



ART MUSEUM  
DALLIN  
CYRUS

Cyrus Dallin Art Museum  
611 Massachusetts Avenue  
Arlington, MA 02474

### Plan a visit!

The Cyrus Dallin Art Museum is located in the heart of Arlington, just six miles from Boston, along the route of Paul Revere's ride and the April 1775 Revolutionary Battle Road.

The Dallin Museum is open Friday through Sunday, 12:00 - 4:00 pm. Admission is a requested donation of \$5 per person.



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# THE SCOUT

Summer 2019

CYRUS DALLIN  
ART MUSEUM  
NEWSLETTER

## Mrs. Hall's Letter By Geraldine Tremblay

The Dallin Museum is thrilled to announce the acquisition of a rare oil portrait by Cyrus Dallin entitled *Mrs. Hall's Letter*. The painting was purchased at auction with the financial support of Andrew and Irene Jay of Charlestown, Mass.

In 1884, at the age of 22, Dallin painted Mrs. Hall during a crucial period in his early career. That same year, the third model for the *Paul Revere Monument* was officially accepted by the city of Boston, ruffling the feathers of Bostonians who preferred the commission to be awarded to a more established and experienced sculptor.

The identity of woman in this painting had been unknown until archival research revealed her to be Mrs. Susan Frothingham Hall. Her likeness in the painting closely resembles a photo of Mrs. Hall from a Dallin family album in the Museum's collection. The photo is signed, "With love and good wishes from Mrs. G.V. Hall 1884."

The Halls became an integral part of Dallin's life during his early years in



Susan Frothingham Hall, 1884



*Mrs. Hall's Letter*, Cyrus Dallin, oil on canvas 1884

Boston. When Dallin left Truman Bartlett's studio due to their contentious relationship, he was unable to afford other living arrangements. His good friend, painter Frederick Bound Hall, invited him to stay at the home of his parents, Gustavus and Susan, who lived at 57 High Street in Charlestown. During the several years he stayed in the Hall home, Dallin produced a number of portraits of family members. One such portrait, a small plaster of Mr. and Mrs. Hall's five-year-old granddaughter, received critical praise at the Massachusetts Institute Fair exhibit in 1882.

In a letter to his parents dated Jan. 21, 1883, Dallin mentioned a portrait he was painting of Mrs. Hall. Several weeks later he wrote that he had "...finished the portrait of Mrs. Hall which is 12 in. by 20 in." These dimensions exactly match those of *Mrs. Hall's Letter*. In 1885, Dallin wrote his parents that he was painting a portrait of Miss Hall, which was to be his birthday gift to Mrs. Hall. He described this full

length figure of a girl as "the best thing I have done in the way of painting."

While living with the Halls, Dallin also painted his fiancé, Vittoria Colonna Murray. In an 1885 letter to his mother, he described his work on a "...study portrait of Colonna in oil color. I shall work on it every Saturday as that is all the time she has." Dallin maintained his relationship with the Hall family long after he left their home. When he and Vittoria were married 1891, Frederick served as Dallin's best man, and one of the ushers was Fredrick's brother Thomas.

The Dallin Museum is delighted to have this rare oil portrait. (All thirty-eight paintings in Dallin's retrospective exhibit at the Boston Art Club in 1934 were landscape paintings.) We would be ecstatic to locate the paintings of Miss Hall & Vittoria Colonna Dallin. More portraits may be hiding in plain sight! ✍️

Special thanks to Sarah Burks, Andrew Jay & David Noonan for their contributions.

## Appeal to the Great Spirit Reexamined

On March 3, 2019, Dallin Museum director Heather Leavell took part in a symposium at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston about the implications of Dallin's *Appeal to the Great Spirit* as a public commemoration of Native American history and experience. Visitors to the Dallin Museum experience *Appeal* as the sculptor's personal reflection on fellow humans that he admired, and a public commemoration of their resilience in the face of ongoing subjugation. Without proper context, however, the statue may have negative associations for viewers. Some MFA visitors have expressed concern that the statue reinforces stereotypical views of Native peoples and the narrative of the "vanishing Indian" - the belief that Indigenous peoples were destined to sacrifice their lives and their lands as part of the natural process of human progress.

In her remarks, Leavell attempted to answer the question: Is it possible for *Appeal to the Great Spirit* to convey the meaning that Dallin intended in today's world? She asserted that for viewers to understand Dallin's message, the MFA must provide interpretation that places this statue within the appropriate context. Leavell described the aspects of the Dallin's life and values on which the Museum's interpretation is based: his



Dallin Museum Director Heather Leavell speaking at the Museum of Fine Arts

formative experiences growing up among the Ute; his personal political views as expressed through his body of work and public criticism of government policies, and his extensive reform work.

She also stressed that the perspectives of others, particularly those of Native peoples, are also important to the statue's interpretation. "By exploring a range of views," said Leavell, "we can better understand the ways in which Dallin's *Appeal* continues to shape perceptions of Native peoples of the past

and present."

For the MFA, this symposium was an important first step in providing its members with a fuller understanding of this iconic statue and the sculptor responsible for it. 🍷

### Couldn't attend the program?

The video of *Appeal to the Great Spirit Reexamined* is available for viewing on the MFA's YouTube page.



Andrew and Irene Jay unwrapping Mrs. Hall's Letter

## Meet the Donors Behind Mrs. Hall's Letter

The acquisition of Mrs. Hall's letter was made possible with the generous support of Andrew and Irene Jay. In fact, Andrew, who is a member of the Friends of the Cyrus Dallin Art Museum, spotted the painting on an online auction listing and alerted Museum staff. He reflects:

*Having had the pleasure of living in Arlington for several years, we enjoyed the richness of the community and see the Dallin Museum as being an important aspect of the fabric of the community. While he is best known for his sculpture, he was an accomplished painter as well. We were lucky to find this painting in New York. We were particularly impressed with the scholarship within the Dallin team as they quickly pinned down many details around the painting. Irene and I are delighted to support the Museum in growing its collection.*

## Arlington Approves \$540,000 for Whittemore Park Revitalization Project

By Heather Leavell

Last month, Town Meeting approved \$540,000 in Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding for the first phase of a \$1.4 million project to revitalize Whittemore Park. This exciting project will transform the vastly underutilized green space in front of the Dallin Museum into a focal point for recreation, civic functions, art, and culture.

Throughout Spring and Fall 2018 the Arlington Department of Planning and Community Development held a series of public forums and conducted an online survey to gather community input on the park design. The planning process was guided by a working group comprised of consultants from Crowley



Proposed design for central green space in Whittemore Park

Mystic Street to extend the lawn area; additional seating throughout the park; an accessible path adjacent to the railroad tracks with a raised granite curb

*"The revitalization of Whittemore Park will provide the Dallin Museum with many opportunities to extend our reach beyond the museum's walls."*

Cottrell, LLC, property and business owners in Arlington Center, and representatives from the Arlington Historical Commission, Arlington Historical Districts, Dallin Museum, Cutter Gallery, and Chamber of Commerce.

Highlights of the final design include a new front lawn and walkway around the perimeter of the park; regrading along

engraved with historical information; a paved program space to the right of the museum; and a new pedestrian plaza with amphitheater-style steps at the rear of the building. Work on the first phase of this project will begin sometime next year. During this phase, dead and invasive tree species will be removed, new trees planted, the perimeter path will be constructed, and other

improvements to the landscaping will be made.

The revitalization of Whittemore Park will provide the Dallin Museum with many opportunities to extend our reach beyond the museum's walls. We envision new and innovative outdoor programs and deeper, collaborative relationships with Arlington cultural organizations. We are grateful to the Town of Arlington for their dedication to transforming Whittemore Park into a more welcoming, useful, and enjoyable space for all. 🍷

Learn more about this project at [www.arlingtonma.gov/departments/planning-community-development/](http://www.arlingtonma.gov/departments/planning-community-development/)



Susan and Gustav Hall Residence, 57 High St., Charlestown, MA where Cyrus Dallin lived in the 1880s.

## Mark Your Calendars!

**Saturdays through September 7, 12-7 pm**

*Beer Garden in Whittemore Park hosted by Aeronaut Brewing Company*

Take a photo with Cyrus and other Museum fun in the park! (Museum activities will take place on select Saturdays. Dates will be advertised in the local paper and at [dallin.org](http://dallin.org).)

**Saturday, September 14, 10-4 pm**

*Art on the Green*

Our popular annual event featuring local artisans, live music, book signings, and family activities in the museum.

# \$10,000 Gift in Memory of Cyrus Dallin and Joan Pearson Watkins

By Heather Leavell



Joan Pearson Watkins, 1950s

It is with tremendous gratitude that we announce the receipt of a \$10,000 unrestricted gift from the Joan Pearson Watkins Revocable Trust. “I want to continue with what help that I can to honor the memory of Cyrus and Joan Watkins,” said Jonathan Fairbanks, Trustee of the Watkins Revocable Trust. “Joan was a talented potter, devoted educator, and avid collector and proponent of the arts. I know that it would please Joan to assist with the Dallin Museum and its collection.”

During her years as a professional ceramicist, Joan Pearson Watkins (1924-2013) exhibited her prize winning work in international venues, headed the Ceramics Department at the California School of Fine Arts, starred in a popular televised pottery instruction program, and conducted groundbreaking Tiffany and Fulbright-funded research on traditional pottery techniques.

Joan and her second husband, famed historian Malcolm Watkins (curator at the Smithsonian and first curator of Old

Sturbridge Village) were passionate advocates for, and collectors of, American and Japanese decorative arts. As a consultant for the Smithsonian, Joan was instrumental in elevating the stature of the decorative arts through innovative exhibits for the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C.

A dear friend of Joan and Malcom, Jonathan Fairbanks, is an accomplished sculptor, painter, educator, historian, and museum professional. Among his many accomplishments is his founding of the American Decorative Arts and Sculpture Department at the MFA, Boston, where he served as curator from 1970-1999. As Executive Director of the Fuller Craft Museum in Brockton, Mass. from 2012-2017, he expanded the Museum’s collection, programming, and reputation to a new level of prominence, helping to reclaim its position as an influential advocate for contemporary crafts.

Jonathan has been a champion of the Dallin Museum for many years, thanks in part to a special connection between the Fairbanks and Dallin families. In 1890, when his grandfather, Utah painter John B. Fairbanks, went to Paris to study, Dallin extended a much appreciated helping hand. He invited John to stay with him until the painter found accommodations. “I understand that this was a typically generous way that Dallin had with everyone,” said Jonathan.

The gift from the Joan Pearson Watkins Revocable Trust will be used to advance the Dallin Museum’s strategic

goals for the coming year, including the restoration of *Mrs. Hall’s Letter* and the production of interpretive panels reflecting our new research on Dallin’s extensive activism for Native civil rights. ❧



**Left to Right: Daniel J. Fairbanks, Donna Fairbanks, and Jonathan Leo Fairbanks at the unveiling of a portrait bust entitled *Young Cyrus Dallin* sculpted by Daniel (Jonathan’s nephew) in 2013.**

Daniel Fairbanks modeled this bust on stage at Arlington Town Hall while Jonathan simultaneously presented a lecture on Cyrus Dallin’s legacy to a captivated audience of nearly 200 people. The event was held in 2012 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Dallin’s birth. Joan Pearson Watkins was in attendance that evening. Jonathan recalled that she was no longer driving at the time and managed to get to Arlington from her residence in Middleton, Mass. via public transportation. Not an easy task!



*Serving you is our life’s work.*

**Thank you to Winchester Co-operative Bank for their dedicated support to the Dallin Museum and for sponsoring this newsletter.**

*For more information on sponsoring our quarterly newsletter, please email us at [info@dallin.org](mailto:info@dallin.org).*

# Highlights from the Gift Shop!



**Massasoit Ousamequin**  
\$45

Own your own Cyrus Dallin sculpture! These 6” plaster busts based on Dallin’s *Massasoit Ousamequin* (Plymouth, MA) were produced exclusively for the Museum by sculptor Robert Shure and his team at Skylight Studios in Woburn, Mass. The

design is based on an original cast of the statue by P.P. Caproni and Brother, the Boston plaster casting firm that reproduced Dallin’s work for many collectors in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Quantities are limited!

**Appeal to the Great Spirit Collector’s Coin**

\$6 with clear protective case, \$7.50 with ornament case



Produced by Golden State Mint, this beautiful 1-ounce copper bullion coin is the perfect gift for Dallin enthusiasts, museum supporters, and coin collectors.

To purchase items from the gift shop, visit the Museum Friday-Sunday, between 12-4 pm or contact us at [info@dallin.org](mailto:info@dallin.org), 781-641-0747. Proceeds support Museum programs and collections care.

## Museum Happenings



Larry Slotnick reading “Paul Revere’s Ride” on Patriots Day

We have had a busy spring at the Dallin Museum! Members of History Camp and the Aberjona Book Club in Winchester enjoyed private tours of the galleries. Our Patriot’s Day event featured readings of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s famous poem “Paul Revere’s Ride” in Whittemore Park. On Mother’s Day weekend, we extended free admission to all moms and offered a tour focusing on Dallin’s portrait of Julia Ward Howe, whose campaign for a Mother’s Peace Day in 1873 led to Mother’s Day as we know it. And on May 18th, we held the inaugural meeting of the Friends of the

Cyrus Dallin Art Museum (a stewardship committee whose members are dedicating their unique talents and relationships to move the Museum forward) and celebrated the restoration of the Winfield Robbins Memorial Garden in Arlington Center with a garden party!



Aberjona Book Club of Winchester



Friends of the Cyrus Dallin Art Museum L to R: Ted Lamson, Marsha Lamson, Don Tremblay, Ken Doherty, Grant Bennett, Stephen Gilligan, Geri Tremblay, Betsey Doherty, Coleen Bennett, and Dan Johnson



Alan McClennan as Nathan Robbins addressing guests at the garden party celebrating the restoration of the Robbins Memorial Garden