

Mythologies of an American Everyday Landscape: Henry Ford at the Wayside Inn

by

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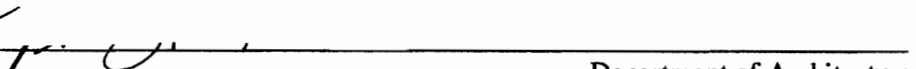
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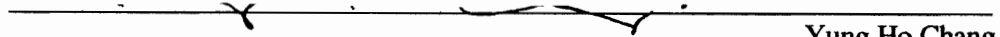
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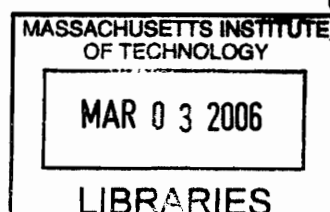


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ABSTRACT

Ford purchased property in 1923 in Sudbury, Massachusetts in order to preserve an historic inn associated with the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Over the next twenty years, his mission expanded to create an idealized New England landscape and a way of living on the land representative of an American identity. This study will demonstrate that this change of intention is one which elevates a notion of collective memory over that of heroic history. It will also show that Ford's endeavor at the Wayside Inn represented not only his own private dialogue with a cultural landscape, but also was emblematic of a broader public engagement with the crafting of what it meant to be American in the early twentieth century. Finally, this investigation will illuminate Ford's collection of the American experience as an attempt to grapple with how to make an American community (both physical and social) that embraced American traditions *and* technological innovations without the latter obliterating the former.

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Biographical Note

B.D. Wortham is currently an Assistant Professor in the Programs of Architecture and Historic Preservation at the University of Maryland. Her areas of focus include a critical examination of the everyday built environment of the United States (in both its physical form and social practices) and the design of the twentieth century American city and landscape. She teaches at all levels from freshmen to doctoral candidates, and in a variety of formats from studio, to lectures, to seminars. Recent honors include: Who's Who Among America's Teachers (2005), the Philip Merrill Faculty Mentor Award (2004), National Society of Collegiate Scholarship, Fellow (2003), Martin Fellow for Sustainability (2001-2), and Center for Teaching Excellence Award (2001-02). Wortham holds an A.B. in American Civilization and Anthropology, *magna cum laude*, Brown University; an M.S. in Historic Preservation, University of Pennsylvania; and an M.Arch., Alpha Rho Chi Medal, University of Maryland.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Taking the witness stand in a libel trial against the *Chicago Tribune*, Henry Ford made his infamous utterance, “History is Bunk.”¹ The year was 1919 and Ford had already catapulted from mechanical tinkerer to industrial titan with the mass production of his automobile, the Model T. As Ford turned over the presidency of the Ford Motor Company to his son Edsel that same year, half of the cars on the road in America were Tin Lizzies.² Given his wealth and stature in American society, Ford had to have been aware that almost everything he did made history (or, at the very least, was widely covered by the press). Ford’s consciousness of his position within the American heroic pantheon, as well as his interrogation at the trial, may have led him to reflect on his attitudes toward what history was and what it could be. As Ford stepped down from the daily operations of his company, he shifted his focus to a different enterprise: defining and representing what he believed to be the American experience.

Ford himself had already made history; now he would engage in the making of America’s history. He spent the period between the two World Wars in pursuit of articulating what kind of history Americans should have that would reveal what he believed to be their particular experience. The history projects he pursued did not attempt to create an objective American record but constructed an American scene that reinforced some of the prevailing cultural ideas and assumptions about what American society ought to be. This study will investigate Ford’s involvement in a particular site in New England

¹ The trial centered around the *Tribune*’s coverage of Ford’s pacifist stance toward American involvement in World War I.

² Tin Lizzie and The Flivver were common nicknames for the Model T at this time.

as a conduit into what type of American record and environment he was attempting to create.

Ford purchased property in 1923 in Sudbury, Massachusetts in order to preserve an historic inn associated with the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Over the next twenty years, his mission expanded to create an idealized New England landscape and a way of living on the land representative of an American identity. This study will demonstrate that this change of intention is one which elevates a notion of collective memory over that of heroic history. It will also show that Ford's endeavor at the Wayside Inn represented not only his own private dialogue with a cultural landscape, but also was emblematic of a broader public engagement with the crafting of what it meant to be American in the early twentieth century. Finally, this investigation will illuminate Ford's collection of the American experience as an attempt to grapple with how to make an American community (both physical and social) that embraced American traditions *and* technological innovations without the latter obliterating the former.

In 1702, David Howe built a two-room homestead in South Sudbury, Massachusetts.³ Obtaining a license in 1716, he expanded the original building and opened an inn, known as Howe's Inn or The Howe Tavern. After nearly 200 years of ownership, the site fell out of the hands of the Howe family in 1897 when Edward R. Lemon, a wool merchant and antique collector, acquired the property. Henry Ford bought

³ A basic history of the Howe family can be found in Garfield and Ridley, *As Ancient Is This Hostelry: The Story of the Wayside Inn*.

the Wayside Inn from proprietress Cora Lemon in 1923.⁴ He also purchased hundreds of acres of surrounding land and outbuildings. Over the next twenty years, he proceeded to acquire and move—or design and build—several more structures on this parcel to include: a one-room schoolhouse, a grist mill, an ice house, a chapel, and a cider mill. On the parcels he purchased, Ford also constructed a one-mile by-pass so that the original Boston Post Road could remain a bucolic dirt road running in front of the inn. Ford's landscape—partly designed and partly extant, to include a stream, a pond, dense woods, farming fields, and a rose garden—was a symbolic one loaded with a mythology of American agriculture and building archetypes.⁵ He did not want the Wayside to become a museum to these memories, but a working landscape, and thus established a school system in which academic and practical/agricultural education were intertwined. The place where these students lived and worked was as important to Ford as what they learned. The three schools that Ford would establish in this cultural landscape would remain an active part of the Sudbury school system until the mid-1970s, although not under the aegis of Ford's pedagogy, which ended with his death in 1947.

The site today is operated as a non-profit known as Longfellow's Wayside Inn. While Ford was the last private owner of the site (and helped to establish the non-profit status before his death), his association with the site is not apparent to the twenty-first century visitor. Nevertheless, his mark on this place is visible. The inn still operates as a

⁴ Henry and Clara Ford owned all the land and buildings from 1923-1945 until they deeded them to the Wayside Inn Trust. In 1960, that Trust gave the property to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which, in turn, formed a new non-profit educational Wayside Inn Trust which today still owns the Inn. Today, the Inn is located on over 106 acres of forest and cultivated fields on which much of the Inn's seasonal produce is grown. The Inn still functions as such to include accommodation for horses in the barn.

⁵ John Stilgoe's seminal work, *Common Landscape of America*, describes the American archetypes of agriculture and artifice such as the farmstead, farmhouse, farmland, grass, crops, fences, cowpens, woodlots, and mills and makes regional distinctions within the design and distinction of such types.

place for travelers to eat and stay; the grist mill that he reconstructed in 1929 still grinds corn meal which tourists and locals alike purchase; the Martha-Mary chapel (added in 1940) still holds services and performs weddings; only the schoolhouse has now been relegated to status as pure artifact. Longfellow might receive top billing, but the cultural landscape that exists there today is all Ford's. Ford's intervention into this site was not an attempt at ossification. Instead, he was grappling with how to affirm what he believed were traditional modes of American living in a period that was relegating Jeffersonian agrarian pastoral models to historical footnotes. This study will examine Ford's conflicted position as creator of a modern American landscape—through his revolution of the automobile industry—that threatened to obliterate a symbolic American landscape that he was reconstructing in Massachusetts.

Ford's "preservation" of this landscape was his attempt to tell a story of what it meant to be an American.⁶ So the question becomes not how real—or authentic—is this place, but what does Ford discover in New England that he finds so compelling? What was he trying to remember (or conversely, to forget) in the reproduction of a usable past in Massachusetts? Ford's particular fiction can exist *only* in America because it is a product of an idealized vision of the American landscape. His fable of cultivated domesticity offers a mythical model of colonial New England where people work in concert with each other and nature. American culture could not return to a Jeffersonian agrarianism rendered impossible in the industrial society Ford helped to fabricate. So why did Ford create such a story in Sudbury?

⁶ The term American here is used as emblematic of an interwoven ideology and identity; not as a way of obliterating the diverse and heterogeneous American cultures that exist from the tips of Canada to Argentina. I will critically look at others who have made connections between nationalism and the environment, with an eye to avoiding arguments of American exceptionalism.

Because Ford's engagement with the Wayside Inn will be discussed as a cultural landscape, it is worth acknowledging how this terminology has been used previously. The legacy of cultural landscape studies begins firmly in the mid-twentieth century with the pioneering efforts of J.B. Jackson who described the production and use of common cultural landscapes.⁷ In other words, landscape was understood as the context for social action. Landscape studies are also connected to its historical origins in painting—where landscapes were associated with a painterly or artistic view.⁸ In addition to conceptualizing landscape as a context and a frame, contemporary cultural geographers analyze landscapes as sites for explicating power relationships under the rubric of postmodern/critical theory. My own use of landscape will draw from these traditions. For this dissertation, landscape will be used as: a way of framing the built environment as a cultural production, both real and ideal; and, a text or document that reveals broader contexts and intellectual currents.

This leads to some of the key questions under consideration: How was this landscape formed and for what purpose? Why set aside this land in *this* way? What does this symbolized landscape tell us about America in the early twentieth century? What were the landscapes which have served as the basis for this symbol really like? And, how can the impact, the power, of the symbol be assessed?⁹

⁷ The founder of the magazine *Landscape* (1951), J.B. Jackson spent the 1940s, 50s, 60s and 70s writing about the vernacular American landscape. The work begun by Jackson in the mid-twentieth century has been taken up today by scholars like Chris Wilson (University of New Mexico) and Paul Groth (UC-Berkeley) in their co-edited work *Everyday America: J. B. Jackson and Recent Cultural Landscape Studies*, co-edited with Chris Wilson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004) and Groth and Todd Bressi's co-edited, *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

⁸ Denis Cosgrove is a contemporary historian who has reinvigorated the visual of model of landscape.

⁹ These questions are informed and inspired by the work of D. W. Meinig; particular in his essay "Symbolic Landscapes" in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*.

Ford's endeavor was not unique during this period. The methods of his undertaking had relationships to a variety of disciplines engaged in the crafting of an American culture. In particular, it is useful to situate Ford relative to modes of thought and activity that strongly emerged in the nineteenth century: historic preservation, American pastoralism, the colonial revival, and museum collections. It is the purpose of this dissertation to illuminate Ford's multi-disciplinary attitude toward material culture and American history. This is work that has not been done with much substance in the existing Ford scholarship. The archives at the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village Research Center were used as the primary source material in this exploration of Ford. The archival collections related to the Wayside Inn, while small compared to the vast archival holdings, have not been mined in previous scholarship outside of footnotes and asides. Most scholarship has positioned Ford's material culture work in the museum and village he created in Dearborn. Thus the use of the Wayside Inn documents as the primary focus of study *and* to use them as a way of exploring turn-of-the-century discussions about Americanness is the principal contribution of this dissertation.

Even when including the material written about Ford's Greenfield Village, the majority of the extant scholarship on Ford discusses his technological and socio-economic contributions as they relate to the automobile and modernization. This scholarship either broadly focuses on his whole life (as a way of leading up to his technological achievements) or narrowly spotlights the time period surrounding the manufacture of the Model T. In situating Ford, this work does not discuss his contributions to the making of culture in the early twentieth century. The few works that do look at Ford from a cultural perspective include Reynold Wik's *Henry Ford and*

Grass-roots America (which focuses on Ford's relationship to ruralism in 1920s America) and the coffee-table-type books available for tourists who visit Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan.¹⁰

As opposed to existing literature which positions Ford as a maven of modernization, Ford's work included the crafting of an American identity through material culture. In his historical constructions, Ford did not sit neatly in one camp as he synthesized a variety of methods and attitudes while he grappled with the creation of *his* American scene. These methods of inquiry will be discussed within the chapters, but it is useful here to highlight Ford's work in Massachusetts in relationship to a concurrent paradigm shift within the field of historic preservation.

The private attempts toward the preservation of history at the turn of the twentieth century can best be characterized by the work of two organizations: the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA) founded in 1889 by a matriarchal group of Virginia's social elite and the Society for Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA) founded in 1910 by Brahmin William Sumner Appleton.¹¹ The APVA's use of the past was largely symbolic and in alignment with the assertions of the mid-nineteenth century French architect Eugene Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc. Viollet-le-Duc used preservation as a weapon in order to defend the Gothic against the Classical hegemony

¹⁰ Wik's book was published in 1970; there has been scant material since updating a culturally contextual look at Ford and his work. Greenfield Village began publishing tourist books in the 1930s, with another surge happening around the bi-centennial, and a few updates at the turn of the twenty-first century. See the bibliography at the end of the dissertation for more complete listings. Ford also published his own writing, in collaboration with Samuel Crowther (again focused on his own autobiography and his contributions to technology and socio-economics, but not on material culture): *My Life and Work* (1923), *Today and Tomorrow* (1926), *Moving Forward* (1931), and *Edison as I Knew Him* (1930).

¹¹ See the works of William Murtaugh, James Lindgren, and Michael Holleran for comprehensive histories of the field of historic preservation in the United States.

upheld by the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. At the turn of the twentieth century, the APVA used buildings allegorically in order to protect traditionalism and ensure cultural stability and hegemony.¹² Their energies were focused on constructing markers, erecting plaques, tending graveyards, and creating shrines and museums which honored important historical figures and events based on a romanticized historical perspective which elevated sentimentalism and patriotism. In contrast to the saving of artifacts for veneration, William Sumner Appleton guided SPNEA's policy of acquiring and preserving of a large collection of individual buildings, regardless of historical significance, under the rubric of archeological methods, scientific investigation, and professionalization.

Ford's efforts represent a hybrid of the two organizations; his preservation endeavors combine an ad hoc personalism and a preoccupation with the symbolic, with an obsession with everyday material objects not necessarily connected to significant peoples or events. In this way, Ford's farm in South Sudbury represents the dialectic of preservation in the first decades of the twentieth century as it negotiated a milieu of contestations over the definition of the past, present and future mixed with the contemporary currents of progressivism, traditionalism, the colonial revival, professionalism, specialization, modernization, as well as a growing heterogeneous population.

In addition to the state of preservation in fin-de-siecle America, one must understand the contemporary rhetoric. The standard histories of preservation in the

¹² For example, they promoted the hypothetical reconstruction of Jamestown's seventeenth century church.

United States place the movement's apocryphal inception at Mount Vernon under the leadership of Ann Pamela Cunningham and the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association in the 1850s.¹³ These histories start in the nineteenth century with individual efforts—reinforced by “secular pietism”—to save artifacts for veneration, pleasure and/or education. These private efforts broaden in the twentieth century to embrace preservation based solely on aesthetics. Eventually, this private agenda becomes public mandate, culminating in the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act.¹⁴ William Murtaugh's canonical history is one in which preservation moves from period rooms and house museums to outdoor museums and historic districts; and, concomitantly from values of transcendent worth (1850-1900) to those of intrinsic worth (1900-present). It is a progressive history in which preservation moves toward an ultimate consummation with the conservation movement—particularly in the area of cultural landscape preservation—, and advances the importance of architectural and design merit over purely patriotic impulse. It features the post World War II environment as one in which the “true” strides in the movement are made toward this higher mode of action.

These preservation studies, however, fall short in several ways. They omit the study of preservation as a means of resolving the conflicts of modernity; the preservation field as not a monolithic movement but constituting a variety of aims and purposes; the highly selective, malleable and often contested interpretations of the past invoked. There

¹³ The canonical histories include: Murtaugh, *Keeping Time. The History and Theory of Preservation in America* (New York, 1997); Hosmer Jr., *Presence of the Past* (New York, 1965) and, *Preservation Comes of Age* (Charlottesville, 1981).; as well as James Marston Fitch, *Historic Preservation: Curatorial management of the built environment* (Charlottesville, 1990) which took on the task of codifying historic preservation education based on his development of the historic preservation program at Columbia University in the 1960s.

¹⁴ The early legislation which built to this act include: The Antiquities Act, 1906; The National Park System Organic Act, 1916; The Historic Sites and Buildings Act, 1935; and the Charter of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1949.

is also a reluctance to let go of the primacy of the high over the low and the elite over the popular. While vernacular studies did emerge in the 1960s (and gained strength over the next 20 years), these often remained important within the literature of the latter twentieth century only in its ability to evidence an aesthetic value, not in offering a common cultural experience. Preservationists, thus, often measured landscapes by the yardstick of aesthetic authenticity or historical veracity, not cultural context. This mode of thinking is beginning to be challenged, particularly by groups such as the Vernacular Architecture Forum or by those whose primary field is in an allied discipline like anthropology or American Studies. Authors, like Michael Kammen and David Lowenthal, have begun to challenge History—with the emphatic capital H—as the primary method by which these sites should be evaluated. Kammen’s seminal work, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, is influential to this dissertation in mining American history for its inventions and mythologies.¹⁵ Kammen’s study, however is so broad and all-encompassing that any discreet discussion of a particular event or phenomenon is sacrificed for a more holistic and ambitious story of American memory. Also useful in the discussion of the creating of an American culture is Steven Conn’s study of museums under the aegis of what he terms an “object based epistemology.”¹⁶ Conn’s conceptual study of anthropology and material culture will be broadened and applied to architecture and historic preservation within this dissertation.

¹⁵ Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: the transformation of tradition in American culture* (New York: Knopf, 1991). As with most discussions of Ford’s cultural contributions, he appears here in passing, not as a primary subject.

¹⁶ Steven Conn, *Museums and American intellectual life, 1876-1926* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

The Wayside Inn landscape has been relegated to the status of footnote in contemporary histories of historic preservation, while Nelson Rockefeller's concurrent attempt at Williamsburg, Virginia has been lauded as exemplar. I believe its dismissal within the discourse is, in part, due to the presumption of its compromised authenticity and shoddy representation of History. When authenticity becomes the primary litmus test for "good" preservation, then the complex layers of meaning and memory are often sacrificed in the name of scientific veracity. Should preservation be about the purity of the thing or about the relationship people have with the object? Are these purposes mutually exclusive or can they coexist? The supplication to the altar of authenticity has not come without dispute over the manner of such worship. This study asserts that the existing literature is consumed by a problematic terminology which is no longer meaningful. Is it possible to examine the Wayside Inn landscape from an alternative perspective, leaving the question of authenticity behind?

Instead of making distinctions between *real* history and fiction, this work affirms that history is story telling.¹⁷ Stories are told in order to report information, narrate actions, and make sense of events by analysis or myth-making. Efforts to save cultural resources in the United States are efforts to tell a story of what it means to be American. Ford's preservation of a New England landscape is one such fiction. So the question becomes not how real—or authentic—is this place, but what does Ford discover in New England that he finds so compelling? What are Ford's aims in weaving his particular

¹⁷ See Rhys Isaac, "The First Monticello," in Peter S. Onuf, ed., *Jeffersonian Legacies* (Charlottesville, 1993).

narrative known as the Wayside Inn landscape? If the creation of sites of memory requires setting aside certain places, then why does Ford set aside the landscape around the Wayside Inn? What is he trying to remember (or, conversely, to forget) in the reproduction of a useable past in Sudbury, Massachusetts?

The primary subject of this investigation is the cultural landscape Henry Ford created in Sudbury, Massachusetts. As such, this work does not intend to be a biography of Ford. Nevertheless, it is useful for the reader to have a quick summary with which to preface Ford's activities in the 1920s and 30s. Ford (1863-1947) was born to Irish immigrants on farm in Dearborn, Michigan.¹⁸ He preferred tinkering in his father's shop to working on the farm and left home as soon as he could in 1879 to apprentice with a machinist in Detroit. Ford held a variety of odd jobs that bounced him back and forth between farming and machine work; at the time of his 1888 marriage to Clara Bryant he supported his family by both farming and running a sawmill. He was hired as an engineer in 1891 by the Edison Illuminating Company and spent his free time devoted to experimenting with internal combustion engines. He built his own self-propelled vehicle, the Quadicycle, in 1896. The success of his various experiments attracted investors which allowed Ford to incorporate the Ford Motor Company in 1903. In 1908 the company released the Model T, which soon became ubiquitous in the American landscape. Ford's son Edsel took over the helm of the company in 1919.

¹⁸ Ford biographers consulted for this work include: Allan Nevins, *Ford: The Times, The Man, The Company* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1954); Reynold Wik, *Henry Ford and Grass-roots America* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1972); John Cote Dahlinger, *The Secret Life of Henry Ford* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1978); Peter Collier and David Horowitz, *The Fords, An American Epic* (New York: Summit Books, 1987); Donn P. Werling, *Henry Ford, A Hearthside Perspective* (Warrendale, Pa.: SAE International, 2000).

The man who revolutionized not only the automobile industry, but also industrial production world-wide (through his implementation of the assembly-line in the production of affordable cars) was a complex person, not without controversy. As an influential figure in the construction of an American identity, it should not be forgotten that the *Dearborn Independent*, Ford's personal mouthpiece, contained anti-Semitic diatribes throughout its publication, pointing to the danger he saw from outside cultures. His Americanism was also set against a wave of central and eastern immigrants coming to the United States during the height of industrialization; many of whom would end up in Ford's factories. This forum will not discuss the socio-economic and political issues surrounding his factory production, but it should be remembered that his company contained both Sociological and Service Departments. The purpose of these departments was to Americanize company workers; their practices were often paternalistic and dictatorial. The Service Department in particular actively worked against unionization.

Characterizations of Ford in contemporary fiction often depicted him as a ruthless capitalist.¹⁹ When Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) gave God the name Ford and replaced the cross with the sign of the T, it wasn't meant to be complementary toward the auto magnate. In his trilogy *U.S.A.: III, The Big Money* (1936), John Dos Passos represented Ford as unable to adapt to the social and cultural changes he himself had wrought in bringing about a modern America. A year later, Upton Sinclair published

¹⁹ See John Dos Passos, "Tin Lizzie," in his trilogy *U.S.A.: III. The Big Money* (New York: Modern Library Random House, 1937), 47-57; Upton Sinclair, *The Flivver King: A Story of Ford-America* (1937; rept., Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1984), 110; and Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (1932; rept. New York: Harper Perennial Books, 1969), 29. Interestingly, Dos Passos writes that "in 1922 there started the Ford boom for President (high wages, waterpower, industry scattered to the small towns)" (54-55). See also Peter Edgerly Firchow, *The End of Utopia: A Study of Aldous Huxley's Brave New World* (Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 1984), 103-4.

The Flivver King which contrasted the fortunes of Henry Ford with that of a fictional employee in a less than flattering light for the captain of industry. All of this is mentioned to demonstrate that Ford's endeavors go way beyond his tinkering in New England and that this study should not be seen as any attempt to convey the totality of his work and life.

Because Ford's preservation of an entire landscape at the Wayside Inn was not merely a personal exploration, but existed against a long line of American intellectual thought, I find historian Arthur Lovejoy's introduction to *The Great Chain of Being* (1936) helpful. Lovejoy was one of the pioneers in encouraging an interdisciplinary approach to scholarship. His methodology for writing and understanding the history of ideas is compelling because he eschews conventional "schools or -isms" as misleading. In architecture, I share Lovejoy's disdain for the compartmentalization of a discipline into schools or "isms." For example, laymen want to know what style a building is, as if that conveys the totality of the significance of it as architecture. What I find more relevant are qualities such as spatial definition, iconography, tectonic invention and expression, and social context, which don't fall neatly into "isms." While I appreciate the formal aesthetics of the building—and that those often happen in groups which can be classified —, I also feel like saying: Who cares if it is High Victorian Gothic or International Style?

Lovejoy asserts that one must look at the "unit-ideas" that are primary and/or persistent throughout the history of thought. An architecture analogy would be looking at space instead of style as a primary idea of architecture. This is what Bruno Zevi did in

Architecture as Space (1957)—a “breakthrough” in the framing of architectural history.

Lovejoy outlines the principle types of these primary units of thought—with one discussion focusing on unit-ideas as being implicit assumptions made by individuals and/or generations.

It is the beliefs which are so much a matter of course that they are rather tacitly presupposed than formally expressed and argued for, the ways of thinking which seem so natural and inevitable that they are not scrutinized with the eye of logical self-consciousness, that often are most decisive of the character of a philosopher’s doctrine, and still oftener of the dominant intellectual tendencies of an age.²⁰

What Lovejoy describes here is precisely what social historian Raymond Williams argues is operating in the western conception of nature. Lovejoy too makes this argument specifically related to nature in his book *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* when he writes:

...that the range of connotation of the single term [nature] covers conceptions not only distinct but often absolutely antithetical to one another in their implications; and that the writers who have used it have usually been little aware of its equivocality and have at all times tended to slip unconsciously from one of its senses to another.²¹

Lovejoy goes on to describe the methods of the historian of unit-ideas. These include: the tracing of the idea multi-disciplinarily; of the production of “historical synthesis” but not unification of these disciplines; of comparative studies between nationalities and/or languages; of the significance of time over geography as revealing commonalties; of the importance of collective and/or common thought in addition to that of the individual genius; and, of the discovery of how ideas capture and dominate a generation.

²⁰ Arthur Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Harvard University Press, 1936), p. 7.

²¹ Lovejoy, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (Johns Hopkins Press, 1935), p. 12.

In terms of this dissertation, I will employ the notion of inter-disciplinary studies in an exploration of the Wayside Inn as an everyday landscape. This critical look at the Wayside Inn will encompass the disciplines of history, cultural studies, literature, architecture, and historic preservation.

In contrast to Lovejoy, this dissertation will look both at the notion of the common as well as the individual in order to enrich the reading of this landscape. Unlike Lovejoy this work will not focus on comparative study outside of the United States. This dissertation contests, in part, Lovejoy's assertion that a New Englander and Englishman of the 1930s will have more in common than a New Englander from the 1930s and one from the 1630s. While obviously there are things that people share in a generation (including historical events, science, technology, and cultural artifacts), this work will contend that the exploration of what it means to be American to Henry Ford inextricably binds the "New Englander" of all generations, particularly under the rubric of the idea of pastoral. These conceptions, however, are not static, which means one cannot understand the New Englander of 1930 (and she herself) without knowing the myth and reality of the New Englander over the 300 previous years.

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 begins with the story of the Inn under the ownership of the Howe family. The end of the Howe connection with the property coincided with the burgeoning of the Colonial Revival in America. It is the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow who would explicitly connect the Inn to this cultural movement. This discussion also serves as the backdrop for Ford's coming-of-age in an antique and New England obsessed Victorian America.

In the next chapter, the narrative continues with Ford's involvement with the Wayside Inn. Ford's actions are used to tease out the relationship between the crafting of an American identity and an interest in a materially, not textually, based past. The broader trends informing museums and didactic instruction are compared to Ford's endeavor in order to highlight the dialectic between history and progress at the start of the twentieth century.

Chapter 4 discusses the role of authenticity in the preservation and production of a cultural landscape in America. These issues are introduced by Ford's purchase and addition of a one-room schoolhouse to the Wayside Inn landscape. He did not transport any ordinary schoolhouse to the site, but in fact brought one loaded with the mythologies of the common American, nineteenth-century, cultural landscape. Ford sought out, found, and authenticated the one-room school to which Mary took her little lamb.

The next chapter sets Ford's work in Sudbury against the village industries he established back in Michigan. Ford's village creations are discussed as belonging to the long tradition of the American pastoral, and particularly the dialectic between technology and nature that cultural historian Leo Marx termed "the middle landscape." This discussion is introduced as Ford decided to move the road in front of the Inn. It is the automobile which he feared would ruin his common American landscape. The tensions between the emergence of the modern landscape and a desire to hold onto the fabled landscape of the past are central to Ford's work on the site.

The concluding chapter will touch upon Ford's historical collections in Dearborn that followed his work in Sudbury. It will examine Ford's work against that of Roosevelt's New Deal program, the Works Project Administration. Both projects

highlight the growing cultural production related to the invention of an American identity between the two World Wars.

Through an examination of Ford's Wayside Inn landscape, this dissertation will investigate to what extent the preservation movement is not about maintaining historical veracity, but constructs a fiction more real, as it were, than any of the available realities. Ford's involvement in the Wayside Inn landscape is neither idiosyncratic nor unique. Instead, it represents a larger effort to identify what it meant and continues to mean to be American via the "saving" of a peculiarly American environment.

This endeavor is not free from potential traps and pitfalls. Any scholar who has waded through the discourse of postmodernism cannot dismiss the problem of invoking "the American". First it must be stated that the term America as used in this text refers to the political-geographical area known as the United States of America. It should be acknowledged that the United States' neighbors to the north and south are also part of the Americas, and their cultural history is just as rich. America is used here, not merely to refer to the geographical location, but more important to establish an intellectual construct. America was (and is) as much as an idea as a place. It is the idea of America with which Ford is grappling and constructing. Questions to be kept in mind in the imaging of an everyday American landscape include: For whom is this American cultural self-image—as manifest in Ford's preservation/creation—representative? Whose sense of identity and national consciousness is addressed in the case study selected? For whom are the environmental and architectural archetypes representative? How does one keep from reinforcing oppressive majoritarian ideologies? How does one keep from falling into the

trap of the grand narrative of American exceptionalism; that every citizen shares a single national experience?

Chapter 2. Tales of Howe's Tavern, of the Red Horse Tavern, and of a Wayside Inn.

"As ancient in this hostelry
 As any in the land may be.
 Built in the old Colonial day
 When men lived in a grander way,
 With ampler hospitality;
 Now somewhat fallen in decay,
 With weather stains upon the wall,
 And stairways worn, and crazy doors
 And creaking and uneven floors,
 And chimneys huge and tiled and tall."

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *Tales of a Wayside Inn*²²

Howe's Tavern was neither Sudbury's first nor oldest ordinary.²³ John Parmenter Jr. established the first "house of publique [sic] entertainment...for selling beer, brandy, wine and strong waters" in Sudbury, Massachusetts in the winter of 1655.²⁴ Nevertheless, Howe's Tavern would become not only the most famous watering hole in Sudbury, but also arguably in New England and, in the waning decades of the nineteenth century, the nation.²⁵

The Howe family's 200-years running the tavern were made possible when John Howe traveled from England to Massachusetts sometime between 1621 and 1639.²⁶ One

²² Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, "Tales of a Wayside Inn," 1863

²³ Ordinary is a commonly used term for taverns and inns during the colonial period. How's Tavern, Howe's Tavern, the Red Horse Tavern, and the Wayside Inn are all monikers given to the same building located in South Sudbury, Middlesex County, Massachusetts. It should be noted that How is spelled both How and Howe by the family (as well as in historical documents and secondary scholarship). For the sake of consistency within this document and in a deliberate choice to not get into the historical semantics of the existence of an "e", Howe will be used as the spelling referring to the family which built and owned the inn for nearly 200 years.

²⁴ MSCF, Folio 17.

²⁵ As George Marlowe asserted, "But of all America's old inns and taverns, at Wayside Inn at South Sudbury is probably the most famous; for what Washington Irving did for the Red Lion at Stratford, Longfellow did for the Red Horse Tavern at Sudbury." *Coaching Roads of Old New England* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1945), p. 14.

²⁶ John van Schaick, Jr., *Characters in Tales of a Wayside Inn* (Boston: The Universalist Publishing House, 1939), pp. 9-11. Curtis Garfield and Alison Ridley's well researched book *As Ancient Is This Hostelry: The*

of the founders of Sudbury and Marlborough, Howe became a leading citizen of both towns, as did his progeny.²⁷ John was the first Howe to receive a license and operate an ordinary—The Black Horse Tavern; however, it was not located in Sudbury, but in nearby Lanham. The Black Horse Tavern would be run by John and his descendants for several generations. Apocryphal tales of John Howe as a King Solomon-type mediator who was respected by and fairly treated the local Native American populations abound in the historical record. It is hard to determine the veracity of these stories. The most popular fable contends that Howe arbitrated a dispute between two arguing Indians over a pumpkin that was planted on one's land and grew into the other's property.²⁸ The legend has Howe dividing the pumpkin in half to share between the Indians, whom then proclaim him a wise man. This was a tumultuous time between the colonists and the native populations. John Howe would certainly have had stature among the colonists based on his land holdings—as Sudbury's early settlers instituted an English open-field system of government which accorded the men their social and economic status based on their landholdings (determined on the basis of land held previously elsewhere). But the Native American perceptions of Howe went unrecorded. Records of land deals between the two groups do exist. Those of pumpkin sharing do not. After the Sudbury Fight in 1676 against King Philip, the Howe family became involved in maneuvers to swallow up

Story of the Wayside Inn (Sudbury, Mass.: Porcupine Enterprises, 1988) is a tremendous resources regarding the Howe family.

²⁷ His rise, as well as that of his sons and grandsons, is recorded in the Sudbury Town Book, which contains the records of the town's affairs since its incorporation in 1639.

²⁸ Stories of Howe and Indians can be found in the *Worcester Magazine and Historical Journal*, ed. by William Lincoln & C. C. Baldwin (Worcester: Charles Griffin, 1826) vol. 2, p. 130. See also the recounting of Samuel Arthur Bent's 17 June 1897 address to the Society of Colonial Wars in van Schiack Jr (1939), p. 11. See also Garfield (1988) Chapters 1 and 2.

the Native American plantations into their own. The days of friendly adjudications about pumpkins were certainly gone for good at this point.

With permission from the Court of General Sessions, John's son Samuel opened an inn in Sudbury in 1692.²⁹ Because of his appointment the previous year as a selectman of Sudbury, his ordinary quickly became the headquarters for officials conducting town business west of the river.³⁰ The origins of The Wayside Inn, however, began eleven years later, in 1703, when Samuel gave his son David 130 acres of uncultivated land and helped him build a house. With the aid of his father's carpentry skills, David built a post and beam, two-room building, twenty-six by twenty feet. The entrance hall on the west contained a circular stair which wrapped the chimney and led to a common bedroom on the second floor. The first floor common room would eventually become the bar room of the Wayside Inn in the twentieth century; for David it served as a combination kitchen, dining room and parlor heated by a fieldstone fireplace on the west wall. Upon its completion, David used the building solely as a residence for himself and his family. He did not put up travelers in the two-room homestead. David's father, Samuel died in 1713, a decade after they built the house. Upon Samuel's death, his son Elisha took over running the ordinary in Lantham.

Tensions went unabated between the various New England tribes and the colonists in the beginning decades of the eighteenth century as both groups were caught

²⁹ Contrary to published accounts from the late nineteenth century up to van Schaick's book, this inn was not the future The Wayside Inn and Samuel Howe was not the first operator of said inn. Garfield's research indicates that Samuel's ordinary and home were on the West side of Sudbury close to Lantham. There were no buildings on the present site of the Wayside Inn lot until after 1702. One building, the homestead built by Samuel and David in 1703, shows on a 1707 map. Garfield (1988), 35. MAC, Ancient Maps and Grants, Vol. 1, 224.

³⁰ Garfield (1988), pp. 30-31. *Middlesex Court of General Sessions Records, 1692-1722*, East Cambridge, Mass. See also lists in the Sudbury Town Records for dates and topics of meetings at Samuel Howe's.

amid the power struggles between England and France. During this time period, stories proliferated concerning David Howe and his brother Daniel as Indian rangers. There is no definite evidence to support these stories.³¹ David Howe did increase the size of his house sometime in the 1710s; he added two more rooms to the west end and the chimney was doubled to accommodate two new fireplaces in an east end addition. By mid-eighteenth century, the colonial conflicts with Native Americans subsided enough for settlement to continue in western Massachusetts beyond Middlesex County. Western settler desires and needs to travel to the port in Boston meant an increase in traffic over the dirt path that ran in front of David Howe's homestead. At this point, David turned his homestead into a place of business and opened an ordinary.³² At the same time David opened his tavern, he also dammed Hop Brook and built a mill a short distance from where Henry Ford would build his own grist mill over 200 years later. Originally equipped for sawing logs, millstones were added to the mill later to grind corn, wheat and rye for meals served at the tavern. Ezekiel Howe, David's youngest son, first appeared as holding a license to operate the inn in 1748; his father died eleven years later at the age of eight-five.

³¹ As Garfield (1988), p. 45, footnotes: "The tradition of David How's Indian service seems to have resulted mostly from the fact that Hudson, in his *History of Sudbury*, mentions David How as appearing in Captain Willard's Journal which Hudson apparently examined in the State Archives. Hudson must have misread the name 'Daniel' as 'David'. David's younger brother, Daniel, lived in Rutland and was a leading citizen there. Hudson's error was later compounded by the Rev. Martin Lovering who states flatly in his *Genealogies of the Howe Family*: 'David How was an Indian ranger,' with no sources mentioned." This reference was, even more unfortunately, picked up and perpetuated by van Schaick, Jr. (1939), p. 16.

³² The first record of David Howe having an innkeeping license dates from 1716 until 1747. Garfield discusses at length the dating of Howe's Tavern based on such record keeping (noting that inns were well-recorded and regulating during this period), refuting early notions based on the Inn's present sign board that David or his father opened an inn on this site much earlier. Further evidence includes an entry from Henry David Thoreau's journal dated 22 May 1853: "...Left our horse at the How Tavern. The oldest date on the sign is 'D.H. 1716.' An old woman, who had been a servant in the family and said she was ninety-one, said that this was the first house built on the spot." From Henry David Thoreau, *Journal*, ed. Bradford Torrey (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1906), Vol. 5, p. 179.

As both Ezekiel's family and the tavern business grew, the ordinary's four rooms became cramped. Ezkiel felled wood like his father and grandfather: on the American chestnut tree covered slopes of nearby Nobscot Mountain. Ezekiel's additions included a small sitting room to the rear of the original parlor, a private kitchen and dining area for the family behind the bar room, a bedroom (now called the Lafayette room), and a long room with a fireplace on the second floor used for dancing. Ezekiel also made improvements to the land with the addition of outbuildings such as barns and sheds, which were meant to accommodate the increasing traffic between Boston and western settlements. The switch from Howe's Tavern to the moniker Red Horse Tavern is colloquially attributed to Ezekiel as an attempt to distinguish his ordinary from his cousins' — Black Horse Tavern; and, therefore, he had a Red Horse painted on the signboard. Various diaries from the early nineteenth century, however, claim that the signboard carried a black horse.³³ The signboard serves as a marker as well in the beginning of the lore of the tavern; facts merge with fiction. Perhaps this was inevitable because Ezekiel's tenure as landlord coincided with the Revolution, the time in which the mythological Wayside Inn was born—first by the antebellum culture then again in *fin de siecle* Americana.

The Red Horse Tavern became a locus of revolutionary activities during the latter part of the eighteenth century, in part because Colonial Ezekiel Howe was the commanding officer of the Fourth Middlesex Militia. On June 24, 1774 William Molineaux Jr., a member of the Boston Committee of Safety (charged with making

³³ van Schaick Jr. (1939), pp. 16-19. Also Garfield (1988), p. 57.

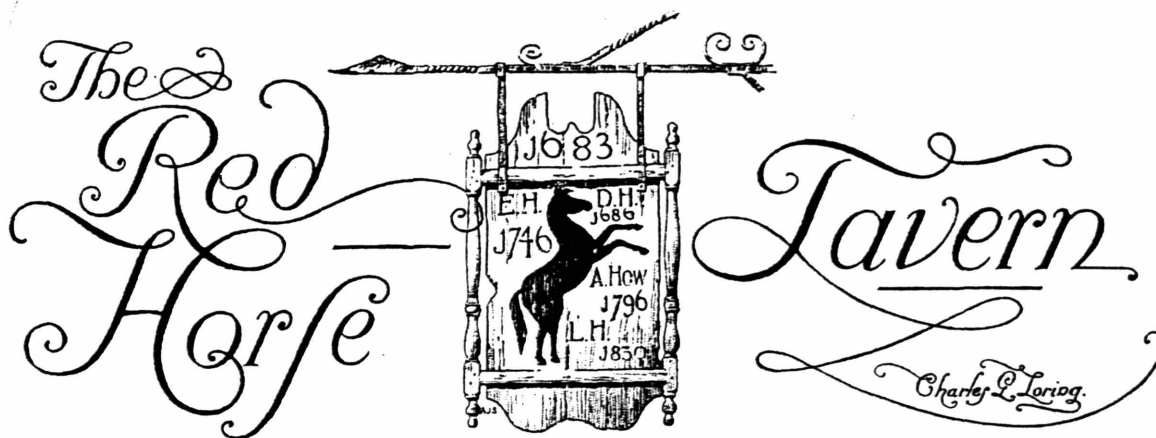


Figure 1. Drawing of signboard made by Charles L. Loring. Appears in brochure produced by the Trustees of the Wayside Inn, 1922. From the collections of the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village Research Center.

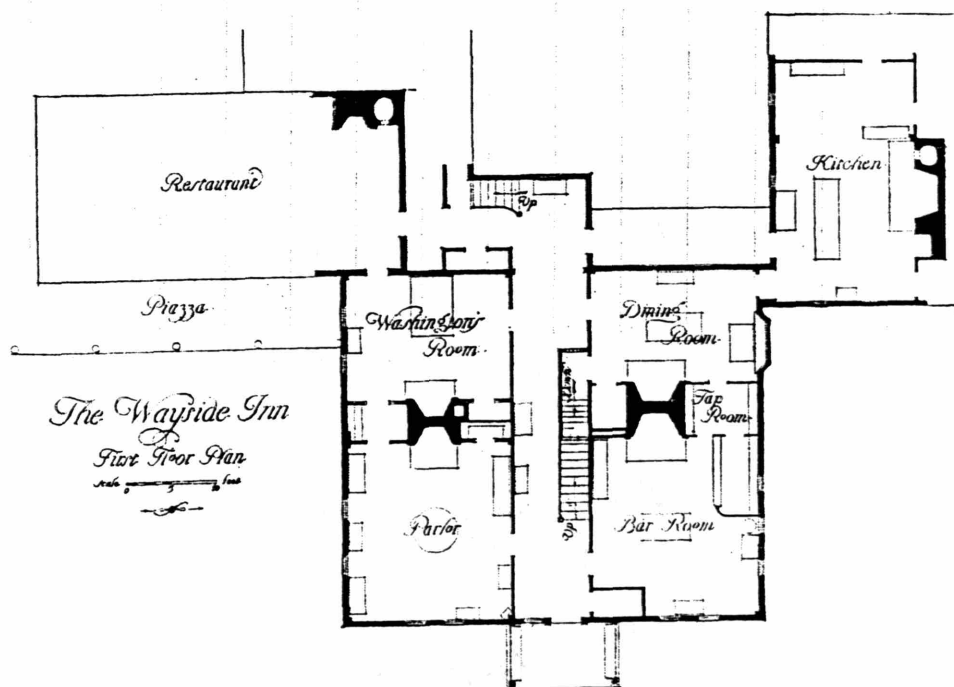


Figure 2. First Floor Plan of the Wayside Inn at the beginning of the twentieth century. Illustration appeared in Henry Ford's "Why I Bought the Wayside Inn," *Garden & Home Builder*, Vol XLIII, No. 5 (July 1926), p. 436.

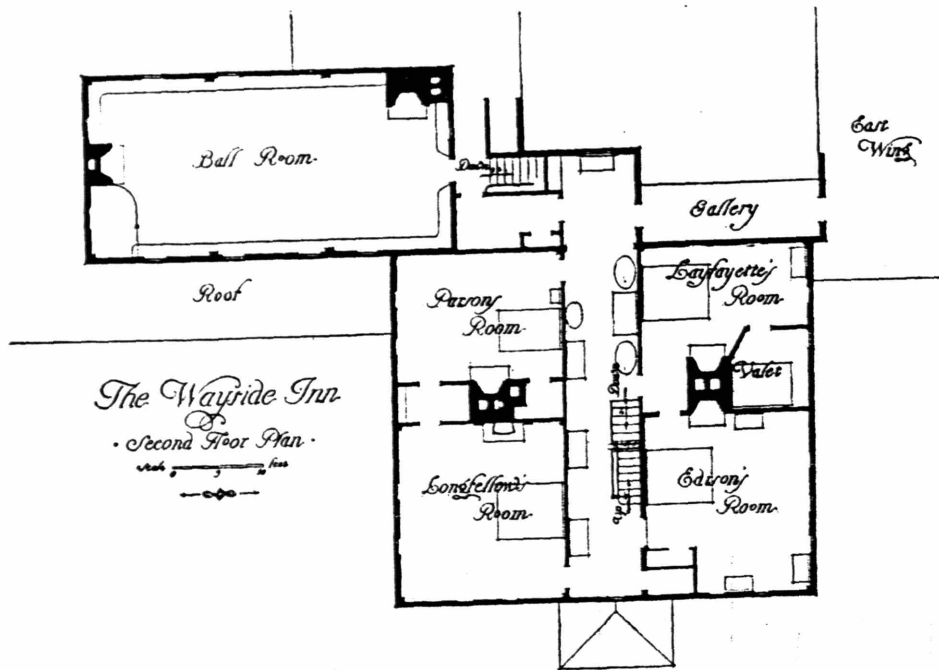
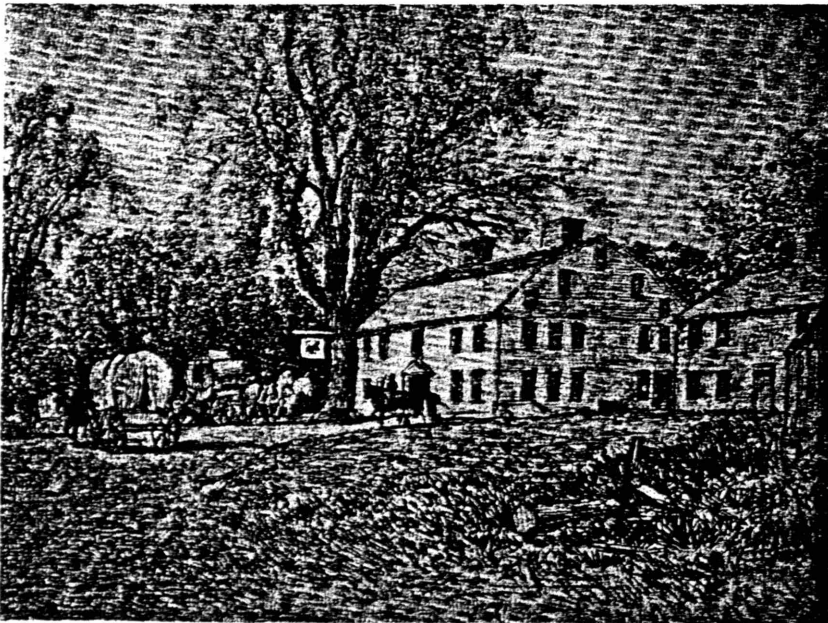


Figure 3. Second Floor Plan of the Wayside Inn at the beginning of the twentieth century. Illustration appeared in Henry Ford's "Why I Bought the Wayside Inn," *Garden & Home Builder*, Vol XLIII, No. 5 (July 1926), p. 436.



The Wayside Inn in Stagecoach Days

Figure 4. Illustration of Wayside Inn, frontispiece in John van Schaick Jr., *The Characters in Tales of a Wayside Inn* (Boston: The Universalist Publishing House, 1939).

contingency plans in case the British troops then occupying Boston should make a foray into the countryside), scratched a ditty on a parlor window pane that you can see today:

What do you think?
 Here is good drink.
 Perhaps you may not know it.
 If not in haste, do stop and taste.
 You merry folks will show it.

It is these intense activities that places the Red Horse Tavern at one of the most common American historical epigraphs: George Washington Slept Here. The verity of such a claim has been debated here (as well as in many other sites) for years. What is known? General Washington took command of the Continental Army in the summer of 1775 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Some stories have him stopping at the Tavern to refresh himself during his journey (as a tablet in front of today's Wayside Inn attests).³⁴ Others posit that President Washington stopped at the Tavern on 23 October 1789 during a tour of New England with the purpose of acquainting himself with "the temper and disposition of the inhabitants toward the new government..."³⁵ His route during that trip took him from Marlborough to Weston—Sudbury clearly sits on the path between the two towns. What can be stated for certain is that there is no evidence that Colonel Howe and General Washington ever met, much less were comrades-in-arms. Whether Washington stopped for refreshment at Howe's establishment remains more in the category of fiction than fact. A more interesting inquiry (to be addressed later) than whether George Washington slept at the Inn is why late nineteenth and early twentieth century Americans wanted him to sleep there?

³⁴ van Schiack Jr. (1939), 17 and Garfield (1988), 77.

³⁵ Douglas Southall Freeman, *George Washington, A Biography* (New York: Scribners, 1934), vol. 6, p. 24.

After Lord Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown on 19 October 1781, the number of overnight guests at Ezekiel's ordinary increased as the mail coaches traversed the Boston Post Road on route to various points between Boston and Philadelphia. The increased business led Ezekiel to expand the Tavern once again; he added a kitchen at the west end of the dwelling and more chambers above on the second floor.³⁶

At the close of the eighteenth century, Adam Howe, Ezekiel's youngest son, began to take over the daily operation of the Inn. He became the official landlord upon his father's death in 1796. By the time the nation was approaching its fiftieth birthday in 1826, business at the Red Horse Tavern was booming. Like his father and grandfather before him, Adam made changes to the property: moving a small barn and attaching it to the northeast corner of the house (today called The Old Kitchen) and adding a second story onto it with bedrooms and a fireplace. He also added conversation pieces such as a peacock to strut the front lawn.³⁷

In his address to the Society of Colonial Wars on 17 June 1897 at the Inn, Samuel Arthur Bent proclaimed, "The third proprietor of the Red Horse Tavern was the antiquarian of the family. The ancient coat of arms, hanging during his boyhood in the parlor of the Inn, gave his thoughts a heraldic turn and he was proud of the lineage he derived from an English ancestry..."³⁸ Like the fictions of George Washington's stay and the signboard, the coat of arms turned out to be more simulacrum than fact.³⁹ The sign

³⁶ MRDPC, Estates. No. 12021.

³⁷ Lydia Maria Child, "The Howe Tavern in Sudbury as it Looked in 1828. A Memory," *The National Standard*, New York, c. 1870.

³⁸ Samuel Arthur Bent, "The Wayside Inn—Its History and Literature," Address to the Society of Colonial Wars, 17 June, 1897, 18.

³⁹ The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines simulacrum as 1. A material image, made as a representation of some deity, person, or thing. 2. Something having merely the form or appearance of a certain thing, without

board represented the purchase of someone (perhaps Adam Howe) desirous of a connection to the sanctified beginnings of the country; by prominently displaying the coat of arms, Howe embellished the origin story of the Inn by proclaiming an ancient legacy for the proprietors.⁴⁰

The Inn was the primary way station for mail coaches using the Boston Post Road to travel between Boston and New York (a route established in 1711). Those leaving Boston at 3 a.m. would arrive at Howe's ordinary in time for breakfast. Other regular visitors included traveling ministers and General Court deputies, passing through on business. The inn was not only a way station for travelers, it was also a destination as it became a regular practice for Brahmins to take a coach out to Sudbury for an overnight stay.⁴¹ It is also during this busy time that Adam Howe's most famous alleged guest [did not] stay at the Inn: the Marquis de Lafayette.⁴²

possessing its substance or proper qualities; and, 2b. A mere image, a species imitation or likeness, of something. Definition number 2 being applicable to the coat of arms.

⁴⁰ Garfield (1988), pp. 85-86, "In 1927, William Prescott Greenlaw, then librarian of the New England Genealogical Society, in response to an inquiry from the landlord of the Wayside Inn [Henry Ford], expressed the opinion that: 'the coat of arms which was said to have been brought from England by John How in 1630...was undoubtedly painted by one John Coles of Boston... John Coles Sr., as early as 1776, undertook to supply all inquirers with a family arms at a moderate cost. ...The spurious armorial paintings are easily recognized by the form of the shield, the mantlings and the palm branches. These are widely scattered throughout New England and of course are entirely worthless...'"

⁴¹ Brahmins refers to a class of New England society claiming hereditary or cultural descent from the Anglo-Saxon Protestants who originally settled New England (i.e. the Puritans). Others, however, either bought or married their way into this 19th century society. Oliver Wendell Holmes is often credited with coining the term in a January 1860 *Atlantic Monthly* article, "The Professor's Story." Far from egalitarian, this was the Yankee version of an aristocracy. The nature of the Brahmins is summarized in the poem, "Boston Toast," by John Collins Bossidy: "So this is good old Boston, The home of the bean and the cod, Where the Lowells talk only to the Cabots, And the Cabots talk only to God."

⁴² Curtis Garfield's exhaustive research found no evidence in local newspapers of Lafayette's visit. According to Lafayette's nine trips to Eastern Massachusetts only two of them would have made a visit to the inn possible. Neither Lydia Child nor Adeline Lunt mention him in their travel accounts of the same time period.

The proprietorship of Adam Howe over the Inn was chronicled in a variety of newspapers, diaries, and magazines after the Civil War. In the exchange of letters in the *Boston Journal* in August 1868 between Zed and Medicus (pen names of undiscovered authors) who visited the Inn as boys in the 1830s, Zed wrote:

Thirty years ago it was a treat to the boys to pass an hour beneath the trees at the inn and watch the callers at the trough quench the thirst of their horses and maybe the longing of their own appetites. Then too, in the summer, gentlemen with their families used to drive with coach and two from Boston to Sudbury to pass the night at the Red Horse Tavern as we called it; and such a paraphernalia as they presented was no unattractive sight to eyes like ours in those days. 'Uncle Adam', as he was familiarly known, was the landlord then and briskly did he move about in his long blue frock of wool, regardless of the style of his guests, while his good spouse in plain calico gown presided with honest zeal over the details of the house though both were grown gray from many labors and many years. The How boys were all at home then, Young Adam, Winthrop the working son and the Esquire (Lyman), the last of the family to pass away...⁴³

Another such sojourner was the writer Lydia Maria Child.⁴⁴ Child's visit in the summer of 1828 would later be published in *The National Standard* over forty years later:

Many years ago when it was June in the seasons and the June of my youth, I went to ride with the young lover who is now my old lover. We rode on like a prince and princess through fairyland until we came to an old inn...known to all surrounding regions as Adam How's Tavern.⁴⁵

After Adam Howe's death in 1854, his son Lyman—born as Thomas Jefferson assumed the presidency—took over as caretaker of the Inn.⁴⁶ Lyman grew up during the

⁴³ *Boston Journal*, Zed and Medicus, August 1868. See also Garfield (1988) Chapter 9 for extended accounts of Adam Howe.

⁴⁴ Lydia Maria Frances visited Adam How's Tavern in the summer of 1828 with her fiancé David Lee Child. At the time of her visit, Lydia had published two moderately successful novels. It would be another five years before she and her husband would publish the abolitionist document "An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans called Africans."

⁴⁵ Child, (1870). See also van Schiack Jr. (1939), pp. 18-19 and Garfield (1988), pp. 81-82.

⁴⁶ The popularity of Adam Howe is attested to in a poem written by Thomas Parsons about his passing, entitled "The Old House in Sudbury, Twenty Years Afterwards," published in a volume of his poems (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1893). "Adam's love and "Adam's trouble/ Are a scare remembered tale; / No more wine cups brightly bubble, / No more healths, nor cakes, nor ale./ Never to his father's hostel/ Comes a kinsman or a guest/ Midnight calls for no more candles/ House and landlord both have rest."

Inn's last hoorah and would have met one of the last famous travelers to the Inn (who actually did visit), the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882).⁴⁷ During Lyman's time as proprietor, however, traffic at the Inn abated—in part because of the replacement of coaches by railroads—decreasing the need for stay-overs by travelers both locally and from afar. During this period, Harvard Professor Daniel Treadwell took his family on a trip throughout the state and spent the night at Lyman's tavern. The once busy inn was now a secluded oasis that became a summer retreat for Treadwell.

Treadwell not only returned to summer at the Inn with his family, but he also brought with him other members of Cambridge's academic community to include: Dr. Thomas Parsons, Luigi Monti and Henry Ware Wales. It is this group, along with Lyman Howe, that Longfellow would immortalize as his main characters in the popular poem *Tales of a Wayside Inn*.

Antebellum visitor Adeline Lunt—wife of George Lunt, a Boston editor and journalist, and sister to Thomas Parsons, the “poet” in Longfellow's *Tales of a Wayside Inn*—wrote an intimate portrait of the tavern published in 1880 in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* based on several visits she made with her brother during the 1830s.⁴⁸

Her account was one which bolstered an antiquarian view of the Inn and affirmed its significance via the poetry of Longfellow. Hers was one of the few sources which described both Lyman's (and Longfellow's) Inn at length. Many of the retrospective accounts of Lyman Howe make him the culprit in the decline of the Inn. One of the few favorable comes from Caroline Morse who wrote in the late 1920s of a childhood

⁴⁷ Longfellow recorded his visit to the Inn in his journal from October 1862.

⁴⁸ Adeline Lunt, “The Red Horse Tavern” *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, September 1880, pp. 608-617.

Thanksgiving visit to Lyman's tavern in 1860 (which, in fact, marked Lyman's last Thanksgiving there).⁴⁹ Lyman did not marry and had no heirs. He died in April 1861. Following Lyman's death, Jerusha Howe (Lyman's sister and Adam's daughter) took over the Inn for a short and unsuccessful period. Child described the trajectory of the Inn from its early to mid nineteenth century heyday to its late nineteenth century decline: "...Everything about the Inn degenerated from its ancient thriftiness and began to wear a shabby and disconsolate aspect. Jerusha died, debts accumulated, and finally the primitive old homestead with its fair acres of pasture and woodland passed into the hands of strangers."⁵⁰

Even though Adam Howe's tenure as innkeeper served as the time period during which those who reminisced the Tavern visited, the popular literature sentimentalizing the Inn's halcyon days burgeoned in the decades after the Civil War when the Howe family no longer owned the ordinary. It is easy to finger to the culprit in this Victorian interest in the Inn: the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.⁵¹ The year Henry Ford (1863) was born also marked the year that Longfellow wrote *The Sudbury Tales*; a poem whose title he later changed to *The Tales of a Wayside Inn*. Longfellow's first trip to the Inn (like those who also would write about it in the latter decades of the nineteenth century), however, had occurred nearly forty years prior.⁵²

⁴⁹ Wayside Inn Archives, Sudbury, Massachusetts.

⁵⁰ Lydia Maria Child (1870). See also van Schiack Jr. (1939), pp. 18-19 and Garfield (1988), pp. 81-82.

⁵¹ Longfellow's personal connections to the colonial era included his family lineage. His maternal grandfather, Peleg Wadsworth, was a general in the American Revolutionary Army. His father's side traced back to Priscilla and John Alden, who arrived to the New World on the Mayflower.

⁵² Longfellow's first trip to the inn was most likely in 1826.

Retiring in 1854 after twenty years as a Harvard Professor of Modern Languages, Longfellow became both a popular and influential mid-nineteenth century poet; he was also among the first American writers to use the cultural landscape and history of the United States (both indigenous and colonial) in his work.⁵³ For early twentieth century cultural critical Van Wyck Brooks, Longfellow contributed to the “flowering of New England;” a time period Brooks felt was rich in cultural production specific to America and included such artists as Nathaniel Hawthorne (Longfellow’s classmate at Bowdoin College), Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Washington Irving, and many others.

Longfellow’s role in popularizing the colonial revival cannot be underscored as his American-themed ballads were popular with both children and adults of various socio-economic classes. His poetic work was characterized by clear and simple language relating the stories of the founding of America, to include: *Song of Hiawatha* (1855), *The Courtship of Miles Standish* (1858), and *Paul Revere’s Ride* (1860).⁵⁴ *Song of Hiawatha* sold 10,000 copies in less than four weeks after publication; by April of 1857, 50,000 copies had been sold. At that same time, a total of 325,000 copies of all of his works had

⁵³ A good turn of the twenty century biography of Longfellow (and the source of some of the sales statistics in this narrative) is Samuel Austin Allibone’s *A Critical Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1900). Other Longfellow sources include: Bonnie L. Lukes, *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: America’s Beloved Poet* (1998); Newton Arvin, *Longfellow: His Life and Work* (1977); and L. R. Thompson, *Young Longfellow* (1938).

⁵⁴ *Song of Hiawatha*, one of Longfellow’s best known narrative poems, was based in part on Henry Rowe Schoolcraft’s books on the Indian tribes of North America published in 1839. In consulting Schoolcraft’s books Longfellow perpetuated an error of Schoolcraft’s that placed Hiawatha among the forest tribes of the northern Midwest. The historical Hiawatha (c. 1450) lived well to the east. *The Courtship of Miles Standish* was written about the poet’s ancestors on his mother’s side. His mother, Zilpah Wadsworth Longfellow, was a descendent of John and Priscilla Alden who came to America on the Mayflower. Longfellow’s connection to the revolution included his choice of home in Cambridge. He occupied the Craigie House, said to have been occupied by General George Washington and his staff during the Revolution.

been sold in America.⁵⁵ Longfellow's poetry reflected both his and the nation's interest in establishing an American mythology. His poem *Tales of a Wayside Inn* was a critical part of this desire to invent the origin myths of the country. In this poem, Longfellow goes beyond a story about a single inn in a specific town to try to capture an archetypal inn and the moment in which it was central to the American Revolution and experience. Hence, the change of title from *The Sudbury Tales* to *Tales of a Wayside Inn*. The poem title eventually stripped the specifics of place (Sudbury) and ownership (Howe & Red Horse) for a broader description of a common American type of tavern in a cultural landscape *Tales of a Wayside Inn*.

The need for America to establish a cultural patrimony distinct from Europe was a common refrain during the nineteenth century. In painting, artists looked to the American landscape for that which could not be found in Europe, as demonstrated by the Hudson River School painters. In literature, the two most common themes of a distinctly American culture were found in telling stories related to the indigenous peoples as well as in the founding of the nation. Geographer and ethnologist Henry Rowe Schoolcraft (1807-1882—renown for his discovery of the source of the Mississippi River in 1832) acknowledged Longfellow's use of his own studies of Native American culture as source material in the *Hiawatha* poem. As Schoolcraft noted in a letter to Longfellow:

⁵⁵ Given that the free population in 1860 was 27,489,561, the Longfellow's sales were astonishing. The slave population that same year was 3,953,760; given the propensity of slave owners to actively deny and prevent literacy among their slaves—as well as their relative socio-economic status; they can be discounted contributing to the purchase of Longfellow's works. These numbers are also astounding given the relative paucity of public libraries at this time. Most nineteenth century American's access to books was through private collections and athenaeums. While the first circulating library, the Library Company of Philadelphia was chartered in 1732 prompted by Benjamin Franklin—and a public library had been opened in Boston as early as 1653—a strong and largely accessible public library system in the United States would not emerge until the later nineteenth century, this would be spurred with the founding of the American Library Association in 1876.

Permit me to dedicate to you this volume of Indian myths and legends, derived from the story-telling circle of the native wigwams. . . .you have demonstrated, by this pleasing series of pictures of Indian life, sentiment, and invention, that the use of the native lore reveals one of the true sources of our literary independence. Greece and Rome, England and Italy, have so long furnished, if they have not exhausted, the field of poetic culture, that it is at least refreshing to find, both in theme and metre, something new.⁵⁶

Longfellow's poem *Paul Revere's Ride* demonstrated both this desired literary independence from Europe and the creation of an origin myth.⁵⁷ Longfellow was derided by critics—both of the time and throughout the twentieth century—for the lack of veracity in his narrative. His version, the critics complained, simplified the complex economic and political forces that catalyzed the Revolution, and distorted history into a singular story of an heroic individual. Longfellow, however, made no claim to scholarship as his purpose. He was, instead, crafting a creation story wrapped in the patriotic heroism that affirmed the importance of the founding of the democracy. Longfellow was writing as America simultaneously neared her centennial birthday and was encountering cultural conflicts. The need for the construction of an origin myth, by Longfellow and others, is explained by the pioneering work of early to mid-twentieth century anthropologists Bronislaw Malinowski and Claude Lévi-Strauss. As historian Michael Kammen notes, “Malinowski . . . once described myth as a story about the past which has the function of justifying the present and thereby contributing to social stability.”⁵⁸ Kammen continues by adding that “Lévi-Strauss . . . the most influential anthropologist of the generation that followed Malinowski's . . . acknowledged that myths

⁵⁶ Samuel Austin Allibone, *A Critical Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1900).

⁵⁷ *Paul Revere's Ride* was originally published in *The Atlantic Monthly* (1860) and later republished as the start to the interwoven stories collected into *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (1863).

⁵⁸ Michael G. Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The transformation of tradition in American culture* (New York: Knopf, 1991), p. 17.

may be activated or reactivated in order to legitimize a version of history that is useful...”⁵⁹

If Malinowski’s (or Lévi-Strauss’ more subtle) definition of myth is applied to *Paul Revere’s Ride*, then Longfellow’s purpose is clear. Longfellow interpreted the Revolutionary past to shore up the contemporary tensions; the poem was published a few months before the April 1861 Battle of Fort Sumpter in Charleston Harbor that initiated the Civil War. Originally a regional folk hero, Revere was elevated in Longfellow’s popular reconstruction to the national. It was constructional myth, not factual history, that could accomplish this feat. With tensions between the states and with the federal government increasing, Longfellow took a local hero (recognized by the Yankee readers of the Boston-based *Atlantic Monthly*) and raised him to a national emblem of why the nation had been formed in the first place. While the long term impact was cultural, the short term purpose of the poem was clearly political—to stave off the impending break up of the United States by providing a potentially unifying icon.

As George William Curtis noted even before the publication of his American mythology series: “The secret of [Longfellow’s] popularity as a poet is probably that of all similar popularity—namely, the fact that his poetry expresses a universal sentiment in the simplest and most melodious manner.”⁶⁰ Longfellow was just one of many cultural/political figures who shaped the way nineteenth century Americans saw

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ George William Curtis, “Sketch of Longfellow” in *Homes of American Authors* (New York, 1853), pp. 282-283. While Longfellow’s poetry reached a relatively wide audience of people belonging to a variety of socio-economic and ethnic groups, claims to a universal sentiment do not take into account one’s ability to enjoy Longfellow’s poetry without agreeing upon a shared American experience. Or that Longfellow’s version of the American experience was one small narrative that excluded a multitude of American stories that were never told to or reached as broad an audience, but were nevertheless representative of an American experience; not the definitive one.

themselves individually *and* collectively, in the present *and* in the past. So what was the “universal sentiment” of his poems that was shared by many nineteenth century Americans?

With the living memory of the Revolution no longer accessible, Americans needed a way to reconstruct their past rather than faithfully record it; the emergence of the colonial revival represented that attempt. The contemporary needs (of both Antebellum and Victorian Americans) influenced why and how this reconstruction took place.

While its seeds were germinating prior to the Civil War, the colonial revival did not sprout into a thick cultural field until after the 1870s, with the first great harvest at The Centennial Exposition in 1876 in Philadelphia.⁶¹ The first official world’s fair held in the United States attracted nearly ten million Americans (or roughly twenty percent of the population—although the percentage would be lowered by the repeat visitors) on a pilgrimage to Philadelphia in order to celebrate the emergence of America’s technological prowess. The exhibits were placed in seven categories, most of which reflected the predominantly industrial orientation of the fair.⁶² The technological displays, in fact, lured Henry Ford’s father (without his family in tow) to the fair in his first trip away from Michigan since arriving in America. “Henry questioned him closely when he returned from this celebration of American ingenuity and innovation, which had

⁶¹ One might bookend the height of the colonial revival between the two expositions held in Philadelphia, the Centennial in 1876 and the Sesqui-centennial in 1926.

⁶² The categories were: mining and metallurgy, manufactured products, science and education, machinery, agriculture, fine arts, and horticulture. Consumer products first displayed to the public included Alexander Graham Bell’s telephone, the Remington typewriter, Heinz ketchup and Hires Root Beer. Technologies introduced at the exhibition included the Corliss Steam Engine.

galvanized amateur inventors and Horatio Alger types all over the country. His father told of seeing Machinery Hall, with its steam engines, locomotives and power lathes.”⁶³ The impact of the fair on Ford was clearly one of the inspiration of modernization.

Despite the fair’s declared purpose (and official title as the International Exhibition of Arts, Manufactures and Products of the Soil and Mine), the exposition turned America’s focus toward the celebration of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the cultural construction of a colonial past. What constituted the colonial (both at the fair and as a revival), however, was flexible and open to interpretation. The variety of buildings at the Exhibition deemed colonial attested to architects’ flexible application of the term to a variety of building styles from the Georgian, to the Palladian, to those that were more medieval in character. By the turn of the twentieth century, anything deemed traditional in aesthetics carried the moniker of colonial.⁶⁴

While the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia attempted to collect colonial architecture for didactic display to a diverse American audience, individuals were creating their own collections (from the scholarly to the hobbyist) of a variety of colonial artifacts. From furniture to other small collectibles, the middle and upper classes set out to acquire both authentic and reproduced objects from the colonial era that were described in an ever proliferating set of magazines and books. The work of Alice Morse Earle (1851-1911) was exemplar of the surging interest in colonial antiques. Starting in 1874, Earle wrote seventeen books about the culture of colonial America. Her books

⁶³ Peter Collier and David Horowitz, *The Fords* (New York: Summit Books, 1987), p. 22. Ford’s mother would also die that year.

⁶⁴ Vincent Scully writes about the variety of revival styles in his seminal book, *The Shingle Style and the Stick Style* (first published, 1955; revised edition, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971).

passed through multiple printings and were as much a popular phenomenon up through the early twentieth century as Longfellow's poetry. The popularity of the colonial era led to the growth of the reproductions of its culture, particularly in home furnishings for middle and upper class white Americans. The influential antiquarian Wallace Nutting made a career out of the public's desire for all things colonial. Nutting bought colonial houses and furniture during the latter nineteenth century which would in turn inspire his line of high quality seventeenth century furniture reproductions. He also produced hand colored photographs of pastoral scenes and books, from *The Colonial House*, to his "Beautiful" series on the states of New England (e.g. *Massachusetts Beautiful*, *Maine Beautiful*, etc.). The ubiquity of this collecting led the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York to hold the first major exhibition on early American furniture, metalwork and other artifacts in 1909.

The colonial revival went beyond the fetishization of interior accoutrements, to encompass a broader nostalgia for a rural America that predated the tensions wrought by urbanization and modernization. Nineteenth century authors and artists embraced this Virgilian sympathy in the work they produced throughout the century; and, they often conflated the pastoral landscape with that of the constructed cultural landscape of New England. The sheer amount of cultural detris produced would be too long to list but its range included work from John Barber's (1798-1885) production of more than 400 engravings of New England town centers in the 1830s to higher end paintings by Thomas Cole (*New England Scenery*, 1839) and Frederic Church (*New England Scenery*, 1851).

One approach to (re)creating a colonial past was to situate it in the cultural landscape of New England. Thus, one of the more popular exhibits at the Centennial

Exposition was “An Old-Time New England Farmhouse” which imitated a country dwelling from the previous century. This cult of New England, as one form of the colonial revival, began almost as soon as George Washington’s inauguration in 1789. In that year Jedidiah Morse published *The American Geography* and in the next decade the production of state histories, particular in New England would increase in popularity. With the taking of the first Federal census in 1790, 26% of the American population resided in New England; those 93,000 people were eager to have their origin story codified and retold.

On the heels of the publication of Jedidiah Morse and Elijah Parish’s *A Compendious History of New England* (1804), the first New England Society was established in New York City in 1805. Six years later Samuel F. B. Morse completed one of the earliest known paintings of the Pilgrims, *Landing of the Forefathers*. This topic would become a common theme through the nineteenth century historical painting. Plymouth’s bicentennial was celebrated in 1820 with much pomp and circumstance; the same year that saw Washington Irving’s publication of *Rip Van Winkle* and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. Author and abolitionist Lydia Maria Child published the first major fictional treatment of New England’s founding in 1824, *Hobomok: A Tale of Early Times*. The following year John Winthrop’s private journal was printed for the first time: *A History of New England* (1825). The periodical *Yankee*, which focused on all things and people from New England, was founded in 1828. The following year, 1829, William Appess’ autobiography, *A Son of the Forest*, a Pequot retelling of the region’s colonial history, was published; that same year Lydia Maria Child would continue her work on New England by focusing on its women and the role of domesticity in American culture

by publishing the popular title *The American Frugal Housewife* (reprinted 28 times by 1842). In 1834, Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote “A New England Sketch.” Her body of work could continue to engage the trope of the New England village—even when Stowe wrote about the South in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1851) the moral center for the work was the archetypal New England village.⁶⁵ In 1839 Ralph Waldo Emerson published “Self Reliance” (which made connections between the Yankee culture and the fashioning of an American identity), Thomas Cole painted, “New England Scenery,” and John Barber wrote *Historical Collections of Massachusetts*. Other periodicals would join *Yankee* in celebrating all things New England; one of the more prominent voices occurring in 1857 with the founding of the *Atlantic Monthly*.⁶⁶

Cultural critic Van Wyck Brooks reinforced the prominence of New England as representative of the American experience through his writings at the beginning of the twentieth century. In his publications and anthologies, he asserted the prominence of the influence of New England writers on the national mind.⁶⁷ His *New England Reader*, for which he won the Pulitzer Prize, featured both the nationally prominent as well as more obscure New England writers, both men and women, to include: William Bradford, Anne Bradstreet, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and e.e. cummings. He admired authors like John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892), Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896), and Sarah Orne Jewett (1849-1909) because their writing “dealt with New England country life and the

⁶⁵ See also Stowe’s novel *Old Town Folks* (1869).

⁶⁶ These aforementioned works only represent a minute listing of the enormous cultural production in the construction of New England (the entire oeuvres of Nathaniel Hawthorne and Henry David Thoreau alone made significant contributions in the invention of a cultural and natural colonial New England).

⁶⁷ Van Wyck Brooks, *A New England Reader* (New York: Athenaeum, revised edition 1962).

legends and history of New England.”⁶⁸ These names are well accepted in the American cannon today, but at the time Brooks’ assertion—not only of the importance of regionalism in crafting an American culture, but also specifically, that of New England as being representation of the national ethos—was a lesser known supposition. As Brooks asserted in his introduction:

More than a province, less than a nation, New England has always had a certain coherence of its own, ... it has shown the same consistency of character. For even when the coming of other races might have enfeebled the original stock, the characteristic traits continued to appear, so that literature in New England has possessed a special quality that one can distinguish easily and almost define.⁶⁹

Brooks particularly lauded the mid-nineteenth century as the period in which New England served as teacher to and crafter of the “young republic.” While Brooks makes the case for the significance of New England by going back to the writings of Bradford and Bradstreet, they are there to provide provenance, not to affirm the cultural vision of New England. Bradford’s New England landscape—“a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men” is hardly one that serves as pastoral symbolic landscape.⁷⁰ It is really in the work of writers like Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864) that Van Wyck attributed the emergence of a New England voice that served as a national voice.⁷¹ It is the New England of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1883; Hawthorne’s roommate at Bowdoin) where readers could find New England as a

⁶⁸ Brooks (1962), pp. 140 & 199 & 311. Whittier was a Quaker poet born in Massachusetts, he was a follower of William Lloyd Garrison and a speaker and writer for abolitionism until the Civil War. Stowe too was an abolitionists best known as the author of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* written after spending time in Kentucky, observing slave and being an ardent anti slavery advocate. Born in New England but lived in Cincinnati as well.

⁶⁹ *Ibid* p. vii. It goes without saying that this quote demonstrates an inherent racism against any one other than Anglo Americans prevalent at the beginning of the twentieth century.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. 4 from William Bradford’s “The Landing of the Pilgrims” in his *History of Plymouth Plantation*.

⁷¹ Brooks points particularly to his *Twice Told Tales*, published in 1837 and focusing on the early history of New England.

symbolic landscape for the nation, as Brooks noted, "Virtually all of his poems were known in every English-speaking household."⁷²

The re-telling of colonial New England during the mid-nineteenth century was a way of connecting to the origins of the nation. Thus the story of New England was the story of the nation. The two were conflated starting in this period and continuing through World War II (although the idea of what New England meant and how it represented America would change). Because of the colonial revival's geographical fixation, to be a New Englander or a Yankee was conflated with being American. In the nineteenth century conflict between the North and the South, the North won not only the war between the states, but also the cultural wars in the construction of the "American" past. The myth-making would start in New England and travel to the Midwest as both high and popular American cultures sought to legitimize a useable past for the uncertainties of their present.

The year Henry Ford was born, President Abraham Lincoln declared Thanksgiving a national holiday (1863). The desire to cohere the nation into a cultural polity was clearly on the agenda of the colonial revival. As it gained momentum, so too did the codification of an American narrative with the establishment of Fourth of July and Memorial Day celebrations (in 1868). America's leaders were creating a past that hoped to soothe the discontents of the present. Paying homage to a joint Pilgrim and Native American feast was one way to highlight to a contemporary audience the value of unity overcoming disparity (or in the case of the Fourth, unity overcoming oppression or in the

⁷² Brooks (1962), p. 53

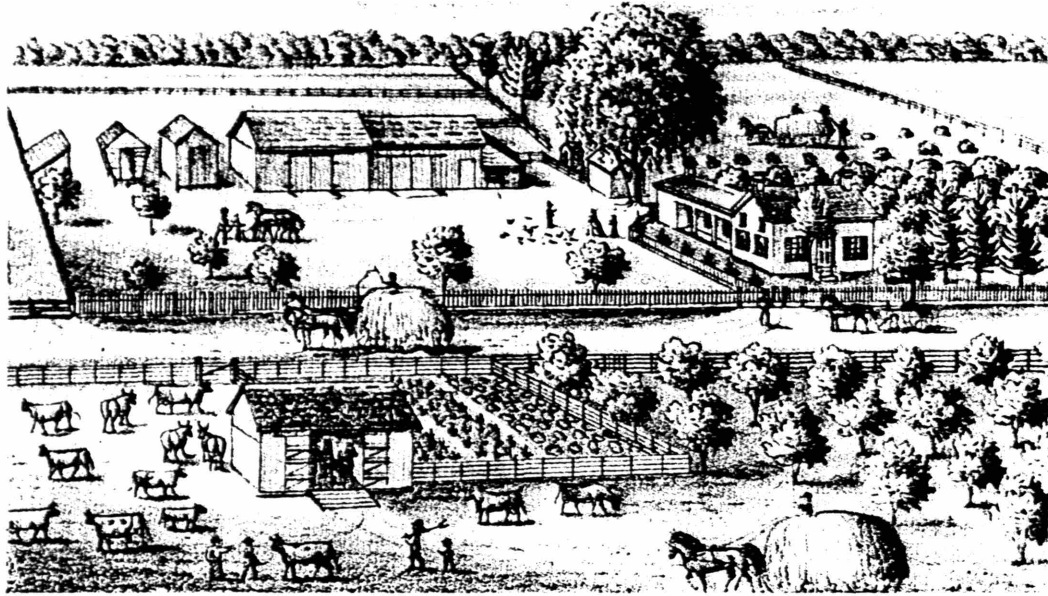


Figure 5. Henry Ford's childhood home in Dearborn, Michigan as depicted in 1876 illustration in *Historical Atlas of Wayne County, Michigan*. Courtesy of the Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village Research Center (HFM-GVRC).



Figure 6. Aerial of Henry Ford's childhood home (1931), after Ford purchased and restored the farm. Courtesy of the HFM-GVRC.

case of Memorial Day, neé Decoration Day, reconciliation overcoming sacrifice). While homage to the founding fathers served as one significant thread of the colonial revival, the people of Henry Ford's youth were specifically looking back to New England. Their new myths of the rugged individual conquering the West sprang out of their progenitors who tamed the New England wilderness. Historian Joseph Conforti asserts that antebellum New England reinvented and codified the Yankee identity "around...revised narratives that redefined New England as a distinctive place with a 'peculiar' people and a sacred past." This narrative linked "the Yankee character and the white village to New England's religious and republican origins."⁷³ New England's past (like in Longfellow's poems), was, thus, a cultural invention meant to stabilize and homogenize a socially uncertain present that was heterogeneous in ethnicity and socio-economic status due to the great influx of immigration from Western and Eastern Europe in the nineteenth century.⁷⁴

Henry Ford's family was part of the great Irish migration of the 1830s and 1840s; but, unlike many of their countrymen, the Fords did not stop in Boston or New York upon landing in the New World. They journeyed to the Midwest via ox-cart and canal to the then-dense wilderness of Dearborn, Michigan.⁷⁵ As the Ford clan was about to embark on their journey to and within the New World, the port of Detroit—capitol of the

⁷³ Joseph Conforti, *Imagining New England* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2001), p. 123.

⁷⁴ This characterizes the immigration to the Atlantic Coast during the nineteenth century. The West coast of the United States had a significant Chinese immigrant population; the Southwest (still contested territory) contained populations of Spanish and Latin American descent. The presence of the Native Americans should also be included in this cultural project even though they were not immigrating to America, but were already living here.

⁷⁵ By the late 1830s, Irish immigrants has replaced Anglo-Saxons as the main working class in the United States; this only increased in the 1840s as more Irish came fleeing starvation and disease in their home country.

Territory of Michigan—had a permanent population of 2,200 and was largely French in custom and Catholic in religion.⁷⁶ Detroit's make up changed rapidly during this time as immigrants from abroad, as well as those from New England, came in search of better and/or more farm land. The new Erie canal provided the key link in the journey from the east, and Detroit was a common landing place (whether temporary or permanent). The Irish quickly displaced the French as the largest foreign born group in Detroit during this time period. The first Ford to purchase land in Michigan Territory was Samuel Ford (Henry Ford's grandfather) who bought 80 acres on 23 May 1832 in the Dearborn Township after an arduous eight-day trip from the port of Detroit inland through dense forests.⁷⁷ Many Ford relatives soon followed suit.

Samuel's son, William Ford, spent the Civil War years at home developing his farm and the resultant prosperity meant he was the first Ford in Dearborn able to afford a buggy with a top on it.⁷⁸ It was into this colonial boosterism that Henry Ford was born and raised. The first of six children, Henry grew up on his parents' farm following his birth in 1863. By 1870, the population of Detroit approached 100,000.⁷⁹ Young Henry, however, would still be in Dearborn attending a one-room Scotch Settlement School where the only pedagogy that stuck were his lessons in the McGuffey Reader, the maxims and exercises appealing to his sense of duty instilled by his mother.⁸⁰ His teacher,

⁷⁶ Ford R. Bryan, *The Fords of Dearborn* (Detroit: Harlo, 1987), p. 35 and Melvin G. Holli, ed., *Detroit New Viewpoint* (New York, 1976). In 1830 the Michigan Territory census revealed a population of 31,640.

⁷⁷ Bryan (1987), 40. Residents voted in 1831 in favor of statehood; Michigan became a state in 1837.

⁷⁸ Collier and Horowitz (1987), p. 19.

⁷⁹ Olivier Zunz, "Detroit's Early Ethnicity," *Rackham Reports*, University of Michigan, 1975.

⁸⁰ Collier and Horowitz (1987), p. 20. Bryant details the founding of the Scotch Settlement school in 1838-39. Henry Ford's teacher at this school would be a Yankee Schoolmaster, Charles Richardson of Connecticut.

Charles Richardson, noted that Henry was more interested in things than in lessons from books, typical of farm boys of the time.⁸¹

Henry grew up during the decade following the Civil War; a time that brought an optimism spurred not only by the end of the war but also by the promise of the Western frontier (hastened with the completion of the Union Pacific in 1869). As landscape historian J. B. Jackson notes, a great number of books appeared heralding the accomplishments of the nation during its first hundred years: "More often than not the accompanying text made much of our small beginnings and boastfully told of how far we had come since Jamestown and Plymouth, and of how in many ways we now excelled the rest of mankind."⁸² In other words, Americans were taking stock of their lives by contrasting their present with the past of their fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers; and, in their reflection, they began the jeremiad of American exceptionalism.⁸³ Those who survived the Civil War were unlikely to have been present to remember first hand the founding of the nation. Thus, the look back involved the rediscovery of the history and culture of the eighteenth century that would reinforce how they saw themselves now and in the future.

In post-Civil War America, the population was still most dense in the New England and Mid-Atlantic states with seventy-four persons to the square mile (a hundred years later that figure would be roughly 350).⁸⁴ Only about a fifth of the American

⁸¹ Bryant (1987), p. 81.

⁸² J.B. Jackson (1972), p. 14.

⁸³ The trope of American exceptionalism not only meant to distinguish Americans over Europeans as the chosen people (those in Asia, Africa and South America were assumed not to hold such status); but also within America to reinforce the narrative of those in power: the white, male, property owners.

⁸⁴ J.B. Jackson, *American Space: The Centennial Years 1865-1876* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1972), p. 17.

population could be called urban—even under Francis Amasa Walker’s loose definition of a city as consisting of a population of 8,000 or more residents.⁸⁵ The largest cities in the United States (in descending order) were New York, Philadelphia, Brooklyn, St. Louis and Chicago. The newly freed black population was still largely concentrated in the south. And every other white American was a Methodist or Baptist. With the exception of the industrialized Mid-Atlantic and Northeast, most Americans were farmers.

It was the western not eastern portions of the United States that characterize the present-minded ethos of this era. The completion of the railroad and concomitant gold rush led to an explosion of population heading west. With that, the relationship between Americans and the land began to shift, as they saw their environment as a great resource to be mined for the progress of the nation.⁸⁶ They were no longer content to admire the richness of the landscape from afar; the soil was also a rich commodity to further the manifest destiny of God’s chosen people: the Americans. The changes to the Midwest and western landscapes would include: the consolidation of fields, the introduction of the barbed-wire fence, the increase in farm size, and the defining or redefining of spaces in terms of natural boundaries rather than the grid imposed by the 1785 Land Ordinance.⁸⁷

While the Ford family came straight from Ireland to the Midwest, the large number of New England transplants there meant it was commonplace for the Midwest to

⁸⁵ Walker oversaw the 1870 census; which was considered the first to show the spatial dimension of social and economic statistics. The government produced an atlas in 1874 based on his work.

⁸⁶ J.B. Jackson (1972) Chapter 1.

⁸⁷ Bryan (1987) p. 37. See also John Reys and J.B. Jackson. In 1785 the Continental Congress passed the Grayson Land Ordinance which provide for the division of the entire Northwestern Territory into townships. Townships were six mile square and then divided into 36 one-mile sections, which in turn could be divided and described as “halves,” “quarters,” etc. for sale to settlers.

look back to New England as home, both intellectually and culturally. Michigan and Ohio in particular, because of their proximity to the east coast, were largely settled by migrating New Englanders. Thus, the ancestral land—and the source for any “origin” story—was not England, but New England.

The gap between the Midwestern romanticization of an ancient New England and its reality was captured by William Dean Howells. Born in the Midwest, Howells became a popular literary spokesman for the Northeast.⁸⁸ In 1860 Howells traveled to New England on assignment from an Ohio paper and was disconcerted by the lack of antiquity in the New England landscape:

With its wood built farms and villages, it looked newer than the coal smoked brick of southern Ohio. I had prefigured the New England landscape bare of forests, relieved here and there with the trees of orchards or plantations; but I found apparently as much woods as at home.”⁸⁹

What Howells found—much like Lydia Maria Childs at the Red Horse Tavern—was a rural New England in decline. During the 1860s more than ten thousand farms were abandoned in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, so it is not surprising that the bucolic New England imagined was not the one found by Howells and others: “There is something sad about the look of the land. One never sees an acre gained from the forest;

⁸⁸ William Dean Howells (1837-1920), author, editor, and critic, was born in Martinsville, Ohio. Howells became the assistant editor (1866-71) and then the editor (1871-1881) of the *Atlantic Monthly*, a post that gave him enormous influence as an arbiter of American taste. Publishing work by authors such as Mark Twain and Henry James, Howells became a proponent of American realism. Howells championed the work of many writers, including Emily Dickinson, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Hamlin Garland, Sarah Orne Jewett, Charles W. Chesnutt, Frank Norris, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Abraham Cahan, and Stephen Crane. Howells is best known today for his realistic fiction, including *A Modern Instance* (1881), on the then-new topic of the social consequences of divorce, and *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885).

⁸⁹ J.B. Jackson (1972), pp. 87-88.

around the pasture lands there is often a belt where the wood marks its gain upon the cultivated tract.”⁹⁰ As J.B. Jackson notes:

...a cycle of sorts was thereby completed: the man-made landscape of New England had got its start back in the seventeenth century on the hilltops cleared by Indian fires; it had slowly expanded, generation after generation, into the wooded valleys. And now, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the fields were retreating from the hills and leaving them to the forest.”⁹¹

Despite the evident second growth of forest, visitors to the postwar New England landscape still envisioned an open landscape of meadows and villages dotted with trees; they desired a smallness of scale that contrasted with the wide open, almost scaleless, horizon-based landscapes of the west. While many Americans looked to New England for their cultural patrimony based on its age and their natural patrimony based on the monumental landscapes of the west, others made no such distinction and lauded the unique cultural and natural heritage of New England by citing its Virgilian landscapes (no matter how common that landscape actually was).⁹² The image of New England as home to America’s original elysian fields became even more powerful as industrialization put pressure on the quality of life, particularly within the city. Those with means began to leave the city during the heat of the summer for relief in a quest for the “real” America, an America thought to be present in New England. This theme was exploited in the literature of the period as the story would often include “the quest...for a bucolic simplicity, for a return to an earlier American innocence...”⁹³ This image of a Virgilian New England, in the end was bolstered by changes in economic production

⁹⁰ J.B. Jackson (1972), pp. 88-89, quote by Nathaniel Shaler in 1869.

⁹¹ Ibid, p. 106.

⁹² Ibid, Chapter x.

⁹³ Ibid, p. 104.

brought on the war. An urgent need for cloth for uniforms meant many New England farmers reverted to sheep farming. The burgeoning urban industrial economy, and concomitant work force, whose production was focused on items other than food, meant a renewed farming culture in late nineteenth century New England. This along with an increased cattle grazing eventually changed the reality of a declining rural and wooded New England vistas that the Midwesterners (and others) so desperately wanted to see; a place where grass fields were in abundance and park-like against the edges of the forest. This was the image of New England, part invention and part reality, that became recreated in the landscape architecture of the late nineteenth century. Olmsted and Cleveland and Copeland and Eliot would take the New England of their childhood memories (a mix of fact and fiction) and transplant those bucolic rock outcroppings, shallow streams, short grasses, and attended forests to Manhattan, Brooklyn, Omaha, and Chicago in the form of a coherent American park system movement lasting up through the turn of the twentieth century.⁹⁴

The colonial New England constructed by nineteenth century Americans was not all invention. Interest in New England's past was spurred by the rediscovery and republication of colonial writings, such as William Bradford's *History of Plymouth Plantation*. Bradford's work disappeared from the colonies during the American Revolution, but was found in a library of the Bishop of London in 1855 who returned it to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1897. It was quickly republished in 1898 and served as a primer for early New England history for the burgeoning antiquarians

⁹⁴ Ibid, pp. 107-111.

(particularly those New Englanders desirous of confirming their Brahmin status).⁹⁵

Nevertheless, while the colonial revival had its sources and roots in the facts of the founding of the country, its larger project was the construction of a collective culture.

After the adrenaline of the Revolution had worn off, Americans turned toward the crafting of a national identity. In a country founded in *tabula rasa* conditions (if one ignores, as the colonists in fact did, that millions of Native Americans already called this land home), the reconstruction of a past was a logical course. The legends of the founding of the country served as socially useful myths in the quest to culturally and politically adhere the new (white, land-owning) citizens to one another. Establishing tradition, therefore, was not merely nostalgia or entertainment, but a device with which one could cement the politics of the United States to its culture. The colonial revival was, thus, the emergence of the willful (if sometimes incoherent) construction of a collective memory. Its cultural currency grew with and strained against the other trope of the nineteenth century, that of progress and modernity. Ford sat amid this dualism and, therefore, was an exemplar of the ever-present American cultural dialogue between the past and present/future.

Specifically, the colonial revival went beyond an aesthetic fad to serve as a socio-political movement which sought to inculcate the growing numbers of foreign immigrants to its notion of the democratic ideal. The revival used the events, heroes, and aesthetics of the Revolution as a means toward the end of a common ideology.⁹⁶ The colonial revival, in its multiple variations that emerged in Antebellum America and

⁹⁵ Brooks (1962), p. 3

⁹⁶ Ideology is used here in its common definition as a body of ideas reflecting the social needs and aspirations of an individual, group, class or culture. The word ideology was coined by Count Antoine Louis Claude Destutt de Tracy (1754-1836), a French Enlightenment aristocrat and philosopher.

continued for the next hundred years, began within Malinowski's paradigm of myth-making, but sustained itself based on Lévi-Strauss's theory. Whether it was antebellum America seeking social stability (Malinowski) or Victorian America attempting to legitimize a past useful for its present (Lévi-Strauss), it was the landscape of New England that became a site for the construction of the American myth(s).⁹⁷

Cultural geographer D.W. Meinig affirmed New England's status as one of the seminal symbolic American landscapes; specifically citing the New England village as pregnant with meaning in the construction of an American identity.⁹⁸ Meinig ascribes to the theory that the collective memory of America is built upon the landscapes and buildings that we make: "Every mature nation has its symbolic landscapes. They are part of the iconography of nationhood, part of the shared set of ideas and memories and feelings which bind a people together."⁹⁹ The making of New England, according to Meinig, is a story about how to make community in the new nation. In other words, landscapes are more than just scenes to be viewed; they are mirrors that reflect what Americans see in these scenes. In other words, the evaluation of the New England landscape by nineteenth and early twentieth century Americans is more telling of those people than of the "truth" of that landscape. Thus, the upholding of New England by colonial revivalists as a model setting for the American community says more about the desire by those Americans to begin to construct a narrative of American exceptionalism

⁹⁷ This notion of understanding place as an invention has been used to discuss New England in two recent works: Conforti's *Imagining New England* and Dona Brown's *Inventing New England* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995). The former tracing more comprehensively pre-twentieth century constructions in literature and other broad based material, the latter focusing on tourism in nineteenth century New England.

⁹⁸ D.W. Meinig, "Symbolic landscapes: models of American community" in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 164.

(of their belief in the uniqueness of being American) as a foundation for a national community, than it does about the making of New England itself.

It is the gap between the ideal (or idyll) of New England and its physical reality that J.B. Jackson and others have exposed; in order, to expose the colonial revival as not history but propaganda. This is not to belie those antiquarians who sought to professionalize history and applied scientific methodologies to their quest.¹⁰⁰ There was, in fact, objective historical inquiry generated out of this time period. But the revival as a holistic movement aligned (while not explicitly) more on the side of subjective memory, in favor of defining and asserting an American way of life that had specific associated values and notions of domestic and gender relations. As Meinig says, "Taken as a whole, the image of the New England village is widely assumed to symbolize for many people the best we have known of an intimate, family-centered, Godfearing, morally conscious, industrious, thrifty, democratic community."¹⁰¹ That is what makes it so difficult to penetrate the colonial revival. Its generalizations and clichés laid claim to an American experience; and, therefore, obliterated the multitudes of American experiences actually lived by a variety of people during the eighteenth century. Within the New Englandization of the colonial revival one needs not only to understand New England as an invention representing the American experience, but also to acknowledge the multiple American experiences that were being left out of this construction.

¹⁰⁰ In fact, the artistic and aesthetic production in the fields of literature, art and architecture led to the professionalization of the movement as scholarly histories and historical societies were produced and formed, starting slowly before the Civil War and gaining speed in the 1880s, 90s and 1900s.

¹⁰¹ Meinig (1979), p. 165.

In spite of the pastoral imagery abounding in Victorian America, a young Henry Ford showed a lack of enthusiasm for life on the farm, and in 1879 Henry left William and Mary's rural homestead in Dearborn for the nearby city of Detroit. Occasionally returning to the farm to help his family, Ford spent the next three years as a machinist's apprentice, eventually dividing his time between factory work and working on steam engines. After marrying in 1888, he initially supported himself and his wife Clara Bryant by running a sawmill. After only two years as an engineer with the Edison Illuminating Company in Detroit, he was promoted to Chief Engineer in 1893. As twenty-seven millions tourists traveled to Chicago for the Columbian Exposition (where the architectural trope was no longer the colonial revival but a return to classicism), Ford instead spent his free time experimenting on internal combustion engines.¹⁰²

By 1896, Ford completed his first automobile, the Quadricycle and drove it through the streets of Detroit. After a few unsuccessful attempts to establish an automobile manufacturing company, the Ford Motor Company was incorporated in 1903, with Ford serving as vice-president and chief engineer. Initially, the company produced a few cars a day at its factory on Mack Avenue in Detroit. Only five years later, the company would revolution the way in which transportation was utilized in the United States.

The Model T introduced in 1908 would, within a decade, constitute fifty percent of all cars in America. In 1910, Ford opened a large factory in Highland Park, Michigan, and there, he combined precision manufacturing, standardized and interchangeable parts,

¹⁰² Between May 1-Oct 31, 1893, 27 million visitors would attend the Columbia Exposition, aka White City, in Chicago; this total constituted 25% of the United States population at the time, although this percentage does not take into account the reality of repeat visitors.

division of labor, and, by 1913, a continuous moving assembly line. Ford's standardization of production was revolutionary and made his company the largest automobile manufacturer in the world; producing fifty-five percent of the industry's total output by 1921. Ford died in 1947 at the age of 83 at Fair Lane, his home in Dearborn.

While Ford was focused on the mechanization of American progress, the codification of America's interest in her past in the early twentieth century happened at all levels from the federal to the personal. In 1906, Congress passed the Antiquities Act which authorized the president to protect archaeological sites on federal land. Three years later, the Hudson-Fulton Exhibition was held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and resulted in the collection of early American rooms and decorative arts later installed in the American Wing. The following year in 1910, the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities was incorporated. After World War I, this type of activity only increased, with the establishment of The White Pine series of photographs and measured drawings of early American architecture in 1915 and the National Park Service in 1916; the former providing stewardship of the built environment, the latter of the natural environment. In 1919, Henry's son Edsel was named president of the Ford Motor Company. Ford may have begun the century focused on its modernization, but within two decades he too was focused on the collection and construction of an American past.

Chapter 3: Ford's Ordinary

It will take a hundred years to tell whether he helped us or hurt us, but he certainly didn't leave us where he found us. — Will Rogers on Henry Ford¹⁰³

Henry Ford purchased the Wayside Inn in Sudbury, Massachusetts in the summer of 1923 from the widow Cora Lemon, who was unable to maintain the property following the death of her husband. In pragmatic terms, Ford's purchase of the Inn assured that it would not slip into obscurity, be bought for alternative development or run down again as had happened in the previous century. With Ford at the helm, the Inn now traded its renown based on a fictionalized account (*The Tales of the Wayside Inn*) of a real landlord to a mythic landlord (Ford) infatuated with telling the *real* story of what it meant to be American.

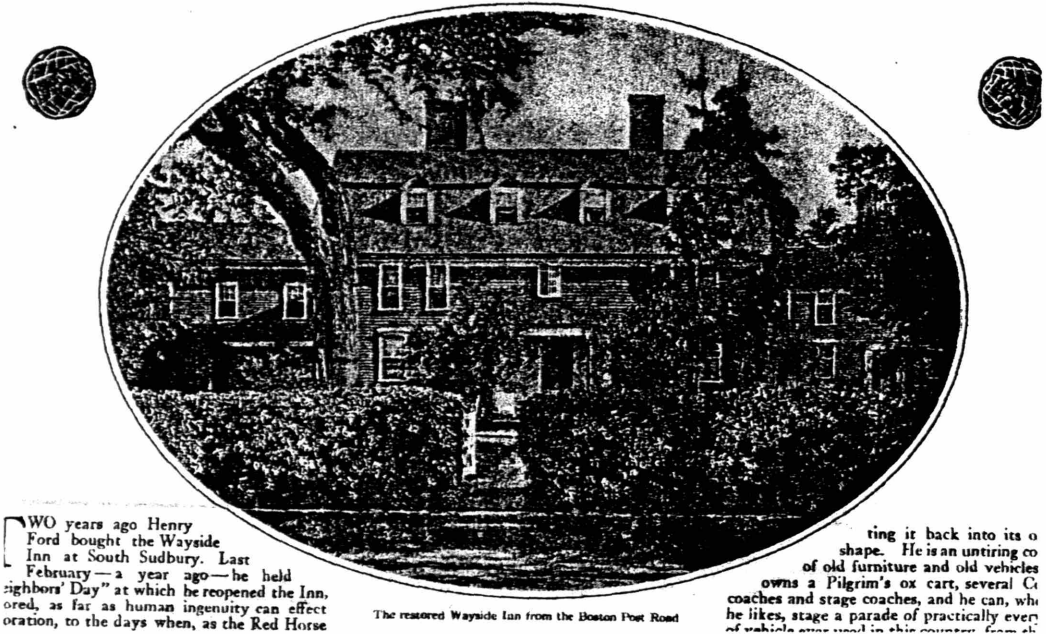
Ford's fame had spread dramatically since the popularization of the Model T in 1908; thus, reporters covered his purchase of the Inn outside of Sudbury. The stories initially focused on the man doing the bidding rather than the artifact being bid upon, but the Inn had already been singled out as a landmark during the burgeoning days of the colonial revival. Thus, the coverage ran with triple-billed headlines: the automobile magnate Henry Ford sharing the focus with the late poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and with the Inn itself, famous for its apocryphal connections to George Washington and the Marquis de Lafayette.

The purchase was not merely another acquisition by an industrial tycoon. It raised the continuing American cultural dialectic between the old and new, the extraordinary

¹⁰³ Collier and Horowitz (1987), p. 13.

HENRY FORD: WHY I BOUGHT the WAYSIDE INN

An Interview with SAMUEL CROWTHER



TWO years ago Henry Ford bought the Wayside Inn at South Sudbury. Last February—a year ago—he held "Neighbors' Day" at which he reopened the Inn, restored, as far as human ingenuity can effect restoration, to the days when, as the Red Horse

The restored Wayside Inn from the Boston Post Road

bringing it back into its original shape. He is an untiring collector of old furniture and old vehicles. He owns a Pilgrim's ox cart, several Concord coaches and stage coaches, and he can, when he likes, stage a parade of practically every kind of vehicle ever used in this country.

Figure 7. Ford's Wayside Inn as it appeared in Samuel Crowther's interview, "Henry Ford: Why I Bought the Wayside Inn," *Country Life* (April 1925), p. 43.

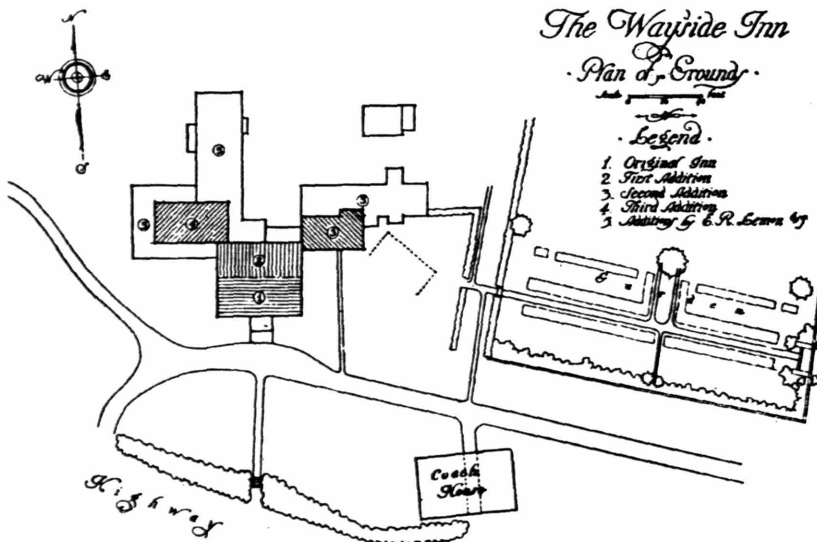


Figure 8. Site plan of the Wayside Inn as purchased by Henry Ford. Plan appeared in *Garden & Home Builder*, Vol. XLIII, No. 5 (July 1926), p. 434.

The ANTIQUARIAN

VOL. IV, No. 2

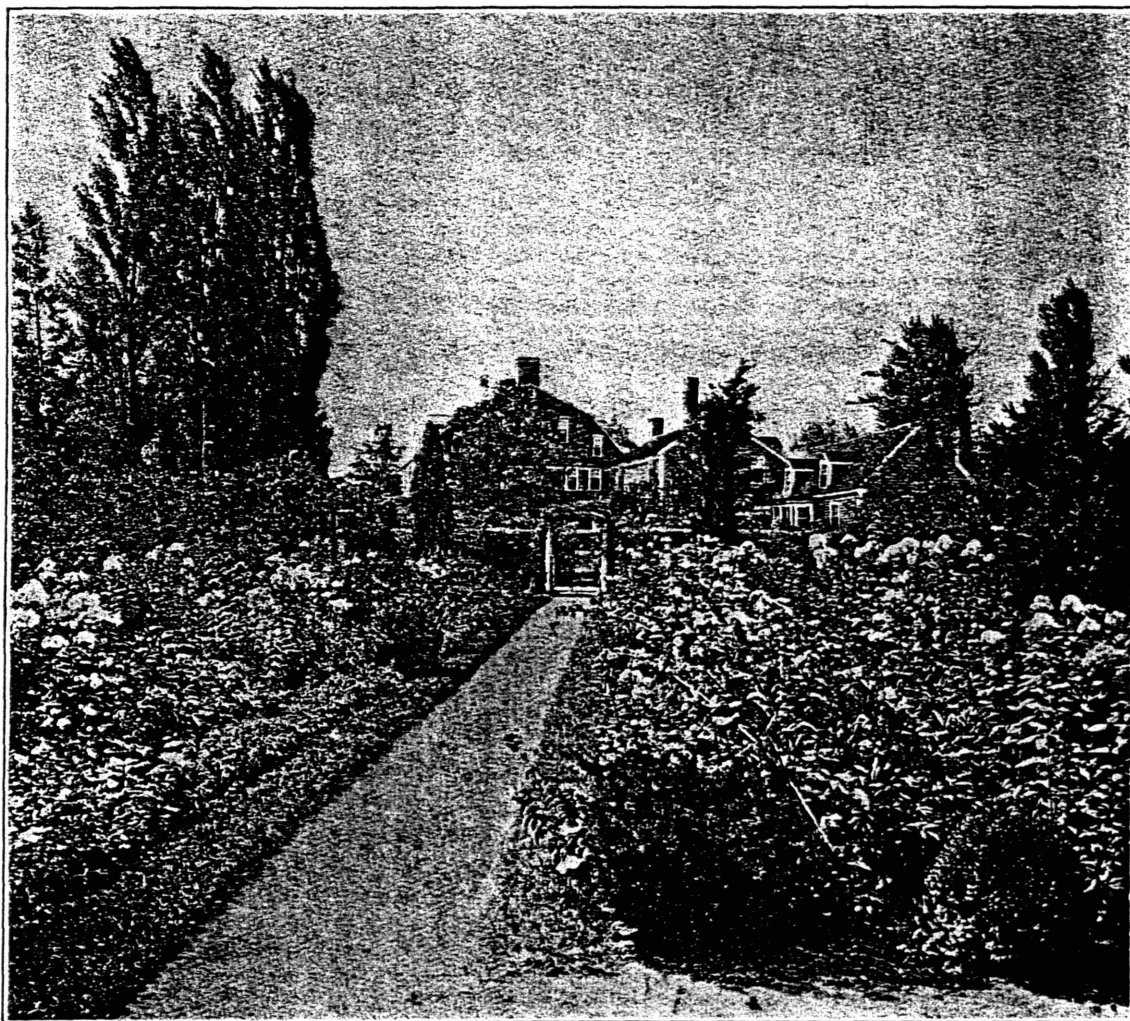
MARCH, 1925

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RESTORING THE WAYSIDE INN

Mr. Henry Ford Has Gathered Relics of the Past for This Old Tavern

By ESTHER SINGLETON



The Old-Fashioned Garden at Wayside Inn

Figure 9. Photo of garden added to the Inn by Mr. Lemon as front *The Antiquarian*, Vol. IV, No 2 (March 1925).

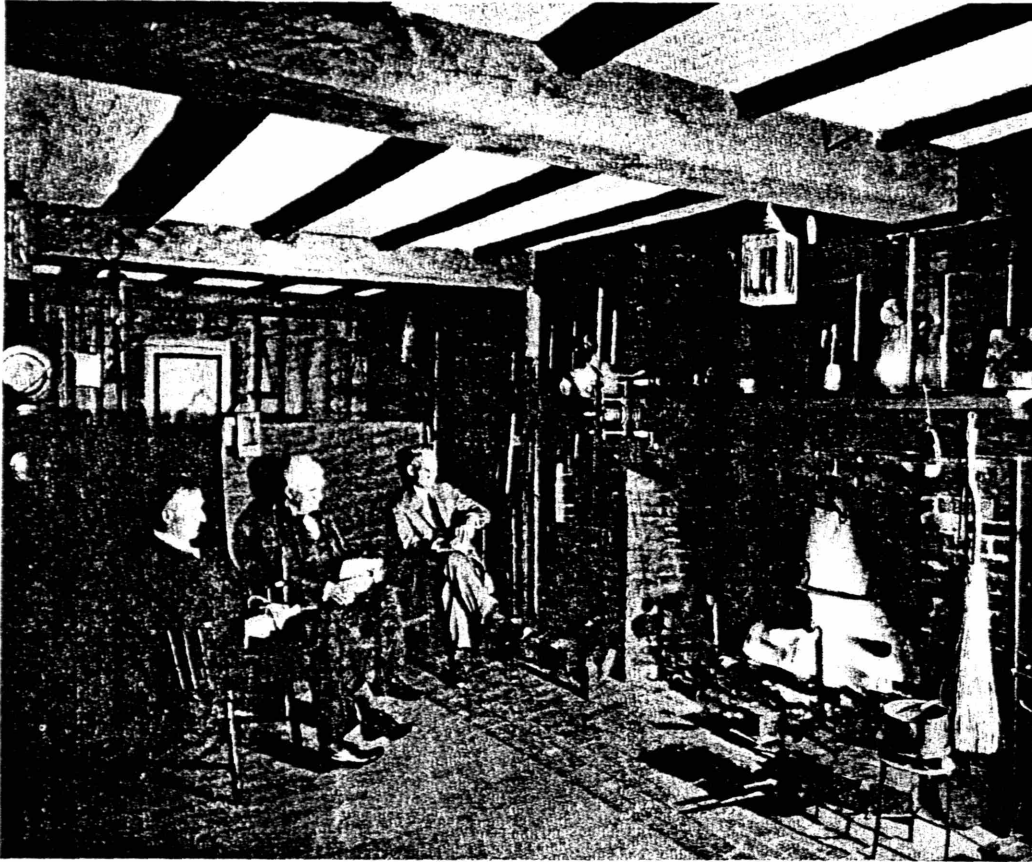


Figure 10. By 1926 much of Ford's restoration of the Inn was complete. Ford sits by the fire with his visitors to the Wayside Inn (left to right) Harvey Firestone and Thomas Edison. Courtesy of HFM-GVRC.



Figure 11. Ford would hold dances at the Wayside Inn featuring colonial music and dancing. This dance held at the Inn in 1926 honored Alice Longfellow (the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's daughter). Alice sits in front with the cane. Courtesy of HFM-GVRC.

and the ordinary, and history and progress. The *New York World* reported the irony on 13 July 1923, “The house thus to be preserved by the motor magnate, who is quoted as having said history is bunk, has an extraordinary wealth of historical association, aside from its fame as the setting selected by Longfellow for the ‘Tales’ ...”¹⁰⁴ Most of the early reporting asserted that Ford planned to maintain the Inn as a museum open to the public. The early reportage also focused heavily on two *facts* to trumpet the Inn’s important status: (1) that both Washington and Lafayette slept—or stopped—there during the Revolution; and, (2) that Longfellow first visited there at the impressionable age of nineteen—a trip that would influence him and result in an epic poem with widespread popularity in the second half of the nineteenth century.¹⁰⁵ Clearly the nation was attracted by the colonial provenance of Washington and the contemporary acquisition by Ford, but why did this place grab Ford’s attention?

When the Inn fell out of the hands of the Howe family, it should have fallen into obscurity, and, in fact, did for a short period of time after the Civil War. However, the growing interest in America’s colonial patrimony by antiquarians like Edward R. Lemon (and the magazines that fed their interest) meant the Inn stayed alive in the national imagination. Lemon purchased and restored the property, installing a collection of antiques to include some furnishing that were originally the property of the Howes.¹⁰⁶ Despite Cora Lemon’s best efforts to continue to maintain the Inn upon her husband’s

¹⁰⁴ “Ford, of History is Bunk Fame, Owns Historic ‘Wayside Inn.’ To Maintain as Museum Hostelry of Which the Poet Longfellow Sang.” *New York World*, July 13, 1923.

¹⁰⁵ The word *facts* is italicized to emphasize the coverage at the time believed both to be true; later research has shown only the latter, that Longfellow did make a brief trip to the Inn, can be verified as fact.

¹⁰⁶ As reported by numerous newspaper accounts covering the Inn both during the Longfellow hey days in the 1870s-90s and also during Ford’s purchase in the 1920s.

death, the operation became more than she could manage. To the rescue of Cora and the Inn, came Boston's patrician elite. In 1922, a veritable Who's Who of Brahmin Boston joined to establish a trust to protect part of New England's colonial patrimony. The reported purpose of the trust was to preserve and restore the building and its "antiques and relics as nearly as possible in their original condition" and reopen it for continued business as an Inn.¹⁰⁷ As the *Boston Transcript* noted, the members of the trust were adamant that:

...it will continue to be an inn. It has been an inn for more than two and a quarter centuries. It will be more commodious for the traveler and more modern in its appointments; for an inn must respect the devices of its day; but its new comfort will trespass on none of the flavor of its historic age.¹⁰⁸

Concerned that the estate — which comprised about ninety acres of farming land, a gatehouse, garage, stable, barn and outbuildings in addition to the Inn — "might fall into the wrong hands"¹⁰⁹ the trustees (who included Charles Francis Adams, L. Loring Brooks, and speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives B. Loring Young) contracted a man who ran a New Hampshire inn to operate the Wayside once they bought it. That innkeeper, Robert F. Peckett, was chosen because the trustees trusted him to "keep the traditions of the old-fashioned New England tavern, here at the foot of Nobscot Mountain..."¹¹⁰ With a plan in place, they rallied the social elite of Boston (and beyond) to their cause. The voluminous list of those individuals and organization involved in

¹⁰⁷ *Boston Transcript*, June 14, 1922; undated Trustee brochure "The Wayside Inn, Sudbury, Mass., HFMGVRC, Acc 1, Box 125, Folder 125-11. The Trust's financial agent was the National Union Bank of Boston.

¹⁰⁸ "Wayside Inn at South Sudbury To Be Preserved Historically By a Trust That Will Continue It In Its Ancient Capacity As A Hostelery with Modern Appointments and Additional Space," *Boston Transcript*, April 8, 1922, p. 1.

¹⁰⁹ *Boston Transcript*, June 14, 1922.

¹¹⁰ "Favor Wayside Inn Plan. West as Well as East Approves of Project. Information Asked as to How to Take Part. Historic Place to Be Saved to the Future. And Kept Going as for More Than 200 Years." *Boston Transcript*, June 14, 1922.

endorsing the protection of the Inn included Charles W. Eliot, Allan Forbes, Edwin Farnham Greene, Henry Cabot Lodge, George A. Plimpton, Dr. Myles Standish, Mrs. Nathaniel Thayer and Mrs. Barrett Wendell, The Boston Society of Architects, William Sumner Appleton, of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities; Addison L. Winship, vice president of the National Shawmut Bank; John R. Macomber of Harris, Forbes & co.; Edmund N. Talbot, of the National Society of Sons of the Revolution; E. T. Gregory of the First National Corporation; Frank A. Gardner. M.D., president of the Old Planters Society; Herbert Fairfax Wallace of the Society of the War of 1812; Alice M. Longfellow, daughter of the poet; as well as officials of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the New England Historic Genealogical Society, the American Antiquarian Society, the Sons of the American Revolution, the Society of Founders and Patriots of Massachusetts, the Paul Revere Memorial Association, the Bay State Historical League and other organizations.¹¹¹ Based on the large involvement by Bostonians and others of antiquarian affiliation, there could be no doubt the colonial revival was still thriving and focusing its efforts on the field of preservation. As Massachusetts Governor Canning H. Cox wrote L. Loring Brooks on 18 March 1922:

“The Wayside Inn is one of the points of greatest interest in Massachusetts and whoever comes here desires to visit it. It is most gratifying to learn that steps are being taken to make sure that the old Inn shall be kept in fine conditions for the entertainment of guests. I hope that the effort may be successful.”¹¹²

So how was the Inn viewed by these worthy citizens? And more specifically, why did they deem it worthy of saving?

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid and “The Wayside Inn, Sudbury, Mass.” Trustee Brochure.

Ford's involvement with the Inn was preceded by (and to a certain degree concurrent with) a distinct paradigm shift within the field of historic preservation from patriotic veneration to aesthetic-based collection as represented by the work of two groups: the established Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA) and William Sumner Appleton's upstart the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA). Not only would Ford's work in Sudbury mix these two distinct approaches to historic preservation but the shift in ideology was also apparent in the rhetoric surrounding the Inn's preservation prior to Ford's involvement.

While the notion of preservation can be found in America before the apocryphal inception of the movement at Mount Vernon under the leadership of Ann Pamela Cunningham and the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association in the 1850s, these nineteenth century efforts were significant because they were trying to save artifacts for veneration and/or education (often seen as one in the same).¹¹³ Patriotic impulse spurred these early efforts; a determination to understand and memorialize what it meant to be American. Like the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, the APVA's use of the past was largely symbolic and in alignment with the assertions of the mid-nineteenth century French architect Eugene Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc. Viollet-le-Duc used preservation as a means of defense for the Gothic Style against the Classical hegemony upheld by the dominant architectural voice of the time: the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. At the turn of the twentieth century, the APVA used buildings allegorically in order to ensure cultural stability and

¹¹³ See William J. Murtaugh, *Keeping Time. The History and Theory of Preservation in America* (New York, 1997); Charles Hosmer Jr., *Presence of the Past* (New York, 1965) and, *Preservation Comes of Age* (Charlottesville, 1981).

hegemony.¹¹⁴ Their energies were focused on constructing markers, erecting plaques, tending graveyards, and creating shrines and museums that honored important historical figures and events based on a romanticized historical perspective which elevated sentimentalism and patriotism. Under this rubric, then, preservation was an activity in which a person saved monuments that serve a quasi-religious purpose (in a country where democracy was and is deified).

It was no surprise, then, that the specter of George Washington and the Marquis de Lafayette would hover over the efforts to save the Inn.¹¹⁵ As the Vice-President of The National Shawmut Bank of Boston, Addison Winship told L. Loring Brooks in 1922:

...I hope this is the beginning of a concerted movement for the preservation of monuments of this kind so rich in historic association and so interesting to the visitor because of their valuable collections of furniture and other objects associated with the early life of the forefathers. It will mean that this wonderful old hostelry will continue as a "Mecca" for Pilgrims from all over the world...¹¹⁶

The fervor for "ancient" artifacts was endorsed by the growing number of associations and groups who made the reverence of all things colonial their central tenet.¹¹⁷ The Sons of the Revolution echoed Winship's feelings of the "great historical importance" of the Inn because "during the struggle for our country's independence,

¹¹⁴ For example, they promoted the hypothetical reconstruction of Jamestown's seventeenth century church.

¹¹⁵ As is noted by Edward H. Hoyt, Secretary of the Boston Society of Architects in a letter dated 15 February 1922 to L. Loring Brooks, "...made famous through its association with the names of Washington, Lafayette and many other guests of bygone days."

¹¹⁶ 1922 Wayside Inn Brochure. HFM-GVRC. This letter was dated 6 February 1922 and it should be noted that the letter included a photograph of The Howe Coat of Arms.

¹¹⁷ The term ancient was used by nineteenth and early twentieth-century collectors to describe items from the colonial period. These objects were often called antiquities (a term borrowed from the burgeoning field of archeology in the nineteenth century based on British excavations of ancient Greece and Rome); the Americans who collected these objects were often called antiquarians.

governors, magistrates and generals...were its patrons.”¹¹⁸ Thus, in these cases, it is not the Inn so much that these individuals wanted to save but what it represented; specifically, the birth of a nation. The Inn’s colonial provenance was, therefore, crucial to its new-found protectors. They did not care whether Washington, or Lafayette or Webster actually spent time at the Wayside Inn. The Inn was important because everyone believed that to be the case. This was not a purposeful deception of the public, but almost a self-deception—a desire to believe in the ability to transport oneself to the nation’s founding via the connection to a material artifact mythically associated with a fictional history.¹¹⁹

As the nationalistic impulse for historic preservation broadened from politically important individuals to a broader cultural definition of what it meant to be American, the relative importance of the tavern grew because of its connection to Longfellow—the person who raised the stature of the Inn to the national scene through his epic poem “Tales of a Wayside Inn.”¹²⁰ The president of the Boston Society of Architects proclaimed: “The Wayside Inn lives in American History and Literature, and although it is a New England institution, it is known country wide through Longfellow’s poem and

¹¹⁸ Letter dated 28 February 1922 from Edmund Talbot, Gen. Vice President, National Society of Sons of the Revolution to L. Loring Brooks.

¹¹⁹ The following quote from the *Boston Transcript*, April 8, 1922, p. 1 is typical of the coverage of the Inn from the late nineteenth century up through Ford’s purchase and involvement: p. 1, “It is better that this ancient house continue to hear the fireside talk of contemporaries than that it become a neglected cabinet for relics of the dead. The voices of this present are making history in the room where Washington sat down to dine, and in the room at the head of the stairs where Lafayette laid his head to rest may sleep some soldier who helped repay the debt to France. Where Longfellow blew out his candles beneath the beams of the spacious chamber that looks down on the passing road another, remembering a cross channel flight, will switch off an electric lamp. Daniel Webster stalked these halls with the sonority of some great argument reverberating in his mind and the walls still live to echo the laughter of girls and talk of ‘Main Street’ and the Yale-Harvard game.”

¹²⁰ As is noted in the trustee brochure, “it was gratifying to learn that steps were being taken to assure that the old Inn where Longfellow set the scene for his ‘Tales of a Wayside Inn’ would be kept in fine condition for the entertainment of guests.”

its historic traditions.”¹²¹ In this way the Inn served as a stage set, a proscenium upon which the drama of American exceptionalism could be played out. The Longfellow family supported these connections and the saving of the Inn (while some supported a broader cultural agenda, others had intimate knowledge of the architecture).¹²²

The sentiments about the Inn were wrapped up in larger feelings related to the past and specifically the colonial heritage and a popular belief that New England represented the country as a whole. The longing, thus, may have only been partly for the Inn itself, but more so for the idea of the Inn or what it represented in terms of a way of living in the United States. The Inn represented the myth of Jeffersonian agrarianism; a myth that seemed to grow even more prominent as the nation turned from agricultural to industrial production:

In these surroundings there are no more dinners of the old Paint and Clay Club. There are no more herders and no more pioneers. But the tales of the Wayside Inn continue to be told by the new generation—the generation of today sitting before the hearths of yesterday. By the trust now formed the generation of the future will contribute its own story to the treasure of this ancient house of hospitality.¹²³

Certainly the initial reportage of the trust in the spring of 1922 was laden with melancholy for the past, along with an acknowledgement that the Inn’s future visitors would be traveling tourists, not famous statesmen:

“It may be that another winter will see here at the foot of Nobscot Hill, where King Philip once took his warlike way and where the packs of the Norfolk and Middlesex Hunts have run more recent course, the sports of snowshoe and ski and toboggan; and the stamping feet of the new generation will shake the snow upon floors that once were wet with snow and rain from garments of soldiers of the Revolution and men on their way to the Indian wars.”¹²⁴

¹²¹ Letter to L. Loring Brooks from BSA Secretary Edward H. Hoyt dated 15 February 1922.

¹²² Letter to L. Loring Brooks from Alice M. Longfellow dated 25 March 1922. See brochure notation.

¹²³ *Boston Transcript*, April 8, 1922, p. 1.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

While these private efforts at the preservation of the Inn, like the APVA, focused on patriotic veneration, in the early twentieth century the field of preservation began to move away from the preoccupation of artifacts valued because of their transcendent worth towards an interest in the intrinsic value of the thing itself. William Sumner Appleton pioneered this shift away from the saving of artifacts purely for adoration and towards an analysis of their design merit. He crafted SPNEA's policy accordingly by preserving a large collection of individual buildings, regardless of historical significance, under the rubric of archeological methods, scientific investigation, and professionalization. This desire to turn preservation into an aesthetic taxonomy represented a new application of a methodology made popular throughout nineteenth century America: the application of Enlightenment principles to all bodies of knowledge.

The term Enlightenment is most commonly invoked in reference to a period in European intellectual history that built upon the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century. This "Age of Reason" marked the elevation of reason and science over metaphysics and religion. The Enlightenment was not merely a scientific revolution but a social one as well, in which correlations between moral behavior and natural laws (and both supporting the idea of progress) held sway among figures as diverse as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Jeremy Bentham, Adam Smith, and Auguste Comte. The Enlightenment marked the rise of a secularism, which sought to divorce thought and society from mystification and sacralization, to break with history and tradition, and to embrace the idea of progress in order to liberate humanity.

While the Enlightenment is a period in history marked by certain intellectual attitudes, the Enlightenment Project is a set of ideas promoted by the discourse of modernity in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries that sought to promote the values of the Enlightenment—equality, liberty, faith in human knowledge, universal reason, freedom, and democracy— in order to establish a universal culture that was secular, rational, humanitarian, and progressive. The Enlightenment Project—espoused by Western thinkers on both sides of the Atlantic such as Marquis de Condorcet and Thomas Jefferson—followed along the axiom that for any given inquiry there is only one possible, right answer. From this it followed that a controlled and rational picture of the world could be eventually represented. It was just a matter of time of asking the right questions and finding *the* answers.

In the quest to define a truly American culture, the educated elite in the United States often turned to Enlightenment-based objectivity as the basis for the assertion of a subjective uniqueness. One of the earliest examples of a scientifically-derived cultural articulation was the museum established by Charles Wilson Peale in Philadelphia. Born in colonial Maryland in 1741, Peale became one of American's earliest well-known painters—namely a portraitist—completing a comprehensive series of George Washington while serving as a captain in the Continental Army.¹²⁵ The self-taught artist also had an interest in natural history and became interested in collecting and the

¹²⁵ For a discussion of the relationship between republican values and Peale see Dell Upton, "Inventing the Metropolis: Civilization and Urbanity in Antebellum New York," in *Art and the Empire City New York, 1825-1861* eds. Catherine Hoover Voorsanger and John K. Howat (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000), pp. 3-46. Print and web sources for Peale include: www.amphilsoc.org; www.scils.rutgers.edu/~christym/final/federalist/peale; Godman, John D. 1826. *American Natural History*. Philadelphia: Carey and Lea. Richardson, E.P., B. Hindle, & L.B. Miller. 1982. *Charles Wilson Peale and his World*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Semonin, P. 2002. *American Monster: How the nation's first prehistoric creature became a symbol of national identity*. New York: New York University Press.

establishment of a public museum while illustrating mastodon fossils belonging to Dr. John Morgan in the early 1780s. Hoping a public museum would alleviate his financial woes amidst the post-war depression, he also wanted the museum to have a didactic purpose. Peale's Museum (a.k.a. the American Museum and The Museum) began as an eclectic assortment of his Revolutionary War portraits in combination with his collection of curiosities as well as animal, mineral and ethnographic specimens. "This fusion of American heroes and American nature resonated with a citizenry eager to establish a new national identity that would both differentiate the young country from Europe and proclaim it as the standard bearer of civilization's progress."¹²⁶ The natural history displays combined both rare and commonplace specimens presented in their natural habitat. Open to the public on 18 July 1786, the museum became the repository for the collection of the American Philosophical Society as well as the cultural and natural artifacts (particularly those of the Native Americans) collected during government sponsored expeditions of the West, to include Lewis and Clark. This led to its unofficial status as the nation's museum.¹²⁷

Peale was confronted with how to interpret his collections to the public. Some of his innovations in the curatorial management of museums included visitor pamphlets, environmental displays and taxonomically coherent specimen arrangement. The museum occupied parts of two buildings with three rooms located in Independence Hall. Clearly a product of the Enlightenment, Peale's efforts engaged scientific discourse for the purpose of cultural codification and public edification. While the influence of his museum on

¹²⁶ http://www.acnatsci.org/museum/jefferson/otherPages/peale_museum.html

¹²⁷ Founded in 1743, the American Philosophical Society was the first and most important learned society in the new republic. Located in Philadelphia, the society counted among its members John Bartram, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, David Rittenhouse and Caspar Wistar.

American natural science and its leaders (including John D. Goodman, Richard Harlan, Thomas Say, and Alexander Wilson) has been well discussed, its role in the cultural production of an American identity, has not. The public nature of his museum was an exception at a time when comparable European institutions were private enclaves for the elite.¹²⁸ Therefore, his collection was not merely a secluded stash for the amusement of the elite, but a representation to and for all Americans of their own collective culture and habitat (at least for those who were white and living on the East Coast).

Peale's way of thinking about how to define an American culture set a precedent for modes of classification in the cultural arena and for Henry Ford's personal methods of engaging history, memory and culture. This approach to the representation of an American culture, however, would be lost until the early twentieth century because Peale's work represented the highest example of this methodology at the time. The hundred years following Peale brought a notion of museum not as cultural embodiment of a nation but as carnivalesque curiosity. Peale's effort at a taxonomy of American culture degenerated into a peepshow during the antebellum period, with the collections not serving the same noble purpose; for the most part, the purpose of the nineteenth century museum was titillation.¹²⁹ While the notion of a museum as an entertainment venue would continue up through the twenty-first century, the nineteenth century version of museum as entertainment made no other pretense regarding instruction, American exceptionalism, professionalization or scientific inquiry.

¹²⁸ Peale retired from the museum in 1810 leaving its management to his sons: Rembrandt, Raphaele, Franklin, Rubens, and Titian. He did return to the collections in 1822 and worked until his death in 1827.

¹²⁹ N.H. Winchell, "Museums and their Purposes," *Science* 18 (July 24, 1891). See also David Murray's history of museums (*Museums: Their History and their Use*) written in 1904 in which he asserted that museums had become "a collection of curiosities...there was generally implied in it the idea of strangeness or rarity." (Glasgow: James Maclehose and sons, 1904), pp. 187-188.



Figure 12. Peale's self portrait— "The Artist in His Museum, 1822"—shows the scientification of his museum displays. Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

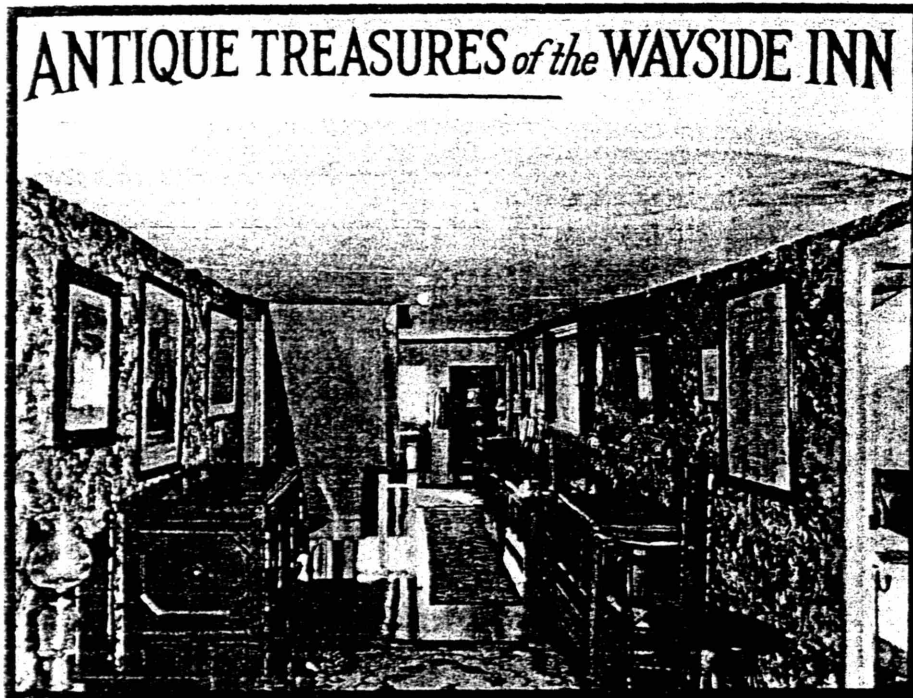


Figure 13. Ford collected colonial antiques in restoring the Wayside Inn. Photograph from "Antique Treasures of the Wayside Inn," *The Mentor* (September 1927), p. 11.

Appleton revived scientific methodology in his own work in acquiring the vernacular buildings of New England to establish the archetypes of an American culture. But he relied on the rhetoric of the old paradigm when it came to supporting the saving of the Wayside Inn. With the names of Washington, Lafayette and Longfellow swirling around the Inn, Appleton too was caught up in the worship of the building as a symbol of the birth of the nation. Thus, in Appleton's letter of support sent to Brooks (and, therefore, the trust), he emphasized the importance of the continuity of use in the preservation of the Inn as a national icon.¹³⁰

The enormous support for the preservation of the Wayside Inn received its boost, in part, from the destruction of other New England buildings. There was a growing recognition that the loss of buildings like the John Hancock House meant the loss of a tangible connection to the colonial era. While the colonial revival had begun as an homage by painters and writers to the birth of the United States, the revival itself represented and reconstructed the colonial past long before it became zealously interested in the preservation of it. People began to recognize that the reverence for the important individuals and events of the past could be vested in buildings representative of that era, that the aesthetics of the building could embody the republican values and culture from which it was made.¹³¹ As was explicitly noted by the president of The First National Corporation, Boston, L. T. Greogory, in one of the many letters sent to L. Loring Brooks:

¹³⁰ "...For a time there seemed some danger that the old place might be sold for a residence and its continuity as an Inn would have been forever lost. That would have been a national calamity and we must all be grateful to you for the hard work you are doing to prevent it." Letter from William Sumner Appleton to L. Loring Brooks dated 30 January 1922.

¹³¹ See Letter from Frank A. Gardner, M.D., President of the Old Planters Society to L. Loring Brooks dated 13 February 1922 in which he cites the success of the saving of the John Balch (1638) homestead as well as the regret of the destruction of the John Hancock House.

“There are few buildings in America today which can compare with the old Wayside Inn, either in classical design or tradition.”¹³² It is no surprise that the Boston Society of Architects would affirm this sentiment (after also acknowledging the full provenance from Howe to Washington to Lafayette to Longfellow) by claiming that “the historic Wayside Inn and its contents...stands as one of the most interesting examples of our early architectural expression.”¹³³

Thus, in addition to patriotic adoration, the calls for the saving of the Inn included an acknowledgement of its material integrity, which transported the visitor back to the Revolution:

Those timbers are still intact. They frame the shelter that comforts the traveler of today as it covered the roistering young Molineux when he cut his name and his verse in that pane of glass here on June 24, 1774 and as it had sheltered men who were old when he was born. Harvard was less than forty years old that day. The shot had not been fired at Lexington. Washington had twenty-five years to live and work. The visitor at the Inn before he is aware is gliding back into the purple of time to live with these people of the past.¹³⁴

Fueled by a sense of national significance, the Inn’s patrons’ efforts became a fulcrum in the shift from valuing the History of the nation solely through its famous founders to valuing the cultural aesthetics of buildings as representative of the people and culture of the era.

The trustees sent letters to prominent Americans whom they thought might join in restoring the Inn to its former glory. They also promised the potential for dividend returns to shareholders. One of those invitations to save the Inn was sent to Henry Ford. A man

¹³² Letter from L.T. Gregory to L. Loring Brooks dated 20 March 1922.

¹³³ Letter from Edward H. Hoyt, Secretary of BSA to L. Loring Brooks dated 15 February 1922. See also Letter from Herbert Fairfax Wallace, President of the Society of 1812 to L. Loring Brooks dated 4 February 1922.

¹³⁴ *Boston Transcript*, April 8, 1922, p. 1.

who proclaimed “History is Bunk” might have been impervious to a solicitation regarding the saving of a historic landmark. In fact, he rejected the trustees’ solicitation to purchase a share of the Wayside Inn in order to buy the entire estate outright. Why did Ford take such an ardent interest in the Inn?

Lucia Ames Mead, writing two years after the trustees’ plea, took credit on behalf of her husband for Ford’s knowledge and interest in the place based on an article written by Edwin Mead in November 1889 for *The New England Magazine*: “I think I have warrant for believing that this old Wayside Inn article was an essential and perhaps determining link between Longfellow and Henry Ford.”¹³⁵ Putting Mead’s assertions aside, Ford’s interest in acquiring the past began at least in 1919, the same year he gave his notorious utterance from the witness stand: “History Is Bunk.” Amidst a libel trial with the *Chicago Tribune*, Ford learned that his childhood, Dearborn homestead was to be torn down for the building of a new road. Before the buildings could be razed, Ford purchased them and restored them (and would eventually move them to a site he would develop after his efforts in Sudbury were underway—a site called Greenfield Village). By the time he purchased the Wayside Inn, Ford was already the largest collector of Americana, of items both large and small, in the country.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ Lucia Ames Mead, “How the Old Wayside Inn Came Back,” *The Boston Herald*, February 26, 1924. In reference to Mr. Mead’s article she says: “I think I may be pardoned for saying that I think this old article is perhaps the most interesting and important article on the Wayside Inn that exists, although I confess that my knowledge of Wayside Inn literature is largely confined to Longfellow.” While Lucia Mead’s article was found in the Henry Ford Archives, her husband’s 1889 article for *The New England Magazine* was not in the collections, so it is difficult to ascertain whether or not Ford would have seen it prior to his purchase.

¹³⁶ The brochure and letter sent out by the trustees well established the Inn’s connection to Longfellow. Even though the brochure post-dates Mead’s 1889 article on the Inn; it was unlikely Ford’s interest in acquiring the property was piqued at this moment when he was still focused on making engines and automobiles.

In an interview with Samuel Crowther in 1925, Ford made explicit “Why I Bought the Wayside Inn.”¹³⁷ Illustrated with lavish photographs of both the exterior and interior, the interview set up the now familiar narrative in which Ford was said to have rescued “... the Red Horse Tavern, ...[which] sheltered George Washington, the Marquis de Lafayette, and many another man who helped in some signal way to make the United States.”¹³⁸ Ford not only bought the ninety acre estate for which the Boston Trustees sought protection, but also an additional sixteen hundred acres of the surrounding land of which the Inn formed the approximate center. As the prologue to the interview stated:

On this tract are some of the oldest houses in Massachusetts and the ruins of several ancient grist mills. This whole district will within a short time be as nearly as possible brought back to the condition it was in two hundred years ago. It will be restored so nearly that if the shade of Paul Revere should again go a-riding of a midnight, he would perfectly know his way about. The years will be rolled back and a stretch of Colonial New England will be uncovered in the New England of to-day.¹³⁹

Like the women of the Mount Vernon Association and the APVA, it was personalism that brought Ford to the field of preservation, in this case the very private act of acquiring and restoring his childhood home. Ford’s admiration for old buildings, however, was not strictly private. He embraced the national fervor that surrounded the stories of the Wayside Inn. He, too, articulated a desire to save the Inn based on its associations with the formation of the nation. But that nationalistic ardor did not keep him there and influence his future endeavors at the site. Instead, Ford focused his efforts on the collection (both in Sudbury and in a variety of other places) of any artifacts he believed relevant to the telling of the American story. Ford’s relationship with the

¹³⁷ Samuel Crowther, “Henry Ford: Why I Bought the Wayside Inn,” *Country Life*, April 1925, pp. 43-45.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

American past was not, in fact, exclusively a venture within architecture. In acquiring buildings, landscapes, and objects, he wanted the real things and places that people had used in the making of their lives in America. This was how he meant to establish the making of an American history and culture. Thus, even though the patriotic veneration of the Brahmins brought him to Sudbury, Ford also embraced an effort to capture the common people of American and their experience.

At the Wayside Inn, this authentication of the past initially involved a rigorous search for the artifacts associated with the Inn (run by his assistant secretary Frank Campsall, who scoured New England for all things related to the Wayside Inn). His initial attention aligned with those in preservation interested in the recreation of period rooms. "We went about getting the Inn back into its original condition, all excepting one bedroom. This we have named the 'Edison Room' and have furnished it as of the time of Mr. Edison's birth."¹⁴⁰ Ford's labors at this point were concerned with the conflict between authenticity and anachronism. For example, Ford was obsessed over how to compromise between the necessity for modern lighting (i.e. the use of electricity) and still representing the authentic form and design of the candles and wall scones in the colonial Inn.¹⁴¹ Ford was also concerned with finding genuine furnishings (not the all-too common

¹⁴⁰ Crowther (1925) p. 44 and Ford, *Garden & Home Builder* (1926), p. 433.

¹⁴¹ Ford, *Garden & Home Builder* (1926), p. 434, "The lighting gave us a good deal of trouble. The old Inn was lighted by candles in wall sconces and in candlesticks. These had been replaced by ordinary electric-light fixtures. We could not, as a practical matter, go back to candlelight, for the fire risk would have been too great. We finally managed to get sconces such as must have been used in the Inn, and to get candle-shaped electric lights which very well imitate the old candles." See also Cameron, *The Detroit News*, February 1924.

reproductions spurred by the colonial revival), not just Revolutionary period objects, but ones vetted as having been in the Wayside Inn.¹⁴²

Ford's focus moved from the Inn itself and its accoutrements to the development of the site as whole. Ford, however, did not leave one ideal behind for the other; the nationalistic impulse remained as he

began to put the whole neighborhood into somewhat of its former condition....putting back into the exact condition it was in during the Revolution...We are working on an old blacksmith shop and shall have it ready, with forge, tools, and benches of the time. "In the barn of the Inn we are gathering the coaches and rigs of the time. The coach house is not large enough to hold more than a couple of specimens of the collection. One of the most interesting of the old coaches is the 'Governor Eustis,' in which Daniel Webster and Lafayette rode in 1825 to the dedication of the Bunker Hill Monument. We have a collection of old ploughs and other farming tools, and we have oxen to pull them, just as the pioneers had."¹⁴³

Thus while the forefathers may have led him to the era of his obsession, it was the material culture of everyday life that became more important to him than the deeds surrounding the Revolution. He wanted to bring back the cultural milieu of Revolutionary America, not just the political leaders. While he inextricably linked the two, his interest in the everyday landscape was made clear in the things he collected and how he collected them. In assembling his collection in Sudbury, Ford was inadvertently aligning himself with the ideas present in both the disciplines of anthropology and literary criticism with his desire to: 1. place significance in the material object itself; and 2. produce a useable past with said objects.

¹⁴² Ibid, "Then we went out to find some of the relics of the Inn which had disappeared. Most of them we have found. One trunk, for instance, we located and brought back from Kansas. The old bible we managed to repair, and we put it in a case so that it will last forever. The old clock had not been running for many years. It was made in England in 1710, and many of the parts were badly worn, although other parts, in spite of all the years of service, were as good as new... Thus, bit by bit, we have the Inn about as it was when Washington first stayed there during the Revolution."

¹⁴³ Ibid.

Ford's "hobby" of collecting material artifacts, from hand tools to buildings, while new to the field of preservation (under the aegis of Appleton's work) had taken root in the fields of anthropology and folklore and, particularly, in the establishment of museums for these fields.¹⁴⁴ The nineteenth century anthropologist believed that the significance of a culture could be found in the material objects used by the people of that culture. Holding up a clay pot from Missouri, Frank Hamilton Cushing (head of the Smithsonian's Bureau of Ethnology) declared, "We can learn from this bowl more than the maker knew himself."¹⁴⁵ Cushing's visit to University of Pennsylvania's new anthropological museum a year after the 1893 Columbian exposition was not a coincidence. The World's Fair in Chicago represented the quickening of American anthropology in its collection and dissemination of the artifacts of American culture to Americans themselves. At the fair, anthropologists presented themselves to the world and asserted the importance of the material artifact in revealing the cultural history and landscape of America. They would have agreed with Cushing's proclamation in Philadelphia a year later: "We have an idea in common—the making of stories out of all these things, stories which will tell themselves to the untrained observer."¹⁴⁶ Historian Steven Conn calls this late nineteenth century assumption that objects could tell stories an "object-based epistemology." Conn asserts that late nineteenth century "Americans held a belief that objects, at least as much as texts, were sources of knowledge and meaning."¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Steven Conn's book, *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876-1926* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998) is a tremendous source in outlining these disciplines in Victorian America.

¹⁴⁵ "Life Stories in Dead Clay," *Philadelphia Press*, September 20, 1894.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Conn (1998), p. 4.

The object, therefore, should speak for itself; it should tell the story or reveal the idea rather than a narrative description or interpretation.

Historian Michael Kammen asserts that the creation of museums was “one of the most important trends in American cultural life ever since the 1870s.”¹⁴⁸ The creation of museum environments via the collection of buildings was critical to the development of historic preservation and its broader allied field of architecture, and to the broader definition of the American identity. Anthropology museums turned to material artifacts in order to instruct an urban population teeming with immigrants and, thus, with marginal proficiency in English. For the burgeoning foreign population to understand what it meant to be American, culture education became a visual education and American identity involved seeing in order to learn. This representation of the world (or, in this case, America) as a view encapsulates Ford’s enterprise in Sudbury.

As Conn suggests, *fin-de-siecle* Americans were obsessed with material objects as central to and representative of their everyday life. Appleton and Ford took the next step when they preserved everyday buildings and landscapes; it was merely a change in scale, not in ideology.¹⁴⁹ The use of material objects in the elucidation of cultural identity, however, has its own problem. As Conn makes clear, his theory of an object-based epistemology does not mean to imply that all objects functioned in the same way.

We should consider several levels on which object related to objects. At one of these, meanings are personal—keepsakes, heirlooms, mementos, old photographs. At another level, meanings derive from some kind of social transaction, such as

¹⁴⁸ Kammen (1991), p. 154

¹⁴⁹ This assertions made by Thomas Schlereth, *Victorian America: Transformations in Everyday Life, 1876-1915* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), p. xiv. See also Simon Bronner, ed., *Consuming Visions: Accumulation and Display of Goods in America, 1880-1920* (New York: Norton, 1989).

buying and selling. At a more abstract level, meaning results when individuals engage in a deliberate, self-reflective act of symbolic interpretation.¹⁵⁰

For Ford, the Wayside Inn operated at all of these levels. His collection was the antithesis to the curiosities of the unfamiliar that characterized the museums that followed Peale's. In Ford's collection, he sought out the common types of the New England landscape. These common types, however, had personal and idiosyncratic meaning for Ford, *and* served as a social model that might salvage from the past methods of living for the future, *and* were symbols of the idea of America. These objects in the landscape were more than signifiers of status for Ford (the automobile, if anything, served that purpose for him). Ford's collection of objects served as a usable past that he hoped would not only suggest to Americans what America used to be, but also what it should and could be in the present and future. Conn claims that this type of object-based ideology disappeared from mainstream American cultural life by the 1920s, just as Ford was beginning his enterprise. Perhaps, Conn's assertions are true for the fields of anthropology and folklore. The fields of architecture and historic preservation, however, were just beginning to embrace this idea. Ford embodied this endeavor at its largest scale.

Criticizing the sideshow-cum-museum that had followed Peale's Museum in Philadelphia, George Brown Goode exhorted in an 1888 lecture to the newly established American Historical Association that, "the museum of the past must be set aside, reconstructed, transformed from the cemetery of bric-a-brac into a nursery of living thoughts."¹⁵¹ Goode later asserted a classification of museums into six categories: art,

¹⁵⁰ Conn (1998), p. 14. Conn attributes these ideas to Norman Denzin and Herbert Blumer in M. Gottdiener, *Postmodern Semiotics: Material Culture and the Forms of Postmodern Life* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995).

¹⁵¹ Conn, p. 20 and George Brown Goode, *The Principles of Museum Administration* (York: Coultas & Volans, Exchange Printing Works, 1895), p. 22.

history, anthropology, natural history, technology, and commercial. Ford attempted to synthesize these categories into one place. Ford abandoned Peale's taxonomic classification in his reconstruction of the Wayside Inn, but would return to it later in Dearborn at Greenfield Village. Conn claims that by the time Ford was engaged in both projects, the production of knowledge was now within the province of the university and that the museum had become more of a vehicle for entertainment, education being only an ancillary by-product. Ford, however, would have bristled that his work was merely education through recreation or purely a refuge for nostalgia.¹⁵² Ford synthesized Goode's categorizes at the Wayside Inn because his was settling in the New England past in order to engage in the unsettling contingencies of the present and future.

Lucia Mead's article, published after Ford's purchase and laden with a reverence for all things colonial, supported Ford's involvement with the Inn at a time when others were hesitant regarding Ford's purpose and intentions toward the property:

We in New England have no reason for regret that the Wayside Inn has fallen into Mr. Ford's hands. When Mr. Lemon died, its fortune became very uncertain. Its renown and its accessibility in this automobile age, which Mr. Ford himself had done so much to create, lent it readily to profanation and it was easy to foresee it transformed from top to bottom to a great restaurant, in the Sunday dinner parties in every room. It was a positive relief to us to know that Henry Ford had bought it. It will probably be treated better than ever before. Mr. Ford's own hobby for old furniture and his invitation of men conspicuous in the preservation of New England antiquities to his recent housewarming seem evidence of the fitting kind of piety and the bringing on of his whole family to the even tis surely a sign of warm, personal interest. The purchase of the hundreds of acres of adjoining land with the prospect of good forestry is a pledge that the historic old Inn will soon have by far the best setting it has ever had; and there seems no reason to fear iconoclasm or ostentation. Therefore, New England should give a warm welcome to the new landlord, who is a great public benefactor. ...Mr. Ford has done more

¹⁵² Conn (1998), p. 28.

to promote cheap and easy communication than any other man of our time. Easy communication is a fundamental category for those who work for a friendly and united world. If his motives have not always been those of the reformer and philanthropist as with Elihu Burritt and Sir Rowland Hill in their crusade for cheap postage, he has still achieved the result. There is in fact much more of the philanthropist in Henry Ford. No more unsentimental money-getter spends a million dollars on a 'peace ship' or wins the friendship of John Burroughs. I suspect that on many a Sunday afternoon he has his dreams of a magnificent use of his wealth by and by. The old Wayside Inn is surely a good place for such dreams¹⁵³

Mead's article outlined the themes surrounding Ford's involvement with the property:

What is the New England landscape, both real and imagined? And, why was it important to collect a site like one collects furniture in an age when the built environment was rapidly changing due to modernization and the automobile? Ford collected because he was in search of a useable past.

Van Wyck Brooks (1886-1963) is credited with the introduction of the concept of a "usable past," first in his 1915 book *America's Coming of Age* and again three years later in his influential essay, "On Creating a Usable Past." A critic concerned with the country's literary history, Brooks wanted to mobilize American memory as a resource for a more democratic future.¹⁵⁴ His first book, *The Wine of the Puritans* (1909), presented the thesis that American culture had been so pervaded by Puritanism, with its materialistic emphasis, that the artistic side of the nation's life has been profoundly neglected. His ultimate objective was to show that America did, indeed, have an artistic tradition. In other words, like his nineteenth century predecessors, Van Wyck Brooks

¹⁵³ Mead, *The Boston Herald*, February 26, 1924.

¹⁵⁴ Claire Sprague writes a good essay on Brooks as an introduction to *Van Wyck Brooks: The Early Years* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, Revised Edition, 1993), pp. 219-226. A graduate of Harvard, Brooks wrote numerous books including *The Flowering of New England* (1936) for which he won the Pulitzer Prize.

grew up with an acute sense of American cultural inferiority. Writing about minor and major artists, Brooks was more concerned with defining an American culture than with the pedigree of the artist.

America's Coming of Age was important not only because of its introduction of the concept of a usable past, but also because of its introduction of the categorizations highbrow and lowbrow; terms that came to dominate discussions of culture in America during the twentieth century. Brooks main thesis in *America's Coming of Age* was that the discrepancy between theory and practice divides and destroys American life. To illustrate, he seized on two words so new their subsequent intellectual currency, if not their coinage, may be credited to Brooks—highbrow and lowbrow. He announced his high/low thesis in the first chapter:

Human nature in America exists on two irreconcilable planes....Between university ethics and business ethics, between American culture and American humor, between Good Government and Tammany, between academic pedantry and pavement slang, there is no community, no genial middle ground.¹⁵⁵

Brooks' was concerned with how to create a tradition in a country without one, as his characters lament: "It's all so vague, so difficult. You can't deliberately establish an American tradition."¹⁵⁶ At the start of the twentieth century, Brooks could only suggest the need for tradition, the need to create it, and the paradoxical need not to be unduly concerned with it. His advice was that we "simply be American" and constructive. His constructive force was the artist who creates out of "the accretion of countless generations of ancestors, trained to one deep, local, indigenous attitude toward life." The artist was at the same time the creator of the American tradition and its savior.

¹⁵⁵ Sprague (1993), p. 17.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

Brooks definition of the artist and her role was significant because it was at odds with the prevailing nineteenth and twentieth century conception of the artist. Both the Romantics and the Modernists upheld the artist as an exceptional genius who created for a higher ideal and, therefore, whose works were unique and personalized. In that conception of the artist, there was no notion of tradition or collective identity, only the individual consciousness. At the start of the twentieth century, Brooks was unusual in wanting to define culture via “pavement slang” and the “deep, local, indigenous attitude toward life.” Ford shared this attitude toward procuring and protecting the everyday as American rather than the highest and rarest forms of art as the nation’s patrimony.

In alignment with the ethos of the Progressive Era, Brooks thought of the American past as useable as opposed to a dry collection of facts or a completed tradition deserving mute reverence. It was a pragmatic approach to the study of history. In other words, the past would become usable when it allowed Americans to pry open spaces in the present for future Innovation. Progressive-era intellectuals thought of their country’s civil religion as usable. They believed that including the stories of the national past was crucial to the construction of a contemporary American national identity; thus, the histories of the time period invoked the story of the unfolding of American national destiny based on a Hegelian historical paradigm of progress.¹⁵⁷ If Ford was concerned with how to forge and express an American identity with and within the built environment, it is hard not to acknowledge Brooks for significantly jump starting that conversation at the beginning of the twentieth century.

¹⁵⁷ Examples of such progressive era histories include: Charles and Mary Beard’s *Rise of American Civilization* (1927) and Samuel Eliot Morison and Henry Steele Commager’s *The Growth of the American Republic* (1930).

What is usable about the past for Ford? The past, for Ford as well as other Americans, provided a more stable foundation during a time of shifting socio-economic and cultural change brought on by modernization and modernity. The reconstruction of history helped to define an American experience and thereby point the way toward a stable future. Ford's efforts represent a move away from a historical narrative punctuated by great men and great deeds to that of everyday people and their surroundings. While professional historians still embraced a history of documents, Ford (and other self-taught historians) believed more firmly in history's didactic value and were therefore more interested in the model set forth by nineteenth century anthropologists. Only after Ford's death, the academy would begin to embrace his notion that the history of America could be told through the history of its ordinary people. Thus, Ford's collection started with acquiring objects from his childhood and expanded to those belonging to the collective memory of America; he collected not for aesthetic value (like Appleton) or monetary value (what antiquing would become). Instead, Ford stated clearly: "I am collecting the history of our people as written into the things their hands made and used."¹⁵⁸ In this version of American history

the Missouri Compromise, the Mexican War, the firing on Sumter, those thousand events that make up the whole web and woof of our story as the schoolboy learns it, are noticed, if at all, only as incidental interruptions of the main advance of national life—the progress in general conditions of living, in invention and efficiency, in comfort and taste. It is a view, moreover, in which a pewter bowl from the humblest kitchen in the Colonies would be of equal interest with one from that of George Washington."¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ Conn (1998), p. 156

¹⁵⁹ *New York Times Magazine*, April 5, 1931. See also Conn (1998), p. 156.

Perhaps in denial of the sentimental private agendas serving as a catalyst for his collecting, Ford's public education agenda at the Wayside Inn still invoked the legend of George Washington as the primary rhetoric for his work in Sudbury.

The Wayside Inn, at South Sudbury, Massachusetts, is one of the oldest in the country—we are a new country and nothing is very old, but the Wayside Inn has housed George Washington and the Marquis de Lafayette and, through Longfellow's *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, has become part of the nation. It is something that ought to be preserved for all time for the public, and when it came up for sale we bought it, not at all as a personal matter, but to preserve for the public.¹⁶⁰

Whether relying on the Revolution or on a pewter bowl, Ford was intent on serving history to the public. Thus, when Ford declared at the *Chicago Tribune* trial that history was “bunk,” he was not disavowing its importance. Instead, he was declaring himself against an American history of documents and for an object based history: “History as sometimes written is mostly bunk. But history that you can see is of great value.”¹⁶¹ Ford believed that ‘the real history of a people was not expressed in wars, but in the way they lived and worked...The history of America wasn't written in Washington, it was written in the grass roots.’¹⁶² Ford was adamant, however, that this collecting of artifacts was not about making a museum, but a lived experience that was not contrived, and not costumed.

When we are through we shall have reproduced American life, and that is, I think, the best way of preserving at least part of our history and our tradition. For by looking at the things that people used and the way they lived, a better and truer impression can be gained in an hour than could be had from a month of reading.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Ford, 1926, *Garden & Home Builder*, p. 433.

¹⁶¹ Ford in “The Ford Museum,” p. 773. See also Ford cited in William Greenleaf, *From These Beginnings: The Early Philanthropies of Henry and Edsel Ford, 1911-1936* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1964).

¹⁶² Ford cited in Greenleaf (1964), pp. 98 & 100.

¹⁶³ Ford quoted in the *New York Times Magazine*, April 5, 1931.

In spite of Ford's declared attitudes toward history, his involvement at the Wayside Inn was seen as a paradox. In his published interview with Ford, Samuel Crowther speculated:

Why is he doing all this? He is supposed not to be interested in history, or in fact in anything that has not to do with the present or the future. He is the apostle of progress and it seems quite impossible that the one man should be buying immense stretches of coal lands in Kentucky, there to erect tremendous steam-electric plants which with all their appurtenances and processes will take more out of coal than it seems reasonable to suppose that the Lord ever put into coal, and at the same time be buying placid hills and valleys and taking their Inns and houses as far back into time as he is taking his mechanical ventures forward. It all seems to be a crying contradiction, and yet it is not in the least.
 ...Mr. Ford has made an investment—possibly a larger investment than anyone else—in Americana, and he is constantly increasing that investment.¹⁶⁴

When Ford acquired the Wayside Inn, it was not a singular purchase, but a small part of his larger obsession with Americana.¹⁶⁵ The contradiction perceived, then, was perhaps fueled by his conflicting statements toward the historical significance of this collection. What is clear is that Ford was interested in the physicality of the past. He, therefore, sought to reproduce what he believed to be a colonial New England landscape. This was a landscape which had a patrician lineage originally christened by the presumed presence of George Washington, Marquis de Lafayette and resurrected by the poetry of Longfellow. It became more important to Ford as a place to reaffirm the mythologies of a simpler American culture when he believed people lived better and life was less complicated:

¹⁶⁴ Crowther, 1925, p. 43.

¹⁶⁵ While Ford was actively collecting prior to his involvement at the Wayside Inn, he himself saw his work there as a critical moment in the transformation of an idle hobby into a *raison d'être*: "Furnishing the Wayside Inn started us on the way to collecting old furniture and carts and every object used in this country during and since Colonial times." Ford, *Garden & Home Builder* (1926), p. 434.

I find recreation in the trees and in the birds, in walking across country, in motoring, in hunting up the objects which our fathers and our forefathers used, and reconstructing life as they lived it. They knew how to order some parts of their lives better than do we. They had much better taste; they knew more about beauty in the design of commonplace, everyday things. Nothing that is good ever dies. That is why we are taking over and reconstructing in their periods a couple of old Inns—one in Massachusetts and another not far from Detroit. One can live in them, keeping the best of the old life with the best of the present.¹⁶⁶

Ford did not intend for Americans to return to a bucolic pre-industrial past. He sought a useable past that could improve the cultural conditions of the present and future. Ford, however, could not separate his focus on the commonplace from the site's origins in the heroic and often conflated history of great men.

I deeply admire the men who founded this country, and I think we ought to know more about them and how they lived and the force and courage they had. Of course, we can read about them, but even if the account we are reading happens to be true, and often it is not, it cannot call up the full picture. The only way to show how our forefathers lived and to bring to mind what kind of people they were is to construct, as nearly as possible, the exact conditions under which they lived.¹⁶⁷

Ford's aversion to academic based histories was clear, but he still invoked the forefathers in his guise to use lived experience as an instructive tool at the Wayside Inn. Ford clearly intended to create a cultural landscape informed by and focused upon the quotidian.

By the time we get through, we expect to have this section, not a museum of Revolutionary days, but a natural, working demonstration of how the people of those days lived. We have both lost and gained in the movement of modern industry. Our gains are many times greater than our losses; we can keep all of the gains and repair some of the losses.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ Ford, 1926, *Garden & Home Builder*, p. 433.

¹⁶⁷ Crowther (1925), p. 44; see also Henry Ford, "Why I Bought the Wayside Inn. And What I am Doing With It" *Garden & Home Builder*, Volume xliii, no. 5, July 1926, pp. 433-434 which contains many of the exact quotes, word for word, as found in the Crowther interview; to include this statement which appears on page 433. It does, however, contain more embellishment and further detail on Ford's intentions concerning the Wayside Inn than the Crowther interview does.

¹⁶⁸ Ford, *Garden & Home Builder* (1926), p. 434.

Ford's desire to "have a look at history as intimate and alive, instead of as something pressed dead within a book" was grounded in the complexities of the moment which modernization (and, thus, he) had wrought.¹⁶⁹

Those of us who are older can still think in terms of the life of the pioneers, but the generation growing up is in a different world from the one we grew up in. The younger generation knows a good deal about automobiles and airplanes and the radio and the movies, but it has nothing to go on when it comes to comprehending the pioneers and what they stood for. There is no use talking about colors to a man who is color blind. And then, too, the foreigners who come to us have no easy way of finding out what is the real spirit of this country. It is to teach these lessons that we bought the Wayside Inn and quite a few other properties here and there.¹⁷⁰

Ford's concern about the relationship between past, present and future resulted in platitudes about the pioneer spirit and the search for a simpler life. As Ford proclaimed to Crowther,

This pioneer spirit...is what America has over and above any other country. If ever we lose that spirit, if ever we get to the point where a majority of the people are afraid to do things because no one before them has done them or because they are hard to do, then we shall stop going forward and start to go back.¹⁷¹

Ford's plea for American exceptionalism was based on the myth of individualism and laden with the language of progress and the desire not to go back. Ford's platitudes of pioneers instead of forefathers allowed him to time travel and make connections between the eighteenth century colonists, the nineteenth century explorers of the West, and the twentieth century engineers of modernity. It allowed for a historical narrative that was fluid and useable, conflating the exceptional men and experiences with those that were shared and ordinary. It also allowed myth, fable, and memory to take precedent in the

¹⁶⁹ Crowther (1925), p. 44

¹⁷⁰ Crowther (1925), p. 44; Ford, *Garden & Home Builder* (1926), p. 433.

¹⁷¹ Crowther (1925), p. 44.

mining of the past for a coherent narrative of the present, instead of relying on objective facts, dates, and records.

In Crowther's interview, Ford concluded, "And so it seemed that the Wayside Inn was well worth preserving for all time. It has in it not so much of what was worth while in the past, but has in addition much of that past as interpreted by Longfellow. And so we bought the Inn."¹⁷² Ford's ambivalence with history is clear. Despite earlier declarations, he renounced the tropes of the Revolution that brought him to the Wayside Inn in favor of a notion that the past is not one of authentic verity but of interpretation. In spite of both his claims and efforts attesting to authentic restorations of colonial artifacts, Ford's more unconscious and yet more revealing aim was the interpretation of the American past.

¹⁷² Crowther, 1925, p. 44

Chapter 4: From Fiction to Fact to Fiction

Mary had a little lamb,
Its fleece was white as snow,
And every-where that Mary went,
The lamb was sure to go.

—Mary Sawyer and/or John Roulstone and/or Sarah Hale

Mary had a little lamb
She put it on the shelf,
And every time it wagged its tail
It spanked its little self.

—Anonymous¹⁷³

At some point in the first few years of ownership, Henry Ford’s attention widened from a devotion to the Inn and its collection of colonial antiques. He decided to collect not only pewter bowls, but also buildings. The narrative he was crafting in Sudbury would be reinforced by the patterns of existing stories like that of Longfellow’s *Tales*. In order to (re)create his New England landscape, Ford turned to a story made popular in the McGuffey Readers that reinforced the themes of his preoccupation: a pastoral vision of America and lessons of how people should live on the land—“Mary’s Lamb.”¹⁷⁴

In 1928, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford published a forty-one page booklet devoted to “The Story of Mary’s Little Lamb” and the new-old, one-room schoolhouse that they had bought and moved within view of the Wayside Inn. The booklet took great pains to authenticate the poem’s authorship, which was a matter in dispute at the time. The poem’s authenticity validated the Redstone Schoolhouse as the school to which the lamb

¹⁷³ Letter from Edith M. Hartung, Detroit, MICH to Mr. and Mrs. Ford, Dearborn, Michigan on 17 February 1931 in Acc 1 Box 125 Folder 125-13.

¹⁷⁴ This is the title given the poem in McGuffey’s *Second Reader* as used in Ford’s self published “The Story of Mary’s Little Lamb” (1928).

followed Mary. The booklet was clearly intended for use in schools (as indicated in a Ford memo) but had a wider distribution as a collectible and/or gift.¹⁷⁵ The booklet brings us directly to the calculated formation of an American tradition, but before this is addressed, the coverage of the School and its move to the site prior to the Ford publication is just as revealing.

A bronze tablet on school's door in Sudbury reads, "In honor of the children's classic 'Mary had a Little Lamb' and of Mary Elizabeth Sawyer, 1806-1889, the 'Mary' of the poem, Rebecca Kimball the teacher, John Roulstone author of the first twelve lines, Sarah Josepha Hale whose genius completed the poem in its present form, This building incorporates the original 'Redstone' schoolhouse, scene of the poem, which stood in the Second School District of Sterling, Massachusetts. It was in use from 1789 to 1856 and was removed to this spot for its Preservation by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford in 1926." According to an article published by *The New York Times Magazine*, the building dated from around 1789 and was in continual use as a school until 1856 when it was sold for \$35.50.¹⁷⁶ The Old Redstone Schoolhouse was a sixteen by thirty foot wood-frame and clapboard building painted red. After its term as a place of learning ended, the community of Sterling adapted the building to a variety of uses. When Mr. Ford acquired the building in 1926, it was being used as the garage of the pastor of the Baptist church in Sterling.

¹⁷⁵ Many letters from business are held in the archives thanking Ford for copies of the booklet. See Acc 1 Box 125 Folder 125-13; For Example the letter from N. W. Rubel and Company, Chicago Illinois, dated 30 September 1929 to Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford.

¹⁷⁶ *The New York Times Magazine*, February 13, 1927. This article provides the details of the physical structure and its purchase.

The New York Times Magazine's story on the school's move to Sudbury was a precursor to the Ford publication, not only in time, but also in content because it retold the story of the "real" Mary, how the poem was written, and the dispute over attribution of the story.¹⁷⁷ The story credited Ford with reminding "the world that there was a Mary and that she had a lamb" in his role as "guardian of Americana."¹⁷⁸ More specifically, the unattributed article claimed that it was Ford who changed Mary's status as myth and fairy tale into something concrete and real. It was his exhaustive authentication of Mary that has brought her from fairy tale to "History." As *the Times'* asserted, Ford "has definitely taken Mary and her pet out of that fascinating but vague realm where Cinderella pines and Little Red Riding Hood holds polite conversation with a wily wolf."¹⁷⁹ Crediting Ford as part-sleuth, part-scientist, the *Times* lauded his efforts at tracing Mary's genealogy and the authorship of the poem, as well as the history of the schoolhouse itself—in other words, turning fiction into fact.¹⁸⁰

Ford's story starred an eleven-year-old Mary Sawyer and her twelve-year-old male classmate, John Roulstone, who some people said was the author of the three-stanza

¹⁷⁷ In fact, much of the narrative of the *New York Times* article is replicated in the Ford book—making it unclear whether Ford provided the text for the article or used the article for the text of the booklet. The former seems likely because Ford's organization had an almost constant public relation control.

¹⁷⁸ *New York Times*, February, 13, 1927, p. 2.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ For a sampling of the extent of Ford's quest to prove there was a Mary: he credited a 1902 publication by the Frederick A. Stokes Company with the true story of the lamb as told by Mary herself and used quotes liberally from this publication in his own 41-page booklet; quoted an affidavit dated 6 May 1901 given by Henry S. Sawyer (a relative of Mary E. Tyler, nee Sawyer) swearing to her existence as a person, her location, and the incident with the lamb, and verifying the schoolhouse as the place where the incident happened; as well as suppositions about the characters in questions, booklet, p. 21, "Can it be shown that John Roulstone had any part in the making of the poem? We should never have known of John in this connection had not Mary always included him in her narrative. If her story had been a piece of fiction she could as well have named anyone else, the teacher for example, or some of her own relatives. However, in the Mary Sawyer accounts of the incident there is no room for any name save that of John Roulstone as the first author of the poem."

rhyme about a lamb. Ford established her lineage as that of a true, fourth generation, American pioneer. The young boy was also vetted; his colonial lineage derived as a son of Captain John Roulstone “a member of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Boston.” The young Roulstone died during his freshmen year at Harvard University preventing first hand verification of the poem’s authorship during the latter nineteenth century.

Also central to the story was Sarah J. Hale, neé Buell, who had an equally distinguished lineage in the eyes of the colonial revivalists and who some credited with writing the poem.¹⁸¹ Offered as evidence of Hale’s authorship was an 1830 book published by Hale—*Poems for Our Children*—which contained “Mary’s Lamb.” Hale’s supporters claimed that the entire poem was authored by her. Ford’s investigation, however, contended that there was a sophistication in the second twelve stanzas lacking in the first twelve. Hence, it was the children Roulstone and Sawyer who wrote the beginning verses (the facts of the poem) and Hale who added the morality play to the account later. Ford declared:

The case with the Hale claim stands this way: Mary Sawyer said that John Roulstone gave her the first twelve lines, and that other lines were added later by another author, Mrs. Hale. The Hale descendants claim that Mrs. Hale wrote the entire poem, that its presence in her book proves it, and that to doubt it is to cast aspersions on Mrs. Hale’s truthfulness. It is not believed by the present writer that the question of truthfulness enters at all. Certainly, both Mary Sawyer and Mrs. Hale were truthful women.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ *New York Times*, February 13 1927, p. 2, “Disputed authorship is an interesting angle of the resurrection of this children’s classic, especially the claims of those who say that Mrs. Hale wrote the poem and that the whole episode was a figment of the imagination. Mrs. Hale was the organizer of the Seamen’s Aid Society, and has been picked out as the individual who did most to make Thanksgiving Day a national holiday.”

¹⁸² *Ibid*, p. 19.



Figure 14. Cover from a McGuffey Reader. Courtesy of HFM-GVRC.

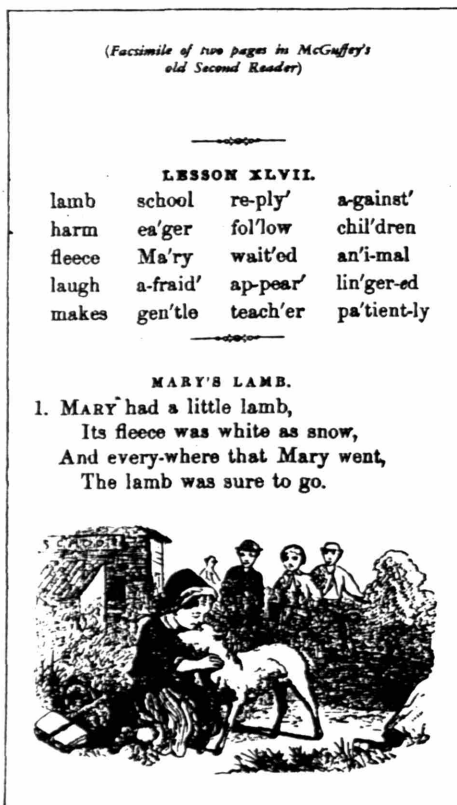


Figure 15. McGuffey Reader page featuring "Mary's Lamb" poem . Reproduced in booklet produced by Henry Ford, "The Story of Mary's Little Lamb." Courtesy of HFM-GVRC.

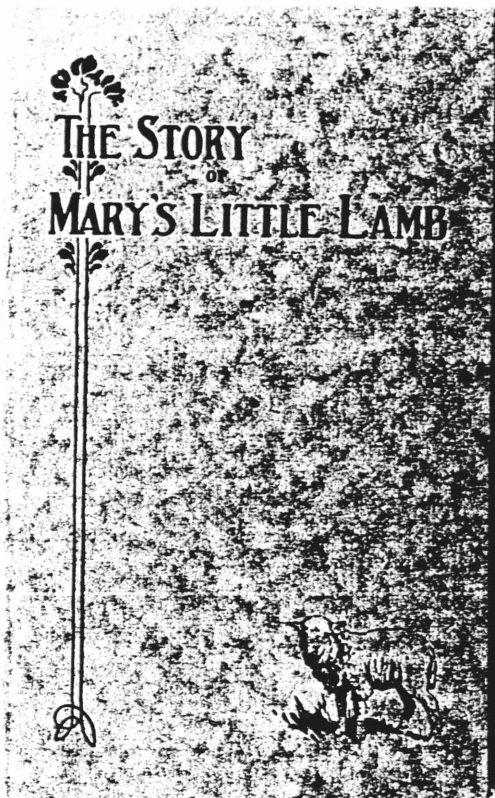


Figure 16. Cover from Henry Ford's booklet, "The Story of Mary's Little Lamb." Courtesy of HFM-GVRC.

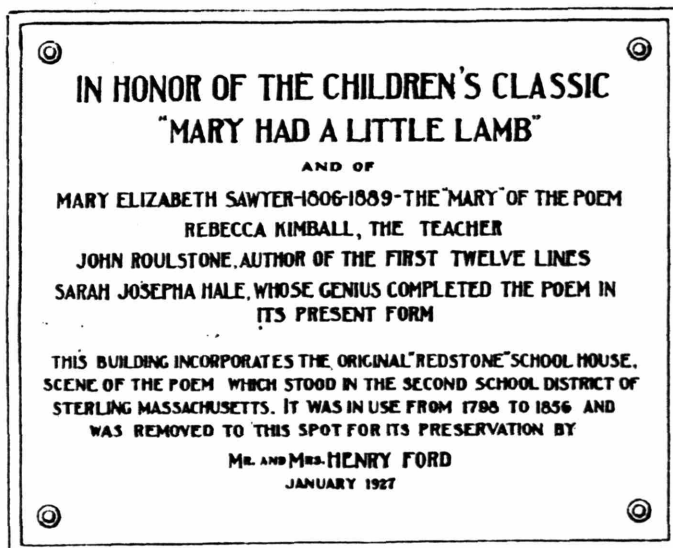


Figure 17. This plaque appears in front of the Redstone School on the Wayside Inn site. Ford reproduced it in his booklet, "The Story of Mary's Little Lamb." Courtesy of HFM-GVRC.

The schoolhouse as it appeared when prepared for use on its new plot of land at the Wayside Inn. With the newly assembled pupils are Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford, whose interest has preserved the old schoolhouse. The children are just the same as the Marys and the Nuts of 100 years ago.

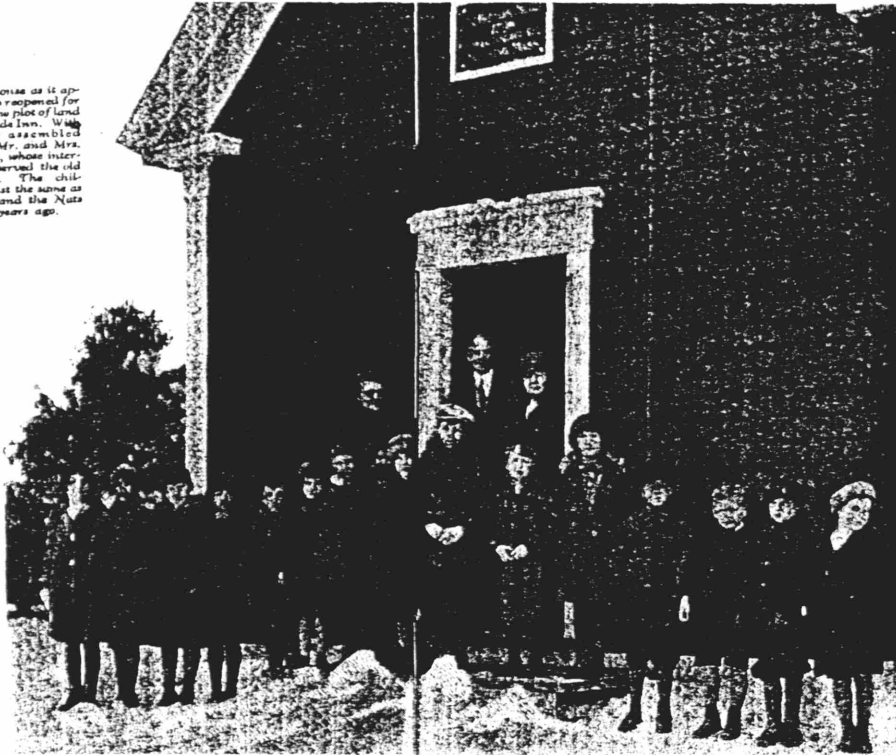


Figure 18. Photograph of Henry Ford and students of the Redstone School at the Wayside Inn site. Appeared in Ford's booklet, "The Story of Mary's Little Lamb." Courtesy of HFM-GVRC.

The Sterling schoolhouse in its new setting near the Wayside Inn. The school is again regularly used for classes and is adorned with many items of historical value relating to Mary and the lamb.

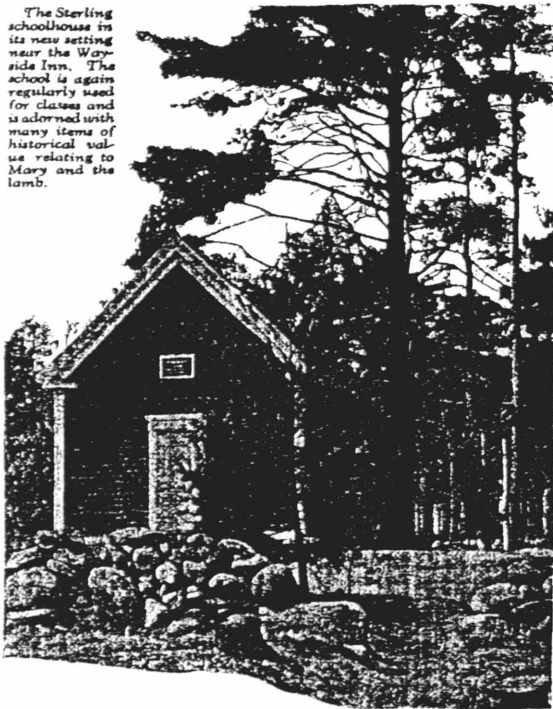


Figure 19. The Redstone School at the Wayside Inn site. In Ford's booklet, "The Story of Mary's Little Lamb." Courtesy of HFM-GVRC.

While Ford claimed that the truth was not at the heart of the matter, he certainly went through painstaking research in order to authenticate the schoolhouse as being related to the poem. Ford stated further:

Mary Sawyer says that her lamb followed her to school, was put out, and that John Roulstone, hearing of it, composed a little poem about it—all that Mary said happened. Mary does not tell about the teacher moralizing upon the love which children should bear to animals. Probably that was the furthest thing from the teacher's mind when she saw the school thrown into disorder by the sudden apparition of the lamb. Therefore, the moral portion does not appear in Mary Sawyer's version of the poem. If there is no doubt that the incident occurred, there is no doubt that the poem describes it just as it occurred. It did not describe the teacher's colloquy with the class, because it did not occur. On the other hand we have no direct account from Mrs. Hale at all. No letters have been produced as from her hand or in her behalf. Her descendants maintain that Mrs. Hale always said that the lamb poem had no basis in fact and was merely the fancy of her mind; in brief, that there was no Mary and there was no lamb. This statement of the purely imaginative origin of the verses, and the 1830 edition of Mrs. Hale's poems, are the bases of the Hale claim.¹⁸³

Ford affirmed the actions involved in the story; what he believed to be myth was the moral of the story, not the set up for the moral. Why was it so important to Ford that this story actually happened and was not a fiction created by for moral edification? Was it because he wanted morals and values to be sited in the physical object?

Ford invented the mythologies of a New England landscape by collecting things he believed to be true about the lives of common Americans. He situated his myths within folklore (i.e. the traditions, beliefs, and customs he thought current among everyday people), in part, to construct his image of America's early history and to justify how he believed Americans should live. He chose to put a one-room schoolhouse on the

¹⁸³ Ibid, p. 19.

site because it dovetailed into both his personal history and the presumption of a collective American experience.

The one-room school was, of course, dominant across America in the mid-nineteenth century; thousands of people had been educated in them, including Ford. By the end of the nineteenth century, a generation had grown up that had watched the world modernize, and that began to wax nostalgic about a simpler mode of life.¹⁸⁴ In 1891, a woman named Helen Lee began her personal homage, “Thirty years ago there stood on the old country road...this old, square, red schoolhouse.”¹⁸⁵ She could have been talking about the Redstone School. The surrounding scene in Lee’s reminiscence—a neighboring farm, an old stone fence, and a hill behind—could have described Ford’s Wayside landscape.

By the turn of the twentieth century, the schoolhouse had been transformed into something that represented far more than childhood education. Authors saw the one-room schoolhouse as a way to teach the new immigrants what it meant to be an American. In 1896, writer Horace Scudder told readers that the schoolhouse should be treated as an unifying national icon:

In a recent political contest, one of the symbols of party principles was a little red schoolhouse. A symbol is capable of a narrow, exclusive application, or of a comprehensive, suggestive one. If we give this one over to party and use it for inflammatory purposes, it may get burned up in the fire it kindles; but as a sign of national order and progress it may fairly be accepted by men of every race and tongue and creed. The common red schoolhouse is in reality the most obvious centre of national unity, and, with the growing custom of making it carrying the

¹⁸⁴ Helen Lee, “The Old Red Schoolhouse,” *The New England Magazine*, vol. 10, issue 3, May 1891, pp. 292-295; Horace E. Scudder, “The Schoolhouse as Centre,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, vol. 77, issue 459, January 1896, pp. 103-109; “Suggestions on the Architecture of Schoolhouses,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, vol. 74, issue 446, December 1894, p. 825; Alexander Clark, “The Old Log Schoolhouse,” *Continental Monthly*, vol. 1, issue 1, January 1862, p. 93.

¹⁸⁵ Lee (1891), p. 292.

American flag, it is likely to stand for a long time to come as the most conspicuous mark of a common American life.¹⁸⁶

Thirty years later, Ford was obsessed with re-creating a landscape that had existed in the 1860s. As an icon, the schoolhouse fit into the pattern of the Inn and the other physical items that Ford collected because it was, at its base, an American fact. These schoolhouses had existed. They had become folklore through the intervening years of shared experiences and reminiscences. And it was the folklore of the schoolhouse which prompted Ford—like authors such as Scudder—to see it as an appropriate emblem in the invention of a mythic American landscape.

But why did Ford need *Mary's* schoolhouse to achieve his objective? Just as the one-room schoolhouse was an ubiquitous American icon, *Mary* and her lamb had entered the popular consciousness through its publication in the McGuffey Reader's used in those schoolhouses as well as its turn into song.¹⁸⁷ In fact, *Mary's* verse had become so pervasive that people undertook illicit re-writing, replacing the original poem's moral lesson with bawdy or comic relief (e.g. *Mary had a little lamb/As you have learn before/If Mary had been hungrier/She would have asked for more*).¹⁸⁸

The poem had captured the imagination of generations, as shown in numerous letters to Ford thanking him for moving the schoolhouse to the Wayside Inn. Dr. Edward

G. Leffler of Waterloo, Iowa wrote:

¹⁸⁶ Scudder (1896), p. 103.

¹⁸⁷ Ford's booklet (p. 31) noted that the poem was put to musical score in the 1831 publication *Juvenile Lyre*. The booklet (p. 27) also quoted a letter from Edison to Ford dated 15 February 1927 which placed *Mary* firmly into cultural prominence: "The first phonograph in the world was made under my direction by one of the workmen at my laboratory at Menlo Park New Jersey in the early fall of 1877. I was the first person who spoke into the phonograph—and I recited the well known verse [*Mary Had a Little Lamb*]. These were the first words ever recorded and reproduced in the phonograph."

¹⁸⁸ Edith M. Hartung shared her collection of *Mary* rhymes in a Ford letter; too numerous to reiterate all here. Letter from Edith M. Hartung, Detroit, MICH to Mr. and Mrs. Ford, Dearborn, Michigan on 17 February 1931 in Acc 1 Box 125 Folder 125-13.

Will you convey to Mrs Ford the thanks my family and self for the Educational, Patriotic and unselfish work he is doing in restoring old landmarks in New England for the benefit of this and coming generations. Recently I saw a picture of the little schoolhouse wherein "Mary and her little lamb" attended classes,--the latter for a brief period tis true—and I must tell you I was thrilled. I have visualized this old school house since I was seven years old for at that age I recited the old familiar poem before a roomful of my "peers" one Friday afternoon long, long ago. I hope ere long to have the pleasure of seeing the Wayside Inn, blacksmith shop and the old mill which Mr Ford is restoring to their original condition.¹⁸⁹

The proliferation of the poem across America would have been no surprise to Ford, who actually believed it started as a real event turned folk tale within the New Hampshire/Massachusetts region. For years, there was an active debate about the poem's provenance. As he bought the school, Ford tried to give an authoritative answer. In his booklet, Ford described how he believed a real story became an iconic tale:

Consider the course such verses would take. They were first a 'josh,' as we should say today. Mary had smuggled her lamb into school and had been found out; the joke was on Mary. The lines got themselves recited around the neighborhood to her intense annoyance. From farm to farm, from party to party, the poem would run—people repeated all sorts of verse in those days much more frequently than we do now—until it became a common by-word. No one knew where it came from; no one cared. Not everyone knew who Mary was---there were plenty of Marys in New England. ... Did the person who first wrote Mother goose rhymes originate them, or simply gather up couplets and rhymed sayings which had been polished smooth by long usage in the common speech? There may have been a little Jack Horner, but who originated the lines about him? Were they just written out of someone's imagination? Probably not—Jack had somewhere set someone a-rhyming on his name. ...Mrs. Hale was right when she said that, with her, it was only imagination, for that is the only way she could have had it even when hearing the simple verses come cross-country from Middlesex County in Massachusetts to Sullivan County in New Hampshire. It is the only way every reader since has had it. But imagination must have a foundation in reality and Sterling furnished the reality.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ Letter from Dr. Edward G Leffler, Waterloo Iowa, 6 February 1927 to Private Secretary to Mr. Henry Ford in Detroit, Michigan. HFMGVRC Acc 1 Box 125 Folder 125-13. These files also include order forms from business as well as thank you letters from children dating well into 1948.

¹⁹⁰ Acc 1023 Box 5, Booklet, pp. 39-40.

Ford believed that the poem was not a fiction, but an event transmitted through the folk culture of New England. The discrepancy in authorship was based on an everyday cultural moment of children that became codified in the writing of an adult.¹⁹¹ Ford asserted:

There *was* a Mary, and there *was* a lamb. It is not an imaginary tale about an imaginary Mary and a mythical lamb that the poem celebrates, for Mary herself lived until 1889, and the old Redstone Schoolhouse of District No. 2, in Sterling, Massachusetts, is still to be seen in use. But the schoolhouse is not in Sterling now. When it became known as the scene of the immortal children's classic it was removed for preservation and now stands in the shadow of deep woods on a side road near Longfellow's Wayside Inn, at Sudbury, Massachusetts, where its old walls echo to songs and lessons again."¹⁹²

With this inspiration, Ford moved the schoolhouse to a site where not only it never existed before, but where no schoolhouse had existed before. He believed he had taken Mary's poem that many people thought to be a fiction and had proven it to be a fact and rescued the historical schoolhouse. Then Ford placed that school in a non-historical landscape—returning it and Mary's lamb to a fictional context.

We have a hunger for something like authenticity, but are easily satisfied by an ersatz facsimile.—George Orwell, c. 1949

You have to appreciate authenticity in all its forms.—advertisement for Winston cigarettes, 1999

¹⁹¹ Ford booklet, p. 19. The statement continued, "Now, the Sawyers lived near the north line of Massachusetts and the Buells (that was Mrs. Hale's maiden name) lived near the south line of New Hampshire. To all purposes, they were in the same general community. Both were within the range of any cross-country saying that might arise. For, as the popular song circulates among us today, so did smart sayings, good stories and new verses circulate in those days. 'Mary Had a Little Lamb' was one of those sayings which easily fit into the memory and easily trip from the tongue. There is no reason for Miss Buell failing to hear of it, even to recite or sing it herself. Sarah Buell was eighteen years older than Mary Sawyer and was married the year that John Roulstone died."

¹⁹² Ford Booklet on Mary and her Lamb (n.d), p. 1.

Ford's turning of fiction into fact into fiction did not sit well with the growing discipline of historic preservation. As previously mentioned, Ford's involvement with the Inn was preceded by (and to a certain degree concurrent with) a distinct paradigm shift within the field of historic preservation from patriotic veneration to aesthetic-based collection. When Brahmin William Sumner Appleton founded the Society for Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA) in 1910, he created the most influential American preservation organization until the founding of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1949.¹⁹³ Given the status of SPNEA as a leader within the field, Appleton's fixation with carrying out preservation under the rubric of archeological methods, scientific investigation, and professionalization would influence the entire profession. This influence would place the scientification of the discipline—preferencing the dating of objects (and their physical elements) as authentic representations of certain construction methods and styles—ahead of contextual cultural constructions of architecture. Architectural preservation would become about fixing the truth of an artifact in time, rather than as a reconstruction conveying its relationship to people or a broader cultural (and temporal) continuum. This influence could be seen well into the twentieth century.

At the close of the twentieth century, the bulk of the historic preservation literature focused on the provenance and aesthetics of specific artifacts and/or how to protect the individual object.¹⁹⁴ Most books favored the pragmatic over the theoretical,

¹⁹³ President Truman signed the legislation creating the Trust on 26 October 1949. The initial purpose of the Trust was the acquisition and administration of historic sites. The trust's first museum property, Woodlawn Plantation, was acquired in 1951.

¹⁹⁴ With the exception of a tourist-oriented narrative, even this type of scholarship is absent with regard to the Wayside Inn landscape, particularly regarding Ford's involvement therein.

focusing on praxis. The unpacked ideology of historic preservation still fell on the shoulders of the authentic. These how-to books focused on conservation of materials, restoration to a specific date, how to record historic structures and interpret the guidelines set forth by the Secretary of the Interior. In other words, the literature was dominated by scientific and bureaucratic minutia meant to aid in the very real and very necessary practical issues in “saving” buildings. These were amplified by case study literature which not only showed these rules and regulations in application, but also were often meant as a jeremiad to continue the cause of protecting the physical patrimony (from progress). This literature documented individual buildings and provided a taxonomy of a building typology or catalogued the work of a region.¹⁹⁵ Those works that moved beyond particular buildings to try and understand historic preservation’s broader role within the disciplines effecting the built environment, were aimed at legitimizing a nascent field. Legitimacy was often found by waving the banner of authenticity.

The term authenticity haunts the discourses of preservation. The debates are concerned with the circumscription of its definition, not the challenging of the term and its applicability to the purposes of the saving of material objects. The latter is assumed; of course, the authentic shall be preserved. This position was reinforced by twentieth century preservation scholarship which focused on the aesthetic value of an object. Consequently, things in the physical environment are treated like museum objects whose worth is free of any context. As the director at Williamsburg avowed in 1941,

¹⁹⁵ For example: Jane Holtz Kay and Pauline Chase-Harrell’s *Preserving New England* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986). This book is an ode to mythic idyllic New England in the face of changes wrought during the later 20th century; trying to rediscover it and prove that the mythic has a basis in the reality of the extant historic fabric.

“Authenticity has been virtually [our] religion; sacrifices have been offered before its altar.”¹⁹⁶ Authenticity—that which is “of undisputed origin”—lies, in this theory, in that which a human being has built and which remains the way it was *at some point*.¹⁹⁷

However, this is exactly where preservation becomes contested within its own ranks.

Does the authenticity of a cultural object exist only in its date of origin, or does the genuine exist perhaps later at a significant historical or aesthetic moment? The supplication to the altar of authenticity has not come without dispute over the manner of such worship.

In appraising the significance of authenticity in a discussion of history and heritage, historian David Lowenthal notes:

...[the] Williamsburg staff can see it was all wrong back then—and express confidence that they are now getting it right. ... Staff take pride in purveying real history, as opposed to Disneyland fiction. Worried about a prospective Disney history theme park in their backyard, they were shocked to find the public saw little difference.¹⁹⁸

Architectural critic Ada Louise Huxtable offers another perspective on the relationship between Williamsburg, Disneyland and the authentication of the past by placing them closer together on the continuum from the real to the fake—both being closer to the fake end than Williamsburg was previously positioned.¹⁹⁹ She believes these two places are

¹⁹⁶ Kenneth Chorley (1941) quoted in Kammen (1991), 373n.

¹⁹⁷ The Oxford Modern English Dictionary, 2nd edition, gives the following definition for the word authentic, “1. of undisputed origin; genuine. 2. reliable or trustworthy.”

¹⁹⁸ David Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998) p. 166. Here Lowenthal refers to the efforts in 1994 by the Disney Corporation to build a history theme park outside of Washington DC called “Disney’s America”.

¹⁹⁹ Huxtable is not only in her critique. Williamsburg’s claim to “authenticity” has been decried by many in the field; particularly in the wake of postmodernist discourses which would challenge the metanarrative of colonial Williamsburg as the truth of the place, in favor of unearthing the hidden histories of African American slaves, women, and the fact that many buildings not deemed “authentic” to the reproduction of a colonial Williamsburg were torn down.

blatant examples of manufactured landscapes that have nothing to do with historical preservation, or the in the case of Disney, the European cities and villages after which these landscapes are named. Huxstable asserts that Colonial Williamsburg and Disney are entertainment venues that can offer some educational insight, but cautions visitors to not misinterpret these sites and their landscapes as historical. Instead, they represent the “real fake” (Williamsburg) and the “fake fake” (Disneyland).

Huxstable decries places like Disneyland (and Disneyworld) for their banal representation of various imaginary lands or historic places. Disney, she argues, makes replicas of European cities and expects the visitor to believe that they can come and experience these foreign places in an American environment. In the case of Williamsburg, Huxstable condemns the idea of sanitizing and mummifying historical objects for the sake of preservation, or in her opinion, tourism. In her eyes, the exploitation of historical places for profit and the increasing popularity of copies has cheapened authentic history. At Williamsburg, everything has been razed and rebuilt according to a prescribed notion of what 1920s preservationists thought Williamsburg should look like. A certain period was decided upon to recreate the entire Williamsburg experience—the colonial period. What about earlier periods? What about Williamsburg’s existence from its inception up to 1926 when John D. Rockefeller provided the financing for its preservation? Even if the strategy of fixing a place in time is agreed upon, then what about the livestock? What about slavery? For Huxstable, if visitors take these venues at face value for what they are—pure recreation—and enjoy themselves, then fine. Huxstable only asks that these experiences not be accepted as factual history.

Part of Huxstable's ire centers around the concept of "authentic reproduction" and its stronghold within American culture throughout the twentieth century.²⁰⁰ The authentic reproduction is the nomenclature for what Huxstable would term the real fake. It is the ubiquity of real fakes, and American culture's comfort with them as equals to the real thing, that prompts her query. The notion of an authentic reproduction for her is an oxymoron. A reproduction does not have the original fabric, patina and/or character of the original—no matter how fine the craftsmanship, she argues. The historic preservation of Williamsburg falls into this category of authentic reproduction (real fake) because it is an idealized past of a colonial Williamsburg that is presented. As she argues, in the case of Ellis Island, the scientific and technical parts of the restoration can be "well done," but concentrating on the science of the materiality may still rob the restoration of its historical essence, its presence within a cultural continuum.

Huxstable's concerns about American's fixation with the real fake were articulated by German philosopher Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) in his influential essay, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*.²⁰¹ Benjamin began the essay by acknowledging that art production in the pre-modern world also included reproduction; he pointed out that it is really the means that separates the pre-modern and modern replications, not an intent toward authenticity. The Greeks reproduced via founding and stamping, the Middle Ages used engraving and etching. The nineteenth century adopted lithography and photography, and the twentieth century added films. The distinction for

²⁰⁰ In fact, the notion of an authentic reproduction really gained currency in American culture with the colonial revival as people sought to own reproductions of colonial furniture and other interior accoutrements.

²⁰¹ Theodor Adorno was one of the men responsible for reviving Benjamin's scholarship after World War II. Collections of his essays were published in the late twentieth century, starting with *Illuminations* (1968) in which *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, first appeared in English translation.

Benjamin in discussing the status of an object is its “aura.” It is the “aura” that has been compromised by the modernization of replication because modern techniques of reproduction detach “the reproduced object from the domain of tradition.”²⁰² It is historical processes, the presence of an object in a specific time and place, that is unique to a specific object and therefore manifests itself as the object’s “aura.” Benjamin noted:

Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be. This unique existence of the work of art determined the history to which it was subject throughout the time of its existence. This includes the changes which it may have suffered in physical condition over the years as well as the various changes in its ownership.²⁰³

Benjamin asserts that reproductions lack any historical dimension because they lack “aura” in their imagistic simulation of the original. Huxtable’s real fakes fall into the same category. Huxtable decries Williamsburg and Ellis Island as works of historic preservation because they lack aura. She proposes in order to preserve historic buildings, stewardship should bring them into the present, with modern uses, so they remain relevant.

Ford’s preservation of the Wayside failed to please most preservationists because his landscape was not authentic. Ironically, his Wayside could be said to follow Huxtable’s tenet, although she would have recoiled at Ford’s methods to achieve this usable past. Ford wanted the Wayside Inn landscape to synthesize an idealized past with a useable place in the present. He wasn’t interested in produced the real fake of Williamsburg. He was not freezing South Sudbury in time with people walking around in period costumes. He wants trying to create a model of living for the future, which

²⁰² Benjamin, p. 3.

²⁰³ Ibid, pp. 2-3.

incorporated American cultures and customs from the past. One of Walter Benjamin's main points was that, with modernization, the work of art reproduction becomes the work of art designed for reproducibility. Ford's work in Massachusetts became an archetype for him. This model way of living would become truly reproducible for him in Michigan with his development of nineteen village industries; places that incorporated modern techniques of industrialization with pastoral values in the way the American land should be inhabited.

It doesn't matter what the jargon [of authenticity] says, so long as it is spoken in a voice that resonates properly.—T.W. Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity* (1964)

The fake is charming; the simulacrum is not.—Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981)

Understanding Ford's work, however, as a piece of historic preservation prompts questions: What is special about the "real" thing as opposed to "reproduction"? With the advent of new technology that can duplicate with ease, and in some cases, can make things better, has authenticity become more or less important? Can things be still considered authentic when they are removed from their original setting/context? Under Huxtable's schema, Ford's work in Sudbury might walk the line between real fake (the tavern and the grist mill) and fake fake (the schoolhouse and the chapel). Her quest is to defend authenticity in the built environment and her reflections focus on commercialism, social exclusion, and the issue of time. Huxtable asserts that the rejection of reality (at Williamsburg, Disneyland and New Urbanist communities like Celebration, Florida) for an idyllic fantasy is an American phenomenon. While she affirms mythmaking's role as a function of architecture, she believes the line between sentimental unreality and nostalgic

idealism has been increasingly blurred. She is ill at ease at the pervasiveness of simulacra and hyper reality in American culture.

French philosopher Jean Baudrillard (1929-) pioneered the popular use of the term simulacrum and hyperreality in their postmodern context.²⁰⁴ Baudrillard situated his notion of hyperreality specifically in the United States. Baudrillard asserted that America has invented a place that is more real than reality (i.e. hyperreality). In Baudrillard's America, authenticity has been replaced by copy (simulacrum) and therefore nothing is real. What is real is the illusions in which Americans engage as spectators. Americans consume spectacles instead of engaging in lived experiences.

Under these definitions, Baudrillard's counter argument to Huxtable would be that Disneyland and Williamsburg, and New Urbanist designed communities represent what is real in the American world. In this conception of place, simulation is the creation of the real through mythological models which have no connection or origin in reality. Homes, relationships, fashion, art, music, all become dictated by their ideal models presented through the media. Thus the boundary between the image, or simulation, and reality breaks down. This creates a world of hyperreality where the distinctions between real and unreal are blurred.

So, is there any such thing as authenticity? To Baudrillard, whenever authenticity is evoked, we are already in the world of the fake (or the real fake). Ford's Wayside Inn landscape, therefore, becomes a simulation of identity, or how to be American. It becomes another piece of the hyperreality known as the colonial revival, because it too

²⁰⁴ See Baudrillard's books *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981) and *America* (1986). Novelist and semiotician Umberto Eco (1939-) should also be acknowledged for his contributions in the concept of hyperreality in the postmodern literature.

blurs the lines between facts, fiction, past, and present. This place collapses the boundaries between meaning and history; there is no distinction between cultural forms, land forms, social models and technological ones. Despite historic preservation's presumptions, the Wayside Inn landscape does not have a specific historical context from which it arose. It is not colonial (therefore it cannot be a fake). Ford did not intend it to be fixed in time. The only historical context that is pertinent is the time period in which Ford engaged this landscape. This fictional landscape says more about Ford and what it meant to live in 1920s-30s America—caught betwixt traditionalism and modernity—than it does about the colonial period in the United States. Huxtable might decry Ford's Wayside Inn's lack of aura. That is because she situates the aura within the eighteenth and nineteenth century Howe family. But the Wayside Inn landscape does have an aura as a twentieth century landscape—as it positions itself as part of Baudrillard's hyperreal environments also known as America.

To retrieve these sources and discard the intervening layers of myth would tell only half the story, however. The myths themselves hold hints of New England's character. In fact, they too shaped it. —Jane Holz Kay²⁰⁵

The Wayside Inn landscape has been relegated to the status of footnote in contemporary histories of historic preservation, while Nelson Rockefeller's concurrent attempt at Williamsburg, Virginia has been lauded as exemplar. Its dismissal within the discourse is, in part, due to the presumption of its compromised authenticity and shoddy representation of History. This is precisely Holz Kay's lament—that people sacrifice meaning and memory, often complex layers in conflict, in order to uphold the veracity of

²⁰⁵ Holtz Kay (1986), p. 17.

the physical object itself. Should preservation be about the purity of the thing or about the relationship people have with the object? Are these purposes mutually exclusive or can they coexist?

In the end, evaluating Ford's interventions in Sudbury based on authenticity dismisses his larger agenda of devising ways for modern people to live on the land that respects a pre-modern notion of ruralism. Ford's Wayside Inn might be an unreal semblance of a colonial landscape. But he prepared this landscape not to teach people how to save artifacts (which was Appleton's project with SPNEA); but to teach people how to be American. And he believed that being American was based upon how one engages the land. If Ford's Sudbury site belongs more to the world of signs and has made a fundamental break from reality, it is because he wanted to construct an alternative model for living. Thus the Inn became not a house museum, but an active tavern where people still stay the night, or come for a meal; the grist mill he reconstructed on Hop Brook (farther downstream from the original Howe mill) is still an active mill, not merely a setting for sheep; the chapel he constructed atop a rolling hill is still an active place for worship; and, the one-room schoolhouse was not a museum to Mary and her Lamb, but a part of the Sudbury school system.

Ford's Redstone School became one of three schools he established for the Sudbury school system. He also established the Southwest School and the Wayside Inn Boys Vocational High School near the site. Ford made sure the *McGuffey's Readers* were used in these schools because they had a profound influence on his life because the stories "stressed love of nature, events in rural life, and lauded the blessings of industry,

thrift, temperance, kindness, and patriotism.”²⁰⁶ These were all values he sought to be replicated at the Wayside Inn landscape. Ford’s broad conception of education meant one’s total experience. What happened in the classroom was only one component; education must also include individual involvement, implied observation, sensory perception, and praxis. He wasn’t against history (either its place in the classroom or as a means for engaging the built environment), as his infamous 1919 statement proclaimed: “History is Bunk.” History was only one part of the equation for Ford; and it wasn’t meant to be static. The boys in Ford’s Sudbury school were

not taught in formal classes, but learned by solving daily problems. If a tractor needed to be overhauled, the students learned how to grind valves and install new piston rings; if the kitchen ceiling fell down, they studied plastering by patching it; if they needed flour for baking, they learned how to run a grist mill; if they needed water, they dug a well, and if the lights went out, they repaired electrical circuits. During the four years, every boy became familiar with the basic processes and machines of modern farm and industry. Moreover, they were paid \$2.00 a day, part of which went for board and the rest for clothes, amusement, and savings.”²⁰⁷

Ford’s Wayside Inn was a didactic landscape—meant to instruct children in what it meant to be a modern American with rural values. For it to be evaluated under a conventional early (and late) 20th century preservation rubric of authenticity misses the point. The site was invented to instruct how modern men and women might embrace progress while still valuing a notion of pre-industrial America. Ford did not provide a counterfeit colonialism. He invented a modern pastoral. Ford continued this construction in Michigan as he established village industries to carry out the work of the Ford empire. He wanted to replicate across America the type of life in which the Wayside Inn boys

²⁰⁶ Reynold M. Wik, *Henry Ford and Grass-roots America* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1972), p. 204.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid*, p. 205.

engaged the land. A 1944 *Saturday Evening Post* article captured Ford's vision in telling the story of a day in the life of one of the village industries workers: Albert Risch.

Albert Risch looks like a professor of high-school physics. But when the electric alarm clock beside his bed goes off at five A.M., he's a farmer. He jumps into worn blue overalls and hastens into the early dawn to feed his pigs, poultry and cattle. An hour and a quarter later, he comes back into the kitchen carrying a brimming bucket of milk deftly extracted from the Guernsey, and he finds his blond wife, Jane, and a stair-step arrangement of five blond little Risches waiting from him at a well-loaded breakfast table...

Naturally and Inescapably, Farmer Risch is a fuller man when he pushes back from the table at 6:45, exchanges his overalls for shop clothes, pins on his identification badge, hops into his car and drives five miles to town. Here, as Electrician Risch, he punches a time clock at seven A.M. and starts his day's work of maintaining the complex electrical equipment of an ignition-parts factory. At 3:25 P.M. he punches the clock again and heads home to a big dinner and evening chores, accomplished with at least two or three small Risches heeling him and telling him of the wonderful events that took place on the farm that day. In the evening, while Jane reads to the children and listens to the radio, he becomes Student Al Risch and bones up on electronics or dreams up electrical gadgets to make his well-organized farm-and-factory work even easier.

The factory, where Al keeps his trained eyes on a control board rampant with dials, and the farm, where he uses an instinctive skill to make crops and livestock grow, are equally significant indicators of a hopeful, reassuring trend in American life. You won't be apt to spot the factory as much if you happened to drive through Milan, Michigan, population 2340. The village is typical of backroads America, with quiet, tree-lined streets, small snug homes, and casual motor and foot traffic on the few blocks of Main Street. At the edge of town, where the meandering Saline River flows, is a place that strikes you as a village park of some kind, with a long low building in the foreground and an old-fashioned grist mill in the back under towering trees. However, the low building is the Ford Motor Company's Milan ignition-parts plant, and the old mill, which a century ago was grinding farmer's grain, now houses spotlessly modern soybean-oil-extraction machinery.²⁰⁸

Ford wanted all Americans to live like Al Risch. He was not concerned with supplicating himself at the altar of authenticity. The rigors of historical scholarship were not his aim.

²⁰⁸ John Bird, "One Foot on the Land," *Saturday Evening Post* 216 (March 18, 1944), p. 12.

Creating a way for a rural American landscape to not be forever changed and lost to the Model T was more of his concern.

Chapter 5: The Flivver in the Garden

When first Imagination fills the Mind,
 And Hope delusive leaves slow doubt behind,
 The eager Tourist hastens to begin
 His fancied Journey to a pleasant Inn;
 Where many a Traveller in days of old
 Has trod good Roads, and good Adventures told
 — John Byng, Fifth Viscount Torrington, Composed at an Inn, 1781.²⁰⁹

Two years after purchasing the land surrounding the Wayside Inn, Henry Ford decided to move one of the oldest continuously used roads in the country, the Old Boston Post Road.²¹⁰ The road was the primary route for travel and mail between New York and Boston as well as troop movements during the Revolutionary War. The route was established in 1673 and traveled by horseback; journeymen would travel approximately fifteen miles a day in the winter and thirty to fifty a day in the more favorable summer conditions.²¹¹ New York Governor Lovelace's post-rider made this journey with his saddlebags carrying the first regular mail between New York and Boston:

... a lonely man on horseback was following an old Indian trail through the woods ... Much of the way was through unbroken forest and was poorly marked, though occasionally there were rough cart-roads through the sparsely settled villages along the Sound. ... stopping for the night at some rude village tavern...²¹²

Stagecoaches superseded those on horseback as the conditions were upgraded from trail to roadway along many routes. The first stage coach left New York for Boston on 25 June 1772; the typical journey took six to nine days and passengers would have to get out

²⁰⁹ Full poem is quoted on frontispiece of George Francis Marlowe, *Coaching Roads of Old New England* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1945).

²¹⁰ The road is still in use today and is known as Rte. 20 in Massachusetts.

²¹¹ F.N. Hollingsworth, "The Old Boston Post Road," *The Buffalo Motorist*, April 1935, p. 11.

²¹² Marlowe (1945), p. 1.

and push when the vehicle was stuck in ruts, bogs, etc.²¹³ Longfellow's first visit to the Inn was typical; the stage left Boston at three o'clock in the morning, reaching the tavern for breakfast. At that time, the journey on the Boston Post Road was not one which engaged the traveler with views of a pastoral landscape, as Longfellow noted, "a considerable portion of the route being traveled in total darkness, and without your having the least idea of who your companion might be."²¹⁴ If Longfellow could have looked out the stage coach window, he would have seen that the Boston Post Road was a natural dirt, worn-down trail ten to twelve feet wide across most of its length, with it widening to a macadam surface eighteen feet in width as its popularity grew. In 1918 the Massachusetts highway department took it over as a state highway, laying down a new macadam surface along its route within the state.

The press reported Ford's desire to move the Old Boston Post Road as deriving from concern over the increased automobile traffic along the path and specifically in front of the newly restored Inn: "...Ford feared that the vibration would damage the foundations of the old house..."²¹⁵ Ford offered to relocate a portion of the road around the Wayside Inn, at his expense, in order to protect the inn from traffic; the state granted permission in 1926. Ford engineers, in cooperation with the state highway department, relocated the Boston Post Road 590 feet away from the inn, laying an 8000 foot stretch of new road. Completed in 1928, the new section of road was fifty feet wide—including thirty feet of three lanes of hard surface, three-foot-wide hard shoulders, and a seven-

²¹³ Hollingsworth (1935), p. 12.

²¹⁴ Quote from Longfellow in Marlowe (1945), p. 4.

²¹⁵ Hollingsworth (1935), p. 12 and David Lewis, "The Flivver of Hostelries: Ford's Wayside Inn," *Cars and Parts*, vol. 17 no. 5 (April 1974), p. 127. Ford, *Garden & Home Builder* (1926), p. 433.

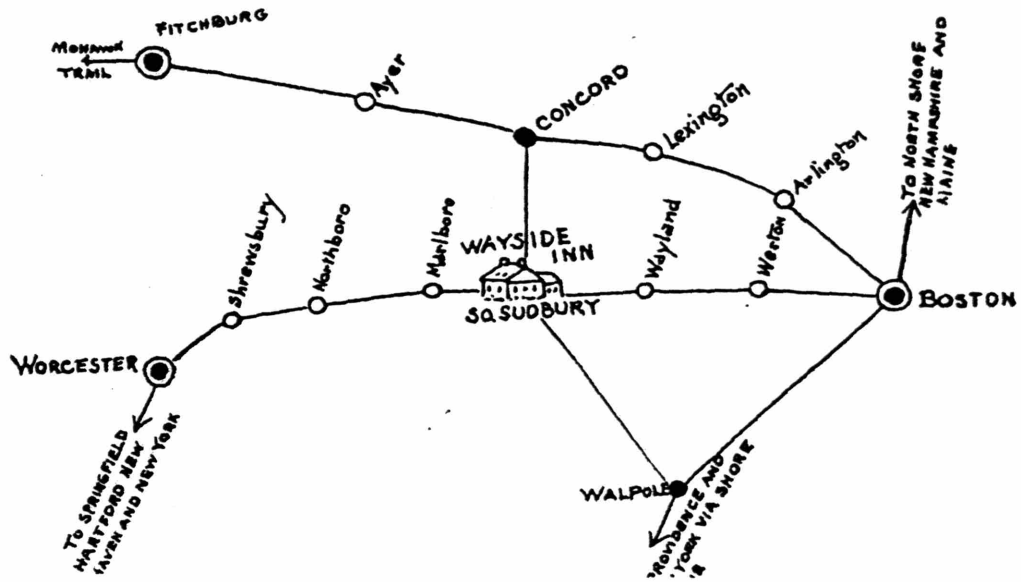
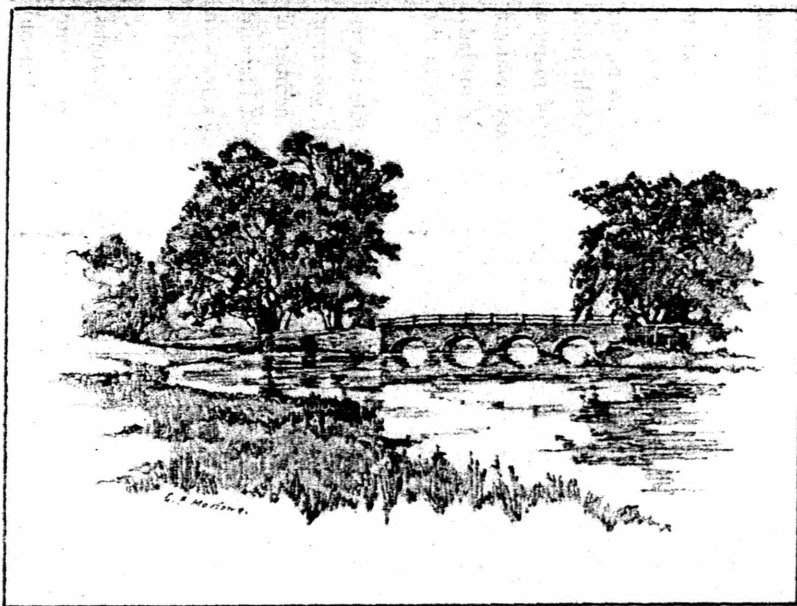
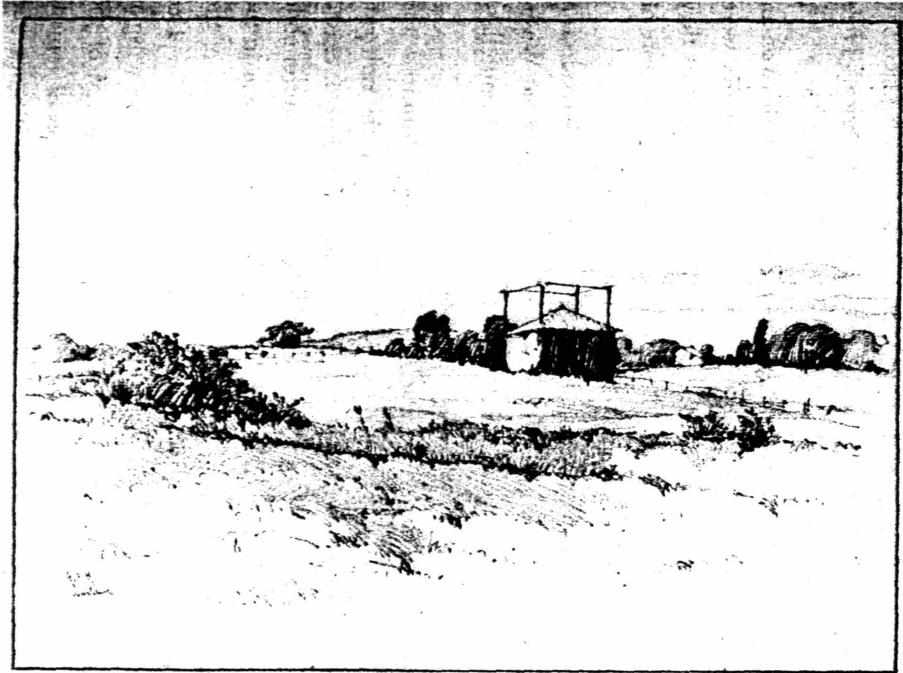


Figure 20. From *Garden & Home Builder* (July 1926), p. 484: "The Wayside Inn is located at South Sudbury, Mass., about midway between Boston and Worcester on the old Post Road, which is now the main artery for east and west automobile traffic."



Wayland Bridge, Sudbury River

Figure 21. Illustration by George Marlowe in his book, *Coaching Roads of Old New England* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1945) showing the Old Boston Post Road route to the Wayside Inn, p. 11.



Wayland Meadows

Figure 22. More from Marlowe's book (1945) showing the route to the Wayside Inn, Ibid, p. 15.



Figure 23. Marlowe's depiction of the arrival at the Wayside Inn, Ibid, p. 19.

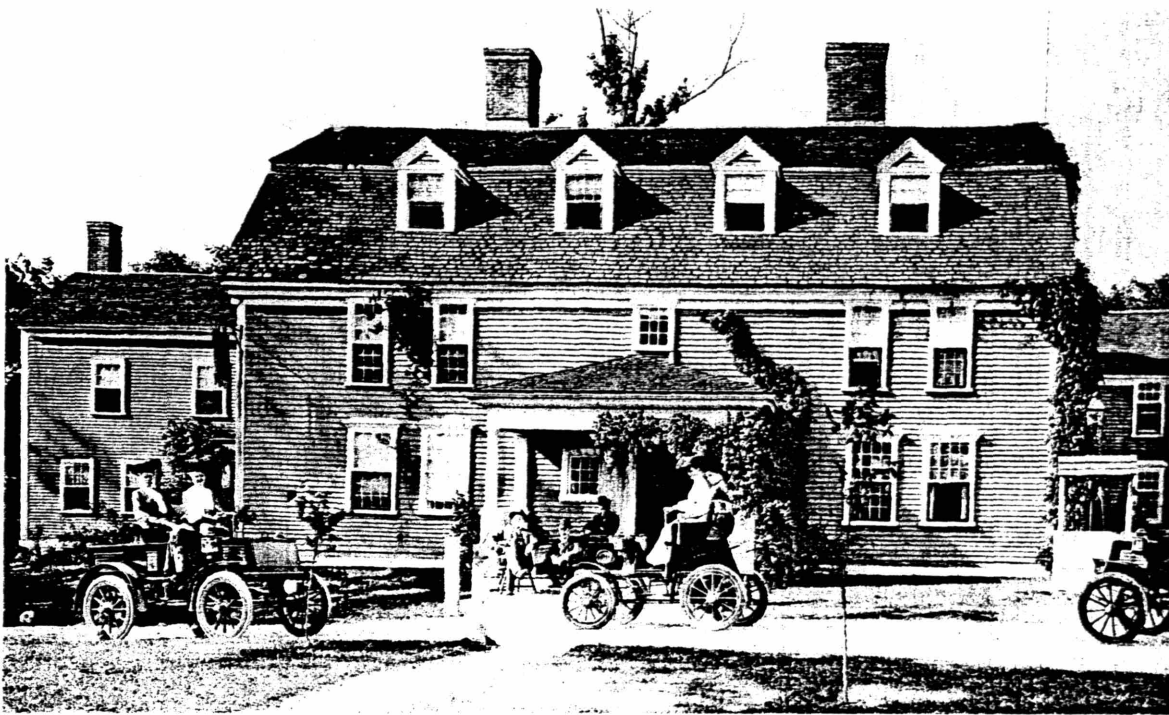


Figure 24. Thanks to Ford, the Wayside Inn of the twentieth century is reached by automobile. Courtesy of HFM-GVRC.



Figure 25. Ford enjoyed spending his time out of doors. Courtesy of HFM-GVRC.



One of
the boys
from the
school



shoveling
out.

Figure 26. One of the boys from the Wayside Inn schools shoveling snow. These images are from "The Wayside Inn Diary," March 13, 1939). These diaries recorded daily activity at the Wayside Inn landscape during the 1930s. Courtesy of HFM-GVRC.

foot-wide grass strip. The project cost Ford around \$300,000; he sold it to the state for one dollar.²¹⁶

Why did Ford go through this Herculean effort and expense to move a road? He wanted the visitor to his Wayside Inn landscape to imagine the past. But it was not a past that froze the site as an outdoor museum set in colonial America (as was funded by his contemporary, Nelson Rockefeller, down in the much-celebrated preservation of Williamsburg, Virginia). Ford wanted the Wayside Inn to exist in twentieth century America. The landscape he was creating in Sudbury was about a synthesis of the past and present. Ironically, in his attempt to preserve what he thought was peculiar about this landscape, he in fact changed its reason for being.²¹⁷ The Old Boston Post Road went right past the doorstep of Howe's tavern where riders could dismount to an old horse block at the door—for many it was a place to stop on the way to something else. Under Ford's proprietorship, the Inn became a destination, the focus point of "an old-time village group which include[d] a Little Red School House, an old grist mill, an old-fashioned garden, and many other features. Automobile buses [made] hourly trips from Boston to the inn, landing passengers at the coach-house gate after leaving the new highway at a point east of the inn to drive down the shady old road."²¹⁸

²¹⁶ Cost amounts vary from \$280,000 to \$330,000 depending on the source.

²¹⁷ Marlowe (1945), p. xi, "Some of the old coaching inns and taverns have been spared to us. Once every town and village along the road had one or [p. xii] more, and often one was to be found in the smallest hamlet and even at lonely crossroads with never another house insight. On one of the turnpikes there were said to have been sixty-five inns or taverns in sixty miles." Marlowe could write his book about the relationship between taverns and roads because there was in fact a significant one in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. See Frederic Wood's 1910 publication, *The Turnpikes of New England*; one of the first comprehensive histories on the turnpike as an American landscape type.

²¹⁸ Hollingsworth (1935), p. 13.

When Ford moved the road, he abandoned the Inn's purpose of a stop on the main highway in order to save the experience of riding down a "shady old road." Ford wanted to maintain a notion of the American pastoral in a changing modern American landscape. Ford must have clearly achieved his objective as George Marlowe commented almost two decades after Ford moved the road:

When the Post Road was rebuilt several years ago, this section near the Inn was straightened, leaving the old house in a sort of sequestered backwater, and although some of the great oaks have at last succumbed to the ravages of time and the elements, the place still retains much of the charm of its old-time setting. It is not difficult to conjure up those scenes of bygone days when it was an important place on the busy highway; in times of the French and Indian Wars a halting place for troops on the way west and to Canada, and upcountry marketers with great canvas-topped wagons; teamsters with their ox wagons and yokes of slowly plodding steers stopped before the door or put up their teams for the night in the stable yards, while housemaids and hostlers came running to prepare refreshment for man and beast."²¹⁹

Against the litmus test of authenticity, Ford's moving of the road could be decried as offering a false past because the Inn and road lose their original relationships. This, however, positions the authenticity of this landscape relative to a very specific moment in time and does not acknowledge, as Ford did, that change is inevitable. Even if Ford had left the Inn on the main Boston Post Road, the road was soon to lose its place as a main interstate thoroughfare. Ford's proliferation of automobiles and people's desire to use them for pragmatic and romantic travel would soon replace the Boston Post Road with the Massachusetts Turnpike (the main east-west road across New England) and Interstate 95 (the primary north-south road across New England down to Florida). Even if the Boston Post Road had not been moved, the cars would eventually go elsewhere anyway. Ford wanted visitors to stand outside his inn and imagine horsemen, or stage coaches, or

²¹⁹ Marlowe (1945), p. 23.

even old Model T's riding up to spend the night; just like he wanted visitors to stand outside the schoolhouse and imagine Mary and her lamb walking around. It was not the car that spoiled this invented landscape, it was the proliferation of cars that killed it. Ford wanted to distinguished between the urbanization of an auto-centric landscape and the idealized middle landscape of technology and nature in a symbiotic and synthetic harmony. In moving the road, Ford was commenting less on the role of authenticity in the preservation of America's past than he was asserting an anti-urban modern America. As Marlowe noted:

In this last quarter-century many of these old wayside houses have disappeared. Some have succumbed to fire; the march of progress—street widening and other 'improvements'—has been responsible for the disappearance of others. Fortunately, of recent years a more general appreciation of the architecture and historic associations of the past to some extent has aroused public sentiment and interest, and a number of them have been saved from destruction, though in many cases some of their picturesque aspect due to their old-time setting along the highways has been impaired. But in setting out on this, our imaginary journey over the old coaching roads of New England, whether on horseback, in the lumbering 'stage-wagons' of early days, or in that climax of perfection of the coach builder's art, the Concord coach, we shall confine ourselves to no particular time, traveling perhaps with loyalist subjects of King George, with patriotic citizens of the Revolutionary years, or later officers of the new public....²²⁰

While Marlowe's journey was a literary one, his words resonate with Ford's actions. As

Marlowe comments specifically on the Wayside Inn:

For four generations, covering a period of a hundred and sixty years, the tavern was kept by the Howes; but the railroads made it no longer profitable, and for nearly forty years it ceased to be a public house. When with the coming of the automobile the public took to the road again, it was reopened. ... Henry Ford, who now owns the place and some hundreds of acres in the vicinity, has added a wing at the rear. If this is not quite in the character of the rest of the house, it evidently gives satisfaction to the hundreds of tourists and other visits who enjoy a meal here amid the historic and romantic surroundings of the famous old inn. The furniture is appropriate and mostly old, and a number of objects of interest [p.

²²⁰ Ibid, p. xii.

16] associated with the tavern have been collected. Here Mr. Ford occasionally comes and has entertained President Coolidge, Thomas Edison, and other friends.²²¹

The initial coverage of Ford's landscape did not reject the trappings of modernity layered onto a mythic past.

Motors have taken the road of the stage coach and the sound of the post horn; they run in smoothly with the purr of muffled engines where once jingled the harness of the bi-weekly mail. They empty out bright grills in the rough fresh homespuns of our colorful day and clean-shaven men who talk golf and business and stocks and the Washington Conference.²²²

It was not the instruments of technological progress (i.e. the car) to which Ford objected.

It was the changes that modernization wrought in the built environment with which he struggled.

At first we had no intention of doing more than buying the Inn and restoring it. But, since it is on a public road, there was nothing at all to prevent it from being exploited and the roads lined for half a mile around with peanut and hot dog stands, and side shows, and all sorts of catch-penny places. We had to preserve the setting and so we bought enough additional land for that.²²³

Is Ford's project (and his perceived need to move the road) really about saving an object?

Or is it more about creating an idealized way of living? Ford was engaging place and memory not to conserve an authentic moment in America's past, but, instead, to continue a century-old tradition regarding the dialectic between technology and nature—the American pastoral.

Henry Ford would be less than the man he is if, walking by the River Rouge, he did not thrill at the sight of his huge plant growing huger and huger by the day. But the old man's dearest dream is no longer of piling building on building in

²²¹ Ibid, p. 14.

²²² The *Boston Transcript*, April 8, 1922, p. 1.

²²³ Crowther (1925), p. 44 and Ford, *Garden & Home Builder* (1926), p. 433.

metropolitan congestion. A farm boy who has kept his love of the land, Ford now visions the 'little factory in a meadow' as the future shape of American industry... Ford will furnish land for use by those who do not have farms or gardens. Henry Ford is convinced that, for happiness and security, the worker of the future must divide his time between factory and farm.—*Life*, 1938.²²⁴

In Ford's experiment at the Wayside Inn, he was exploring the notion that buildings and landscapes adapt in different ways at different times. Ford wanted to apply that adaptation, however, within the longstanding trope of a pastoral America. How could the invention of a bucolic New England of the past help the New England and, more importantly, Midwest and West of the present and future? How could the technologies of modernization not obliterate the bucolic landscape that Ford loved so dearly without having to return to pre-modern industry? Nineteenth century writer Henry Adams gave voice to Ford's dilemma. Writing about the 1900 Paris Exposition, Adams contemplated the moral and material power of the Virgin Mary at the medieval cathedral in Chartres alongside the forty-foot high dynamo, wondering how the past and present could be so physically close and yet so intellectually apart.²²⁵ Ford's project in Sudbury was not only about preserving the past, but also about creating models of living in the present; he sought a model in which one could simultaneously look forward and backward without any contradiction. His work in Massachusetts coexisted with similar explorations nearer to home: the creation of village industries in Michigan.

Ford's engagement with memorializing a New England landscape seemed perplexing when set against the common narrative of his professional work: the invention of the centralized production of the auto assembly line. Ford's complexes at Highland

²²⁴ "America's Ruggedest Individual," *Life*, May 30, 1938, 13.

²²⁵ Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*. 1906 originally privately published. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1971, pp. 379-390.

Park and the River Rouge became symbols of American technological might.²²⁶ John Van Deventer wrote in 1922 about each unit at the Rouge plant as “a carefully designed gear which meshes with other gears and operates in synchronism with them, the whole forming one huge, perfectly timed, smoothly operating industrial machine of almost unbelievable efficiency.”²²⁷ To say that the Rouge plant was large was to call the Grand Canyon big. Ford’s operation was gigantic and included every step of the process from which finished automobiles emerged—to include the coal, iron, limestone, timber and silica shipped in from Ford-owned mines, quarries and forests. This large scale production required large numbers of people; Ford’s technological innovations would mean more urbanization as people flocked to the industrial north and Midwest to service the growing industrial economy.

In addition, the physical design of these large-scale factories for cars, trucks and tractors, designed by Albert Kahn, was associated with the aesthetics and ideologies surrounding modern architecture. Both the objects built within these factories as well as the factories themselves changed the shape, form and face of the American landscape into a modern one. This is why on its face, Ford’s obsession with collecting Americana appeared contradictory.

While Ford’s mechanical prowess led him to be at home with modernization as a means or process, it was modernization and modernity as an end—as modern processes were manifest in the built environment—that left him conflicted. The heterogeneity and

²²⁶ The following authors discuss the impact of Ford’s primary plants: Allan Nevins and Frank E. Hill, *Ford: Expansion and Challenge, 1915-1933* (New York: Scribner, 1957); Nevins and Hill, *Ford: Decline and Rebirth, 1933-1962* (New York: Scribner, 1963); David L. Lewis, *The Public Image of Henry Ford: An American Folk Hero and His Company* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1976).

²²⁷ John H. Van Deventer, “Ford Principles and Practice at River Rouge, II: Links in a complete Industrial Chain,” *Industrial Management* 64 (September 1922), pp. 131-32.

cacophony of the early twentieth century American city did not suit the farm boy; the man who brought a larger workforce to the city wanted to provide a rural alternative for them. "The modern city has done its work and a change is coming. The city has taught us much, but the overhead expense of living in a such a place is becoming unbearable... The cities are getting top heavy and are about doomed," Ford proclaimed to journalist Drew Pearson in 1924.²²⁸ Despite Ford's assertion that it was the economics of the modern American city that was untenable, there is more behind this quote than economics; it is tied to the philosophical roots of the country. Ford's engagement with ruralism covered a variety of activities, to include: his camping with Thomas Edison, Harvey Firestone and naturalist John Burroughs; his affinity for farmers; his support of environmental and naturalist causes; his interest in folk cultures and practices; and his collection of Americana.

After the initial successes of the Model T, Ford shifted his attention to a different model of production; he concentrated not just on how to make the cars themselves, but on the context within which these machines would be made. Ford's focus was no longer on the technological advances he prompted at his huge complexes at Highland Park and River Rouge. Instead, he aspired to create village industries that would facilitate the depopulation of Detroit and other industrial cities and their replacement by small towns. His village industries were, in fact, less a commentary on economic and business models

²²⁸ Drew Pearson, "Ford Predicts the Passing of Big Cities and Decentralizing of Industry," *Motor World* 80 (August 28, 1924): 9. More on Ford's antiurbanism can be found in Morton and Lucia White, *The Intellectual versus the City: From Thomas Jefferson to Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York: New American Library, 1964) and John R. Mullin, "Henry Ford and Field and Factory: An Analysis of the Ford Sponsored Village Industries Experiment in Michigan, 1918-1941," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 48 (Autumn 1982), pp. 426-27.

than a philosophical engagement with social and cultural values about how to live in America.

Ford's village industries were part of the culture of nature in America; in particular, his industries were part of the pastoral traditions in American that began with the inception of the country and continue today. Pastoralism represents one of the strongest origin myths of the nation and pervades America's literary and visual culture as a strong and recurrent trope.²²⁹ The significance of the pastoral in Western culture dates back to ancient Rome and the poems of Virgil which idealized the Roman countryside as a middle landscape.²³⁰ In Virgil's formulation, this landscape existed as a place of retreat from both the civilization of the city and primitive nature. And while notions of what a pastoral is and should contain have been argued since that time, there was never controversy about its relevance to the American cultural scene. The writings of four influential authors, the last of whom had a known impact on Ford, set the stage in which Ford's drama will play out.

²²⁹ The *OED* breaks down the use of pastoral as an adjective into the following definitions: Of or pertaining to shepherds or their occupation; of the nature of a shepherd; Of land or country used for pasture; hence the scenery or its features; having the simplicity or natural charm associated with such country; Of literature, music, or works of art portraying the life of shepherds or the country; expressed in pastorals; Of or pertaining to a pastor or shepherd of souls; having relation to the spiritual care or guidance of a 'flock' or body of Christians; Of or pertaining to the care or responsibility of a teacher for a pupil's general well-being. As a noun, the *OED* provides the following definitions for pastoral: A person of pastoral occupation (shepherd or herdsman); Pastoral games or pastimes; A poem or play, or the like, in which the life of shepherds is portrayed, often in an artificial and conventional manner; also extended to works dealing with simple rural and open-air life; A pastoral picture or scene in art; Pastoral poetry as a form or mode of literary composition; and, A letter from a spiritual pastor to his flock. Under the term "pastoralism" the *OED* lists the following: pastoral quality or character; the action or practice of dealing with pastoral or rural life; the pastoral style in literature; a pastoral trait or affectation.

²³⁰ One of the most famous poets of ancient Rome, Virgil (70-19 BCE) wrote the *Aeneid*, an epic poem that tells the story of the heroism of Aeneas and the founding of Rome. The long poem is often compared to Homer's *The Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, Greek epics combining history and mythology. His other well known collections of poems are *Eclogues* (39 BCE) and *Georgics* (29 BCE).

The works of Thomas Jefferson, J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, Washington Irving, and Henry David Thoreau—*Notes on the State of Virginia* (written 1782, published 1784), *Letters From an American Farmer* (1782), *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (1819-20), and *Walden* (1854)—are all considered seminal within the rubric of American intellectual and literary history.²³¹ Jefferson's book has been lauded as an early tract of (American) scientific writing; Crèvecoeur's as a popular, personal account of life in late eighteenth century America; Irving's as a popular children's tale; and, Thoreau's as a religious tract for the transcendental movement. All of these texts are also more than what they seem on the surface and contribute to the rhetoric of creating an ideal American landscape.

Considering his prolific portfolio of writing, it is surprising that *Notes* was Thomas Jefferson's only original full length book.²³² Jefferson presented the book—apparently written in response to inquiries made by the Marquis de Barbé-Marbois (Secretary of the French Legation in Philadelphia) concerning Jefferson's native state—as a positivistic account of Virginia; but his scope was, nevertheless, broader than the scientific quantification and description of the Commonwealth. The focus of this book ostensibly resided in Virginia, but Jefferson's true scope of inquiry was America. Contributing to the discipline of natural history/scientific geography, the book also served as a forum for Jefferson's ideas (and idealism) about the nation. Thus, while offering

²³¹ It should be noted that while it cannot be proven that Ford read all of this literature, he was certainly familiar with and interested in it. His exposure was most likely embellished through his relationship with the naturalist John Burroughs, with whom Ford went on many camping trips in the early twentieth century.

²³² I am relying here upon the scholarship of Adrienne Koch and William Peden, editors of *The Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (Random House, 1993) for the verity of this statement.

descriptions and quantifications of the geography, animals, and plant life of the state and nation, he also expounded on the social and moral aspects of slavery, the Indians, the government, the Revolution, the law, education, and the land and its cultivation (to name just a few).

While Jefferson used the term nature in different ways (as an essence or characteristic; as the strength or substance of a thing; as an inherent dominating power/impulse), it was his descriptions of nature as the material world (of this land to be cultivated) which are of particular interest. Jefferson began with (and continued throughout) a scientific description of the physical world of Virginia, writ large to encompass the entire nation. Within these positivist descriptions, nature was clearly something to be consumed and improved upon; and, this consumption led to both emotional and moral consequences. In the chapter, "Query II: A notice of its rivers, rivulets, and how far they are navigable?" Jefferson described and categorized the rivers in reference to their utility for human use. The rivers *served* as vehicles for human commerce and improvement. Jefferson's descriptions focused on what the waterways could "yield" for people. A hierarchical relationship was, thus, established between people and nature. While nature was the key to the "life, liberty and pursuit of happiness" of the people, these were distinct and separate things: the nature-made and the human-made; with what people made in nature residing atop the moral high ground.

In the chapter, "Query IV: A notice of its Mountains?", Jefferson's visual consumption of nature as the sublime first appeared. Here Jefferson's empirical observations gave way to romantic description:

The passage of the Potomac through the Blue Ridge is, perhaps, one of the most stupendous scenes in nature. . . . In the moment of their junction, they rush together against the mountain, rend it asunder, and pass off to the sea. The first glance of this scene hurries our senses into the opinion, that this earth has been created in time, that the mountains were formed first, that the rivers began to flow afterwards, that in this place, particularly, they have been dammed up by the Blue Ridge of mountains, and have formed an ocean which filled the whole valley; that continuing to rise they have at length broken over at this spot, and have torn the mountain down from its summit to its base. . . . But the distant finish which nature has given to the picture, is of a very different character. It is a true contrast to the foreground. It is as placid and delightful as that is wild and tremendous. For the mountain being cloven asunder, she pretends to your eye, through the cleft, a small catch of smooth blue horizon, at an infinite distance in the plain country, inviting you, as it were, from the riot and tumult roaring around, to pass through the breach and participate of the calm below. Here the eye ultimately composes itself; and that way, too, the road happens actually to lead.²³³

Jefferson animated and personified the natural material world. He did so, in part, to establish the autonomy and authority of the American identity as distinctive from Europe. He could not do so by using the society and culture (that which was made by humans) of the new republic because these citizens were of European cultural heritage. He established the American in nature; in the physical non-human-made world (both) extant (and under improvement) in the young nation. American authority lay in its natural history. Its future was in the nascent manifest destiny of the cultivators who would build and then follow the road to “an infinite distance in the plain country.”

Adding to the complexity of this passage is Jefferson’s formulation of nature as both subject and object. *She* is the artist and the painting. *She* is both the agent of force and the result—a view framed for one’s pleasure. Here the human eye (which occupies a position distinct from nature, the painter and painted) provides the link between the

²³³ Jefferson, “Notes on the State of Virginia,” *The Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, p. 182.

emotional, visual, painterly conception of nature and its scientific quantification. The eye is both objective observer as well as purveyor of the sublime spectacle.²³⁴

Before Jefferson returned to his positivist account, he made one more curious statement about nature in which he admonished those (i.e. the human eye) who do not “survey these monuments of a war between rivers and mountains.”²³⁵ Again, the importance of the eye was evident here, and his use of the verb “survey” seems to imply that these ‘scenes’ were to be objectively taken in. But Jefferson also portrayed nature as “monuments of a war,” something (like paintings) which connoted the human-made world, the social world. While Jefferson seemed to imply that the material world of nature was different than the material world of humans, the metaphor of nature as a painting or monument (i.e. human-made artifacts) provided a more ambiguous link between the two worlds.

Nature as sublime was best exemplified in the chapter “Query V. Its Cascades and Caverns?” in reference to the Natural Bridge:

If the view from the top be painful and intolerable, that from below is delightful in an equal extreme. It is impossible for the emotions arising from the sublime to be felt beyond what they are here; so beautiful an arch, so elevated, so light, and springing as it were up to heaven! The rapture of the spectator is really indescribable!²³⁶

Here Jefferson invoked the emotional; the pleasure one derives from viewing nature.

Nature was capable of elevating people into a higher state, one which might bring them closer to heaven, and, thus, God. Nature was the harbinger of the moral. The most noble

²³⁴ Given Jefferson’s extensive library he would have been aware of Edmund Burke’s work the *Philosophical Enquiry Into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* published in 1757 in which negative pleasure or terror characterizes part of the feeling of the sublime.

²³⁵ Jefferson, p. 183.

²³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 186.

and moral occupation one could hold, according to Jefferson, was to cultivate the land. When nature was made useful to people, and humans engaged in close contact with this improvement of nature, it was a *pure* engagement. This was not passive spectatorship, but active improvement of the land in which Jefferson found God, and his ideal citizen for the new nation. “Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever He had a chosen people, whose breasts He has made His peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue.”²³⁷

Having briefly looked at Jefferson’s text, what does visual consumption, elevation of the spirit, or farming have to do with the pastoral? Are there pastoral notions in *Notes*, an ostensibly scientific text? When used both as an adjective and a noun, definitions of pastoral refer to literature, art and music. Specifically, the definitions talk about a pastoral “scene.” Jefferson’s descriptions of nature were clearly concerned with notions of viewership and scene-making. His nature was a work of art that did not need the painting or the story as the mediator—the spectator mediates for herself. In doing so, Jefferson believed the viewer sets herself up for an elevated experience, a religious experience. Jefferson’s nature was also Jefferson’s chapel of democracy; and, it was the former that provided the spiritual vessel for the latter. Finally, while few Americans engaged in the occupation of shepherd, the farmer was the New World version of the herdsman. Jefferson made it clear, that he believed the moral rectitude of the nascent nation would be upheld by a nation of farmers.

²³⁷ Ibid, p. 259.

A member of Jefferson's agrarian nation, J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur posited himself as an inside observer of this ideal position as farmer in a country where the land was apparently boundless and available (the land was available, of course, if the Native Americans were discounted, which, throughout her history, America commonly did and does). Crèvecoeur packaged his book as a series of letters that represented the true and authentic experience of the eighteenth century American farmer. In the chapter, "What Is an American?" he described the society and country in general, and then followed with a case study of a newly arrived immigrant-turned-American and the process by which (i.e., the working of the land) he became an authentic American.²³⁸ In fact, Crèvecoeur produced an idealizing and emotional work on what it meant to be American or, rather, what it should mean; and, this is wrapped up in an idea of what nature is and should be. As writer D. H. Lawrence critically noted, "...Crèvecoeur was not a mere cultivator of the earth. . . . He himself was more concerned with a perfect society and his own manipulations thereof, than with growing carrots."²³⁹

The ideal society which Crèvecoeur described exists in an ideal setting: cultivated nature. Nature provides a place for shaping morality and character; it is this ideal, physical nature which determines the characteristics of the American people.

Here he beholds fair cities, substantial villages, extensive fields, an immense country filled with decent houses, good roads, orchards, meadows, and bridges where an hundred years ago all was wild, woody, and uncultivated! What a train of pleasing ideas this fair spectacle must suggest; it is a prospect which must inspire a good citizen with the most heart-felt pleasure. The difficulty consists in the manner of viewing so extensive a scene.²⁴⁰

²³⁸ It should be noted that some of the other letters in Crèvecoeur's work have a darker and more pessimistic rendering of American life.

²³⁹ D. H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature* (Thomas Seltzer, Inc., 1923), p. 28.

²⁴⁰ Hector St. John Crèvecoeur, *Letters From an American Farmer and Sketches of Eighteenth Century America*, first published 1782 (Penguin Books, 1986), pp. 66-67.

In Crèvecoeur's idyllic, cultivated nature, the issues of viewership and consumption again emerged. It was the improvement—and then viewing of the improvement—of nature which stimulated both feelings of pleasure and moral rectitude. Crèvecoeur's emotional rapture did not elevate itself to the extreme of Jefferson's sublime, but he was clearly concerned with improved nature as analogous to a painterly view which provided pleasure because it is beautiful. As Lawrence observed, "Benjamin [Franklin] overlooked NATURE. But the French Crèvecoeur spotted it long before Thoreau and Emerson worked it up. Absolutely the safest thing to get your emotional reactions over is NATURE."²⁴¹ Lawrence continued with more (often sarcastic) pronouncements which expose that there was not one simple, benign pristine nature in Crèvecoeur's conception. "Crèvecoeur the idealist puts over us a lot of stuff about nature and the noble savage and the innocence of toil, etc., etc. Blarney! But Crèvecoeur the artist gives us glimpses of actual nature..."²⁴²

Crèvecoeur made clear that not every setting was this idyllic nature which led to the "cultivation" of the good citizen. He compared the locales of the sea, the woods, and the plains and assigned concomitant characteristics to the animals and people who dwelled thereby. "It is with men as it is with the plants and animals that grow and live in the forests; they are entirely different from those that live in the plains. ...By living in or near the woods, their actions are regulated by the wildness of the neighborhood."²⁴³

Within this description Crèvecoeur made numerous assertions in terms of geographical

²⁴¹ Lawrence (1923), p. 29. Capitalizations are Lawrence's.

²⁴² Ibid. p. 31.

²⁴³ Crèvecoeur (1986), p. 76.

determinism. First of all, there is a distinction between nature which is wild versus that which is pleasurable and good. This wildness existed, for him, in the woods and on the frontier — a medieval European view — where the material world of humans and non-humans was intermingled and had the same effects on all which resided therein; they are all unsocial and uncivilized.²⁴⁴ By contrast, progress, the beautiful, and the good resided on cultivated land where humans were in control and manipulate physical nature and where there was a distinction between the material world of people and that of plants and animals.

Evidence of the pastoral was less clearly articulated in Crèvecoeur than in Jefferson. Crèvecoeur's preoccupation with the occupation of farming added weight to the argument that Virgil's shepherds are America's yeoman farmers. In Crèvecoeur, a distinction was made in the natural environment; a distinction which was crucial in the defining of the American pastoral; for it is a distinction of the cultivated ideal over the wild real; a cultured nature versus a non-human one.

While the American pastoral seems natural in Jefferson and Crèvecoeur — writing during the nation's inception — it seems a surprise in a tale most widely known in contemporary America as an early example of an indigenous fairy/horror tale for children: Washington Irving's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. Yet the pastoral ideal was clearly and succinctly articulated by Irving, forty years after Jefferson and Crèvecoeur. Irving's story was not only peculiar to a small valley in New York, but also symbolized

²⁴⁴ For a concise explanation of the medieval European conceptions of wilderness, the woods, and their influence and transformation in America, see the chapter "Landscape" in John Stilgoe's *Common Landscape of America, 1580 to 1845* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

the idealization of the settlement of the New World. Irving began his story with a description of the setting—and the setting is integral to the unraveling of this yarn. It was a place both idyllic and horrific. The Hollow was a cultivated paradise of plenty by day and ominous, foreboding at night; it was both the Garden of Eden and the landscape of Hell. The plants and animals that were formerly benign with “uniform tranquility” in the daylight became frightening.

...as he wended his way, by swamp and stream and awful woodland . . . every sound of nature, at that witching hour, fluttered his excited imagination: the moan of the whip-poor-will from the hill side; the boding cry of the tree toad, that harbinger of storm; the dreary hooting of the screech owl; or the sudden rustling in the thicket, of birds frightened from their roost.²⁴⁵

How could this “hearty abundance” amidst “those green, sheltered, fertile nooks” simultaneously be the location of “some shrub covered with snow, which like a sheeted spectre beset his very path”?²⁴⁶ In part, because they represented the different elements of the American landscape. The horror lies outside the farmlands, meadows, and valleys which represented the American pastoral ideal—the places cultivated by the “perfect picture of a thriving, contented, liberal hearted farmer.”²⁴⁷ Desirous of this pastoral life, Ichabod Crane pined for Katrina Van Tassel not merely as a man for a woman, but as a man seeking to be that Virgilian shepherd in a perfect landscape:

. . . as he rolled his great green eyes over the fat meadow lands, the rich fields of wheat, of rye, of buckwheat, and Indian corn, and the orchards burthened with ruddy fruit . . . his heart yearned after the damsel who was to inherit these domains, and his imagination expanded with the idea, how they might be readily turned into cash, and the money invested in immense tracts of wild land, and

²⁴⁵ Washington Irving, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow and Other Stories* (Penguin, 1988), p. 277.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 279 & 278.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

shingle palaces in the wilderness. . . .and he beheld himself bestriding a pacing mare . . . setting out for Kentucky, or Tennessee, or the Lord knows where!²⁴⁸

Crane wanted to be the shepherd, but not in a pre-established landscape like Sleepy Hollow. He wanted to mimic the journey of the original colonists: to be the first shepherd; to cultivate his own abundant pasture in the wilderness.

When Irving did send Crane West, he thwarted his pastoral dream. Crane was denied the hand of Katrina—and the concomitant plentiful nature—after his encounter with the darker, hellish side of the Hollow. This was not the farmland and meadows, but the woods. Irving borrowed from the American European heritage in his depiction of the woods as foreboding and wild. As John Stilgoe explains:

Snow White, according to the old German folktale, so threatened the ugly queen that a huntsman was ordered to drag her into the forest, put her to death, and cut out her lungs and liver. In the folk imagination of the Middle Ages the forest is the logical setting for such atrocity. After all, it is a great chaos, the lair of the wild beasts and wilder men, where order and shaping are not.²⁴⁹

Irving acknowledged that this part of nature, the woods, were not intrinsically evil, but were “terrors of the night, phantoms of the mind.” Just as humans made nature into their image of the Garden of Eden, so too they made nature into their image of dreaded Hell. In early America, these two places within one nature correspond to representations of the farmland and of the forest. They were both human constructs; the former which humans controlled and the latter which they did not.

²⁴⁸ Ibid, pp. 279-80.

²⁴⁹ Stilgoe (1982), p. 7.

Medieval conceptions of wildness did not prevent Henry David Thoreau from his Walden experiment of going back into the forest and living in solitary harmony with nature. Despite his claims, it is now known that he did not live for a year in the wild leaving civilization behind, ala John Muir, but was within easy distance of the comforts of Concord, Massachusetts. Nevertheless, Thoreau's work, while clearly acknowledged as seminal within the environmental and transcendental discourses, contributed to the continuing American dialectic on nature and the pastoral with its strong ethnocentric construction of nature. An examination of two chapters in *Walden* illuminates these themes in his work.

If Thoreau's chapter "The Ponds" provided the lyric center of *Walden*, then "The Pond in Winter" was its refrain. In "The Ponds," Thoreau portrayed Walden Pond as primordial, pre-socio-cultural, and, thus, its essence free from the corruption of the fall, of man's sinful nature.²⁵⁰ It was pure and untouched. This purity was not merely ecological or natural, but also spiritual and moral. The pond was ancient—connected to the origins of the earth and natural environment that was more sacred than the domain of humans. The pond was, therefore, not part of the relatively short amount of time that corresponds to the existence of human culture.²⁵¹ Walden Pond belonged to the time people cannot fathom, that is beyond human perception and consciousness.

²⁵⁰ "Perhaps on that spring morning when Adam and Eve were driven out of Eden Walden Pond was already in existence, and even then breaking up in a gentle spring rain accompanied with mist and a southerly wind, and covered with myriads of ducks and geese, which had not heard of the fall, when still such pure lakes sufficed them. (p. 238)"

²⁵¹ As Bill McKibben delineates in *The End of Nature* (New York: Anchor Books, 1989). McKibben also asserts that the loss of wild nature meant a loss of humanity, because the culture of man relies upon "untouched" nature for its moral and spiritual sustenance.

When Thoreau described the pond as the “earth’s eye,”²⁵² he did so not because he was concerned with its outward gaze upon the world; the pond did not function as some sort of panoptic entity scrutinizing (or judging) the actions of human society.²⁵³ Instead, it was a vision that is reflective and insightful. The spiritual depth of a human could be measured against the depth of the pond; and, in Thoreau’s eyes, most people were shallow compared to the soulful depth of the pond. It was the measuring stick because it was infinitely (near bottomless) pure and flawless.²⁵⁴ The metaphors Thoreau employed in his description of the pond — as light, crystal, transparent — only reinforced this purity and flawlessness.²⁵⁵

Walden Pond as the symbolic soul of Thoreau’s experiment was threatened in “The Pond in Winter” when men came to harvest this natural resource. Its purity was compromised by the taint of society; or, more specifically, a society embracing capitalism, commercial culture, and, thus, soiled by “the muck” of “market value.” In harvesting ice from the pond, people brought their profanity into the sacred waters of Walden (a sanctity made ‘permanent’ by its change of state from liquid into a solid).²⁵⁶

²⁵² “A lake is the landscape’s most beautiful and expressive feature. It is earth’s eye; looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature. (p. 243)”

²⁵³ See Michel Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish*, first published 1975, translated into English in 1977. Foucault’s analysis of modernity society and its power-knowledge structures relies upon an comparison with Jeremy Bentham’s nineteenth century design for the Panopticon—a prison in which a single guard can watch over many prisoners while the guard remains unseen.

²⁵⁴ Thoreau, p. 316, “What if all ponds were shallow? Would it not react on the minds of men? I am thankful that this pond was made deep and pure for a symbol. While men believe in the infinite some ponds will be thought to be bottomless.”

²⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 253, “White Pond and Walden are great crystals on the surface of the earth, Lakes of Light. ... They are too pure to have a market value; they contain no muck. How much more beautiful than our lives, how much more transparent than our characters, are they? we never learned meanness of them.”

²⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 324, “Why is it that a bucket of water soon becomes putrid, but frozen remains sweet forever? It is commonly said that this is the difference between the affections and the intellect. [in 30 days] I shall look from the same window on the pure sea-green Walden water there, reflecting the clouds and the trees, and sending up its evaporations in solitude, and no traces will appear that a man has ever stood there.

The sanctity of the pond was reinforced by Thoreau's satirical analogue between farming and ice production.²⁵⁷ While Thoreau reified the activity of "the New England Farmer or the Cultivator," his sarcastic description of the ice-men as farmers belied any sense of propriety in the 'harvesting' of an ice crop. Part of Thoreau's experiment included the cultivation of the land, and his descriptions portrayed his own endeavors as a farmer as model ones. In "skim[ming] the land," his actions were benign, even honorable, because they were meant only to further his ability to live simply and honestly. By contrast, Thoreau described the ice-men as aggressively "skin[ning] the land" and defiling it because their means lead to a profane (capitalist and materialistic) end. The personification of Walden during these passages only reinforced Thoreau's portrayal of the ice-men ravaging her just as the early Massachusetts colonists raped and pillaged the native women on that land.²⁵⁸ But whereas the native populations were permanently and catastrophically changed by the white man's invasive intervention in their environment (even in spite of 'reparatory' actions by the forbearers of these men), the pond was able to return to its pure and primordial state once the ice-men left. The pond only needed time (and a relative short amount of it) to heal itself — and without any beneficent actions of people.

While the ice-men passage reaffirmed a certain eco-centricism in terms of human intervention in the natural landscape, it also showed that Thoreau's larger argument was

...Thus it appears that the sweltering inhabitants of Charleston and New Orleans, of Madras and Bombay and Calcutta drink at my well."

²⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 322.

²⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 322. Here I am specifically referring to "Squaw Walden". If Walden is pre-historical and pre-fall, then does that mean that the Native Americans also occupy that position. There were other places where Thoreau describes Walden in "native American" terms. I have not followed it enough to make conclusions, but it would be an interesting inquiry to pursue.

more nuanced and anthropomorphic. While nature, or the pond specifically, remained the domain of the sacred, his experiment was ultimately one concerned with the betterment of humanity—with the locus of people’s spiritual improvement lying in nature rather than concern with the protection of nature in of itself. And, in fact, in the case of the pond, nature can heal herself without human benevolent or malevolent interference.

Despite their eighty year difference, these authors promoted and shared the image of America as, “A new world, a world of the Noble Savage and Pristine Nature and Paradisal Simplicity and all that gorgeousness that flows out of the unsullied fount of the ink-bottle.”²⁵⁹ And, yet, they also despised any sense of wildness in that “pristine nature.” What, then, is this pristine nature ... areas of the physical world where people do not reside (again, for the purposes of these authors, the Indians are not included as residents of this land), but which also excludes the wilderness? It is that part of nature in which the shepherd resides. If one looks closely at these texts, the inference is that the American shepherd (a.k.a. the yeoman farmer) withdraws from society. These figures are seen outside of culture and civilization; as being one with the land; one with nature. Therefore, the pastoral can be pristine because men do not reside therein, only Man, reified, does. In America, this pastoral is not static, but “a place of continuing and transformative change.”²⁶⁰ As historian Jeffrey Meikle notes, “... Crèvecoeur situated the pastoral as an ideal middle ground located between the cities of the original settlements and a savage

²⁵⁹ Lawrence (1923), p. 29.

²⁶⁰ Jeffrey L. Meikle, “Leo Marx’s *The Machine in the Garden*,” *Technology and Culture* 44.1 (2003), p. 151.

frontier, and thus continuously moving westward.”²⁶¹ Trying to answer Crèvecoeur’s question “What, then, is the American, this new man?”—which these men attempted to do by situating him in a specific physical environment, i.e. a pastoral environment—then, is not as clear as it seems upon one’s initial viewing of the American picture they paint, because the American middle ground is constantly moving both forward and back.²⁶²

When Jefferson envisioned a thousand-year expansion of America’s yeomen farmers cultivating a pastoral landscape, he still feared the influence of mills and factories, not just in their potential urbanization of America, but also for what it would mean for the polity of the nation. Jefferson’s vision for America was expansive in geography, but static in spatial form and cultural implication. As Meikle notes, “When the machine finally entered the American garden, so too did the fact of continuous material and social change, the idea of infinite progress, and, ultimately, history itself.”²⁶³ Ford’s response to the dialectic between the machine and the garden borrowed but also diverged from his predecessors. He, too, sought cultural and social salvation in America’s middle landscape. But Ford did not posit a dialectic of the farmer versus the industrial capitalist wherein one clearly skims the land and the other skins it. Ford believed

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Crèvecoeur, p. 69.

²⁶³ Meikle (2003), p. 151.

modernity and natural harmony could coexist; and he crafted his modernized middle landscape in the form of village industries.²⁶⁴

Not obscure experiments, but rather widely publicized between the two world wars, Ford's village industries were small scale factories, pastoral alternatives to the urban industrial complex. They coupled rural settings and values with contemporary tools and technological processes.²⁶⁵ The village industries were structured so that each one only manufactured one or two parts for the company's vehicles in decentralized plants in rural settings. Ford did so because he intended for his factory workers to become part-time farmers. He, however, was not seeking a return to pre-industrial technologies; he wanted to synthesize modernization with rural living and employ technological advances at a small scale. William Simonds, a Ford publicist, declared in 1927, "Industrialism does not necessarily mean hideous factories of dirty brick, belching smoke stacks and grimy workmen crowded into ramshackle hovels....the little Ford plants are placed in leafy bowers and surrounded with a flowering shrubs, green pushes and trees. The spots you would select for a picnic Henry Ford has picked for factory sites."²⁶⁶ Eight years later another Ford publicist, W. J. Cameron, would comment that, "some who felt as Ruskin and Wordsworth did about the invasion of the countryside by railroads, have found to their pleasant surprise that these country industries are really a native note in the

²⁶⁴ "Middle landscape" is a term coined by Leo Marx in his seminal study of the relationship between technology and nature in nineteenth century America, *The Machine in the Garden, Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

²⁶⁵ Leo Marx (1964); and Howard P. Segal, "The 'Middle Landscape': A Critique, a Revision, and an Appreciation," in Segal, *Future Imperfect: The Mixed Blessings of Technology in America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), pp. 13-26.

²⁶⁶ William A. Simonds, "Rural Factories along Little Streams," *Stone and Webster Journal* 41 (November 1927), p. 653.

landscape.”²⁶⁷ Like the railroad train and tracks weaving through the middle landscape of the Hudson River Valley in the George Inness painting *Lackawanna Valley* (1855), Ford sought a synthesis and peaceful coexistence of the elysian fields of America and American technological prowess; the machine and the garden were not at odds but complemented on another.²⁶⁸

Ford’s small plants had direct predecessors in the nineteenth centuries New England industrial communities like Lowell, Lawrence and Waltham as well as the more indirect examples in colonial New England settlements built on rivers, each containing its saw, grist, paper, or other type of mill in the center.²⁶⁹ Ford established his village industries in places familiar to him from his childhood and early career. Some consider his estate in Dearborn, Fair Lane, as “A partial prototype for the village industries that followed.”²⁷⁰ His purchase of the property and its embellishment coincided with that of his efforts at the Wayside Inn. Starting in 1920, Ford established nineteen village industries whose success helped to sustain their associated communities through the ravages of the Great Depression.²⁷¹ After Ford’s death the Ford Motor Company sold off

²⁶⁷ W. J. Cameron, “The Spread of Industry,” *Ford Sunday Evening Talk*, Detroit, May 5, 1935 (reprint, n.p.).

²⁶⁸ This represents Leo Marx’s original reading of the painting in his 1964 edition of *The Machine in the Garden*. As Meikle notes, this interpretation was changed and virtually reversed in a description written by Marx of the painting for a 1988 exhibition catalogue on the railway in America art. Meikle says of Marx, “He no longer regarded the painting as an unapologetic symbol of the technological sublime but instead concluded that it ‘transcends the limits of the conventionally bland landscape of reconciliation’ by conveying a ‘poignant dissonance, a distinctive note of foreboding intermixed with the idyllic.’ Ultimately it represented ‘the deep moral ambiguity of material progress.’”, p. 154.

²⁶⁹ For a description of the 19th century and colonial settlements see Alan I. Marcus and Howard P. Segal, *Technology in America: A Brief History*, 2d ed. (Fort Worth, Tex.: Harcourt Brace, 1999).

²⁷⁰ Letter from Donn P. Werling, director, Fair Lane, to Howard P. Segal, September 25, 1989 as recounted in Segal, *Henry Ford’s Village Industries*, 7.

²⁷¹ The nineteen Michigan village industries in order of construction were as follows: Northville on Rouge River (1920-1981, 1982-1989); Nankin Mills on Rouge River (1921-1948)—the closest of the village industries from Dearborn at 12 miles; Phoenix on Rouge River (1922-1948); Flat Rock on Huron River

nearly all of the village industries, although a few made it past World War II.²⁷² The investment of Ford in the village industries might have been eco-politically motivated by creating environments that pre-empting the unionization of his company. But more important it represented the desire for a synthesis of tradition and modernity in the cultural landscapes of early twentieth century America.

Ford's idea may have been unique within the context of his own empire, but it certainly resonated with others in America prior to World War II. The idea of decentralization started with the nation's inception when Jefferson promoted an ideal of decentralized production via small rural manufacturing as a means of preserving agrarian values while encouraging domestic industries. Variations on this theme only picked up speed and frequency with the onslaught of modernization and consequent urbanization of America. "By the first World War, urban areas had multiplied nine times as fast as rural areas, and by 1920 the nation had become more urban than rural in population."²⁷³ In the face of the growing metropolis on the eastern seaboard and in the Midwest, America's most famous early twentieth century architect, Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959), reacted by contributing to the anti-urban conceptualizations of the American landscape.

(1923-1950); Plymouth on Rouge River (1923-1948); Waterford on Rouge River (1925-1954); Ypsilanti on Huron River (1932-1947); Newburgh on Rouge River (1935-1948); Tecumseh/Hayden Mills on Raisin River (1935-1948); Dundee on Raisin River (1936-1954); Milan on Saline River (1938-1947); Milford on Huron River (1938-1948); Saline on Saline River (1938-1947); Brooklyn on Raisin River (1939-1967); Sharon Mills on Raisin River (1939-1947)—the furthest of the village industries from Dearborn at 57 miles; Manchester on Raisin River (1941-1957); Willow Run on Huron River (1941-1944); Clarkston on Clinton River (1942-1947; and, Cherry Hill on Rouge River (1944-1945).

²⁷² Segal notes that some of these facilities have been adaptively reused (2005), 130: "Of the other eighteen sites besides Northville—the last of the village industries to cease operations— sixteen have become county or municipal government facilities— museums, offices, libraries, community and shopping centers, garages—or antique shops and, in six cases, plants or offices for other private businesses, some in high-tech areas. Willow Run has been abandoned and dismantled, and Ypsilanti was absorbed into the larger facility built in 1947, a Ford plant that remains in operation today."

²⁷³ Morton and Lucia White, *The Intellectual Versus the City. From Thomas Jefferson to Frank Lloyd Wright* (Cambridge, Mass.,: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 189.

Wright, a Wisconsin farm boy, shared Ford's antipathy for the city in even greater measure as he too sought to demolish traditional European urbanism in America. Steeped in the American agrarian tradition (like Ford), Wright shared Jefferson's conflation of urban form with a lack of democracy and expressed so in his 1930s paper project, Broadacre City, eventually codified in his book *The Living City* (1958).²⁷⁴ While Ford contributed to the growing middle class through his technological and business acumen, Wright took up the middle-class as the social component driving his desire to establish a truly American form and space. For the middle class, he designed the Prairie House. Prairie houses were Wright's articulation of an architecture that was continuous with its natural setting and embellished with an ornament that was organic (not applied artifice). He extended to these notions to the city. The city should be rooted in the ground and expressive of the horizontality of the American landscape; in other words to become a non-city as compared with New York or Chicago. Wright believed that the technological advances of modernity (the airplane, the automobile, and the telephone), meant people did not need to congregate in close quarters in order to produce the socio-economic structure of America.²⁷⁵ Wright held that the promise of modern technology was the decentralization of America. Believing decentralization to be an inevitable consequence of modernization, Wright made his plans accordingly:

²⁷⁴ Wright, like Ford, held Emerson and Thoreau in the highest esteem. Wright included an appendix to *The Living City* which contained a long excerpt from Emerson's essay "Farming."

²⁷⁵ Cultural critic Lewis Mumford would critique Wright's notion that modern technology meant people would no longer need to meet face to face, as he believed Wright never considered "that one might need or profit by the presence of other men within an area compact enough for spontaneous encounters, durable enough for the realization of long-range plans, and attractive enough to stimulate social intercourse. Save for the family, he scarcely recognizes the need for social groups or associations." Lewis Mumford, "A Phoenix Too Infrequent," *From the Ground Up* (New York, 1956), p. 86.

The first step is of course to decentralize, to spring man from the trap and cage of the crowded city into the countryside, assuring no less than an acre to each man, woman, and child, seeing that there were (in 1958 by Wright's calculation) about fifty-seven green acres for each human being in America. Spreading thin laterally would be the watchword.Broadacre City, the city of the future, would be everywhere and nowhere, the city which embraces the country and becomes the nation. And therefore, it is a city only by courtesy, by virtue of a very faint family resemblance to what we now call cities."²⁷⁶

While Ford was not trying to spread out over the America landscape, he looked to the spatial type of the traditional village as his model, he did agree with Wright that: "The city...lacks a soul; it is artificial; it is not a community; ...it should be abandoned for the country; ...it is doomed to extinction..."²⁷⁷ Both Wright and Ford (as with Jefferson) held this anti-urban ideology not just because they despised the social influence of the city, but because they believed that the definition of America of a polity and a people was at stake. As Henry Ford proclaimed in his mouthpiece, *The Dearborn Independent*: "When we all stand up and sing, 'My Country 'Tis of Thee,' we seldom think of the cities. Indeed in all that old national hymn there are no references to the city at all...the country is THE country. The real United States lies outside the cities."²⁷⁸

The promotion of moving out into the American landscape did not end with Wright. Decentralization, particularly as catalyzed via technology, is a continuing trope in the American landscape. While the automobile spurred the early twentieth century

²⁷⁶ White (1962), p. 198.

²⁷⁷ Henry Ford, *Ford Ideals: Being a Selection from 'Mr. Ford's Page' in The Dearborn Independent* (Dearborn, Michigan, 1922) particularly pp. 124-128, 154-158, 425-428, and 293-296 as cited in White (1962), 201.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p. 127.

form of decentralization, computers and telecommunication continue to allow for the American desire for lebensraum to continue.²⁷⁹

Ford's engagement with constructing memory landscapes and rural industrial plants coincided during a period given the moniker "The Machine Age" by a variety of popular and professional cultures between the two World Wars.²⁸⁰ The village industries did not represent part of the large discourse on the retreat from modernity, but rather provided an alternative form for a technologically progressive society. While many talked about decentralizing American urbanism, Ford acted on it. And while some might consider his cultural memory landscapes at the Wayside Inn and Greenfield Village as frivolous whims of a wealthy magnate, his village industries were serious efforts to change how modernization *should* affect the American landscape.

²⁷⁹ *The New York Times* proclaimed as a subhead "Technology Spurs Decentralization Across the Country," in an article on real estate trends in the United States whose primary headline read "Back Offices Disperse from Downtown," *Sunday New York Times*, May 13, 1984.

²⁸⁰ This term was ubiquitous and used by journalists, popular writers, advertisers, engineers, scientists, historians, artists, public officials, etc. See Charles A. Beard, *Wither Mankind? A Panorama of Modern Civilization* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1928) and Beard, *Toward Civilization* (1930); Lewis Mumford, "Toward Civilization?" *New Republic* 63 (May 28, 1930), pp. 49-50.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

That which we remember is, more often than not, that which we would like to have been; or that which we hope to be. Thus our memory and our identity are ever at odds; our history ever a tall tale told by inattentive idealists.—Ralph Ellison (1964)

One summer day about three years ago, in that part of Michigan which forms the great thumb along the shore of Lake Huron, an automobile was seen to stop suddenly. Then it was backed over the road for several hundred feet. Out of the car stepped [sic] a man who hurried to something which looked like a long-discarded stove buried in the sand. But little of it was visible, merely the rounded side being exposed to indicate what it might be. The man summoned his companion, and the two worked for more than an hour to remove it. Under the hot sun they dug and scraped away until at last the thing they sought was exposed to a view. The elder man looked over it carefully, shook his head a little sadly, spoke to his companion, and the two of them climbed into the car and drove away. The man was Henry Ford; his companion, his son Edsel.—*Literary Digest*, July 14, 1923.

As widely published as Ford's village industries were between the two World Wars, the project that would stay current in the public mind and in historians' critique was his design for Greenfield Village. Critics attacked Ford for his less-than-rigorous approach to historic preservation in Michigan and either ignored the Wayside Inn or relegated it to a footnote. Greenfield Village, however, was a different kind of fiction than the one Ford created at the Wayside Inn.

Ford originally intended to further expand his landscape at the Wayside Inn into a larger collection of the American past. In fact, his conspicuous consumption of American material culture prompted representatives from Williamsburg to offer up the town to Ford for purchase for five million dollars, if he would promise to restore it.²⁸¹ Ford turned them

²⁸¹ *Detroit Free Press*, August 31, 1924 and Conn (2001), p. 155. Ford would travel in September 1923 to Doylestown, Pennsylvania to visit Henry Mercer's extensive collection of American artifacts. After his tour he announced: "This is the only museum I've ever been sufficiently interested in to visit. Some day I expect to have a museum which will rival it." *Doylestown Daily News*, September, 10, 1923 in Conn (2001), p. x.



Figure 27. Newspaper clipping showing Henry Ford's infamous statement about history. Courtesy of HFM-GVRC.

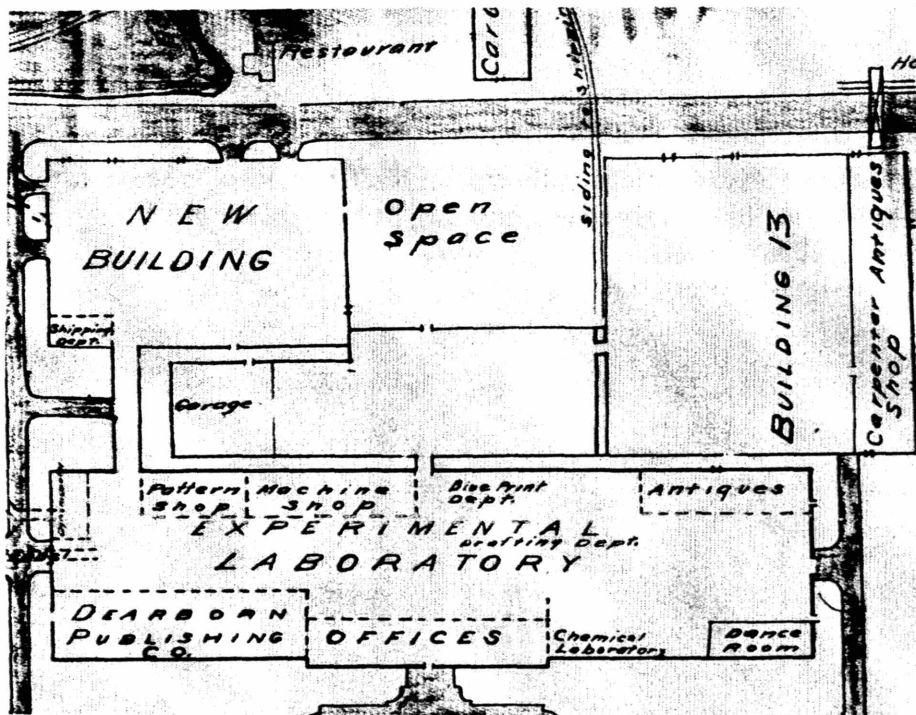


Figure 28. Plan showing where Ford kept his growing Americana collection at his River Rouge factory. Courtesy of HFM-GVRC.

Impressed with Mercer's collection, Ford would have *The Dearborn Independent* wrote an article about it, "Dr. Mercer's 'Tools of the Nation Builder,'" *The Dearborn Independent*, February 2, 1924.

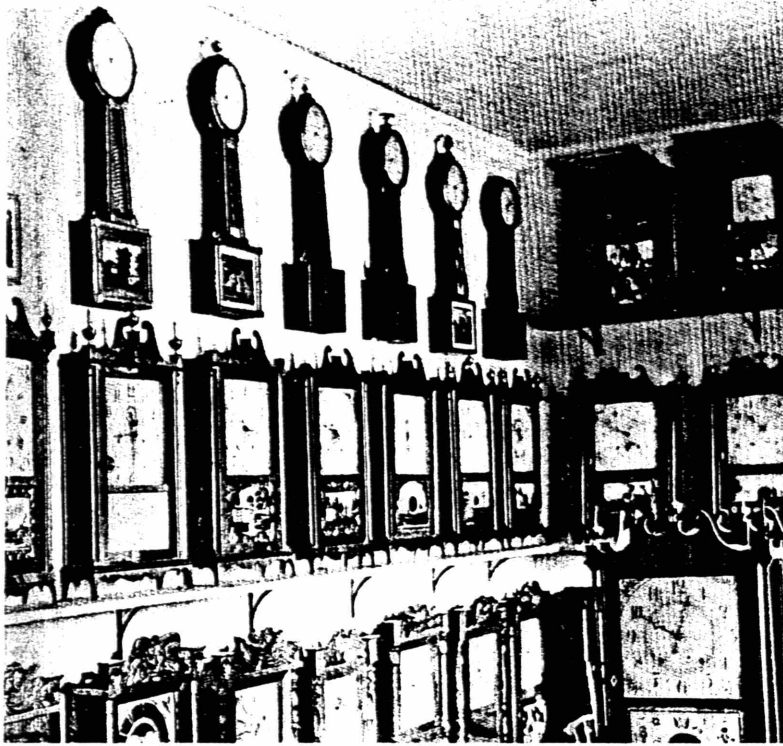


Figure 29. Ford's wide variety of objects collected in his River Rouge plant (in Building 13—see previous plan) prior to the building of the Greenfield Village and Museum. Courtesy of HFM-GVRC.

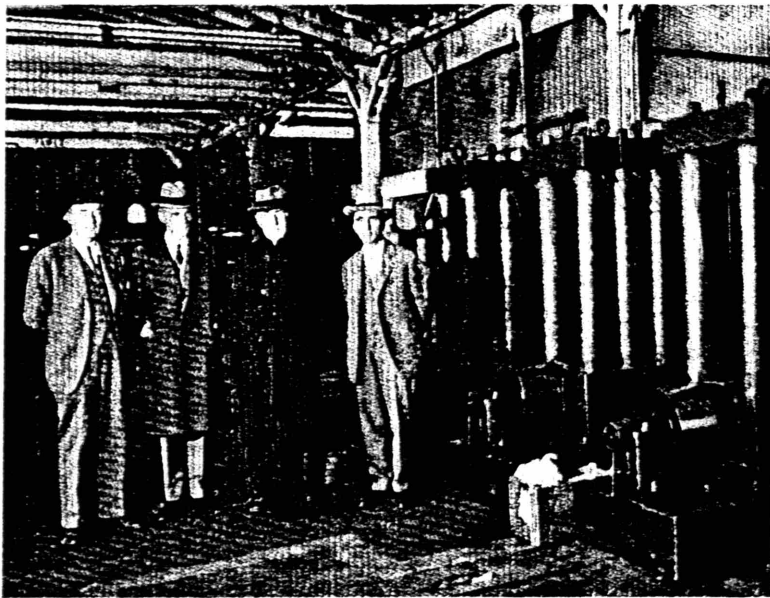


Figure 30. Ford (in Experimental Laboratory—see previous plan) shows off his collection of electrical apparatus in 1928: (left to right) Edison's son, Charles; Ford; Edison; and Jim Bishop. Courtesy of HFM-GVRC.

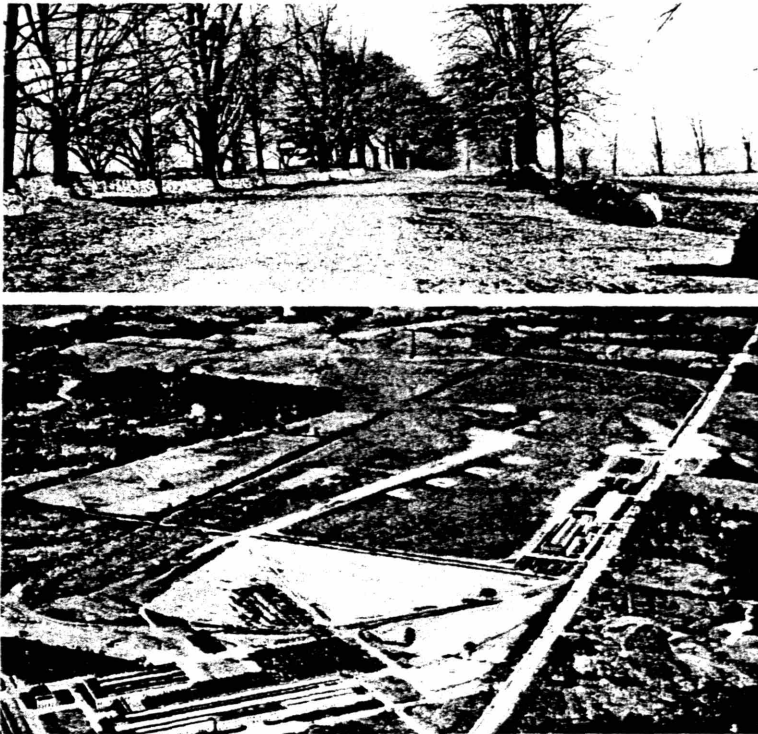


Figure 31. The raw site in Dearborn by Ford's plant that will become Greenfield Village. Courtesy of HFM-GVRC.

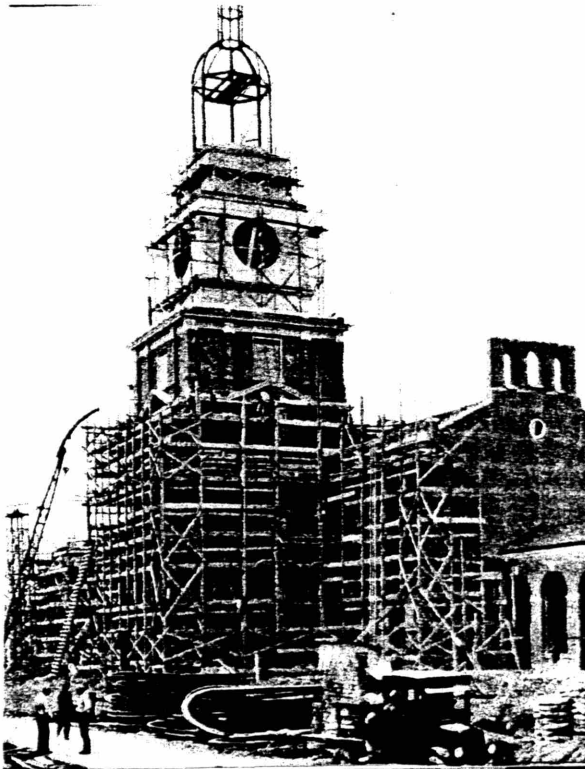


Figure 32. Ford has a replica of Philadelphia's Independence Hall built as the façade for his Greenfield Village Museum.



Figure 33. Cartoon spoofing Ford's purchasing and moving of buildings from across the country to his Greenfield Village site in Dearborn. By Cyrus Cotton Hungerford in the *Pittsburgh-Post Gazette* 1934). Courtesy of HFM-GVRC.

down because he wanted to build his own town. However, opposition from the Sudbury community, the inability to purchase the necessary land, and other obstacles led him back home, however, to start and complete that vision. Thus, the Wayside Inn became a starter model for his much larger project in Dearborn, Michigan.²⁸² Unlike the Wayside Inn landscape, which started from a real Inn and farm property, Greenfield Village never existed in any form before Ford. Unlike the Wayside Inn landscape, Greenfield Village was treated as a museum village from its inception.

The Dearborn complex—its location picked because of its proximity to Ford’s Engineering Laboratory and his Dearborn estate—contained two components: a museum containing Ford’s vast collection of American technological artifacts and an outdoor museum containing a large collection of American building types. The museum and the village (originally named The Edison Institute; Greenfield Village is the moniker that would stick later) were didactic in purpose; Ford wanted visitors to understand the American past, in terms of its technological superiority and its pioneer spirit, in order to foster their continuance in the leading the American future. The indoor museum collections were enormous from agricultural hand tools to tractor-powered machinery to household arts to decorative arts to locomotives, fire engines, and, of course, automobiles. Ford’s personal secretary Frank Campsall bragged, “No phase of American domestic, industrial or agricultural life has been neglected.”²⁸³ What this eclectic collection had in common was Ford’s obsession with the material culture of everyday

²⁸² Ford would announce his plans for Greenfield Village in 1928, but a letter from Ford’s secretary Frank Campsall to James Bishop (September 27, 1928) stated that Ford had been thinking about this project for a while, “Mr. Ford has been developing the idea of an educational museum for a number of years. It has been the real purpose behind his tireless work as a Collector of Americana of every kind.”

²⁸³ Frank Campsall to James Bishop, September 27, 1928, Ford Archives.

Americans. Ford took a taxonomic approach to these collections and he wanted them to be the most complete assemblage of American everyday life anywhere. Ford was cementing his belief that the American identity could be established via a demonstration of its technological progress (a long way from Charles Peale's attempts almost 150 years earlier to reach the same ends using natural history as the means). As Campsall noted, Ford's collection was "arranged in an ascending series, [and] present[ed] a vivid and authentic record of American progress."²⁸⁴ As historian Steven Conn surmised, "Henry Ford did not lament the passing of a preindustrial America; he saw it as inevitable. The exhibits at the museum persuaded that what began with the horse drawn cart ended logically with the Model T."²⁸⁵ These thousands of objects resided in a 14-acre museum building that felt as enormous as a train shed and inside had the character of one of his gigantic industrial buildings on the River Rouge. Ford's indoor museum produced an assembly line of American culture. The outside, however, was clearly in the realm of the colonial revival as the headhouse marking the entry into his enormous shed of Americana was a replica of Philadelphia's Independence Hall.²⁸⁶

In the village, Ford collected buildings from around the country (and a few abroad) and rearranged them along streets, a village green, a farm, and a waterway. The design for this collection was in the hands of architect Edward J. Cutler who based his earlier sketches on the New England village with buildings centered around a common

²⁸⁴ See transcript entitled "Herbert F. Morton, Collector for Henry Ford," Ford Archive, Folder—Henry Ford Museum Interiors; and Frank Campsall to James Bishop September 27, 1928

²⁸⁵ Conn (2001), p. 157.

²⁸⁶ According to Geoffrey Upward in *A Home for our Heritage* (Dearborn, Mich.: The Henry Ford Museum Press, 1979), p. 22, architect Robert O. Derrick (a friend of Edsel's whom Ford met on a European cruise in 1928) suggested reproducing Independence Hall for the façade. Actual construction on the museum began in 1929.

green. Ford's fondness of the New England landscape meant he supported Cutler's initial plan; nevertheless, Ford continued to massage and change the design of the village even after buildings were in place.²⁸⁷ By 1928, two elements would anchor the design of the village: the New England town green and a restoration of Thomas Edison's Menlo Park Compound, moved from New Jersey. Ford's agents scouted the country documenting buildings appropriate to Ford's vision. When he approved, the buildings were measured, dismantled—often by workmen supplied by local Ford dealers—and shipped to Dearborn where Cutler supervised their reconstruction in the village. Alterations were made only in the case of replacing damaged materials or in modernizing the facilities with electricity and indoor plumbing.

The buildings were meant to be the context for his objects, to make their application more real to the visitor. The village was not meant to be fixed in time (like the restoration of *colonial* Williamsburg) or in a specific place (like the Wayside Inn, which was clearly a New England-invented landscape). The village was supposed to represent America across time and space. The two components of the project were necessary in Ford's opinion in order to provide a complete picture of everyday American culture. As Conn noted,

By viewing the village and the museum as the two linked parts of a single enterprise, also prompts a reevaluation can also reevaluate the anachronistic nature of the village. At one level, the juxtapositions of the buildings makes all of them seem hopeless out of place... Instead, we should see that in his attempt to portray the history of ordinary Americans, Ford saw buildings both as settings for the other objects he collected and as objects in and of themselves. He used the buildings of the village to give context to his blacksmith's tools and farm equipment, but he also wanted to collect these contexts in the same encyclopedic way. ... Ford did not intend that his village would actually represent the life of a

²⁸⁷ Some buildings were left on blocks to make their moving easier.

specific historical place. Rather he conceived of the village in total as a museum, and the buildings that make it up as specimens.²⁸⁸

Greenfield Village was officially dedicated by President Herbert Hoover on October 21, 1929—an event that was designed to honor Thomas Edison and the fiftieth anniversary of his invention of the electric light. At that point various buildings already stood in the village.²⁸⁹ A month prior to the dedication, the site was already activated with the beginning of the village school program—a variation of The Edison Institute still operates on the site today. Henry Ford had moved the one-room Scotch Settlement school he had attended sixty years ago to Greenfield Village; thirty-two students attended that first day in September 1929.²⁹⁰ Three years later Greenfield Village was officially opened to the public in June 1932, but the complex was still a work in progress with at least three structures added each year until 1944 with slower growth continuing up to the present.²⁹¹

Ford was aware of comparisons to Rockefeller's simultaneous work in the restoration of a colonial Williamsburg. Returning from a tour of American museums, Edsel Ford reported to Henry, "There's nothing that can compare with what we have here, father. Williamsburg will never be a drip in the bucket to what we have here."²⁹² Mid-twentieth century comparisons, often made by historic preservationists favoring

²⁸⁸ Conn (2001), p. 158.

²⁸⁹ The buildings completed by the dedication included the Menlo Park Compound from New Jersey, the Abraham Lincoln Courthouse from Illinois, Luther Burbank's garden office from California, the Phoenixville Post Office from Connecticut, and the Whittier Toll House/Shoe Shop from Massachusetts. See Upward (1979), p. x.

²⁹⁰ At its height Ford's village school system in Dearborn would include nine buildings, housing kindergarten through post-high school vocational training.

²⁹¹ Frank Caddy, president of the Edison Institute, surmises that World War II and the death of Ford's son Edsel in 1943 contributed to the slowing of his efforts at the village. Upward (1979), p. x.

²⁹² Transcript of interview with Fred Smith, conducted 1951. Ford Archives, Folder marked Henry Ford Museum interiors in Conn (2001), p. 159.

Williamsburg over Greenfield Village, did not acknowledge that these two places had very different agendas. The preservation of Williamsburg followed Appleton's (and SPNEA's) protocols: using the scientific method and disciplines like archaeology in order to authenticate the objects and fix them in a particular time and space. By contrast, Ford was not concerned with the recreation of an authentic moment in time and place, but wanted to produce a comprehensive collection of pre-modern America in order to establish a useable resource for modern America.

While post-modern critiques now lambaste Williamsburg for the way in which it went about the project, the larger point is that it set out for itself an agenda of scholarship based on material culture. Ford's project was more interested in philosophical agendas of how one could manage to wade the murky waters of modernity. He believed the past would be useful to the present. While both were transmitting historical knowledge, they did so with very different means and ends. Williamsburg, like Appleton, focused on the aesthetics of the colonial period, fixing history in the formal design of the material artifacts. Williamsburg approached history from the preservation of buildings in order to save style. Historic preservation was based on architecture for architecture's sake. In contrast, Ford's Greenfield Village and the Wayside Inn concentrated on defining an American identity through the objects and buildings commonly used by everyday people. Ford focused on history's obsession with great men and great deeds and offered an alternative view, "We ought to know more about the families who founded this nation, and how they lived...One way to do this is to reconstruct as nearly as possible the

conditions under which they lived...”²⁹³ Historic preservation for Ford was a means to learn how to be an American of the present and future by understanding how Americans had lived in the past. The past he focused on was the technological past (a progressive history in which the journey from blacksmith to Model T was inexorable and would lead further) that he wanted reconciled with a vernacular and rural environmental past. Greenfield Village was Ford’s attempt to demonstrate that “mankind passes from the old to the new on a human bridge formed by those who labor in the three principle arts—agriculture, manufacture, transportation.”²⁹⁴ Ford remarked, “This is the only reason Greenfield Village exists—to give us a sense of unity with our people through the generations...As a nation we have not depended so much on rare or occasional genius as on the general resourcefulness of our people. That is our true genius, and I am hoping that Greenfield Village will serve that.”²⁹⁵

Ford’s search for an American identity was not a unique quest between the two World Wars. Ford’s collection of everyday America and its history began from the deeply personal acquisition of his family home in 1919. When his family farm was threatened to be demolished by the extension of a major road, Ford moved the house and barn and then restored them. The furnishing of that house launched his larger search for American artifacts—small and large. That Ford would become the premier collector of Americana by 1923 was a surprise to some who had heard Ford’s witness stand utterance “History is Bunk,” the same year he bought his family homestead. Ford had sued the

²⁹³ Upward (1979), p. 20.

²⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 4.

²⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 58.

Chicago Tribune for libel based on a series of articles it ran in 1916.²⁹⁶ The trial forced Ford to collect his thoughts on American history and material culture.

When I went to our American history books to learn how our forefathers harrowed the land, I discovered that the historians knew nothing about harrows. Yet our country has depended more on harrows than on guns or speeches. I thought that a history which excluded harrows and all the rest of daily life is bunk and I think so yet.²⁹⁷

Ford was clear in acknowledging the significance of history in modern America. He just wanted that history to be based on everyday material culture and not focus solely on the heroic deeds of great men.

As Ford's investigations of American culture—particularly as situated at the Wayside Inn and Greenfield Village—were well underway, others took to representing *and* inventing an American history. The government would not codify its historical project with building culture until the establishment of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1949. But it made its first move into the recording and creating of what it meant to be American with the establishment of the Works Project Administration (WPA).

Founded in 1935, the WPA was a measure under President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal program, aimed at the relief and recovery of the nation during the Depression.²⁹⁸ At the depth of the depression, in 1933, one out of every four workers was

²⁹⁶ The articles were based on interviews with Ford, who at the time was vocal in his pacifist stance regarding American involvement in World War I. The *Tribune* ran an editorial calling Ford an “anarchist” and “ignorant idealist.” Ford sued them for libel.

²⁹⁷ Geoffrey C. Upward, *A Home for our Heritage* (Dearborn, Michigan: The Henry Ford Museum Press, 1979), p. 2.

²⁹⁸ There is a tremendous amount of scholarship on Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal from a political/intellectual history point of view. This scholarship begins contemporaneous with Roosevelt's

unemployed. The first few years of the New Deal focused on relief (both economic and food assistance). The WPA was one such work-relief program. Putting America back to work included putting artists to work; thus, the WPA sponsored the Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP), the Federal Theater Project (FTP), the Federal Writers' Project (FWP), and the Federal Art Project (FAP).²⁹⁹ The short-lived predecessor to these programs, the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), set the initial agenda: to employ artists at hourly wages to embellish public buildings and promote the "American Scene" as appropriate subject matter.³⁰⁰ The Federal Art Project continued the agendas of the PWAP and its impact was extensive: in creating jobs for 5,000 artists (41 percent of whom were women) it also produced over 225,000 works of art for the American people.

administration starting with the year in which he was elected. See Charles A. Beard and George H.E. Smith, *The Future Comes: A Study of the New Deal*, 1933; Pare Lorentz, *The Roosevelt Year: A Photographic Record*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1934. Edgar E. Robinson *The Roosevelt Leadership, 1933-1945*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1955; Frank Freidel, *The New Deal in Historical Perspective*. Washington D.C.: American Historical Association, 1959; and, Arthur Ekirsch, *Ideologies and Utopias: The Impact of the New Deal upon American Thought* Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969 to name just a few.

²⁹⁹ The art divisions of the WPA were preceded by the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP) which operated only a year from 1933-34 under the leadership of George Biddle and the Civil Works Administration (CWA). One million dollars of CWA money was used to establish the PWAP. Good sources from the time period include: Cahill, Holger. *American Art Today*. New York: National Art Society, 1939. Holger Cahill and Alfred H. Barr, Jr. (eds.). *Art in America*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1934. Edward Bruce and Forbes Watson. *Art in Federal Buildings: An Illustrated Record of the Treasury Departments New Programs in Painting and Sculpture*. Washington, D. C.: Art in Federal Buildings, Inc., 1936. Works Progress Administration. *Federal Art Project Manual*. Washington, D. C., 1935. Works Progress Administration. *Federal Art Project: A Summary of Activities and Accomplishments*. New York, n.d. George Biddle. "Art under Five Years of Federal Patronage." *American Scholar* 9, no. 3 (Summer 1940). Whiting, Jr., F. A. "Five Important Years," *American Magazine of Art* 32, no. 12 (December 1939): 729. Elizabeth McCausland. "Save the Art Projects." *Nation*, July 17, 1937. "Social Protestors' Become 'New Realists'." *Art Digest*, January 1, 1940, p. 14. Constance Rourke. "American Art: A Possible Future." *American Magazine of Art* 28, no. 7 (July 1935): 390-405. Francis O'Connor. *Federal Art Patronage, 1933 to 1945*. Exhibition catalogue. University of Maryland, College Park, 1966. William McDonald. *Federal Relief Administration and the Arts: The Origins and Administrative History of the Arts Projects of the Works Progress Administration*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1969. Robert McKinzie. *The New Deal for Artists*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1973.

³⁰⁰ While there was a clearly established agenda for the subject matter, there was no such declaration for the style in which the art was to be produced.

The Projects commissioned murals and sculpture for extant federal buildings (the largest program placed murals in post offices across the country). While they provided work for unemployed artists, the Projects asserted that relief was secondary to an art-conscious America. Painters doing this work who were held up as archetypal of the “American Scene” included: John Stewart Curry, Thomas Hart Benton, and Grant Wood.³⁰¹ The “American Scene” became the preferred subject matter by the federal programs, which encouraged scenes of everyday American life—usually from small towns or rural America—and scenes which depicted moments in American history or American rituals. Under the guise of the “American Scene,” the WPA programs sought to use art for didactic in purpose. The work was to embrace art as an agent of social change, restore democratic traditions to the republic, and unite the American people with a common sense of shared everyday experiences.

The WPA work, however, did not rely solely on the regionalist traditions of the American Scene to inform their agendas. Artists producing work under the guise of Social Realism also informed the art production of the WPA. Social Realism was a movement often antagonistic toward the Regionalists. These artists (e.g. Ben Shahn) aimed to use art to forefront the short-comings of American democracy.³⁰² In fact, while the WPA work often gets discussed under the rubric of regionalism, nationalism was also at the heart of the work. The work of the WPA, therefore, operated at multiples levels: it can be seen as an instrument of cultural production related to the promotion of a democratic ideology (critical at a time when fascism, socialism, and communism were

³⁰¹ See James Dennis. *Renegade Regionalists: The Modern Independent of Grant Wood, Thomas Hart Benton, and John Stuart Curry*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998.

³⁰² Not much scholarship has revealed how the antagonisms between these two groups—which often centered around a combination a social attitudes and formal technique—effected the WPA.

being contested widely in Europe and to a lesser extent in the United States), and it can be seen as part of the production of myth and fantasy in regional stereotypes.³⁰³

On the surface, Ford's work would seem to parallel that of the WPA in the desire to invent and/or reinforce the mythologies of the nation. Ford was no different than the painters: they were all creating work under the aegis of constructing an American Scene. Grant Wood's painting "The Ride of Paul Revere," (1931) exemplified the parallels in their efforts. The painting made no attempt at capturing the factual history of Paul Revere's role at the inception of the Revolution. Wood emphasized the subjectivity of the painting through his composition and technique, which create a dreamlike, too brightly lit night scene. He painted a New England town with all of the necessary representative buildings types compressed along a post road (like Ford did at the Wayside Inn landscape). The buildings and the landscape elements were idealized in shape and form because Wood was not trying to document an actual town that Revere rode through in order to alert of the impending arrival of British troops; instead, Wood showed an archetypal New England town that Revere *should* have encountered (just as Ford built a New England town that *should* have existed). Despite the similar creative agenda in Ford's built landscapes and the WPA art, the WPA was able to mine richer discords and tensions within the work, while Ford sought to obliterate, hide, and/or mollify any contestations. An examination of the time period in which both projects (Ford and the WPA) were at work uncovers these differences.

³⁰³ See Sue Beckham's *Depression post office murals and southern culture: a gentle reconstruction* (1989). In this book Beckham tries to reclaim images of the South from stereotypes via a look at this work. She looks at how to reconcile the southern culture of myth and fantasy with the real. In a mode which used history to promote a hopeful future, how do you do that in the South where the history is one of slavery and the mess of reconstruction? She also addresses issues of the representation of women and minorities; a subject woefully understudied in these texts.

Ford's work at both the Wayside Inn and Greenfield Village was at its nadir as the nation plunged into an economic depression. The Depression was a national disaster, but among the hardest hit states were those of the Great Plains (Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, the Dakotas, Montana, Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico). The severe and prolonged drought that brought the dust further crippled the regions already ailing principle industry: agriculture. In 1933, the average per capita income in North Dakota was \$145 a year, compared with a national average of \$375. A high proportion of plains farmers were forced to accept relief. By 1935, while 18 percent of the urban families in the nation were on some form of relief, 20-36 percent of farm families were on relief.

The Depression also hastened a massive shift in population from rural to urban areas. High among Roosevelt's priorities was the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA). Rexford Tugwell, appointed assistant secretary of agriculture, helped to write the reforms embodied in the AAA. The Act, passed in 1933, established a system of government price supports for agricultural commodities, tied to reductions in crop production. The AAA paid landowners to hold crops off the market, but they did so without taking into account the landowners' tenants. The landowners used the money to buy farm equipment (i.e. tractors) which alleviated the need for tenants. The tenant families had nowhere to go and often lived in debilitating poverty. Up to 75 percent of all farms in the South and Southwest were tenant farmed.

To assist these people, Roosevelt created the Resettlement Administration (1935-37), naming Tugwell as director. The agency's primary programs included loans to tenant farmers to allow them to buy land, the conservation and reclamation of farmland, the construction of model communities, and a variety of innovative and controversial

attempts to resettle displaced farmers. When Roosevelt's executive order was later declared unconstitutional, most of these programs were transferred to a new agency, the Farm Security Administration (1937-42). Tugwell realized he needed public support in the face of conservative political criticism, because there was little public awareness of the problems tenant farmers faced. So he established the Historical Section of the FSA (run by Roy Stryker) and charged it with photographing and publicizing the plight of the tenant farmer.³⁰⁴ The 45 photographers who worked for Stryker took 80,000 photographs with sixteen doing the bulk of the work (which included eight women and one African American male). The Historical Section's directives were multiple, to include: the exposure of the ill fed, ill clothed, ill housed in need of agency assistance; the documentation of RA/FSA accomplishments in rural rehabilitation and resettlement; the coverage of social, economic, and cultural processes that were not necessarily rooted in the depression; the coverage of America's conversion from economic recovery to winning the war; and, a broadening of focus to include small towns and cities.³⁰⁵ The perception of the work—reinforced by much of the initial scholarship on the FSA—was that it focused on the Great Plains and California. This was not true. The areas receiving the most coverage were the South, the Mid-Atlantic, and the Great Lakes Region.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁴ See Jack Hurley. *Portrait of a Decade: Roy Stryker and the Development of Documentary Photography in the Thirties*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1972. Roy Stryker and Nancy Wood. *In This Proud Land: American 1935-1943 as Seen in the FSA Photographs*. Greenwich, Conn., 1973.

³⁰⁵ The last home for this group was the Office of War Information. Transferred in 1942 with the US entry into the Second World War.

³⁰⁶ The following percentages are based on the lots of photographs acquired. Out of 1,580 lots of photographs the breakdown in regional coverage, in descending order, was as follows: The South: 23 percent; The Mid-Atlantic 18 percent; Great Lakes Region: 14 percent; The Southwest: 12 percent; The North east: 10 percent; The Midwest: 7 percent; The Rocky Mountain and Great Basin region: 7 percent; The Northwest: 4 percent; California: 4 percent; Mexico: less than 1 percent; and, Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands: less than 1 percent.

The eight-year life of Stryker's section coincided with the growth of photo-journalism in magazines and books; indeed, the use of the Section's photographs in several influential works contributed to this growth.³⁰⁷ FSA photographs were published in newspapers across the nation and by magazines such as *Life* (founded in 1936), *Look* (founded in 1937), and *Survey Graphic*. The books published contemporaneous with the FSA emphasized their format as that of documentary photography and literary journalism. In fact, they had a clear social agenda and were influenced by sociological methods, particularly field work.

At the time, the photographs were thought to portray an imputed historical reality. The images were treated as windows on the American world, and an implicit trust was placed in the photographs as impartial evidence. The work of the FSA photographers, however, was not pure objective documentary photography. They were works of art, and as such they represented highly constructed and edited views of the American cultural landscape. For example, Marion Post Wolcott and Gordon Parks documented the position of African-Americans in their photographs. These were not merely documentary captures of African American lives, but constructed commentary as well.

If the larger project was supposed to affirm the cultural aspects of the everyday American environment, then Wolcott's work clearly honored that agenda by highlighting the rich cultural and architectural landscapes of quotidian Americana. Nevertheless, Wolcott was also aware of the constricted cultural milieu of small towns where racism and sexism were rampant. She also documented the politics of these places. Her

³⁰⁷ Some of the more celebrated works included: James Agee and Walker Evans. *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1939. Dorothea Lange and Paul Schuster Taylor. *An American Exodus: A Record of Human Erosion in the Thirties*. New York, 1939. MacLeish, Archibald. *Land of the Free*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1938.

photograph, “Negro Man Entering a Movie Theater by ‘Colored Entrance,” was not just a documented glimpse of small town entertainment. The photograph highlighted the racial dimension of American space through its contrasts of cheerful commercialism (the background contained a Dr. Pepper sign advertising “good for life”) against the harsh realities of segregation and the separate publics within the American scene.³⁰⁸ Gordon Parks’ photograph, “Mrs. Ella Watson, Government Charwoman,” clearly built upon the compositional features of Gordon Wood’s already iconic “American Gothic” (1930) painting.³⁰⁹ In Wood’s painting a white, Midwestern farm couple stands in front of their gothic-style home, holding their farm equipment upright with stern expressions. By contrast, Parks shows a dour African-American woman with her broom and mop, standing in front of the United States flag. In this single photograph, Parks made visible the invisible American. And while this picture holds iconic status, Parks actually followed Watson in a series of photographs that conveyed a sustained dialogue regarding issues of race, gender, domesticity and work product. While Parks’ photo was packed with a questioning of what it meant to be an American, the series contained a richer narrative. This highlighting of individual photos as iconographic of an American moment over the process in which they were taken—as a series—robbed many of the FSA photographs of their richer contexts which often underscored issues of gender, race and other social issues operating outside the American mythic narrative.³¹⁰

³⁰⁸ This photograph was taken in Belzoni, Mississippi, 1939. FSA, Library of Congress.

³⁰⁹ This photograph was taken in Washington, D.C., 1942. FSA, Library of Congress.

³¹⁰ Works that have challenged the documentary reading of the photographs include: James Curtis. *Mind’s Eye, Mind’s Truth. FSA Reconsidered*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989. Alan Trachtenberg’s essay in *Documenting America: 1935-1943*, ed. Carl Fleischhauer and Beverly W. Brannan. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988. Nicholas Natason. *The Black Image in the New Deal, The Politics of FSA Photography*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1992.

The WPA art production addressed a desire for the memorialization of American traditions and for a coherent historical narrative—a (re)uniting of the lost fragments of the American past. This was Ford’s agenda as well, in the construction of both a regional mythology of New England in Sudbury and an American tradition in Greenfield Village. Neither the WPA nor Ford presented an objective American record; they provided a constructed American scene that reinforced many prevailing cultural ideas and assumptions about what American society ought to be. Like Thornton Wilder’s classic play, *Our Town* (1938), the WPA and Ford’s landscapes were conscious idealizations searching for an American community that responded to the nomadic, detached, and chaotic realities of modern life in America.

Unlike Ford, the works of the WPA not only reinforced the construction of American myths but also complicated them. In addition, regional stereotypes were both reinforced and contested in the construction of an American art of the everyday by the WPA. In addition to contributing to the mythologies of an everyday American landscape, the work produced by the depression era artists also presented: a reordering of modern relationships between the masculine and feminine; a critical evaluation of the personal versus the private; commentary on sexuality, power structures, class and race. Ford spent this period mapping a singular American identity, grounded in the quotidian over the heroic. The WPA not only embraced that project but also expanded it to include the mapping of multiple American experiences, that reinforced and contested a singular American mythology (and often at the same time).

Kenneth Ames has questioned whether “deep immersion into the past can be read as a positive affirmative action or whether it might be seen more accurately as an act of

cultural desperation.”³¹¹ While that critique might be valid for some of the excesses of the colonial revival, the work of Ford (and of his Americana contemporaries like the WPA) reveals a layered dialogue between past and present, tradition and modernity, and history and memory that go far beyond desperation.

³¹¹ Kenneth Ames in the introduction to Alan Axelrod, ed., *The Colonial Revival in America* (New York: Norton, 1985), p. 14.

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- Massachusetts Archives Collection, Columbia Point, 220 Morrissey Blvd., Boston, MA (MAC)
- Middlesex Court of General Sessions Records, East Cambridge, MA (MGC)
- Middlesex Registry of Deeds and Probate Court Records, East Cambridge, MA, Deeds and Estates (MRDPC)
- National Park Service publications and papers, items dispersed through regional libraries and available on-line, Department of the Interior and National Archives (NPS)
- National Trust for Historic Preservation's Archives and Papers, National Trust Library, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland (NTHP)
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