

Longfellow Day in Cambridge

This March 25th will mark the 100th anniversary of the death of the Cambridge poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. 145 years ago Longfellow first arrived in Cambridge to begin his post as Professor of Modern Languages at Harvard College. 16 years later he retired to concentrate on his poetry. A rich harvest of his poetical ability brought us "The Village Blacksmith", "The Children's Hour", "Evangeline", "The Song of Hiawatha", and many more.

From that time to the present, Longfellow has gained acclaim as one of the most popular literary figures to have emerged from Cambridge. His death in 1882 was a deeply felt loss not only in America but also in Europe. The London Globe reported that "...the death of Mr. Longfellow is a national loss to England, ...true appreciation was accorded him here at a time when America was anything but popular." (March 25, 1882)

In Cambridge the schools and a great many stores closed on the day of his burial. Each hour the bells would toll seventy-five times. Thousands of visitors came to his Brattle Street home to pay tribute to him.

The Longfellow House, a National Historic Site, has long been recognized as a landmark in the city of Cambridge. It receives in excess of 19,000 visitors each year. Among them are people from all walks of life and from every state in the country. Visitors from all over the globe have passed through this famous home--a fitting tribute to a man whose works have been translated into more than twenty languages, bringing him acclaim as an "International Poet".

We point to these facts merely to show how Longfellow continues to influence people even 100 years later. This is surely a significant achievement. In the 1800's Cambridge was known for its great figures in the worlds of literature and academia. Often referred to as the "New Athens", Newtowne has achieved a considerable reputation for excellence. It draws thousands of visitors yearly for this reason alone.

In memory of the upcoming anniversary, the Longfellow House and the National Park Service are coordinating a conference from April 1st to 3rd. Beginning with "Readings from Longfellow's Works" on April 1, at the Society of Friends Meeting House in Longfellow Park, the seminar will continue on the 2nd and 3rd with a series of lectures at the Episcopal Divinity School. Also scheduled is an exhibition of the Longfellow manuscript collection at Harvard's Pusey Library. On April 3, there will be an open house at Longfellow National Historic Site. All conference members and interested members of the public are invited to the open house and poetry reading.

The importance of Longfellow and Cambridge is well reflected in this commemorative conference. As a tribute to this man, we ask the Cambridge City Council to proclaim a "Longfellow Day" in recognition of a great Cantabridgian.



City of Cambridge

22.

IN CITY COUNCIL

February 22, 1982

COUNCILLOR WALTER SULLIVAN

- WHEREAS: March 25, 1982 will mark the 100th anniversary of the death of the world-renowned Cambridge poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who first came to Cambridge some one hundred and forty-five years ago to assume a position at Harvard College as Professor of Modern Languages; and
- WHEREAS: Cambridge is proud to have "The Longfellow House", a National Historic Site, located at 105 Brattle Street, which is toured by 19,000 persons each year; and
- WHEREAS: One hundred years after Longfellow's death his exceptional literary talent continues to influence people as they tour the house or read such works as "The Village Blacksmith", "The Children's Hour" or "Evangeline"; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED: That in recognition of such a great and famous Cantabrigian, this City Council go on record proclaiming the period of April 1-3, 1982 as "Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Week" in memory of this scholarly gentleman and urge all Cantabrigians to participate in the conference in memory of this anniversary being jointly sponsored by the National Park Service and the Longfellow House; and be it further
- RESOLVED: That the City Clerk be and hereby is requested to forward a suitably engrossed copy of this resolution to Mr. Frank Buda at the Longfellow House on behalf of the entire City Council.

In City Council February 22, 1982.
Adopted by the affirmative vote of 9 members.
Attest:- Paul E. Healy, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

C. SNG

Order # 22

5-66

C. W. Sullivan re: Proclamation of the period of April 1-3, 1982 as "Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Week" in honor of the 100th anniversary of Longfellow's death.

In City Council,

February 22, 1982

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