

2005

**"This place is not meant for recreation. It is meant for inspiration"  
:: the legacies of Clara Endicott Sears/**

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**'THIS PLACE IS NOT MEANT FOR RECREATION. IT IS MEANT FOR  
INSPIRATION.': THE LEGACIES OF CLARA ENDICOTT SEARS**

A Thesis Presented

by

MEGAN M. KENNEDY

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

February 2005

History Department

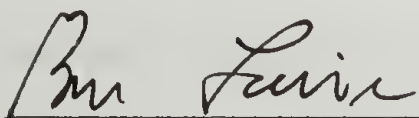
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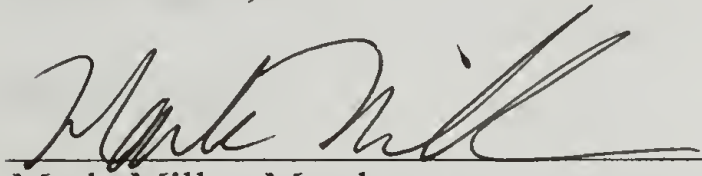
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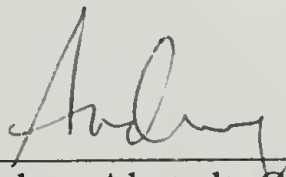
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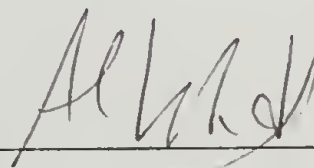
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research project, like all extended undertakings, was only completed with the help and consideration of many friends, all of whom went above and beyond the call of duty to shape the outcome. Foremost, I am very grateful for the kind attention of Dr. Mike Volmar, curator of the Fruitlands Museums. He patiently presented me with new gems upon each visit, and remained curious and invested in my research. My understanding of Miss Sears was greatly informed by access to the Fruitlands Archives. The photographs published within were made available courtesy of Fruitlands.

Dr. Bruce Laurie calmly guided and oversaw my work on this thesis, as well as the entirety of my graduate career, with a sense of unobtrusive confidence. I remain grateful for every early morning conversation on atavism. Dr. Stephen Nissenbaum, who originally directed me toward the story of Clara Endicott Sears and the Fruitlands Museums, challenged my initial understanding of Sears' significance and introduced me to a memorable project. Dr. David Toomey has reminded me time and again that stories are, indeed, important. In many ways, Dr. Lise Sanders has tirelessly dedicated her time to my education, and deserves commendation for her attention to my work outside of her classroom.

On a personal note, Ben, bearer of smiles, continues to remind me there is life beyond my assignments. Thanks most importantly to my father, who quietly introduced me to the power of understanding the past, and who today diligently reprimands my inclinations toward passivity.

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*Clara Endicott Sears*

Clara Endicott Sears, 1917. Published courtesy of Fruitlands Museums, Harvard, Massachusetts.

## CHAPTER I THE BRAHMIN ETHOS IN THE NEW CENTURY

“This place is not meant for recreation.  
It is meant for inspiration.”<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

In 1918, as an introduction to her first novel, Clara Endicott Sears wrote that “very soon the rush of modern life will have swept away the potent characteristics of our old New England villages—already they are changing from the old into the new.” Sears warned that “the younger generations flit away to colleges and schools and come back citified and combed and curled, to take exception to the dear old ways, and in their place they put the latest innovations that turn the quiet, simple life into something far more complex, and all the peaceful charm inevitably disappears.”<sup>2</sup> This fear of loss permeated Sears’ work, and she spent the remainder of her career attempting to preserve the “veil of romance” that once surrounded her idea of life in early New England. The writer of three novels, countless poems, and seven historical compilations, as well as the creator and curator of four museums and the spokeswoman for a generation of bewildered Northeastern philanthropists, Sears remains a largely understudied figure in the preservation movement of the early twentieth century. Her legacy stems from very obvious roots: the member of the Boston aristocracy, a well-traveled and educated woman coming of age at the turn of the twentieth century, Sears represents the late-Victorian haute-bourgeois drive to seek the authentic and cultivate ‘real life’ experiences. She created a venerable museum dedicated to the collection of antiquities and to the education of the public; she wrote prolifically on the demise of the quaint New England village and its simple folk; she sought spiritual gratification in a study of

New Thought, the Shakers, the Millerites, and the Native Americans; and she worked to solidify her own family as one of the remaining dominant forces in an increasingly chaotic economic and social atmosphere. In an enduring attempt to avoid falling prey to such chaos, her life's work was dedicated to a self-referential quest for the authentic.

The turn of the twentieth century ushered in epochal changes in American life, complicating daily existence and forcing the nation to rethink its objectives and orientation. By the second decade of the twentieth century, many cultural commentators claimed that modern life had arrived and the world had changed dramatically, more quickly, and more completely than ever before. In 1913, the French poet Charles Péguy proclaimed, "The world has changed less since the time of Jesus Christ than it has in the last thirty years," and seven years later Virginia Woolf dramatically claimed, "On or about December 1910, human character changed."<sup>3</sup> New demands of industrialization, the internationalization of domestic policy, and the quickened pace of life struck many as new, glamorous, and modern. Energized by their recent foray into imperialism and overseas adventurism, flush with the prospects of a new national ethos, Americans experienced an era of extreme flux. Instead of stodgy Victorian life, with its bourgeois art, stifling moralism, financial over-indulgence, and sexual repression, the new modern life was an egalitarian movement, an experiment in art and form, in politics, and in class consciousness.<sup>4</sup>

Reactions to the closing of the Victorian moment were hardly consistent, however. In New York, bohemians invaded Greenwich Village and discussed revolution in cafés and night clubs. They cut their hair and skirts, broke sexual boundaries, and rode the waves of uncertainty pervading American culture. In Boston,



an entirely different approach mandated a revival of the distant past, of true Puritan-American spirit and ingenuity. The harbingers of this classical restoration embraced the pastoral, the quaint, and the uncomplicated. These two contending groups operated under an umbrella of overarching cultural trends featuring the fracturing of the modern self, while challenging mainstream debates over secularism, psychology, self-reflection, and reputation. In an era when scientific thought subsumed religion, both the bohemian and the Brahmin fought to express more than wide-spread uniformity and conformity. For both groups, the turn of the twentieth century meant coming to terms with identity in a palpably self-conscious search for a better self. Meanwhile, notions of experiential existentialism and the significance of a genuinely experienced life flourished in urban, intellectual scenes. Despite these trends of self consideration, a pervasive duty to contribute to society—through war efforts, mental dedication, and morale—was becoming increasingly difficult to ignore.<sup>5</sup>

Complicating this transitional phase in Boston were the clear culprits of industrialization, immigration, and steadily increasing urbanization. By 1875, census records revealed that, for the first time, a majority of Massachusetts residents lived in urban areas across the state. The largest and most dramatic surges in immigration came between 1890 and 1910, when more than one million eastern and southern Europeans entered New England cities.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, by 1890, two-thirds of all Boston residents were first- or second-generation immigrants.<sup>7</sup> From upheavals in power to dramatic alterations to its physical layout, Boston had changed radically by the turn of the twentieth century—from an antebellum merchant city to an urban metropolis with a population of more than one million within a ten-mile radius in 1900.<sup>8</sup> This onslaught of

change brought not only renewed energy, but also fear and intensifying uncertainty. Proclamations of impending danger rose throughout the North: the process of industrialization was too rapid, the social and economic inequality in Boston too drastic, and mounting conflict imminent. A nation changed so quickly and completely would spiral out of control, lose cohesion, and stand on the brink of disaster. While Boston never fell into the hands of an ethnic and mechanic revolution, the city did begin to suffer a fracturing effect as its social classes grew increasingly distanced; immigrant workers, middle-class progressives, and elite xenophobes retreated further into fragmented enclaves.

The childhood companion of Henry Cabot Lodge and Justice Robert Grant, neighbor of William Sumner Appleton and Isabella Stewart Garden, and the benefactress of a sizable China-trade estate, Clara Endicott Sears' life—from 1863 to 1960—spanned one of the greatest moments of change in the history of the world. Born during the final moments of the Civil War, Sears lived to see the beginnings of the civil rights movement; she also witnessed firsthand the incredible fruition of industrialization, the tense societal transformations of modernity, and the development of an international political awareness. Sears was only one of many important and representative figures caught in the crosshairs of such a dramatic trajectory. Her legacy, however, was longstanding; the fruits of her labor remain as strongly in place today as they did when she created them. Her work endures as a living testament to Sears' belief in the persistence of a New England spirituality, available to those who might “tune their ears to the faint vibrations of former days.”<sup>9</sup>

## Methodology

The study of Clara Endicott Sears necessitates a grounding in the rich and varied scholarship of late nineteenth and early twentieth century cultural trends in New England. This thesis, thus, draws heavily on Jackson Lears' antimodernism thesis in *No Place of Grace*, which situates the cult of the authentic and the antimodern. Joseph Conforti's investigation of a New England regional identity in *Imagining New England* provides a historical framework for changes in the significance of regional and national identification and allegiance. Michael Kammen's sweeping synthesis of tradition and communication, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, suggests why Sears and her cohort sought experiences in the preservation of their culture. Recent scholarship of the Colonial Revival, preservation, and antiquarianism provide a contextual framework for Sears' collecting habit. Studies of Boston, and localized histories of Harvard, situate Sears in time and place. Moreover, the contemporary primary source documentation of Sears and her cohorts explains, in part, their motivations, desires, and fears.

Recent scholarship suggests that, despite previous evidence to the contrary, the turn of the twentieth century was indeed a major watershed in American cultural history. The crux of this transformation was a widespread acceptance of antimodernism—"a kind of cultural asphyxiation among the educated and affluent, a sense that bourgeois existence had become stifling and 'unreal.'"<sup>10</sup> Lears argues that antimodernism was not simply an escapist impulse; instead, it represented a "quest for intense experience"<sup>11</sup> which ranged from neurasthenia and the rise of therapeutic



psychology to Progressive reform movements and increased militarism. Antimodernism was a current of restlessness prevalent among the wealthy, who sought to resurrect a more automatic sense of self, amidst new secular bureaucratic systems. Robert Wiebe has claimed that the spread of science and technology, the new highly ordered work environment, urbanization, immigration, and recurring economic depressions had eroded older beliefs in individualism, laissez-faire economics, progress, and a hierarchically-ordered society. The turn of the twentieth century saw a frenzied search for organizing principles around which a viable social order could be constructed in a suddenly demanding and impersonal world.<sup>12</sup> Behind such flights from modernity lay a craving for intense experience, which manifested itself as a reaction against the overwhelming demand for Puritanical self-control produced by a century of fundamental cultural change.

What follows is ultimately the biographical tale of a woman whose yearnings drove her to resurrect a sense of self by evoking a constructed 'real life,' whose luxuries enabled her to recreate a home she had never experienced and eventually allowed her to impose a sense of community on a diverse and carefully manipulated landscape.

## CHAPTER II THE QUEST FOR THE AUTHENTIC

Clara Endicott Sears

The antimodern impulse, deeply rooted in a moment of calamity over cultural authority, was plainly visible in both the public and the private spheres. For Sears, the memories she felt most personally responsible for retaining—both publicly and privately—were those of her own illustrious family. At the end of her life, in 1956, she privately published a short book, *Early Personal Reminiscences in the Old George Peabody Mansion in Salem, Massachusetts*. She dedicated the work, filled with photographs taken by a cousin, to her family in the hopes that they might retain memories of the way life in New England used to be:

I am writing this for all those who have the George Peabody blood in their veins, as well as my grandmother's blood, with her heritage of Endicott. Therefore I cannot but believe and hope that even a simple tale of home-loving and dignified forbearers such as these can transmit a memory to lean on that is worth while, and act as a reminder in these modern days.<sup>13</sup>

Sears' generation of traditionalists grew up in a culture eager to collectively forget the divisive upheaval, sacrifice, and atrocity of the Civil War. Rather than grieve, Americans learned to commemorate. This perceived progress led the cult of the authentic to feel "the responsibility of remembrance."<sup>14</sup> Out of the post-war climate also grew a distinct thread of New England regionalism, which permeated all of Sears' work. "I am so interested to learn that your members are all descended from New England pioneers," she wrote in 1941 to the president of the National Society of New England Women;

I am a very distinct product of New England, as my Mother was a direct descendent of Governor Endicott, and my father was a direct descendant of Governor Winthrop, so I belong to the very soil of Massachusetts.<sup>15</sup>

Because complex relationships to place and family, combined with often-conflicted aspirations, motivated antimodern endeavors, Sears was not alone in her longing to preserve her family's history as a source of pride and self-identification. This identification, however, caused complication as it also systematically denied the realities of fin-de-siècle New England. Sears and her contemporaries railed against the changes of the modern world, clinging to an idealized and elusive past of their own making. In the new modern world, Sears represented the wealthy woman's burden, creating philanthropic enterprises with seemingly pure motivations to preserve, share, and educate the less fortunate.

Born in 1863 to an elite New England family, Clara Endicott Sears represented the Boston Brahmin—the “achievement of cultivation, security, and ... arrogance”<sup>16</sup>—born at the peak of their decline. Her parents' only surviving child and the sole heiress to a China trade fortune, Sears entered into a society dominated by a maritime ruling class, made elite through their investment ventures after the Embargo of 1807 and the War of 1812 and kept exclusive through intermarriage.<sup>17</sup> A direct descendent of both John Winthrop and John Endicott, the first governors of Massachusetts, Sears' father was Knyvet Winthrop Sears—a man “unfitted by temperament and education for practical affairs,”<sup>18</sup> and who, even in 1852, was “a typical gentleman of an age now passed, with the cultivated tastes of a man of leisure.”<sup>19</sup> Her mother, Mary Crowninshield Sears, was descended from the Peabodys and Endicotts in Salem. Clara's sister, Mary Peabody Sears, who died of tuberculosis in 1890, married Francis



Shaw, the son of Gardiner Howland Shaw and Cora Lyman. Born into a family with complete with annotated genealogies and published family histories, Sears was raised to understand the vitally important interconnectivity of Boston society; in fact, she was raised to embody the “Bostonian with enough genealogy to wear for a winter coat”<sup>20</sup> and become a member of the cult “whose identity was secured by the use of two last names.”<sup>21</sup>

While she grew up at 132 Beacon Street in a house built by her father two years before her birth, Sears’ early life was “spent on and off in Europe” with “instructors,—a French governess and an English governess.” She studied painting under Ross Turner, “sang a little, played the violin a little, and the piano a little under Arthur Foote” before she “came out into the social world.”<sup>22</sup> Sears made her debut into Boston society in a “dazzling” yellow dress looking like a “veritable goddess” in 1892 in front of her Beacon Hill set.<sup>23</sup> The Sears family lived two houses down from Isabella Stewart Gardner, and, like Gardner, spent a great deal of time in Salem with the Peabodys, the family of Gardner’s mother. (Likewise, Mr. Gardner was a relative of William Crowninshield Endicott, as was Sears’ father.) Both women also traveled to the Peabody farm and country estate in Danvers, as well as to a family seaside retreat in Nahant, where Sears grew up with Robert Grant and Henry Cabot Lodge. It was Gardner, though, “a will-o’-the-wisp leading Boston society a merry chase,” who stood at the forefront of the society and cultural trends to which Sears aspired.<sup>24</sup>

Sears became a close follower of Gardner, some twenty years her senior, and Gardner’s social set, joining similar Boston clubs, attending the same parties, and reading about their neighbors in the society pages of Boston newspapers. Gardner

traveled widely throughout Europe and Africa around the same time Sears and her mother set sail for a tour of the cathedrals of Paris and to visit to relatives in London. Both women returned home with antiques, artifacts, and obscure pieces of art. They had their portraits painted in Paris by the same artists and fancied Venetian sculpture. Both strove to use their wealth to collect and preserve. Gardner built Fenway Court, a spectacular Boston mansion, in 1903 in part to hold her collections; she intended the property to act as her home as well as “a Museum for the education and enjoyment of the public forever.”<sup>25</sup>

Unlike Gardner’s spectacular personal life, full of adventurous romance and advantageous marriage to an incredibly well-positioned bachelor, Sears never married. Early in her life, she vowed to marry only if she found exactly the right man, because she was reluctant to sacrifice her independence to the role of wife and mother. The only full biography of Sears describes clearly that, in her parents, Sears saw “a narrowing preoccupation with the world of society, and...suspected that a husband would almost surely perpetuate the Victorian dependence that she was beginning to find restrictive.”<sup>26</sup> Perhaps presciently, only weeks after her sister’s marriage, Sears, then just twenty years old, pasted into her scrapbook the poem “Quite Too Dreadful”:

What caused the cold sensation  
Of a nipping Artic blast?  
Why, a frigid Boston spinster  
Just then went sailing past.<sup>27</sup>

When her father died eight years later, in 1891, she took on the role of companion to her mother, a task which provided the next twenty years with ample opportunities to pursue her personal interests: photography, European travel, teas, collecting art and antiques, and exploring her conflicted feelings regarding religion as well as the legacy of her New



England heritage. She participated in social clubs, spent every Sunday morning at the Emmanuel Episcopal Church, had luncheons with friends, and acted as caretaker to her mother.

It was not until 1910 that Sears, at 47 years old, made her first real foray into the world beyond Boston society. In the 1890s, as the Massachusetts coast became crowded with industry and the Brahmins abandoned Nahant for coastal Maine, Cape Cod, and other outposts of rural New England, Sears and her mother began spending more time on a family estate in Groton, which she later claimed was a town “too gay and socially inclined.”<sup>28</sup> She later noted that during those years in Groton, she yearned to “do something more constructive [than] going about, luncheon here, dinner there, dancing and entertainments.” Accusations of a romance with a married faculty member at the Groton school, as well as an inclination to build her own home, encouraged her to hunt for new property. Evening pleasure drives with her mother often took them to nearby Harvard, where Sears “discovered the wonderful view” on Prospect Hill in Harvard. “My mother and I came frequently to look across the valley and to see the sunset behind Wachusett Mountain. Finally, I could not get the place out of my mind.”<sup>29</sup>

Gradually, beginning in 1910, she accumulated acreage by securing lots from old farmers, many of whom were reluctant to sell property that had been in the family for generations.<sup>30</sup> She sold her parent’s Riverdale Farm in Groton to pursue construction in Harvard. By 1912, she had acquired 112 acres of former farmland on which she built “the Pergolas,” a palatial summer cottage complete with imported marble columns and a “lovely Colonial doorway” that was “no modern reproduction, but the original doorway to the George Peabody Salem Mansion built by her great-grandfather.”<sup>31</sup> She



strategically positioned the clapboard manner, located 350 feet above sea level, to overlook the Nashua River Valley, Mt. Monadnock to the north and Mt. Wachusett to the west. On clear days she could see New Hampshire.<sup>32</sup> She was especially proud of the Istrian stone pillars, intricately carved with Byzantine designs and rescued from a monastery in Venice, which framed the view.<sup>33</sup>



Figure 1: View of the Pergolas, 1911. Published courtesy of Fruitlands Museums, Harvard, Massachusetts.

As Kenneth Ames has documented, Americans of this era were fanatically attuned to the impact created by initial impressions. Most recognized that what their neighbors saw first colored entire outlooks and disproportionately influenced their opinions.<sup>34</sup> Modernist notions of authenticity, formed in opposition to Victorian artificiality, eschewed overly synthetic, formulaic notions of gentility. Somewhere in the middle of these two extremes fell the antimodernist: a member of the established gentry, but simultaneously unresponsive to the excesses of modernity. They practiced their own unique breed of specialization and elaborate refinement. Like Elizabeth

Bishop Perkins, Caroline Emmerton, Isabella Stewart Gardner, and countless other female preservationists of her generation, Sears created a home based on a notion of an antiquated Colonial-American aesthetic, a style obviously influenced as much by Colonial as by Victorian sensibilities; her culture was both “consciously and deliberately a culture of artificiality, of imitation, of pretending and pretension.”<sup>35</sup>

Only thirty miles west of Boston, Harvard provided an enticing location for a Brahmin summer home, and Sears was one of many who built there in the first few years of the new century. Harvard was easily accessible by the increasingly available automobile, something Sears keenly understood as crucial to the viability of her life in society; though an ardent antimodernist in other respects, this foresight was one which ultimately served Sears well. The attractive, freshly-painted town center of Harvard, with its tight-knit community and distinctly New England “old-time town” feel, combined with the pastoral image of the nearby countryside, afforded a distinctly rural retreat for city-dwellers. As she had watched her compatriot Gardner do with Fenway Court, Sears used her inheritance to collect and display family collections of art as well as objects she acquired abroad, to supplement the newness of the Pergolas.

Of the Bostonians who populated Harvard during the interwar period; many happily kept their business interests in the city and saw their time in the country as a venue for relaxation. Across the street from the Pergolas, at 135 Prospect Hill Road, Dr. Sidney Ellis built a summer mansion in 1916 that “towered over the Pergolas;” Ellis practiced medicine in Harvard only in emergency situations.<sup>36</sup> Elvira Scorgie, also from the Back Bay, followed her sister to Harvard and later assisted Sears as a seasonal docent at the Fruitlands Museums. No Boston-transplant during this period was more



important than Fiske Warren—especially when Sears first moved to town. Nor did any other serve as more of a direct competitor for town attention. A wealthy paper manufacturer from Waltham, Massachusetts, Warren built his country estate, “the Hutch,” on Bare Hill in Harvard in 1898. He was famous for purchasing the first automobile in town. Warren made his political and social mark by directing the American Peace Society and acting as executive secretary for the Committee of the Anti-Imperialist League in Boston. During those years, Sears was also deeply involved in club life, although her interests were far less radical and her glance not forward-looking; she divided her time among genealogical societies, the Women’s Republican Club, Daughters of the American Revolution, the North Shore Garden Club, and the Old Glory Club.

It was not until a few years after the construction of the Pergolas that Sears hit her stride, turning her Harvard homestead into what would become her legacy. It was the discovery of the Fruitlands farmhouse on her Prospect Hill property that lead Sears down the paths that would become her *métier*, writing New England fiction and history, and creating museums devoted to local history. Many of Sears’ books were initiated by discoveries on her Harvard estate, and her decision to live there changed the course of her life. It was at the Pergolas that Sears began to pursue her previously latent interests in history and preservation. She consciously left the Brahmin society (at least seasonally), which she called “the social hub of the universe in that glorious age,” so that she could more seriously take up her avocations of writing and collecting.<sup>37</sup> On Prospect Hill, Sears recovered a dilapidated homestead that she discovered had once housed a little-known and short-lived communal experiment, Bronson Alcott’s



Fruitlands, in 1843. Recalling Longfellow's poem "All houses wherein men have lived and died/ Are haunted houses," Sears wrote,

From my terrace on the hill I looked down upon it with mixed feelings of pity, awe, and affection. It seemed like Presence, a ghost of the Past, that compelled the eyes to gaze at it persistently. In the warm joyousness of the spring sunshine, or when the cold mists of autumn crept across the valley, it conveyed to me the same sense of desolation, of mystery, or disillusionment."<sup>38</sup>

After considerable repair, she proudly recorded, "Its dignity has returned to it. As we enter it, we step across the threshold into a dream of bygone days."<sup>39</sup> As her interest in the saga of the property grew, Sears researched the story of the commune and compiled a chronicle of the brief experiment, created a friendship with Alcott's aged widow as well as her daughter, the writer Lousia May Alcott. Sears opened the home, restored and filled with "period pieces," to tours in 1914 as the first part of what would eventually become the Fruitlands Museums in Harvard.

The message of the original Fruitlands experiment, according to Sears, was the power of transcendentalism, and the significance of those who strove toward a New Eden; "In this material age we cannot afford to lose any details of so unique and picturesque a memory as that of Bronson Alcott," she proclaimed in 1915. "...If for a time [Fruitlands] had borne the semblance of a New Eden, then that time must be honored and not forgotten." Instead, she suggested that the farmhouse must be cherished: "If that history was full of pathos, if the great experiment enacted beneath its roof proved a failure, the failure was only in the means of expression and not in the ideal which inspired it."<sup>40</sup> It was not the power of the transcendentalists at Fruitlands, however, that was immediately noticed by her peers. Instead, it was Sears' preservation work, with its "distinctly regional feel," that was lauded as among "the best examples of

individual sponsorship of a historic restoration” by fellow preservationists.<sup>41</sup> After a “gala welcome” in the fall of 1914 for Alcott family members, Sears opened the museum to the officers of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.<sup>42</sup> William Sumner Appleton, the founder of SPNEA, later described Fruitlands as “one of the most successful and encouraging examples of recent preservation work.”<sup>43</sup>

### The Colonial Revival in New England

Sears was no stranger to preservation by the time she discovered and restored Fruitlands. In fact, much Brahmin energy had been spent restoring and renovating buildings throughout her lifetime, and a modern trend emphasizing the intersection of history and patriotism was flaring throughout the country.<sup>44</sup> The mid-nineteenth century heirs to Boston fortunes emerged as an aristocracy defined not just by their wealth and privilege, but also by their post-Puritan ethic of community responsibility. It was this sense of civic duty that created an institutionalized way of thinking about public space and preservation. Michael Kammen has located a key defining moment in American fervor for tradition in the 1870s. Before that transformation, only intermittent interest in the past existed, primarily memorials in the form of fascination with the ‘founding fathers’ and the major events of the early Republic.<sup>45</sup> Bostonians were fully aware of the efforts of preservationists, like the Levys’ fight to preserve Monticello, and the work of the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association to save George Washington’s home. Arguably the earlier American effort to save a historic house was the failed attempt of women in Deerfield, Massachusetts to preserve the town’s “Old Indian House.”<sup>46</sup> However, Mary



Hemenway's dramatic fight to save the Old South Meeting House in Boston through the formation of the Old South Association in 1876 perhaps marks New England's earliest successful battle for preservation.<sup>47</sup> On much smaller scales, however, Boston elite found that preservation addressed many of their concerns with stability and a dwindling sense of permanence in such a changing city. As entirely new pieces of the city were formed—such as the filling of the Back Bay—in front of their eyes, Boston was becoming an entirely new place. Even the presence of time-saving, traffic-easing technology was disruptive; Sam Bass Warner has illustrated that the entire concept of a streetcar suburb represented a state of “omnipresent newness” and constant change.<sup>48</sup>

It was in response to these changes, and the efforts to preserve cultural landmarks, that architects and preservationists began adopting the Colonial Revival style at the end of the nineteenth century. Michael Holleran has noted that this reinforcement of preservationism created “the potential for a permanently established community architectural identity.”<sup>49</sup> Much of the movement, as has been extensively defined by material and cultural historians, was certainly the result of elite assertiveness. While the accumulation of national fortunes grew, in the form of industry, railroads, and imperial conquest, and new wealth flooded the market, Boston prosperity remained exclusively tied to the local market.<sup>50</sup> This shift displaced Brahmin wealth and uprooted community investment, causing further urban flight. Historic preservation during the progressive era, thus, represented a challenge to define not only the present and future, but also to redefine the past.

William Sumner Appleton, the man most often associated with furthering the Colonial Revival in New England, was, like Sears, an unwed Brahmin, “trying to figure



out what to do with his life.”<sup>51</sup> Also from Beacon Street, he found himself funneling his trust fund into restoration activities. With a background in architecture and the absence of a career, Appleton founded the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities in 1905. The group spearheaded the burgeoning movement to purchase and preserve old homes in the greater Boston area, as well as to revise the image of the past, to recodify earlier values, and invent a history that fit the present needs of its members. The heritage they hoped to maintain included the preservation of buildings as well as memories. Encouraged by the success of the effort to salvage the Paul Revere House, Caroline Emmerton’s preservation work in Salem, and the heroic recovery of the Old South Meeting House, Appleton focused on protecting historic buildings and sites from destruction.

While Michael Holleran rightly notes that the Colonial Revival and preservation movement did not produce nativism or renewed xenophobia, the argument that Appleton and SPNEA were “so steadfastly concentrated on buildings and objects” as to pay no attention to dominant cultural strands of patriotism and nativism is unfounded.<sup>52</sup> Certainly Appleton, who commented that the best houses on Beacon Street were between numbers 39 and 45 because of their location on the uppermost peak of Beacon Hill, surely was aware of his participation in elitism.<sup>53</sup> Appleton also stands as a clear representative of the growing movement in the early twentieth century to ‘professionalize’ history. While Appleton praised Sears’ preservation of Fruitlands, and appointed her to serve as a trustee for SPNEA for a number of years, it is unmistakable that his intentions were to move the world of preservationism away from the house museum and secure SPNEA as an architectural institution. William O. Murtagh credited

Appleton and SPNEA with single-handedly “reorienting the field from a preoccupation with romanticized history to one stressing architectural aesthetics, scientific method, and historical scholarship.”<sup>54</sup> Murtagh undoubtedly meant to also credit Appleton with saving the field from the domestication of history.

Women like Sears, Caroline Emmerton, Mary Hemenway, and the ladies of the Mount Vernon Association learned the values of patriotism and the techniques of preservation in clubs such as the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Society of Colonial Dames, and the Massachusetts Society for Mayflower Descendants. Thus, their outlooks were marginalized by their very gender, which restricted their access to higher education and the professionalization of history. As many historians have since pointed out, these women became the designated custodians of the local past. While at times this work was rewarding in the sense that it afforded some degree of authority and influence, women were pushed further to the margins of the preservation movement and into the realm of domestic museums. Ultimately, house museums did pave the way for more specialized and revolutionary museums, especially those related to minority groups, albeit unwittingly. Women antiquarians also used their moments in time, fleeting as they might have been, to engage in a public sphere, as both historians and preservationists, and also as writers and librarians. Julie Des Jardins has suggested that these women helped usher in new methodologies of historical practice as they offered new perspectives on the national past, by instinctively including social and cultural histories.<sup>55</sup>

It is not clear whether Sears considered herself an integral part of this female-antiquarian agenda. While she participated in exclusively female associations and clubs,



and corresponded with female friends, she just as frequently acted as the only woman on distinctly male committees. At the museums, in her literature, and in the non-fiction histories, Sears rarely identified herself as a woman. Likewise, she was not active in the suffrage movement, and considered herself a member of the Republican Party long before she was eligible to vote. She also continued to donate materials and correspond with the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, MA, even though she was denied membership on the basis of her gender. Sears was, however, vitally concerned with asserting her ethnic, racial, and regional identities. She was not shy in discussing her illustrious relatives, and never hesitated to assert her claim to Yankeeedom. Among the scraps of her unfinished poems remains her most clear literary representation of attachment to her regional identity, directly referring to New England as home:

And everywhere the potent charm  
That spells the name of HOME,—  
When spring comes to New England  
I have no wish to roam!<sup>56</sup>

When asked to speak at a meeting of the National Society of New England Women, Sears responded to the president, “I am so interested to learn that your members are all descended from New England pioneers. I am a very distinct product of New England.”<sup>57</sup>

Later, in response to a letter regarding the League of American Pen Women, Miss Winifred Willard asked if Clara Endicott Sears was in fact an old childhood friend named Clara Sears. Sears responded, “And now let me say ‘that I am not the Clara Sears who used to live in Denver.’ ... I am of the very essence of New England.” Miss Willard promptly (and astutely) wrote back, “You are ‘of the very essence of New England.’ Well, so am I in somewhat distant centuries, which to you makes me a rather diluted essence, doesn’t it?”<sup>58</sup>



## The Wayside Museums

“The attempt to take over the time-bound vestiges of other periods,” Lewis Mumford wrote in 1938, represented “concrete utopias of escape: the desire to establish little dream islands in the steely sea of reality.”<sup>59</sup> Sears was not satisfied to have only two islands, Fruitlands and the Pergolas, adrift in the Harvard sea. Instead, she set her sights on developing further museums. Directly across the Nashua Valley from the Pergolas, Sears could see the Shirley Shaker village. “A little band of loyal souls still keep the candle of their faith burning in their secluded village,” she wrote, “far removed from the outside world, like a shrine hidden in a sanctuary of hilly woodlands.”<sup>60</sup> The local presence of Shakers encouraged Sears to produce another compilation quite like her earlier book, *Bronson Alcott’s Fruitlands*. In researching *Gleanings from Old Shaker Journals*, Sears befriended local eldresses, who shared with her their collections of journals and photographs. When the community closed in 1917, Sears purchased their eighteenth century office building, which she moved to Prospect Hill. Three years later, she opened the building as the first Shaker museum in the country, exhibiting Shaker material cultural and folk art.

Like the Fruitlands farmhouse, Sears felt that the Shaker house radiated an atmosphere of intensity, one which could inspire thinkers. At the same time, she greatly sympathized with the plight of the Shakers, and felt the force of their quest to escape religious persecution. She called Shaker worship “strange” but admired their fervor and enthusiasm. Visitors to both museums, according to Sears, concurred that the houses radiated intensity, and expressed their own feelings of encouragement after visiting.<sup>61</sup>

Because Sears believed in the power of old buildings to strike a chord with visitors, to place them in touch with the spirit of place, she sought to arrange the museums as advantageously as possible. "Valuable and necessary as are the statistics we accumulate," she wrote in 1918, "those dry facts have but little power to stir us. Like rows of fossils in a closed glass case, we glance at them and then pass on unmoved."<sup>62</sup> Therefore, she created the museums as sanctuaries to inspire great thinking and continued dreaming. Instead of 'fossils in a closed glass case,' the Shaker building and the Fruitlands farmhouse were arranged as house museums, authentic replications of a time and place, filled with the everyday materials integral to a historic moment. Bronson Alcott's library from his time at Fruitlands was replicated and placed in the house. Pewter and stoneware kitchen accessories, like those Mrs. Alcott might have used, were added, and rickety spaces in the floorboards were purposely left noisy to promote a sense of the original environment. Likewise, in the Shaker meeting house, a bedroom and work area were furnished with Shaker-made antiques, and cloaks were hung from pegs in the hallway. Retaining an 'authentic aura' in the houses provided legitimacy and purpose to the exhibits.

Though the Pergolas was a cluttered and gilded expanse, Sears long admired the Shaker aesthetic for its simplicity and purpose, which she saw in direct contrast to Victorian excess. The Shakers also provided some sense of calm in the face of adversity, which Sears sought to imitate. Despite their inherent conflict with modernity, and the subsequent dissolution of most Shaker communities during the Progressive Era, their faith encouraged forward thinking. "Yea, what you say is true," spoke an eldress in response to Sears' questions on modernity, "times have changed. And life is looked at

from a different angle. But nothing that has gone before is lost.” Indeed, the Shakers believed that “the Spirit has its periods of moving beneath the surface, and after generations pass, it sweeps through the world again and burns the chaff and stubble.”<sup>63</sup> It is not apparent from what she left behind if Sears heard anything so comforting from any other source she sought.



Figure 2: The Harvard Red Cross Canning and Evaporating Club, 1918. Published courtesy of Fruitlands Museums, Harvard, Massachusetts.



### CHAPTER III REWRITING THE NEW ENGLAND PAST

When Sears wrote to her composer-friend Helen Gulesian in 1945, "I realize more than ever that my whole project has taken deep roots in the public estimation," she was not only noting the achievement of her museums, but also her writing. By 1945 however, in her seventh decade, Sears began to doubt the power of her written word, "when it comes to writing poems [now] I write them and then throw them away. They do not seem to fit with the times." The successes of her earliest work, including patriotic poetry and compiled histories, were fading into the distance as the literary world changed. "It seems to me that a very drastic change has taken place in the poetical world, and I am puzzled by it," she wrote.<sup>64</sup>

At a lecture to writers during World War Two, Sears described an encounter she had some years before with a "young, modern poet" at a Boston Author's Club poetry reading. He suggested to the audience that "there need be no meaning to the words [in poems], really, as long as they flow along producing the effect of meaning." "Listen," Sears interrupted, "the lunatic asylums are full of just that sort of thing. The inmates jabber to each other with whole strings of words that mean nothing,—where's the difference?" The audience apparently uproariously agreed with Sears, and Dallas Lore Sharp stood to shout "Bravo!"<sup>65</sup> Sears believed poets, "if they have any right to call themselves so," must be sensitive and in tune with "vibrations, whether of joy or sorrow." The poems written during World War One were filled with exaltation, inspiration and beauty. "But in this war," she wrote, "it is different. The bloodshed seems greater. The cruelty seems worse. We are stunned and filled with horror."<sup>66</sup>

Sears believed that all writing be an exercise in consciousness and an effort to undercover all the details of a single moment or angle. "The truth is no work of any kind can be done in life with any sort of value to it," she wrote, "unless some effort is made to make it good of its kind, whether it is sweeping a floor, cooking a meal, running a factory, or writing a book."<sup>67</sup> At the time of her death, Sears had published eleven histories of various moments in New England history, as well as four novels, a collection of poetry, and numerous poems turned into lyrics and set to music by Helen Gulesian. She also printed catalogues of the Fruitlands Museums, which she sold in the gift shop. Encouraged by the likes of Judge Robert Grant and her mother, Sears later claimed Harvard Professor Barrett Wendell "urged me to turn to writing and to 'write the way you talk.'"<sup>68</sup>

"Like mystic bells/ Of memory"<sup>69</sup>

Part of the late-nineteenth century cultural attraction to 'quaint bygone days' was the ability to authentically experience life associated with preindustrial farm and village life. These experiences took many forms, from the acquisition of reproduction furniture to a revolution in the tourist trade throughout pastoral New England. Tourists soon began to seek an imagined experience of the past, filled with rural independence, ethnic and class harmony, and the virtuous simplicity associated with the Puritans. A persistent and widespread nostalgia for places, as well as objects, that lay outside the realm of the modern was suddenly very valuable; an entire strain of travel literature, as well as nostalgic fiction, catered to those unable to travel as often as they wished into the cherished folkways of New England.<sup>70</sup> This work reflected a fascination with all that



was not modern, urban, or industrial; it represented the “primitive” and “wholesome” values associated with a simpler past. As many historians have now surmised, the cultural current of local color literature, which began with Harriet Beecher Stowe much earlier in the nineteenth century, was intricately related to strands of tourism and a renewed interest in antique-collecting. Nathaniel Hawthorne and Henry James believed that all reading played into the drive to appropriate experience vicariously; the cross-cultural avarice of the Brahmin traveler, whether through fiction or tourism, represented a vicarious experience and annexation of other ways of life, especially into the unmodern picturesque.<sup>71</sup>

Sears’ ongoing confrontation with progress infiltrated all of her literature, which frequently turned to religiosity and localism, was written in the hopes of leading readers down the right, proper, and “straight” highways. In a similar vein as her desire to recreate a New England village at Fruitlands, Sears published four romance novels, each devoted to both the romances between simple locals and to an overarching romance with the land, and a sentimentalization of the ‘New England village past.’<sup>72</sup> The subtext of all her novels was a legendary love of the countryside and the ability rural folk were afforded to forgive, love, and overcome adversity, even when confronted with modernity. In the preface to her first novel, *Whispering Pines: A Romance on a New England Hillside*, in 1918, Sears wrote,

The world changes. Times change. People change. Habits change. Standards change. Life in the country villages has changed. Types of character are as historically interesting and revealing as events. I write of those recorded in this story with affection, for I have known most of them. Before the memory of them is gone, I want to preserve them. They belong to the old picturesque days before the World War.<sup>73</sup>



It would not be unfair to say that one of the most important characters Sears had known well was the New England countryside. By 1930, however, the countryside she knew was just a passing memory. Not only had “life in the country villages...changed” by the time she wrote this introduction, the village landscape itself had changed dramatically, often just outside her window.

Sears began her publishing career writing exclusively for Houghton Mifflin in Boston until sales fell short and she took to publishing privately in small quantities. In that time, the literary trade had shifted considerably as America itself modernized; the vast intellectual, material, social, and psychological changes profoundly influencing everyday life culminated in the development of a national literature. Though the interwar period saw an enormously diverse body of writing, the most successful work shared in common a degree of recognition of major transformations and an acknowledgment of shock. Realism triumphed, in the form of both sentimental and nostalgic romances that dealt with the shock of the modern world through regression, as well as in the direct prose of dislocation, discontinuity, and fear. Authors tackled urbanization, increasing secularism, the continual tides of immigration, the significance of a mechanical industry, and dealt with the closing of the frontier. In this period of time, it was often through literature that America consciously began to rebuild itself and encourage critical awareness of the modern world. During this period, new themes, forms, subjects, authors, audiences, and regions emerged; no longer was the literature of solemn New England a truly national literature.<sup>74</sup>

Among Sears’ peers and friends in the Boston Author’s Club are examples of those who rode the tides of modernity, and those who remained steadfastly adamant

about the significance of Old New England. William Dean Howells took significant risks when he moved beyond travel literature about coastal Massachusetts and instead explored the moral conditions and economic transformations of American culture. Likewise, Charlotte Perkins Gilman took part in the utopian trends of the interwar era. Others, like Sara Ware Bassett, Sears' close friend and writing companion, Sarah Orne Jewett, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, and Sears herself, remained steadfast in their work as writers of fictional regionalism. This trend in the burgeoning literature of realism indulged the antimodern impulse to ignore (or at least repress) the realities of industrialization, increasing immigration combined with related cultural homogenization, among other unpleasant truths of the modern world. Practitioners of regional realism wrote of local topography, architecture, manners, customs, history, and character types, and focused on primarily sentimental story-lines. Often utilizing an affected form of the provincial dialect, these regional stories focused on the peculiarities of 'real life' in small communities.<sup>75</sup>

As Richard Brodhead has noted, however, this sentimental regionalism also fetishized a "backwardness where locally variant folkways still prevail."<sup>76</sup> Thus, writers of the form were required to own a degree of familiarity with some cultural backwater, a level of acquaintance with those outside the prevailing culture. It is in this respect that atavistic literature coveted the marginal, and placed the genre closer in line with other dominate antimodern values. A predominately female-centric tradition, regionalist works were most often created and read by women.<sup>77</sup> Due to the significance of local color in upper-class circles, the genre was written by the cultural and economic elite, and often emulated an upper-class bias toward the marginal and 'simple life'



movement. The leisure necessary to co-opt or appreciate such variant lifestyles required a particular social status.<sup>78</sup>

In a speech to the Boston Author's Club Luncheon in 1942, Sears described an encounter with an acquaintance who asked "You are always interested in New England. Now tell me,—do you think there will be any quaint old characters in the future like those who lived in the past?—like those you have written about?" Sears' answer was vague; she felt that the future would produce some interesting characters, with a "quaintness all their own," but very different characters than those of the past.<sup>79</sup> The primary story line in her fictional tales of New England involved the romance of simple native folk, and their relationships with each other and the landscape. The novels were written with a similar motive to the formation of the museums: to allow the prevailing world an opportunity to catch the faint 'vibrations' of past life, before they were lost to the noise of modernity. Sears was particularly fond of recounting old-time traditions, which she felt were wonderfully descriptive and helpful in identifying and understanding the past.

Like Alice Morse Earle's nonfiction tracts on the frugality, simplicity, and human empathy of colonial America, Sears' novels, complete with moral lessons, strove to illuminate interrelationships between seemingly disparate groups in the New England past, and to illustrate how their differences were overcome through love, understanding, or in the attainment of a common goal. The rural setting of her novels provides a fictional backdrop of wholesome community, which is often enacted as the presence of God-like spirit. In *The Bell-Ringer: An Old-Time Village Tale*, published in 1918, Sears explores a romance between two town eccentrics, a crippled but sweet young girl



confined to a wheelchair in a window overlooking Main Street, and Seth, an aging bachelor, well-intentioned but isolated in his farmhouse. Their love is one of companionship and quaint love, set in a town filled with good-intentioned people who often make mistakes and inflict their personal pain upon others. The novel was Sears' first foray into writing a rural dialect—"the old-time appealing turn of phrase, the manner of speech associated with the country folk of old."<sup>80</sup> Sears was fearful the language of the rural would soon be forgotten, and, with it, those old folk would also disappear into the oblivion and be lost to future generations.

*The Romance of Fiddler's Green*, written four years later, chronicles the journey of a frustrated and distraught young man struggling to overcome his fear of love and commitment. After Simon, the main character, leaves his fiancé waiting at the altar (which also happens to be the dining room of her parent's clean and simple farmhouse), he runs away to 'find himself' and understand his fear of commitment. His beautiful and sweet-natured fiancé then dies tragically of a broken heart, sick from waiting and longing. Her death sparks intense feelings of revenge and rage in her brother, who vows to seek out Simon and kill him as a badge of honor for his lost sister. The town, like the New England village in which *The Bell-Ringer* is set, is filled with anomalies, obstacles, and the cruel judgment of townsfolk, who harass and threaten Simon's parents, and seek to ruin the love affair of his sister, without truly understanding the nature of the situation. Though Simon eventually finds comfort and support with a nearby community of Shakers, who adopt him and defend his need to grow and learn, his true struggle is overcoming the imposed duties and priorities of his community. The Shakers in the story appear as true Believers of goodness, standing for forgiveness and the

power of the future, unlike the townspeople, who stand in judgment. While the townspeople ignore Simon's explanations and apologies, the Shakers listen to his pleas and unlock the key to his faith. Held in the strong support of the Shakers, Simon is able to find his true calling—to honor his faith—and, thus, submits to a beating by his finance's brother, forgiving both himself and his persecutor for their wrongs.

Unlike Sarah Orne Jewett, Harriet Beecher Stowe, or even William Dean Howells, Sears' fictionalized stories of New England deal exclusively with primitives. Jewett, who was also interested in backwater communities filled with quaint townies, used a first person narrator in *Country of the Painted Furs* to act as an "other," a counter point for the natives. Sears never used first-person narration, preferring to distance herself as a writer from her fictional characters. However, her agendas are still clearly visible in her choices of lead characters. By the time she wrote her last novel, *Whispering Pines: A Romance on a New England Hillside*, in 1930, Sears was hardened to the realities of modernism, but still invested in the stories of primitive New England. She hoped to "preserve" the characters she recalled in the story, whom she claimed to have known; she felt they "belong[ed] to the old picturesque days before the World War." The story is set in a time "before the automobile had crowded out the horse and wagon in the rural districts" when "the fever for speed" had not yet "attacked the farming population."<sup>81</sup> (Possibly before the construction of Route 2 had modernized Harvard?) By the end of the story, however, Sears imagines the town completely modernized; she writes of the village's "dingy little [train] station," overcrowded with too many visitors, "more and more pouring in every moment."<sup>82</sup> The plot, which explores a jealous uncle's relationship to his orphaned nephew, is truly a story of a rural



community's confrontations with the modern world. Upon returning from the agricultural college, Dave Hickson, the nephew, represents the modern man: over-educated, lazy, and, since his collegiate exposure, interested in the ever un-practical pursuit of art. His uncle, essentially a backwater farmer, is resentful of Dave's opportunities, distraught over the death of his sister, and reconciled to live a stubborn life; the uncle also holds "an unreasoning suspicion of modern methods coupled with a sudden overweening jealousy of his nephew's interference had taken firm hold upon the old man so that month after month was passing and things on the farm were pretty much at a standstill."<sup>83</sup> Modernization, at least in *Whispering Pines*, makes the poor and isolated farmers of New England greedy, skeptical, and hardened as well as utterly fearful of town judgment.

The uncle's sublimated feelings of shame, remembering the town's disapproval of his sister's painting career, arose as anger toward Dave, who painted in secret. The subplot of *Whispering Pines* involved a naïve and idyllic relationship between Dave and a young mountain girl reminiscent of a relocated Appalachian. Unlike Dave's town sweetheart, Marcia, who "had always lived within the narrow limits of the village,"<sup>84</sup> the mountain girl often went without shoes, continually had dirt smudged into her cheeks, and treated Dave as a specimen of cultivation:

'We wood folks don't bother to fix up same as you folks do,' she added after a pause with something like an attempt at apology.—We don't mix with your kind. We let the sun shine on us and the rain fall on us.—We don't mind dirt.—We claim it's only part o' the earth we tread on.'<sup>85</sup>

The simple appreciation of an uncultured and uncluttered sprite inspired Dave to continue painting, while her carefree spirit and role as 'other' (and 'primitive') allowed him to redefine himself outside of the town's narrow limits. Ultimately, Dave combines



his interest in art and farming, and creates a socially acceptable occupation as a landscape architect. In doing so, he abandons his friendship with the sprightly mountain girl, leaving the reader to wonder what happens to primitives once the dominant cultural eye turns inward.

### The Romanticization of the Simple

Sears' books, sold at the Fruitlands Museums shop, enjoyed only a limited readership, but from her personal letters it is clear that other antimodernists—especially her Boston cohort—read and responded to her literary work. Her life-long friend and childhood companion, Henry Cabot Lodge, the staunch nativist and conservative Republican senator from Massachusetts, wrote her immediately after he read *The Bell-Ringer: An Old-Time Village Tale*:

I am again struck by your penetrating knowledge and sympathetic comprehension of our native New Englander...I can think of no one who in literature, with the exception of Hawthorne, has felt and understood and depicted the strain of mysticism in the New Englander of the true old stock so admirably as you. You have also shown what is often overlooked.<sup>86</sup>

She also received letters from children who read her novels at the local YMCA, in English classes, and through the local library. Often, the young readers noted Sears' use of 'slang' dialogue, which they often found difficult to understand. Sears advised a careful use of slang when it was necessary to convey a sense of local color. "If they introduce a great deal of slang, for instance," Sears suggested to other writers,

it should be done with some subtlety and point, and not thrown into the story as if for want of something to say, or with a hope that it would give a sense of ease and sophistication which the writer fears her work lacks.<sup>87</sup>

Moreover, she encouraged an understanding of plain folk; she felt that she was “unearthing what I could of their lives and works,” and giving “another glimpse of the old days in New England”<sup>88</sup> in both her fiction and historical tracts.

Sears was particularly proud to be compared to Nathaniel Hawthorne, whose life had been devoted to the telling of New England stories, and whose style Sears’ yearned to emulate. Like Elizabeth Bishop Perkins, Sears wrote novels “founded on fact, but woven with imagination.”<sup>89</sup> Hawthorne, who built his literary career by probing the Puritan past, was associated with a penetrating ability to unlock the keys necessary to understand the New England mind. While his fiction was only acknowledged posthumously, by the time of Sears’ education New England culture was, in a sense, inextricably link to national culture; Hawthorne, Whittier, Emerson, and Thoreau were considered to be an *American* literature.<sup>90</sup> Sears felt honored, as though she had reached a level of absolute attainment once she was compared to Hawthorne; in a non-commissioned biography Sears often used as promotional literature for the museums, Harriet O’Brien wrote,

Miss Sears is truly mystical and in all her works there runs, like a delicately vibrating thread, an elusive spiritual quality which lingers long after her books have been laid aside. It is this delicate mysticism, coupled with the power of lending to the most usual occurrences a dramatic significance, that has caused her writings to be so frequently compared to Hawthorne.<sup>91</sup>

Her own press releases, presumably written by her publishers but approved by Sears, also harped on the similarities: “Not since Hawthorne has any writer so tellingly put into words the intangible eeriness that hangs like a breath of mist over so many of the village stories of old New England.” It was noted that despite her “individual style,” her



novels “suggested” Hawthorne and Mary E. Wilkins, a celebrated and widely-published Massachusetts local colorist.<sup>92</sup>

In 1918, in response to her first novel, Sears began a correspondence with Basil King, a Canadian novelist and clergyman. King called *The Bell-Ringer* “a very strong piece of work,—sober, romantic, full of the ‘dry’ poetry we get as a rule only from times that have been long matured.” Sears was so impressed with King’s assessment that she forwarded the letter to her publishers, who used it as advertising material. King later wrote to Ferris Greenslet at Houghton Mifflin, “I hope you will persuade Miss Sears to write a modern novel. I think she would bring to it distinctly a new note,—and a new outlook.” Greenslet responded to Sears, “What about a modern novel full of ‘dry’ poetry? We should be distinctly hospitable towards such a book from you.”<sup>93</sup>

Unfortunately, when Sears submitted her manuscript *Nephew Dave*, her first ‘modern’ novel, in 1926, Ferris Greenslet rejected its publication on the grounds of previously poor sales.<sup>94</sup>

In the wake of her friends’ successes, especially in turning manuscripts into motion pictures, Sears later printed the manuscript privately as *Whispering Pines*, but never pursued fiction writing again. After setbacks with her publishers, the circuit of reviews of her novels was tepidly discouraging. The *Boston Evening Transcript* praised her “enthusiastic research among relics of the queer people...[and] their sects and superstitions,” which allowed her to “give to her story, no doubt, the authentic ‘local color.’” It was noted that, in *The Bell-Ringer*, she wrote in the tradition of Howells and was clearly familiar with her subject, bringing it to light for those who did not have first-hand experience with rural life. The review carefully noted, however, that while



Sears was emulating the style of her revered forefathers of literature, she went above and beyond the tradition: “Hawthorne would never have condescended to reproduce the rustic Yankee dialect in his dialogue.”<sup>95</sup> A 1922 *New York Herald* review of *Fiddler’s Green* also noted “a slightly Hawthornesque quality,” with “a real touch of the mystical romance of a bygone New England.” Unfortunately, the reviewer noted, Sears seemed too intent on pushing the envelope of quaintness; the narration and tone “is keyed so high that it becomes shrill at the crises, and is overdone throughout.”<sup>96</sup>

Reviews of Sears’ historical works were equally mixed. In 1924, Judge Robert Grant, a childhood friend from Nahant and a published fictionalist, wrote of *Days of Delusion*, “This book is excellently done and adds another valuable chapter to your record of New England’s pathetic spiritual eccentricities.”<sup>97</sup> Ten years later, *The New York Times* called her a “sound, dependable writer on historic matters,” and suggested that “she has used her imagination in a wholly legitimate way,” by reconstructing “graphic and colorful scenes.”<sup>98</sup> However, writing for both professional and lay audiences in the first decades of the modern historical profession, Sears negotiated a fine line reconstructing her scenes. This was both a valuable asset and a liability. A reviewer noted that, by drawing on her own background in *The Great Powwow*,

Miss Sears writes in a readable style, with frequent touches of unconventionality and colloquialism. Perhaps her most outstanding and meritorious quality is that she is an entirely honest historian and tells some of the things that few writers about the Colonial times and frontier development ever admit concerning the customs of the whites in warfare with the Indians... She is open-minded and just—again, something that few writers have ever been.<sup>99</sup>

Others were less kind. “It is regrettable,” a review concluded, “that the author’s powers as a novelist and methods as an historian are not more advantageously displayed.

Literary critics are likely to condemn the style as juvenile... historians may well question the author's use of materials and object to some of her opinions." Known foremost as a collector, poet, and novelist of local color, Sears had difficulty gaining acceptance in professional history circles. *The New England Quarterly* noted that "Miss Sears's method is highly unhistorical," in part because her "prejudices and opinions" tended to "weaken the book." Her condescension was not lost on her contemporaries, many of whom traveled more widely, read more extensively, and knew a wider range of people. What she considered an honest depiction of quaint locality, reviewers saw as "idyllic pictures," falsifying what had already been accepted as fact.<sup>100</sup> What some saw as "open-minded and just" others saw as ignorant and debasing.

Although one can only speculate why Sears insisted on writing about topics with which she was barely acquainted, she built a reputation for her attention to preservation and her keen interest in artifacts. She belonged to as many groups devoted to New England antiquities as Boston writers. The Harvard Historical Society wrote that Sears was "a collector of the rare, the unusual, and the intrinsically beautiful and her home is a gracious place filled with treasures gathered throughout the world."<sup>101</sup> She served for many years as a trustee for the Society of the Preservation of New England Antiquities, with her Boston neighbor Appleton. Like Sears, Appleton's career was rooted in his own history, particularly his family home on Beacon Street.<sup>102</sup> Appleton's biographer



wrote that “at heart” for Appleton, the Colonial Revival trend “represented a longing for stability and roots” and acted as a “counterweight against the unwelcome, but seemingly inevitable, present.”<sup>103</sup> In a speech to the group, Sears outlined her own motives; “In this material age,” she warned, “we cannot afford to lose any details of so unique and picturesque a memory.”<sup>104</sup>



Figure 3: The Fruitlands Tea Room, opened 1935.  
Published courtesy of Fruitlands Museums, Harvard, Massachusetts.



## CHAPTER IV A JOURNEY INTO THE PAST

### Creating an Imagined Community

It was the post-Puritan sense of mystical spirituality that guided Sears through the further development of the museums while she also pursued her writing career. She told a reporter in 1930, at the opening of her Native American museum, that “All the quaint traditions of which we happen on reveal the spiritual and mental history of their time and so I think they should all be preserved.” The reporter noted that Sears was doing nothing for profit because she had “the true folklore spirit.”<sup>105</sup> The backbone of all Sears’ work was to acquire such a true folklore spirit. Her initial involvement in publishing, long before she opened Fruitlands or began building the Pergolas, was a tiny self-printed booklet of aphorisms and quotes from New Thought prophets like Emerson, Franz Anton Mesmer, and Prentice Mulford. New Thought, based on the metaphysical traditions of spiritual sensibility gained through mystical experience promoted the importance of mind over the body, especially with regard to self-healing. Like contemporary New Age practices, New Thought purported the use of hypnotism and the growth of internal spirituality. Not unlike many in her cohort, Sears sought to develop a responsive instinct for mysticism, which she believed grew out of the Puritan tradition. Sears’ interest in Mulford was so great that she was compelled to publish a compilation of his teachings in 1912; she culled pieces from his *White Cross Series*, written in the ever-spiritual enclave of Boston, and extracted advice on applying New Thought to everyday life.

These mystical leanings remained with Sears, a self-defined devout Episcopalian, throughout the rest of her life. She felt that her work on itinerant portrait

painters “drifted” into her life and aroused in her a desire to “unearth what I could of their lives and works, and give another glimpse of the old days in New England.”<sup>106</sup>

Concurrently, she pursued a curiosity in the Millerite craze which culminated in her 1924 treatise *Days of Delusion*. Her interest was specifically in the devout disciples of William Miller, a New York Baptist who predicted the end of the world would come in 1844. Prior to the expected millennium, Miller brought many followers to Harvard for a short period to seek a spiritual commune, not altogether unlike Bronson Alcott’s.

Following the Great Disappointment, when the world continued and no apocalypse occurred, many post-Disappointment believers formed the modern day Seventh Day Adventists. Sears showed compassion for the plight of the believers, depicting their devotion and disappointment. Through personal testimonies, records, and brief narrative, Sears compiled a story that examined a time when “the minds and souls of men and women respond[ed] in inverse ratio to undercurrents of mental and spiritual agitation.”<sup>107</sup> Though her title implies her feeling that Millerites were essentially deluded and misled by their leader, the naiveté of the group did not affect her reverence for their faith and perseverance.

Not long after the opening of the Shaker house in 1922, a construction worker on the property found an arrowhead while digging in a garden; this precipitated in Sears a vast curiosity concerning the presence of Native Americans in Harvard. Shortly thereafter she undertook an intensive investigation of the grounds, and began hunting throughout the region for ‘primitive’ antiques. Her archeological foray resulted not only in a collection of Native American artifacts culled from across the country, but also in another museum and accompanying book, *The Great Powwow: The Story of the*

*Nashaway Valley in King Phillip's War*. Like *Days of Delusion*, *The Great Powwow* traced with empathy and understanding the primitive beliefs of Native Americans in the New England area. Sears was credited for giving "literary expression to Nashaway Valley charms" and illustrating the "stirring events" of the Wampanoag, Pocasset, Nashaway, and Nipmuck in seventeenth century colonial Massachusetts.<sup>108</sup> Fascination with Native Americans, a theme which cropped up time and again in nativist and nationalist movements since the first such movement in 1840, was something Sears had been raised to understand. Her descriptions paint an idyllic picture of the primitive life of Indians amidst wigwams and Puritan settlers. In *The Great Powwow*, Sears somewhat radically suggested that colonists, because of poor communication and fear, never truly understood that the native "Great Spirit was ... the same in majesty and might as God Almighty."<sup>109</sup>

To accompany the Indian Museum, which opened to the public in 1930, Sears purchased a statue of a "splendidly-poised figure of an Indian, standing firmly and looking into the sky after the arrow, which he has shot from the bow."<sup>110</sup> Sculpted by her cousin, Philips Sears, Pumuangwet (He-Who-Shoots-the-Stars) was not set on a pedestal, but on a native Nashua Valley rock. In *The Great Powwow*, Sears depicted young braves sent to "shoot upward at the stars," and, to her, Pumuangwet represented aspiration and attainment, as well as intense focus and agility.<sup>111</sup> At an unveiling ceremony, Sears orchestrated processions of local Boy Scouts and invited Native Americans, including chiefs in headdresses holding peace-pipes. 'Authentic' music was provided that stirred the crowd to tears; Sears wrote of the ceremony, "I shall never forget the strange sound of that drum. It had a sound of a wild Clan about it. Those



inside told me that it made the goose flesh rise on them when the sound of it struck the air.” Wo Peen, a Pueblo artist, and Chief Buffalo Bear, an imported Sioux leader, chanted invocations “Summoning the Lights,” requesting the spirits to make holy the grounds of the museum(“May it be Holy Mellow Ground”). Sears and her guests “stood as if transfixed.”<sup>112</sup>



Figure 4: The Unveiling of Pumuangwet, 1930. Published courtesy of Fruitlands Museums, Harvard, Massachusetts.

C. Vann Woodward has noted that “short on historical antiquity, countries such as the United States take pride in geological antiquity, primeval wilderness, or primitive aborigines.”<sup>113</sup> Sears, who inherently had much in the way of genealogical antiquity but lacked a firm societal ground on which to stand, strove to understand the wilderness of Harvard and the ancient aborigines who had populated the countryside. Her later interests, though pursued with much less fervor than her earlier undertakings, still retained an interest in the primitive; in 1940 she opened a picture gallery filled with American folk art, with a specific interest in the ‘primitive movement’ and in the work

of itinerant folk artists in New England. She also collected the work of the Hudson River Valley artists—filling a gallery with sweeping paintings of vast scenes encompassing an enormous and vivid landscape. Following the lead of Electra Havemeyer Webb and Isabella Stewart Gardner, she created not only an eclectic and diverse collection in her museums, but also one inspired by the unique, the authentic, and the natural.

### The Reproduction of New England

Material historians theorize that collectors, as they select and sequence objects, create self-defining material narratives; the meaning and importance of any single object always depends upon its relationship to a larger collection of artifacts.<sup>114</sup> The imagined terrains of a display also significantly juxtapose and relate objects, giving an overall meaning not necessarily inherent in the individual object itself in isolation. In displaying objects for public consumption, the collector also presents an artifactual autobiography, indicating a schema or polity, and codifying an agenda. If collections in museums can be interpreted as micro-narratives, the story they tell is interwoven with the story of the collector; a critical understanding the collector's intentions, experiences, and longings helps to structure museum displays as a form of cultural production.

As Karal Ann Marling has rightly suggested, anything as vague as a stretch of time, like “the notoriously elastic colonial epoch,” can signify nearly anything to any commentator “with a pressing need to find particular messages in history.”<sup>115</sup> Relatedly, collectors—and particularly those involved in the Colonial Revival—used these vague moments in time to reassert antiquated cultural norms. In this context, it is also



important to keep in mind Alan Axelrod's important theory that "the decision to colonialize is always an act of choices—an effort grounded in intention—and a choice necessarily made over other choices."<sup>116</sup> The critical impulse of the Colonial Revival was the power of nostalgia, the emotional feeling that idealizes a past frozen in unchanging perfection. In fact, until the twentieth century, the term nostalgia was used as a medical term to connote a condition of homesickness. Coined by a German physician in 1678, nostalgia existed as a form of homesickness among a group of Swiss mountaineers geographically relocated to isolated lowlands. Symptoms included a loss of appetite, irregular breathing, and frequent sighing, unnatural reserve and silence, and vague feelings of unrest, compounded by an overwhelming desire to return home.<sup>117</sup> It was only at the beginning of the twentieth century that nostalgia took on its modern cultural definitions of a wistful yearning for the irrevocable past.

The nostalgia embodied by early-twentieth century antimodernists, therefore, was a backward glance, a drive toward the romantic past. For the elite, it was the great polarization of society, the destruction of a homogenous culture, that most threatened social stability. Nativism—the fear of strangers and the unknown—accumulated, mounting into a distrust, hatred, and an eventual escape. Barrett Wendell, an outspoken contemporary of Sears and a fellow Brahmin, lamented, "We are vanishing into provincial obscurity...American has swept from our grasp. The future is behind us."<sup>118</sup>

A fascination with the nebulous Colonial era, re-imagined by late-nineteenth century idealizations of a Puritan epoch, was one in which hard work, dutiful spirit, and civic responsibility created a solid and good community. For Sears and her contemporaries, who had experienced not only the relative tranquility of the Gilded Age but also the



upheaval of the First World War, nostalgia was a collective experience, a longing for a past never experienced and often devoid of incident; it also fueled the study of the simple, the typical, and the normal, and resisted an interest in the idiosyncratic.<sup>119</sup> The Colonial Revival also served as a marketing tool and an economic opportunity: entrepreneurs peddled antiques, as well as reproductions of furniture, artwork, pewter spoons, and quaint New England towns catered to regional tourism. It was an emergence of an era Marling calls “deluxe Puritanism.”<sup>120</sup>

It was within this climate of deluxe Puritanism that Sears created the Fruitlands Museums as a tribute to the New England past. By the turn of the twentieth century, Boston had an established tradition of commemoration and display. Beginning in the 1870s, small museums were founded throughout New England with surprisingly democratic motives—primarily to serve and educate the public.<sup>121</sup> They served mainly as memorials or educational displays. However, the feature that bound together the disparate collection of museums that opened in the early twentieth century was their “mystique of preservation,” which was evoked through “nostalgic lamentations over the price of progress and the disappearance of familiar landmarks.”<sup>122</sup> Fruitlands flourished during the same period Colonial Williamsburg was restored and established as a tourist destination, at the same time Henry Ford created Greenfield Village. The 1920s ushered in a renewed interest in the local, and museums became preeminent destinations.

To the credit of Clara Endicott Sears, the creation of the Fruitlands Museums combined a variety of innovative elements, from literature and local history to religiosity and art, and invoked an atmosphere of higher learning and attunement to ‘great vibrations.’ As a museum, the creation of Fruitlands predated Henry Ford’s

interest in the Wayside Inn, Henry and Helen Flynt's great undertaking at Historic Deerfield, John D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s investment in Colonial Williamsburg, and Albert Wells' creation of Sturbridge Village. The use of evocative sentiment and interest in inspiration punctuate the differences between Fruitlands and other living history villages. As an exemplar of efficacy, and an accomplished woman among well-known men, Sears used her inherited wealth to establish a personal collection which ultimately outlived the collector.

The early docents hired by Sears to chaperone guests—mostly faculty of Wellesley on summer vacation—were handpicked for their financial stability, personal cleanliness, knowledge of New England history, and ability to digest and repeat her books “by rote.” “One must be very careful who is chosen for guides,” Sears wrote to the museum trustees in 1930. Mrs. Ward, one prized guide who stayed on for many summers, originally declined her salary, as she felt working with transcendentalism was payment enough; “Of course I did not allow her to do that,” Sears wrote, “but it showed how the more educated feel about the whole project.”<sup>123</sup> Docents often returned summer after summer, living in the Fruitlands farmhouse and giving tours to motorists who happened through Harvard.

As Sears had designed the Museums, there was no cohesive narrative displayed to unify and thread the various collections together. Each museum acted as an independent and isolated unit. Despite the lack of an active dialogue between the museums, to Sears the cohesion was simple: not only were the houses the product of her collecting efforts and the physical embodiments of the Past, each reflected a particular



facet of New England. The overarching theme, then, of the Fruitlands Museums, as a unit, was the canvas on which they were placed: the pastoral New England landscape. The combination of the buildings on the property of Fruitlands was, in some ways, a village recreation—an attempt to place Native Americans, Puritan fundamentalists, transcendental scholars, zealous Millerites, New England primitives, and simple Shakers together in a mutually beneficial working environment, both alike and dissimilar to the foundations of the region. On the grounds, the Native Americans were seated between the Transcendentalists and the folk artists, and across the street from the Shakers. Though the groups rarely interacted, they shared a common central location with a main street.

As she formed the museums, Sears also created something of a sacred landscape on the grounds, imposing pastures, brooks, and orchards onto a distinctively New England hill geography. In a catalogue of the museums, Prospect Hill was described “as if New England had sought some one place in which she might distill the very essence of her peculiar beauty.”<sup>124</sup> This geography clearly served as an advantage for the museums, with their picturesque quality placed amid the natural world. Sears’ initial decision to purchase land on Prospect Hill in Harvard was undoubtedly influenced by the view it afforded. Strategically positioned to overlook the Nashua River Valley, the view at Fruitlands commanded as much attention as the museum itself. Reviews of her books, reports in local newspapers about events at Fruitlands, and visitor accounts noted the picturesque view time and again. What made the view remarkable was not just the beauty of the Nashua Valley, or how far one could see into New Hampshire; it was also a view of the rural landscape of pastoral New England. Sears developed what Dona



Brown has called “the cult of romantic scenery.”<sup>125</sup> Sears proudly noticed how many guests were affected by the view: “It is amusing to watch the faces of those who have never been here before. The view and the surroundings take their breath away.”<sup>126</sup> A reviewer wrote of motorists being physically “struck by the beauty.”<sup>127</sup> Likewise, Sears was praised time and again for her fortunate sensitivity to beauty and keen awareness for choosing an estate in such a sublime valley.<sup>128</sup>

While she did not actively advocate the grounds be used as a museum themselves, Sears was aware of a power of place; “One idea to keep in mind,” she told the trustees, “is that all these points of nature which are so wonderful should in some way be made use of for the public.”<sup>129</sup> Sears dealt with her own idealization of the New England village landscape in at least two pivotal ways. First, by abandoning Boston and placing herself in Harvard, she escaped the burgeoning industrial urban complex. This voluntary exile enabled Sears to devote her energy into ‘getting back to the land’ in the company of simpler people, in a landscape that *looked* more like what she imagined New England should resemble.<sup>130</sup> Stephen Nissenbaum has suggested that in Harvard Sears “could maintain her social authority within the republic polity”<sup>131</sup> and remain an elite even in a changing society. Second, Sears idealized the region in far more creative ways; from 1910 onward, she systematically reinvented her Harvard property to convey a picture of a New England landscape that had never existed. In 1914, when she purchased a neighboring property, complete with the 1735 farmhouse of Joseph Atherton, she immediately had the house and barns razed to create open meadows for a clearer view and more maintained, carefully landscaped property.<sup>132</sup>

The management of her Harvard property was an on-going battle for Sears. She instructed her caretaker to be vigilant in “cutting back the forest growth that threatens us at all times.” Her acreage, encompassing an entire hillside, began with the Pergolas at the highest elevation and dipped down the valley to the Nashua River. Many of the trees were cleared when she purchased the property, as the land had been used almost exclusively as cattle pasturage. The cult of that scenery was not lost on Sears; “We have here a very beautiful view that draws people ... It could easily be marred by carelessness.” Such a bare (and unnatural) landscape, however, required constant maintenance, as though vegetation had a mind of its own:

It seems as though vegetation was conscious of its power to creep over the ground unnoticed by man until there comes an awakening that little by little the forests are growing up around one like a sort of parasite that smothers all the breathing spaces and closes them up,—changing the lay of the land,—impairing the view and altering the whole aspect of the surroundings. I am especially sensitive to this, and am ever on the watch, for I have seen places lose their beautiful views...<sup>133</sup>

Long after Sears’ death, the museums still struggled to keep the view clear. As late as 1978, the Report of the Land’s Committee requested that excess trees be cut down as soon as possible and the lawns mowed, “as it was in Miss Sears’ day.”<sup>134</sup> (Today, the curators of the museums have acknowledged the significance of the outdoor world at Fruitlands. An archaeological dig site is open to the public, and walking trails zigzag through the wooded and pasture areas. Selective deforestation is also a continual problem for the strategic view, especially for paying guests of the Tea Room. Excess trees are shorn and sold to support the continual maintenance of the facilities.)

Sears strategically designed picnic areas at the peak of her scenic overlook to entice motorists to enjoy the view and stay to visit the museums—what Raymond



Williams would have termed “conspicuous aesthetic consumption.”<sup>135</sup> This temporary sale of premier property to tourists and voyeurs continually reinforced and solidified the social authority of the elite, and drew patrons to Harvard. The creation of the Prospect House tea room and terrace in 1935, a long-held dream of Sears, was the ultimate use of her landscape and strategic scenery. Her travels in Europe had taken her to many tearooms located to enhance the view for visitors. Designed as a resting spot for journeyers, as well as a place of refreshment for museum tourists, the tearoom acted as a centralized meeting area and main building on the grounds. The terrace of the tearoom, an elegant outdoor seating area, showed off the view from the highest elevation of the property accessible to visitors. Serving “simple enough” refreshment, so as to “not attract an undesirable type,”<sup>136</sup> Sears hoped local residents and summer visitors would also use the tearoom as a meeting area. She brought in the head chef at the Harvard Red Cross Tea Room (which subsequently closed) and decorated the area with items culled from her European trips.<sup>137</sup> Fruitlands existed not only as a tourist destination, but also as an “imagined ‘old New England’ of small towns [and] rural virtues,” which “formed an increasingly attractive antidote to the new industrial city.”<sup>138</sup> Moreover, Sears forced the cohabitation of Native Americans and Shakers, an effort to join a utopian commune an ideal of aboriginal simplicity with a religion unable to sustain itself, complete with a fully trimmed village green.



## CHAPTER V CHANGES IN THE LANDSCAPE

### The Arrival of the Modern

It was the threatened devastation of the landscape at the Fruitlands Museums that eventually bound together the disparate elements on the grounds. It was their collective role as part of the pastoral Fruitlands that united the museums against the onslaught of a common enemy, the 1916-17 construction of the Camp Devens Army facility in nearby Ayer, Massachusetts. Built as the temporary training camp for the Nashua River valley, the base served nearly four million soldiers preparing for the First World War.<sup>139</sup> Located just northwest of the Pergolas and the Fruitlands Museums, Camp Devens deeply scarred Sears' carefully constructed view. The town of Harvard ultimately lost more than five thousand acres to the fort, including some acreage from Sears' property. Through eminent domain, the government forced local residents to abandon farmlands and homes; many of these estates had belonged to families for more than a century.<sup>140</sup> In 1920, the town of Harvard voted to discontinue the maintenance of all town roads within the limits of Camp Devens, despite the continued residence of a handful of town residents. Many in Harvard, while supportive of the war effort represented by the facility, were dismayed by the continued disturbance the influx of military personnel created and refused to participate in camp efforts. The Harvard Historical Society published a town history in 1940 that listed all the town properties usurped at market value by the Army during the initial construction and later expansions of the camp, as well as the loss of key rail lines connecting Harvard to the nearby towns of Groton and Ayers.<sup>141</sup> The combination of the war and Fruitlands' proximity to Camp Devens dramatically affected Sears and the museums:

The building up of the Fort has raised so many questions that one never dreamed of before. We all felt so safe in the peaceful surroundings of the Nashua Valley. I am afraid those happy days will never come back. Already the Fort has acquired 136,542 acres of land in and around the valley, and is still reaching out for more.<sup>142</sup>

Despite these fears and intrusions, Sears and other Harvard residents did their best to appease those in power at the camp. At the Pergolas, she entertained officers of the general's staff throughout the summer of 1918, and was then invited to luncheon at the general's quarters at the Camp.

As the presence of the army continued and showed no signs of abating, Sears grew weary of the intrusion. By 1931, the camp had become a permanent installation designed to serve as both an induction and demobilization site and redesignated Fort Devens. It continued to draw resources and land from Harvard and from Sears, in particular, whose land-holdings dropped by at least one hundred acres. As the camp grew to accommodate the summer training of soldiers, particularly in response to threats of the another World War, soldiers were found repeatedly on the grounds of the Fruitlands Museums.<sup>143</sup> The docents complained of soldiers loitering and drinking alcohol. They also frantically called the police on newly installed phone lines one night when an African American soldier knocked on their door late one evening, thinking fellow soldiers were using the house to host a party. In 1930, the resident maintenance man of the properties reported seeing soldiers lounging in the pastures throughout the summer, and by the fall it was clear soldiers were frequently breaking into the Fruitlands farmhouse to host card parties.<sup>144</sup> Ten years later, problems with Fort Devens had not abated; Sears wrote in her "General Report" that "the great numbers of soldiers form a danger which no one should disregard."<sup>145</sup>

That same year, in 1941, Sears was issued a Trespass Rights Agreement by the federal government, and required her to turn over another 200 acres, some of which contained Bronson Alcott's "Sacred Grove." In a letter to the Trustees, Sears wrote, "It was, I can assure you, a knockout blow when I received notice that the Government required me to turn over more of my land." Sears protested the government's right to procure property of historic value and petitioned to have the land returned after the war: "But they said that Fort Devens was here to stay... I have a strange feeling that the members of the little community of Fruitlands are looking out from those western windows, aghast at what they see."<sup>146</sup> Rumors spread through Boston that Sears was losing all her property, including the Pergolas; society columns in the Nashua Valley printed the sad news only to later print corrections.

The next year, 1942, proved to be an even worse year for Sears; she arrived in Harvard to visit the grounds in spring to find officers scouting the area around her house. Soon, a notice was delivered from the Massachusetts Road Commission, which planned to run a road through Sears' rock garden. Sears worried "whether little by little they planned to take bit by bit as came handy, and leave me only with the shell of what once was mine."<sup>147</sup>

Apparently, the Government can tell you to get out of your house and you have no choice but to obey. Very likely the moderns call this 'the march of progress!' It's a march all right, but whether of progress remains to be seen.<sup>148</sup>

As damaging as the threat of government appropriation of her land was, Sears was also dismayed by the personal restrictions placed on the general public. She was distressed with "heavier taxes to meet, the ever-growing Community fund, the rationing of foodstuffs." She was most concerned, though, about what she called "the drastic



restricting of gasoline for motors” which caused a “complete shut down on pleasure driving.”<sup>149</sup> Indeed, low attendance during the war years was directly attributable to the rationing of gasoline. Like the affects of government acquisition of historical property, the curbing of pleasure driving had the affect of keeping patrons from visiting the museums and enjoying the full range of their inspirational spirit.

While Sears acquired land to enhance her views and the value of her Fruitlands property, her neighbor and counterpart Fiske Warren fundamentally challenged the town of Harvard, actively protesting the development of Fort Devens, running for local offices, and building a summer cottage with luxuries that put the Pergolas to shame. Like Sears, Warren was a shrewd investor who bought up the land surrounding his home, the Hutch; by the 1910s, Warren owned hundreds of acres throughout Harvard. His most lasting contribution to the town was civic-minded: he implemented a radical system whereby he leased his land back to town residents, experimentally implementing a single-tax enclave based on the ‘economic rent’ principles of Henry George. By the time of his death in 1938, he owned all of the property that had formally housed the Harvard Shaker community, and was leasing dozens of farms on Bare Hill.<sup>150</sup>

Both Warren and Sears clearly epitomized the eccentricity of the relocated in Harvard, which for half of the year functioned as a Boston summer club. Both responded to modern change with passion; most importantly, both were reactive. Each represented the extremes of Brahmin political engagement; their generation of Brahmins, now in its death throes, came of age as their class divided into conservative and radical camps. They saw their parents’ Republican Party divide and fracture, and lived through a series of Democratic upheavals as the Irish mayors won elections and

began to structurally reconfigure the city. Both sides of the Republican divide had some degree of interest in a public provision to civilize. Sears' atavistic nativism became a latent belief in political exclusionism and lead to clannish retreat. Warren's paternalistic reforms meanwhile lead toward support for Progressivism and a conviction in the power of the modern state.

### The Language of Denial

The instillation of Fort Devens was not, however, the greatest blow to the operations of the Fruitlands Museums. Instead, what ultimately shattered Sears' pristine location was the construction of a major highway, U.S. Route 2, which cut across Massachusetts connecting Boston and Albany. Sears was again required to relinquish land to government works projects. This time she was mandated to sell more acres to the construction of the Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge, which was established in conjunction with Route 2.<sup>151</sup> In the early nineteenth century, the Union Turnpike had crossed through Harvard in a straight line from the town's eastern boundary to Prospect Hill and down the Steep Slope, slicing across the property on which Fruitlands sits today. Another major road, called the "Intervale Way of the Pioneers," ran through the Nashua River valley, alongside railroad tracks completed in 1846. However, by 1933, the stations were used only to handle freight shipments from Boston, and passenger service was abandoned.<sup>152</sup> Early in the 1940s, many Massachusetts developers were anxious for a major east-west highway connecting Boston to Western Massachusetts and New York state. The ideal route proposed mirrored the old turnpike which had cut through the northern part of town near Stow Leg.



Although only two families were displaced by the highway, construction of the road and its right-of-way obliterated numerous scenic areas. Long-time residents of Harvard had mixed reactions to the economic and demographic impacts attributed to the opening of Route 2; some in the community predicted the growth of service industries in Harvard, hoping to offset a post-war stagnant economy, the resulting rapid population increase, and continued emigration from Harvard. However, none of the expected supermarkets, banks, and retail shops materialized. Instead, like the earlier impact of the railroad in Harvard, residents saw a facilitated flight from town. Route 2 made it easier to drive elsewhere to shop, bank, and conduct business.<sup>153</sup> The highway also forced local residents to again sell precious property to the government. Sears lost not only access to the Nashua River with the development of Route 2, but she was also deprived of one of her most critically important possessions, her view. Both the military camp and traffic from the highway were visible from the highest points on her property.

Sears was particularly dismayed when rocks were blasted and trees removed to make way for the road. She thought that creating a uniform height for the highway, by raising and lowering ground levels, diminished the local “character” of the road. “I am beginning to feel strangely numb about it all. The old blessed sense of security has gone” she wrote in 1941.<sup>154</sup> Sears was not alone in her feeling of displacement with the construction of the road, nor was she the only Harvard resident who noticed the connection between the construction of Route 2 and the seeming permanence of Fort Devens. “All day long and most of the night the army goes over the road,” she groaned. “I wake up to hear the rumble of army lorries and tanks and guns, hurrying to some place of rendezvous.”<sup>155</sup> Residents of Harvard saw the highway, at least in part, as a



thoroughfare for Fort Devens, and linked its construction with the intrusion of the war and the end of quaint times.

In 1941, Sears wrote a poem detailing what appears to be the Harvard portion of Route 2. Perhaps residents of Harvard saw the highway as a thoroughfare for Fort Devens; they also saw the road as an major encroachment of the modern world. "Road Builders" was essentially a poetic ode to the construction of the road; Sears chronicles the toil of the "swarthy men" who dug without credit, and the march of soldiers who would undoubtedly use the road to access Fort Devens. The bitter tone of the poem suggests that the patriotism of World War One had already disappeared for Sears. "We are the builders of roads," she wrote,

In the scorching sun  
'til the day is done  
We build the roads  
For others to walk on,-  
For soldiers to march on,-  
For canon to roll on.

Regiments pass by.  
We stand at salute.  
No one asks why.

While it is obvious that she was not one of the toilers herself, Sears felt directly involved in the formation of Route 2. Once the workers had gone, she wrote, the dust would remain and settle into her land. The encroachment of the road and the soldiers, and, moreover, the encroachment of the modern, confused and confounded her effort to grip the past so tightly at Fruitlands. The ambience she was sure existed in the original Fruitlands farmhouse faded as the trucks made clear that the modern world had reached

Harvard. Using an ageless religious vernacular in the second stanza of “Road Builders,” Sears moralized the construction, forcing her conviction that those who sought the modern, who “pass by swiftly,” were out of touch with the vibrations of the spirit of the world.

To the powers responsible for the designing the road (the government, a Devens general? It is unclear), Sears wrote,

You are building a highway  
On which tired Man  
Can pass by swiftly and  
Fearlessly on his goal  
Like the long unseen Path  
On which travels his soul.  
For we all have a road  
To build,-each one and all.  
Some build their road crooked  
On which men will fall,-  
But some build their's straight  
With signs pointing towards Heaven.<sup>156</sup>

Her proclamation “we all have a road/ To build” allowed individual recognition of life goals and direction, although Sears was clearly frustrated with those who made the wrong choices. Such an ongoing confrontation with progress suffused her prose as well as poetry, and she frequently turned to religiosity and local stories in the hopes of leading the reader down the right, proper, and “straight” highways.

Sears’ ultimate point, however, was that the construction of the road interrupted her pristine images of life in Harvard. While the road obstructed her view of the depths of the valley, and subsumed large chunks of land she worked for years to acquire, Sears was most distraught that her own powers over the environment were slipping away. She was forced to decide whether, with this stage of intrusion, she needed to retreat further

into the rural. “There are others,” she wrote, “besides The armed forces of men Who will travel this road.”

Possibly Sears’ best known piece of writing was a sentimental, patriotic poem, “The Unfurling of the Flag,” which was set to music as an anthem during World War I. Written on April 6, 1917, the eve of America’s involvement in the war, the poem reminded good citizens to honor their flag and nation. She sent copies of the hymn to churches through the United States and Great Britain as prayer to help the war effort and bring about peace. The poem, which glossed over most of the crucial elements of the international conflict creating the war, was a call to symbolic action only:

Can you see the flashing emblem  
Of our Country’s high ideal?  
Keep your lifted eyes upon it  
And draw joy and courage from it,  
For it stands for what is real  
Freedom’s calling  
To the falling  
From oppression’s hard decrees.  
It’s the flag we’ve named Old Glory  
You see floating in the breeze.<sup>157</sup>

The war marked the call to arms that rocked Sears’ world, and it remained the only contemporary national event she wrote about. Rising fuel price slowed attendance at Fruitlands, and a pervasive national attitude of mourning kept vacationers from visiting her grounds. However, the fame she received from “The Unfurling of the Flag” was not lost on Sears. She dedicated the poem to the soldiers abroad, but took great pleasure in retelling the story of her inspiration to write the poem on many occasions, lecturing at luncheons and accepting awards for her duty. Despite her minimal efforts, Sears was no staunch supporter of the Great War. She and her nemesis Fiske Warren, who loudly advocated pacifism and anti-imperialism, were not so different. Like many elite



Americans, Sears hoped for an end to United States interest in the rest of the world; while she did not advocate state-sanctioned domestic reform efforts, she was distraught that her tax money was supporting exterior interests. She also found the brutality of war and the casualty of innocent youth unconscionable. For the rest of her life, Sears continued to see the beginning of the war as the dividing line between the old, simple life, and the new, modern life.

In the ominous years leading up to the beginnings of U.S. involvement in World War II, Sears adamantly refused to believe rumors of another international conflict. Though by that point she resolved that the world had, indeed, changed and that modern life was inescapable, she was certain a second war would have a detrimental affect on the museums. Fuel shortages and an effort to clamp down on pleasure-motoring in Massachusetts significantly altered museum attendance. Her resolve that, though inadvertently, the First World War had brought Americans together, in the Puritan sense of civic obligation, allowed her to persevere through the Second World War. By the outbreak of U.S. involvement in the second war, Sears was in her late seventies, and was, by that point, more preoccupied with keeping the museums afloat than rallying for peace and orchestrating canning and evaporating clubs. For Sears, it wasn't until the fall of 1954 that she was finally prompted to take aggressive action regarding her grievances with the government. At that time she began a prolonged correspondence with officials at Fort Devens, complaining to General Einar Gjølsteen about the toll the base had taken on Fruitland;

As I have spent over forty years, much research, and a great deal of money in developing this historic site, I am much distressed to have such disturbance within a short distance of the museums, to which some 10,000 visitors come each year... During the summer, tanks made excessive noise, so loud that visitors complained and guides were frequently stopped in their lectures because they could not make themselves heard above the din. Now, within the last week, heavy firing takes place practically at our door. In addition, we find that without any consultation with us telephone wire has been laid over our fields. Further, army vehicles frequently drive in our grounds. No army personnel has asked or received permission to do either of these.<sup>158</sup>

Despite her admonitions, the Army did not back down and Sears was relegated to fighting a rear-guard action. Just as her creation of the museum had been an attempt to hold on to an imagined past, her efforts to safeguard the museums amounted to an ill-fated effort to stem the tide of modernity.



Figure 5: The Fruitlands Farmhouse, circa 1920. Published courtesy of Fruitlands Museums, Harvard, Massachusetts.



## CHAPTER VI CONCLUSIONS

Today, the Fruitlands Museums have partially changed their focus and are striving to reflect their greatest, but most under-used, asset: the “largely untouched landscape” surrounding the buildings. Many of the 210 acres which remain from the initial 400 acres Sears purchased in 1910 were fundamentally underutilized by the museums. However, recent preliminary examinations on a far corner of the property found the remains of a brick factory, a water works system, and workers’ housing, visible evidence of the site’s unspoken industrial past. They also found indications that a turnpike had run through the property as early as 1805, forty years before the construction of the Worcester and Nashua Railroad. Like the misinformed travel writer, Sears never knew of the commercial character of the land she so assiduously tried to remake into a mythical rural New England landscape. This alternate story of the property only came to light after her death in 1960, which was followed almost immediately by razing the Pergolas. All of these developments require a further reexamination of differences between the Fruitlands Sears hoped to create and the land that existed for many people in many different eras. In 2000, the director of the museum, resolved to grow Fruitlands into “a museum of the New England landscape,” and expanded its mission to include the use of the buildings and collections as well as the property, in a way it had previously neglected; the goal, she said, was “to tell the story of how human beings have shaped, and been shaped by, this piece of Massachusetts countryside.”<sup>159</sup>



## The Legacies of Clara Endicott Sears

Lears maintains that antimodernism amounted to more than the backward-looking, atavistic death throes of an entrenched New England elite unable or unwilling to come to terms with the raw, unsettling forces of modern industrial America. Instead, “as influential shapers of the dominant American culture, their private struggles had (often unintended) public consequences.”<sup>160</sup> Antimodernists helped to usher in the transition at a critical historical moment. A *New York Sun* article in 1941 noted that

Clara Endicott Sears seems to regard the past as having been lived chiefly for the benefit of the future. The present she regards as a convenient work season arranged for her by future time in which she can make the future still more aware of the past.<sup>161</sup>

Sears, like many of her contemporaries, was worried that the ambience of bygone days and the essence of Brahmin life were fading into the distance, obscured by the hustle and bustle of the modern world. Her attachment to her familial, cultural, and class heritage only gained intensity as challenges to her status sharpened. Her pious attempt to preserve the past and give the public an opportunity to “tune their ears to the faint vibrations of former days,” so that they might “still feel the thrill of them and catch the sound of the receding voices” to some degree succeeded.<sup>162</sup> The Fruitlands Museums, the first piece of which Sears opened nearly a century ago, still stand as a monument to the legacy of New England’s brief experiments with collective living, as well as the diverse groups who sought spirituality and simplistic living. Sears’ decisions essentially reflect a common impulse among her cohort—the drive of the wealthy to support the development of regional identities and the reinvention of the New England village, and, in her specific case, to integrate regional communal and spiritual groups into a homogenized and digestible specimen of mutual interdependence and pastoral peace. In

her backhanded attempt to demonstrate how fringe groups were assimilated into the New England past, she laid out a program to foist elite taste on her humble country neighbors and acculturate her “swarthy workers.”

To her contemporaries in both Boston and Harvard Sears was an oddity—a woman who “in bearing and manner epitomizes all that is best in the tradition of early New England,” but who “rather than be a part of the exclusive social world that is rightfully hers,” chose instead “to live quietly at the Pergolas in Harvard.”<sup>163</sup> Sears evolved out of a community with an increasingly limited world view, and she was quick, like many in her cohort, to sentimentalize the past, particularly to create a pastoral and antimodern image of a past she had surely never experienced and one that may have existed only in her impassioned dreams and imaginings. However, recent scholarship makes it clear that although Sears was a reclusive writer, collector, and curator, she was not so different from her peers as she might have thought. In fact, it appears that Sears adhered very closely to dominant cultural trends, as she collected antiques, bought her Harvard property, and built an early American “provincial” summer home while a colonial revival gained steam throughout the nation. That the trend seemed to be centered around the reestablishment of New England as the birthplace of American culture only increased its significance for Sears. She must have lived, like her Boston relatives, in constant fear of the decay of Anglo-Puritan traditions and values amidst the post-bellum industrial boom, the continual stream of immigrants into the country (and specifically into Massachusetts), and the accelerated urbanization of cities such as Boston. In response to this fear, New England revived its own image as a picture of puritanical simplicity, homogeneity, and Anglo-Saxon heritage. Sears

valued quaint maritime villages, such as her grandparents' version of Salem, as much as she sought pre-industrial, antimodern, pastoral landscapes.<sup>164</sup>

Through family solidarity, an invocation of a rural work ethic, distrust of bureaucracy, and omnipresent quest for mysticism, Sears can be seen as a pivotal antimodernist. Her museums represent, as her biography epitomizes, a generation's longings for physical, moral, and spiritual regeneration, in the preservation of a self-edifying past. As her elite status noticeably dissipated, Sears, like many women, designed herself a custodian of the past, which allowed her some degree of authority and influence. The Fruitlands Museums, her innovative contribution to the preservation movement, remained the crowning glory of her achievement. "I am tenacious never to allow the place to become vulgarized," she wrote,

and by that I mean to resemble many resorts and public parks that are throughout the country with their swings and their tilting boards and their merry-go-rounds and a general appearance of holiday relaxation. This must always be a place where thinkers can come and find an atmosphere that is appealing to them... [A]ll kinds should come to seek the place as one to deepen their powers of thinking... There are many places in this country the public can meet. There are public parks given over to recreation. This place is not meant for recreation. It is meant for inspiration... It must always remain more or less like a poem.<sup>165</sup>





Figure 6: Sears posing for a colonial pageant in Salem, 1870. Published courtesy of Fruitlands Museums, Harvard, Massachusetts.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Clara Endicott Sears, from "Letter to Trustees [of the Fruitlands Museums]," July 30, 1930. "These museums are not merely collections of objects of historical value. The objects are there, but back of all that there must be the atmosphere that goes with each one of the houses. This place is not meant for recreation. It is meant for inspiration." Fruitlands Museum Archives.

<sup>2</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. *The Bell-Ringer: An Old-Time Village Tale*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, Co., 1918. p. vi.

<sup>3</sup> Virginia Wolff. "Character in Fiction." *The Essays of Virginia Wolff, Vol. III. 1919-1924*. Andrew McNeillie, ed. San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1988. p. 420.

<sup>4</sup> See Christine Stansell. *American Moderns: Bohemian New York and the Creation of a New Century*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000. Prologue, pp. 1-10.

<sup>5</sup> See Babette Faehmel. "'We Must Carry the Torch for a New Future': College Women and the Men they dated in an Age of Doubt, 1940-1953." Working Paper prepared for the North American Sexualities Conference, April 25, 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Jack Tager and John W. Ifkovic, eds. *Massachusetts in the Gilded Age: Selected Essays*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1985. p. 9.

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- <sup>7</sup> Dona Brown. *A Tourist's New England: Travel Fiction, 1820-1920*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1999. p. 12.
- <sup>8</sup> Sam Bass Warner. *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900*. Cambridge, MA, 1962. p. 1.
- <sup>9</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. *The Romance of Fiddler's Green*. Cambridge, MA: The Riverside Press, 1922. p. x.
- <sup>10</sup> T. J. Jackson Lears. *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1981. p. xii.
- <sup>11</sup> Lears, p. xv.
- <sup>12</sup> Robert H. Wiebe. *The Search for Order, 1877-1920*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1967.
- <sup>13</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. *Early Personal Reminiscences in the Old George Peabody Mansion in Salem, Massachusetts*. Concord, NH: The Rumford Press, 1956. p. 45.
- <sup>14</sup> Michael Kammen. *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991. p. 137.
- <sup>15</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. "Letter to Mrs. George Howard, President, National Society of New England Women, Rochester, NY." December 2, 1941. Scrap in Fruitlands Museum Archives.
- <sup>16</sup> Ronald Story. *The Forging of an Aristocracy: Harvard & the Boston Upper Class, 1800-1870*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1980. p. xiii.
- <sup>17</sup> Tager and Ifkovic, pp. 9-10.
- <sup>18</sup> FPS. "The Late K. Winthrop Sears." Obituary from June 26, 1891. Scrap in Fruitlands Museum Archives.
- <sup>19</sup> Ruth Lawrence. *Colonial Families of America*. New York: National Americana Society, 1852.
- <sup>20</sup> "Ask the Globe." *Boston Globe Sunday Magazine*. January 10, 1888. p. 77. Scrap in Fruitlands Museum Archives.
- <sup>21</sup> Joseph A. Conforti. *Imagining New England: Explorations of Regional Identity from the Pilgrims to the Mid-Twentieth Century*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001. p. 210.
- <sup>22</sup> Clara Endicott Sears, letter to Mrs. Stuart Huckins, December 4, 1947. Fruitlands Museum Archives.
- <sup>23</sup> "While Miss Clara Sears." *Boston Sunday Herald*. January 14, 1899. Scrap in Fruitlands Museum Archives.
- <sup>24</sup> Morris Carter. *Isabella Stewart Gardner and Fenway Court*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1925.
- <sup>25</sup> Carter, p. 255.
- <sup>26</sup> Cynthia H. Barton. *History's Daughter: The Life of Clara Endicott Sears, Founder of Fruitlands Museums*. Harvard, MA: Fruitlands Museums, Inc., 1988. p. 34.
- <sup>27</sup> 1883. Scrap in Fruitlands Museum Archives.
- <sup>28</sup> Obituary, *The Worcester Gazette*, March 27, 1960. Scrap in Fruitlands Museum Archives.



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- <sup>29</sup> *Boston Transcript*, April 20, 1936. Scrap in Fruitlands Museum Archives.
- <sup>30</sup> Letter, "For the New History of Harvard, Mass: *Creating the Pergolas and Fruitlands and the Wayside Museums Inc. At Harvard, Massachusetts.*" Fruitlands Museum Archives.
- <sup>31</sup> Harriet E. O'Brien. *Lost Utopias: A brief description of three quests for happiness, Alcott's Fruitlands, Old Shaker House, and American Indian Museum Rescued from oblivion, recorded and preserved by Clara Endicott Sears on Prospect Hill in the old township of Harvard Massachusetts.* Boston: Perry Walton, 1929. p. 60-61.
- <sup>32</sup> Dianne Newton. *The Harvard Album.* Harvard, MA: Harvard Historical Society, 1997. p. 80.
- <sup>33</sup> *Harvard History*, p. 114.
- <sup>34</sup> Kenneth L. Ames. *Death in the Dining Room and Other Tales of Victorian Culture.* Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1992. p. 7.
- <sup>35</sup> Ames, p. 236.
- <sup>36</sup> Dianne M. Newton. *The Harvard Album.* Harvard, MA: Harvard Historical Society, 1997. p. 81.
- <sup>37</sup> Obituary, *The Worcester Gazette*, March 27, 1960. Scrap in Fruitlands Museum Archives.
- <sup>38</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. *Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1915. p. xiii.
- <sup>39</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. *Catalogue of Fruitlands.* Harvard, MA: Fruitlands Museums, 1924.p. 3.
- <sup>40</sup> Sears. *Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands*, pp. xvi-xvii.
- <sup>41</sup> Charles B. Hosmer, Jr. *Presence of the Past: A History of the Preservation Movement in the United States Before Williamsburg.* NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1965. p. 118.
- <sup>42</sup> Hosmer, p. 119.
- <sup>43</sup> William Sumner Appleton. "Report." *Bulletin of SPNEA* VI (April 1915): 14.
- <sup>44</sup> Hosmer, p. 193.
- <sup>45</sup> Michael Kammen. *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture.* New York: Knopf, 1991.
- <sup>46</sup> See Marla Miller and Ann Digan Lanning. "Women and the Recreation of Community Identity in Deerfield, MA, 1870-1920." *Gender and History* 6 (November 1994): 435-455.
- <sup>47</sup> Michael Holleran. *Boston's "Changeful Times": Origins of Preservation and Planning in America.* Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 1998. See especially p. 102.
- <sup>48</sup> Sam Bass Warner. *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962. p. 156.
- <sup>49</sup> Holleran, p. 5.
- <sup>50</sup> Holleran, pp. 39-40.
- <sup>51</sup> Holleran, p. 219.
- <sup>52</sup> Holleran, p. 235.
- <sup>53</sup> Holleran, p. 232.



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- <sup>54</sup> James M. Lindgren. *Preserving Historic New England: Preservation, Progressivism, and the Remaking of Memory*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. p. 4.
- <sup>55</sup> Julie Des Jardins. *Women and the Historical Enterprise in America: Gender, Race, and the Politics of Memory, 1880-1945*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003. And Patricia West. *Domesticating History*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 1999.
- <sup>56</sup> *Untitled* (Undated, unpublished poem). Scrap in Fruitlands Museum Archives.
- <sup>57</sup> Letter to Mrs. George Howard, President, National Society of New England Women, Rochester NY, December 2, 1941. Fruitlands Museum Archives.
- <sup>58</sup> Letter to/from Miss Winifred Willard, Washington DC, regarding the League of American Pen Women, November 3, 1941-Nov. 7, 1941. Fruitlands Museum Archives.
- <sup>59</sup> Quoted in Lindgren, p. 5.
- <sup>60</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. *Gleanings from Old Shaker Journals*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1916. p. xi.
- <sup>61</sup> Meeting of the Trustees, August 20, 1930. Fruitlands Museum Archives.
- <sup>62</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. *The Bell-Ringer: An Old-Time Village Tale*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1918. pp. v-vi.
- <sup>63</sup> Sears. *Gleanings*, pp. xii-xiii.
- <sup>64</sup> Letter to composer Mrs. Helen Gulesian, September 2, 1945. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>65</sup> *Untitled* lecture notes, dated World War Two, p. 4. Scrap in Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>66</sup> *Untitled* lecture notes, dated World War Two, p. 4. ("Those words should only be a vehicle or part of the body of a poem.") Scrap in Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>67</sup> *Untitled*, undated lecture notes. ("I have been asked to give some account of my ideas on the methods used in writing.") Scrap in Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>68</sup> Letter to Mrs. Stuart Huckins, December 4, 1947. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>69</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. "Vesper Bells in the Nashaway Valley" in *Wind from the Hills and Other Poems*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1936. p. 59. "But they always/ Peal for me/ Like mystic bells/ Of memory."
- <sup>70</sup> See Brown, *Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the Twentieth Century*. Chapter 4: "'Manufactured for the Trade': Nostalgia on Nantucket, 1870-1890." pp. 105-134.
- <sup>71</sup> Richard H. Brodhead. *Cultures of Letters: Scenes of Reading and Writing in Nineteenth-Century America*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1993. pp. 133-144.
- <sup>72</sup> Nissenbaum, p. 59.
- <sup>73</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. *Whispering Pines: A Romance of A New England Hillside*. Falmouth, MA: Enterprise Press, 1930. Preface.
- <sup>74</sup> Ronald Gottesman, ed. *Norton Anthology of American Literature, Volume 2*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1979. pp. 3-10.
- <sup>75</sup> Harry R. Warfel and G. Harrison Orians, eds. *American Local-Color Stories*. New York: American Book Company, 1941. pp. ix-xi.

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- <sup>76</sup> Brodhead, p. 115. See also Sarah L. Giffen and Kevin D. Murphy, eds. *"A Noble and Dignified Stream": The Piscataqua Region in the Colonial Revival, 1860-1930*. York, ME: Old York Historical Society, 1992.
- <sup>77</sup> Josephine Donovan. *New England Local Color Literature: A Women's Tradition*. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 1983.
- <sup>78</sup> Brodhead, pp. 115-144.
- <sup>79</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. "Speech to Boston Author's Club Luncheon," Dec 3, 1942. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>80</sup> Sears, *The Bell-Ringer*, pp. v-vi.
- <sup>81</sup> Sears, *Whispering Pines*, preface.
- <sup>82</sup> Sears, *Whispering Pines*, p. 319.
- <sup>83</sup> Sears, *Whispering Pines*, p. 75.
- <sup>84</sup> Sears, *Whispering Pines*, p. 63.
- <sup>85</sup> Sears, *Whispering Pines*, p. 105.
- <sup>86</sup> Letter from Henry Cabot Lodge to Sears, March 5, 1922. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>87</sup> Untitled, undated lecture notes. ("I have been asked to give some account of my ideas on the methods used in writing.") Scrap in Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>88</sup> Speech on *Some American Primitives*. Date and audience unknown. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>89</sup> Giffen and Murphy, p.190.
- <sup>90</sup> Nissenbaum, p. 40. See Warren I. Susman. *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century*. NY: Pantheon Books, 1984. pp. 43-44.
- <sup>91</sup> O'Brien, p. 56.
- <sup>92</sup> *Bell-Ringer* press release, Fall 1918. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>93</sup> Letters carbon-copied to Clara Endicott Sears from Basil King to Ferris Greeslet. December 13, 1918. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>94</sup> Sears "Line-A-Day," August 16, 1926. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>95</sup> *Boston Evening Transcript*, Sat. Oct 5, 1918. Scrap in Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>96</sup> *New York Herald* 3-19-22, *Fiddler's Green*. Scrap in Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>97</sup> Letter from Robert Grant to Sears, March 16, 1924. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>98</sup> "Miscellaneous Brief Reviews," in *The New York Times Book Review*, March 18, 1934, p.10.
- <sup>99</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>100</sup> Review of the Great Powwow, in *The New England Quarterly*, 1934.
- <sup>101</sup> *Harvard History*, p. 114.
- <sup>102</sup> Lindgren, p. 15. The Appleton family lived at #39 Beacon Street; Sears grew up at #132.
- <sup>103</sup> Lindgren, pp. 6-7.



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- <sup>104</sup> Lindgren, pp. 62-63.
- <sup>105</sup> Margaret Brandenburg. "New England's Best Traditions Are Being Preserved by Miss Clara Endicott Sears, The Pergolas." *The Press Magazine* (January 1930).
- <sup>106</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. *Some American Primitives: A Study of New England Faces and Folk Portraits*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1941.
- <sup>107</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. *Days of Delusion: A Strange Bit of History*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1924. p. xii.
- <sup>108</sup> Raymond P. Stearns. "Review of *The Great Powwow*." *The New England Quarterly*. 7 (December 1934): 751.
- <sup>109</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. *The Great Powwow: The Story of the Nashaway Valley in King Philip's War*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934. p. 94.
- <sup>110</sup> *Boston Globe*, June 13, 1931. Scrap in Fruitlands Museum Archives.
- <sup>111</sup> Sears. *The Great Powwow*, p. 23.
- <sup>112</sup> Sears. "General Report," June 12, 1931. Fruitlands Museum Archives.
- <sup>113</sup> C. Vann Woodward review of *The Past is a Foreign Country*, p. 348.
- <sup>114</sup> Catherine Whalen. "Conceptualizing Collections as Material Narratives: The Cases of Francis P. Garvan, George Dudley Seymour, and Annie Burr Jennings." Unpublished paper manuscript, presented for "New England Collectors and Collecting." Deerfield, MA: The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, 2004. p. 2.
- <sup>115</sup> Karal Ann Marling. *George Washington Slept Here: Colonial Revivals and American Culture, 1876-1986*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988. See Chapter 6: "The Colonial Revival: Heroic Imagery for the American Home, 1893-1924." Quote p. 155.
- <sup>116</sup> Alan Axelrod, ed. *The Colonial Revival in America*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1985. p. 8.
- <sup>117</sup> Christopher Lasch. *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and its Critics*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1991. pp. 105-107.
- <sup>118</sup> Quoted in Tager and Ifkovic, p. 24.
- <sup>119</sup> Lasch, p. 199.
- <sup>120</sup> See Marling, "Chapter 9: Heroes, History, and Modern Celebrities, 'Puritanism de Luxe,' 1923-1929."
- <sup>121</sup> Kammen, pp. 154-156.
- <sup>122</sup> Kammen, pp. 261-262.
- <sup>123</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. "Letter to the Trustees of the Museums," July 30, 1930. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>124</sup> O'Brien, pp. 5-6.
- <sup>125</sup> Brown. *Inventing New England*, p. 57.
- <sup>126</sup> "Fruitlands Museums Minutes." June 10, 1930. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>127</sup> Raymond P. Stearns. "Review: *The Great Powwow: The Story of the Nashaway Valley in King Phillip's War*." *The New England Quarterly* 7 (December 1934): 751.



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- <sup>128</sup> Letter from Dr. Ellaine Elmore to Clara Endicott Sears, September 9, 1936, Truro, Massachusetts. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>129</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. "Letter to the Trustees of the Museums," July 30, 1930. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>130</sup> See Maxwell Grant. "Appropriating the Ideal: Myth, Community and the Deerfield Summer School of History and Romance, 1886-1891". Deerfield, MA: Historic Deerfield Fellowship Program, 1991. Unpublished student paper. Also, see David Glassberg. *American Historical Pageantry: The Uses of Tradition in the Early Twentieth Century*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990.
- <sup>131</sup> Nissenbaum, p. 47.
- <sup>132</sup> Newton, p. 82
- <sup>133</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. "Letter to the Trustees," June 5, 1937. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>134</sup> June 1978, Report of the Land's Committee. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>135</sup> Raymond Williams as quoted in Brown, p. 59.
- <sup>136</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. "Letter to the Trustees of the Museums," July 30, 1930. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>137</sup> Anderson, p. 23.
- <sup>138</sup> Brown, p. 140.
- <sup>139</sup> Elvira Scorgie and Arthur Bigelow, "History of Harvard," 1982.
- <sup>140</sup> Anderson. p. 147.
- <sup>141</sup> Harvard History, pp. 74-76.
- <sup>142</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. "General Report 1941," p. 8. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>143</sup> "Correspondence between Commanding General Bryan L. Milburn and Clara Endicott Sears." July 9, 1956. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>144</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. "Letter to the Trustees of the Museums," July 30, 1930. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>145</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. "General Report 1941," p. 7. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>146</sup> Letter, December 31, 1941. "Thank you for your cooperation in allowing troops to maneuver over your land." Trespass Rights Agreement, and General Report 1941, p. 5. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>147</sup> Letter from June 27, 1942. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>148</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. "General Report 1941," p. 8. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>149</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. June 19, 1943, Trustee's Meeting. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>150</sup> Sears purchased the Shirley Shaker meeting house prior to Warren's acquisition of the village. See Robert C. Anderson. *Directions of a Town: A History of Harvard, Massachusetts*. Harvard, MA: Harvard Common Press, 1976. p. 57; *Harvard History*, p. 12; and Newton, p. 84.
- <sup>151</sup> Anderson, p. 146.
- <sup>152</sup> *Harvard History 1894-1940*, p. 11.

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- <sup>153</sup> Anderson, pp. 159-161.
- <sup>154</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. "General Report 1941," p. 7. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>155</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>156</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. "Road Builders." 1941. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>157</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. "The Unfurling of the Flag." April 6, 1917. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>158</sup> "Correspondence between Commanding General Einar B. Gjelsteen and Clara Endicott Sears." October 28, 1954. Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>159</sup> Ellen K. Rothman. "Fruitlands: Landscape as Lens on the Past." *Mass Humanities*. South Hadley, MA: Massachusetts Foundation for Humanities, Fall 2000. The website heading now reads "Fruitlands: The View is Just The Beginning."
- <sup>160</sup> Lears, p. xviii.
- <sup>161</sup> *New York Sun*, December 1941. Scrap in Fruitlands Museums Archives.
- <sup>162</sup> Sears. *The Romance of Fiddler's Green*, p. x.
- <sup>163</sup> O'Brien, p.56.
- <sup>164</sup> Conforti. pp. 205-206.
- <sup>165</sup> Clara Endicott Sears. "Meeting of the Trustees," August 20, 1930. Fruitlands Museums Archives.



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