

THE CTHULHU PRAYER SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

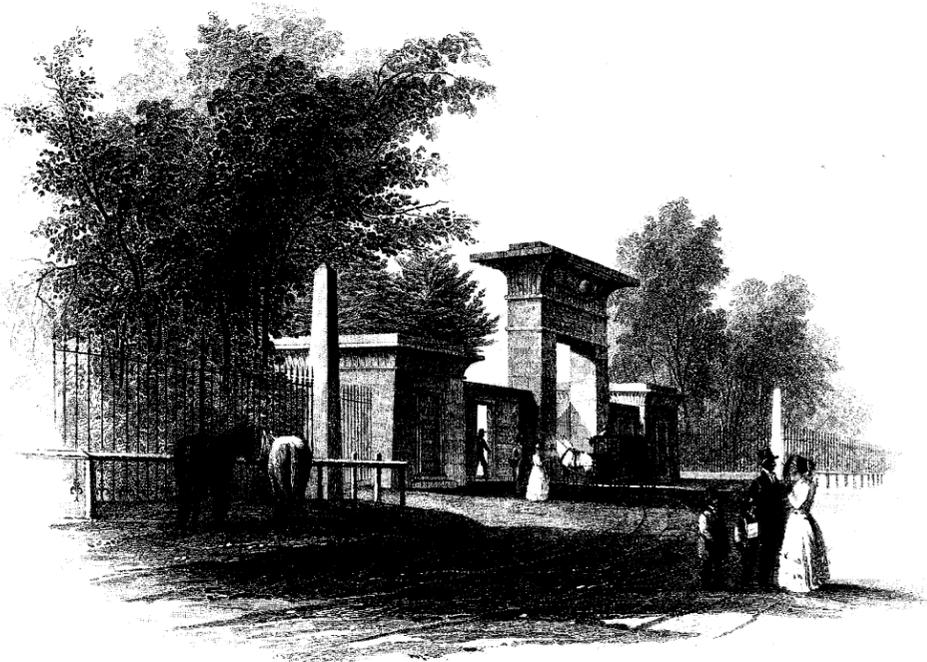
The Providence H.P. Lovecraft Friends' Group Celebrated Spring's "Witch Night" in Style

JUNE 9, 2002 — The local "Friends of Lovecraft," also known as the Cthulhu Prayer Society, met on April 30 to help Hal Hamilton celebrate the opening of his new home, "Whych House," on Arnold Street, part of Fox Point's mysterious "Blighted Corners." Pierre and Jen Ford, historian Jane Lancaster, artist Pieter Vanderbeck, and Fra Britannicus joined in helping Mr. Hamilton release the spirits entombed in his stone-walled cellar (circa 1822).

The occasion was Walpurgis Night, the ancient pagan festival of spring renewal. Part of the evening was devoted to a discussion of Walpurgis Night and May Day customs surviving since the Druid times into the beginning of the 20th century. Customs such as smoking or sweeping evil spirits out of the house, or circling the home three times beating pots and pans, were related with some merriment, as May Wine and strawberries, Alsatian asparagus quiche and other delicacies were savored. Musical accompaniment was provided by Stravinsky, Orff and "The Reanimator."

The planned May excursion to Marblehead was called off, owing to our cult leader's wayward hip and spine. We plan to tour Marblehead in the fall.

With today's meeting Auburn trip, the merry crew of artists, writers and Lovecraft devotees continues its intensive exploration of the weird, the strange and the wonderful.



Boston's Mount Auburn: A Special Tour for June

by JUDITH ASKEY

On Sunday June 9th, join the Cthulhu Prayer Society for its first Boston area "Sunday social" and cemetery tour. We will visit Cambridge's Mount Auburn Cemetery, where melancholy dogs, sheaves of wheat and obelisks replaced skulls, hourglasses and bones in the first garden cemetery of America.

We will stroll through Mount Auburn, where the dead were both laid to rest and memorialized. (Keep those pesky monuments off our city squares!) If the proper Bostonians vied with one another in life for the best Beacon Hill houses, wait till you see their mausoleums! Mount Auburn is also famed for its landscaping, a wide variety of exotic trees. Visitors come not only to visit the deceased, but to picnic with them as well. (I hope the lemon meringue pie isn't too tart for your taste buds, Aunt Fannie.)

During our informal tour, you will have a chance to:

ADMIRE the gothic lodgings of the Henry Cabot Lodges.

AMAZE your friends with your newly-acquired knowledge of who truly were Jesus' physicians.

BEWARE the ravens haunting Longfellow's eternal resting place. (We'll pause here and read a few poems, also reflecting on the intense mutual dislike that sprang up between Poe and Longfellow.)

BLINK and you'll miss Harold Edgerton's tombstone.

BRING your babies and we'll provide well-sealed boxes to pay homage to B.F. Skinner.

DARE to answer the ringing phone at Mary Baker Eddy's cupola tomb. (You've all seen the Christina Science Temple of Doom that broods over College Hill, as well as the egomaniacal "Mother Church," in Boston — now you can see where MBE sleeps and awaits her just rewards.)

ENVY the lavish funeral expenditure by the descendants of artist Winslow Homer.

EXCLAIM at the boulder used to commemorate the food NOT cooked following Fannie Farmer's recipes.

FEED the wild geese without losing digits at Willow Pond.

HEAR the howling of your comrades climbing the Washington Tower. (A good place to declaim Byron or to roll cannonballs down the enclosed stairwells upon hapless tourists.)

LAY laurels at the feet of John Wilkes Booth's older and more talented brother, Edwin.

LIFT your voices at Julia Ward Howe's grave.

MEANDER past the sculpture honoring the Father of the Express Business.

SEE the Father of Anesthesiology in a still deeper sleep.

TOUCH the Sphinx without buying an airline ticket on an Arab-filled plane.

WITNESS the site of the rug merchant's mausoleum commemorative sacrifice.

—continued on next page



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MOUNT AUBURN

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First Cemetery of Its Kind

Mount Auburn Cemetery, consecrated in 1831, is now home to some 90,000 permanent residents. Inspired by Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris and in response to the filthy, bleak and overcrowded city cemeteries of America, Mount Auburn was created by mostly Harvard-educated men who were uplifted by the Unitarian and Universalist vision of God in the magnificence of nature. In the 19th century, Mount Auburn became one of the most popular outdoor tourist attractions in the Northeast, rivaling Niagara Falls and the Erie Canal. Filled with landscape design and stone sculpture, it was the first picturesque cemetery in America, decades before the first public art museums were built.

Mt. Auburn established the model for “garden cemeteries.” The site has a large collection of “champion” trees including Cryptomeria. We’ll visit Harry Lauder’s Walking Stick and the Bottlebrush Buckeye. For the birdwatchers among you, keep your eyes open for the Belted Kingfisher, the Northern Flicker and the Tufted Titmouse.

Had they waited until 1915, Bostonians would have been rid of the ghoulish smell of decay and disease from their urban churchyards with the Great Molasses Flood. That year, a 2.3 million gallon vat of molasses exploded. It sent a 15+ foot tidal wave surging through downtown Boston. It flattened buildings, people and animals. (now you know where they got the idea for “The Blob.”) If our visit coincides with hot and humid weather, you may well catch a scintilla of molasses on the breeze.

The cemetery tour will be preceded by a buffet lunch at Chez Judith in Dorchester (a Boston suburb now inhabited by commuters, Vietnamese immigrants and the original Irish “monkey people” whose features will disturb your dreams.) You’re invited to gorge on Judith’s version of a well-rounded meal. This means there will at least be bread & butter and dessert. Worry not. Mr. Rutherford will make sure your hostess provides wholesome sustenance before our afternoon excursion.

So come and eat out of the armadillo stomach. Turn on the alligator. Pose for photos in Uncle Jack’s Coffin. Then it’s off to Sweet Auburn!

DIRECTIONS

Judith Askey
19 Cheverus Road
Dorchester, MA
Home 617-282-4364
Cell 508-353-5708

From Providence:

Take 95 North. Continue past the 495 exit. Close to Boston you will be faced with a choice of two lanes forking to the left and two lanes forking to the right. Take the right fork. You will pass exits to routes 24 and 28. Continue until two lanes fork to the left to Boston on 93 North. The two lanes to the right will take you to 93 South and on to Cape Cod.

Go several miles to Exit 11B for Granite Avenue. From here you drive straight with no turns for about 1.4 miles. The next paragraph will describe lights and intersections as you drive this distance:

About 0.5 miles from the beginning of the exit there is a green light at an iron bridge. This first light is ALWAYS green. Continue straight ahead. At 0.6 miles is the second light. Continue straight. By the 0.8 milepost you need to be in the RIGHT lane in or-

der to go straight through the Granite and Gallivan light. On your left is Texaco, McDonalds on your right. You will see the EIRE PUB across Gallivan. Granite becomes Adams Street. You will continue straight (even though the street curves) to the light at Adams and Ashmont, 1.2 miles (Ashmont Liquor). Continue straight to 1.4 miles where there is a blinking green light.

TURN LEFT here at Lonsdale Street. Continue straight one block to the STOP sign (1.5 miles) at Florida Street. Continue straight one more long block to Dorchester Avenue (1.7 miles). Wells Market is on the left and a blue and white striped building ahead.

TURN RIGHT onto Dorchester Avenue. Go to 1.8 miles passing in front of St. Mark’s Church. The first street AFTER the church is CHEVERUS ROAD.

TURN LEFT onto Cheverus Road. The street is a dead end. #19 is the fifth house in.

Additional directions provided upon request.



Actor Edwin Booth was America’s great performer of Shakespeare. He rests in Mt. Auburn, still perturbed at the actions of his brother, John Wilkes Booth.

THREE MOUNT AUBURN POEMS

by BRETT RUTHERFORD

THE TURK’S MAUSOLEUM

A Turkish rug merchant’s mausoleum:
hung with a brilliant
tapestry,
sunlit from doorglass
showroom bright.

His favorite Bokhara?
His last request
to keep it from Omar,
his rival, or Habib,
the brother he hated?

Or a ghoulish invite
to grave robbers?
Once in, they have to hear
his well-oiled patter,
hours of rug talk,
gossip about the Iranians,
complaints about the
cheap carpets from China
that will be the death of him—

SACRIFICE

Before a cenotaph
in civilized Mt. Auburn,
a desiccated squirrel,
its eyes a maggot nest,
its scream frozen—

someone tore out his heart
and made him an offering
on steps of the monument,

legs extended in a cross,
his vacant rib cage
crying “Murder!”

THE ARGUMENT

“Two decades ago
that scribbler Poe —”
Longfellow smiled and took tea,
“— that *jingle writer* as Emerson
dubbed him,
called us but frogs
‘round the Common,
likened our poems to croaking.
Well, he’s dead,
and I’m writing still,
and that’s an end to it.”
His auditors nodded,
some heavy-eyed,
as the old master
recited “Evangeline.”

One sunny day, quite unintended,
I find the old bard’s tomb
in Mt. Auburn:
a grassy knoll well fringed with yews,
a stately monument, the letters
L O N G F E L L O W
immense enough for all to read.

But whom should I discover there,
perversely lingering,
casting their shadows
upon the stone that weighs
the poet’s brow?
Whom but a trio of stately Ravens,
borne on their wings
from an unknown shore,
rebutting the greybeard poet’s boast,
ending the argument — forevermore!



Be careful not to step on great artist Winslow Homer’s modest tombstone!

2002 LOVECRAFT FRIENDS EVENTS

Here it is, with all meetings except those starred with double asterisks commencing at 11:30 am at the Union Station Brewery.

**SUNDAY, JUNE 9th.

A Boston cemetery tour, led by Judith Askey. Mt. Auburn and other graveyards will be featured. Day ends with a feast in Boston.

SUNDAY JULY 14.

Day of the Gorgons.

All are invited to share art, stories, film, and anecdotes related to Medusa, the mysterious Cyclades islands, and the Gorgons.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 11.

HPL Birthday Weekend at Swan Point Cemetery.
Poetry readings, offerings, tributes.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15th.

Program to be announced.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13th

Poe and Mrs. Whitman.

Premiering the second edition of Rutherford's book on the doomed romance of two important poets and dreamers.

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31.

Samhain (Halloween). A grand celebration, place to be announced.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15th.

Decorating the Baba Yaga tree at Rutherford's place. Bring mystery presents to be unwrapped on Russian Christmas, January 6th 2003

That's it for the year. Your ideas and suggestions will be welcome.

Among the "unscheduled" events will be viewings of DVDs and videos, including the last portion of Gormenghast (BBC); a double feature of "Dead Alive" and "Meet the Feebles" by Peter Jackson (director of "Lord of the Rings"), and other surprises.

An outdoor reading of Algernon Blackwood's "The Willows" is also planned in Roger Williams Park -- as a picnic under weeping willow trees.

I SEE DEAD PEOPLE: WHO'S WHO IN MT. AUBURN

By Brett Rutherford

With Dispatches from the Internet

We come to Mt. Auburn because of its significance as a cemetery, a turning point in how America disposed of and honored its dead. But after admiring the monuments and vegetation, there's always the pressing question of "who's buried here?" For those of us with a Lovecraftian bent, Mount Auburn is a little bland. If you want witches, accused witches, hanged witches and witch trial judges, you must go to Salem. If you want the graves of Boston's great rebels and Revolutionaries, the Old Granary cemetery near Boston Common is where you will find most of the names familiar to history buffs. And if you want the really, really great New England Transcendentalist authors, they are mostly at Sleepy Hollow cemetery in Concord (Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne and the Alcotts, to name a few).

In Mt. Auburn you are more likely to encounter names that became well-known once America settled in as a new country. Theologians choke on their Bible dust next to doddering Harvard presidents. Merchants and society ladies, manufacturers, statesmen, and all the better sorts of Bostonians rest in Mt. Auburn. With a little help from the Internet (findagrave.com), we obtained a little background about some of the permanent residents of Mt. Auburn whose graves you might like to discover. And we even have an "Easter Egg hunt."

If **Mary Baker Eddy** (1821-1910) were alive today, she'd have a cult on Jonestown and her own cable network. The inventor of "Christian Science" and the discoverer of the "mind-body-connection," Mrs. Eddy provoked generations of Americans to throw away their medicine bottles and pray their way to better health. Those who were being treated by dangerous quacks, of course, got better. Those with serious illnesses tended

to live shorter life spans, leaving all their money to Mrs. Eddy's Mother Church. (What a wonderful racket!) Today we know Christian Scientists as the loonies who refuse medical attention for their children -- but in her day, MBE was taken very seriously indeed. Our hostess will share some of the lore associated with her mammoth monument.

Harold Edgerton (b. April 16, 1903 d. January 4, 1990) is responsible for the induced seizures of thousands of people dancing in discotheques. He invented the electronic stroboscope, as well as the original cameras and flash units used by Jacques Cousteau for underwater photography. **Edwin Land**, the inventor of the Polaroid Camera, is also in Mt. Auburn. Now that the Polaroid Company has declared bankruptcy in the face of digital photography, can we anticipate an untrimmed grave? The infamous behaviorist **B.F. Skinner**, who put his children in isolation boxes to prove his theories that people and rats are the same, is also in Mt. Auburn. Visitors are asked to ignore his grown children, who linger about the grave begging for cheese and crackers. Visionary **Buckminster Fuller**, inventor of the geodesic dome and one of the benevolent gurus of the 1960s, also rests here. If you get the feeling that Mt. Auburn is a high-IQ graveyard, you're right. Any resurrectionist who wanted to dig for brains has found the spot!

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, b. February 27, 1807 d. March 24, 1882, is probably the best-known poet in Mt. Auburn. He was perhaps best known for his epic poem *Hiawatha*, which thousands of schoolboys once memorized and recited. In fact, many of our grandparents got almost everything they knew about Northeastern Native Americans from this poem, which is based on actual Iroquois legends. Czech composer Antonin Dvorak, during his American visit,



Poet and Suffragist Julia Ward Howe still waves her cane at the Boston Brahmins who denied her the vote.

was inspired by reading *Hiawatha* to compose two movements of his "New World Symphony" with allusions to events in the poem.

In addition to writing poems on American themes, Longfellow was an ardent student of the classics, and the verse of faraway cultures. He spent years doing his own translation of Dante, and did many adaptations from German and other languages. In no way could he be described as a "provincial" poet, and his work was as well-known in England as in America.

Other poets in Mt. Auburn include **Julia Ward Howe**, b. May 27, 1819 d. October 17, 1910, also famous as a Suffragist. (Cambridge was a major hotbed of the women's rights movement.) She spoke and read Greek, Italian, Hebrew and German. She is best known as the author of the words to the "Battle-Hymn of the Republic." You'll also find **Amy Lowell** b. February 9, 1874 d.



Poet James Russell Lowell was an ardent humanist and published widely on antislavery and the theme of the brotherhood of man. He was the first editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*. He succeeded Longfellow as the dean of American poets.

May 12, 1925, and **James Russell Lowell** b. February 22, 1819 d. August 12, 1891.

Francis Parkman has the honor of being America's first professional historian. Although earlier writers such as Washington Irving had done historical sketches, Parkman's books about the Westward expansion, *The Oregon Trail* and *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*, were hailed as masterpieces of what is today called "non-fiction." Parkman was Boston's Phantom of the Opera -- a man of ruined health who lived in perpetually darkened rooms, he could scarcely see and could not write more than five or six lines a day. Yet he had lived the wild outdoor life he wrote about, called his gun "Satan," and cursed all ministers as "vermin." An interesting character indeed!

Robert Gould Shaw b. October 10, 1837 d. July 18, 1863 has a well-deserved cenotaph in Mt. Auburn as well as a monument on Boston Common. A white Civil War Union Army Officer, he was named Colonel and commander of the all-black 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry. The Shaw Memorial depicts Colonel Shaw and his men passing in review past the Massachusetts State House on their way to Boston Harbor to depart for combat duty in South Carolina. The elaborate monument was created in bronze by sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens. It was unveiled on Memorial Day, 1897 during ceremonies featuring orations by William James and Booker T. Washington. It stands on a corner of the Boston Commons across from the Massachusetts State House, Boston. Images of this monument appear at the end of the movie "Glory" (1989) in which Colonel Shaw was portrayed by actor Matthew Broderick.

Our "Easter Egg hunt" is for the grave of **John Knowles Paine**, America's Beethoven. He worked and died in Cambridge, and though we didn't find his name in the Mt. Auburn web site, we have a strong feeling that this is his resting place. Following is a brief bio of this important American musical pioneer, written for a concert program by Murray Forbes Somerville:

Harvard's first professor of music was born in Portland, Maine, where his father led the town band, owned the music store, and published music. A local composer, a German immigrant, taught young John Knowles Paine the organ, and the boy soon excelled at the keyboard. It became clear that he would need greater educational opportunities to nurture his talent—but the Great Fire of Portland destroyed the family's business in 1856 and his father died shortly thereafter. Benefit concerts provided a solution, attracting favorable critical attention from as far away as Boston and raising sufficient funds for Paine to set sail for Berlin in the summer of 1859.

There he spent three years studying organ, composition, and voice. Paine worked hard at his studies; a contemporary recounts seeing him on a hot summer's after-

noon, drenched with sweat, determined to play a particular pedal passage 100 times perfectly before he could be persuaded to take a walk beside the river.

Returning to the United States in 1861, Paine decided to seek his fortune in Boston and was quickly appointed organist of the socially prominent West Church on Cambridge Street. Six months later, when Harvard College needed someone to take charge of the music for its new Appleton Chapel following the sudden death of the choirmaster, the 23-year-old Paine was asked to take over. Despite his lack of a college degree, he was named to the newly created post of University organist and choirmaster.

In 1863 the installation of Thomas Hill as Harvard's president gave Paine a welcome opportunity. Assembling a large chorus and orchestra, he wrote for them a setting of the traditional text *Domine, salvum fac praesidem nostrum* ("O Lord, make safe our president"). Music so grand had never been heard before at University ceremonies. Meanwhile his organ variations on "The Star-Spangled Banner," written at the height of the Civil War, were quickly published; he performed them often on the huge new concert organ at Boston Music Hall and began giving free lectures on musical history and form. He also worked on his first magnum opus, the great Mass in D for chorus, soloists, and orchestra; in 1866 he traveled to Berlin for its premiere in the presence of Prussian royalty.

Harvard's next president, Charles William Eliot, granted Paine an honorary A.M. in 1869 as one of his first official acts; that meant Paine could be appointed to the faculty. Five years later, he managed to have himself named the first academic professor of music at any American university. Correspondence between Paine and Eliot shows the wily composer hinting at blandishments from another university if he is not granted the promotion, and the flinty Eliot keeping him dangling until almost too late.

Although incorporating music into the Harvard curriculum proved a hard struggle, the program Paine finally established strongly influenced other colleges and universities. Most likely the theoretical course of study he instituted derived both from his conservatory training and from the need to establish his academic respectability and music's intellectual bona fides in a place where Harvard Corporation member Francis Parkman, the historian, allegedly liked to remark after reading the annual University budget, "Musica delenda est [music must be destroyed]!"

In his own work, it is interesting to watch the brash young composer—who was not above writing a tongue-in-cheek barber-shop quartet, "Radway's Ready Relief" ("from Paine!" he wrote below the title on a friend's copy)—transform himself into the creator of academic overtures and choral settings of Sophocles so he and his wife could rub shoulders with Boston's intellectual elite. His first symphony, the first written by an American, debuted in 1876 to a rapturous reception. Even more ecstatic was the reaction to his *Spring Symphony* four years later: after its premiere in Sanders Theatre, the starchy Boston critic John Sullivan Dwight was seen standing on a chair, "opening and closing his umbrella in an expression of unbridled enthusiasm!"

Paine devoted his last 15 years to composing a three-act opera, *Azara*. Acclaimed a masterpiece in concert performances, *Azara* was scheduled at the Metropolitan Opera in the 1905-06 season, the year of his retirement, but the company's Italian singers refused to learn a full-length opera in English and it was dropped, to his bitter disappointment. (His widow had the full score and parts published, but the opera has never been staged.)

There is a fascination in trying to determine how much the hidden biases and un-

witting agendas of Paine's career as composer and pedagogue became incorporated into American academic musical taste and assumptions early in the last century: the reverence for European masterpieces, the distrust of performance studies, the abhorrence of any music dependent on popular appeal—including the new jazz or the rousing marches of that other lower-middle-class self-made American musical icon, John Philip Sousa. But there can be no doubt that the lyrical impulse and sheer craftsmanship of Paine's music have ensured it a lasting place in the cultural heritage of the United States.

In the last two decades, a number of Paine's major works have been performed and recorded in the Boston area.



John Knowles Paine's burial site is not listed anywhere on the Internet. Maybe we'll find him today!