, really was, if, indeed, she ever existed. Our sleuthing has taken us to the Maryland Archives; the library of the Chesapeake Bay Museum; the Talbot County Historical Society; the Maryland Historical Society; the local libraries in Easton and Oxford; the Library of Congress; the New York State Library and Museum, Albany; the Caird Library of the National Maritime Museum, London; the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast—and we haven't finished yet. We hired a professional researcher, Peter Day, in London to delve into archives of the Public Records Office, which houses both the Admiralty and Colonial Office's records in London, to pursue Perdita's Caribbean connection.

Sedgwick reportedly wrote the story after her brother Theodore visited the Oxford, Maryland, estate of Plinhimmon in the early 19th century, when it was owned by the Tilghman family. The Tilghmans bought Plinhimmon in 1787 for the widow of Tench Tilghman, the

Continued on page 7

The Return of the *Experiment*, by L. F. Tantillo
Captain Stewart Dean prepares to land his sloop *Experiment* at City Hall Dock
in Albany, New York, following his amazing voyage to China, 1785-1787.
Image used with permission of the artist

Continued from page 6 — In Search of Perdita

aide-de-camp to General George Washington, purchasing it from the heirs of Captain John Coward, who sailed regularly across the Atlantic between England and Maryland in the mid-18th century. Coward had inherited Plinhimmon, as an infant, in 1722 from his Bristol-born father, Richard. Over the Tilghman dinner table, Theodore Sedgwick was told of Perdita's ill-fated-elopement on Coward's ship, *Integrity*, her unhappy stay on the Plinhimmon estate, and gallant rescue by "The Chivalric Sailor."

Sedgwick gives the date of Perdita's arrival in Oxford as 1768. And, according to the original port records of Oxford, held at the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Coward's *Integrity* arrived in Oxford from London on June 23, 1768. It was common in the 18th century for passengers to pay for their trans-Atlantic passage by working off the fare in the New World as indentured servants, sometimes involving years of hard labor. Apparently, this was the price Coward intended to extract from Perdita for her passage, treating her little better than his three slaves, John, Peter and Sarah.

In her epilogue to "The Chivalric Sailor," Sedgwick noted that she interviewed "Perdita's rescuer," "Frank Stuart," in Albany, New York, after his retirement from the sea and some 50 years after the events of the Perdita saga took place. She recorded that after serving as a successful privateer during the Revolutionary War, "Stuart" went on to command the second American merchantman to China.

That ship was the 80-ton sloop *Experiment*, built in 1784 for Captain Stewart Dean of Albany, New York. It sailed for Canton less than a year after the triumphal 1785 return of the *Empress of China* from the first American voyage to China. That voyage was financed by Robert Morris Jr., the so-called treasurer of the American Revolution, who spent part of his youth in Oxford, Maryland, where his father was the successful factor for the Liverpool trading company of Foster Cunliffe in the mid-18th century.

Captain Stewart Dean, in his earlier years, was an orphan in Oxford, Maryland. He was sponsored for a three-year seaman apprenticeship in 1766 by the influential Lowe family. He served with Captain Adam Coxen, originally from Ramsgate, England, who made yearly Atlantic crossings on his square-sterned *Hazard*, carrying tobacco eastwards, and textiles, manufactured goods, and sometimes, probably, slaves, convicts and indentured servants westwards. The Oxford port records also show that Coxen and his *Hazard* made the Atlantic crossing every year during the 1760s, except, apparently, for 1768. *Hazard* did, however, sail from Oxford for Cowes, Isle of Wight, off the southern coast of England, on August 31, 1769. This suggests that "Perdita" might have stayed for a little over a year in Oxford and left with Dean on what would have been his last voyage with Coxen before his apprenticeship ended on reaching the age of 21, when he moved to Albany, New York, to pursue his sea-faring career.

After serving as a privateer in command of the New York-based *Beaver* from 1776 to 1779, Dean took over the armed merchantman, *Nimrod*, in Philadelphia in 1782. The schooner was financed, according to its Letter of Marque, on file in the National Archives, by Thomas, Samuel C. and Cadwallader Morris. We have not yet determined whether they were directly related to Robert Morris Jr. It was while Dean commanded the *Nimrod*,

Continued on page 8

Continued from page 7 — In Search of Perdita

that, according to Sedgwick, "Stuart,'' his fictional alter ego, was captured by the British, reunited with "Perdita," and freed from captivity by her husband, the Governor of Antigua.

The governor of Antigua in the 1780s was Sir Thomas Shirley, born in Boston, December 30, 1727, the son of Major-General William Shirley, the Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief of the province of Massachusetts Bay in the 1740s. His wife was Anne Maria Western, born in Essex, England, to a family of landed gentry, whose fortunes went back to the 17th century rebuilding of the English Navy under the Duke of York.

Portrait of Steward Dean by L. F. Tantillo, used with permission of the artist

If the Sedgwick account was true, Anne Maria would appear to be the elusive "Perdita." But there are three major problems: Anne Maria was born on March 21, 1737, and baptized later that year at St. George's Church, Hanover Square, London. This would have made her 31 years old in 1768, hardly the teen-age run-away that Sedgwick wrote about. Sir Thomas married Anne Maria at her family's home, Rivenhall Place, Essex, on January 4, 1768, months before Sedgwick had the unattached "Perdita" arriving in Oxford, Maryland; Anne Maria died in 1777 on the Caribbean island of Dominica, where Sir Thomas was governor prior to being appointed to Antigua. She died five years before Dean commanded *Nimrod* in the Caribbean.

So, two years after first venturing into the archives and turning the yellowing pages of so many vellum tomes, we were left with the intriguing questions with which we started: Who was "Perdita"? Did she ever exist?

In his 1915 *History of Talbot County, Maryland, 1651-1861*, Oswald J. Tilghman cited a study of the veracity of the "Perdita" story by his late father-in-law, Samuel Alexander Harrison. Harrison, a medical doctor and amateur historian, asserted "with almost absolute certainty" that "Perdita" sailed to Oxford aboard Captain John Coward's *Integrity.* He noted a letter that appeared in the *Easton Gazette* alongside Sedgwick's original story in 1826 and observed that the writer "living much nearer than we to the time of the occurrences, seems to have been familiar with the events of the story as they actually happened."

The letter was signed simply "C" and offered Sedgwick's story to the *Easton Gazette*'s editor, Alexander Graham. It was not unusual in the days before copyright for readers to see a story of local interest in one magazine or newspaper and submit it to another. "C" wrote: "In sending you for re-publication the enclosed chivalrous and pathetic story, a part of the plot of which was unfolded in our own (Talbot) county, it affords me pleasure to correct perhaps one of the only aberrations from the genuine truth of the characters displayed in the tale."

"C" took particular issue with Sedgwick's description of the captain, the un-named John Coward, who brought "Perdita," in the guise of a cabin-boy, to Maryland as being "a coarse, illiterate man" and "despotic as a Turkish pasha." In rebuttal, "C" wrote: "The person to whom the interesting and delicate fingered boy bound himself was not only an intelligent sea captain, but a well-bred country gentleman who owned the fine estate called Plinhimmon, adjoining the old town and port of Oxford, where his family resided. Several persons, still living, recollect him as a man of character, well-esteemed, and of good feeling, who moved in the best company of his day, and living on the fat of a choice soil, aided by the resources and foreign nick-nacks of a rich merchant ship, entertained liberally and handsomely." Of "Frank Stuart "—or Stewart Dean—"the gallant tar who ran off with the beautiful Perdita," and who Sedgwick interviewed while in his retirement in Albany, "C" says he "has ever continued the very soul of truth."

Our research into the tea trade tended to support the notion that Dean was essentially an

Continued on page 9

Continued from page 8 — In Search of Perdita

honest man. He became a regular captain on the China run and established a firm and lasting friendship with Howqua, the Chinese Imperial Court's chief Hung merchant, who was renowned for his integrity. Dean even brought home a portrait of Howqua, a man who, the records suggest, would have little truck with anyone less than totally trustworthy.

Perhaps significantly then, in his successful 1833 application for a military pension, Dean himself cited his capture by the British Navy at St. Kitts and his release by the Governor of Antigua and Admiral Phillips Cosby without making any mention of "Perdita." Given his reputation for chivalry and the dismissive way women were considered in those days, this might not be so surprising. But, whether or not he was being discreet, the question remains: why did a British governor release and re-equip an American privateer, rather than clap him in irons?

In his 1942 unpublished biography, "The Life of Captain Stewart Dean, A Character of the American Revolution," copies of which are held at the Library of Congress and the New York State Library in Albany, author William J. Wilgus cites Dean's appearance on September 30, 1833—at the age of 85, more than 50 years after the "Perdita" events and at least seven years after he was interviewed by Sedgwick—before the Court of Common Pleas in Livingston County, New York, to request a pension for his Revolutionary War service. Dean's testimony, recorded in the third person in the copper-plate script of the clerk of the court, is on file at the U.S. National Archives, in Washington, D.C. It includes this statement: "While lying in harbor at St. Christopher (in May, 1782), the *Nimrod* was attacked by two 20-gun ships, and after a short but severe conflict captured and carried to Antigua. He (Dean) was badly wounded during the engagement, and immediately after the surrender of the *Nimrod*, was detained a prisoner for twenty days, at the expiration of which time, through the friendly interposition of Admiral Crosby (sic) and the then Governor of Antigua, whose name he had forgotten, the *Nimrod* with the remainder of her crew was restored to him, and after returning to St. Christopher, whither he was towed by one of the Admiral's ships, and laying in a cargo, arrived safely at the head of Elk river (at what is now Elkton) in Maryland in August or September having been absent between 4 and 5 months."

Wilgus suggested "that what is to be taken in Miss Sedgwick's tale to have been the truth, insofar as the capture and release of the *Nimrod* are concerned, is evidenced by the sworn statement of Captain Dean. The latter's basic facts are quite like Miss Sedgwick's, whose embroidery of romance in respect to 'Perdita' may be taken as partly true and partly fictional as suits the reader. The writer of this sketch, for one, chooses to believe that the part thus chargeable to romance is essentially true."

Clearly, Wilgus was inclined to endorse Sedgwick's version, suggesting that Sir Thomas Shirley, supposedly aware of Dean's earlier chivalry toward his wife, freed him in gratitude. In reaching this conclusion, Wilgus chose to dismiss what he termed a "different" explanation for the release, reported in *The Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser*, published July 17, 1782. It reported that British privateers had entered "the harbour of St. Kitts from whence they cut out the Schooner (*Nimrod*), Captain Dean, of this port, and two other American vessels, and carried them to Antigua. The French commandant, discovering that some of the English on the island has been concerned in the business, immediately seized the vessels belonging to them, and demanded they should see to the redelivery of the American vessels, which after some delay was complied with, and the vessels sent back, when the merchants of St. Kitts were obliged to refit the vessels with rigging, stores, etc, of which the privateers had plundered them, and then they were delivered in good order to their owners."

A synopsis of the papers of Admiral Phillips Cosby, who was mentioned by Dean in his pension application, is held in the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast. It reveals the real reason for Dean's release, which was closer to the newspaper's report than to Sedgwick's story: the St. Kitts representative of France, allied to the Americans, was so furious at the British warships' incursion into his harbor to seize the *Nimrod* that he refused to allow 20 ships loaded with the goods of English planters and merchants on his island to join a convoy for Britain that was assembling off Antigua. Cosby, then the captain of transport for the Leeward Islands, was desperate to get the convoy underway and negotiated a deal with the French. Although Cosby does not mention Dean, it can be reasonably inferred that the American's release was part of the negotiations to allow the ships to sail from St. Kitts.

In a 1968 pamphlet produced for the Oxford Museum, "A Port of Entry, Oxford, Maryland," local historian Jane Foster Tucker recalled the "popular

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9 — In Search of Perdita

legend" of Perdita and her reunion with Stewart Dean in the Caribbean. "Needless to say, Capt. Stewart Dean, who had never forgotten the beautiful Perdita, asked her to marry him. They lived happily ever after," she writes, perhaps tongue-in-cheek.

But there is another blow to a fairy-tale romance between the sailor and the run-away: Dean was married twice: first to Pietertze Bratt of Albany, New York, on May 12, 1773, three years before he first sailed the *Beaver* to the Caribbean, and then to Margaret Whetten of New York City, on October 4, 1787, five years after Sedgwick had him reunited with "Perdita" in Antigua. Neither came close to fitting the character of Sedgwick's "Perdita."

The record, particularly "C's" near-contemporary letter to the *Easton Gazette* suggests that "Perdita" did exist and was rescued by Dean. Sedgwick took the initial "Perdita" adventure, as recounted to her brother at Plinhimmon and confirmed by Dean in her meeting with him in Albany, and threaded it through Dean's actual Revolutionary War adventures. The truth appears to be that either Dean did not know Perdita's identity, or, if he did, he did not divulge it to Sedgwick.

Significantly, Sedgwick chose not to use the real names of those characters whose identities she knew – particularly the extremely honest Stewart Dean. Could this have been because she knew she was going to embroider the romantic truth with some real-life adventure from his war record, making her "beg … pardon for compelling him, for the first time in his life, to figure under false colours?"

Sources

Dean, Stewart. Military Pension Application File. Microfilm Publication M804, Roll 780. National Archives, Washington, DC.

Dean, Stewart. Bond for Letter of Marque for the schooner *Nimrod*. Microfilm Publication M247, Roll 204. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Fontenoy, Paul E. "An 'Experimental' Voyage to China. 1785-1787." The American Neptune, Salem, Mass. Available at http://www.pem.org/neptune/voyage1.htm.

Oxford, Maryland, Port Records 1756-1773. Ms. 2355. Maryland Historical Society Library, Baltimore, MD.

Sedgwick, Catharine Maria. "The Chivalric Sailor." 1826, 1835. Available through the University of Virginia's Electronic Text Center at http://etext.lib.virginia.edu.

Tantillo, Leonard F. *Visions of New York State: The Historical Paintings of L.F. Tantillo*. New York: Shawangunk Press, 1996.

Tilghman, Oswald. *History of Talbot County, Maryland. 1661-1861*. Baltimore: Regional Publishing Company, 1937.

Tucker, Jane Foster. "Perdita - from the original story 'Modern Chivalry' by Catherine (sic) Sedgwick 1826." Easton, MD: Easton Publishing Co., 1971. Part of the Tucker Collection at the Library of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, Oxford, Maryland.

Wilgus, William J. Life of Captain Stewart Dean: A Character of the American Revolution. Ascutney, Vt. 1942. Unpublished ms. Control number ocm20376901. New York State Library, Albany.

Editor's Notes:

L. F. Tantillo's historical and nautical paintings, including his portrait of Stewart Dean and several works featuring the *Experiment*, may be seen on the Internet at www.lftantillo.com or by visiting Tantillo Gallery, 488 Broadway, Albany, New York. Call 518-689-1212 for further information.

Lucinda Damon-Bach recommends Fontenoy's "An 'Experimental' Voyage to China" (web address available above) for those interested in learning more about Stewart Dean.

Romancing the Revolution and Revolutionizing the Romance in Nineteenth-Century Fiction

American Literature Association Annual Conference San Francisco, California May 2004

This year's ALA panel focused on the intersection of romance and the American Revolution in the writings of Sedgwick and her contemporaries. Examining both fictional and autobiographical texts, the papers significantly broadened the context for understanding the cultural meanings of historical literature in the early 19th century. Emily Van Dette, Penn State University, examined *The Linwoods* in relation to domestic advice literature, showing the ways in which brother-sister bonds provide Sedgwick with an imaginative response to the threat of political disunion. Mike Kelly, New York University, identified a "crisis in genre" in American letters and read Sedgwick's *The Linwoods,* along with works by James Kirk Paulding, as providing alternatives to the themes and methods of Sir Walter Scott's historical romances. And Catherine Kaplan, Arizona State University, looked at the war memoir of a foot soldier, Joseph Plumb Martin, characterizing it as a text that refused to participate in the trend to romanticize the war and instead showed self-interest to be at the heart of the Revolutionary experience.

Comments by the session chair were followed by a spirited conversation between the panelists and an audience of approximately fifteen people. Abstracts of the three papers appear in the following pages.

—Deborah Gussman, Session Chair

CALL FOR PAPERS

Sedgwick and _____

2005 American Literature Association Annual Conference Boston, Massachusetts May 26 - 29, 2005

At the 2005 American Literature Association (ALA) conference, the Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society would like to explore literary, theoretical and/or personal links between Catharine Maria Sedgwick and other authors. In particular, we want to hear from scholars working with Irving, Child, Cooper, Fuller, Bryant, or others whose lives and writing careers intersected with Sedgwick's. We also will consider proposals relating to Sedgwick and her literary predecessors (including Maria Edgeworth, Susanna Rowson, and Charles Brockden Brown) or later writers (Hawthorne, Stowe, etc.) The goal of this panel is to increase our awareness of what is at stake when Sedgwick's writings are placed in context with the work of other authors.

Please send abstracts by January 5, 2005, to Lisa West Norwood, Drake University, lisa.norwood@drake.edu or mail to Lisa West Norwood, Department of English, Drake University, Des Moines, IA 50311.

'It should be a family thing': Family, Nation, and the Sibling Marriage Convention in Catharine Maria Sedgwick's *The Linwoods*

Emily VanDette
Penn State University

In one of the last scenes of *The Linwoods*, the title family gathers outside their New York home to watch the retreat of the British army, following Mrs. Linwood's suggestion that bidding the soldiers farewell "should be a family thing." That scene marks the family's reconciliation and reunion, despite the political differences that threatened to break them apart. The path to that familial peace and harmony is the main narrative of the novel, and the means by which Sedgwick imagines resolution to the political turmoil of Jacksonian America[1]. Given Sedgwick's response to national crises through familial narrative, my goal here is to interrogate the relationship between family and nation in *The Linwoods*. More specifically, this paper suggests that, while she ultimately seeks to restore and protect the national/familial union, Sedgwick imagines that union functioning well only when its members exercise their right to self-determine responsibly and are guided by their conscience and filial/patriotic duty, which in turn will serve to reinforce the national union. Through repeated depictions of intense, opposite-sex sibling relationships, Sedgwick reminds her readers of the duties and obligations that come with self-governance, which is a timely reminder given the broadening of democratic rights during the era of Jacksonian democracy. Sedgwick's use of the sibling dynamic draws upon a trend that I refer to as the "sibling marriage" convention. This paper, then, has two purposes: to discuss the sibling marriage, as it appeared in domestic advice literature of the nineteenth century, and to explore how Sedgwick adopted that convention to reassert the social obligations that accompany self-governance and enfranchisement, ultimately to preserve the solidarity of the union.

Although, as historians have repeatedly demonstrated, it never achieved predominance in reality, the concept of a nuclear family reached iconic status in the early nineteenth century and was widely considered to be crucial to the health and well-being of the nation. The idea of a tightly-knit, insular, and self-contained family unit brought sibling relationships into the spotlight. Since a chief characteristic of the nuclear family ideal is that emotional fulfillment should be contained within the immediate family, the ideology encouraged intense closeness between siblings. The popular genre of domestic advice literature gave special attention to codes of conduct for nuclear-family, opposite-sex siblings throughout the nineteenth century. Mimicking traditional heterosexual marriage values of the day, the advice to young adults often defined the brother's responsibility to protect and serve his sister, and the sister's duty to confide in and depend upon her brother[2].

With the proliferation of advice urging closeness between opposite-sex siblings, and with her personal experiences that reinforced that notion, it is not surprising that Sedgwick chooses the opposite-sex sibling dynamic, or the "sibling marriage," as a paradigm for her political and moral agendas in *The Linwoods*. Sibling couples allow Sedgwick to reinforce the solidarity of the nuclear family union, and, by extension, the national union. To that end, for instance, Herbert and Isabella maintain their commitment to each other throughout the novel, even in the face of their own political differences and their family's crisis. While the siblings of the title family play a central role in the reconstruction of family/nation, Sedgwick further asserts the importance of insular, self-contained familial/national unions through two other significant brother-sister pairs: the blind twins, Lizzie and Edward Archer, and Eliot and Bessie Lee. Sedgwick portrays those sibling couples as especially stable and devoted, and her depictions reflect the gendered codes of the day for opposite-sex sibling dynamics. Bessie and Eliot are first separated by war, and then by Bessie's mental breakdown, and Lizzy and Edward are literally ripped apart by robbers. In both "marriages" the sisters end up on the brink of death and are brought back to safety by their devoted brothers.

Sedgwick's repeated depictions of brother-sister dynamics reinforce the gendered codes for childrearing, most explicitly revealed in Eliot Lee's statement that the brother offers "a sense of protection," and the sister, one of dependence. The portrayals of brotherly protection and sisterly dependence in *The Linwoods* reveal Sedgwick's interest in the social responsibility of the growing number of enfranchised members of the national union. Sedgwick chooses brother-sister bonds to suggest the roles between the enfranchised and disenfranchised compatriots in the republican nation, since the parallel social circumstances of siblings make their political distinctions especially glaring. Sharing parents, filial love, racial and class identities, even childhood education, the brothers and sisters of *The Linwoods* differ significantly only in their gender-determined political agency. The brother-sister depictions in *The Linwoods* allow Sedgwick to strike a conservative compromise between democratic rights and national hierarchies. Sedgwick argues for the preservation of both the union and republican self-determination, but rather than extending democratic rights to, say, women, she seeks to remind enfranchised men of the responsibilities that come with self-government, namely their duty to serve and protect their compatriots and to remain loyal to the national union.

[1]Maria Karafilis explored the political contexts of *The Linwoods* in her introduction to the 2002 edition of the novel (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2002).

[2]This paper draws upon excerpts from the following advice manuals to discuss the "sibling marriage" convention in advice literature: Aikman, William. *Life at Home; or, The Family and Its Members*. New York: Samuel R. Wells, 1870; Alcott, William A. *Familiar Letters to Young Men on Various Subjects*. Buffalo: Geo. H. Derby and Co., 1850; Alcott, *The Young Man's Guide*, 10th edition. Boston: Perkins and Marvin, 1836.

New Romances of History: Opposition to Sir Walter Scott in Sedgwick and Pauling

Mike Kelly
New York University

Writing the story of the American Revolution was a major concern during the first decades of the new republic. It is not at all surprising that a political struggle that was in large part fueled on the circulation of pamphlets, newspapers and other documents would instantly produce a flood of attempts to assess the successes and failures of the enterprise. In addition to poems, celebratory speeches, and conventional histories, nearly 200 works of prose fiction about the Revolution were published between 1774 and 1860, the majority of these appearing after the success of Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley* in 1815. The historical romance provided a unique space in which the nature of the American character could be explored and defined outside the generic constraints of epic poetry and academic prose. In *The Linwoods, or, "Sixty Years Since" in America* (1835), Catharine Maria Sedgwick explores the issue of national character through the drama of the Linwood family and their immediate social circle. The portrayal of the Revolution as a family conflict and the allusion to Sir Walter Scott in her subtitle call to mind the works of James Kirke Paulding—an early champion of a native national literature free from British influence. By examining Paulding's portrayal of the American Revolution and his explicit assaults on Sir Walter Scott, I hope to draw attention to the critique of Scott implicit in Sedgwick's historical romance.

In the decades immediately following the Revolution, experimentation with a wide range of genres was fused with anxieties over the very possibility of a native national literature. Washington Irving and James Kirke Paulding had a small success with their humorous periodical called *Salmagundi* (1807-08) after which Irving produced the comic-historical *A History of New York* to international acclaim. Paulding also combined history and comedy in his first post-*Salmagundi* effort, a satirical work titled *The Diverting History of John Bull and Brother Jonathan* (1812). In this short book he portrayed the American Revolution as a family feud between John Bull and his wayward son Brother Jonathan. Despite John Bull's various legal claims to dominion over the colonies in North America, Brother Jonathan wins his independence through a fistfight. Paulding exposes the language of global politics as false: brute force, not history, law, or reason is the foundation of our independence.

The following year his criticism is directed at Sir Walter Scott in the parody *The Lay of the Scottish Fiddle* (1813). This work is a scathing attack on the way the language of chivalry and poetry can be used to disguise war atrocities, such as those committed by the British during the War of 1812. Beyond its function as wartime propaganda, it is also an attack on Scott's antiquarianism and a treatise on the potential of native American literature. The book is presented as the work of "W—S—" and consists of a poem about the burning of Havre De Grace along with an editor's introduction and endnotes, similar to Nabokov's *Pale Fire*. This sort of formal experimentation is typical of Paulding, who tried his hand at every sort of writing—from satire to epic poetry to biography to fiction.

When read in light of the ferocity of Paulding's attacks, the critique of Scott implicit in *The Linwoods* takes on greater significance. Sedgwick's story is one of a successful revolution, while Scott's is the tale of a failure. By the end of *Waverley* the Scottish rising has collapsed, in large part because of the unchecked self-interest of the Highland chieftains jockeying for favor and position. Edward Waverley, an almost entirely passive hero, only briefly defies his natural father and is taught the error of his rebellious ways by the surrogate father in the figure of Colonel Talbot. Sedgwick's characters have much more in common with Paulding's Brother Jonathan—they are concerned with the future, not the past. Thus, the family crisis at the center of *The Linwoods* can be read as a complete inversion of Scott. Herbert Linwood defies his father—as does Isabella—and both are proven right in their defiance in the end.

The impact of Scott's poetry and novels on the development of American letters is difficult to overestimate, but it is clearly an extremely sophisticated and complex relationship. American authors of historical romances could not deny that they were imitating Scott to some degree, but a closer examination of these works reveals a sustained critique of Scott that runs throughout the romances of the Revolution.

Beyond Private Yankee Doodle: Joseph Plumb Martin's Revolutionary War Memoir Reconsidered

Catherine Kaplan
Arizona State University

Joseph Plumb Martin's 1830 memoir, "Narrative of Some of the Adventures, Dangers, and Sufferings of a Revolutionary soldier," participates in an exploration of New England identity and the Revolution as family romance. Its bitter humor and bleak view of America's wartime character, however, sharply differentiate it from Sedgwick's *Linwoods*. Martin demands sympathy and respect from his readers as a son of New England and as a Revolutionary veteran. However, his regionalism is laced with skepticism about the actual virtues of New England, and his descriptions of his own service include accounts of malingering and thievery. Martin also portrays the war as an endless series of unneighborly acts: Tories choosing the British over their own, a public who refuses to provide sufficient food for its army, women who try to seduce Continental soldiers into carrying out their local acts of mischief. In contrast to Jacksonian era authors who portrayed a fall from wartime grace, Martin is intent on revealing that America had not declined into self-interest and sin, but – and he was the man to prove it – had been conceived there. In short, Martin's text, if salvaged from the simplistic readings its modern titles – *Ordinary Courage*, *Private Yankee Doodle* – have encouraged us to make, offers an intriguing look at one man's ongoing, and unsuccessful, attempt to come to terms with his relationship with the country he deems "a light-heeled wanton of a wife."

Society for Early Americanists

Fourth Biennial Meeting
March 31—April 2, 2005
Old Town Alexandria, Virginia

Teaching Historical 'Awareness' with Sedgwick and her Contemporaries

Karen Woods Weierman, Worcester State College
Teaching Sedgwick's Usable Past

Lucinda Damon-Bach, Salem State College
Re-examining—or Re-inventing?—the Past:
Shay's Rebellion and Post-Revolutionary New England Slavery in Sedgwick's Fiction

Laura Beadling, Purdue University
Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* in the Undergraduate Classroom:
Blurring the Lines Between History, Historical Fiction, and/or Historiography

2004 MLA Convention

Don't miss our Society-sponsored session:

Means and Ends:
Reexamining the Work of Literary Recovery in a New Political Climate

Address by

Susan K. Harris
University of Kansas

Responses by

Paul Lauter, Trinity College

Sarah Robbins, Kennesaw State University

Sandra Abelson Zagarell, Oberlin College

Moderator, Lucinda Damon-Bach, Salem State College

Session 491
Room 404 Philadelphia Marriott
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wednesday, December 29
1:45 pm — 3 pm

Notes

"E" is found!

Victoria Clements and Lucinda Damon-Bach believe that they have identified the mysterious "E," author of the initial epigraph to *Hope Leslie*, as Eliza Cabot Follen. A hand-written version of the poem cited was discovered among some of Sedgwick's personal papers not yet housed in a publicly accessible collection. They are currently tracking down further information.

Ellen Foster agrees that "E" is indeed most likely Follen. In a letter held in the Massachusetts Historical Society collections, CMS asks Follen to use portions of her poem "Sachem's Point" to open *Hope Leslie* (CMS I.8.5). While CMS did not date the letter, archivists believe it is from 1827, the year of *Hope Leslie*'s publication.

CMS Reviews Elizabeth Palmer Peabody's *Record of a School* — and EPP Reviews CMS

Megan Marshall

In researching my forthcoming biography, *The Peabody Sisters: Three Women Who Ignited American Romanticism* (Houghton Mifflin, May 2005), I came across the following entry in Bronson Alcott's 1836 journal, dated March 18: "Last evening, I read 'Review of the Record of a school,' in the *Knickerbocker* for *March*, by Mrs. Sedgwick . . . quite encouraging." [Joel Myerson, "Bronson Alcott's 'Journal for 1836,'" *Studies in the American Renaissance 1978*, p. 44.]

Turning to the *Knickerbocker* of February, 1836 (v. VII, no. 2, 113-130), I found that the unsigned lead article was indeed a review of Elizabeth Peabody's *Record of a School* (1835), the book in which Peabody documented Alcott's educational experiments at their jointly run Temple School in Boston. I was glad to see that Catharine Sedgwick (for Alcott surely was mistaken in identifying the writer as "Mrs.") had singled out "Miss Peabody" as "evidently a woman of genius" for her contributions to the text and to the school itself.

Sedgwick had known Peabody since the mid-1820s, and had once praised her in a letter to her niece Catharine Watson as "a very intelligent and highly improved young woman" who had her own distinct methods, which even then foreshadowed the Temple School experiment: "Her pupils do not commit any lessons [to memory]. She reads to them–and talks with them" (January 6, 1827, CMS Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society).

It cannot be known whether Sedgwick ever identified Peabody as the author of what must have been among the first reviews of her complete oeuvre, "The Novels of Miss Sedgwick," which appeared anonymously in *The American Monthly* in January, 1836, (v. I, no. 1, 15-25), the month before Sedgwick reviewed Peabody. Of Sedgwick, Peabody wrote: "She has embodied, as no other of our writers has, the spirit of her native soil." Was Sedgwick returning a favor? More likely, given the lead time required for writing such reviews, the near-simultaneous publication of the two essays was literary coincidence.

Genteel Crime: The Case of "Wilton Harvey" and the American Popular Magazine

Peter C. Molin, Indiana University

Molin presented the following paper at the Peter Straub Symposium on Literature and Popular Culture at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, September 30-October 1, 2004:

My project argues that a serialized novella by domestic-sentimental author Catharine Sedgwick occupies a key position at the intersection of high and low literary forms that underwrote the explosive growth of the American middle-class woman's magazine in the early antebellum era. Published in 1842 in *Godey's Lady's Book*, "Wilton Harvey" is based on a sensational real-world murder. By fictionalizing an actual crime for middle-class consumption, the novella marks the emergence of "genteel crime fiction" out of a penny newspaper and cheap pamphlet-novel tradition. My analysis demonstrates how Sedgwick incorporated sensational elements within the strictures of a women's magazine known for its decorum and sentimental ethos. Genteel crime fiction represents a significant early effort in American popular culture to reconcile the demands of what Peter Brooks calls "the narratable"—compelling subjects treated in dramatically interesting ways—with the morally edifying and educational missions that have traditionally been one of the justifications of high art. The literary marketplace forced—or enabled—*Godey*'s and its readers to negotiate innovative solutions to contradictory purposes while remaining within conventional literary and periodical frameworks. The hybrid quality of "Wilton Harvey" and of genteel crime fiction in general tells us much about the choices and decisions facing periodical textual community participants—editors, authors, and readers—as they forged a "middlebrow" alternative during a critical period when the distinctions between high and low literature were heatedly debated.

Recent Publications

Elsden, Annamaria Formichella. *Roman Fever: Domesticity and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century American Women's Writing*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2004. Includes chapter on CMS, "'I Forgot Myself': Nation and Identity in Catharine Maria Sedgwick's Travel Writing."

Ellis, R. J. *Harriet Wilson's* Our Nig*: A Cultural Biography of a "Two-Story" African-American Novel*. Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2003. Includes references to Sedgwick's *Live and Let Live* and *A New-England Tale*.

Foster, Shirley. "Nineteenth-Century American Views of Naples." *America and the Mediterranean*. Ed. Massimo Bacigalupo and Pierangelo Castagneto. Turin, Italy: Otto, 2003. 351-359.

Karafilis, Maria. "Catharine Maria Sedgwick (1789-1867)." *Writers of the American Renaissance: An A-to-Z Guide*. Ed. Denise D. Knight. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2003. 316-323.

Robbins, Sarah. "Periodizing Authorship, Characterizing Genre: Catharine Maria Sedgwick's Benevolent Literacy Narratives." *American Literature* 76.1 (March 2004): 1-29.

Simmons, Clare A. "*Hope Leslie*, *Marmion*, and the Displacement of Romance." *ANQ* 17.1 (Winter 2004): 20-25.

VanDette, Emily. "'It should be a family thing': Family, Nation, and Republicanism in Catharine Sedgwick's *A New-England Tale* and *The Linwoods.*" *American Transcendental Quarterly* 18.4 (December 2004). Forthcoming.

Stockbridge Library Association Reopens Its Historical Collection

Barbara Allen, Curator

It has been over a year since the Stockbridge Library Association sent its historical collection to off-site storage while renovating the Historical Room. At last, everything is back in a redesigned, climate-controlled area in the lower level of the library. Once again, the historical collection is open to the public.

We are now able to control temperature, relative humidity, and lighting. There is improved security and an expanded storage area, thanks to new compact shelving. At last, the Sedgwick Collection and the rest of the Stockbridge historical records are housed as they deserve.

Last year, with the help of Sedgwick Society members Ellen Foster, Jenifer Elmore, and Melissa Homestead, we began the processing of our Sedgwick Family Papers. Miracles were accomplished in the short amount of time we had, but there is still much to be done. Now that the construction is complete, I hope to continue the work on the early series within this collection.

For those who wish to visit the collection, the new hours are Tuesdays through Fridays from 10 to 5 and Saturdays from 10 to 2. Despite all the improvements, the Historical Room is still a one-person department, and it is closed whenever I am away. If you have any questions, please call me at (413) 298-5501 or email me at ballen@cwmars.org.

Society News

A Letter from the President

Lucinda Damon-Bach

Greetings! I'm happy to report that since last spring, the Sedgwick Society has experienced an impressive "territorial expansion." Here are some highlights:

Several CMSS members were on hand on November 6th to help celebrate Advisory Board member **Judith Fetterley**'s retirement from SUNY-Albany. **Bob Daly**, **Victoria Clements**, and I led a roundtable that addressed Judy's pioneering work recovering 19th-century women writers, with Sedgwick as a case in point; **Sharon Harris** and upcoming MLA panelist **Paul Lauter** formed part of the panel "What Matters?: Reflections on Reconstructing American Literature," and **Charlene Avallone**'s analysis of *The Resisting Reader* was also presented (in absentia). In Judy's honor, several of us have decided to create a prize for the best essay presented at future CMS symposia; a very generous anonymous donor has offered to fund the prize the first year and it will be up to us to generate sustaining funds. Soon you will hear further details about this exciting project to acknowledge Sedgwick scholarship publicly.

In addition to promoting scholarship, one of our CMSS goals is to support the teaching of Sedgwick, at all levels. Public school teachers are hungry for information and teaching strategies, as I confirmed this past summer. In July, I presented several lectures on six antebellum women writers, including Sedgwick, to approximately 200 enthusiastic public school teachers from across the nation who were attending four NEH summer institutes in Salem, Massachusetts. I surveyed all the participants (K-12 teachers of history, English, art, and librarians), asking about their background in American literature, and learned (no surprises here) that most had used *The Norton Anthology* before its radical makeover in the 1990s and had never heard of Sedgwick. The good news: participants were very pleased to learn about these women writers; several are now integrating Sedgwick into their high school curricula, including Teresa Sutton (one of Judy's former students) in western Massachusetts. Our challenge: to find ways to support the inclusion of Sedgwick in elementary and secondary classrooms. Please remember to share your teaching materials for posting on the website.

We can also generate interest in—and an audience for—Sedgwick by leading book talks in our communities, as **Victoria Clements** has in Maryland, or even by offering a sermon! I presented my first "lay" liturgy this past summer for the Unitarian Universalist Church of Reading (MA), which included the opening words, "Who is Catharine Sedgwick, and Why Should We Care?"; hymns by her literary contemporaries; a readers' theatre excerpt from *A New-England Tale*; and an interpretive message, "Leading with the Heart: CMS, American Author and Early Unitarian." I must say that this was great fun. (And people *did* come up afterward and say they were going to go buy the novel to find out what happened next!)

The website continues to generate interest in Sedgwick, and to support scholarship. A special case in point is Gilbert and Valerie Lewthwaites', who first contacted me two years ago (July '02) about Sedgwick's story "Modern Chivarly," which Gilbert had tracked to our website. Following our e-mail and snail-mail exchanges, he and his wife Valerie visited Salem State a year later (Sept. '03) to discuss their questions and findings; this newsletter features their fascinating research to date.

Last, but not least, as a result of our election last spring, we welcomed two new officers to the Executive Board, and two individuals who contributed fine work for the society have moved on. Our thanks go out to former 1st Vice President of Programs, **Melissa Homestead**, who directed the wonderfully successful 2003 Symposium, and to **Jenifer Elmore**, former 2nd Vice President of Programs, who spearheaded efforts to create a Sedgwick presence at *two* MLA conventions—a remarkable feat (among many). And to **Ellen Foster**, who has just announced her decision to step down as Vice President for Communications: our deepest thanks! The newsletter has more than doubled in size and frequency since Ellen took on the editorship—hers will be a tough act to follow. Our gratitude to all three of you—and our welcome to the two new Vice Presidents for Programs—Patricia Kalayjian and Lisa West Norwood, who have already hit the ground running.

One final anecdote: at the ALA in San Francisco last spring, I approached a children's literature panelist to ask if she had done any work on Sedgwick. "No," she replied, "but there's a really great group you should know about, the Sedgwick Society . . . ." So, the word is getting out! From San Francisco last May, to Philadelphia this December, to Virginia next March, and New York City next fall, Sedgwick studies is covering new ground. Be sure to let us know the highlights of your own journey!

2004 Election Results

Thirty-four of our sixty-three members (as of May 2004), or 54% of our membership, voted in the spring 2004 election. The election results, reported by members Ginny Mastromonaco and Judith Gibson, are:

President
Lucinda Damon-Bach (receiving 79% of the vote)

First Vice-President for Programs
Patricia Larson Kalayjian (uncontested)

Second Vice-President for Programs
Lisa West Norwood (receiving 56% of the vote)

Vice-President, Communications
Ellen Foster (uncontested)

Vice-President, Finance and Membership
Deborah Gussman (uncontested)

The term of these officers is three years, to expire in spring 2007.

Again, we thank the membership for voting, Robert Daly for receiving nominations, Ginny and Judith for receiving and counting the ballots, and all who elected to run for office. We especially thank Melissa J. Homestead, former First Vice-President of Programs, and Jenifer Elmore, former Second Vice-President of Programs, for their service from 2001 through 2004.

Call for Nominations: Vice-President, Communications

Following the resignation of CMSS Vice-President Ellen Foster, effective December 31, 2004, we seek nominations for a special election for Vice-President, Communications. Members are invited to self-nominate by contacting Deb Gussman at gussmand@loki.stockton.edu, as soon as possible.

The Vice-President, Communications, serves as editor of the Society newsletter and is responsible for communicating matters of interest to the Society membership.

Membership and Finance Report

Deborah Gussman

In May of 2003, at the Sedgwick Society's business meeting (held at the Symposium), I was elected to a one-year replacement position as VP for Membership and Finance. I met in July with Victoria Clements, the outgoing VP, who turned over the membership lists and the books and did an outstanding job of explaining my responsibilities to me. I am very lucky to have inherited the job from the Society's incredibly organized and patient co-founder.

Our membership has grown slightly this year, with 63 members in May of 2004 (up from 55 in May of 2003). Some of this increase can be related to our policy of asking participants at Society-sponsored conferences and panels to become members. While some members recruited in this way do not re-join once the membership lapses, many do, which suggests that we should continue this practice.

We have also gained new members by giving out Society-related materials and membership forms at conferences, including SSAWW this year. This suggests that we should continue to bring our information on the road when we speak on Sedgwick, and to encourage other members to do so too. Other ways to continue broadening our membership base might include recruiting new board members, developing liaisons with other author societies (perhaps co-sponsoring conferences, or panels at larger meetings), and encouraging graduate students to present at and attend the Symposium by offering modest support with travel expenses.

When the outgoing VP turned the finances over to me, the Society had a balance of $2,154.00; we currently have a balance of $2,399.00 The small increase is entirely due to new and renewing membership dues.

This year we become eligible to apply for tax-exempt status for the society from the IRS. I will prepare and submit this application.

Society-Sponsored Panels in 2005: SEA and ALA

Lisa West Norwood

The Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society will sponsor a panel at the Society for Early Americanists (SEA) conference next spring; the complete announcement appears on page14 of this issue. We are very fortunate since not all the panels were accepted. SEA should be a promising venue to develop links with scholars in the earlier periods of American history and culture and to enhance our understanding of how Sedgwick fits with her predecessors. The conference, SEA's fourth biennial meeting, will be held March 31-April 2, 2005 in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia.

Our panel, "Teaching "Historical Awareness" with Sedgwick and her Contemporaries," will address the following issues. Many of us teach in English departments that are replacing the traditional "fields" of literature with broader categories of learning – one of which is "historicity" or "historical awareness." What does this shift mean for early American literature courses and the possibilities for thinking beyond the survey? How do you teach something like "historical awareness" in the humanities anyway? We will apply these theoretical questions to our understanding of Catharine Maria Sedgwick's early writing – or that of her contemporaries.

At the 2005 American Literature Association (ALA) conference, held in Boston from May 26-29, 2005, the Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society would like to explore literary, theoretical and/or personal links between Catharine Maria Sedgwick and other authors. The complete call for papers appears on page 11 of this issue.

Planning Ahead . . . NYC in 2005 and the Berkshires in 2007

Patricia Larson Kalayjian

After some discussion at the society meeting in San Francisco during ALA, members voted to explore the possibility of holding two conferences over the next three-year period. This would involve rescheduling our tri-annual CMS Symposium from 2006 to 2007 and viewing that event (to be held in the Berkshire area) as a celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the society's founding. In the interim and tentatively scheduled for fall 2005, we would sponsor a small conference in New York City that would focus on Sedgwick, other antebellum women writers, and their literary interest in the city.

To measure the potential level of participation for such a conference, we sent a query out this past summer via both the SSAWW list-serve and our society's own list. We feel that we have generated enough of a positive response that we are moving forward with our plans. If you have not yet responded regarding your interest in such a conference, please read the announcement below and let me know if you think you would like to attend, present, chair a panel or perhaps even help plan for a meeting in New York in September, 2005.

****

Based on the growing interest in antebellum women writers and on the desire of Sedgwick scholars to explore her urban connections, the Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society is planning to host a small conference in New York City, September 23-25, 2005 (tentative dates).

We would welcome papers and panels that address, for example, the use of the city in Sedgwick's long and short fiction; the New York connections between Sedgwick and her female contemporaries; the influence of New York on Lydia Maria Child, Margaret Fuller, Caroline Kirkland, and others; and the urban experience of antebellum women.

We are most curious to know the level of interest in such an event. Please reply to pkalayjian@earthlink.net.

A Review — and Preview — of Society-sponsored Panels, 2003-2004

Jenifer Elmore

If you are anywhere near the MLA convention in Philadelphia this year, then you will want to make time to attend our society's second-ever special session. The session, **"Means and Ends: Reexamining the Work of Literary Recovery in a New Political Climate,"** is set for Wednesday, 29 December, from 1:45–3:00 p.m. in Room 404 of the Philadelphia Marriott.

Encouraged by the success of our first MLA session in 2002 and inspired by **Susan K. Harris**'s provocative keynote address at the Third Sedgwick Symposium in 2003, the executive board decided to propose a session that would present Harris's address, as well as three responses to it, to a wider audience. In a true group effort involving both the advisory and executive boards, we secured commitments from Harris, **Paul Lauter, Sarah Robbins,** and **Sandra Zagarell** to serve as panelists. With such a slate, it was hardly surprising that the MLA accepted our proposal.

The format of the session will be atypical, in that Harris will deliver an abbreviated version of her Symposium keynote, after which Lauter, Robbins, and Zagarell will present prepared responses. As chairperson, **Lucinda Damon-Bach** will introduce the panelists and moderate the discussion period. I encourage all Society members to attend this session and participate in debating the most serious issues facing our mutual enterprise as scholars of Sedgwick and other recovered American authors.

Over the course of the 2003-2004 academic year—the final year of my term as our society's Second Vice-President for Programs—I also organized our panels for SSAWW 2003 and ALA 2004. A year ago, I served as chair when **Jenifer Banks**, **Lisa Norwood**, and **Sarah Robbins** presented papers at our "The Choice of a Lifetime: Marriage and Singlehood in Catharine Sedgwick's Writings" panel at the second biennial SSAWW conference in Fort Worth, Texas. Last May, **Deborah Gussman** chaired our panel at ALA, "Catharine Maria Sedgwick: Romancing the Revolution and Revolutionizing the Romance in Nineteenth-Century Fiction," which featured presentations by **Catherine Kaplan, Mike Kelly,** and **Emily Van Dette**. A report from ALA 2004 and abstracts of their papers appear on pages 11 to 14 of this issue.

Thanks to everyone who submitted or read proposals for our many panels throughout my tenure as Second Vice-President for Programs. I appreciate the privilege of having served on the executive board for the past three years, and I'm proud of everything we have accomplished. We have provided opportunities for scholars from across the country and even from Europe to participate in our panels at major conferences as well as our own symposium. As a result, the Sedgwick Society is certainly a more visible and more dynamic part of the larger academic community than ever before. I wish the best to my successor, **Lisa Norwood**, and I look forward to remaining active in the Society.

Cindy Damon-Bach, Victoria Clements, Judy Fetterley, and **Bob Daly** at The Resisting Reader, Then and Now, A Symposium in honor of Judith Fetterley, November 6, 2004, Albany, New York.

Member News

Charlene Avallone's article "Women Reading Melville/Melville Reading Women" is forthcoming in *Melville and Women*, edited by Elizabeth Schultz and Haskell Springer, from Kent State University Press. The piece, a revised version of a talk given at the 2003 Sedgwick Symposium, focuses on *The Linwoods*, "The Country Cousin," and *Pierre* to explore Sedgwick's likely influence on her Berkshire neighbor, Herman Melville.

Amy Cummins was appointed assistant professor of English at Fort Hays State University (Kansas).

Lucinda Damon-Bach, Society President, earned tenure and promotion to Associate Professor at Salem State College (Mass.). Cindy was recently named the Coordinator for the Secondary Education Minor in English at Salem State.

The **Elmore** family (**Jenifer**, Wilkes Honors College of Florida Atlantic University and former Second Vice-President for Programs, Charles, Holly and Shelby) announces the birth of Andrew John Elmore on May 20, 2004.

Ellen Foster was appointed assistant professor of English at Clarion University of Pennsylvania, Venango Campus.

Deborah Gussman, Vice-President for Finance and Membership, earned tenure at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.

Melissa J. Homestead, University of Oklahoma and former First Vice-President for Programs, is pleased to announce that her first book will be published by Cambridge University Press in Fall 2005. *American Women Writers and Literary Property, 1822-1869* includes a Sedgwick chapter, "'Suited to the Market'": Catharine Sedgwick, Female Authorship, and the Literary Property Debates, 1822-1842," as well as chapters on Harriet Beecher Stowe, Fanny Fern, Augusta Jane Evans, and Mary Virginia Terhune. Melissa has begun work on a new book-length project on Catharine Sedgwick's relationship to antebellum American print culture and her engagements with the business of letters during her nearly four decades as a published author. Melissa spent the months of April in residence at the Library Company of Philadelphia and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania as a Reese Fellow in the History of the Book in the Americas, where she researched Sedgwick's gift book publications and her relationship with publishers Carey and Lea.

Patricia Larson Kalayjian was appointed assistant professor of Interdisciplinary Studies at California State University, Dominguez Hills.

Amy Dunham Strand, University of Washington, reports that her article "Interpositions: *Hope Leslie*, Women's Petitions, and Historical Fiction in Jacksonian America" is forthcoming in *Studies in American Fiction*. The article draws upon the paper Amy delivered at the 2003 Sedgwick Symposium. Amy, husband Chris and daughter Meg are also happy to announce the birth of Margaret Dunham Strand on June 22, 2004.

Joan Varnum defended her all-Sedgwick dissertation, "Pledging Allegiance: Apostasy, Adventure, and the American Woman in the Early Fiction (1822-1835) of Catharine Maria Sedgwick" during the Fall 2003 semester and received her PhD in English and American Literature from New York University.

Contributors to this issue

Barbara Allen is Curator of the Stockbridge Library Association's Historical Room.

Patricia Larson Kalayjian is assistant professor of interdisciplinary studies at California State University, Dominguez Hills, and the First Vice-President of Programs for the Sedgwick Society.

Catherine Kaplan is an assistant professor of history at Arizona State University. She has published in *Early American Literature* and the *Journal of the Early Republic*. Her book about Federalist literary culture is forthcoming from the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture.

Mike Kelly is the Curator of Books in the Fales Library and Special Collections at New York University. He curated an exhibit of American novels about the American Revolution titled "Revolutionary Fictions" and has compiled a bibliography of nearly 450 such works.

Gilbert Lewthwaite is a retired national and foreign correspondent for the *London Daily Mail* (1960-1971) and the *Baltimore Sun* (1971-2001). He has won numerous awards for his reporting and was a Pulitzer Prize nominee in 1997 for a series on slavery in Sudan. **Valerie Lewthwaite** is a retired nurse. They have been based in London, Moscow, Rome, Paris, Washington, and Johannesburg. The Lewthwaites are now halfway through writing a roman-a-clef around the story of Perdita.

Emily VanDette earned her Ph.D. in English from Penn State University in August 2004. Her dissertation is entitled "Family and Nation in Nineteenth-Century American Women's Fiction." She also composed the notes for the 2003 Penguin edition of Sedgwick's *A New-England Tale*. She is currently teaching part-time for the Penn State English Department.

Membership Form

Membership in the Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society includes a subscription to the newsletter and e-mail updates of all Society activities, including calls for papers. The membership year runs from July 1 to June 30. Membership expiration date appears on the newsletter address label to remind members of when it is time to renew.

Please be careful to write LEGIBLY!!

Membership (check one):

Regular	$10.	_____	Lifetime	$200.	_____
Institutional	25.	_____	Student	5.	_____

Please add $5. per year for international mailing.

Name _____

Affiliation _____

Preferred mailing address *(Please use home, if possible; saves us space and time!)*:

_____

Preferred e-mail address *(only one, please)*: _____

Phone numbers (H) _____ (O) _____

Would you like to receive e-mail updates from the Society? _____ Yes _____ No

Please return this form and your membership payment (by check or money order made payable to Sedgwick Society) to: Deborah Gussman, 619 Wayne Avenue, Haddonfield NJ 08033.

Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society
c/o Ellen Foster
Department of English
Clarion University, Venango Campus
1801 West First Street
Oil City PA 16301