

ROYALL HOUSE & SLAVE QUARTERS

Summer 2016

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2016 Tours

Saturdays and Sundays
May 22nd - October 30
1, 2, and 3 p.m.

Admission

FREE for members
Adults \$7
Seniors and Students \$5
Children \$4
Families \$16

Royall House and Slave Quarters

15 George Street
Medford, Massachusetts
RoyallHouse.org



“Giving Voice” with Playwright Kirsten Greenidge

This year’s annual Giving Voice benefit event, held on June 5th, featured Obie Award-winning playwright Kirsten Greenidge. Although rain prevented the garden party we’d intended, it graciously held off till all were safely seated indoors, and we appreciated our audience’s patience with Plan B!

Ms. Greenidge spoke about the art of playwriting and the particular challenges and responsibility of crafting plays based in history. She read from two of her current works-in-progress: *To the Quick*, which moves between a present-day instance of prejudice and the story of Tituba and the Salem witch trials of 1692, and *Little Row Boat*, about teen-aged Sally Hemings in Paris with Thomas Jefferson.



She responded thoughtfully to audience questions about how she recommends learning to write authentic dialogue – “Carry a notebook on the T and write down everything people say!” – and how the play development process works, once actors are involved – “I rewrite everything!”

Ms. Greenidge also spoke of her plan to write a play about a woman who was enslaved on our site in the eighteenth century. “When the Oregon Shakespeare Festival approached me about the American Revolutions commission, I knew what I wanted to write about. Most importantly, I knew WHO I wanted to write about. My sisters and I had visited the Royall House and Slave Quarters just after I’d had my daughter. We took the tour with her in a baby carrier. And that was when I first learned about Belinda Sutton and her persistent petitioning to receive a pension from her former

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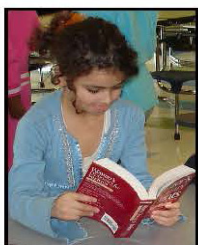
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The Rotary Club of Medford raises funds to help provide goods and services to benefit humankind. We grant gifts to Medford organizations and to humanitarian efforts beyond the city. Some of the programs we support include, but are not limited to:



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ROYALL HOUSE & SLAVE QUARTERS

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owners, the Royalls. I knew I wanted to write a play about that and about slavery in the North. That there is a plantation still standing here is remarkable and needs to be remembered.”

Ms. Greenidge’s interest in Belinda Sutton as a protagonist fits solidly within the body of work the playwright has developed over recent years. *Milk Like Sugar*, about the decisions teen girls of color make based on the support structures available to them, recently completed a Boston run, simultaneous with a premiere of *Baltimore*, about a racially charged incident on a college campus. Her 2012 play *The Luck of the Irish*, which centers on a dispute between an African American family and the white couple who “ghost bought” a house on their behalf in the era of redlining, is based on the purchase of an Arlington home by Ms. Greenidge’s grandparents.

Her work shines a strong light on the intersection of race and class in America, and she enjoys the challenge of placing underrepresented voices on stage. “I like to write about the have nots,” she says, “the outsiders.” the purchase of an Arlington home by Ms. Greenidge’s grandparents. Her work shines a strong light on the intersection of race and class in America, and she enjoys the challenge of placing underrepresented voices on stage. “I like to write about the have nots,” she says, “the outsiders.”

Special thanks to the guests, donors, business sponsors, and volunteers who made this event possible.

Mark your calendars for these upcoming programs, and please visit our website for more details:

The Slave Cabin Project with Ifé Franklin

Saturday, November 5, 2016

Workshops at 10am and 2pm

Supported in part by the Medford Arts Council;
co-sponsored by Historic New England

The Slave’s Cause: A History of Abolition

Professor Manisha Sinha,
University of Connecticut

Wednesday, November 16, 2016 at 7:30pm

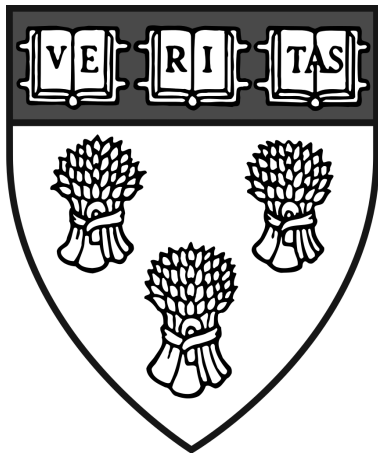
A Revolution in Color: The World of John Singleton Copley

Professor Jane Kamensky, Harvard University

Wednesday, January 18, 2017



Harvard Law School Retires Royall Shield



On March 14, 2016, Harvard University announced its decision to retire the Harvard Law School shield, which was derived from the family crest of Isaac Royall Sr. His son's 1781 bequest to Harvard College was used to create the first endowed professorship of law in 1815.

While the RH&SQ has long been aware of this association, Harvard Law School (HLS) indicated that it became aware of this connection in about 2000, when Professor Daniel Coquillette began circulating the results of his research into the link between Royall and HLS. Isaac Royall Sr. made the family fortune from his Antiguan sugar plantations and the Caribbean slave trade. When the family relocated to Medford, Massachusetts, in 1737, the Royall family both retained its Antiguan holdings and became the largest slave-owner in Massachusetts. Isaac Royall Jr. inherited the family's wealth, including its slaves, upon his father's death in 1739. When Royall Jr. died in 1781, he left land to Harvard College that was sold to endow the Royall Chair of Law, the first chair of law and the precursor of what would become HLS. Coquillette expanded his research into HLS's connection to the Royall family in his recently-published *On the Battlefield of Merit: Harvard Law School, the First Century*, the subject of a book talk at the RH&SQ on April 6, 2016.

The most visible connection between the Royall family and HLS was the law school shield, designed by Pierre de Chaignon la Rose in 1936 for Harvard

University's tercentenary celebration, and used as an official symbol for the law school ever since (though particularly in recent decades, as part of a "branding" effort). La Rose based the HLS shield on the three sheaves of wheat depicted on the Royall family's crest.

Starting in the fall of 2015, a group of HLS students organized under the name Royall Must Fall began to protest use of the shield, claiming that it was an offensive and inappropriate symbol for HLS. In November 2015, Dean Martha Minow appointed a committee to study the shield and recommend to the University's governing board whether to retain it. The Committee, chaired by Professor Bruce Mann, included faculty, alumni, and students. During its deliberations, the Committee heard from approximately one thousand members of the larger HLS community.

On March 3, the Committee announced that it was unanimous in "recognizing that modern institutions must acknowledge their past associations with slavery ... to understand the pervasiveness of the legacy of slavery and its continuing impact on the world in which we live." But the Committee was divided on whether to retire the shield. The majority recommended retiring the shield, concluding that "there are better ways to engage the past and its legacy ... than by retaining a symbol that so many members of the community reject." Professor Annette Gordon-Reed, joined by student Annie Rittgers, favored retaining the shield, arguing that "tying it to a historically sound interpretive narrative about it, would be the most honest and forthright way" to acknowledge the past.

The governing board of Harvard University announced on March 14, 2016 that it would retire the shield and give HLS the opportunity to propose a new one – one conducive to unifying rather than dividing the law school community. The board stated that its decision was based on the understanding that HLS will not seek to erase its past association with slavery but will bring it to light and learn from it.

Volunteer Spotlight: Rebecca Ennis



Rebecca Ennis approached the Royall House and Slave Quarters about volunteering at the end of her first semester as a Tufts University undergraduate. Because our tour season barely intersects with the academic year, we identified a couple of projects that she could work on independently. Her first task was to transcribe seven petitions subsequent to Belinda Sutton's successful 1783 request to the state legislature for a pension from Isaac Royall Jr.'s estate, as these documents had recently been digitized. Rebecca faced the long S's and puzzling abbreviations of eighteenth-century script with determination, and her work gave added depth to our understanding of this strong African woman.

She has since nearly completed a more challenging task: writing brief biographies of more than 60 other individuals enslaved on our site, often with very limited documentary evidence. Rebecca has undertaken this project with a historian's rigor—recognizing that her descriptions must stay true to the facts, however scant—and a humanist's compassion—trying to bring these individuals to life, despite relying on the brief notations of those who held them in bondage.

Rebecca has a passion for history and a strong sense of social justice. We look forward to her involvement with our museum during her next two years at Tufts.

Board of Directors News



Collins Warren (left) and Mary Kathryn Menck, Belinda Sutton Board Members, past and present.

The Royall House and Slave Quarters is pleased to welcome Mary Kathryn Menck, this year's Belinda Sutton Emerging Professional Board Member. Ms. Menck hails from the state of Tennessee, where she has worked as an intern at the Sam Davis Home in Smyrna, the Tennessee State Library and Archives, the Nashville Public Library, and the Hermitage. Mary Kathryn received her Bachelor of Arts degree in History, Medieval Studies, and Anthropology from Brandeis University in 2015. She is a second-year student in the Museum Studies and History graduate program at Tufts University, where she also works as a research assistant for Professor Kendra Field. Ms. Menck's interest in the interpretation of slavery at histor-

ic sites is rooted in her previous experience at small house museums in the South and has been furthered by volunteering at the Royall House and Slave Quarters over the past academic year and work with Professor Field related to the Tufts Center for the Study of Race and Democracy. As someone who prefers to take a hands-on approach to learning, Mary Kathryn believes that "working with the board would provide me with an invaluable opportunity to see firsthand how historic homes are run. It is one thing to read about board operations, marketing, and funding decisions in a textbook—it is quite another to actually participate in or directly witness these fundamental things firsthand."

News Briefs

On June 9th and 10th, Medford Public Schools' 5th graders—all 400 of them!—toured our site, an annual opportunity for us to give back to our museum's home community. The kids were engaged and respectful, and asked wonderful questions. This group had all experienced Tammy Denease's compelling portrayal of Belinda Sutton last fall—the first students to have seen this performance—and their deeper understanding of our site's history was immediately apparent: they were eager to see where Belinda and her children had lived and worked. We hope to identify funding sources so we can offer this two-part educational program to future 5th graders. On June 13, RH&SQ Education Coordinator



Olivia Searcy participated in Mass Humanities' annual Mass History Conference, the largest in history! Keynote speaker Steve Bromage, Executive Director of the Maine Historical Society, offered food for thought as he talked about his passion for community partnerships and his state's particular challenges. Olivia was part of a lively panel discussion on "History for and with Kids and Schools," which explored working with kids in a museum, in a public space at a yearly event, and on history day projects.

Also in June, we hosted an informal conversation among museum educators, led by Kristin Gallas of the Tracing Center on Histories and Legacies of Slavery, to explore the challenges of teaching children and teens about enslavement, and to share relevant resources. In addition to our Education Coordinator **Olivia Searcy**, the group included representatives of Historic New England, the House of the Seven Gables, Salem State University, Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site, and the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association's Deerfield Teachers' Center.

Thanks to the **Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation**, we've replaced the crumbling front walkway and high step into the Slave Quarters with a smooth and gently sloped path. A new rail-



ing will soon replace the temporary one shown here.

The Royall House and Slave Quarters welcomed the **New England Museum Association's Young and Emerging Professionals** group for a special tour on a lovely summer evening in late June.



Thanks to **Antiques and Fine Arts Magazine** for inviting an article on the Royall House and Slave Quarters for their Summer 2016 issue. This beautiful periodical is the nation's best-selling antiques magazine, the leading publication for collectors, designers, and enthusiasts of art and antiques. Read

the article on our website at www.royallhouse.org/press/. Copies of the current issue are on newsstands now, and also available for purchase in our museum shop.

The annual reading of Frederick Douglass's fiery 1852 speech asking "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" on the Boston Common took place on June 30th. We were truly honored to be invited to join the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice at Harvard Law School, Community Change, Mass Humanities, and a host of other civic and community organizations to cosponsor this year's event.



**Congratulates the
Royall House and Slave Quarters
for keeping history alive.**

**We look forward to
continuing our partnership.**

tufts.edu/home/neighbors

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As many readers know, the Royall House and Slave Quarters has been active on Facebook for some time, and our page has gained us many new friends. We've recently extended our social media reach and hope that you'll now follow @RoyallHouse on Twitter!

We started tweeting regularly last fall and have been using the popular micro-blogging service to get the word out about our programs, explore the history of our site and the people who have lived and worked here, and engage in wide-ranging conversations about the histories of slavery and freedom in the Atlantic world.

Following us @RoyallHouse is a great way to keep up on all our activities. We try to be responsive on Twitter just as we are on Facebook, so feel free to get in touch. Our conversations in the Twittersphere over the winter have already sparked new friendships and connections and deepened existing ones. We look forward to having you follow and tweet at us!