



President's Overview

by John Anderson



Holiday greetings from the Board and volunteers to all our members! I hope this newsletter finds you enjoying the season!

Since this is the 100th anniversary of the building at 10 Governors Avenue, our theme is "Changing Times." We often feel that the world is moving at an accelerating, breathtaking pace, but the people in the photograph on page 2 must have felt they were in a period of unprecedented change as well. Between 1910 and 1930, Medford's population more than doubled from 23,150 to 59,714. Over 80 years later, our population is actually lower, estimated at 56,173 in 2014. Pressure for social change was intense as well. In 1916, movements for both women's suffrage and temperance were in full swing, culminating in nationwide prohibition and women's right to vote in 1920. "The Great War" was raging in Europe. Although we were still officially neutral, pressure to enter the war rose dramatically when the RMS Lusitania was torpedoed by a German U-boat on May 7, 1915. Not accustomed to "foreign entanglements," we were horrified that among the 1,100 deaths were 124 Americans, including dozens of prominent citizens – corporation presidents, well-known performers, a Vanderbilt, and a 20 year-old niece of Andrew Carnegie.

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Grand entrance to the Marquette Building in Chicago, built by Medford's Brooks brothers.

Medford Brothers Peter Chardon III and Shepherd Brooks I: The Architectural Revolution in Chicago

by David Fedo

The history of Medford is rooted in the collective history of its men and women, some well-known and others not, who made their homes in a rough settlement and which, over 350 years, grew to become a thriving and prosperous city. Among the most famous are members of the Brooks family, whose property in what is now called West Medford, remained in the Brooks family from 1660, the year Thomas Brooks purchased 400 acres, well into the 20th century. Thomas Brooks himself never settled in the small hamlet (nor did Medford's founder, the English parliamentarian Matthew Cradock, 30 years earlier), but Thomas' son Caleb took up residence in 1679. Among the many worthy family luminaries that followed were John Brooks (1752-1823), who fought in the militia during the Revolutionary War and became Governor of Massachusetts from 1816 to 1823 (he was famous enough to have Gilbert Stuart paint his portrait), and Charles Brooks (1795-1872),

a Unitarian minister and author of *A History of the Town of Medford* (1855).

Then more recently there were Peter Chardon Brooks III (1831-1920) and his younger brother Shepherd Brooks I (1837-1922), both of whom built magnificent summer estates on the Brooks land in West Medford (they had residences in Boston as well). The Medford Brooks' estates—Peter Chardon Brooks' 1859 edifice called the Point of Rocks and Shepherd Brooks' 1880 home called the Manor at Acorn Hill—were called dazzling 19th-century showplaces, positioned amid carefully cultivated landscapes with vistas that overlooked man-made ponds. Only Shepherd Brooks' dwelling still stands on a hill not far from the Oak Grove Cemetery. It is owned by the City of Medford, with a volunteer organization called the Medford Brooks Estate Land Trust (MBELT) charged with the

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President's Overview *continued*

In the spirit of changing times, MHSM proudly supported another run of *Letters to Medford: A Play About the Past, According to the Future*, an original play by Kyna Hamill, site-specific to our building. It is complete with the ghosts of Reverend Charles Brooks, Lydia Maria Child, and Lucy Osgood who meet 2016 Medford High School students expressing their hopes and anxieties about the future.

In this issue, we have an update on the *Our Medford* school book project as well as a number of upcoming activities. Please consider responding to our upcoming annual appeal so that we can keep bringing you programs and maintain Medford's Museum!

Looking Forward with "Historic Tree"

Thanks to Aggie Tuden, Tree Warden, and the City of Medford, there's a new tree on the Governors Avenue median strip across from our building. Here's what it looks like today:



According to Aggie, "Dawn Redwood is a deciduous evergreen. It has needles, but sheds them in winter. It has a gorgeous, upright-pyramidal shape, distinctive, coppery fall color, and is a very fast grower. One of the planet's oldest species, it's been around for something like 100 million years, and for about 15 million years, was native to North

America. Plus, we have very few in Medford, none public, to my knowledge."

Using Wikipedia, I discovered that this tree dates to the Paleocene era when dinosaurs still roamed the earth, but mammals were proliferating, and the world was much warmer. Dawn Redwood fossils have been found in Canada's northern islands at 80 degrees north latitude, only about 700 miles from the North Pole. The tree was thought to be extinct until it was rediscovered in China in 1941. It is now used around the world, including as a street tree in London and at "Strawberry Fields" in New York City.

The photo to the right is what we, or at least our children, can expect:



View of the groundbreaking ceremony for our headquarters at 10 Governors Avenue.

Celebrating Completion of 10 Governors Avenue Foundation, 1916

This poem was written for the dedication of the building. Medford was in a period of rapid change in 1916. It's easy to sympathize with the feelings expressed, even if the style seems old fashioned.

*Beside the banks of Mystic stream,
The scene of Winthrop's toil and dream;
And Cradock's pride in power of State,
And Royall's house of beauty great;
A home of modern day we raise
With grateful thought of earlier days.*

*Could Winthrop stand upon this spot
Well might he say "I know it not,"
And Royall from the stately home,
Whose acres broad he loved to roam,
Would gaze with a bewildered look,
Back to the mansion he forsook.*

*And are we in Old Medford still,
Woods, streams and pastures, vale and hill
All changed in form by modern hand?
Our forbears could not know this land.
We miss the forms by Nature lent,
We bow to change by centuries sent.*

*Changed though the land, by Nature given,
Old Medford's spirit works its leaven,
And memory clings to days of old,
With reverent thought their good we hold.
Though changed be wood, and field, and hill,
To us it is Old Medford still.*

*How best to show the love we bear
And others lead, our work to share,
To safely guard through fleeting time,
The treasures that deserve a shrine,
This building to such work we give,
Historic Medford long shall live.*

property's oversight. As many Medford citizens know, leaders of M-BELT have proposed to the city a major development plan for the property which they say will pay back the cost of the plan in 20 years. But the City has not approved the plan, and the Acorn Hill house, and the surrounding landscape and roadway, remain in danger of further deterioration.

But this report is not about the Point of Rocks and the Manor at Acorn Hill in Medford, jewels though they may have been. It's about the extraordinary impact that Peter Chardon and Shepherd Brooks had on a vastly different urban landscape, the city of Chicago, hugging the shores of Lake Michigan, and still reeling after the disastrous 1871 fire. The Brooks brothers had a huge impact on the re-building of Chicago, especially as they helped develop a series of very large buildings which prompted change in the footprint of what crooner Frank Sinatra would call that "toddling town."

Some months ago my wife Susan and I had the good fortune to visit Chicago, hosted by my brother Stephen Fedo, a lawyer, and his wife Ann Speltz Fedo, a teacher and artist. Both are longtime residents. One major goal of the trip was to tour the buildings which Peter Chardon and Shepherd Brooks had financed and developed, without much fanfare, many years ago. Happily, Ann was conveniently serving as an official docent for the Chicago Architecture Foundation, so we had a built-in guide for inspecting three of the Brooks' buildings. They were (and are) The Rookery (built in 1888), the Monadnock (1891), and the Marquette (1894). These iconic buildings still stand proudly in a revitalized Chicago although there has been some updating of all three. A fourth Brooks building, the Montauk, built in 1883, was demolished in 1902 (see below). We did not get to see a fifth Brooks brothers steel-framed skyscraper, again designed in accordance with the Chicago School architectural style, which was built in 1910 and located on West Jackson Boulevard. This structure was named the Brooks building, after the brothers.

As detailed in the M-BELT's "Brooks Estate Master Plan," the Brooks brothers, observing that the Chicago fire had destroyed some four square miles of the city, were afforded significant investment opportunities. "And the two brothers from Medford moved quickly to help launch a new age for skyscrapers in a reborn Chicago," says Ann Speltz Fedo.

Joyce Goldenstern, in her article "Monadnock on the Prairie," provides further insight into the workings of the Brooks brothers, and especially Peter Chardon:

Although Peter told the historian of his Harvard class "that he had never worked, that he had no profession," he, with Shepherd "had indeed, worked." They "lived the quotidian life of New England farmers". . . . In addition, both men, from afar, invested in the development of the

burgeoning frontier city of Chicago. They bought land, planned and paid for office buildings, and collected rent. Peter, especially, attended to details. Nothing was too minute for his scrutiny: paint color, faucets, urinals, plumbing, and elevators invited his long distance comments and commands. He is said to have in his study a grid-map of downtown Chicago, dotted with colored pins on which he studied the patterns of speculative office space. Like a chess master, he anticipated his competitors' moves and plotted his own. He knew each block, each corner lot and its potential by heart. Although he seldom visited Chicago [history tells us he only visited once, and apparently Shepherd never saw Chicago], according to realtor and historian Niles Berger, he cannot be considered an "indifferent outsider nor an absentee landlord, for he contributed significantly to the architecture of the City."

The brothers were also fortunate in engaging an onsite real estate agent and amateur historian, Owen Aldis, to provide on-the-ground oversight and expert advice back to Medford and Boston. He was an invaluable resource.

The Montauk Building: Monroe Street. The Montauk Building, often referred to as the Montauk Block, was a project that brought together the brothers Peter Chardon and Shepherd Brooks as developers, and John Wellborn Root and Daniel H. Burnham as the architects. It was an 1883 collaboration that would account for some of the city's most famous commercial buildings over the next two decades.

The Montauk consisted of 10 stories, two passenger elevators, and was especially noteworthy as being the first high steel building in Chicago. Above all, as Thomas Leslie writes in *Chicago Skyscrapers 1871-1934*, the developers and architects sought to emphasize "functional performance." According to Erik Larson, in his book *The Devil in the White City*, the Montauk was the first building to be called a "skyscraper." The cost: \$325,000. Sadly, the building was taken down in 1902 and was replaced by a series of buildings. The site currently accommodates the Chase Tower.



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The Rookery Building: Corner of LaSalle and Adams Streets. This 12-story building, financed and developed by the Brooks brothers, and a product once again of the prolific designers and architects Burnham and Root, “is considered the oldest standing high-rise in Chicago.” It is also often referred to as one of the Burnham and Root masterpieces (in their 18-year partnership, they designed over 250 buildings), and in 1972 it was designated as an official Chicago landmark. The building has been described as being close to a perfect cube and is named after the pigeons which had formerly roosted in the buildings it replaced. Ornamentation in the form of sculptured concrete rookeries is attached to some exterior walls.

For the architects, the Rookery emphatically demonstrated the transition from the traditional to newer building techniques. The Rookery’s “grillage” foundation—consisting of exterior load-bearing walls and an interior steel frame, along with “a solid platform atop Chicago’s notoriously swampy soil”—was mostly engineered by Root. The design meant that the normal heavy foundation of stones would no longer be necessary to support the building’s immense weight. In addition, the Rookery’s overall design led to other

Pigeon sculptures on the entryway of Rookery Building



advances, too, including the “fireproof city tile, plate glass, improved mechanical systems, and that remarkable innovation, the hydraulic passenger elevator.”

Leaving aside the technical triumph, the Rookery itself has great aesthetic appeal, with its design reflecting Roman revival and Queen Anne’s architectural styles. Its light-infused central court has been declared by many, including Ann Speltz Fedo, to be “inspiring.” We agreed on the sunny day we visited. It is an appealing place to be. The rays coming through the skylight bathes those in the courtyard and is also diffused to the interior offices. The handsome façade consists of a thoughtful balance between red marble, terra cotta, and brick. In all, the interior gives one a sense of spaciousness. When the Rookery opened in 1888, it provided 600 office spaces accommodating 4,000 workers. At a cost of \$1,500,000, it is a noble achievement.

Today the Rookery stands gallantly in the busy Chicago Loop, winning accolades from those using the building for business as well as by architectural critics. It has even been noticed by artists. The writer Frank Norris set some of his novel (1903) in the building. At least two movies—*The Untouchables* (1987) and *Home Alone* (2000)—have used the edifice as a setting for some scenes.

The Monadnock Building: Corner of Dearborn and Jackson Streets.

This magnificent 16-story building, completed in 1891 and 1893, was Ann’s next stop. The north half of the edifice, completed in 1891, is again the work of architects Burnham and Root, and made possible by the vision (and money) of Peter Chardon and Shepherd Brooks (this part of the building—the north half—is the subject of this article). The south half of the building, an addition completed in 1893, was designed by William Holabird and Martin Roche.

Why *Monadnock*? Peter Brooks once wrote to Owen Aldis that he liked “Indian names,” and the name “Monadnock,” familiar to New Englanders for the majestic mountain in southern New Hampshire, is an Abenaki Native American name meaning “mountain that stands alone.” Goldenstern, with a nod toward the Brooks’ roots, writes that the brothers “brought their heritage westward to Illinois. Today the Monadnock is part of Chicago’s historical lore.” The Monadnock’s height “rises from the flat earth with strength and stability and without adornment.”

Critics are mostly in agreement that one key to the Monadnock rests in Peter Chardon’s wish for “simplicity” in its design. Writing again to Aldis he says that he “would request an avoidance of ornamentation,” preferring instead “the effect of solidity and strength.” He continued: “My notion is to have no projecting surfaces or indentations.” A written guide available in the building for visitors elaborates:

Once he [Root] accepted that the building was to be without ornament, he also realized that he would have to rely on the building’s form alone for design strength. From the beginning he had considered an Egyptian theme, using

a stylized lotus as his decorative motif. When ornamentation was eliminated, Root still looked to Egyptian architecture as the source for a monumental shaft configuration. As he worked, Root examined brick and granite as sheathing materials and the possibilities of introducing subtle color variations. He had for some time been interested in the value of color, and he thought this building was the perfect moment for experiment. Furthermore, the idea seemed consistent with the Egyptian style he was pursuing and would lend vitality to a severely simplified elevation. The initial schemes, although considerably different from the final study, did prefigure the ultimate design.

Many observers agree that the Monadnock's north half is in keeping with the Chicago School and "has no equal in the annals of the high office building." As we could see during our visit, the building moves upward from the granite blocks on the ground floor, and "the structure is strengthened yet relieved by the inward curve of the wall at the second story, the outward flare of the parapet, the gentle chambering of the building's corners, and the rhythm of uniform oriel windows which seem to grow from the wall surface." The brickwork throughout is superb, as Louis Sullivan, the 19th-century "Father of Skyscrapers," put it: it is "an amazing cliff of a brickwork, rising sheer and stark, with a subtlety of line and surface."

The Marquette Building: Corner of Adams and Dearborn. The Marquette Building, erected in 1894, is named after Father Jacques Marquette, whose daring exploration of the region with Louis Jolliet in 1674-1675 led Brooks agent Owen Aldis to recommend that the structure be named after the explorer. The brothers agreed. As a brochure handout in the Marquette building states, "Marquette's travels through the New World and his exploration of unknown territories are symbolic of the courage and bold spirit of our earliest pioneers. In much the same way, the Marquette Building's innovative style—a departure from conventional thinking—celebrates that pioneering spirit." Peter Chardon and Shepherd Brooks collaborated this time with the architects Holabird and Roche in creating a landmark building that, at 16 stories, "is a work of art that honors Chicago's history and recalls the city's architectural heritage."

The building stands in conformity with the Chicago School of architecture in its dramatic steel frame exterior. This frame was then covered in terra cotta, making the building fireproof. Brick masonry and windows completed the outside. As the written brochure explains, the facade was divided into three parts, emphasizing the vertical. "The lower section is the weighty base. The middle section is the shaft with long vertical lines drawing the eye to the capital, the top section."

Susan and I were struck by the extraordinary artwork incorporated into the Marquette Building, ornamentation that seemed at first to go against the



The Monadnock Building

Brooks brothers' earlier reluctance to add non-essential art or details to the buildings they financed. But this was a building celebrating Chicago-area history; apparently Peter Chardon and Shepherd, perhaps persuaded by Owen Aldis and the architects, had a change of heart. Four bronze panels over the exterior doors show Father Marquette and Louis Jolliet launching their canoes, encountering Native Americans, arriving at the Chicago River, and finally depicting the burial of Marquette's body. Busts are found on various floors of the building, and an amazing mosaic, designed by the Tiffany Company, invites appreciative viewing.

Fortunately, after so many years, the Marquette Building has been rescued through a number of renovations, most recently by the McArthur Foundation. It remains as a prominent representative of an era of building that is worthy of preservation.

For visitors, a variety of walking and boat tours of the city's splendid architectural legacy can be arranged through the Chicago Architecture Foundation (info@architecture.org).

Note: Sources for the above article include commentary from Ann Speltz Fedo; Medford Brooks Estate (MBEL); Charles Brooks, *A History of the Town of Medford*; Chicago Architecture Foundation; Joyce Goldenstern, "Monadnock on the Prairie"; *Guide to Chicago* (3rd edition); Thomas Leslie, *Chicago Skyscrapers 1871-1934*; "Brooks Estate Master Plan" (online); written guide to the Marquette Building; various online references to Peter Chardon Brooks III and Shepherd Brooks I; Wendy Bright, "The Rise and Fall and Rise Again of Chicago's Beloved Marquette Building"; and Joanna Merwood-Salisbury, "The Monadnock."

The Marquette Building





Tufts volunteers cleaned, moved furniture, refurbished display cases, and cleaned up around the exterior.

Thank You to our Friends in the Medford Community

We're always grateful for support from the community. For example:

- The Tufts FOCUS program sent a team of incoming first-year students to perform community service at MHSM, as they have done for the last few years. This year they cleaned, moved furniture, refurbished the interiors of display cases, and cleaned up accumulated debris along the sides and back of the building. They are great kids and fun to work with.
- Tufts volunteer Ali Rosenberg, of the Tufts Museum Studies program, gave the ship building case a make-over. We are primarily a volunteer museum, so it's great to have help from someone with professional training.
- The Medford DPW crew answered a call on short notice to help us reposition a heavy display case. Once again, professionals know how to get the job done!

Thank you all!

MHSM volunteers Brianna Randolph and Kyna Hamill at the Mystic River Celebration, September 24, 2016



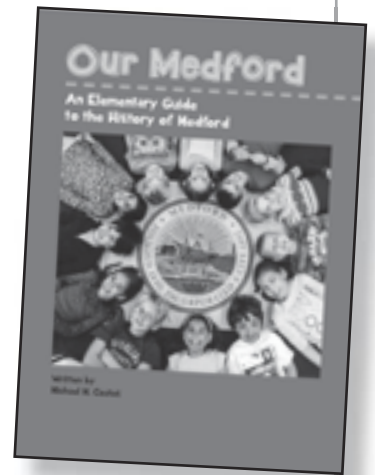
Brooks Estate Opportunity

We recently received a letter from Tom Lincoln, MHSM member and President of M-BELT, the organization that manages the Brooks Estate for the City. He has asked for us to appoint a representative to serve as liaison between MHSM and M-BELT.

MHSM has the opportunity to appoint a member to the governing board of M-BELT. This is an exciting time to be involved as they continue their efforts to enhance the value to the community of the Manor House, carriage house, and the extensive grounds. Please let me know if you are interested: John Anderson, jwa02155@yahoo.com.

"Our Medford" Now in Third Grade Classrooms

As of November, copies of *Our Medford, An Elementary Guide to the History of Medford* have been distributed to all third graders in the Medford public schools. It was introduced as a pilot project at the Brooks School in the spring. Based on its initial success, *Our Medford* has been embraced by the School Department and the School Committee. It is now used as a local history text across all third grades in the City. You can find it in school libraries and the Public Library. We're really proud of the part we played in this project.



Our Medford was written by Brooks School teacher and Medford native Michael Coates. It was produced by the Medford Historical Society & Museum with support from a Medford Arts Council grant, and printing costs for classroom use were generously provided by Century Bank.

You can view the full book via a link on our website's home page. It is also available for sale as a paper copy for \$20 at MHSM. All proceeds support MHSM's educational outreach.

Award presentation at City Hall - Medford School Committee with Superintendent Belson, Mike Coates (4th from left with his wife), Barry Sloane and Mayor Burke front and center with award, and Allison Andrews to their right.



Events Calendar

January 8, 2017 – February 26, 2017



**MHS Museum Collection Exhibit
Stitching and Learning:
Samplers from the MHSM Collection**
Sundays, 12 Noon to 4:00 PM at MHSM

Opening Reception: Sunday, January 8, 2017, 2:30 to 4:00 PM at 10 Governors Avenue

Guest Speaker: Lynn Bassett, from *the American Sampler*, on early American samplers January 22, 2017, 2:00 PM at the Medford Public Library, 111 High Street

Stitching Classes with Beth Hayes

Learn the basics and begin your own sampler creation in these small group classes. Tentative dates: Sunday afternoon, February 19, and Thursday evening, February 23, at MHSM. Watch for additional information.

Saturday, March 25, 2017



TRIVIA Night at the Library Fundraiser
Jointly sponsored by MHSM with
the Medford Public Library
7:00 PM to 9:00 PM
Medford Public Library, 111 High Street

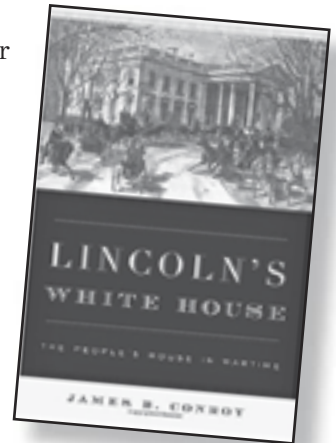
Tickets \$20.00 per person, including snacks and a great time. Bring your friends and join in the game. There will be soft drinks and a cash bar with beer & wine at the circulation desk. Age 21 and older. Tickets on sale at the Library Circulation Desk any day and at MHSM on Sundays 12 noon to 4:00 PM.

If you are willing to volunteer to help us with this event, please contact Barbara Kerr at BKerr@min.lib.org or Susan Fedo at SusanRFedo@gmail.com.

Thursday, April 6, 2017

**Author/Lecture
James B. Conroy, author
of *Lincoln's White House*
7:00 PM at MHSM**

Local, noted Civil War author James Conroy has written the definitive book to date on life in the Lincoln White House. Using material from those who lived there and visited, from servants to statesmen, at a time of high stakes and high anxiety, Conroy provides an intriguing and dramatic picture of the time and place of Abraham Lincoln. A Lincoln scholar calls the book “gripping, atmospheric, and at times spellbinding.” Join us for this fascinating view of the White House during the Civil War. See more at www.jamesbconroy.com | Lincoln's White House.



Friday, May 19, 2017

MHSM Annual Meeting

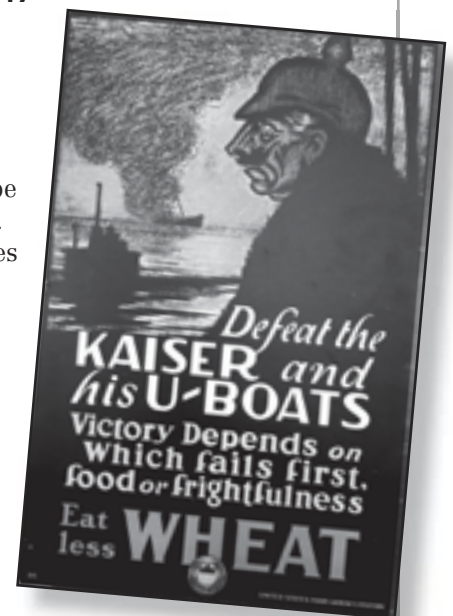
We'll be marking the 100th Anniversary of the building and “Changing Times.” Save the date, and watch for details on the celebration!

June, July, August 2017

**Special Exhibit:
World War 1: Posters
and Collection Pieces**

Exhibit is jointly sponsored with The Medford Public Library and will be at 10 Governors Avenue. There will be two lectures at the Library.

For updates and additional information, see us on Facebook at Medford Historical Society, the MHSM web page www.medford-historical.org, and in the Club section of the *Medford Transcript*.





This photo is from our archives. Let me give you a couple of clues. The clothing can help date the photo, and the backdrop may suggest what they're doing together. If you'd like to participate in figuring it out, the picture will be on our Facebook page, so please feel free to comment.

**Who are these Guys?
What Are They Up To?**

Your Medford Historical Society Newsletter

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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