

= Longfellow House ? Washington 's Headquarters National Historic Site =

The Longfellow House ? Washington 's Headquarters National Historic Site , also known as the Vassall @-@ Craigie @-@ Longfellow House and , until December 2010 , Longfellow National Historic Site , is a historic site located at 105 Brattle Street in Cambridge , Massachusetts . For almost fifty years , it was the home of noted American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow . It had previously served as the headquarters of General George Washington , 1775 @-@ 76 .

The house was built in 1759 for John Vassall , who fled the Cambridge area at the beginning of the American Revolutionary War because of his loyalty to the king of England . George Washington occupied the house as his headquarters , beginning July 16 , 1775 . It served as his base of operations during the Siege of Boston , until he moved out on April 4 , 1776 . Andrew Craigie , Washington 's Apothecary General , was the next person to own the home for a significant period of time . After purchasing the house in 1791 , he instigated the home 's only major addition . Craigie 's financial situation at the time of his death in 1819 forced his widow Elizabeth Craigie to take in boarders . It was as a boarder that Henry Wadsworth Longfellow came into the home . He became its owner in 1843 , when his father @-@ in @-@ law Nathan Appleton purchased it as a wedding gift . He lived in the home until his death in 1882 .

The last family to live in the home was the Longfellow family , who established the Longfellow Trust in 1913 for its preservation . In 1972 , the home and all of its furnishings was donated to , and was made part of , the National Park Service . The home , which represents the mid @-@ Georgian architectural style , is seasonally open to the public .

= = History = =

= = = Early history = = =

The original house was built in 1759 for Loyalist John Vassall who inherited the land along what was called the King 's Highway in Cambridge when he was 21 . He demolished the structure that had stood there and built a new mansion . The home became his summer residence with his wife Elizabeth (Oliver) and children until 1774 . His wife 's brother was Thomas Oliver , then royal lieutenant governor of Massachusetts , who in 1766 moved to Cambridge and built the nearby mansion now known as Elmwood . On the eve of the American Revolution in September 1774 , they fled Boston .

In the days after the Battles of Lexington and Concord , the home was used as a temporary hospital . Colonel John Glover and the Marblehead Regiment occupied the house as their temporary barracks in June 1775 . Initially , General George Washington , Commander @-@ in @-@ Chief of the newly formed Continental Army , used the Benjamin Wadsworth House at Harvard College as his headquarters , but decided he needed more space for his staff . Washington moved into the Vassall House on July 16 , 1775 , and used it as his headquarters and home until he departed on April 4 , 1776 . During the Siege of Boston , he found the view of the Charles River from the house particularly useful . The home was shared with several aide @-@ de @-@ camps , including colonel Robert H. Harrison . During his time there , Washington was visited by John Adams and Abigail Adams , Benedict Arnold , Henry Knox , and Nathanael Greene . In his study , Washington also confronted Dr. Benjamin Church with evidence that he was a spy . It was in this house that Washington received a poem written by Phillis Wheatley , the first published African @-@ American poet . " If you should ever come to Cambridge " , he wrote to her , " I shall be happy to see a person so favored by the Muses " .

Martha Washington joined her husband in December 1775 and stayed until March 1776 . She brought with her Washington 's nephew George Lewis as well as her son John Parke Custis and his wife Eleanor Calvert . On Twelfth Night in January 1776 , the couple celebrated their wedding anniversary in the home . Mrs. Washington reported to a friend that " some days we have [heard] a number of cannon and shells from Boston and Bunkers Hill " . She used the front parlor as her

personal reception room , still furnished with the English @-@ made furniture left behind by the Vassalls . The Washingtons also had several servants , including a tailor named Giles Alexander , and several slaves including " Billy " Lee . They also entertained very often . Surviving household accounts show that the family purchased large quantities of beef , lamb , wild ducks , geese , fresh fish , plums , peaches , barrels of cider , gallons of brandy and rum , and 217 bottles of Madeira wine purchased in a two @-@ week period .

Washington left the house in April 1776 . Nathaniel Tracy , who had made a great fortune as one of the earliest and most successful privateers under Washington , owned the house from 1781 to 1786 . He then went bankrupt and sold the house to Thomas Russell , a wealthy Boston merchant , who in turn occupied it until 1791 .

= = = Craigie family and boarders = = =

Andrew Craigie bought the house in 1791 ; Craigie had been the first Apothecary General of the American army . In his ballroom , Craigie hosted Prince Edward , Duke of Kent and Strathearn , the father of Queen Victoria . While living in the home , he married the daughter of a Nantucket clergyman , 22 @-@ year @-@ old Elizabeth Craigie , 17 years her elder . Craigie overspent in trying to restore the home and , when he died in 1819 , he left his wife Elizabeth in great debt ; Mrs. Craigie took in boarders to support herself , most often people connected to nearby Harvard University . Short @-@ term residents of the home included Jared Sparks , Edward Everett , and Joseph Emerson Worcester . Sparks , who moved into the home in April 1833 , was then preparing a biography of Washington based on original documents . He recorded in his journal : " It is a singular circumstance that , while I am engaged in preparing for the press the letters of General Washington which he wrote at Cambridge after taking command of the American army , I should occupy the same rooms that he did at that time . " Another lodger was Sarah Lowell , an aunt of James Russell Lowell .

Longfellow moved to Cambridge to take a job at Harvard College as Smith Professor of Modern Languages and of Belles Lettres . A friend , Cornelius Conway Felton , recommended that Longfellow rent a room on the third floor of the home of a Professor Stearns on Kirkland Street ; Longfellow stayed there for the 1836 ? 1837 academic year . He disliked the place , however , and sought out better accommodations . Beginning in the summer of 1837 , he rented rooms on the east side of the second floor of the home on Brattle Street , now owned by Elizabeth Craigie . At first , Mrs. Craigie thought he was a student at Harvard and refused to rent to him until he convinced her that he was a professor as well as the author of the book she was reading , *Outre @-@ Mer* .

Longfellow 's new landlady had earned a reputation for being eccentric and often wore a turban . In the 1840s , Longfellow wrote about an incident when canker @-@ worms were devastating the elm trees on the property . Mrs. Craigie " would sit by the open window and let them crawl over her white turban . She refused to have the trees protected against them & said , Why , sir , they have as good a right to live as we ? they are our fellow worms " . The maid at the time , a woman named Miriam , served Longfellow his meals in his room . Longfellow called her " the giantess " .

Upon moving into the home in August 1837 , Longfellow wrote to his father , " The new rooms are above all praise , only the do want painting . " The rooms Longfellow rented were the same ones once used personally by George Washington while it was his headquarters . He proudly wrote to his friend George Washington Greene : " I live in a great house which looks like an Italian villa : have two large rooms opening into each other . They were once Gen. Washington 's chambers " .

The first major works Longfellow composed in the home were *Hyperion* , a prose romance likely inspired by his pursuit for the affections of Frances Appleton , and *Voices of the Night* , a poetry collection which included " A Psalm of Life " . 20th @-@ century literary scholar Edward Wagenknecht notes that it was these early years at the Craigie House which marked " the real beginning of Longfellow 's literary career " . His landlady , Elizabeth Craigie , died in 1841 .

= = = Longfellow family = = =

After Elizabeth Craigie 's death , the entire property was leased by Joseph Emerson Worcester from her heirs ; he in turn rented the eastern half of the house to Longfellow . In 1843 , the house was purchased by Nathan Appleton , who gave the house to Longfellow as a wedding gift when Longfellow married Nathan 's daughter Frances . He paid \$ 10 @, @ 000 for the home . Frances wrote to her brother Thomas Gold Appleton on August 30 , 1843 : " We have decided to let Father purchase this grand old mansion " , especially after Longfellow 's friend George Washington Greene reminded them " how noble an inheritance this is ? where Washington dwelt in every room " . Longfellow was proud of the connection to Washington and in 1844 purchased a bust of the home 's former occupant , a copy of the sculpture by Jean @-@ Antoine Houdon . Worcester and his wife became tenants under Longfellow in the western half of the house until their new home a few doors down was completed that spring . Mrs. Longfellow wrote on May 5 , 1844 , " Worcester family left us in complete possession [of the house] , with rooms nicely cleaned , and uncarpeted stairs and entries " .

Nathan Appleton also purchased the land across the street , as Longfellow 's mother wrote , " so that their view of the River Charles may not be intercepted " . In all , Longfellow 's gift included nine acres of land .

Longfellow lived in the house for the next four decades , producing many of his most famous poems including " Paul Revere 's Ride " and " The Village Blacksmith " , as well as longer works such as Evangeline , The Song of Hiawatha , and The Courtship of Miles Standish . In all , while living in this house , Longfellow published eleven poetry collections , two novels , three epic poems , and several plays as well as a translation of Dante Alighieri 's Divine Comedy . Even as the poet 's popularity increased , Longfellow and his wife most often referred to the home as " Craigie House " or " Craigie Castle " .

Longfellow oversaw the creation of a formal garden and his wife oversaw decorating the interior . Mrs. Longfellow purchased several items from Tiffany 's in New York as well as \$ 350 worth of carpets . They installed central heating in 1850 and gaslight in 1853 . During their time in the house , the Longfellos hosted famous artists , writers , politicians and other luminaries who were attracted to Longfellow 's hospitality and fame . Specific visitors included Charles Dickens , William Makepeace Thackeray , singer Jenny Lind , and actress Fanny Kemble . Dom Pedro II , Emperor of Brazil also visited the house privately and requested the company of Longfellow , Ralph Waldo Emerson , Oliver Wendell Holmes , Sr. , and James Russell Lowell . Mr. and Mrs. Longfellow also raised their three daughters and two sons in the home . Longfellow and his wife stayed in the home until their respective deaths but spent their summers after 1850 in Nahant , Massachusetts .

Longfellow often wrote in his first @-@ floor study , formerly Washington 's office , surrounded by portraits of his friends , including charcoal portraits by Eastman Johnson of Charles Sumner , Ralph Waldo Emerson , Nathaniel Hawthorne , and Cornelius Conway Felton . Longfellow would write either at the center table , at the desk , or in the armchair by the fire .

Fanny Longfellow died in the home in July 1861 after her dress accidentally caught fire ; her husband attempted to quell the flames , managing to keep her face from burning . Longfellow himself was burned on his own face and was scarred badly enough that he began growing a beard to hide it .

= = Preservation and current use = =

Longfellow died in 1882 and his daughter Alice Longfellow was the last of his children to live in the home . In 1913 , the surviving Longfellow children established the Longfellow House Trust to preserve the home as well as its view to the Charles River . Their intention was to preserve the home as a memorial to Longfellow and Washington and to showcase the property as a " prime example of Georgian architecture " .

In 1962 , the trust successfully lobbied for the house to become a national historic landmark . In 1972 , the Trust donated the property to the National Park Service and it became the Longfellow National Historic Site and open to the public as a house museum . On display are many of the original nineteenth century furnishings , artwork , over 10 @, @ 000 books owned by Longfellow ,

and the dining table around which many important visitors gathered . Everything on display was owned by the Longfellow family . The site was renamed to Longfellow House ? Washington 's Headquarters National Historic Site on December 22 , 2010 , to ensure that the connection to Washington was not lost in the memory of the general public .

The site also possesses some 750 @, @ 000 original documents relevant to the former occupants of the home . These archives are open to scholarly research by appointment .

Across the street from the Longfellow House ? Washington 's Headquarters National Historic Site is the municipal park known as Longfellow Park . In the middle sits a memorial by sculptor Daniel Chester French dedicated in 1914 . In addition to a bust of the poet , a carved bas @-@ relief by Henry Bacon depicts the famous characters Miles Standish , Sandalphon , the village blacksmith , the Spanish student , Evangeline , and Hiawatha . The monument is similar to one French designed for the street that leads to Sunnyside , the former home of Washington Irving .

= = Architecture and landscape = =

The structure of the original house was built in the Georgian architectural style . The pair of large pilasters that frame the facade expressed John Vassall 's aristocratic background . In 1791 , Andrew Craigie added the two side piazzas and the two @-@ story back ell and also expanded the library into a twenty by thirty foot ballroom with its own entrance . During the Longfellow family 's time in the home , very few structural changes were made . As Frances Longfellow wrote , " we are full of plans & projects with no desire , however , to change a feature of the old countenance which Washington has rendered sacred " .

The Longfellow House ? Washington 's Headquarters National Historic Site is noted for its garden on the northeast end of the property . Henry Wadsworth Longfellow oversaw the creation of the original garden , shaped as a lyre , shortly after his wedding . In 1845 , he began refurbishing the garden in earnest and imported trees from England with help from Asa Gray . These trees included " a number of evergreens , among them a cedar of Lebanon and pines from the Himalayas , Norway , Switzerland and Oregon " . The lyre shape proved impractical and a new design was made with the help of a landscape architect named Richard Dolben in 1847 . The new design was a square surrounding a circle that was cut into four tear @-@ shaped garden beds outlined by trimmed boxwood . Mrs. Longfellow referred to the shape as a " Persian rug " .

After her father 's death in 1882 , Alice Longfellow commissioned two of America 's first female landscape architects , Martha Brookes Hutcheson and Ellen Biddle Shipman , to redesign the formal garden in the Colonial Revival style . The garden was recently restored by an organization called Friends of the Longfellow House , which completed the final stage of its reconstruction , the historic pergola , in 2008 .

= = Replicas = =

For a time , Longfellow 's home was one of the most photographed and most recognizable homes in the United States . In the early twentieth century Sears , Roebuck and Company sold scaled @-@ down blueprints of the home so that anyone could build their own version of Longfellow 's home . Several replicas of Longfellow 's home appear throughout the United States . One replica , simply called Longfellow House , still exists in Minneapolis . Originally built by businessman Robert " Fish " Jones , it currently serves as an information center for the Minneapolis Park System and is on the Grand Rounds Scenic Byway . A full @-@ scale replica of the house was built in Great Barrington , Massachusetts at the turn of the 20th century . This building is the only remaining full @-@ scale replica of Longfellow 's original home maintaining all the original historical character .