New Research Sheds Light on Cyrus Dallin’s Activism for Native Rights
by Heather Leavell, Director/Curator

In April, I presented a talk about Cyrus Dallin’s activism on behalf of Indigenous peoples. This program was co-sponsored by the Arlington Historical Society and the Dallin Museum, and was the culmination of two years of research. The following highlights reveal the broad scope of Dallin’s activism and the passion and focus he brought to this work.

Growing up in Utah Territory, Dallin witnessed the Ute’s way of life change from that of a relatively free people to one of forced confinement, starvation and disease on the barren Uintah Reservation. He was deeply disturbed by these and other crimes perpetrated against Native peoples.

In speaking engagements and interviews, Dallin was fierce in his criticism of America’s colonial policies. In The World’s Work magazine he proclaimed, “Every Indian war was started by the whites.” During a lecture in Cambridge he said that the U.S. “deliberately and knowingly tricked them [Indians] out of their lands by making treaties... which we never had the slightest intention of filling.” In The Boston Globe he stated, “The attitude of white people toward Indians in general is one of supreme arrogance.”

Throughout the 1920s and 30s Dallin became involved in efforts to reform government policies that suppressed Native rights. In 1923, he was invited to speak at the Algonquin Indian Council of New England’s inaugural meeting in Providence, R.I. He talked about the need for Native communities to band together to fight oppressive measures in Congress. The Council appointed him as the head of a “committee of one” to “investigate proposed Indian measures [in Congress] on behalf of the Algonquin people.” Dallin served in this capacity for the Council until at least 1927.

Also during this period, Dallin chaired the Massachusetts Branch of the Eastern Association of Indian Affairs. This organization was founded to fight the Bursum Bill, federal legislation that would have authorized the acquisition of Pueblo lands by squatters. The Eastern Association, along with the New Mexico Association (the western branch of the organization), the American Indian Defense Association, and the All-Indian Pueblo Council, successfully lobbied to defeat the Bursum Bill in 1922. Following this victory, Dallin

“[The reservation system is] a diabolical invention in destroying human beings,” Cyrus Dallin, The Boston Globe, Nov. 6, 1929

and others saw that the needs of Native people reached far beyond one piece of legislation. In 1923, these groups collaborated on a set of recommendations to the Department of the Interior aimed at reversing policies of assimilation. This “New Indian Policy,” called for an educational system focused on “developing rather than destroying pride of race;” vast improvements

Continued inside
Sunday, August 5, 2018, 5-8:30 pm
Woburn Country Club
5 Country Club Rd., Woburn, MA 01801
Tickets: $60, $75 at door
Tickets are on sale now for this fun summer evening celebration to benefit the Dallin Museum! Experience the tastes, sights, and sounds of a Bal-Musette Parisien (French social dance) in celebration of the city that launched Cyrus Dallin’s career as an internationally acclaimed sculptor. The Soiree will feature French popular music performed by Musette Suzette and French-inspired hors d’oeuvres, desserts, and signature cocktails. Arlington Selectman Kevin Greeley will emcee our Soiree auction. Proceeds provide crucial support for museum programs, collections care and operations.
Purchase tickets at www.dallin.org or send a check payable to the Cyrus Dallin Art Museum, Inc. to the Museum at 611 Mass. Ave., Arlington, MA 02474

To become a sponsor, donate to our auctions, or buy tickets visit www.dallin.org or contact us at hileavell@dallin.org, 781-641-0747. Thank you!

Don’t miss our Summer Soiree online auction!
Incredible offerings include oceanside getaways; museum, theater, and music tickets; fine art and collectibles; restaurant certificates; dance, cooking and art classes; fine wines and foods; and much more! New items will continue to be added over the two-week period. Bid early and often!

PHOTOS Left: Rinko Tokushige and Samer Obrien of Musette Suzette.
Center: Chuck Luca, Janine Danielson, Laura Luca, Elaine Gouve, Right: Glenn Doherty, Barbara Milhender, Geri Tremblay, Pat McCabe

Thank you to our Generous Soiree Sponsors

Great Spirits
Dan Johnson & Faye Kohonen
Ken, Betsy & Jean Dallin Doherty
James & Misty Corey

Visionaries
Cherron
Mirak Automotive Group
Winchester Co-Operative Bank

Altruists
Century Bank
Wadsworth Savings Bank
Anne Ferguson & Peter Drench

Sustainers
David Kubisiak
The Dallin Family: Gail Adams & Wayne Coste, Glenn Doherty & Barbara Milhender, Karen & Ken Fraker, Delphia Hibbard, and Denice Wheeler

Supporters

This winter, the museum received a $1000 grant from the Arlington Cultural Council to restore two Cyrus Dallin artworks: a circa 1930 oil on canvas painting of the artist’s backyard entitled Landscape with Rocks and Birch, and a 1927 plaster portrait bust of Charles Lindbergh entitled The Vision.

The museum purchased the painting at auction in 2016. It is being cleaned and re-framed by Peter Williams; a Boston art conservator specializing in 19th and 20th century American paintings and picture frames.

The Vision was donated to the Dallin Museum last year by Benjamin Covell, who had inherited the work from his grandparents. The bust was restored last January by sculptor Robert Shure of Skylight Studios in Woburn. The process involved the removal of modern paint, surface cleaning, and infilling of damaged areas.

Fascinated by the great innovators of his time, Cyrus Dallin created The Vision just a few months after the Lindbergh’s nonstop solo flight across the Atlantic. In his 1927 review, Boston Globe art critic A.J. Philpott described the idealized qualities of Lindbergh’s facial features: “The eyes are the eyes of a dreamer; the mouth and chin show that kind of determination which Lindbergh displayed in his flight. It’s the kind of head the old Grecian sculptors loved to put on their gods” Stay tuned for details of an unveiling celebration this fall! We are deeply grateful to the Arlington Cultural Council for making this project possible.

New Dallin Museum Consultants
We are excited to announce new partnerships with Nancy Blanton and Megan Bisciglia! This fall, Nancy will begin developing a group tour program for the museum. Megan is assisting with the development of a corporate membership program and serving as our newsletter editor.

Nancy Blanton has lived in the Boston area her whole life and is passionate about the New England art scene, finding her membership to the Museum Council of the MFA, Boston to be especially enjoyable and educational. She frequently travels throughout the New England area to enjoy hiking, biking, culinary adventures, and visiting museums.

Megan Bisciglia is a freelance marketing consultant primarily advising musicians and other art organizations in the Greater Boston Area. She works with her clients to create brands that highlight authentic individuality. Current and past clients include Boston Lyric Opera, Boston Opera Collaborative, and Original Gravity Concert Series.

www.notablecommunications.com

Sneak peek!

Robert Shure of Skylight Studios in Woburn. The process involved the removal of modern paint, surface cleaning, and infilling of damaged areas.

New Dallin Museum Consultants
We are excited to announce new partnerships with Nancy Blanton and Megan Bisciglia! This fall, Nancy will begin developing a group tour program for the museum. Megan is assisting with the development of a corporate membership program and serving as our newsletter editor.

Nancy Blanton has lived in the Boston area her whole life and is passionate about the New England art scene, finding her membership to the Museum Council of the MFA, Boston to be especially enjoyable and educational. She frequently travels throughout the New England area to enjoy hiking, biking, culinary adventures, and visiting museums.

Megan Bisciglia is a freelance marketing consultant primarily advising musicians and other art organizations in the Greater Boston Area. She works with her clients to create brands that highlight authentic individuality. Current and past clients include Boston Lyric Opera, Boston Opera Collaborative, and Original Gravity Concert Series.

www.notablecommunications.com

MC Mass Cultural Council

Coming Events
Saturday, September 15 | 10 am–4 pm
Art on the Green

October
Dallin Museum 20th anniversary celebration. Stay tuned for details!

Thursday, November 29
The Indigenous People of Mendonory
Time and Location TBD

www.facebook.com/dallinmuseum
Dallin’s Activism (continued)

known as the Indian New Deal. The IRA was passed in 1934. Dallin played an influential role in the effort, holding such leadership positions as chair, president, and vice president of the Massachusetts Branch of the Eastern Association Arts Fund exhibits in the Boston area. Established by the Eastern and New Mexico Associations in 1925, the IAF was dedicated to the preservation and revival of Indigenous arts, particularly Pueblo pottery. Organizers mounted

“In Indian genius in painting, sculpture, music, and literature can make a genuine contribution to the sum total of Americanism.” New Indian Policy

of Indian Affairs.

In 1933, the Eastern Association and other advocacy groups merged into one organization known today as the Association of American Indian Affairs. The AAIA has helped establish such important laws as the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act and the Indian Child Welfare Act. The AAIA is now run entirely by Indigenous people.

Dallin also helped organize Indian traveling exhibitions to develop a market for this work. The goal was to assist tribes in building economic self-sufficiency and secure a federal appropriation to support the Native creative economy.

While more research on Cyrus Dallin’s activism is necessary, these new insights expand our understanding of his significance as a pioneer of the role of the artist as an agent of social change.

Restoration of Menotomy Hunter and Robbins Memorial Flagstaff by Megan Bisceglia

extensive cleaning and new protective coatings. The Hunter’s original verdigris (green) patina had faded and the top of the bow was missing. The base of the Flagstaff was cracked and chipped in multiple areas, most notably on the eagles’ beaks, and the top section of the Minuteman’s rifle had broken off. The conservators consulted historic photographs to guide their work. We are grateful to the Town of Arlington for restoring these beautiful sculptures for our community to enjoy!

Last spring, Arlington’s Assistant Town Manager Jim Feeney led an effort to restore two of Cyrus Dallin’s most masterful public works: Menotomy Hunter and Robbins Memorial Flagstaff. Conservators from Skylight Studios in Woburn conducted the restoration, and Dallin Museum staff consulted on the project. The results are beautiful and return the sculptures to near original condition. Both the Hunter and Flagstaff required

Menotomy Hunter during restoration

Menotomy Hunter after restoration

Robbins Memorial Flagstaff before restoration

Robbins Memorial Flagstaff after restoration
MUSEUM EVENTS RECAP

1. **Intro to Zentangle** | March 18
   Attendees loved learning this creative way to relax and destress with certified Zentangle teacher Katie Crommett. Zentangle is an easy-to-learn method of drawing beautiful structured patterns. A great way to center and ground yourself no matter where you are!

2. **Patriots’ Day Reading** | April 15
   In honor of Patriots’ Day, Dallin Museum friends Dan McNichol and Stephen Hines read Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s famous poem *Paul Revere’s Ride* in Whittemore Park. Visitors were then invited to view Dallin’s plaster of Paul Revere and learn why it took seven models and fifty-seven years before the statue was finally dedicated at the Old North Church.

3. **Sculpture in Service of Social Justice** | April 24
   Museum director and curator Heather Leavell presented a talk on the ways in which Dallin employed his position as an internationally acclaimed sculptor to fight the oppression of Native people. This talk was co-sponsored with the Arlington Historical Society.

4. **Skylight Studio Tour** | May 6
   Winners of last year’s Summer Soiree auction were treated to a tour of Skylight Studios in Woburn, Mass., the workspace of Robert Shure, one of America’s most renowned contemporary figurative sculptors. Bob shared stories about his many commissions, including his memorial to George Washington at the Washington Monument, his portrait of Ted Williams at the entrance to the Ted Williams Tunnel in Boston, and his work removing the time capsule from the gilded lion atop Boston’s Old State House.

5. **Mystic Brass Ensemble** | June 2
   Local residents enjoyed a free concert in Whittemore Park performed by the Mystic Brass Ensemble. MBE showcases original works and arrangements for brass, with a focus this past spring on French Impressionist music. Founded and conducted by Andrew Heath.