

A detailed engraving of Catharine Maria Sedgwick's face, showing her with dark, curly hair and a serious expression, looking slightly to the left. The image is in a muted, dark color palette.

# THE CATHARINE MARIA SEDGWICK SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2019

## President's Letter

BY MELISSA J. HOMESTEAD  
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN

2017 is a banner year for the Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society, and what a lot we have to celebrate! In the past twenty years, we've hosted eight symposia in four locations that Sedgwick lived in or visited in Massachusetts, New York, and Missouri, and through presentations at ALA, SSAWW, MLA, and SEA, we've expanded our geographical reach to additional sites that she visited and well beyond: Washington D.C., Philadelphia, Virginia, Colorado, Texas, and California, to name a few.

Now, through new bibliographic research, we know that her works were published in all of these places during her lifetime. And, through our collaborations with the Harriet Beecher Stowe Society and the Margaret Fuller Society, we have expanded our Society's geographic reach across the Atlantic as well, co-hosting three conferences in England, Italy, and, in 2018, "Women of the Green Atlantic" in Ireland. We are on the move!

Our members' activities are now bringing Sedgwick to new audiences through a range of digital and public-facing scholarly enterprises, fulfilling our mission from 1997 in unanticipated and exciting ways. We have yet to make Sedgwick a "household name," but we are moving in the right direction as our public outreach continues to grow. Perhaps crossing the Pacific is next, if not in person, via the internet.

May we continue our generous support of rising scholars' new visions, and continue to spread the word about Sedgwick Studies in our teaching, publications, and new collaborations.

Here's to the next twenty years! What will we have accomplished by 2037, or by 2039, the 250th anniversary of Sedgwick's birth?

# Sedgwick Society at SSAWW 2018

## Denver, CO :: November 7-11, 2018

Throughout the Triennial Society for the Study of American Women Writers conference, Sedgwick scholars made their presence known. Two panels sponsored by the Sedgwick Society were showcased on the "Highlighted Sessions" list by conference organizers, and Sedgwick society members and friends presented on more than four other panels at the conference. The society once again partnered with the Harriet Beecher Stowe and Margaret Fuller societies to host an afternoon tea for attendees and increase the profile of our respective societies and our members' work. Despite being in competition with several conference panels and a special event artist talk, the afternoon was well-attended and enjoyed by all.

Jill K. Anderson chaired our first society-sponsored panel entitled "Resisting Readers in Catharine Maria Sedgwick's Work," which asked panelists to consider the way Sedgwick layers resistance into her more didactic writings. Melissa Lingle-Martin connected the author's writing to questions of imagery in her paper on "Resisting Images: Sedgwick's Cultivation of Critical Vision," while Lisa West's "Flights of Fancy? Or Resisting Reason" engaged the reader's role in Sedgwick's writing. Not to leave out Sedgwick's beloved *Hope Leslie*, Christopher C. Apap's "Dark and Crooked Passages: Revisiting Esther Downing's Conventionality in *Hope Leslie*" reconsidered Esther's place in the novel as a voice of resistance over didacticism.

Our "Recovery and Alternatives to Print Publication Roundtable," chaired by Lisa West, featured five dynamic presenters, including a professor-student legacy trio with Jenifer Elmore and her former student, Jordan Von Cannon, and Von Cannon's current student, Alyssa Prosper.

Patricia Kalayjian offered attendees valuable insight into the Catharine Maria Sedgwick Online Letters Project, including strategies for workflow between herself and project partners Lucinda Damon-Bach and Deborah Gussman. In the discussion during the roundtable, many commented on the challenges of TEI markup standards for online letter projects and the hopes of automating these processes for literary scholars using these tools for annotations. Jessica DeSpain, editor and creator of *The Wide, Wide World Digital Edition*, introduced her exciting plans for the "Digital Recovery Hub".

The hub will offer infrastructure, project management, and technological assistance to individuals working on marginal authors or texts that may not receive support from more

competitive entities like the NEH or their home institutions.

DeSpain's work highlights the way digital humanities can become far more collaborative in the way we share resources and support one another's projects. Jenifer Elmore highlighted the way she brings digital projects into the classroom as a way to give students access to Sedgwick's out-of-print stories and increase professionalization as they consider the challenges of the scholarly edition. Jordan Von Cannon and Alyssa Prosper similarly spoke on opportunities for undergraduate students in the digital humanities, discussing their collaborative project "Transatlantic Departures," a digital map project that aims to create a digital edition of Sedgwick's *Letters from Abroad*. The roundtable succeeded in highlighting many of the wonderful qualities of our society: collaboration, mentorship, and outreach..

Beyond the society-sponsored panels, we had several Sedgwick scholars and others sharing their work on other exciting panels at the SSAWW conference. In light of the #MeToo Movement, Melissa McFarland Pennell presented on Sedgwick's *A New-England Tale*. Lucinda Damon-Bach discussed Sedgwick and Anna Jameson's correspondence on a panel focusing on Transatlantic Women. In a later panel on "Women's Family Letters" Damon-Bach would also explore Jane Minot Sedgwick's influence on Catharine Sedgwick. Patricia Kalayjian went into further details about the Catharine Maria Sedgwick Online Letters Project on a panel dedicated to editing American Women Writers.

Stephanie Scherer's presentation on Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* considered "cross-racial attachment" and nineteenth-century notions of hospitality. Finally, Deborah Gussman encouraged us to thinking about Sedgwick's legacy and influence on American Women's Writing in the twentieth century by discussing "Edith Wharton's Revision of Catharine Sedgwick".

These presentations showcase the diverse way Sedgwick and her writings can be in conversation with so many other American women writers, thus cementing her place and prominence in these discussions and finding ways to bring Sedgwick's writing to new audiences.

*Jordan Von Cannon*



# Sedgwick Society at SSAWW 2018 Denver, CO :: November 7-11, 2018



Sedgwick Society Members and Friends at SSAWW President's Luncheon



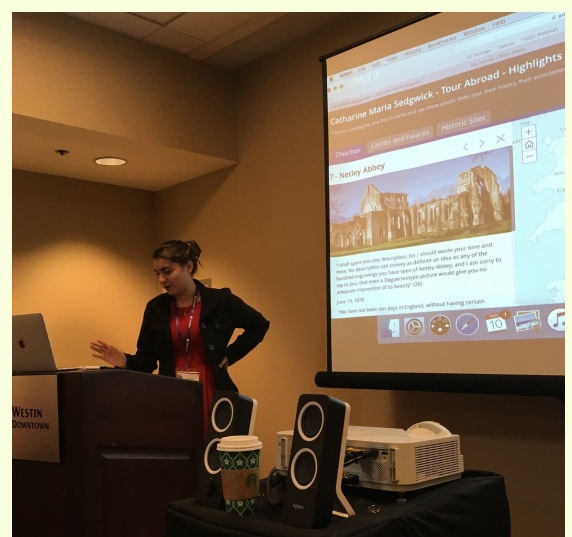
Charlene Avallone's Welcome at the Afternoon Tea - co-sponsored by Sedgwick, Stowe, and Fuller Societies



Sedgwick Legacies - Alyssa Prosper, Jordan Von Cannon, and Jenifer Elmore



"Resisting Readers" Panel featuring Christopher C. Apap, Lisa West, and Melissa Lingle-Martin



Roundtable - Student Alyssa Prosper discusses digital maps and Sedgwick's trip abroad

# Sedgwick Society at ALA 2018

## San Francisco, CA :: May 24-27, 2018

The Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society was well-represented at ALA last spring, where we hosted two vibrant sessions: a roundtable of responses to Michelle Sizemore's *American Enchantment: Rituals of the People in the Post-Revolutionary World* and a panel on Sedgwick (and her contemporaries) beyond Unitarianism. Both sessions were well-attended, and there was significant crossover between them. In addition, panelists or audience members of other sessions (including a session sponsored by the Society of Early Americanists and the James Fenimore Cooper Society) referred back to ideas and comments from our sessions, adding to the sense that Sedgwick Studies today has much to offer to the study of early American and 19th-century literature at large.

The roundtable was chaired by Lisa West and focused on responses to Michelle Sizemore's study of "the people" (a mystical force, a process, not a flesh-and-blood entity) in the post-Revolutionary moment. Panelists ranged from graduate students to established faculty, with the goal of responding to this important new book from a variety of positions: what it means for teaching or studying "the field" of early American literature; what it means as a reconsideration of democratic processes – particularly processes not based on reason or a rational public sphere; what it suggests about the genre of tales of the Revolution (or other historical literature); and how temporality and enchantment are related to reading practices. Dana Nelson's (Vanderbilt University) comments on "American Enchantment, the People, and Popular Sovereignty" were read in absentia to open the roundtable and introduce Sizemore's ideas that "the people" is a process and that such a process of becoming "the people" involves enchantment rather than rational practice. Next, Gretchen Murphy (U of Texas at Austin) focused on "Revolutionary Invocation and the Temporalities of Civil Mysticism," and Jennifer Greiman (Wake Forest U) spoke on "Radical, Vortical: On Democracy's Sovereign Arts." Gabriela Valenzuela (UCLA) then addressed issues of teaching the text or applying it to other 19th-century material with her comments on "American Enchantment and Graduate Study." Jeffrey Hole (U of the Pacific) and Sam Sommers (UCLA) continued with a focus on the body (whether collective, constitutive, or enchanted) with "Constitutive Forms & Body Politics" and "Enchanted Bodies," respectively, the latter of which applied Sizemore's ideas to scenes of Nelema in Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*. Maria Karafilis (California State U-Los Angeles) concluded the panelists with her look at "Enchantments and Entanglements," which developed some of Sizemore's ideas of enchantment and temporality. There was robust discussion after the short presentations, particularly about the temporalities suggested by enchantment, issues of identity (particularly nonwhite identity), and considerations of democratic participation. Michelle Sizemore (U of Kentucky) concluded the session by addressing the issues and possibilities raised by panelists and the audience.

This format – responding to new scholarship – is a first for us at ALA and, based on the attendance, energy, and participation, it is something I think we should do again. Furthermore, this session was selected by ESQ to be highlighted in its "year in conferences" article; consequently, panelists spoke with the graduate student representative to share notes and summaries.

Ashley Reed (Virginia Tech) both chaired and served as respondent for the panel "Sedgwick (and Her Contemporaries) Beyond Unitarianism." This panel sought to expand our sense of Sedgwick's religious affiliation and sensibility beyond her association with Unitarianism. (It also was an attempt to connect with studies on secularity or the postsecular.) Jessica Ling (U of California at Berkeley) opened the panel with a fascinating account of "Stowe's New England Parishes," looking at parishes within Stowe's writing and the broader cultural history of the parish in general, particularly as a unit for history, genealogy, and geography that has its own written accounts and documents. Next, Gretchen Murphy (U of Texas at Austin) presented on "Unitarians, Shakers, and Infidels: The Problem of 'Rational Christianity' in Sedgwick's *Redwood*," arguing that Sedgwick demands something beyond reason in her explorations into faith and religious theory. Dawn Coleman (U of Tennessee at Knoxville) completed the panel with a paper on "Disenchanted: Skeptical Women and Emergent Secularity in Early American Fiction," which is part of a longer project and situates Sedgwick's interest in skeptical women (including Caroline Redwood) within a longer tradition. Ashley Reed received all papers ahead of time and wrote a formal response, which both responded to each paper separately and also found connections across them. Discussion was robust, and there was clearly connection between this panel and some of the roundtable's focus on enchantment. I left this panel feeling that there is much more that can be done with Sedgwick and religion.

In addition to the roundtable and panel, Society members presented elsewhere at ALA. Dawn Coleman chaired and Ashley Reed presented on the panel "American Religious-Scientific Literature," with Ashley's talk on "Spiritualism, Free Love, and Consent in Elizabeth Oakes Smith's *Bertha and Lily*." Lisa West (Drake U) presented a paper on the wonderfully alliterative Lydia Maria Child panel, "Cupcakes, Cruelty, and Curses: Fresh Consideration of Lydia Maria Child." Lisa presented on "Chocorua's Curse" and Child's gendered ecology. Cynthia Smith (Miami U) presented "Sailors in Uncle Tom's Cabin" on a Harriet Beecher Stowe panel; Cynthia has previously presented on sailors in *Hope Leslie* at the CMS symposium.

All this shows that the Sedgwick Society was well-represented and that Sedgwick scholars are invested not only in her work but in broader theoretical and literary considerations.

*Lisa West*



# Sedgwick Society at ALA 2018

## San Francisco, CA :: May 24-27, 2018

Ever since I began reading and studying Sedgwick as a graduate student, I've chafed at her "seemingly parochial status as a Unitarian writer," as Dawn phrased it in her paper. This positioning of Sedgwick has always seemed to me to underestimate both Sedgwick's own ambivalence about rational Christianity and her deep, lifelong engagement with the religious and political situation in which she and other early national authors found themselves. This panel makes impressive strides toward addressing these themes in Sedgwick's writing.

Jessica Ling's paper on New England parish histories provides crucial context for our understanding of Sedgwick's life and her works. Sedgwick's family played a central role in the parish life of Stockbridge, Massachusetts, where her local pastor—and her uncle—Stephen West was a towering figure. Her memories of this parish childhood would inform much of her fiction, including, as Ling notes, her debut novel *A New-England Tale*. Beyond her own personal experience of growing up in a New England parish, the early years of Sedgwick's literary career coincided with the disestablishment of state churches and the revivals associated with the Second Great Awakening. The parish histories that Ling discusses memorialized local political and religious concerns in the face of this movement away from the grounded and toward the generalized. Parish histories thus created a facade of stability and longevity in the face of religious and administrative upheaval. They did so, Ling recounts, by erasing the "dramas of colonial war" that both severed the United States from England and facilitated the destruction of the land's aboriginal inhabitants. The rhetorically constructed *longue durée* of the parish history, in which a "logic of inheritance" naturalized "the passage of church property from person to person (or parson to parson)" also constructed a history without rancor, effacing the fierce and often nasty religious and political debates that Sedgwick observed from an early age and that constitute a theme in both her personal writings and her fiction.

The interpenetration of religious and political life is the theme of Gretchen Murphy's paper. In particular, Murphy explores Sedgwick's preoccupation with a political problem that was also a religious problem: just how much "zeal" was necessary for the proper regulation of public and private virtue? Unitarianism's religious rationalism could produce a dearth of zeal, as Sedgwick noted when she lamented Unitarian believers' failure to proselytize; on the other hand, too much religious zeal produced the unseemly "enthusiasms" of the Second Great Awakening. But politics, too, had its extremes: the Jacobins' secular rationalism could lead to a rabid populism; lack of political zeal produced apathy or aristocratic laziness. (Think of Jasper Meredith in *The Linwoods*.) According to Murphy, Redwood prescribes just the right balance of rational religion and irrational faith to keep the republic on the straight and narrow. The necessity of retaining irrational faith, Murphy demonstrates, is concretized in the

locked "casket" that contains proof of Ellen Bruce's legitimate birth. Murphy resists a simplistic reading of Redwood that would characterize Ellen's blind faith as a "retreat into ineffectual feminine religious feeling." Instead, Murphy reads Ellen's piety and her faith in the casket as deeply political, "serving a Federalist conception of public religion." Redwood posits that an irrational religious faith might temper both the lack of zeal produced by rational religion and the overabundance of zeal increasingly on display in early national political discourse.

Dawn Coleman's paper finds in Sedgwick's fiction of the 1820s an increasingly skeptical "authorial presence." Though skeptical women are rare in Sedgwick, Coleman argues that the irreligious adolescents Elvira Wilson and Caroline Redwood show signs of a childish and ill-informed skepticism. More intriguingly, however, Hope Leslie offers Monoca and Magawisca as portraits of mature skeptics: women who are fully aware of Christianity's doctrinal premises and knowingly reject them. Unlike some other early national women authors, Coleman avers, Sedgwick acknowledged the possibility of an "honest skepticism," which might appear in the form of principled resistance to coercive missionary activity or simply as an inability to silence doubt. While in Coleman's opening anecdote David Hume suggests that women were unlikely apostates because they weren't "sturdy" enough to sustain such a "virtue," Sedgwick's "honest skeptics" display reason, sentiment, and virtue despite their apostasy. Coleman's ongoing work on skeptical women, including those in Sedgwick's works, makes a crucial intervention into discussions of religion and gender in America.

As these three papers have amply shown, taking our studies of Sedgwick's religious and political life "beyond" Unitarianism opens an immense field of generative and productive work for scholars of Sedgwick, of religion, of skepticism, and of early American literature. I am grateful to Jessica, Gretchen, and Dawn for sharing their work with us, and for giving me the opportunity to engage with it.

*Ashley K. Reed*

# Just Read One -- Sedgwick Story Challenge

## Goal:

To raise public awareness of Massachusetts author Catharine Maria Sedgwick (1789-1867), whose 20 books and over 150 short stories earned her national recognition and international fame in the nineteenth century as one of the founders of American fiction (including literature for children).

## Background:

The literary recovery of Sedgwick's writings and reputation has been progressing steadily since the first new edition of her novel *Hope Leslie* in 1987. Her work is now included in all the major anthologies of American literature for college-level study, but elementary- and secondary-level teachers and the general public remain less aware of her work. Sedgwick wrote for very young readers as well as mature readers. This challenge invites readers of all ages and from all walks of life to read (or listen to) one of Sedgwick's stories, and then to share their responses, questions, and thoughts, which will (with permission) be posted to a website aiming to promote the reading and teaching of Sedgwick's work.

## Process:

A volunteer steps forward who is willing to read (and possibly transcribe) one of Sedgwick's stories, and contacts

Professor Lucinda Damon-Bach,  
English Department, Salem State University:  
[ldamonbach@salemstate.edu](mailto:ldamonbach@salemstate.edu)

After reading (and possibly transcribing) the story (see specific transcription advice below), the volunteer practices reading the story aloud, and prepares some questions to ask after sharing the story with his/her audience (whether children, friends, family members, elders, etc.).

The volunteer reads the story aloud to his/her audience, and afterward records (or asks listeners to record) some of their thoughts, questions, and reactions.



The volunteer then writes up the read-aloud event, describing his/her audience (approximate age-range, gender/race, setting), and summarizing the audience's reactions to the story, quoting some of the individual questions and responses, if possible (citing names is optional, depending on permission of auditors). Please include any written responses, if applicable).

This descriptive transcript (as Word document, please) is then e-mailed to Professor Damon-Bach, who will arrange to have the responses and any teaching ideas/recommendations posted on the Society website

## NOTES FOR TRANSCRIBERS:

Please type everything as written (i.e., if a word is spelled oddly, retain that odd spelling).

Be sure to proofread your transcription, checking for missing words or punctuation.

Transcriptions will be gratefully published on the website "Sedgwick Stories: The Uncollected Periodical Writings of Catharine Maria Sedgwick"

## Sample Reading Response Questions to Ask Your Audience:

1. How does this story connect to you personally, to our world, to other stories you've read or heard?
  2. What questions do you have about this story?
  3. What parts of the story are different from (or similar to) life today, and what did you learn or wonder about that?
  4. What ideas do you have about how to teach this story?
  5. Who would you recommend this story to, and why?
- And of course any questions of your own design!
- author Catharine Maria Sedgwick (1789-1867), whose 20 books and over 150 short stories earned her national recognition and international fame in the nineteenth century as one of the founders of American fiction (including literature for children).

*Lucinda L. Damon-Bach*




# Reading *The Linwoods* in the Age of Social Media

In Spring 2018, I taught Sedgwick's *The Linwoods* in an upper-level undergraduate course on US Novels of the 19th century. Intrigued by the youthfulness of the novel's central characters and fully invested in "all the drama" with the various love triangles, my students imagined what Sedgwick's cast of characters and their relationships would look like if they were set against the backdrop of the social media age.

The assignment was simple: create a social media profile for your assigned character. Working in groups, students determined which social media platform their character would most likely use before creating sample content for their page or posts, and a brief rationale for why their group made these decisions. Students were allowed to "fan-cast" or select celebrity photos they felt captured the "image" of their character. Here are the results:


**BESSIE LEE:** This group agonized over whether Bessie would be "bold" enough to have a public social media account, but they finally settled on a friends-only Instagram account. They imagined any selfies on her page would include a self-deprecating remark and far too many hashtags on each post.



@Bessie\_Lee

14 posts

J.M.



**ELIOT LEE:** Although the group created a Facebook page for Eliot, they imagined his profile would only be 10% complete.; he would never post status updates, and he'd have to re-set his account upon each log-in because of the lengthy space between sign-ins.

**ISABELLA LINWOOD:** My students were quite confident that Isabella would be on Twitter as a result of her wit and desire to appear "above it all." According to this group, people who disdain the petty or vain elements of other social media platforms still deem Twitter acceptable.

**HELEN RUTHVEN:** This group decided that Helen would be on Instagram (for the visibility) and have an active "Pinterest" page that would include her #dreams

**HERBERT LINWOOD:** As a result of his intense relationship with politics, the group decided Facebook was the only appropriate platform for the younger Linwood's political leanings; they also believed he would be a frequent poster of pro-rebel political memes meant to troll the elder Mr. Linwood.

**JASPER MEREDITH:** This group decided on a James Franco-esque character with a public LinkedIn profile that makes far more of his listed professional accomplishments than he actually has to his name. The group was adamant that Meredith would also have a "secret" Tinder profile reflective of the mess he often makes in relationships and his own self-love.


*Jordan Von Cannon*

**Eliot Lee**



Studied at: Cambridge

Work: Self – made man; low key lawyer, active volunteer



**Isabella Linwood**

@young\_Juno

16. Independent & Adventurous. "It is not in the stars to hold our destiny but in ourselves." -William Shakespeare. NY.

**Helen\_Ruthven**

201 posts 145 followers 207 following

Follow

Let me show your friend how magnanimous I can be.

Tory Life

**Helen\_Ruthven** Here goes nothing!

#dontneedpermission #whodoeswashingtonthinkheis #torylife #familymatters #riverboattrip

Genuine English gentleman


Independently wealthy

#LovemyMom

You know you want to swipe

**facebook**

Name: **Herbert Linwood**



Status Update (3 important facts about me)

"I'm writing to inform everyone that I have decided to fight with the Yankees in this perilous war"

"Yankees> Loyalists"

Relationship Status: It's complicated

"My country tis of thee, Sweet land of Liberty..."

# CALL FOR PAPERS

## Sedgwick Panels at Upcoming Conferences

American Literature Association -- Boston, MA (May 23-26, 2019)

Catharine Maria Sedgwick and the Gothic or Supernatural

While Sedgwick is associated with Federalist politics, reason, republican sensibility, and moral leadership, her writings do venture into the gothic, the uncanny, the supernatural, and the enchanted. This panel will explore the underexamined ways Sedgwick uses the gothic and the supernatural in her fiction and other writings. Panelists are encouraged to consider ways she responds to a transatlantic gothic tradition or to think about the religious supernatural. Panelists can build on ideas and papers presented at 2018 ALA or SSAWW. Papers are also welcome on writers who are contemporaries of Sedgwick, such as Washington Irving or Lydia Maria Child. Send 200-word abstracts to Lisa West, [lisa.west@drake.edu](mailto:lisa.west@drake.edu) by January 15, 2019.

The Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society is sponsoring a roundtable on:

Sedgwick's Letters: Material Letters, Transcribed Letters, Fictional Letters, Digitized Letters.

This roundtable will put the exciting work of the Catharine Maria Sedgwick Online Letter (CMSOL) Project in conversation with theoretical approaches to "the letter" in a variety of contexts. CMSOL is an ongoing initiative with the goal of making the correspondence of Sedgwick held at the Massachusetts Historical Society publicly available in digitized form. This project is significant not only in developing the scholarly infrastructure of Sedgwick Studies but also in linking archives, scholars, and the general public. The project raises numerous ethical and pragmatic issues about reading, transcribing, and editing letters. We welcome short presentations on Sedgwick's (or her contemporaries') personal letters, letters embedded within novels, letters from abroad, or references to letters. Scholarly challenges in working with letters or family papers also welcome, as are presentations that consider the role of letter-writing within a broader literary culture. Send 200-word abstracts to Lisa West, [lisa.west@drake.edu](mailto:lisa.west@drake.edu) by January 15, 2019.





# A Look Back: 20th Anniversary Sedgwick Symposium Stockbridge, MA :: Summer 2017

"Where and When: Evolving Concepts of Place, Space, and Time  
in the Writings of Sedgwick and Her Contemporaries"

Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of Sedgwick's death in 1867  
and The 20th Anniversary of the Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society



Photos: Jill K. Anderson



Our most recent symposium, was held June 7-10, 2017, at The Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. This conference celebrated both the 150th anniversary of the death of Sedgwick in 1867 and the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society. What better celebration than to see historic and familial sites, take in Sedgwick's lovely view of the Housatonic, honor the founding and early members who attended, and welcome graduate students and others to Sedgwick Studies. As always, the symposium was a high-energy, collegial, and memorable event.

The celebration opened in the historic Stockbridge Library, with Mary C. Kelley delivering the Keynote Address, "Journeying with Catharine Maria Sedgwick's Life and Letters." The talk was followed by a reception in the gallery of the Stockbridge Library, where we could chat, eat, and view documents and pictures from their collection. The next day began with a panel on "Sedgwick's Geographic Imagination," with papers by Ashley Reed, Janet Zehr, Cynthia Smith, and Christiane Farnan exploring geography in short fiction, evolutionary views of landscape, the sea, and considerations of mapping. "Traveling People, Traveling Texts" featured Emma Newcombe, Susan L. Roberson, Jenifer Elmore, and Johanna McElwee discussing tourism, travel, expeditions (both real and literary), technology of travel, domesticity and travel, and the influence of Sedgwick on Swedish writer Frederika Bremer. Then came "Evolving Views of the Spinster, the Bluestocking, and Related Figures," with papers by Deborah Gussman, Kate Culkin, and Robin L. Cadwallader that contextualized Sedgwick's writing within contemporary conversations about "singlehood, marriage, and feminism" (Gussman); explored pedagogies and student responses to The Sedgwick School; and compared notions of the bluestocking then to notions today. Continuing the busy day, María Carla Sánchez, Beth Avila, and David Ober spoke on the panel "Where and When Men Disrupt the Home and/or the Social Order," with papers on "Catharine Sedgwick's Men," pirates, and "blurred boundaries of domesticity" in Hope Leslie.

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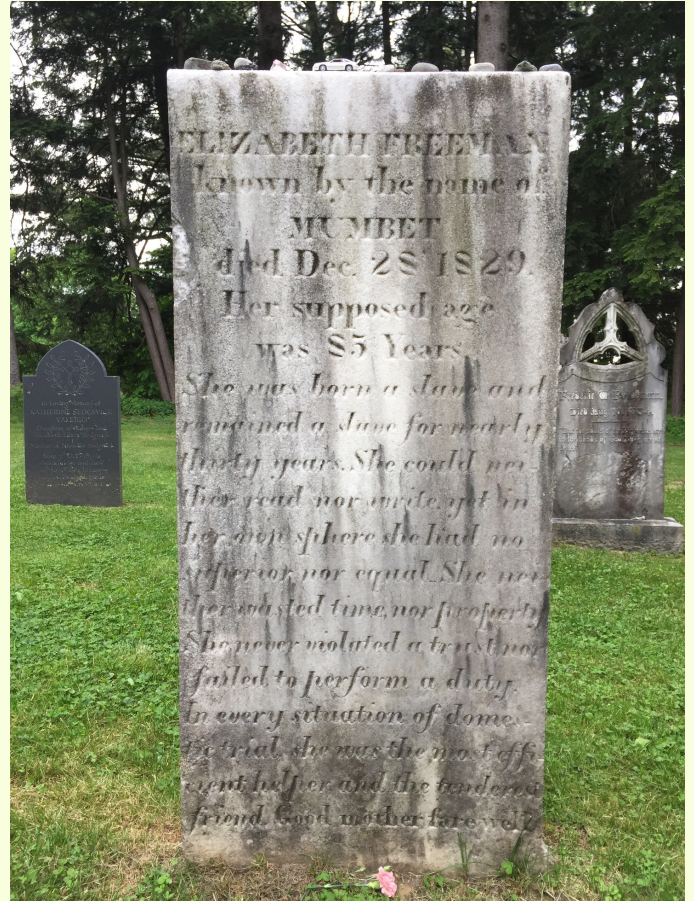
# A Look Back: 20th Anniversary Sedgwick Symposium

Panels the following day included the following. There was a panel on “Keeping the Past Visible,” where Robert Daly, Elizabeth T. Kenney, and Charlene Avallone theorized about “diachronic thinking” in The Linwoods; “temporal regressions,” footnotes, and interpolations in J.M.M. Hart’s novellas; and “National Space, Social Place, the French Language, and Catharine Sedgwick” respectively. “Time, Spaces, and Places of Reform” featured Michelle Wood, Susanna Compton, Heather Santiago, and Emily VanDette speaking to a variety of issues related to reform, such as the way Sedgwick revises John Winthrop’s famous “city on a hill” speech; the conception of a “secular” Sedgwick; issues of voice interlinking Sedgwick and Magawisca; and new approaches to Sedgwick’s animal advocacy stories. The final traditional panel, “Where and When Do Borders Break Down,” featured Lisa West, Gretchen Murphy, and Maureen Tuthill on the borders between geologic and narrative time; the limits of “rational Christianity” in Sedgwick’s religious sensibility; and the tensions between “work and the concept of time” in Married or Single?

In addition to these traditional panels, the society also organized roundtables or alternative sessions that addressed teaching and scholarship in today’s climate. These were spread out throughout the weekend and included:

- a roundtable on pedagogy, which included abundant discussion on digital platforms, engaging undergraduate students in research, and assignments asking for transcription, annotations or other forms of writing;
- editing Sedgwick over time, chaired by Judith Fetterley and with Lucinda Damon-Bach as respondent: Melissa J. Homestead, Emily VanDette, Deborah Gussman, and Victoria Clements all spoke of challenges and successes in getting Sedgwick texts published with a variety of approaches and with different presses;
- a panel on archival and bibliographical studies, which featured Patricia Kalayjian, Lucinda Damon-Bach, Melissa Lingle-Martin, and Meghan Smith presenting on new developments concerning Sedgwick and early letters, translation/biographical writing, visual culture, and digital research respectively
- a hands-on archive workshop, facilitated by Lucinda Damon-Bach, in which participants transcribed letters and discussed issues of archives, letters, transcription, and editing.

These sessions fostered discussion on ethical and pragmatic issues related to technology, changes in the profession, the need for more infrastructure in studying Sedgwick, and other issues related to the continued recovery of her work and revival of interest in her life and literary contributions. As we celebrated the past twenty years, we were also looking forward to future steps in Sedgwick Studies and the kinds of work we can do in the classroom, online, and in archives like the Massachusetts Historical Society.



Elizabeth Freeman, "Mumbet"  
in the Sedgwick Pie, Stockbridge, MA  
Photos: Jill K. Anderson

Arguably the highpoint of the weekend was the banquet and founder’s celebration, with recognition for all this group has accomplished and excitement for the years to come. From “sentimental sailors” to spectacles, animal advocacy to skepticism about “work” and “rational Christianity,” the papers contextualized Sedgwick in a variety of ways, demonstrating her central position to 19th century cultural developments.

Some papers, such as Robin Cadwallader’s paper discussing the current Blue Stocking Society of Saint Francis University and María Carla Sánchez’s paper that evoked disenfranchised “men” in the world of Trump, overtly made Sedgwick speak to the current moment. The symposium, while stressing celebratory milestones, showed how current our work is and how it speaks to gender, intellectual issues, and political concerns of the present as well as the past.

*Lisa West*



# Sedgwickians "out and about" in Stockbridge, MA

Outings happen when Sedgwickians gather. At our last symposium, we held the initial reception at the historic Stockbridge Library and visited the Sedgwick family home, enjoying a wine and cheese reception while admiring 19th-century portraits, federal furniture, a pet cemetery, and the sensational view from the backyard of the home – a view associated with early landscape descriptions in *A New England Tale*. We were graced with the presence of Sedgwick family descendants and the legacy of the family in this region. After the reception, we walked to the Stockbridge Cemetery to view the cemetery, particularly the “pie” where family members have been buried. The next day, we took a group hike to Laurel Hill and the Ice Glen, featured landmarks in Sedgwick’s fiction. We saw the infamous inspiration for “sacrifice rock” and felt the chill of bouldering in the glen. While all the symposia are marked with collegiality, good conversation, and fascinating outings, the Stockbridge sites are particularly striking for Sedgwick readers. Preserved by family members, the local community, or other organizations, there are many places that add a geographic or biographic element to her writing.

She is so present in these sites, even 150 years after her death.



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## CATHARINE MARIA SEDGWICK SOCIETY EXECUTIVE BOARD

THE FOLLOWING OFFICERS WERE ELECTED BY THE SEDGWICK SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP IN FALL 2018. TO CONTACT OUR OFFICERS PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE ([HTTPS://CMSEDGWICKSOCIETY.ORG/EXECUTIVE-BOARD/](https://cmsedgicksociety.org/executive-board/))

PRESIDENT: MELISSA J. HOMESTEAD, UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN

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VICE-PRESIDENT, DIGITAL RESOURCES: JORDAN VON CANNON, FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY

# ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

## Special Thanks to Our Contributors

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## SEEKING CONTRIBUTORS

Please send items for the newsletter to the VP of Communications Cynthia Smith (casmith1800@gmail.com).

Possible items include:

- Short essays about Sedgwick and her contemporaries
- Notes and discoveries from the archives
- CFPs
- Descriptions of recent conference presentations on Sedgwick
- Experience teaching Sedgwick in the classroom
- Just Read One Sedgwick Story Challenge

We will also continue updating our News and Notes section of the CMS Society website with more information between newsletters.

Visit: <https://cmsedgwickociety.org/sedgwick-society-news-notes/>

HAVE YOU SEEN US ONLINE --

Visit <https://cmsedgwickociety.org/>

for the most up to date information on Sedgwick Society happenings, upcoming symposia and conferences, and other events. Our website also includes an extensive timeline and bibliography for everything Sedgwick, as well as pedagogy resources for teaching Sedgwick in the classroom.

We are always looking to add materials to our website, so please send your contributions to our VP of Digital Resources Jordan Von Cannon, [jvoncannon@fgcu.edu](mailto:jvoncannon@fgcu.edu).

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