

# FRIENDS OF STONEHURST

Robert Treat Paine Historical Trust, 100 Robert Treat Paine Drive, Waltham, Mass.

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In the aftermath of the Civil War, Paine's generation set lasting standards for social reform and responsibility. An intense idealist, Robert Treat Paine devoted his life to assisting the working poor of Boston and invited them to visit his country home in Waltham each June. Photo, Stonehurst Archives.

## “Touched with Fire”: The Civil War Generation

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*Stonehurst will provide a fitting backdrop for interviews with historians in a WGBH documentary on Civil War Reconstruction, which will air in 2004. The visit from PBS prompted Trust staff and president to take a fresh look at the property in the context of Reconstruction.*

Among the generation that lived through the national conflict of the Civil War were many who felt that great things were expected of them. Perhaps

to honor the memory of brothers, cousins and friends who had died giving their lives for the Union, perhaps inspired by Lincoln's notion of “dedication”, these visionaries, rather than lapsing into complacency, enlarged the idea of Reconstruction into the ideal of truly forming a more perfect Union.

“Touched with fire” in Oliver Wendell Holmes' phrase, this generation that had just come of age saw the urban expansion that resulted from post-war industrialization and immigration as a chance to

## *“Touched with Fire” continued...*

create a great and diversified society centered on free labor and self-government. As a means of addressing societal inequities, through collective and individual will, this generation set lasting standards for civic responsibility and reform with the unprecedented founding of public schools, libraries, parks, churches, museums and organized charities. The most idealistic among them were sensitive to the problems of those who did not reap the benefits of an industrialized society: the working poor, immigrants, people of color, and women.

As early as 1870, Boston real estate lawyer and investor Robert Treat Paine, Jr.—whose three brothers had all fought for the Union, the youngest of them giving his life at Gettysburg—decided to do something about the tenement problem in Boston and founded the Boston Cooperative Building Company to provide affordable housing. This was the first of numerous ventures and non-profit organizations that Paine and his wife Lydia Lyman Paine founded, and funded, over the next twenty years. Paine retired from business in his thirties to become a leading social activist and housing reformer. One of his four church projects, Trinity Church in Boston welcomed and assisted people from all walks of life, who were drawn by the inclusive-minded and eloquent preacher Phillips Brooks, Paine’s closest friend.

In 1883 Paine and his wife commissioned Henry Hobson Richardson, architect of Trinity Church, and landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, the best designers of their era, to design a great addition to their summer house in Waltham, Mass.

Stonehurst, as the house subsequently was named, embodied the ideals that the Paine family held dear and to which they believed every American had a right: regular access to an abundance of clean air and a healthy, restorative environment, both of which could be a driving force in correcting societal inequities, indeed provide a spiritually uplifting experience. The Paine family shared their ideal country home with the working people of Boston one Saturday afternoon each June.

Olmsted’s public parks provided green space for families living in affordable homes built by Paine’s Workingman’s Building and Loan Associations. Olmsted wrote: “As a means to education and grace, of sweetness and light, [the urban park] is worth more to those who can resort to it than literature or the fine arts in any or all forms.”

The Paines’ private estate, located in a remote, woodland setting, offers a wealth of clean air, sunlight and magnificent views, with wide porches and terraces that encourage healthful living and an appreciation of the natural beauty of this earth. The natural and man-made worlds were integrated intimately and seamlessly by its designers. In its way, the estate embodies the ideals of Olmsted’s parks movement, Paine’s affordable housing innovations, and Richardson’s reverence for the natural environment and traditional craftsmanship.

The standards of opportunity, education and quality of life that we may take for granted did not just happen; they had to be created, and preserved. So many manifestations of this idealism had their origin in the Reconstruction Years, the legacy of the Civil War generation, who rededicated themselves to creating a more perfect Union, centered on the democratic belief that a portion of the nation’s bounty be accessible to all.

Like the many educational, cultural and charitable institutions of this extraordinary period in American history that remain today, Stonehurst embodies that bounteous spirit. Stonehurst appropriately became a public park in 1974, when a descendant donated the house and grounds to the City of Waltham.

### **Gala Postponed**

Due to the uncertain economy and war, the *Stonehurst: Celebrating an American Treasure Gala* has been postponed to a more appropriate future time. Thank you for your support of the Trust during these difficult times.



## Students Investigate Technologies & Services at Stonehurst

When Robert Treat Paine hired H.H. Richardson to expand his country home in Waltham, the architect was asked to create more spacious living quarters for “ten servants, his wife and himself.” Richardson “laughed about the instructions...but thought that a practical way of putting it.” \* In answer to Paine’s request, Richardson turned over most of the original 1866 summer house to service functions. Unencumbered by these utilitarian requirements, he was free to design the open living spaces that distinguish Stonehurst from contemporary homes.

While the design problem Paine presented to Richardson certainly reflects his great wealth, it also demonstrates his concern for the living conditions of his servants. Given Paine’s role as an early housing reformer for the working class, the servants’ quarters in his own home deserve a close look.

Under the direction of Philip Marshall, Associate Professor of Historic Preservation at Roger Williams University, a group of students are in the process of investigating and documenting the service areas and innovative technologies of Stonehurst. Students are working with a network of conservators to gain a



This servant was captured performing daily routines in the Paines’ Boston home in 1898. His snapshot was carefully placed in an album once owned by their son George. Robert Treat Paine Historical Trust Purchase, 2002.

better understanding of historic American construction technology and contemporary conservation practices.

Marshall and his students are contributing to the larger effort to develop a Historic Interiors Conservation Plan for Stonehurst. The Robert Treat Paine Historical Trust is grateful to the Getty Grant Program and The Felicia Fund, Inc. for funding this project.

Visit the project website at [philipmarshall.net/stonehurst](http://philipmarshall.net/stonehurst). (user name: stone, password: ann)

\* John Jacob Glessner. “For contemplated paper on Richardson, House Building, Etc. 1890-1914” (Chicago: Glessner House Museum, unpublished manuscript)

### Become a Friend of Stonehurst

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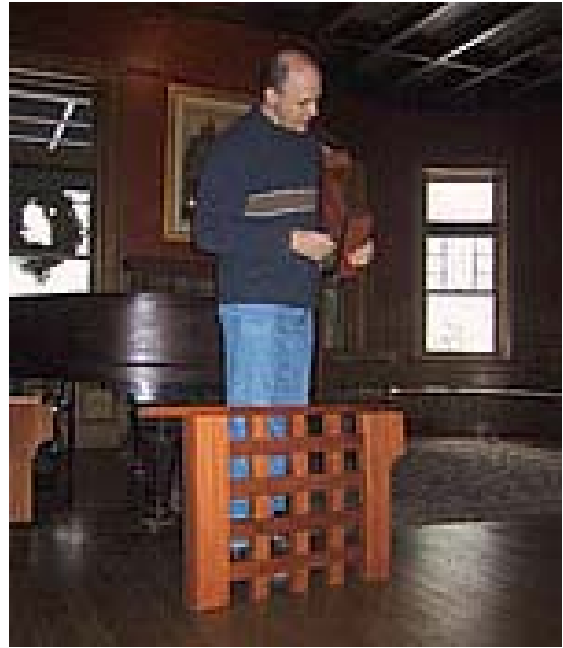
# Long-Awaited Exterior Preservation Project Begins

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The general contract for the Exterior Preservation Project has been awarded to Kronenberger and Sons Restoration, Inc., of Middletown, Connecticut ([kronenbergersons.com](http://kronenbergersons.com)). These restoration contractors have worked on several National Historic Landmarks, including the Mark Twain House in Hartford and Lyndhurst in Tarrytown, New York.

Claude Emanuel Menders Architects, Inc. ([mendersarchitects.com](http://mendersarchitects.com)) is administering the project that will provide everything from a new drainage system and extensive wood repairs to a copper mansard roof.

Funding is provided by the federal Save America's Treasures program, the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund, the City of Waltham and the Robert Treat Paine Historical Trust.



## Funding Opportunity

During a Roger Williams University class site visit, Patrick Guthrie of Claude Emanuel Menders Architects, Inc. displayed a mock up of a tower balustrade crafted by Andy Ladygo. Further funding is needed to reproduce these important design features.

## Friends of Stonehurst

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