

CAUSARUM COGNITIO:  
THE ARCHITECTURE, COLLECTIONS, AND SOCIAL AGENCY OF THREE AMERICAN  
ATHENAEA: REDWOOD, BOSTON, AND CALTECH

by

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In loving memory of Virginia Perrotta Malloy, Donna-Marie Malloy Whelan,  
and Herbert Charles Curry

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Virginia Malloy Curry, MA

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The inspiration for this historical and aesthetic study of select American Athenaea came from doctoral seminars in which Dr. Brettell tasked his students with examining and presenting in-depth analyses of the origins of university museums in Europe and then in the United States in order to develop a concept for his vision of a future museum that would house the Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History on the campus of The University of Texas at Dallas. By virtue of Dr. Brettell's commitment to my study, I was fortunate to receive financial support from the Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History. This enabled me to visit and examine each of the three Athenaea profiled in this study as well as several others.

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CAUSARUM COGNITIO: THE ARCHITECTURE, COLLECTIONS, AND SOCIAL  
AGENCY OF AMERICAN ATHENAEA  
THREE CASE STUDIES: REDWOOD, BOSTON, AND CALTECH

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Is the athenaeum an adaptable concept in the twenty-first century university environment? What evidence exists to conclude that it contributes to a discursive community? This dissertation explores the legacy of the concept of the athenaeum in America and examines the organically formed social circles who share an interest in continuing discourse, often within multiple disciplines, and who contribute to their communities by modeling habits and behaviors reflecting their desire for improvement of themselves and their communities.

From before and since our nation's founding, the societies of the American Athenaeum have served as community-organized intellectual and artistic hubs, providing access to information, pursuing thought-provoking discourse, and applying their aggregate knowledge resources as agency for social change while presenting the most inspirational architecture, lectures, artistic performances, and collections to their communities.

I focus on the eighteenth century Redwood Library and Athenaeum of Newport, Rhode Island, the nineteenth century Boston Athenaeum, and the twentieth century Caltech Athenaeum. The newest of these, Caltech Athenaeum, has been in service over one hundred years, and the oldest, the Redwood Library and Athenaeum, has been in service to its community continuously over 300 years.



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The term "Athenaeum" has, over time, come to represent institutions with philosophical origins in ancient Greece that evolved organically in Western Europe and later spread to the United States. The word itself appears to have originated as a Latin derivation from the Greek *Athēnaion* referring to the sanctuary of Athena at Athens, frequented by poets and scholars. Roman emperor Hadrian appropriated the title to designate the academy of law, literature, and the arts that he founded. By the mid-eighteenth century, "Athenaeum" was used to describe a literary or scientific association or any building or hall used as a library or reading room, eventually becoming the definition of an institution for the promotion of literary or scientific learning.

Athenaea have historically been private institutions that provide, via subscription, access to a library or archives consistent with the interests of a particular business, scholastic, or governmental sector, which may also include examples of antiquities, fine arts, and the physical sciences.

I shall argue here that an Athenaeum as the locus of rational interdisciplinary human discourse can fulfill the mission of a public university campus within a demographically diverse metropolitan community and respond also to the challenges of new technology with a strategy for life-long education.

## The Concept of the Athenaeum

In ancient Greece, approximately the fifth century BCE, Socrates, as a tutor of young men, took his students to the *Agora* (marketplace), located at the base of the Acropolis, the hill on which stood the temple of Athena, goddess of knowledge and war. There he taught them to think for themselves in a pedagogical model following logical principles, now known as rational deductive reasoning.

Plato, a student and the scribe of Socrates, created the standard model, pursuing the highest of the *Forms* in his *Academy*. Plato's student Aristotle taught ontology, ethics, political philosophies and aesthetics, biology, logic, and rhetoric. Aristotle, in turn, instructed his own students to embrace a love for knowledge of Natural Philosophy (the sciences) in his school, the *Lyceum*.<sup>1</sup> Aristotle departed from Plato's idea of seeking the highest degree of the Forms and "Transcendentalism" to find a "Divine Mind" and, instead, looked to the "scientific" evidence in nature of a divine design.<sup>2</sup>

The word "Athenaeum" is widely considered to mean the locus of Platonic and Aristotelian discourses. It is often represented by the aegis of Athena and has come to represent the social agency for the improvement of the human experience, and the cognitive concept of Plato's Academy and Aristotle's Lyceum, as a center for shared discourse and enrichment in the arts and

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<sup>1</sup> David C. Lindberg, *The Beginnings of Western Science: The European Scientific Tradition in Philosophical, Religious, and Institutional Context, Prehistory to A.D. 1450* (Chicago, Ill.; Bristol: University of Chicago Press: University Presses Marketing [distributor], 2008) 45.

<sup>2</sup> Fred D. Miller, "Aristotle's Divine Cause" in *Aristotle on Method and Metaphysics*, ed. Edward Feser (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2013) 277.

sciences. One of the earliest examples of what might be characterized as an Athenaeum took place between 300 and 275 BCE in Alexandria, Egypt. Classicist Lionel Casson described this discursive gathering of individuals whom we might call a "genius" circle as "an ancient think-tank":

Ptolemy I gathered Greek experts in geometry and physics of his time and later, Ptolemy III invited Eratosthenes, who accurately defined the circumference of the earth, Herophilus, an expert of anatomy trained on Cos, where Hippocrates worked. Archimedes also came to Alexandria.

Scholars were attracted by the library and museum. The museum was considered sacred space inhabited by the muses of the arts. In Alexandria, the circle of *genii*: scholars, poets, scientists, writers and poets could live in Alexandria without cost and did not pay taxes. Food and lodging were an endowment from Ptolemy I. Scholars remained in the palace and met for food and conversation in a common room. They pursued their project and had no outside concerns of their projects.<sup>3</sup>

As noted by Casson, Ptolemy's system presumed that, with the provision of almost all human requirements met, great minds, in the presence of other geniuses, would in time realize great things.<sup>4</sup> The continuance of this group after Ptolemy was perhaps the best evidence of its success. Ptolemy, and later Hadrian in Rome, demonstrated understanding of the importance of a dedicated space where intellectuals could gather, share, and collaborate, ultimately benefiting society as a whole.<sup>5</sup>

Aristotle's philosophy was followed by the Roman author Pliny the Elder.<sup>6</sup> As reported by his nephew, Pliny the Younger (in his own surviving letters), the Elder's pursuit of scientific

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<sup>3</sup> Lionel Casson, *Libraries in the Ancient World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001) 33.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid 47. The continuance of this group through the successors of Ptolemy indicates that such provisions and fellowship were most likely suggestive of their success.

<sup>5</sup> Casson 33.

<sup>6</sup> Gaius Plinius Secundus is known as Pliny or Pliny the Elder.

causes and the interventions of humanity ironically may have led to his death, trying to save friends while observing the eruption of Mount Vesuvius and the resulting destruction of Pompeii in 79 CE.

In his *Historia Naturalis*,<sup>7</sup> Pliny the Elder quoted Aristotle, "We must trust the evidence of the senses rather than theories, and theories as long as their results agree with what is observed." As the "collector and interrogator" of nature, Pliny the Elder envisioned himself in the role of scientific observer searching to "know the causes" (*Causarum Cognitio*).<sup>8</sup> He wrote his books in order to enable others to learn from his observations and notes and to model his scientific activities and methods for future scholars. This approach is documented by collections historian Paula Findlen as "Reading the development of natural history as a discipline," rather than the collection of objects as a political expression of authority "to bring all of nature into one space."<sup>9</sup>

Other interested individuals followed Pliny the Elder and sought examination materials to identify *flora* and *fauna*, making notations, sharing them for the purpose of enlightening others, and then sharing this in their circles of like-minded individuals. These were small assemblages, and occasionally the amassed collections came down in families by descent.<sup>10</sup> Some of these collections were often later purchased or donated and consolidated, then displayed in a home as a

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<sup>7</sup> Pliny et al., *Pliny Natural History* (London: Folio Society, 2011). See vii, 37.

<sup>8</sup> This admonition by Pliny the Elder appears in the *tondo* (circular painting with mosaic) placed by Raphael above his *Scuola d'athene* (School of Athens) fresco in the *Segnatura* of Pope Julius II (*della Rovere*.)

<sup>9</sup> Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy, Studies on the History of Society and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) 9.

<sup>10</sup> Knowledge shared as an agency for human understanding/improvement (Findlen) 153.

"Cabinet of Curiosities," or "*Wunderkammer*."<sup>11</sup> Such collections were often donated to the founding of many great museums, including the Fitzwilliam in Cambridge, England, where Professors such as Don Mary Beard lecture with these same materials today.

Early evidence of the transmission of western philosophical tradition based largely on Ancient Greek thought is evidenced by the twenty-first century discovery of a second century CE Roman building. Described by ancient sources<sup>12</sup> as an "Athenaeum," it was constructed by order of Emperor Hadrian.

In 2013, archaeologist Marco Galli announced this discovery in the Italian Ministry of Culture's *Bollettino di Archeologia*. He considered it to be one of the most important since Trajan's Forum, based on architectural design aspects that distinguish it but also connect it in symbol, function, and topography with the Forum. Galli noted the significance of this find, which, up to that time, had only been imagined, based on the writings of ancient sources such as orator Flavius Philostratus, who wrote about the performances in the Athenaeum in his history, *Vitae sophistarum*<sup>13</sup> and his contemporaries in the Roman court.

In his report to the Italian Ministry of Culture, Dr. Galli related the importance of the discovery<sup>14</sup>:

The discovery of this new sector connects with the most imposing monuments of ancient Rome sheds new light, but also new questions, about the entire Trajan

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<sup>11</sup> David Freedberg, *The Eye of the Lynx: Galileo, His Friends, and the Beginning of Modern Natural History* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2002) 285.

<sup>12</sup> Philostratus, C. P. Jones, and Eusebius, *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (2012) 583.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Marco Galli, "L'Athenaeum Di Adriano: Note Su Un Luogo Della Sofistica a Roma" *Bollettino Di Archeologia On Line, Ministero dei beni e delle attivita` culturali e del turismo IV* (2013).

Center. The sequence of the new large halls brings a decisive contribution to the identification of the building named in ancient sources as Athenaeum and attributed to the benevolence of Emperor Hadrian.

If until now the locations of the Second Sophists in Rome were imaginable almost exclusively from literary sources, these are now appreciable in the series of the *Auditoria* projected in the northern sector of Trajan's Forum, whose architectural concept put it in close connection, symbolically and functionally, with libraries, the portico of the historiated columns and the platform with the ever-unescapable presence of the temple of the Emperor Trajan.

(Translated by author)

The three buildings discussed in Galli's bulletin, described as being grouped around the Column of Trajan, posit the desire of the Roman Emperor Hadrian to align himself not only with the legendary history of Alexandria, by virtue of the presence of a library, an Aula, and Auditoria, but by positioning it adjacent to the Roman Forum, also aligns with the socio-political agency of Emperor Trajan and his Forum. In effect, Hadrian was creating a Roman Athenaeum as a center for culture and education within the heart of the city, in the spirit of Athens and Alexandria and in his own name.

Based on architectural design aspects both distinguishing it from and connecting it with Trajan's Forum in symbol, function, and topography, this discovery propels Hadrian, famous for his political accomplishments, into a position of social agency not only by virtue of his identification with the historic accomplishments of Trajan, but also as the social patron of dramatic and performing arts in the Athenian traditions.

During the eleventh century, the concept of adult, non-ecclesiastical, discursive education evolved organically as a global and sustainable phenomenon in Western Europe. Independent scholars interested in reading and enrichment in the classics and sciences gathered in small home



groups taught by and for students. Some of these early participants belonged to the student study circles that gradually sought more instruction, eventually evolving into *studia* with their own identities, such as in the cases of Bologna, Oxford, and Cambridge. In Amsterdam, a circle group begun by two instructors as the Amsterdam Athenaeum grew in students and faculty, eventually evolving into the University of Amsterdam. In fact, the University cites its founding date as 1632, the date the Athenaeum was originally founded by the two instructors.<sup>15</sup>

During the papacy of Julius II,<sup>16</sup> the agency of Plato's Academy and Aristotle's Lyceum were adopted in the vernacular as the "School of Athens" or "Athenaeum." We now have the material proof that it was extant in Rome in antiquity, while it was only known to us previously by the preserved writings of the second sophists, led by Philostratus.<sup>17</sup>

Julius II caused this metaphoric representation in his library, the *Segnatura*,<sup>18</sup> by Raphael, who was experimenting together with Bramante, merging geometry with art. Also, both saw and represented themselves as the modern counterparts of those historic academicians represented in this record. Their source for this was likely Vatican historian Pico della Mirandola (author of *Oration on the Dignity of Man*), who had access to the historic archive collection and worked within the circle of Raphael, Michelangelo, and Bramante. This genius circle appears as the author-artists illustrated themselves, participants modeled in a contemporary re-enactment of

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<sup>15</sup> Dirk van Miert, *Humanism in an Age of Science: The Amsterdam Athenaeum in the Golden Age, 1632-1704*, Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009) 45.

<sup>16</sup> Pope Julius II, born Giulio della Rovere, took his name Julius in honor of Julius Caesar (not Pope Giulio I), and he is often referred to by history scholars as the "Warrior Pope."

<sup>17</sup> Philostratus, Jones, and Eusebius 76.

<sup>18</sup> The *segnatura* was the Pope's personal library in his Vatican apartment.

historical figures. Bramante is painted as Euclid and Leonardo as Plato. Raphael portrayed himself as the greatest Greek artist, Apelles, in discussion with Ptolemy and Zoroaster, presenting the imagery of an extraordinarily interdisciplinary and discursive circle. This suggests that perhaps Giulio II was also emulating the social agency of Hadrian's nearby Athenaeum, providing a library, and this interdisciplinary discourse of artists, scientists, writers, and philosophers, as an extension to Trajan's forum.

Ascending to the Papacy in Rome after the 70-year Avignon exile, Pope Julius II found the Basilica of St. Peter in "extreme disrepair." Therefore, he set the Catholic Church on a plan to rebuild St. Peter's with sufficient grandeur to include his eventual burial site. Already concerned with the acknowledgment and acceptance of Natural Philosophy by the Catholic Church, Julius II devoted the renovation of his *Segnatura* to portray the social agency of the Church as "owner/patron" of both Natural and Aesthetic Philosophy. Raphael Sanzio, from Urbino, aided by his skilled colleagues in Humanism, was charged to visualize and heroize "Philosophy" in this room, using the techniques of philosophy such as perspective. Raphael's "The School of Athens" (1509) appears somewhat derived from Ghirlandaio's 1490 painting in the Tornabuoni Chapel at Santa Maria Novella in Florence. In that painting, Marsilio Ficino (who translated Plato to Latin), Cristoforo Landini (a member of the Platonic Academy founded by Ficino), and Demetrios Chalkokondyles (who taught the Florentine humanists to read Greek) are pictured together in interdisciplinary discourse.

As part of his program, Julius II ordered an Old Testament narrative to be painted by Michelangelo to visually align his Church politically and dogmatically with the Bible. Additionally, Julius II ordered that his personal library next to the chapel, the Stanze della

Segnatura, be decorated by Raphael. The resulting frescos aligned the Catholic Church with Natural Philosophy and Art, on one wall in the "School of Athens"<sup>19</sup> and on the other "Dispute of the Holy Sacrament."<sup>20</sup> Above the "School of Athens"<sup>21</sup> is a kind of "speaking seal" that directs the viewer to *Causarum Cognitio* ("Know the Causes," words attributed to both Cicero and Pliny the Elder). This "speaking seal" of the imagery of goddess Philosophy, who is holding books by Plato and Aristotle, connects the Catholic Church as champion for the social agency of the "love of knowledge."

"The Dispute of the Sacrament" visualizes and imprints into the very walls of the Pope's apartment, as a large fresco, the heavenly agency of the Catholic Church just prior to a trial of Church Canon brought into question by Martin Luther.

As we shall see in the first chapter, this dispute and the history of religious, intellectual, and social freedoms (and philosophy) in the British colonies of America are entwined. For example, a key concern in the discursive circles of America in the Massachusetts Bay Colony was the required imposition of a "Free Man's Oath" that occupied the only printing press in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Roger Williams' opposition to a theocratic government in the British Colony.

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<sup>19</sup> A fresco is literally painted into the plaster of the wall and remains unless painted over or otherwise obscured.

<sup>20</sup> Julius II's response to Martin Luther's condemnations of pretention specifically directed at Julius II by demonstrating the social/religious agency of God and Heaven is with him.

<sup>21</sup> This fresco is identified by the official website of the Vatican Museums as the *Scuola d'Atene* because it represents the dominion of the Pontiff over the utility and agency of the arts and philosophies. The images align the achievements of the greatest minds of the philosophies of the arts and natural sciences with this Pope, Julius II. (<https://museivaticani.va>)

## **Discursive Circles Lead to The Founding of American Athenaea**

From the mid-1700s onward, a small number of Athenaea, community-based institutions for the discussion and promotion of literary or scientific learning, were established by elite groups in growing urban centers in North America. Although studies focused on the history and activities of specific individual institutions have been published, no comparative work has been undertaken to explore the socio-economic, political, and aesthetic impact of these Athenaea upon their communities or the regions in which they are located.

This dissertation explores philosophy in American Athenaea as circles of individuals with an exceptional capacity of intellect, curiosity, and often empathy, who seek truths and principles of knowledge and conduct stemming from Socrates' Agora, and codified in the queries and writings of Plato and Aristotle.

So, what is the logic for studying the Athenaeum model? It became an important phenomenon and has come to represent the origin of every western university in Europe, and was extant in America predating the founding of the nation. The Athenaeum aspires to be a cultural center for learning and interdisciplinary discourse that effects measurable and positive social agency for its community.

My dissertation examines the architecture, collections, and social agency of three American Athenaea, each in continuous service from the eighteenth century to the present, to determine the contributions of each of these elements as key to their continued utility and sustainability. Their

successes can demonstrate strategies that may still be applied to future Athenaea, especially in association with university campuses.

These circles share discourse and participate in forums to inform, to facilitate projects for positive change, and to benefit society, in the traditions of natural philosophy, Plato's philosophy of ideals or "forms," and the Aristotelian model of the Lyceum. In the course of my investigation, I researched a representative selection of American Athenaea and Athenaeum-type private library communities and made selections to represent three different geographic areas and historic periods. These include the first American Athenaeum, the Redwood Library and Athenaeum, founded in Newport, Rhode Island, in the eighteenth century, the Boston Athenaeum, founded in the nineteenth century, and the Athenaeum at the California Institute of Technology, founded in the twentieth century.

In this dissertation I argue how each of these three Athenaeum facilities improved its community in terms of social and intellectual contributions and political agency, which led to positive engagement and accomplishments. I also argue that since these institutions and their intellectual circles share research and philosophic debate, often concerning many polarizing issues such as religious freedom and human rights, they reflect discursive engagement founded in Platonic and Aristotelian traditions.

## **Chapter Summaries**

### **The Redwood Library and Athenaeum**

In Chapter 2, I argue that The Redwood Library and Athenaeum in Rhode Island is the first American Athenaeum that was purpose built. Founded in what was then the American colonies

in 1747, it was the first American non-academic interdisciplinary and discursive center.

Originally located in founder Abraham Redwood's home, it was later moved to the present free-standing building designed by architect Peter Harrison, in the heart of Newport, Rhode Island.

I argue that the participation of several scholars such as Rhode Island colony founder Roger Williams, Ezra Stiles, George Berkeley, and others presented a social, intellectual, and political influence that eventually facilitated the end of slavery in Newport. This circle also improved Rhode Island through the direct agency of Ezra Stiles in the founding of Brown University in 1764.

I argue that social agency and library collections used by the discursive circles of the Newport Library and Athenaeum informed the members, and they worked to resolve the contradictions between their conviction of faith and the exploitation of human freedoms and rights wrought from the triangular trade.

### **The Boston Athenaeum**

In Chapter 3, I discuss the founding and contributions of the Boston Athenaeum, initiated in 1807 by students of the law and ministry from Harvard. I argue the importance of its founding and the broad scope of interests of its membership. I contend that this circle consisted of the most prominent citizens and families of greater Boston and represented exceptional accomplishments and skills in medicine, education, science, business, and the arts. I argue for the intellectual, political, and social agency and, most importantly, the aesthetic contribution it provides to America and to the greater Boston community by its assistance in the foundation of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. After two hundred years of service, it still serves as the heart, hub, and

memorial for the personal and nascent history of America, and the City of Boston in particular. I argue that the subscribership of the founders and proprietors of the Boston Athenaeum, as it includes the most prominent citizens of Massachusetts from the fields of government, history, medicine, science, religion, and literature and the creative arts, presents the legacy here for the benefit and enlightenment of the present membership. Not only did the founders donate their library collections of books and art to the Athenaeum, but they began a legacy of philosophy, intellectual agency, and discourse with their personal keepsakes and memories, continuing today in the stewardship and improvement of the private library collections. This support lends utility to scholarly pursuits as well as almost daily programs of public engagement, now available using new "face-to-face" computer virtual technologies as a platform for shared discourse, education and entertainment.

### **The Athenaeum of the California Institute of Technology**

In Chapter 4, I consider the intellectual, philosophic, social, and economic agency of the first American Athenaeum founded in the twentieth century, and its circle, who facilitated the growth, development, and artistic aesthetic of the internationally recognized California Institute of Technology (Caltech). The Athenaeum functions as a welcoming home to visiting scholars and as a conduit and discursive nexus to the Institute, the Huntington Library and Museum, and the local community it serves.

I contend that Astrophysicist George Ellery Hale, who had relocated to Pasadena to direct the Mount Wilson observatory, was tapped by the Throop Institute Board of Directors to help attract exceptional faculty and scholars to their school. Considered a "Mechanic's Institute,"

Throop needed both physical and academic development. Pasadena itself had been made accessible by rail due to the efforts of railroad magnate Collis Huntington and his nephew-successor, Henry Huntington, himself an avid collector of books of history and science, and also accessible by sea (via the newly completed Panama Canal). From his first meeting with Henry Huntington, Hale's notes reflect that he envisioned Huntington as providing Caltech students and faculty access to his extraordinary collections of sciences, literature, and art, rounding out the Institute dedicated to performative scientific inquiry.

I argue that Hale created the Athenaeum at Caltech specifically as a place for interdisciplinary discourse in the arts and sciences, and he chose a humanist with a degree in English literature as Secretary, to make the Athenaeum more "approachable" and useful to the citizens, faculty, businessmen, and potential donors of Pasadena and the rest of Los Angeles County.

Placed at the edge of the campus closest to the Huntington Library, the Athenaeum would also serve as a much needed social and academic conduit to the Huntington, and also to develop political and financial support from the civic community, by giving insight to the Institute.<sup>22</sup> It would also serve as a unique intellectual hub for the growing business and intellectual community in Pasadena, who would soon need the technology and trained graduates offered by the Institute.

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<sup>22</sup> The first Secretary of the Athenaeum was William S. Munro, who brought humanities disciplines to Caltech.



I shall argue that George Ellery Hale's Caltech Athenaeum defined the architectural style of Pasadena and Caltech, as well as San Marino, the home of the Henry Huntington Library and Museum.

These three uniquely American Athenaeum intellectual circles present informative forums relevant to the issues of their communities. Through their history, each has facilitated positive change and collaboration in relation to such issues as education, human rights, gender and race equality, poverty, environment, and health issues. I argue that this model promotes social and intellectual engagement and agency to find future solutions, while providing a center for lifelong learning, self-improvement, and connectivity.

The Athenaeum aspires to be a cultural center for learning and interdisciplinary discourse that affects measurable positive social agency for the improvement of its community. Yet of all of the studies addressing subscription libraries, I have concluded that there is a void in the scholarship concerning the features and strategies that constitute the continued success of contemporary Athenaea which have not been explored nor articulated.

Each Athenaeum facility can be traced to an individual or individuals who acted as the "Founding Proprietor /Librarian." These individuals facilitated the gathering of useful information in texts, journals, and the like into a shared library for enlightenment and self-improvement and, in turn, to improve society and the human condition. The founding scholar and his circle facilitated a center for the acquisition and sharing of knowledge and inspiration gleaned from these books and other collected materials. These efforts prompted discursive exchanges leading to positive changes in social paradigms, especially with regard to such

humanistic and important concerns as human rights and equal opportunities, while building a uniquely American resource center of literary, historical, and scientific philosophy.

How did these social library circles contribute to their communities to inform and inspire social and political paradigm changes? What specific social or political changes can we identify, and what role did the respective Athenaeum members have to effect a shift in each particular historical social paradigm? How does an Athenaeum perform differently than a library and how do we measure that social agency? Are the methods of the Athenaea to effect social agency a sustainable feature of these circles? Have the social changes effected been sustained? How do we prove this, and are they still a force for social examination and inspiration?

### **Methodology**

My research will address these as I present a comparison of three successful Athenaea, each created as the fulfillment of an intellectual aspiration, each during a separate century of American History, and each of which are still extant as twenty-first century Athenaea. I begin with the Redwood, since it was the first Athenaeum, rather than a public library. Why was it founded in the eighteenth century in Newport, Rhode Island? What were the social, political, and economic challenges the members faced and how were they resolved? What philosophy does it maintain and lend to succeeding Athenaea? What is its agency in this community continuing into the twenty-first century?

I fully focus examination on each of the three selected American Athenaea and compare the founding mission statements of each, to determine how each adapts in response to technological improvements and socio-demographic shifts. I identify public programs and discursive planning

that highlight collections and histories of members and contributors and also describe how this programming includes other Athenaeum facilities and their collections. I also identify the aesthetic: the concepts of design, utility, and architecture of the Athenaeum appropriateness in the physical context, and how the physical context, design, and utility may delineate and impact the community. Within each Athenaeum I define the accomplishments through the social, political, and economic agency of each Athenaeum in the improvement of society or the mediation of a serious social issue.

I conclude that present history and scholarship indicate that Athenaea are thriving and sustainable facilities and are perhaps even better equipped for the future of the University library by providing specialized-discipline-expertise librarians for guided discursive inquiry by utilizing the newest technologies.<sup>23</sup>

In each Athenaeum, care was taken to leave, as a legacy, a founding record. Usually written by the librarian or from original correspondence and actual documents, it explains the intent of the founders, how and why the Athenaeum was organized, and by whom. There is always a head proprietor who is designated the "Librarian" or "Secretary."<sup>24</sup> The "hard copy" records provide the role that the Athenaeum was expected to play as resource and civic memory in the community. There is evidence of discursive materials selected, how they serve as evidence of materials read, and by whom. It also presents historic actions or accomplishments we can

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<sup>23</sup> Each of the Directors of the Athenaea I discuss and I have spoken with, including the Secretary of the Smithsonian and the Accademia dei Lincei, is a recognized academic scholar.

<sup>24</sup> The person in charge of the nineteen Smithsonian divisions is called the "Secretary of the Smithsonian," a post presently held by my International Council of Museums (ICOM) colleague, Dr. Lonnie Bunch.

identify from primary sources beyond letters or legal documents, as a direct result with the inclusion of archival materials, such as boyhood journals, family histories, and personal and professional correspondence.

I have discovered how an Athenaeum creates a more detailed model than a library or a museum by incorporating photographs, paintings, books, letters, graphic illustrations, and models in an exhibit. This creates a narrative to compare, contrast, or explain a particular discursive group, such as Alexander von Humboldt's inspiration of both Darwin and Thoreau. This research evidences that the Athenaeum concept is a proven and sustainable form, from its Western European models to the present. Traditional library scholarship, such as Ronald Story's *Culture and Class in Boston*,<sup>25</sup> regards the library as a legacy contribution to the betterment of society that reflects on community engagement and civic duty.

My work demonstrates that the Athenaeum model is sustainable, and that it uniquely addresses the challenges of the future in a manner that has endured since the Accademia and the Lyceum of Athens, while other institutions have failed. The Athenaeum follows the founding traditions of all western universities and, in fact, several American Universities were started by Athenaeum circles, such as the University of Rochester and Xavier University. My research continues this model.

What are the elements of successful American Athenaea that permit them to endure in service for as long as three centuries? Will they respond to changes in future paradigms?

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<sup>25</sup> Ronald Story, "Culture and Class in Boston: The Athenaeum, 1807-1860," *American Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (1975) 30.

I demonstrate the importance of a reprise of such a dedicated space where intellectuals may explore the agency of the facility as a center to gather, share, and collaborate. I shall also demonstrate how such an investment of resources may "benefit the empire as a whole."<sup>26</sup> Although previous scholarship has addressed the histories of the founding of individual Athenaea, none have yet addressed the qualities or strategies that cause some Athenaea to be successful and evolve in time while others have failed. This dissertation considers the best practices of the past to plan for the sustainability and service of future Athenaeum-type centers.

As such, this dissertation will examine the utility and sustainability model of the Athenaeum as a locus for highly intelligent productive people (and those who aspire to knowledge) who are members of discursive circles and who forge useful partnerships within interdisciplinary meeting opportunities. The methodology that I shall employ will compare three selected Athenaea in terms of quantitative and qualitative criteria, including sustainability, geographic and social contexts, architecture, and programming. These facilities to be compared are the Redwood Library and Athenaeum, founded in 1731, the Boston Athenaeum, founded in 1807, and the Caltech Athenaeum, founded in 1930.

As the earliest of this genre in eighteenth century America, the Redwood Library and Athenaeum of Rhode Island originated in a home circle. As the interest and the circle of local businessmen in Newport, Rhode Island, increased, it was then formally documented in 1747 as the Redwood Library, and their new building, built to provide greater access to their expanding

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<sup>26</sup> Casson. (Describing the founding of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina)31.

library and to provide an independent shared space, was named for their founder and patron, Abraham Redwood.

The Boston Athenaeum was founded in 1807 by the Anthology Society and their Boston-Concord social circle to accommodate access to an expanding library and to create a discursive meeting space. There were five different locations that served as the Boston Athenaeum, and only the last was purposefully design-built, and not an adaptation from another use. Members of the circle of the Boston Athenaeum are responsible for the heart of classic American literary achievement as well as for the founding of medical schools and hospitals. The circles of the Boston Athenaeum, including Concord, as we shall see, aspired to live a philosophic life, in harmony with the earth as some who looked toward "consociate" communities, such as Fruitlands, Brook Farm, and others who were actively involved in the support of the abolition of slavery and suffrage for women.

The twentieth century Athenaeum of Caltech was founded as the first American Athenaeum on a university campus, immediately before the 1929 New York Stock Market crash. The Athenaeum at Caltech serves two separate but associated purposes: first, as a center for prominent visiting scholars in the sciences and technology to meet socially and second, as a secure place for visitors and their guests to relax in a club-like atmosphere, providing access to attending University faculty and advanced Caltech students. Many of the guests were encouraged by their discourse with university faculty and were disposed to contributing toward the further development of the Caltech campus and future programs, a tradition that continues today.

This dissertation identifies, examines, and describes the distinguishing features along with the architecture, collections, and social agency of the members of these three American

Athenaea, studied chronologically from the first founding in the United States in the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, each sustained for at least a century within almost three hundred years of American History. I describe the best practices, features, and social agency responsible for the longevity of each, and how these practices can be applied to a newly built twenty-first century iteration of the Athenaeum, preferably associated with a university or university-type campus.

Many American Athenaea were founded in the northeast corridor of the United States between 1731 and 1930. As in Western Europe, a number of these eventually evolved into universities. Since the first American Athenaea were founded in the relatively densely populated centers in the Northeast, it was not unusual for Athenaeum members to hold memberships in more than one circle. Founding fathers Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton, and Franklin, authors Poe, Melville, Emerson, and Hawthorne, painters Durand and Cole, and even visiting authors from London such as Dickens and Conan Doyle, were often affiliated with multiple Athenaea in America and those circles in Europe. Members of each of these circles would be considered, as a result of their individual accomplishments, to be of "exceptional intellectual or creative power or other natural ability." The archival borrowing records of the American Athenaea disclose that their members were well versed in the classics, including Aristotle and Plato.

In his own journals, minister and author Ralph Waldo Emerson considered himself to be, like Plato, a Transcendental and shared this philosophy with the circle of Concord and in his public lectures. The obvious exceptional attraction of Athenaea was the opportunity to encounter individuals who pursued a wide variety of interests and engaged curiosity. What is very important is that the members of each of these Athenaeum circles visited and also lectured to other Athenaeum circles. Specifically, these intellectual circles were particularly invested in the

abolition of slavery and in favor of suffrage for women. As we shall see, not only did they vigorously write about these important social issues, but they were also politically active, participating in public meetings and often providing material support, such as in the case of the circle of the Concord Library and the Concord Lyceum.<sup>27</sup>

In the early history of British colonies in America, the absence of printing presses and the paucity of printed books and other materials caused literate individuals, mostly in the north-eastern British colonies, to share whatever they brought with them from England with their informal social circles.<sup>28</sup> These circles tended to be located in the geographic centers of populations, held in a home or often even in a public house (bar). This meeting place was named "Athenaeum" by each succeeding founding group, in acknowledgment of the Greek and Latin philosophical tradition of interdisciplinary discursive circles. The Athenaeum, as re-envisioned from its classical roots and European traditions in early America, thus responded to the crisis of censorship promulgated under British Colonial rule.<sup>29</sup>

A major criticism against Athenaea posed by some authorities, such as art historian and German media mogul Hubert Burda,<sup>30</sup> considers such collections of books and objects an antiquated concept in the twenty-first century. Burda states that we live in an age that has advanced away from the library stack to the digital repository. In other terms, "The view from

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<sup>27</sup> While some (like Thomas Jefferson) were developing theories of return of slaves to Africa in yet additional indenture, others were supporting figures such as John Brown and Frederick Douglass.

<sup>28</sup> Andrew McFarland Davis, *The American Historical Review* 11, no. 4 (1906), <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1832256>.

<sup>29</sup> Although founded first from an Athenaeum-type home circle, the Redwood Library adopted the name Athenaeum in 1833. The Boston Athenaeum was founded later but used the designation "Athenaeum" first.

<sup>30</sup> Hubert Burda, Friedrich A. Kittler, and Hubert Burda, *The Digital Wunderkammer: 10 Chapters on the Iconic Turn* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink: Petrarca, 2011) 193.



the window was replaced by the television set."<sup>31</sup> Co-contributor Bonk, from his exhibition

*Chaosmos Soundings, Towards an Archaeology of Chance*, states:

With the advent of digital media, multimedia has arrived... a big orchestra today requires no more than a single programme and a synthesizer.<sup>32</sup>

The scholarship concerning Athenaea<sup>33</sup> recalls mainly the contemporary gesture and genre of libraries and museums and is presently focused either in general object-inquiry survey material or single-issue topics regarding museum administration, or "museology," the hegemony of colonialism, collections, and identity narratives.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, it fails to respond to questions regarding the social agency of the facility and its membership, issues of sustainability, growth, and innovation, especially in response to critical operations and emergency planning.<sup>35</sup> It also does not consider the utilization of new technologies to maintain the continuity of operations as well as opportunities for interdisciplinary and inclusive community outreach. While public and private museums in America have been closed by the global pandemic, Athenaea consider innovative programs for community outreach and connection to subscribers and proprietors, such as live broadcasts of walking tours of collections by a curator that can nourish the soul with

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid. 23.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. 67.

<sup>33</sup> In the original sense of *Athenaeum* as found in the Hadrian discovery: a library, classroom, and "performance" meaning rhetorical exegesis space.

<sup>34</sup> Among these facilities in the United States are those within the 19 facilities that compose the Smithsonian Institution, the Getty Research Institute, the Huntington Research Libraries, the Morgan Library, and others.

<sup>35</sup> As of this writing, all museums, libraries, and Athenaea are closed within the continental United States due to a global Covid-19 virus pandemic. Only American Athenaea adapted and utilized technology from the start to maintain contact with their subscribers, as they are considered the "proprietors."

words and music and the mind with new challenges. As we shall see, the pressure test of a world pandemic demonstrates that there is more to life than preparing for "business as usual."

### Literature Review

Classicists and art historians, including Samuel Quicchelberg<sup>36</sup> (1565), Arthur MacGregor<sup>37</sup> (1985), Stephen Greenblatt<sup>38</sup> (1989), Andrew McClellan<sup>39</sup> (1994), and Lionel Casson<sup>40</sup> (2002), have all published histories exploring early modern collecting methodology and museums. Others, such as James Campbell<sup>41</sup> (1991) and Richard Wendorf (2002), have authored studies of ancient and new world libraries (but not Athenaea). Additionally, Richard Wendorf wrote a survey, *American Membership Libraries*<sup>42</sup> (2006), some of which also identify themselves as Athenaea. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York's 2016 exhibition, *Pergamon and the Hellenistic Kingdoms of the Ancient World*<sup>43</sup> (2016), presents a survey of sculpture and jewelry and permits the viewer to understand how the ancients filled their world with art that reflected their images and aspirations.

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<sup>36</sup> Samuel Quicchelberg, Mark A. Meadow, and Bruce Robertson, *The First Treatise on Museums: Samuel Quicchelberg's Inscriptiones, 1565* (2014).

<sup>37</sup> Arthur MacGregor, *Curiosity and Enlightenment: Collectors and Collections from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven Conn.; London: Yale University Press, 2007).

<sup>38</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

<sup>39</sup> Andrew McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre: Art, Politics, and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1999).

<sup>40</sup> Casson.

<sup>41</sup> James W. P. Campbell, *The Library: A World History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013).

<sup>42</sup> Richard Wendorf, ed. *America's Membership Libraries* (New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press, 2007).

<sup>43</sup> Carlos A. Picón, Seán A. Hemingway, and Art, Metropolitan Museum of, *Pergamon and the Hellenistic Kingdoms of the Ancient World* (2016).

Other art historians, such as Hubert Burda<sup>44</sup> (2011), contemplate the "iconic turn" given the capabilities of the technological age with other image experts such as philosopher Peter Sloterdijk and media scholar Bazon Brock. Unfortunately, this fails to explain what the abandonment of "physical documentation" actually accomplishes and, while possible, are all technology substitutes reliable, now that we have entered into an age of "deep fakes"?<sup>45</sup> In the 2013 documentary *Out of Print*, author Scott Turow, Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, and others debate the dilemma of our dependence on electronic media, which has a substantially shorter permanence than works maintained in books. Archivists whom I interviewed at the Redwood, Boston, and Caltech Athenaea and the Huntington Library support the maintenance of archived originals, when available. In the case of archives in-demand, both the Huntington and Caltech assert that many of the most in-demand collections have been digitized for remote (and on-site) access, however, the original may be viewed by appointment by qualified scholars.

Some authors dedicated themselves to writing about a single Athenaeum, such as Joseph Ashton, *The Salem Athenaeum*<sup>46</sup> (2019) and Jane Lancaster, *Inquire Within: A Social History of the Providence Athenaeum*<sup>47</sup> (2003). Unfortunately, these individual histories, *Inquire Within* by Lancaster and *Culture Club* by Katherine Wolf, concerning the "culture" of The Boston Athenaeum, are histories of places and people but do not provide a rationale for their social groups as agents of change. There is no (yet) published history of the Caltech Athenaeum, and its

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<sup>44</sup> Burda, Kittler, and Burda. *The Digital Wunderkammer, 10 Chapters on the Iconic Turn*, Petrarca Verlag, Munich (2011).

<sup>45</sup> The technology of "deep fakes" discovered in 2014 (after Burda) <https://www.brookings.edu/research/fighting-deepfakes-when-detection-fails/> Brookings Institution, accessed 07/19/2020.

<sup>46</sup> Joseph Nickerson Ashton, *The Salem Athenæum, 1810-1910* (Salem, Mass.: Berkeley Press, 1917).

<sup>47</sup> Jane Lancaster, *Inquire Within: A Social History of the Providence Athenaeum since 1753* (2003).

agency must be discovered in the scattered portfolio of the largely unexamined archives. There isn't any scholarly literature to address Amos Gager Throop's incredible social and political inspiration and accomplishments, nor do they address George Ellery Hale's social and intellectual agency, outside of his work as an astrophysicist. The Caltech Athenaeum library<sup>48</sup> is seemingly counter-intuitive to the University's scientific and technical mission. I explain its social purpose and the political agency that caused the founding of a partner world class humanities library and one of the largest collections of scientific books and models in the world.

Several histories, such as Lancaster's *Social History of the Providence Athenaeum*, actually present more gossip and photographs than functioning as a history of social agency. Lancaster fails to convey how the Providence Athenaeum fostered the intellectual circles, or how their programming relates to their collection or community. There was no explanation of the appearance of the "Temple"-shaped container constructed for Dominique Denon's Napoleonic narrative book, *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Egypte* and the construction of the elaborate case, before the Athenaeum was built. The other scholarship on The Providence Athenaeum was written by Joseph Harrison in 1911, and that describes the joining of largely unidentified members of Providence clubs and their ambition to build an Athenaeum.

The *History of the Salem Philosophy Club* reflects the tumultuous history of an area that, like Newport, pursued its social agency to purchase a scientific library purposefully hijacked by

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<sup>48</sup> The books selected for the Caltech Athenaeum library are purposefully selected as non-technical, fiction, classics, and travel books.

American pirates. The Salem Athenaeum's on-site literature and science programming<sup>49</sup> embraces its history, and all of the contributions of the members who took advantage of the bounty of a scientist's library, books hijacked at sea, then coincidentally "purchased." There is an exceptional and engaging display of artwork, models, and notes that directly correspond and highlight the objects on display in the collection as well as the originally seized library. Some of the insightful displays at Salem include an explanation of Englishman Darwin's *Origin of Species* in context with the Prussian explorer Alexander von Humboldt's *Cosmos, A Sketch of the Physical Description of the Universe*. There are also kinetic sculptures to demonstrate natural philosophy, amusing comic pieces regarding natural philosophy, and the display of the original book that was used as the source of Bowditch's *Practical Navigator*. Although it was not included in my selection, the library and art collection programming were far superior as discursive tools with the wide range for programmed content reception superior to any of the Athenaea that I examined physically while conducting onsite research at the three selected subjects.

As the field of the Athenaeum is quite broad, I continue with a survey of the literature more precisely limited to my selections. The Redwood Athenaeum Magazine *etc* is perhaps the best conceived and most engaging contemporary source of information about Athenaeum activities, events, and displays for members. As we shall see, this magazine seems to be a "best effort" to live in the present and onward, while acknowledging, but not perseverating, about some of the

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<sup>49</sup> Display of books, photos, memorabilia, and exceptional juxtapositions (Darwin and Humboldt); original portraits of Hawthorne with a selection of books read by Hawthorne as indicated in their record.

episodes of a past history conceived and supported by the trade of human slavery. This has only recently been addressed, as the paradigm of history adjusts to resolve the grave transgressions of the past, in light of a very conflicted present in the United States. The histories of the Redwood Library and Athenaeum are mainly taken from historic documentation, and later by three writers: David King in 1860, George Mason in 1891, and Arthur Roberts in 1948.

One example of literature that looks strictly at the architecture of these, Carl Bridenbaugh's *Peter Harrison: First American Architect*, speaks more about Harrison's personal associations and conjecture about his past than his architectural accomplishments. Unfortunately, Bridenbaugh paints Harrison as a traitor to the American Revolution (a coincidental factor in his life as Benedict Arnold was his brother-in-law). This history could have been written as a study to define Harrison's accomplishments. Better information regarding Harrison can be found in Fitzhugh's *The Buildings of Peter Harrison*. Neither of these, however, addresses the building of the Redwood Library and Athenaeum, funded by the exploitation of African slave labor. This is the "buried lead" of history that has remained unspoken until Sean D. Moore's 2019 study *History, Slavery and the Making of Early American Libraries, British Literature, Political Thought and the Transatlantic Book Trade 1731-1814*, which is the first book addressing these libraries as "cultural philanthropy rooted in exploitation." Moore's research points us to the literary history of America's embarrassing truths, indicating, in the loathsome words of our Founding fathers, that the life of a slave is fungible, with the value of one book. In one example, James Madison, a graduate of Princeton, complained to his father that if he did not receive money from home, he would have to settle his debt with a Philadelphia bookseller by "selling a

negro."<sup>50</sup> This *sang-froid* statement by Madison demonstrates what George Berkeley noted as he claimed that a book, like the circulation of money, is a "ticket to the industry of others."<sup>51</sup>

Other "insightful" recent scholarship regarding the genre of Redwood Library and Athenaeum, other discursive centers, the hegemony of material culture and the politics of ornament and consumption is an history dissertation written in 2009 for the University of Delaware titled *Portrait of a Woman in a Silk Dress: The Hidden Histories of Aesthetic Commodities in the Eighteenth-Century British Atlantic World*. This is an exhaustive study by Zara Anishanslin Bernhardt concerning a dress worn in a portrait by Feke of Newport, Rhode Island, of a colonial woman living in Philadelphia. In this, Bernhardt states:

This is a narrative as well as a representation, however. Its visual codes tell a cultural story far greater than the tale of one woman's life, and far less familiar than its surface tale of performative refinement. Although a single portrait of an individual woman, this object is emblematic and revelatory, embedded with multiple stories that recreate a history of eighteenth century British Atlantic World through the narrative power of its material and visual culture.<sup>52</sup>

Unfortunately, I must disagree with Bernhardt, not on the basis of the artist's expertise or the artistry of the silks, the patterns and the design, or even their sources, which she states as "Atlantic trade." While she attests that "Atlantic trade" as the blessed conduit for the beautiful and transformative metropolitan style of all British goods and design, fine and beautiful, brought to America, at no time does historian Bernhardt state that the "invisible narrative power of the

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<sup>50</sup> James Madison, *The Papers of James Madison: Digital Edition*, Alpha version. ed. (Charlottesville, Va: University of Virginia Press, 2010.) Accessed December 26, 2020.

<sup>51</sup> Sean D. Moore, *Slavery and the Making of Early American Libraries* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2019.)

<sup>52</sup> Zara Anishanslin Bernhardt, *Portrait of a Woman in a Silk Dress: The Hidden Histories of Aesthetic Commodities in the Eighteenth-Century British Atlantic World* (University of Delaware, 2009).

material(s) and visual culture," in actuality, is the poisoned fruit wrought of the historic Atlantic Slave trade!

However, while Bernhardt's study is tone deaf on the whole slavery issue (even in Philadelphia in the eighteenth century), it *does* reflect on how we recognize what we see in Feke's Newport Athenaeum Portraits. The Redwood's painting by Feke of Elizabeth Winthrop Wanton, the wife of the last colonial governor, presents her in a simple dress decorated in lace with a bosom so low that it had to have a nosegay added 100 years later by Gilbert Stewart's daughter, for "modest propriety." There is no evidence here of an extraordinary supply chain of imported silks, dyed and shipped to a London couturier.

I shall also demonstrate that recorded discourse and documents found elsewhere in Newport represent Newporters as the first people to advocate the end to slavery.

Regarding the Boston Athenaeum, this literature begins with the formation of the Boston Anthology Society and their publication *The Boston Anthology Monthly*. *The Archives of the Anthology Society*. This is a history written by John Lowell, John Kirkland, and William Shaw<sup>53</sup> (1807), and it is a business plan written as a legal document, expounding on arguments concerning why they selected to model the Boston Athenaeum on the Liverpool Athenaeum in England, as a business organization of Proprietors and Subscribers, in "contractual" depth of detail. Thereafter, the literature proceeds into a humanized in-depth profile of the Athenaeum in Josiah Quincy's (1851) extensive *History of the Boston Athenaeum, with Biographical Sketches*

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<sup>53</sup> Athenaeum Boston et al., *Memoir of the Boston Athenaeum: With the Act of Incorporation, and Organization of the Institution* (Boston: Printed at the Anthology Office, Court-Street, by Munroe & Francis, 1807).



of its Founders.<sup>54</sup> The Athenaeum was founded as a "next step" for intellectuals interested in continuance of their common discourse as they graduated from Harvard into the business world. This work provides details of the personal histories of the members and the proprietors thought appropriate to record by Quincy. This literature is especially focused on the "Boston Brahmin" and with their collection habits, rather than the activities of the Athenaeum itself. The formality of the legal contractual language in all of the Boston Athenaeum's "histories" and "sketches" unfortunately presents a circle of businessmen and lawyers and is hardly the circle of the writers who actually used the Athenaeum library for inspiration, such as Louisa May Alcott, Herman Melville, Edgar Allen Poe, and others whom I discuss later.

Other literature regarding the Boston Athenaeum collections, such as *Acquired Tastes, 200 Years of Collecting for the Boston Athenaeum* (2007),<sup>55</sup> edited by the Boston Athenaeum Director Wendorf, contains comments such as "There was a clear plan for the kinds of books expected to be purchased for the library, but the 'collections' seem random and don't follow a scheme in comparison." In review of the extant documents, all written with legalistic detail, there isn't a statement that directs and focuses the collection practices of the Boston Athenaeum or the interests of the readers.

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<sup>54</sup> Josiah Quincy, *The History of the Boston Athenæum, with Biographical Notices of Its Deceased Founders* (Cambridge: Metcalf and Company, 1851).

<sup>55</sup> Boston Athenaeum., Stanley Ellis Cushing, and David B. Dearing, *Acquired Tastes: 200 Years of Collecting for the Boston Athenæum* (Boston, Mass.) Hanover: Boston Athenæum; Distributed by University Press of New England, 2006).

The architectural design of the Caltech Athenaeum and the context of the University campus have been the subject of *Architectural Digest Magazine*<sup>56</sup> and Caltech Art gallery exhibitions.<sup>57</sup> Romy Wylie's book *Caltech's Architectural Heritage*<sup>58</sup> is a lovely photographic catalogue of design but unfortunately short on explanations of the design and the purpose "form following function" which is found more specifically stated in my research of the letters in the Hale archives. Significant design history regarding architects, materials, design, landscaping, and artwork is not found in this literature. Stirling Calder-designed spandrels<sup>59</sup> for the entrance to the (now-demolished) Throop building and landscape architect Florence Yoch's unique use of Italian cypress trees in Pasadena are found elsewhere, in survey histories and other monographs. Separate books illustrate Kaufman's contribution to the overall architectural design of businesses and private homes<sup>60</sup> and Yoch's careful plantings at Caltech, including the Athenaeum, and almost all major homes and gardens, with the exception of the Huntington Botanical Gardens.<sup>61</sup>

Although each of these brilliantly illustrated books explains the elements of design, they unfortunately fail to capture or describe the intention or the manner in which the visionary George Ellery Hale, the astrophysicist, who a vocational school and developed it into one of a handful of science and technology teaching centers in the world. Additionally, Hale also had the

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<sup>56</sup> Gallery Baxter Art, *Caltech 1910-1950 : An Urban Architecture for Southern California : [Exhibition]*, 4 May through 30 June 1983, Baxter Art Gallery, California Institute of Technology ([Pasadena, Calif.]: The Gallery, 1983).

<sup>57</sup> Caltech, "Raised Arches, or You Can Go Home Again," *Engineering and Science* (1986).

<sup>58</sup> Romy Wylie, *Caltech's Architectural Heritage* (Los Angeles: Balcony Press, 2000).

<sup>59</sup> Jed Perl, *Calder: The Conquest of Time, the Early Years: 1898-1940* (New York: Knopf, 2017).

<sup>60</sup> Marc Appleton, Parsons, Bret, Vaught, Steve: *Gordon B. Kaufmann*, vol. 1, 12 vols., *Master Architects of Southern California 1920-1940* (Santa Monica, California: Angel City Press, 2016).

<sup>61</sup> James J. Yoch, *Landscaping the American Dream: The Gardens and Film Sets of Florence Yoch: 1890-1972* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc./Sagapress, Inc, 1989).

foresight and prescience to consider Henry Huntington's neighboring home, art collection, and library as a future collaborator with Caltech, sharing the largest scientific library in the world at the Huntington with Caltech, enlarging the efficacy of both of these institutions in collaborations.

Despite the centuries-long extraordinary history of Athenaea and those that eventually evolved into universities, scholarship has failed to identify and examine their features that privilege sustainability, such as architecture, collections, and social agency (change or improvement) of the Athenaeum and its stated purpose as a center for adult interdisciplinary discursive circles; this is the purpose of my dissertation.

I looked to authors who highlight the interpersonal, intellectual, and social relationships of the members of American Athenaea circles, rather than solely collections or architecture, as reflected in the single, location studies. They are: Arthur Herman's two historical narratives, *How the Scots Invented the Modern World: The True Story of How Western Europe's Poorest Nation Created Our World & Everything in it* (2011)<sup>62</sup> and his later delve into the roots of the Scottish Common-Sense Philosophy in *The Cave and the Light: Plato versus Aristotle and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization* (2014);<sup>63</sup> Samuel Schreiner's *Concord Quartet: Alcott, Emerson, Hawthorne and Thoreau* (2010);<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Arthur Herman, *How the Scots Invented the Modern World : The True Story of How Western Europe's Poorest Nation Created Our World & Everything in It* (New York, NY: MJF Books, 2001)

<sup>63</sup> Arthur Herman, *The Cave and the Light : Plato Versus Aristotle, and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization* (New York: Random House, 2014).

<sup>64</sup> Samuel A. Schreiner, *The Concord Quartet : Alcott, Emerson, Hawthorne, Thoreau and the Friendship That Freed the American Mind*, (2010) <http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=644919>.

John Matteson's Pulitzer Prize winning history *Eden's Outcasts* (2007);<sup>65</sup>

Megan Marshall's Pulitzer Prize winning history *The Lives of Margaret Fuller* (2008);<sup>66</sup>

Susan Cheever's literary history *American Bloomsbury* (2006).<sup>67</sup>

These document each member's contribution to the Boston Transcendentalist circle.

Unfortunately, they do not look to their association with other circles, as I shall show in this study, finding the intersection of circles in places like Boston, Newport, New York, Philadelphia, Pasadena, and Nantucket.

In his article *A Temple for Tomes: The Egyptian Elephant Folio* (1990)<sup>68</sup> Chris Monkhouse profiled the commitment by the Providence Athenaeum to purchase Napoleon's Egyptian travels by Denon,<sup>69</sup> even before the Athenaeum was built, and before the volumes were printed in France. It presents the motivation for construction of not only the Providence Athenaeum itself, but quite literally that after my observation of its size, craftsmanship and materials, the case is literally a work of art that stands on its own and the folio that is now carefully conserved

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<sup>65</sup> John Matteson, *Eden's Outcasts* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2007)

<sup>66</sup> Megan Marshall, *Margaret Fuller: A New American Life* (New York, New York: Mariner, Div. of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Company, 2013)

<sup>67</sup> Susan Cheever, *American Bloomsbury* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006)

<sup>68</sup> Christopher Monkhouse, "A Temple for Tomes: The Egyptian Elephant Folio Cabinet in the Providence Athenaeum," *Furniture History* 26 (1990)

<sup>69</sup> Vivant Denon, *Travels through Sicily and Malta: From the French of M. Denon, Gentleman-in-Ordinary to the King of France, and Member of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture*, (1790,) [http://0-find.galegroup.com.biblio.eui.eu/ecco/infomark.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&docType=ECCOArticles&bookId=1376400400&type=getFullCitation&tabID=T001&prodId=ECCO&docLevel=TEXT\\_GRAPHICS&version=1.0&source=library&userGroup=europa](http://0-find.galegroup.com.biblio.eui.eu/ecco/infomark.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&docType=ECCOArticles&bookId=1376400400&type=getFullCitation&tabID=T001&prodId=ECCO&docLevel=TEXT_GRAPHICS&version=1.0&source=library&userGroup=europa).

elsewhere.<sup>70</sup> The Providence Athenaeum history, *Inquire Within*<sup>71</sup> (2003), speaks to the notion of the Athenaeum as a "safe" space for social conversation and working. As a "safe place," women were drawn to the Athenaeum to read and write. It was likely one of the few opportunities for writers such as Margaret Fuller<sup>72</sup> and women watchers such as Nathaniel Hawthorne<sup>73</sup> and Edgar Allen Poe.<sup>74, 75</sup>

Helen Wright's biography of George Ellery Hale, *Explorer of the Universe*<sup>76</sup> (1994), provided insight into his childhood development, and the factors and people that enabled him to find his way to astronomy. Hale exhibited a profound insight into human personalities that also made him an impressive natural at "resource development" for the Mount Wilson Observatory, Caltech, and the Huntington Library. Wright's other book, *Maria Mitchell, Sweeper of the Sky*<sup>77</sup> (1980) was about the first female American Gold Medal winner, also the first female Vassar Professor of Astronomy, and the Librarian of the Nantucket Athenaeum.<sup>78</sup> Mitchell<sup>79</sup> organized

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<sup>70</sup> Christopher Monkhouse, "A Temple for Tomes: The Egyptian Elephant Folio Cabinet in the Providence Athenaeum," *Furniture History* 26 (1990).

<sup>71</sup> Lancaster.

<sup>72</sup> John Matteson, *The Lives of Margaret Fuller* (New York: W.W. Norton Company, 2012).

<sup>73</sup> Marion Louise Kesselring, *Hawthorne's Reading, 1828-1850 : A Transcription and Identification of Titles Recorded in the Charge-Books in the Salem Athenaeum* (Norwood, Pa.: Norwood Editions, 1977.)

<sup>74</sup> Philip James McFarland, *Hawthorne in Concord*, 1st ed. (New York: New York : Grove Press, 2004).

<sup>75</sup> Edgar Allen Poe, "Our Amateur Poets, No. Iii-William Ellery Channing", *Graham's Magazine*, 23, 1843; Kevin J. Hayes, "Poe, the Daguerreotype and the Autobiographical Act," *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (2002).

<sup>76</sup> Helen Wright, *Explorer of the Universe: A biography of George Ellery Hale* (New York: Dutton, 1966).

<sup>77</sup> Renée L. Bergland, *Maria Mitchell and the Sexing of Science: An Astronomer among the American Romantics* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2008).

<sup>78</sup> Mitchell organized talks at Nantucket and invited members of the other east coast Athenaea, along with other well-known luminaries and international scientists to her island Athenaeum.

<sup>79</sup> Helen Wright, *Sweeper in the Sky: The Life of Maria Mitchell* (Nantucket, Massachusetts: The Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association, 1949).

speakers at Nantucket that drew members of the other east coast Athenaea, including Ralph Waldo Emerson, Frederick Douglass, Lucretia Mott, Horace Greeley, Henry David Thoreau, William Lloyd Garrison, Lucy Stone, Horace Mann, and other well-known luminaries, to the Island.

While there is no extant historic narrative of the creation of the Athenaeum at the California Institute of Technology, it can be extrapolated from correspondence in Caltech Archives. There are also several helpful human studies about some of the relevant figures. Judith Goldstein's history *Millikan's School*<sup>80</sup> (1991) suggests that the identity of Caltech was based on the genius of the circles of its planners and faculty, one of whom was a Nobel Laureate for Physics and the first President of Caltech, Robert Andrews Millikan. Another was the quixotic presence of admired Nobel Laureate Albert Einstein.<sup>81</sup>

Autobiographic material donated by the family of Amos Gager Throop, the founder of the Throop Universal Unitarian Church and the Throop Institute (the forerunner to Caltech) held jointly by Caltech archives and the Throop Universal Unitarian church in Pasadena, presents an extraordinary record of the historization of the founding of Caltech and the Caltech Athenaeum.

This dissertation will expand on the existing scholarship. I compare three extant American Athenaea, I examine geographic contexts, architecture, libraries, collections, and I demonstrate the social agency of the intellectual circles, and the building of an American artistic, literary, social and scientific philosophy from a scholarly perspective with critical commentary.

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<sup>80</sup> Judith R. Goodstein, *Millikan's School: A History of the California Institute of Technology* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991.)

<sup>81</sup> Goldstein.

Drawing on extensive archival research, personal interviews and thorough fieldwork, this dissertation contextualizes the Athenaeum as a sustainable model that can be adopted even further in the praxis of twenty-first century culture, integrated as discursive hubs within university campuses.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE REDWOOD LIBRARY AND ATHENAEUM

"The Redwood Library embodies the principles of a true athenaeum, a seat of learning and arts, fulfilling its Charter mission of 'having nothing in view but the good of mankind'."<sup>82</sup>

This mission statement of the Redwood Library and Athenaeum clearly reflects a strong bond with its founders, and also how the Athenaeum relates to the People of Newport and most especially, its members. The Newport Athenaeum is the only Athenaeum in the United States that is open all 365 days per year.<sup>83</sup> The agenda, which is posted for the world to see on its website, identifies the Redwood, as it was in its founding in 1747, first as a "home genius circle,"<sup>84</sup> the original cultural hub of Newport. There are events of universal interest to visitors as well as the membership and the local populace. The events, the wealth of history and art maintained in the collections, and what is brought in for exhibitions or lectures are known far beyond the scope of Newport for nearly 300 years.

In this chapter, I argue that the importance of the Redwood Athenaeum to my study is that it was the first purpose-built Athenaeum library in America and has not moved from its location since its design and construction, and it has been in continuous service since it opened. It has often been attributed as used for research by George Washington while visiting with French ally

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<sup>82</sup> <https://www.redwoodlibrary.org/our-history>.

<sup>83</sup> During the global pandemic, the Redwood Athenaeum was one of the first to promote a dense schedule of online programming via the internet and ZOOM.

<sup>84</sup> It is entirely possible that this was a men's circle only, since some historians assert that there were other "tea circles" for women only.



General Jean-Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, comte de Rochambeau ("Rochambeau" as he is commonly called) who was living in Newport while his men were blockaded in Narragansett by the British. According to Peter Harrison historian Carl Bridenbaugh:

Jefferson never traveled to Rhode Island or Massachusetts, and went to his grave ignorant of the fact that Peter Harrison had anticipated him in the revival of classical models. He never knew a loyalist was his precursor in the evolution of a new, pure form of architecture that would reflect the republicanism of the New World."<sup>85</sup>

I also argue for the eventual utility of this library to the Athenaeum circle, which used its collection and their discourse to confront the dependence on the servitude of slaves and which they discovered was a parallel to their own exploitation by Britain. I argue, after considering the specific books purchased, that they were seeking guidance on this philosophic issue and ultimately found it, when the Librarian and community leader Ezra Stiles manumitted his slaves, becoming a strong proponent of education and the abolition of slavery. His ideas influenced others in his circle, including Bishop Berkeley and Moses Brown. Together Stiles and Brown were instrumental in founding the first University in Rhode Island, Brown University, named for Moses Brown.

I also argue that Roger Williams, religious leader and author, utilized his social agency to break away from the theocracy of the Massachusetts Bay Company, setting out to found the Rhode Island colony. He wrote a language guide to assist others in communication with the

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<sup>85</sup>Carl Bridenbaugh, History, Institute of Early American and Culture, *Peter Harrison : First American Architect* (Whitefish, Mont.: Literary Licensing, 2011) viii, This history was published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg, Virginia, in 1949 by the University of North Carolina Press at Chapel Hill.

Native Americans and to aid in building cooperative relations with them. Roger Williams took steps that led to the prohibition of lifelong slavery in Rhode Island.

What is most unique about the Redwood Athenaeum is not the library or art collection but, in fact, the building itself. The Redwood Library and Athenaeum is the oldest purpose-built American Athenaeum and Library of its type, and the only one that remains in its original building.<sup>86</sup> In 1750, Peter Harrison, often called "America's first architect," made Abraham Redwood's dream of a library come to fruition. This building, as well as four others, was designed by Peter Harrison for Newport.

Harrison also designed the Touro Synagogue for the Congregation of Jeshuat Israel.<sup>87</sup> While not the first synagogue built in the new world, the economy of design is similar to the nearby Redwood Library. This was for a congregation of Sephardic Jews, mostly from Iberia, who, after having experienced religious persecution elsewhere, settled in the little town of Newport, Rhode Island, to make their lives. Much in the same way the Newport Athenaeum was originally funded, money was raised from the subscription of the people, some in Newport, some elsewhere, like Charleston, Savannah, Philadelphia, and Richmond. Although founded in 1658, it was not built and dedicated until December 7, 1763.

How Harrison came to be in Newport, the manner in which he would leave, and ultimately how he would become villainized by history are also unique. It seems fitting that Harrison, a

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<sup>86</sup> Bridenbaugh, *Institute of Early American History and Culture* viii.

<sup>87</sup> Touro Synagogue, *Touro Synagogue of Congregation Jeshuat Israel. Newport Rhode Island, Founded 1658* (Newport, Rhode Island: Remington Ward, 1948) 7.

British-born sea captain who traded in rum and agriculture and settled in America at Rhode Island, successfully derived his own ideas for architectural design from books. These were books on the classical designs of the sixteenth century Venetian architect Andrea Palladio,<sup>88</sup> strongly influenced by Vitruvius and classical Greek architecture, as interpreted by sixteenth century British architect Inigo Jones.<sup>89</sup>

A copy of *The Designs of Inigo Jones, Consisting of Plans and Elevations for Publick and Private Buildings Publish'd by William Kent, with Some Additional Designs*, (published in two volumes in London) was the source book for the Redwood Athenaeum found in Peter Harrison's personal library.<sup>90</sup> While some of the drawings are by Jones, plates numbering from number 57 to 63 illustrate Palladio's Church of San Giorgio in Venezia, Italia, which is regarded as the absolute primary source of Peter Harrison's façade for the Redwood Library with just a few deletions of ornament.

According to John Fitzhugh Millar, who catalogued the body of Harrison's architectural projects, he discovered that both the English Neo-Palladian and the Palladian church architectural drawings provided Harrison:

"Examples of elevations where a main triangular pediment is superimposed on another triangular pediment, creating a highly layered façade of strong geometric shapes precisely organized by the use of columns, moldings, and framing elements. The wood structure was placed on a foundation of stone." However, the wood

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<sup>88</sup> Andrea Palladio, *The Four Books of Architecture* (2013), <https://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=1894831>.

<sup>89</sup> John Harris, Gordon Higgott, and Center Drawing, *Inigo Jones: Complete Architectural Drawings* (London: Wilson for Zwemmer, 1990) Plates 57-63.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

structure was actually painted to appear rusticated as though a complete stone structure. The Touro Synagogue and the Brick Market were similarly finished." <sup>91</sup>

As a ship's captain, Harrison frequently made passage to Newport and became interested in learning how to build. Harrison married Benedict Arnold's sister and went on to build a mansion for Arnold facing Newport Harbor and the customs office, so that it would be beneficial for smuggling activity. He also built many public buildings in Europe in the Palladian/Inigo Jones style before settling in America.<sup>92</sup>

During the American Revolution, Newport, due to its strategic geography, was occupied by the British who, at one time, quartered their officers in the Athenaeum and reportedly burned or stole the books that were not removed for safety by the colonist members. The French land forces led by Rochambeau, supporting the Revolutionaries, were also quartered there at one point.<sup>93</sup> In fact, there is a commemorative statue by French sculptor Fernan Harmar of the Comte de Rochambeau in Newport, a copy of the original located in Lafayette Park in Washington, D.C.

Newport businessmen who participated in the triangular trade of American goods for slaves included such luminaries as Abraham Redwood, Ezra Stiles, Bishop Berkeley, Peter Harrison. These same individuals and others first met in Redwood's home, as a small conversational circle, and decided to establish an Athenaeum to accommodate their ever-growing membership along

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<sup>91</sup> John Fitzhugh Millar, *The Buildings of Peter Harrison: Cataloguing the Work of the First Global Architect, 1716-1775* (2014), <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10947263>.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. 38

<sup>93</sup> As I previously noted, Rochambeau, as he is known in history, refused to leave his men who were blockaded by the British at Narraganset.

with their desire to build central, accessible, and useful library. This group, as we shall see, has continued continuously since its founding in 1747 as the Redwood Library and Athenaeum.

According to George Champlin Mason, the author of the *Redwood Annals*, discussions about books, especially those concerning religion, were sometimes argumentative and lively. Since printing paper, ink, and letter type were not readily available for the one or two printing presses which could be found in Massachusetts, the informal circulation of books between friends was the norm. Bibles, histories, books on animal husbandry, poetry and languages were exchanged between family and friends. One of the members of the group, Henry Collins, a patron for the arts often called the Medici of Newport, donated his bowling green for the site of the Redwood Athenaeum, and unfortunately, he eventually had most of his property seized from him by the government.<sup>94</sup>

The archives of the Redwood Library and Athenaeum reveal a circle of writers and artists who were also Redwood subscribers and whose reading account records are maintained in the library. Future research into this material may perhaps disclose how their participation at the Redwood Library and Athenaeum influenced art or literary works which respond to their reading. Some of the notable members were Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Edith Wharton, Gilbert Stewart, Julia Ward Howe, Henry James and Charles Bird King. There are also a number of nationally recognized, local authors and luminaries who presented forums and books regularly. With the founding of the Redwood Library and Athenaeum in Newport, we start to see

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<sup>94</sup> George Champlin Mason, *Annals of the Redwood Library and Athenæum, Newport, R.I* (Newport, R.I.,: Redwood library, 1891).

the further development of "philosophical circles" and how societal changes have shifted from a community of businessmen, trader and slave holders to a resort, working, and retirement community.

The Redwood Library and Athenaeum and the Touro Synagogue were two corresponding intellectual and social hubs for the people of Newport Island. They were united by a new and unique genre of American architecture and an intellectual circle, which once included a future President of Yale University, a future President of the United States, a famous religious orator, and the early cadre of American painters, including Gilbert Stewart and Charles Byrd King. In fact, this intellectual discourse continues as the Redwood Athenaeum presented a virtual public talk (due to the Covid-19 global pandemic) on November 19, 2020 concerning Frederick Douglass' visits to Newport, starting on September 17, 1838 after his escape from slavery. The extant home of the free-born Issac Rice, who worked as a gardener for the governor in Touro Park, and the mansions of Newport, was a "station" of the Underground Railroad, visited frequently by Douglass, who himself was always subject to recapture under the Fugitive Slave Act. This lecture is indicative of the social programming and agency the Redwood maintains, especially during a pandemic winter in Newport. There is a particularly active commitment to engage the entire community with virtual programming of lectures, concerts, streaming music, and "live discursive exchange."

## The "Shining City on The Hill"

### The Massachusetts Bay Company Theocracy

In this chapter, I discuss the theocratic business settlement, "The Massachusetts Bay Colony" and the tireless pursuit of some for religious freedom that caused the founding the territory of Rhode Island, the town of Newport, and eventually, the Redwood Library and Athenaeum as a locus for interdisciplinary discourse, especially regarding disputed topics, such as the slave trade.

Roger Williams, along with his wife Mary, were among fifteen hundred passengers in a seventeen-ship exodus that arrived in Boston in 1630<sup>95</sup> under the guardianship of future Massachusetts Governor, John Winthrop. It was Winthrop who delivered that somewhat daunting admonition regarding "class" and the transformative rally call "duty" to the Pilgrims sailing to their "Shining City on a Hill."<sup>96</sup>

Later, as Governor, Winthrop found himself required to enforce the unhealthy conflation of British law and religion in the new world, despite his apparent friendship and admiration of Williams, who publicly and vociferously spoke against it. According to a biography published by Romeo Elton in 1852, *The Life of Roger Williams: The Earliest Legislator and True Champion for a Full and Absolute Liberty of Conscience*, Williams" is a person whose name should be

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<sup>95</sup> Romeo Elton, *Life of Roger Williams: The Earliest Legislator and True Champion for a Full and Absolute Liberty of Conscience* (London: Cockshaw, 1852.)

<sup>96</sup> New Testament of the Bible, Matthew, Chapter 5-7. (Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount"). It was first spoken by John Winthrop, the first Governor of Massachusetts, explaining the mission of the Pilgrims with regard to their religious settlement. Also see: *As a City on a Hill, The Story of America's Most Famous Lay Sermon* by Daniel T. Rodgers, Princeton (2019)

recognized in every church and every government of the world."<sup>97</sup> According to Elton's history, the travelers did not entirely understand the politics of their new world.<sup>98</sup>

Williams himself wrote in his book *the Bloudy Tenant a Persecution, for Cause of Conscience Discussed in a Conference Between Truth and Peace*, 1644, that there should be a separation of church and state in the new world.<sup>99</sup> Not surprisingly, Williams refused to join the congregation at Boston, since they had not yet broken with the Church of England, and because he "declared his opinion that the magistrate might not punish a breach of the Sabbath, nor any offense that was a breach of the first table of Church of England faith," Winthrop found himself in a conflict of conscience between his support of Williams and his duty as the leader, to the Church and as governor.<sup>100</sup>

### **Mrs. Glover's Press and the Free Man's Oath**

The first printing press brought to the colonies from England in 1639<sup>101</sup> was owned by the widowed Elizabeth Glover and located in Harvard Yard, within the town of Cambridge, Massachusetts.<sup>102</sup> Mrs. Glover was the sole support for her five children and herself as her husband died on the voyage from England. At that time there were no other printing presses in

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<sup>97</sup> Romeo Elton, *Life of Roger Williams: The Earliest Legislator and True Champion for a Full and Absolute Liberty of Conscience* (London: Cockshaw, 1852.)

<sup>98</sup> Ibid. The settlers did not comprehend that they would still be under the authority of the Church of England in America.

<sup>99</sup> Roger Williams, *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution for Cause of Conscience* (Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2015.)

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Cambridge, MA Historical Society

<sup>102</sup> Thomas Hutchinson, *The History of Massachusetts: From the First Settlement Thereof in 1628, until the Year 1750.*, vol. I 2vols. (Salem, MA: Thomas Cushing 1795). (Huntington Library's copy)



the British colony and all new books had to be imported to America. By law, Mrs. Glover was prohibited from even printing the Bible in the colonies, although she had prevailed against a law prohibiting women from conducting business in Concord. Mrs. Glover was able to employ the already indentured Matthew Daye to print some prayer books, and the "Free Man's Oath."<sup>103</sup>

In 1628, Roger Williams declared the Free Man's Oath "A corruption of religious freedom to use the sword of the civil magistrate" to "open the understanding of heretics or cut them off from the state so that they may not infect the church or injure the public peace." However, and perhaps with the intercession of Winthrop, Williams was removed from Boston by the civil (but not church) authorities to Plymouth, where he found a grateful congregation of Pilgrims from Holland who had separated themselves completely from the Church of England.

In the summer of 1636, Roger Williams negotiated an agreement with the Narragansett people for the land that became Providence, in exchange for "...forty fathoms of white beads, ten cloth coats and twenty hoes."<sup>104</sup> One year later, the Pocasset (Rhode Island) settlers decided to "follow the example set by the colonists of Plymouth Colony by drafting and signing the Portsmouth Compact in which the people affirm that they do not swear allegiance to any monarch, the first document of its kind." In 1639, the people agreed to transfer their colony to the other end of the island and founded what they called, "Newport."

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid. Hutchinson. A law was passed to control printing presses by allowing them only in Cambridge. Printing was under the close scrutiny and control of the local government.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

Williams, who already had some faculty for learning languages, devoted himself to the study of the language of the native people living in the Narragansett. In 1644 in London, Williams published a lexicon of the Narragansett, or "Algonquin" language, *A Key into the Language of America, or a help to the language of the natives in that part of America called New England*.<sup>105</sup> Williams' mastery of their language provided him the opportunity to improve the peace between the settlers and the native inhabitants, permitting him to share his faith as well as protect them from the settlers and vice-versa.

While in London, Williams received a Royal charter for the Colony of Rhode Island and the Providence Plantations from King Charles II, which helped to preserve and immortalize the religious liberties of the settlement from encroachment. After making contact in England with his supporters, Williams returned to that part of Narragansett later named Rhode Island, no longer subject to the control of the Boston theocratic government.<sup>106</sup>

From a purely philosophical point of view, the Native Americans of Narragansett represented, in the beliefs that Williams knowledgeably discussed with them, the poignant fact that in response to Plato's question of the search for Immortality of the Soul, that they were given this belief by their own ancestors.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Samuel Green Arnold, *History of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1868). <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moa/AFJ7769.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

## **The "Conflicted" Slave Trade Economy of Newport, Rhode Island**

Although Rhode Island developed from "triangular" trade, founder Roger Williams grew to oppose all slavery in the Rhode Island territory. This circle of academics, ministers and slave owners in eighteenth century America were dealing directly with the Scots, and much like Glasgow, they had significant time between shipments of goods between Newport and Scotland to meet and discuss trade and their other ideas and concerns of importance.

Newport brought social, business and intellectual circles of the Scottish Enlightenment and their triangular trade along with their Scottish Common-Sense Philosophy to America. Common-Sense philosophy is widely acknowledged as the source of our idealistic founding rhetoric of American freedoms and our national economy. American tobacco, cotton and sugar were exported to Scotland and England while slavery and ideas of religious exclusionism were imported together with philosophy of scientific discovery, and new ideas in medical, financial, and industrial innovation.<sup>108</sup>

Eventually, the Redwood Athenaeum was proposed as the number of men who gathered first in the home of Abraham Redwood<sup>109</sup> increased and the group eventually resolved to found and grow a Philosophical Society.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Simpson 33

<sup>109</sup> "The largest slave holder in Newport" according to Benedict Leca, in telcal conversation on 12.28.2020

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

This section discusses the founding of first the Athenaeum circle in America and the plan and build of the first dedicated Library Club in America, the Redwood Athenaeum by American architect, Peter Harrison. As we shall learn, there were growing connections of triangular trade<sup>111</sup> between the people of Newport and the Scots and Irish. Meanwhile, in Scotland during the eighteenth century, similar circles of diverse groups of political leaders, clergy, scientists and businessmen grew with their slavery fueled economy, to become perhaps the most influential contributors to American colonial economy and ideology. The interests of the intellectual circles of the cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow during that time essentially reflected the dichotomy between the Athenaeum Lyceum of Plato and the Academy of Aristotle.

### **Judaism and Newport**

The Touro Synagogue and Touro's successor were instrumental in defining freedom of religion and separation of church and state by George Washington in the Constitution of the United States. The next Rabbi in charge, Moses Seixas, eventually wrote to President George Washington explaining how his people had come to America to escape persecution that had continued for generations. Rabbi Seixas wanted to confirm with Washington that the Jews and other religious groups be given freedom to practice their religions in the United States. The Synagogue was also a cultural center where ancient languages were taught and, as such, was important to not only the Jewish Sephardic community but to scholars like Ezra Stiles, who learned Hebrew at the Touro Synagogue. President Washington's response to this letter set forth

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<sup>111</sup> Slaves, raw goods. Finished goods and credit in "British trade."

the "Affirmation of Freedom of Religion" as well as the separation of Church and State.

Washington stated his response in a letter to Rabbi Seixas as follows:

"The Government of the United States gives to bigotry no sanction; to persecution, no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demonstrate/ themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support."<sup>112</sup>

(Signed George Washington)

### **Founding The Redwood Library and Athenaeum**

The Annals of the Redwood Library and Athenaeum recorded in part by American architect George Champlin Mason (1820-1894) attribute the founding date also to around time of the residence of Dean George Berkeley on Rhode Island in an already discursive community.

The founding of the Literary and Philosophy Club in 1730 may have in part been attributed to Berkeley, however, Berkeley was reported to state that "The people found on Rhode Island, were already highly engaged. They are said to have loved books and loved learning." Many of the books had their exchange recorded on the books themselves, so it was simple to identify everyone's interests.

Social leader, business leader and the owner of the most slaves in Newport, Abraham Redwood provided the sum of 500 pounds sterling to purchase books decided upon by the members of the Philosophy Society, while they in turn raised 500 pounds for the construction of a building. In 1748, Henry Collins, one of the library's acknowledged founders, donated his own

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid. 24

hilltop bowling green to serve as the home for the library. With respect to women members of the Redwood Athenaeum, and whether they were participants, is a subject for further research. A small children's library structure was recently opened next to the Athenaeum.

In this section, I've demonstrated that in founding the Redwood Library and Athenaeum, members used their business and social agency to be informed of building trends and decided to improve the employ a new architectural aesthetic for Newport. More importantly, they strived to change the sociopolitical culture of Newport and the colonies by outlawing slavery and promoting abolition from the colony as a whole.

As we shall learn, a development of "philosophical circles" emerged when people had sufficient resources to travel and visit other groups, especially with regard to the circles of the East. As we shall see, the source of those resources is an extremely conflicted history.

### **Abraham Redwood**

According to historian Sean D. Moore, the painting of Redwood now in the Athenaeum was a family portrait, formerly hung in his home before it was razed, and not meant as a public statement. Abraham Redwood is portrayed clutching Alexander Pope's book, *Essay on Man* suggesting that "Redwood was an educated, middle-aged minister who inherited a good income as a result of slave and rum commerce." Moore interprets Redwood's portrait as a message that he recognizes the paradox alluded to in Pope's book, that "Whatever is, is right."<sup>113</sup> He sees it as Redwood's resignation to the comfortable life he's leading supported by slavery, that is in direct

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<sup>113</sup> Moore 76

contradiction with his professed Quaker religious convictions. Redwood was not alone in this. The archives of the founding of the first library in colonial America demonstrate the degree of effort, organization, and importance given to this philosophical association by its members, even from its conception.

Author Sean D. Moore's offhand statement about Abraham Redwood as an "absentee Antigua plantation owner and slave trader residing in Newport" suggests that Redwood, the largest slave owner in Newport, was distancing himself from the production of his wealth and apparently never in fact visited Antigua. Pope's paradox<sup>114</sup> resigns Redwood as the eldest son who enjoyed the advantages of wealth as the son of a slave plantation owner, but was now captive himself, as his entire lifestyle and those of his "society-connected" wife and children were bound up in an ugliness he didn't even wish to witness. Therefore, he surrounded himself with other slave owners and they managed to conflate slave trading and business with philosophy. Author Simon Gikandi posits in his book, *Slavery and the Culture of Taste*,

"The work of Pope was ubiquitous in the colonies, and evidence from early Rhode Islanders in general, were symptomatic of the disavowal of the Enlightenment's relationship to the accumulation of capital through slave trade"<sup>115</sup>

Although books were only acquired in foreign travel, exchange, purchase, or descentance, James Franklin, the older brother of Benjamin Franklin, published *the New England Courant* in

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<sup>114</sup> Moore. 77

<sup>115</sup> Simon Gikandi, *Slavery and the Culture of Taste*, De Gruyter Ebooks. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011.) Kindle

Newport, after moving his family and his printing press from Boston where he is said to have founded "yellow journalism" in the British colonies.<sup>116</sup>

The records of the Redwood Athenaeum archives narrate the history of the Athenaeum book collection thus: "The outgrowth of the Philosophical Society of the booming seaport of Newport was finding that they needed a regular center to meet and share books, hold civic meetings and other events of interest to the community." On November 4, 1747, the "Company" held a meeting to decide how to acquire books for their mutual interest and enjoyment.<sup>117</sup> According to Michelle Farias, the associate archivist of the Redwood, the Annals state that, on November 4, 1747, the Literary and Philosophical Society met to discuss library acquisitions. The members agreed to present and vote on the selections to be purchased in England by their broker. The choice of books made by one member, Captain Dunbar, presents a title that seems to embrace the whole of Natural Philosophy, namely *A Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences Containing an explanation of the Terms and an Account of the Things Signified Thereby, in the Several Arts, both Liberal and Mechanical; and the Several Sciences, Human and Divine. (1705)*

Another book recommendation that was presented by Abraham Hart reflects the interest in religious liberty found in Newport, as it was the *Biblia Hebraica* (1705), published in Hebrew, which language Redwood Librarian Ezra Stiles learned to read from Rabbi Isaac Touro, the founder of the Sephardic Touro Synagogue, still extant in downtown Newport.<sup>118</sup> George

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<sup>116</sup> Rhode Island Historical Society taken live from display notes of the James Franklin printing press.

<sup>117</sup> Mason.

<sup>118</sup> The Touro Synagogue was also designed by architect Peter Harrison with two other buildings and the Redwood Athenaeum, and various homes. Synagogue, 14-15.



Washington is recorded as a frequent visitor to Newport to visit General Rochambeau headquartered there, and while there he also visited the Redwood Library and Athenaeum, as it was his habit to seek guidance in printed books whenever possible. Washington and Jefferson were known to have both admired the architecture of the Redwood Athenaeum. Although Jefferson never actually visited the Redwood, he had already discovered the style of the Palladio, adapting much of this now "American classical revival" style to his home at Monticello and his eventual planning for the University of Virginia.

### **Ezra Stiles, Moses Brown, and the Abolitionists**

The Redwood Athenaeum Librarian Ezra Stiles (1727-1795), religious scholar and leader, President of Yale University and a founder of Brown, worked in the spirit of Roger Williams toward causing slavery to be prohibited in Rhode Island. Unlike most histories of territorial acquisition from native inhabitants, the founding history of Rhode Island is quite different as it was born from the expulsion from Massachusetts Colony of a minister named Roger Williams.

I contend that the Redwood Library and Athenaeum Circle, as organized by Ezra Stiles, the first Librarian, and who, in 1770 manumitted his slave and his slave's son, became an important center for anti-slavery discourse with Stiles' direction. Stiles organized the Society for the Abolition of Slavery in Newport in 1790.

Joanne Pope Melish explains how the American revolutionary war served as a catalyst toward ending slavery in *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and Race in New England, 1780-1860*, as she states: "It was only in the context of the Revolution that the anti-slavery movement gained support outside a fringe group of Quakers and agitators."

According to Rhode Island historian Lemon:

"By the early 1700s the impact of these moral concerns became evident as many prominent people began to purge themselves of any involvement in the institution of slavery. James Manning, Brown University's first president and pastor of Providence's First Baptist Church, freed his only slave in 1770. Former slaveholder Samuel Hopkins, pastor of the First Congregational Church in Newport began preaching against slavery in 1771 and was joined by Ezra Stiles pastor of Newport's Second Congregational Church, and future president of Yale (after Stiles) Moses Brown converted to Quakerism and freed his ten slaves in 1773, the same year in which the Quaker Yearly Meeting voted a complete break from slavery and ordered all Friends to free all of their slaves."

Brown and Stiles were cofounders of the Society for the Abolition of Slavery in 1790.

Brown was also a founding member of the Rhode Island Historical Society.

In his recent book, *Slavery and the Beginning of Early American Libraries*<sup>119</sup> literary historian Sean D. Moore presents the first association of the new growth of private libraries with the financial resources that were the direct result of the participation of the leaders of Newport, including the clergy, in the triangular slave trade. Much like the leaders of the Scottish Common-Sense School who gathered in Glasgow,<sup>120</sup> there was ample time between the arrival and departure of ships to participate in Philosophic discussions as men of leisure. Moore gives just numerous examples from Newport and down the Northeast corridor, from Quakers in Pennsylvania to Virginia tobacco growers. Irish theologians, such as George Berkeley who wrote that he had obtained his slave whom he named Newport in exchange for a hog's head of rum, demonstrated that private libraries were built and a premium was paid for imported books. This

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<sup>119</sup> Moore.76

<sup>120</sup> Herman, *How the Scots Invented the Modern World : The True Story of How Western Europe's Poorest Nation Created Our World & Everything in It*. New York: Crown Publishing 2001. 222-230.

premium was so high that in fact the books came over with the slave ships and the value of a slave was fungible with that of a book. This unfortunately became an entire economy based on human exploitation of people stolen from their homes in Africa and elsewhere, and purposefully kept illiterate by their owners.

### **The Social Legacy of Ezra Stiles**

Founded in 1961, Ezra Stiles College at Yale University is named to honor the eminent American theologian, lawyer, scientist, and philosopher, and member of the Class of 1746, yet it has been criticized that Stiles, an ordained minister, and highly educated man who uttered abolitionist rhetoric would own three indentured slaves, one of whom he manumitted just before Stiles himself became president of Yale.

"It is certain that [Stiles] was never a white supremacist of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century sort," Stephen Pitti, (Historian, and Head of Ezra Stiles College) wrote in 2014, "But there's no ignoring the fact that this abolitionist, minister, and university president lived in a world in which slavery played a prominent role, that he was a slaveholder for a time, and that he served as the master of two indentured servants."<sup>121</sup>

The Redwood Athenaeum and Library grew to become a center for enlightenment in a physical context though removed from a metropolitan city such as Liverpool, and was regarded as a literal interpretation of the "literati" or "genius circles" of Edinburgh and Glasgow, including its construction of universities and its reciprocal trade with Scotland, and the trade in slaves, alcohol and tobacco. In fact, as I have noted the Librarian of the Redwood Athenaeum became

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<sup>121</sup> Pitti, a twenty-first century historian and head of Ezra Stiles College at Yale apparently considers that Stiles was a "good slave owner" <https://yaledailynews.com/blog/2016/08/18/plaque-honors-three-men-controlled-by-ezra-stiles/>

an important leader in education both in his position as most influential member of the Redwood Library and as Pastor of the Newport Second Congregational Church.

In 1761, Stiles helped to establish the College in the English Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, now known as Brown University, by contributing to the drafting of its charter with his friends William Ellery, Jr. (future Declaration of Independence signatory) and Josias Lyndon, future governor of Rhode Island. Stiles also served, along with 35 others, as a founding fellow or trustee. The Redwood Library was started with a total of 751 books purchased by member vote and 500 pounds sterling donated by Abraham Redwood. Today there are over 200,000 volumes alone in the library. Additionally, there are archives, most of which are digitalized and available to members, a classical music streaming service with an online catalog, and links to the Rhode Island Archives (RIAMCO) and to the Sanborn map collection. The library also contains the family archives of Abraham Redwood, including his extended family letters, and archives of the families who summered in Newport, with newspaper articles and photographs as well as for the participants of the America's Cup race from 1854-2010.

### **Prejudices or Philosophies?**

In reading Dierkeschiede's article citing Thomas Jefferson's letters, in which Jefferson stated he could not see a mixing of the races in America, or that the slaves, once emancipated, should be permitted to remain in America, I posit that Jefferson read Adam Smith's *Stages* and may have decided that the African slaves needed to leave America before they could retaliate against the people who enslaved them. Historian Duncan A. Bruce especially focused on

research concerning the presence and influence of Scots in America, in his history, "*Mark of the Scots*" and notes:

"While Scots in actuality constitute a mere fraction of the world's populace at one half of a percent, people who are Scottish by either decent or birth have constituted 11 percent of all Nobel Prizes through 1990." An overwhelming majority of our United States presidents, from George Washington to George Bush have at least some documented Scottish ancestry."<sup>122</sup>

In business, such influential figures as steel magnate, philanthropist and follower of Swedenborgism, Andrew Carnegie, whom as we shall see, participated in the early development of the California Institute of Technology, and banker and industrialist Andrew Mellon, both trace their ancestry to Scotland. In fact, Carnegie, cognizant and reflecting on the contributions of he and his countrymen opined, "America would have been a poor show had it not been for the Scots."<sup>123</sup>

The famous immigrant who was also a founding father of the United States, Alexander Hamilton, a former soldier who created the U.S. Treasury, the American Banking system and the U.S. Coast Guard, was the son of a Scot trader (who abandoned him) and a plantation worker, born into the West Indies slave and rum trade.<sup>124</sup> Recent research of the Schuyler Mansion Estate (Hamilton's in-laws' home) and Hamilton's personal financial records online at the National

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<sup>122</sup> Bruce 102-130

<sup>123</sup> Andrew Carnegie, "Autobiography of Andrew Carnegie," (2018)  
<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=1855180>.

<sup>124</sup> Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton*. (2017)

Archives, indicates that Hamilton continued managing<sup>125</sup> slaves while a member of the New York Manumission Society.<sup>126</sup>

Some historians, such as Craig Bruce Smith, examine the evolution of the concepts of honor, virtue, and ethics in the foundation of America as "the philosophy of the emerging nation, and a first and early theme of the Pennsylvania Colonial Legislature (Independence Hall)." For his part, John Adams looked to Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics, which he complained about in a letter to Virginia Examiner editor Skelton Jones on March 11, 1809 stating it was, "A field too vast."<sup>127</sup> Adams attended a college to train ministers in Calvinism, and it was hoped to prepare him, according to a statement written by Adams at the age of 86 in 1821, to become a minister.

In Athenaea, the theme of philosophy, whether it be deemed Socratic, Nichomachean, Platonian, Calvinistic, Swedenborgian, Judaic, or Christian is an ever-present human influencer of discourse and contemplation.<sup>128</sup> The American Enlightenment document which sums up what Thomas Jefferson, and his committee of five borrowed from Scottish Common-Sense Philosophy, mostly from Newton and Locke, is the Declaration of Independence. Reading the Declaration of Independence is as though one is reading a checklist: Metaphysics, (Nature), Epistemology, (Reason), Ethics (Human Rights) and Politics (Constitutionalism).<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> In one instance he is "renting out" services of a slave. It is not known as yet whether the female slave was his or his in-laws' "property" see Kindy

<sup>126</sup> David Kindy, "New Research Suggests That Alexander Hamilton Was a Slave Owner," *Smithsonian Magazine*, 2020.

<sup>127</sup> Craig Bruce Smith, *American Honor : The Creation of the Nation's Ideals During the Revolutionary Era* (2018).

<sup>128</sup> Herman 2001.80-330David King, *An Historical Sketch of the Redwood Library and Athenæum, in Newport, Rhode Island* (Providence press co., printers to the state, 1876.)

<sup>129</sup> Herman 2001, 332

Historians contemporary to the period of the founding of the Newport Athenaeum each weigh in on the facts and social circumstances of their time. The document entitled *Historical Sketch of the Redwood Library and Athenaeum*<sup>130</sup> is an excellent example of this. As the author, Dr. King states, Many of the most respected and affluent members of Newport Society were members and were recognized for their "erudition and public spirit."<sup>131</sup>

Yet, for the slaves on his plantation, founding father Thomas Jefferson, the man who wrote that, "All men are created equal," asserts in his personal letters that he was only a scribe and he really didn't mean it as he remained a slave owner who had bastard children with his (slave) property.<sup>132</sup> Jefferson, bedded the 16-year-old Sally Hemmings, the half-sister and slave of his wife Martha, and sired her child in Paris, and five more children later in Virginia. He then wrote his own philosophy of "amelioration" for his slaves.<sup>133</sup> Jefferson's letters reveal that he could see no way forward with a freed race of former slaves co-existing in America, without servitude. In fact, he wrote first about a period of "amelioration" and then the necessity of charging the slaves to be returned and freed in Africa for their travel back. Jefferson envisioned a colony of freed Africans, who would then trade with Americans.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> *An Historical Sketch of the Redwood Library and Athenaeum, in Newport, Rhode Island* (Boston: Printed by J. Wilson and son, 1860). written by Dr. David King, MD in Newport and published in 1860 at Boston by John Wilson & Son, attributes the founding of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newport to the residency of Bishop Berkley in Newport from around 1729 to 1731. David King and YA Pamphlet Collection (Library of Congress), *An Historical Sketch of the Redwood Library and Athenaeum, in Newport, Rhode Island* (Boston: Printed by J. Wilson and son, 1860).

<sup>131</sup> King. 1-12

<sup>132</sup> Christa Dierksheide, "The Great Improvement and Civilization of That Race": Jefferson and the "Amelioration" of Slavery, Ca. 1770-1826," *Early American Studies* 6, no. 1 (2008)

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

In earlier history, Rhode Island founder Roger Williams rebelled against the theocratic conflation of church and state of the Boston wrought by the Massachusetts Colony and disagreed with the enslavement of native Americans during the war with the Pequot over the fur trade with the Dutch. This was a source of grave concern to him which he addressed with Governor Winthrop. The Massachusetts Colony in fact was the first British Colony permitting the enslavement of whites, Africans, and Native Americans in 1641, and this was later adopted by Connecticut and Plymouth when they incorporated as the United Colonies in 1643.

According to Rhode Island historian Stanley Lemons' article based on his 2001 lecture at the Rhode Island Historical Society:

"Today we are horrified by slavery, but until the mid-eighteenth century slavery was generally accepted in all societies and in all times. When we see a seventeenth century figure like Roger Williams involved in the distribution and sale of Narragansett captives after King Phillip's War, we should remember that he was doing something acceptable in that age. Even those enslaved expected it to happen; they were losers in a war, and that is what happened to losers. But Williams was opposed to "man stealing" or abducting persons in order to enslave them, and he even spoke against holding war captives as "perpetual slaves."

In 1652, the Providence Plantations, namely Warwick and Providence, under the leadership of founder Roger Williams, passed legislation in an effort to limit the length of bondage to a contractual term, akin to the indentureship of individuals whose passage to America was paid for them. According to that contract, the indenture was limited and not "inherited."

Rhode Island historian Stanley Lemons further explains in his article *Rhode Island and the Slave Trade* published in 2002, that "Slaveholders who refused to emancipate their slaves or sought to sell them away were to be fined." However, according to Lemons, this law "fell into disuse" when it failed to be adopted in Plymouth and Newport. Lemons further states that "The



conviction that slavery was completely wrong was slow to occur. The first antislavery protest of record came from the Quakers of Germantown, Pennsylvania in 1688. At that time Quakers were regarded as extreme, even weird, and were despised by nearly everyone else." However, Lemon also asserts that even the Quakers were previously slave owners themselves, as were other businessmen in the sphere of the Philadelphia.

I argue that it is ironic that the ships that brought slaves to America were also the same ships that brought the books of philosophy that ultimately convinced the colonials that slavery was bad and antithetical to their religious beliefs. I also claim that this history suggests that as more ideas were read and debated, more social agency occurred, especially resolving slavery in the context of religious belief systems, such as the philosophy of the Universal Unitarian Church, which contends that all who believe in God, share an afterlife in heaven. David McCullough's history of John Adams indicates that there was a shift in paradigm concerning slavery as Abigail Adams's father had two black slaves, but that she and John Adams were very much opposed to slavery, and had none when he started his Presidential term in 1797.

Yet, although other political leaders in the southern states recognized that slavery was bad, they considered a long-term plan that would end slavery in America and perhaps they could allow the slaves to pay for their return to Africa. Thomas Jefferson was one who later wrote his opinion for the "Amelioration of slavery" and the "Grand improvement and civilization of that race," before suggesting in his later letters that slaves could not remain in America, should be freed, and then returned to Africa at their own expense.

Newport businessmen who participated in the triangular trade of American goods for slaves, included such luminaries as Abraham Redwood, Ezra Stiles, Bishop Berkeley, Peter Harrison

and others, first met in Redwood's home as a small, conversational circle and decided to establish a library and Athenaeum to accommodate their ever-growing membership and their desire to build central, accessible, and useful library.

### **Reading in the Redwood Library**

The original library holdings of the Redwood Athenaeum demonstrate that the members were interested in the investment in philosophy, knowledge and discourse. We understand that this investment of resources was substantial and that the members were seeking solutions to many issues, not the least of which was slavery. They looked to more conventionally educated authors of the Scottish, English and French philosophy.

Such Scottish circles included prominent and diverse figures as Adam Smith, the first economist, from Edinburgh, considered the father of Economics and Capitalism and author of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) and *An Inquiry into the Causes of the Wealth of Nations*; James Watt, from Glasgow, the engineer who made the steam engine practical; Alexander Wilson, from Glasgow, an ornithologist and naturalist; and Joseph Black the Scottish physicist and chemist who discovered magnesium, and identified specific heat, carbon dioxide and latent heat. They met with independent intellectuals and clerics as well as artist and writers living in close proximity to one another, included in this circle: John Witherspoon, a Presbyterian Minister from Edinburgh who later became the transformative head of Princeton University; Allan Ramsay, the portrait painter from Edinburgh; and David Hume, a philosopher from

Edinburgh who was a founder of the Scottish Common Sense school that looked to cognitive knowledge as gained from experience and not an "innate" skill.<sup>135</sup>

While Glasgow was the business and manufacturing center, Edinburgh was the literary, artistic and political seat of Scotland. Many of American's founding fathers were also slave plantation owners (by inheritance), growing tobacco, cotton and sugar, and traded directly with the Scots, the "finished" tobacco traders to the rest of Europe.

It is somewhat surprising that some of the major texts inspirational to our political philosophy were more than likely inspired by a claret-fueled debate in Edinburgh. These circles revolved around the triangular trade in tobacco, the new opportunities available in America, as well as discussions of literature, politics and religion. According to historian Arthur Herman, these discursive groups were primarily organized by lawyers, but also included ministers, physicians, military officers, magistrates and merchants who came together to present talks and papers to one another in this informal venue. The presentations by fellow "Edinburgh Literati" were reportedly received with "less pedantic and captious criticism than in other venues."<sup>136</sup>

These circles were also concerned about what Herman suggested we might now term as the "brain drain" of Scots eager to try their luck in business in the Americas. The international tobacco trade brought many of the people termed "Scotch-Irish" to America where they quickly established themselves by building towns, churches and plantations.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Herman, *How the Scots Invented the Modern World: The True Story of How Western Europe's Poorest Nation Created Our World & Everything in It*. 162-169

<sup>136</sup> Ibid. 164

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. 197-214.

Herman notes that the Scots should be recognized as the first literate people as a country of their time in European society. They constituted a broad socio-economic spectrum of readers, ranging from ordinary service and businessmen to bakers and household servants. Herman states that the literacy rate in Scotland in that period was approximately 75% and was well above that of England, which he estimated at 53% during that period.<sup>138</sup>

Meanwhile, in America immigration in the area of Southern New York (New Amsterdam) and northern New Jersey (New Netherland) along the Hudson River was predominately Dutch as they had purchased the maps to the new world from Henry Hudson after he failed to find a water route to China. They settled along both sides of the Hudson and there founded communities and churches, most of which are still extant. In 1766, the Dutch Reformed Church obtained a charter for Queen's College (now Rutgers University). Kings College (now Columbia University) was chartered in New York in 1754 by England's King George II.<sup>139</sup> Similar "closed religious communities" were founded to the territories south and west by those groups that did not want to assimilate or to engage in outside contact, including the Mennonites, who still maintain their closed community structure.<sup>140</sup>

In his study, *Scotland and its First American Colony, 1683-1765*, historian Ted Landsman followed the immigration of the Scots and the Scotch Irish, mostly as indentured servants, from poverty in Europe to America, settling primarily in the northeast. Much as the British did in

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<sup>138</sup> Herman, 2001, 19-21.

<sup>139</sup> Andrew Pettegree, Arthur der Weduwen, and Press Yale University, *The Bookshop of the World :Making and Trading Books in the Dutch Golden Age* (New Haven; London:Yale University Press, 2019.)72

<sup>140</sup> This was also by agreement with William Penn when he sold the multiple acre (5,000) acres plus to the settlers.

Boston, they started to label the land around them with names resonant with their homeland. They could recognize clan names and arrange their groups based on long term, familiar associations. When the Scots arrived in America, they cut out huge swaths of land, modeled them divisionally as they did in Scotland, then brought over family and indentured servants<sup>141</sup> to work the land. Landsman states there was an "increasingly selfconscious Scottish identity."<sup>142</sup>

Presbyterian College (now Princeton,) founded in 1746 on the path to plantations of the American south, was greatly improved by the efforts of a new director and native of Edinburgh, John Witherspoon (whom we already recognize from the intellectual circles of Edinburgh.)<sup>143</sup> "Student debates," began historian Varnum Collins in his biography of Witherspoon, "were often open to the public for their enrichment." Two of his students who particularly excelled in the debates were Aaron Burr and James Madison, both not quite twenty years old. Collins stated that Witherspoon was also particularly innovative, enrolling Native American and African American<sup>144</sup> students in his classes.<sup>145</sup>

The guidance of the Scottish economic philosophers found within the shared books of these academic circles were particularly important since in the case of many of our founding fathers, such as Jefferson and Washington, did not have formal college educations. George Washington,

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<sup>141</sup> Suggesting non-African slavery

<sup>142</sup> Ned C. Landsman, *Scotland and Its First American Colony, 1683-1765* (2016)

<sup>143</sup> Herman 2011.220-223.

<sup>144</sup> Collins neglects to add that other historic records reflect that Witherspoon owned slaves once in America as did James Madison as a Princeton student.

<sup>145</sup> Varnum Lansing Collins, *President Witherspoon* (New York: Arno Press, 1969)

due to the early death of his father and the absence of his older brother,<sup>146</sup> ran the family plantation in Virginia and he did not have the chance to attend college. He relied on buying books for his library and finding loans from libraries.<sup>147</sup>

Thomas Jefferson was also left fatherless at an early age. Fortunately, Jefferson attended the College of William and Mary, which was founded as a school for religious rhetoric and classical scholarship (Latin and Greek.) Similar to Washington, Jefferson was also largely self-taught through books he acquired and through his association with Dr. William Small, a Scottish Enlightenment educated professor trained in "natural philosophy" and mathematics who utilized the Socratic Method of teaching his students. After completing his education, Jefferson continued to be a voracious reader and bought many books for his continued education.<sup>148</sup> It is no small wonder that both Washington and Jefferson pursued books of natural philosophy, mathematics and exchanges, perhaps quite similar to the literacy and scholarship of the ordinary blacksmith or banker in Scotland as previously described by author Herman.<sup>149</sup>

In fact, Washington borrowed books from the first center for interdisciplinary discourse, the second library,<sup>150</sup> which still remains the oldest purpose-built Athenaeum library in America, the Redwood.

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<sup>146</sup> Washington's older brother Lawrence was in the British navy, then he died. (Mountvernon.org/research-library)

<sup>147</sup> Jared Sparks and Joseph Story, *Washington's Papers. An Edition of These Papers Is Preparing for Publication under the Following Title; the Works of George Washington; with Notes and Historical Illustrations* (Cambridge, Mass:1827.)

<sup>148</sup> Leroy Aarons, Glenn Paxton, and Shana Blake Hill, "Monticello," (2015), <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781580816045.01>.

<sup>149</sup> Herman 2011.324-329

<sup>150</sup> The Library Company of Philadelphia founded 1731 by Benjamin Franklin was the first subscription library in America.

Inasmuch as Thomas Jefferson was a slave owner and tobacco grower, it is not surprising that he made frequent visits to Glasgow which, due to its access to the Atlantic, provided a speedy port to monopolize the trade of American Tobacco. The Scotch-Irish immigrants in the south came from poverty, and settling in areas in America, they were not averse to some of the physical challenges they encountered. They brought their hearty work ethic, whiskey making abilities, and their linguistic influences that still reverberate in the south today.

According to author Arthur Herman, fortunes were readily won and lost during this period but there was also a lot of time waiting for the voyages to leave Scotland and return." During that waiting time, the Scots of Glasgow were occupied with the University and education while they conducted circles of rum fueled discourse." <sup>151</sup> Since Adam Smith was teaching nearby at the University of Glasgow, he "... observed first-hand the monumental scale of the businesses involved in the import and trade of American tobacco" and applied these observations to his book, *The Wealth of Nations*.

Historian Tom Devine in his study, *The Tobacco Lords of Glasgow* traces the "development of the "Virginia Dons" who made (and sometimes lost) fortunes in shipping tobacco "from Maryland and Virginia to Scotland from the ports of Glasgow, Port Glasgow and Greenock." According to Devine, this exchange started before 1707. The "Colonial leaf" as it was termed, was re-exported from Glasgow to France, the German States, Ireland, Holland and Scandinavia. The advantage was the much lower operating costs into Glasgow as opposed to ports of the south

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<sup>151</sup> Herman 2011.162-245.

such as Liverpool and Manchester." Devine suggests why the Colonies preferred to deal with the Scots rather than the British:

"The American plantation owner preferred trading with the Scots because they were set up fully as a "supply chain" services which offered other and more important advantages such as the such as consumer credit, goods, money, and plantation equipment and a speedy turnover of the American tobacco when it landed in Glasgow. The Scots also provided "cheap money" meaning low interest credit that they extended to the Americans to plant more crops, hire more slaves. *Credit purchase was the Economy taught to the Americans by the Scots.*<sup>152</sup>

Other historians, such as Sean M. Kelley in his article, *American Rum, African Consumers, and the Transatlantic Slave Trade*,<sup>153</sup> traced the exchange of slave manpower for American rum in the gold coast in a "triangular" trade." Slaves, exchanged for American rum, were then brought to the plantations until the slave trade was abolished by the Scots in 1788. Tobacco and rum were exchanged for utilitarian goods, such as cloth and farming equipment.<sup>154</sup>

George Washington reportedly never visited Scotland as did Jefferson and Franklin, but he didn't have to. Many of the Scots relocated to Virginia, Washington's home state. In fact, according to a history of the Washington family, their great grandfather John Washington and his brother were loyal to King Charles I. After Charles I was executed, they decided that it was best

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<sup>152</sup> T. M. Devine, *The Tobacco Lords: A Study of the Tobacco Merchants of Glasgow and Their Trading Activities, C. 1740-90* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990.)127

<sup>153</sup> Sean M Kelley, "American Rum, African Consumers, and the Transatlantic Slave Trade," *African Economic History* 46, no. May, 2018.

<sup>154</sup> Devine.130



to leave England for the American colonies, arriving in Virginia and becoming politically as well as socially connected through marriage.<sup>155</sup>

Unlike George Washington, Benjamin Franklin's own diaries indicate that Franklin was a frequent visitor to Edinburgh while he lived in London. Franklin's "one-man diplomacy" program was so effective on behalf of the Colonies that he received the "Key to Edinburgh" in 1759.<sup>156</sup> In fact, Franklin, an avid fan of Natural Philosophy and its pursuits, was very astute in his assessments of people and their skills. Since Franklin was respected in Edinburgh, he was in a position to encourage and recommend people he knew. Franklin personally vouched for Benjamin Rush, a graduate of Princeton, who needed the kind of medical education only offered at this time in Edinburgh. Rush completed his study, returned to America, and was eventually the only doctor to sign the American Declaration of Independence.

Franklin also arranged for the extremely outspoken, often jailed, Thomas Paine to escape arrest in England by paying for his passage to America, and then arranged for the nearly dead Paine to be cared for upon his arrival in America. Within a year of arriving, Paine wrote a new political pamphlet critical of the British and named it *Plain Truth*.<sup>157</sup> In 1752, Dr. Benjamin Rush, after having returned from medical study in Edinburgh, convinced Paine to change the name of his pamphlet from *Plain Truth* to *Common Sense*.

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<sup>155</sup> Mary Gregory Powell, *The History of Old Alexandria, Virginia, from July 13, 1749 to May 24, 1861* (Alexandria, Va.: Alexandria Library, 1962.)

<sup>156</sup> Benjamin Franklin, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2017.)

<sup>157</sup> Walter Issacson, *Benjamin Franklin* (2014.) 252

Alternately, the British started to invoke additional tax laws on trade in order to exert Royal authority over their British-American subjects. In 1774, these were termed the "Intolerable Acts" by the Americans.<sup>158</sup> Consequently, the founding fathers sought their inspiration for action from the people who had already bested the British government, the Scots. They were seeking a form of government to replace the monarchy in America, so they looked to the philosophy of the Scots.

According to Arthur Herman,<sup>159</sup> Thomas Jefferson, while preparing to meet with the other delegates of the First Continental Congress, endeavored to make available to them certain texts from Scottish Enlightenment writers. In fact, many of the familiar phrases that Thomas Jefferson used in the U.S. Declaration of Independence, such as "self-evident" truths, were adapted from Scotsman Thomas Reid's writings. The work of Scottish author David Hume, however, was rejected by Jefferson in his formulation for the curricula at University of Virginia because of Hume's suggestion that "Human ideas of right and wrong are not certain and humans rely on habit and past notions."<sup>160</sup> Jefferson wanted to ensure that there were some guideposts for those who had not received the value of his own education and who also needed to understand the philosophy of government, absent a monarchical standard. Jefferson was aware from his travel to Scotland that access to books and natural philosophy community outreach lectures "was more available and egalitarian than in the American Colonies, so he and Benjamin Franklin

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<sup>158</sup> In Britain these were known as the "Coercive Acts"

<sup>159</sup> Herman (2011)70

<sup>160</sup> Herman (2011)216-218

endeavored to make book resources available to the Continental Congress." In 1731, Franklin founded the first surviving subscription library in Philadelphia.<sup>161</sup>

America in the early eighteenth century was similar in some respects to Scotland as the center of business and government was placed to the north in big cities such as Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, while the American south was an agrarian society dependent on slave labor and international trade of commodities, such as tobacco and rum. Edinburgh was the seat of government in Scotland, while Glasgow was the naval port with accessibility which proved to establish a mighty trade in that American tobacco and rum.<sup>162</sup>

Thomas Jefferson was Small's student at about 16 years of age before proceeding to Princeton, where he was mentored by another Scottish Enlightenment philosopher, John Witherspoon.<sup>163</sup> In a letter to a friend, pursuant to a donation of mineral specimens to the University of Virginia, Thomas Jefferson addressed an inquiry about the framing of the Declaration of Independence. Looking back to the "elementary books of public right" including the works of Aristotle, Cicero, Locke, Sidney, etc., communicating his knowledge and consideration of Greek, Roman and English philosophy, Jefferson stated:

"...with respect to our rights and the acts of the British government contravening those rights, there was but one opinion on this side of the water. all American Whigs thought alike on these subjects. when forced therefore to resort to arms for redress, an appeal to the tribunal of the world was deemed proper for our justification. this was the object of the Declaration of Independance. (sic) not to find out new principles, or new arguments, never before thought of, not merely to say things which had never been said before; but to place before mankind the common sense of

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid. 77-78

<sup>162</sup> Herman.2001. 347

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.332

the subject; [. . .] terms so plain and firm, as to command their assent, and to justify ourselves in the independant stand we [. . .] compelled to take. neither aiming at originality of principle or sentiment, nor yet copied from any particular and previous writing, it was intended to be an expression of the American mind, and to give to that expression the proper tone and spirit called for by the occasion. all its authority rests then on the harmonising (sic) sentiments of the day, whether expressed, in conversns (sic) in letters, printed essays or in the elementary books of public right, as Aristotle, Cicero, Locke, Sidney Etc. the historical documents which you mention as in your possession, ought all to be found, and I am persuaded you will find, to be corroborative of the facts and principles advanced in that Declaration. be pleased to accept assurances of my great respect and esteem."

Th: Jefferson<sup>164</sup>

Yet it seems disingenuous that Jefferson never mentioned Adam Smith in this pantheon of inspiration. The writings of Smith were followed by Jefferson and his circle. UCLA's Randal Holt's dissertation, *Reasoning with Savages, The Anthropological Imagination of the Scottish Enlightenment*<sup>165</sup> begins with Liebersohn<sup>166</sup> suggesting that there was an "anthropology" before there was a formal study of this discipline. What Liebersohn stated was that "Tensions emerged between a set of pre-conceptions and empirical evidence."

Holt proposed that "the novelty of the Scottish human sciences from 1750 to 1780 stemmed from their engagement with the natural and formal philosophy of continental partners, namely Rousseau, Montesquieu." Holt appears to use the "charged" words "Reasoning with Savages" as a caustic epithet, but he is in fact explaining how the Scots were attempting to apply "reason" to the race and slave issue. However, Holt asserts that studies of "natural philosophy" indicated that

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<sup>164</sup> John Sanderson et al., *Biography of the Signers to the Declaration of Independence* (Philadelphia: R. W. Pomeroy, 1823).

<sup>165</sup> *A New History of Anthropology, Proquest Ebooks*. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2008). See 158

<sup>166</sup> Randall Joseph Holt, *Reasoning with Savages: The Anthropological Imagination of the Scottish Enlightenment* (Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles, 2016),.

both Kames and Monbottto "...constructed, though from different perspectives, systems in which the key to human understanding was the category of race." Henry Home, the Lord Kames, was perhaps singular among literati by embracing *polygenism*, which was the belief that the world's peoples were separate species and argued that inequalities in civilizational progress were largely the fault of genetic inheritance.<sup>167</sup> Linguist James Burnett, the Lord Monbottto, reasoned that all human origin was from a single region of the earth.

Adam Smith's *Four Stages of Human Societies*, that is, the identification of all cultural development occurring in four stages, suggests (to me) that there was universal concern about the eventual development of the "slaves" into a society that might be motivated to remember how they were subjugated, sold and abused, and then respond in kind against their former "owners."

### **What The Redwood Circle Read**

The evidence of the extant original library catalogue of the Redwood Athenaeum reflects the aesthetic, practical, and philosophical interests of this circle. Of particular interest are several original collection books on the subject of Philosophy, namely the following:

#### **British Philosophy:**

*Elements of Criticism*, by Henry Home, Lord Kames (1762)

An Introduction to Natural Philosophy or Philosophical Lectures Read in the University of Oxford, anno Dom. 1700. To Which Are Added Monsieur Huygen's Theorems, concerning the Centrifugal Force and Circular Motion, by John Keill, London (1745)

Note: This was Abraham Redwood's personal book, donated to the Athenaeum.

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid. Kames book

*Of the Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius (d. 524) (In five books translated to English and illustrated with notes (1695)

The History of Philosophy, Containing the Lives, Opinions, Actions, discourses, of the Philosophers of Every Sect, Illustrated with the Effigies of Divers of Them by Thomas Stanley, (1743)

*The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* by Sir Isaac Newton (Laws of the Moon's Motion According to Gravity) 1729.

Mathematical Elements of Natural Philosophy, Confirmed by Experiments: Or an Introduction to Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy by Gravesande, William Jacobs. London, (1747).

Sir Isaac Newton's Mathematick Philosophy More Easily Demonstrated: With Dr. Halley's Account of Comets Illustrated: Being Forty Lectures Read in the Publick Schools at Cambridge by William Whiston and Edmond Halley Synopsis of the Astronomy of Comets London, 1716

The Works of John Locke, esq. in three volumes, London, (1740)

Bibliotheca Technologica: Or a Philological Library of Literary Arts and Sciences by Benjamin Martin, London (1737).

The Works of Plato, abridged, With an Account of His Life, Philosophy, and Politicks, together with a Translation of Choicest Dialogues in Two volumes by Plato, translated by Andre Dacier, London (1749).

*Quaestiones Philosophicae in Usum Juventutis Academicae Collectae & Digestae* by Thomas Johnson, Cambridge (1732), a digest of Philosophic Questions discussed by young academics.

A plea for the non-conformists; shewing the true state of their case: and how far the conformist's separation from the Church of Rome, for their popish superstitions, &c. introduc'd into the service of God, justifies the non-conformist's separation from them. In a letter to Dr. Benjamin Calamy, on his sermon (call'd Scrupulous conscience) inviting hereto. : To which is added, a parallel scheme of the pagan, papal, and Christian rites and ceremonies: and a narrative of the sufferings underwent by Thomas De Laune. ; With a preface by the author of the Review

The judgment of whole kingdoms and nations, concerning the rights, power, and prerogative of kings, and the rights, privileges & properties of the people: ... by Lord Sommers by Defoe, Daniel 1661?-1731. Newport Rhode-Island: Reprinted and sold by Solomon Southwick, in Queen Street, 1774.

A Discourse Concerning the Resurrection of Jesus Christ in Three Parts: The nature and obligation of moral evidence are explain'd at large. III. The proofs of the fact of our Saviour's resurrection are propos'd, examined, and fairly demonstrated to be conclusive. Together with an appendix concerning the impossible production of thought from matter and motion: the nature of human souls, and of brutes: the anima mundi, and the hypothesis of the TO' IIAÑ; as also, concerning divine providence, the origin of evil, and the universe in genera by Humphrey Ditton (1727)

The aphorisms of Hippocrates, and the sentences of Celsus, with explanations and references to the most considerable writers in physick and philosophy, both ancient and modern. To which are added, aphorisms upon several distempers, not well distinguished by the ancients. by Conrad Joachim Sprengel (Hippocrates, translated by Sprengel) London (1735)

Joannis Clerici Epistolae criticae et ecclesiasticae in quibus ostenditur usus Artis criticae, cujus possunt haberi volumen tertium. /Accessere Epistola de Hammondo & critica, ac Dissertatio in qua quaeritur an sit semper respondendum calumniis theologorum,

Jean Le Clerc, also Johannes Clericus (March 19, 1657 – January 8, 1736), was a Genevan theologian and biblical scholar. He was famous for promoting exegesis, or critical interpretation of the Bible, and was a radical of his age. He parted with Calvinism over his interpretations and left Geneva for that reason. (1700)

The Sacred Theory of the Earth, containing an account of the original of the earth, and of all the general changes which it hath already undergone, or is to undergo, till the consummation of all things by Burnet, Thomas (Lord Monbotto) 1635?-1715  
Note: This book was formerly personally owned by Abraham Redwood.

Burnett was an English theologian who wrote *Telluris Theoria Sacra* ("Sacred Theory of the Earth"), 1681. This book was an early study of geology, Burnett posited that the earth is a hollow sphere with water held below the crust. Noah's flood was released by preordained natural processes. Burnet's opined that God created the Earth so that natural action would transpire according to physical laws without divine intervention. This seemed to be a version of the so-called "clockwork universe" form of creation.

The Athenian oracle: being an entire collection of all the valuable questions and answers in the old Athenian mercuries. Intermix'd with many cases in divinity, history, philosophy, mathematicks, love, poetry, never before published: To which is added in each volume, alphabetical tables for the speedy finding of any questions, by a Member of the Athenian Society.in three volumes by John Dunton (1716) London

## **French Philosophy:**

Cours Entier de Philosophie: Ou Systeme General Selon les Principes de M. Descartes, Contenant la Logique, la Metaphysique, la Physique, et la Morale by Pierre Sylvain Regis; (1691)

*A Course of Experimental Philosophy* by J.T. Desaguliers, (pub. London)

Rohault's System of Natural Philosophy, illustrated with Dr. Samuel Clarke's Notes Taken Mostly out of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy (1728)

*Tuscolanes de Ciceron* by Marcus Tullius Cicero, Paris, translated by Pierre-Joseph Toulriere, abbe' d' Olivet Paris, (1737)

And specifically, Rousseau and Montesquieu in English and in French in the library which date back to the eighteenth century;

### **Scottish Philosophy:**

A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy in Three Books Containing the Elements of Ethicks and the Laws of Nature by Francis Hutcheson, Glasgow, (1747).

Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects by David Hume, Edinburgh, (1747)

### **Swiss Published, Latin Text:**

*Annaei Senecae Tum Rhetoris Tum Philosophi, Opera Omnia* by Lucius Annaeus Seneca (4 bce-5ce) ex typographia Petri Chouet Senioris 1646  
Netherlands, The Hague/Amsterdam

*De philosophorum sectis liber* by Gerardi Ioannis Vossii (1657) On the Book of Philosophy

Diogenes Laertii De vitis, dogmatibus et apophthegmatibus clarorum philosophorum libri X: Graece et Latine Ut & ejusdem Syntagma de mulieribus philosophis; et Joachimi Kühnii ad Diogenem notas. Additae denique sunt priorum editionum praefationes, & indices locupletissimi by Diogenes Laertii: On lives, opinions, and remarkable book about famous philosophers Greek / For the women, Syntagma and the same philosophy; and Joachim Kühnii Diogenes notes. (1692)

Joannis Clerici Epistolae criticae et ecclesiasticae: in quibus ostenditur usus Artis criticae, cujus possunt haberi volumen tertium. /Accessere Epistola de Hammondo & critica, ac Dissertatio in qua quaeritur an sit semper respondendum calumniis theologorum This is a 3rd volume of criticism of the church by Jean Le Clerc, also Johannes Clericus (March 19, 1657 – January 8, 1736), He was a Genevan a biblical scholar. He was notable for promoting exegesis, (critical consideration) of the Bible.



He was formerly a Calvinist but objected and left Geneva. He was published around 1700 in Amsterdam.

### Italian/Latin Texts:

*Discorsi morali di Agostino Mascardi su la Tavola di Cebete Tebano*, Moral Discourses of Agostino Mascardi at the Table of Cebete: This is an Italian manuscript forward of "table conversations", actually the Socratic Dialogues of Agostino Mascardi at the table of Tabano Cebete, translated from the Greek to Italian at Venice, Italy and given to a noble woman. (1642) Mascardi was a humorist from Liguria who became a Jesuit priest and worked for the Pope.

*Epicteti Manuale, Cebetis Thebani Tabula, Prodici Hercules, et Theophrasti Characteres ethici*,/Graece et Latine notis illustrati a Josepho Simpson, A.M. This is about Aristotle's successor Theophrastis, and also concerns discourses of the Table of Cebete Tebano, published at Oxford, 1739.

*Platonis De rebus divinis dialogi selecti Graece & Latine, ... in commodas sectiones dispartiti; annexo ipsarum indice* (Plato's Divine Matters Dialogues in Greek and Latin), by Plato, North, John, 1645-1683, Ficino, Marsilio, 1433-1499. (translators) (1683)

An. Manl. Sever. Boethii Consolationis philosophiae libri v: Ejusd. opuscula sacra. Cum integris notis Johannis Bernartii, Theodori Sitzmani et. Renati Vallini. Accedit Petri Bertii praefatio, Philosophic Consolations by (St.) Boethius with integral notes by Bernartii, Sizmani and Vallini

Author's note: Anicius Manlius Severinus Boëthius, commonly called Boethius who was a Roman senator and he died in 524 C.E as he was condemned for his faith and found consolation in Philosophy, this "*de Consolationis Philosophiae*" is considered his greatest work as he wrote it while imprisoned by Theodoric, and then martyred. He was canonized by the Catholic Church in 1883.

The balance of the original Library is comprised of books regarding construction, architecture, building, design, glass, chimney building, stone bridge architecture, iron work, carpentry and plans, staircases, beekeeping, and other "how-to" books. It also contains the archives of several families, as well as that of the America's Cup Race. There is also a modern library collection selected for the interests of the community in history, literature and the arts.

There were no "women's interest" books in the early collection. However, this may be because of the available topics were contrary to the Redwood circle's ideal thriving business and cultural community. According to a culture and finance study by University of Alberta Professor, Katherine Binhammer, most of the women's interest British literature of the eighteenth century was centered on "Riches to rags" stories, which feature a fall from social largesse, and made evident by such authors as Jane Austen and Fanny Burney. Binhammer additionally states that until British journals arguing against the empowerment of women in education and employment were brought to the American Colonies, women did enjoy some freedoms and opportunities that were soon extinguished.<sup>168</sup>

### **Redwood Art Collections**

The Art Collection of the Redwood Library includes the portrait of Abraham Redwood by Samuel King that formerly hung in his home, a self-portrait of Rhode Island native Gilbert Stuart at age 24, the portrait of Mary Winthrop Wanton by Robert Feke that was later altered by Gilbert Stuart's daughter, and a painting of the "Medici of Newport," Henry Collins by John Smibert. Smibert came to Newport as part of Bishop Berkeley's entourage and was originally chosen to teach at the college that Berkeley proposed to build in Bermuda. Smibert also painted the famous "Bermuda Portrait" of the group, now at Yale.

There is an insightful self portrait of Charles Byrd King, who was born in Newport but passed most of his career in Washington, D.C. painting portraits of political figures. King was

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<sup>168</sup> Binhammer Katherine, *Downward Mobility : The Form of Capital and the Sentimental Novel, Book Collections on Project Muse* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020).

very generous to the Redwood, endowing his personal library and 75 additional paintings to the collection, along with some money. The youngest known portrait of George Washington, at age 40, by Rembrandt Peale after his father's portrait<sup>169</sup> is also in the collection of the Redwood. Sculpture collections at the Redwood present a piece by Gilbert Stuart of John Isaac Bowere, and a poignant sculpture of "American School Boy" by William Green Turner.

In the early part of 2020, the Redwood Library and Athenaeum was observed to be thriving, although the pace may seem somewhat a bit slower in winter. During my visit, paintings were being removed from the walls in a flurry of activity to redesign the space as they adapt it for larger groups. There was a new curated display of Kodachrome photographs by Russell Lee reflecting perhaps the artist's exploration of his subject matter, normally exhibited in black and white.

### **Education and Community Outreach**

The community of Newport, Rhode Island today is an elite summer resort town, and the home of the internationally known America's Cup Yacht Race, the oldest trophy in international sport. There is a year-round core village of resident-members and a solid, 365-day calendar of Library and Athenaeum events.

Today the Newport Library and Athenaeum serves as an integral social locus for the year-round community of Newport, as a place for an annual family day, weddings, concerts, community civic meetings, contemporary art display, book clubs and events that highlight social

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<sup>169</sup> Charles Willson Peale Portrait of George Washington with Virginia Regimen at age 21 in 1753.

consciousness and community. In the context of a setting that hosts the still-fabulous summer homes of the titans of American Enterprise, the Redwood is American history, Newport history, and it also represents the leisure time of the New York political-industrial class, in a community which has always been unique, resilient, and independent. The records of the races and the historic social events of the Golden Ages of Newport are found in the archives of the Redwood.

The Redwood Athenaeum acknowledges that grave mistakes were made by Abraham Redwood and his circle as slave owners and participants in triangular trade. Their education program addresses this topic in memory and discussion, and in various iterations, while celebrating the multi-ethnic heritage of Newport. In 2015 an exhibit, "Judge Us by Our Hearts": Norman Prince and the Lafayette Escadrille: American Aviators in France During WWI examines aviator Norman Prince's unique role as a bridge between the invention of the airplane and the development of modern air warfare. Also in 2015, an exhibit featured Ilse Nesbitt, who was born in Frankfurt am Main, Germany and raised in Japan. She came to the United States 60 years ago and worked in the typography studio at the Rhode Island School of Design, where she met her late husband, Alexander. They founded the *Third and Elm Press* in Newport, specializing in woodblock letter press printing.

In 2016, an exhibition concerning the black churches in Newport and their contributions was presented at the Redwood. "O Lord Remember Me: The Black Church in Rhode Island" is described by the Redwood Athenaeum as a "Groundbreaking exhibit on the 250 years history of its formation and function as the community's moral compass, town hall and developer of artists, thinkers and doers," and "The exhibit tells the story in images and text of American firsts: the first free Black church - Newport; the first Black Episcopal Church – Providence; the first piece

of sacred music by an African – Newport Gardner; The first Baptist church in America – Newport and more."

The description, though perhaps awkward, desires to privilege a social history, "How African ritual merged with European ceremony to form a powerhouse of freedom, service and survival." This first exhibit presented descriptions of "Astonishing accounts of burial rites, music, foodways, politics, and pride show how African Americans forged a unique way out of slavery and religious restrictions to form houses of worship in Providence, South County, Newport, Bristol and Woonsocket." National figures such as Ezra Stiles, Alexander Crummell, Rev. Samuel Proctor, Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, and Moses Brown emerge as major players in promoting, preserving and protecting basic civil rights in Rhode Island.

Recent lectures have included the "unique way out of slavery" that was the Newport Station of the Underground Railroad, such as was used by Frederick Douglass to speak to groups in the north and to avoid reach of the Fugitive Slave Act. Ezra Stiles, as a member within the sphere of the Redwood Library and Athenaeum manumitted his two slaves and founded the Newport Society for the Abolition of Slavery.

In my visit with the present Redwood Athenaeum Director Benedict Leca, we discussed the issue of dealing with the founding of his Athenaeum, named for the largest slave owner in Rhode Island. Although it perhaps seems counterintuitive for a fundraiser to address this history, Dr. Leca has actively chosen to present teaching moments, (formerly contested by some,) that accept the harmful past as history, and posit a hopeful future for the community; addressing and teaching while not ignoring or presenting a false amelioration.

In 2018, Pascale Marthine Tayou's site-specific installation for the Redwood, "Remember Bimbia" (2018) presented a pile of painted paving stones that grounded and held the American flag, American history and American futures, "in the rubble of its repressed past."<sup>170</sup> According to the Athenaeum description the meaning of this outdoor installation in front of the Redwood Library and Athenaeum was:

"The artist's call to memory, 'to Remember Bimbia', is both a specific invocation of what was once the key slave market in Tayou's native country of Cameroon, and with it, an acknowledgement of the role that Africans also played in the slave trade, and a larger appeal for us all to accept slavery as part of our communal history; it is a history that belongs to us all."

As Tayou explains:

"The slave trade powered the economies of the new world as much as the old. And it was central to the prosperity of the "lively experiment" of Rhode Island: to Newport as a city, and to the Redwood specifically." The laying of this rubble at the foot of the American flag in front of the Redwood Library and Athenaeum is an indictment of this historic monument but its inclusion and the patronage suggest the acknowledgment of the past and desire for a future as the cultural center it formerly represented for elite slave owners and traders."<sup>171</sup>

Initially, there were no books for women purchased by the all-male subscribers of the Redwood Athenaeum. However, while there is no evidence of an explicit prohibition of women from the facility, there is no evidence of organized education for women beyond childbearing skills. Any other mention of women reading is mostly anecdotal.

In her book *Separated by Their Sex, Women in Public and Private in the Colonial Atlantic World* author Mary Beth Norton states that

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<sup>170</sup> Also discussed with Redwood Director, Dr. Leca 11.10.2020. (telephonically)

<sup>171</sup> [www.redwoodlibrary.org](http://www.redwoodlibrary.org) (website article)

"As late as 1690, Anglo American women's political interest and opinions were publicly acknowledged. However, a profound shift in attitudes occurred with regard to the participation of women in public affairs by such "cultural arbitrators" including John Dunton, the editor of the *Athenaeum Mercury*, who decided in the periodical that women should be "private" in their domestic lives. Meanwhile, other such "influencers" such as Richard Steele and Joseph Addison in the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*, advanced the notion that the participation of women in politics, even political dialogues was "absurd." They and many other such men of this ilk were imitated in stating that women should confine themselves in "private" to home and family. In the American Colonies, this idea was adopted already by 1760. American women interpreted this as license to create private "tea circles" and thus a "public" for men "private" women division successfully kept "women at home and in their place."<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Mary Beth Norton, *Separated by Their Sex: Women in Public and Private in the Colonial Atlantic World* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2011).168-173.

### CHAPTER 3

#### THE BOSTON ATHENAEUM

The Boston Athenaeum grew from what was a desire to maintain the interdisciplinary discourse and social connections already established through their Anthology Club at Harvard College, to an institution would prove to be a highly successful showcase for the arts. The Athenaeum has moved five times since its founding, yet it has always been situated somewhere in the heart of Boston. Although there have been changes, the control of the Boston Athenaeum by the original number of proprietors remains the same. This chapter introduces a circle of men that originally organized as students while studying at Harvard University in 1807.

I argue that this Athenaeum was the birthplace of both American Romanticism and American Social Agency. Its legacy is the stewardship of the rich library collections amassed by each generation and donated to the community, enabling the precedence of Boston in Science, Technology, and Medicine. I argue that this Athenaeum recognizes and promotes the social agency of women in their circles. Leaders of this community often tutored their daughters at home. Some, as in the case of Louisa May Alcott and her sisters, the Peabody sisters and Margaret Fuller, were strong advocates for the education of women, as well as men.<sup>173</sup> This Athenaeum also encouraged in its circles, and saved for personal enrichment of its membership, the very heart of American Literature and its agency for social equity. This was produced within

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<sup>173</sup> Radcliffe College, was founded in Cambridge Massachusetts in 1879. While it functioned ostensibly as the “female coordinate institution to all male Harvard,” it did NOT join as an equal to Harvard for academic exchanges, until 1999. (<https://www.radcliffe.harvard.edu>)



a neighborhood of three homes in Concord by its own members and its "operational auxiliary," the Concord Lyceum.

A reading of the Boston Athenaeum archives reflects that many of the original Anthology members, once removed from the solace of the Harvard campus, waxed poetic when discussing their need for complete solitude when reading in the Athenaeum. The primary intent of the Athenaeum founders was to enjoy a "reading-room," simply a large room with newspapers and magazines laid out for reading on tables, with adequate seating. This place of "Solitude in the City"<sup>174</sup> filled with and "inspirational art and statuary"<sup>175</sup> was a constant in each of the Boston Athenaeum's physical iterations. This is the only Athenaeum of this study to have moved to accommodate a growing populace and subscription.

Initially, the Athenaeum collections resided briefly in a group of structures known as Joy's buildings on Congress Street, but by the spring of 1807, it was firmly established in Scollay's buildings on Tremont Street, near the present site of Government Center. The Athenaeum remained in that location until 1809, when the Trustees purchased the Rufus Amory House, adjacent to the King's Chapel Burial Ground at what was then the easternmost point of the Boston Common. In 1822, the growing collections were moved again, this time to a mansion on Pearl Street that had been given to the Athenaeum by Trustee James Perkins.

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<sup>174</sup> Josiah Quincy, *The History of the Boston Athenæum: With Biographical Notices of Its Deceased Founders* (Metcalf, 1851.)

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

In 1847, construction began on the Athenaeum's present Beacon Street building, designed by Edward Clarke Cabot,<sup>176</sup> and opened two years later in 1849. The first floor was originally a sculpture gallery, the second floor housed the library's growing collection of books, and the third floor, originally the top floor of the building, and equipped with skylights, served as a painting gallery. The building was completely renovated in 1913-1914, at which time the fourth and fifth floors were added, and the entire structure fireproofed, under the direction of Architect Henry Forbes Bigelow. Later improvements included the installation of air conditioning and an elevator, and alterations to comply with safety codes. The Athenaeum's five galleried floors overlook the peaceful Granary Burying Ground, and, as Gamaliel Bradford<sup>177</sup> wrote in 1931, "It is safe to say that [no library] anywhere has more an atmosphere of its own, that none is more conducive to intellectual aspiration, and spiritual peace."

According to a Boston native source, the bodies of the martyrs of the Boston massacre and the Battle of Bunker Hill were discovered during the excavations for the transit system. The bodies were re-located to the area next to the granary. During one of the renovations of the Boston Athenaeum, windows were installed to look on to the graves of the martyrs of Boston from the quiet of the reading rooms. This association with the City's martyrs compliments the reading of philosophy, history, and other works with the presence of those who had sacrificed their lives to make that place free. During the author's visit to these rooms that look to the

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<sup>176</sup> The Cabots are one of the Brahmin families of Boston. Cabot followed the architectural style of Sir. Charles Barry who designed in the Palladio Pallazzo style.

<sup>177</sup> Bradford, educated at Harvard was an American Biographer and a great grandson of Governor Bradford of the Plymouth Colony.

Granary graveyard, they seem to resonate as a silent, special, space for a confrontation with history.

In 1966, the present building was designated as a National Historic Landmark. However, there is no designation of the purpose of this building from the street entrance. The gold lettering on a seemingly secretive, "speak easy" type door opening on Beacon Street simply shows "10 1/2"<sup>178</sup> and nothing else to herald its important identity and purpose.

Today the Boston Athenaeum maintains a subscription membership. There are "public hours" where non-members generally pay an admission fee to attend social events, such as concerts, workshops, and lectures. The Athenaeum is open to the public on a shorter schedule than the member schedule and is also available for certain function rentals. The Athenaeum hosts various exhibits and also has an online presence for researching the collection. They maintain the records of books which were borrowed by illustrious members of the community.

The importance of the prosperous Boston Athenaeum community was acknowledged when the goods from the estate of Thomas Jefferson was sold at auction from the Athenaeum in 1829. The James Madison estate was also auctioned from the Athenaeum. Donors purchased books from the Washington estate and donated them to the Boston Athenaeum, most notably George Washington's copy of Paine's *Common Sense*.

In 1636, the Massachusetts Bay Company, that I previously discussed with regard to the founding of Rhode Island and the Redwood Library, organized a college, and later named it for

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<sup>178</sup> Archival research in Boston indicates that this was a "divided" lot, hence the fractional address.

John Harvard, a Pilgrim who died while crossing of the Atlantic, Harvard possessed the foresight to draw a will with an offer to endow half of his estate to "Any college that takes his name." Harvard's purpose at its founding was only as a training school for an "informed ministry."<sup>179</sup> At that time, students were taught Rhetoric by rote, but later, between 1738 and 1779, Natural Philosophy and Mathematics were added to the curriculum by John Winthrop. In 1764, a fire destroyed what was then the largest library collection in America at that time, with over 5,000 books.<sup>180</sup> Interestingly, student testing was not inaugurated at Harvard until the first years of the twentieth century.<sup>181</sup>

### **The Anthology Society**

In 1801, there was no national library in the United States as there was in France and other countries of the world. The only library in Boston was at Harvard, and it did not contain new literature outside of the curriculum. A group of resourceful and enterprising young men decided, in a scheme to receive books, that they would write reviews of works sent to them for their examination and their published opinion, in a Monthly Anthology. Thereby, they would have an influx of "contributed" reading material, and a purpose for their critiques on the writings, which could then be sold by subscription. It seemed like a great proposition that would make money and solicit fresh material. Phineas Adams, using the rather presumptuous pseudonym of

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<sup>179</sup> <https://handbook.fas.harvard.edu/book/brief-history-harvard-college>

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Actual testing of students began only in the early twentieth century, by College President Lowell.

"Sylvanus Per Se," according to Josiah Quincy's *History of the Boston Athenaeum*,<sup>182</sup> was a recent graduate of Harvard when he decided to found a monthly literary magazine to display his expertise as well as the work written by the rest of his friends, although it was made up almost entirely of Phineas's writings.

Adams' words in his recorded farewell explain that this Anthology group was conceived in an effort to enable young men, just finishing their educations and without family "connections," the comradery which could assure them a profitable career in the bustling city. Hopefully, they might also discover a way to earn their keep and this was part of the original premise for the Monthly Anthology. It was also a "men's club" where the attraction was the next "dinner with meeting" and what the fare might be, and how much it would cost, and who would actually chip in their bit. This sometimes-raised criticism of the quality of the beef served or whether everyone had actively contributed: "[T]he beef was good and the wine was bad." "Everyone did not bring their own sigars (sic) as had been previously voted."<sup>183</sup>

*The History of the Boston Athenaeum*<sup>184</sup> explains that the institution of a common library was decided upon within twenty days of the inception of Anthology Club, or later as it was known, the Anthology Society and that its publication was known as the *Monthly Anthology and Boston Review*.

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<sup>182</sup> Quincy, *The History of the Boston Athenaeum, with Biographical Notices of Its Deceased Founders*. Access at: <https://cdm.bostonathenaeum.org/digital/collection/p16057coll27/id/6/rec/1>

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

While there are so many notable names associated with the Monthly Anthology, such as William Emerson, who became an important religious figure and the father of Ralph Waldo Emerson, the Transcendental orator, John Collins Warren, the founder of Massachusetts General Hospital and son of John Warren, founder of Harvard Medical school and nephew of General Joseph Warren, who was famously killed at Bunker Hill, it is clear that these are names that resonate with the patriotic history of Boston as well. The only original scholar to pursue the compilation of an independent library was William Smith Shaw, the nephew of President John Adams who, having served as the President's private secretary in his first employment after his graduation from Harvard, returned to Boston after Adam's defeat in the Presidential election by Jefferson. Once Shaw eventually found permanent employment as the Clerk of the District Court of Massachusetts, he was able to commence the bibliophile collection he had begun while at Harvard. He and the others set about working on the Anthology and founding a permanent locus for their meetings and a much-needed Library, the Boston Athenaeum.<sup>185</sup>

Subject matter for the *Anthology Monthly* included book announcements and reviews, something called "Necrology," a sort of very expanded "Obituary" section. This allowed the writer to debate the beliefs and accomplishments of the recently deceased and apparently was *considered* amusing. Their subsequent meetings in 1805 and 1806 concerned the proposal for the founding of an Anthology Society Reading Room:

"The projected Plan will not only afford the subscribers an agreeable place of resort, but opportunities of literary intercourse, and the pleasure of perusing the principal European and American periodical publications, at an expense not exceeding that of

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

a single daily paper." <sup>186</sup>

The Anthology Society also expressed a hope of some success in the future:

"To the increase of the institution, the Society also devoted the profits which should accrue from the "Monthly Anthology"; in which they afterwards repeatedly urged this fact, by way of inducement to the public to become subscribers to the Anthology, and thus become benefactors to the 'Athenaeum' " (The first time this name is used by Quincy in this history)

"The gentlemen engage to provide a commodious room, ease of access, in a central part of the town. It shall be open from nine o'clock in the morning till nine in the evening. The Reading-room shall be furnished with seats, tables, paper, pens and ink; with the Boston papers, and all the celebrated gazettes published in any part of the United States; with the most interesting literary and political pamphlets in Europe and America; with magazines, reviews, and scientific journals; London and Paris newspapers; Steel's Army and Navy Lists; Naval Chronicle; London and Paris booksellers' Catalogues; Parliamentary debates; bibliographical works, &c. The gazettes, magazines &c. shall be bound in semi-annual volumes, and preserved for the use of the establishment. Should this attempt be encouraged, it is contemplated to furnish the Reading-room with maps, charts, and to collect such rare, standard, and costly works, of useful reference, &c. as may enhance the value and reputation of the institution." "The annual subscription is Ten Dollars; the money to be paid on subscribing."

Quincy goes on to record that the initial subscription quickly rose to 100 men, and they were in receipt of 1600 dollars in subscriptions. In the Editor's address prefixed to their volume for 1807 they state:

"We must confess, however, that we have a motive somewhat interesting for wishing, that the pecuniary receipts of our publication may rise as far as possible above its demands, which is, that all of the surplus funds are applied to the support and the increase of a Public Library; one of those institutions, of which every scholar in most parts of our country feels the want, which our government from its nature,

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<sup>186</sup> Quincy.

does not comprise within its cares, -and which nothing but the industry and munificence of individuals will establish and supply."<sup>187</sup>

The curious notion here is that they also saw the need for a "public" library and promised that once *their* demands were met, if there were any funds remaining, they would recommend the establishment of a public library, thus appearing not at all concerned with the sharing of their library, associated with an elitist club. I will address this in my explanation of how the Anthology Society<sup>188</sup> eventually decided which Athenaeum they would use as a model. For the moment I will limit myself to reporting that this decision was based on the kind of books selected and purchased as discussed by the board.

The son of a founding Anthology/Athenaeum member, Ralph Waldo Emerson,<sup>189</sup> in a letter to his friend John Boynton Hill, expressed his concern about a stratification of social classes in Boston. As a teacher by profession, he had just discovered that he was on the lowest rung of the social hierarchy! A series of letters to Hill reflect some of the thoughts that he would later go on to write and lecture about. In regard to his physical context as a member of the Boston Athenaeum, Emerson stated in his letter to Hill dated 3 July 1822, Boston:

"The (Pearl Street House) was 'royally fitted up for elegance and comfort,' and that the reading room's recently donated casts of ancient statues 'attract the eye in every corner from the tedious joys of writing and reading.' The casts, described as 'lordly strangers,' spur on the reader, who 'instantly feels the spirit of the connoisseurship stealing over him.'"<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Anthology Society, 1807, Vol. IV accessed: <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050456> (07/08/2020).

<sup>188</sup> Richard P Harrison, *The Monthly Anthology and Boston Review-1803-1811, Literary Excellence as Interpreted by, "a Society of Gentlemen"* (University of Texas, 1964). UT Austin dissertation, 1964.

<sup>189</sup> He was generally referred to as "Waldo".

<sup>190</sup> Quincy. <https://archive.org/details/historyofbostona00quin/page/n15/mode/2up>



Alternatively, the "distracting" casts and paintings which remain in the Boston Athenaeum still today suggest a kind of temple for highly polished intellectual and historic iconography. The small number, 10 ½ on the door glass, without an identifying sign, suggests that this is a private club, and closed to the public. This is the only Athenaeum that exercises this daunting distinction.<sup>191</sup> In its origin, and the absence of a public library, the qualification for membership and the payment of dues to access this library also reserved self-education and enrichment to the class which could afford it.

This Athenaeum seems more self-conscious now in its historic context and class realignment, placed on the "Freedom Trail." The front of the building faces upscale historic Beacon Hill while the back of the building, now with glass windows installed on the side, looks out the entire length of the building, out and directly over the Old Granary Burial Ground where the martyrs of the American revolution are buried.<sup>192</sup> The names on the cemetery markers reflect a circle of notables of the American Revolution, from Crispus Attucks and other victims of the Boston Massacre, to casualties from the Battle of Bunker Hill, and three signers of the Declaration of Independence.<sup>193 194</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> The ½ addresses in Boston signify that it was an adjusted lot from the original plat.

<sup>192</sup> As was common, that burial ground was referred to by its location next to an old grain storage building, now gone; the south burial ground, the third oldest in Boston, is known as "the Granary." This is not the original burial ground but the remains were removed from their original site when they were discovered and relocated there.

<sup>193</sup> In 1840, an iron fence perimeter and gate as a formal entrance were constructed on Tremont Street designed by Isaiah Rogers in the Egyptian Revival style and modeled on the first garden cemetery, Mount Auburn in Cambridge.

<sup>194</sup> The context of the Boston Athenaeum embracing these martyrs and historic reverberates within this building as there are several quiet reading rooms throughout with chairs facing the expansive windows directly over the entire graveyard, and these rooms, though occupied, are silent.

## Alcott, Channing and Transcendentalism

The nineteenth century residents of Roxbury, "the Fens," Cambridge, and Concord all resided within the not-so-distant memory and context of American History, happening quite literally in their back yards. This is an occurrence biographer Susan Cheever termed, "The coincidences of greatness being the result of proximity to greatness."<sup>195</sup> Cheever mused that author John Mattiessen's<sup>196</sup> bold statement that "..all of American literature had been written between 1850 and 1855," neglected to mention that "Most of it was written in a cluster of three houses." Cheever, in an apparent homage to the London Bloomsbury group, called this group within the orbit of greater Boston, "The American Bloomsbury,"<sup>197</sup> a subset in the circle of thinkers/philosophers who were familiar with Plato's books, such as his "Forms," and Kant's philosophy. The group wanted to live on an "ophitic" level, transcending the "distractions," worldliness, and instead, concentrate on evidence of God in Nature. This was a circle of the authors of important books, considered by most to be classics of American Literature.<sup>198</sup> The writers included, or were inspired by, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, in the company of educator and Transcendentalist Bronson Alcott, and his daughters Louisa May and Abigail May Alcott, the teacher of sculptor Daniel Chester French.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Matteson, *Eden's Outcasts*.

<sup>197</sup> Cheever. She was drawing a relation between this group and the British Bloomsburg circle of writers, artists and intellectuals including artists and intellectuals including John Maynard Keynes, Virginia Wolfe, Leonard Wolfe, Roger Fry, Vanessa Bell.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

Essayist Josephine E. Roberts in her article, *Horace Mann and the Peabody Sisters* <sup>200</sup> noted that like the triangle of Elizabeth and Sophia Peabody and Nathaniel Hawthorne, the dynamics of this society produced one of the most interesting of the intellectual circles. Hawthorne chose the youngest sister who would not outshine him. Mann chose Elizabeth's less dynamic sister Mary. Elizabeth was necessary to this circle because she managed a bookstore that sold their books, and she never married. Margaret Fuller edited their group 'journal' known as *the Dial*, the literary organ of the Transcendental Circle of Concord and their reason for remaining in constant association. The name was at the request of Amos Bronson Alcott for the sundial, but it was largely critiqued for the scale of his obtuseness.<sup>201</sup>

Bronson Alcott,<sup>202</sup> as he was later known, did not have a formal education, which is ironic, inasmuch as Harvard graduate Emerson regarded Alcott to be the most intelligent man in his acquaintance. Bronson was Episcopalian, and reportedly failed to contribute to family chores as his father farmed the land to provide for the family. "Instead, he sat to one side, finding his 'Elysium' in his books." Although he was originally sent to an Episcopal Academy, run by his mother's brother, Alcott failed to do well because of his archaic manner of speech. He was however an avid reader and was to be influenced by James Burgh's *The Dignity of Human Nature* and John Bunyan's *Pilgrims Progress*.

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<sup>200</sup> Josephine Roberts, "Horace Mann and the Peabody Sisters," *The New England Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (1945).

<sup>201</sup> Cheever.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid. Amos Bronson Alcox, was born in 1799 near Hartford, Connecticut. As was the custom then, his name had been changed at crossing to America from England (according to family lore with ships accompanying the Arbella) when it was spelled Alcock. Later it was changed again to Alcott.

Returning to Connecticut, Bronson was determined to return to teaching and began by studying the philosophy of Swiss educator Johann Pestalozzi. However, Pestalozzi's pedagogy of "child centered discovery" appears to be philosophically similar to an Italian contemporary, Dr. Maria Montessori.<sup>203</sup> Bronson appealed to the eminent Unitarian minister, William Ellery Channing who helped him underwrite his first school with the aid of Josiah Quincy. Quincy, the author of our *History of the Boston Athenaeum Memoirs* cited in this dissertation, served both as President of Harvard and Mayor of Boston. Bronson was able, through the agency of Channing, William Smith Shaw and Quincy, to begin the "Temple School" called so because it was built as a four-story Masonic Temple used for public social as well as Masonic meetings. For the Temple School, Bronson was able to obtain the assistance of Channing's former secretary, and future interest of Nathaniel Hawthorne, Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, as well as the brilliant educator and feminist Margaret Fuller. Margaret was educated by her father<sup>204</sup> in writing and Latin, teaching herself Greek and German. After her father's passing, she took the position teaching for Bronson Alcott to support herself. Unfortunately, it is reported that Bronson neglected to pay her.<sup>205</sup>

In terms of twenty-first century pedagogy, Alcott, Fuller and Peabody would be considered outstanding. Bronson Alcott's method did not include corporal punishment (which was the usual course) but he told students to strike him instead, which resulted in the boys being reduced to tears at his goodness. Alcott wanted to "wake" the senses of the students to a journey of

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<sup>203</sup> Cheever

<sup>204</sup> Her father Timothy Fuller was Harvard educated in classics and served as a congressman and later a senator for Massachusetts.

<sup>205</sup> Cheever

inquisitive curiosity and "Socratic" questioning, as he had read in Plato's writings. His method was to teach his students reasoning and not rote, empty compliance. Elizabeth Peabody wrote and published her book, *Record of a School* which was noted successfully as "the first classic of American Transcendentalism."<sup>206</sup>

With this publication, Bronson Alcott, and his ideas on education and philosophy, were suddenly celebrated. He was invited to participate in the circle of "Boston's Intelligentsia." The two individuals whom Bronson really wanted to meet were Frederick Henry Hedge, whose article on Coleridge he admired in the *Christian Examiner*, a "publication which heralded the rise of Transcendentalism" and Unitarian Minister Ralph Waldo Emerson. During the nineteenth century, reading circles sought a spiritual departure from Calvinism and explored alternative spiritualism supported by the scholarship available for research in the Boston Athenaeum Library. The Athenaeum readers records present an exhaustive record of books actually borrowed by members. One notable figure was Emerson, who was interested in the Enlightenment, the books of Plato and some more contemporary writers, including books about Emmanuel Swedenborg, (1688-1772) and Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815), as well as documents of the Congressional, Unitarian, and Universal Unitarianism faiths.

The interest in Swedenborgism arrived as a religious philosophy. His writings were very popular, transmitted in books circulated within the community of Transcendentalists. The archives of the Boston Athenaeum reflect that Emerson, like most, did not read all of Swedenborg's books in their original (and "universal") Latin, but in particular, Emerson

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<sup>206</sup> Matteson, *Eden's Outcasts*. (*Eden's Outcast*) and "Margaret Fuller"

borrowed one book about Swedenborg's fundamental beliefs by another author, from the Athenaeum library. Swedenborgism tenets of philosophy include a single God head, "marriage is forever," and practicing human kindness to others. Swedenborg, the son of a Lutheran pastor, was initially a scientist, however his theories on religion became popular in Sweden and drew interest internationally. In America, his followers are often referred to as the New Church. There is a contemporary town and university devoted to his philosophy in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, a close suburb of Philadelphia. Two of his philosophic ideas are the importance of being of use to one's neighbor, and his insistence that women should be free from any domination from men. Swedenborg also stated that the form of one's worship is not important as long as one has the intention to live morally and to do good.<sup>207</sup> The phrase "to do good" or "to do the most good" is associated with the Methodist influenced Salvation Army, and there are some anecdotal references for connection between founder John Wesley and the Swedenborg followers. Swedenborg lived and was originally buried in England, but his remains were later moved to Uppsala, Sweden.<sup>208</sup>

This circle founded and sought out partners for "transcendental utopia" schemes in a kind of "American Romantic Enlightenment." Their interest in utopian schemes read about and discussed in the Boston Athenaeum led to the actual founding of several shared living experiments in greater Boston, such as Brook Farm Phalanx of West Roxbury, founded in 1841 by Unitarian minister George Ripley, Fruitlands of Harvard, an experiment in 'Consociate living'

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<sup>207</sup> *Scribe of Heaven : Swedenborg's Life, Work, and Impact, The New Century Edition of the Works of Emanuel Swedenborg* (West Chester, Pa: Swedenborg Foundation, 2005).

<sup>208</sup> Clarence Paul Hotson, *Emerson's Sources for "Swedenborg"* ([Brooklyn, N.Y.]: [New-Church Board of Publications], 1932).

founded by Bronson Alcott and Charles Lane 1843, and Henry Thoreau's home on Walden Pond. These examples of utopic society living exist today as teaching museums, with the participants in these generally referred to as the "American Romantics"

### **The Women's Circle of the Boston Athenaeum and their Social Agency**

The women's intellectual circle of the Athenaeum was comprised of such socially and politically active women as Elizabeth Peabody, who was tutored in Greek by Ralph Waldo Emerson and she was a teaching assistant to Amos Bronson Alcott at the Temple school in Boston. Peabody published a book about teaching with Alcott, *Record of a School* that outlined Alcott's unique teaching methods, most notably, he would not employ corporal punishment on children and admitted black female students, which ultimately resulted in the withdrawal of the other students by their parents. Peabody was a part of the Transcendentalist movement<sup>209</sup> and ran a bookstore selling Transcendentalist literature Elizabeth was also the editor of the Transcendentalist journal, *the Dial*, started by Emerson. She was one of the three famous Boston Peabody sisters, the youngest, Sophia whom married Nathaniel Hawthorne and the other sister Mary, married educator Horace Mann. Elizabeth Peabody never married, but traveled abroad and returned, opening the first "*kindergarten*" in America. Another member of the group was Lydia Maria Child, a proponent of antislavery at the Temple School in Boston, and a colleague of the highly intelligent, classically educated, Margaret Fuller. According to historian Katherine

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<sup>209</sup>A philosophy associated with Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Hudson River School Painters, following Plato, largely embracing the natural goodness of people and nature.

Wolfe,<sup>210</sup> Child received great criticism and may even have had her Athenaeum reading privilege revoked after she wrote an anti-slavery piece, *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans called Africans* in 1833.<sup>211</sup> She published a novel called *Hobomok* concerning an interracial marriage between a white woman and a Native American man. Perhaps her most famous work in a poem called, *Over the River and Through the Woods*... Miss Child was also a great proponent of women's rights.

Interestingly, for all of the condescending discourse in Quincy's *History*,<sup>212</sup> suggesting that women should be, "...content enjoying the benefit of having enlightened husbands frequenting the Boston Athenaeum," there is no evidence to suggest that there was in fact, any specific prohibition against women.<sup>213</sup> Granting limited access to women, the Boston Athenaeum neither specifically included nor invited them.<sup>214</sup> They were permitted to withdraw books, as in the case of Lydia Maria Child and Elizabeth Peabody who, "In 1832, ... were both permitted to withdraw books without the customary fee."<sup>215</sup> In regard to membership and the access by women, Quincy states the following:

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<sup>210</sup> Katherine Wolfe, *Culture Club: The Curious History of the Boston Athenaeum* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009.)

<sup>211</sup> Child was unique as a proponent of women's suffrage, an abolitionist, pro native American rights and a prolific writer. Her work was supported by William Lloyd Garrison. She also wrote *Philoshea*, which followed Plato's Divine mind, just a few weeks prior to Emerson publishing his book, *Nature*. She inspired other women in her circle such as Margaret Fuller.

<sup>212</sup> Quincy, *The History of the Boston Athenæum, with Biographical Notices of Its Deceased Founders*. (<https://archive.org/details/historyofbostona00quin/page/n15/mode/2up>)

<sup>213</sup> Which Quincy also states.

<sup>214</sup> However, the withdrawal records of the Boston Athenaeum suggest that the popularity of books by Jane Austen and Fanny Burney were an accommodation to a female family member and not the choice of the subscriber.

<sup>215</sup> Wolfe notes that, in author Barbara Adams Hebard's essay in *The Boston Athenaeum, "Bicentennial Essays"* (edited by Athenaeum Director Richard Wendorf)



"The ladies at least will have an indirect interest in this design. Whatever raises the character of men has a favorable influence on that of the other sex. Undoubtedly when the citizens are sensible and well-informed, the intercourse of the sexes is proportionably more rational and agreeable. But, if the progress of the institution shall be equal to the wishes and expectations of its friends, it will include a plan of instruction by lectures on which the ladies will be invited to attend. By their admission to this privilege. As well as by the use of the circulating books of the library, and the right of access to the other apartments, they will have more than an indirect share of the advantages of the Athenaeum."

"A library consisting of more than a thousand volumes of valuable works has already been collected and deposited in the institution, most of which have been donations. All the property, books, and papers belonging to the aforesaid library and reading-room are vested in the trustees hereafter named, who have full powers to fill up any vacancy which may be occasioned by death or resignation from among their number, and to dispose and manage the same with a view to the objects of the institution, which is intended as a foundation in this metropolis of an establishment similar to that of the Athenaeum and Lyceum of Liverpool in Great Britain; combining the advantages of a public library, containing the great works of learning and science in all languages, particularly such rare and expensive publications as are not generally to be obtained in this country; with a reading or news room, furnished with all the celebrated political, literary, and commercial journals of the day, foreign and domestic. And no book, pamphlet, or newspaper is ever to be permitted to be taken from the rooms by subscribers; so that the patrons of the institution may be certain at all times of finding any publications, which they may have occasion to read or refer to."

According to the present Boston Athenaeum archivist, women such as Miss Child and Miss Adams were physically locked into a room to work to prevent them from being "bothered" by other guests.<sup>216</sup>

That said, given access to the library holdings does not necessarily suggest that they were given reading privileges in the library itself. In fact, according to the Boston Athenaeum records,

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<sup>216</sup> Conversation of Author at the Boston Athenaeum in January 2021.

readers such as Louisa May Alcott actually used the account of a family member, but her name is shown as the person withdrawing, and signing for the books.

### **The Boston Athenaeum Art Collections**

The fine art in the Boston Athenaeum tends to be portraits and busts of famous white men, some in uniform, with a few paintings of women, politely acknowledging their patronage. One in particular on the wall of the Trustee's room is that of Hannah Adams, painted by Chester Harding, in his time the most popular of the Boston painters. Hannah's portrait holds a place of distinction in that she is presented as a doyenne of the Athenaeum, painted in a day dress and bonnet, sitting among some books. The simple manner of her dress, posing with her bonnet suggests a woman honored for her accomplishments, rather than a society portrait as the rest of the collection obviously are. Hannah Adam's portrait was donated "by several ladies" to the Athenaeum and deserves its place of honor in the Trustee's Room.

In fact, Hannah Adams was well connected, as a direct descendant of Henry Adams of Braintree, Massachusetts, and counted two United States Presidents as distant relatives.<sup>217</sup> She is revered for her writing based on her research in the Boston Athenaeum Library, her authorship of classical book translations, an original study of world religions, and a history of New England. As a dear friend and colleague of William Shaw, (the original Society book collector and

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<sup>217</sup> In fact, after John Adams returned to Quincy, Massachusetts from his single term presidency, Hannah Adams was permitted access to his home library on Adams Street for research on her book "The Truth and Excellence of the Christian Religion" in what was celebrated as one of the most complete private collections in the United States. (Archivist Boston Athenaeum)

Librarian), she had the support of many of the members and readers including a women's intellectual circle.

### **The Transcendental Hudson River School Artists**

The first opportunity for "historic art" in the United States came with the founding of the new American nation and, in the style of Europe, showing American leaders as human beings, in the colors of the new country and in a pose suggesting the empowerment of leadership.

One of the first successful artists in the British colonies was John Smibert, who not only painted the "Bermuda portrait" of Bishop George Berkeley and his family, but also drew the plans for Faneuil Hall in Boston. His manner of pose and portraiture was later copied by American colony portraitists such as John Trumbull, George Copley, Washington Allston, and Gilbert Stuart. Just as contemporary photojournalism reveals the horrors of modern war,<sup>218</sup> Trumbull is famous for his painting of the Battle of Bunker Hill and life portraits of American Founding Fathers.

There was a desire to emulate the salons of Europe by placing paintings high up on the walls, as was the taste in the Royal Academy Exhibitions in London and in Paris. Each of my studied American Athenaea prominently display paintings of their founders in their rooms. Aside from the artistic historical and heroic records painted by such American artists as Paul Revere's engraving, "The Boston Massacre," John Trumbull's "Battle of Bunker Hill," John Smibert's

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<sup>218</sup> John Trumbull's painting, *The Death of General Warren, July 17, 1775*, depicts the history which occurred at the battle of Bunker Hill, depicting the sacrifice of one of the first American war martyrs. Trumbull created two copies of this painting, one of which was purchased by the Boston Athenaeum and resides now at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and the other painting is held by the Wadsworth Athenaeum in Hartford Connecticut.

"Bermuda portrait" of George Berkeley and his entourage and Samuel Morse's portrait of the Marquis de Lafayette. There are also portrait busts and one standing portrait from life of George Washington, evocative of loss and patriotism as it is placed in front of the window looking down on the Freedom Trail graves. There is also a life bust of Benjamin Franklin by Houdon. Although Franklin's family has a large monument in the cemetery, Benjamin Franklin is buried in Philadelphia.

American artists later resolved the dearth of historic monuments with emphasizing the beauty of nature and the Transcendentalist vision of God in Nature as explored by other Swedenborg followers Thomas Cole, Edwin Church, George Inness, and rest of the Hudson River School of painters.

### **The Legacy Libraries of the Boston Athenaeum**

The second branch of the Boston Athenaeum, the Library, is described by Quincy as follows;

"Designed to contain, in a separate apartment, the works of learning and science in all languages; particularly such rare and expensive publications as are not generally obtained in this country; the most valuable encyclopedias of arts and sciences in the English and French languages; standard dictionaries of the learned and principal modern languages; also dictionaries, critical and biographical; books of general reference, useful to the merchant and the scholar; and finally, the works of all the best authors, both ancient and modern." <sup>219</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> Quincy. Found here: <https://archive.org/details/cu31924029531542> p.1

The next priority after the library was a museum or a Cabinet<sup>220</sup> where artifacts of interest might be placed for examination:

"...Specimens from the three kingdoms of Nature, scientifically arranged articles such as gems, intaglios, coins, artificial curiosities and then a Repository for the Arts where models of new and useful machines, statues, paintings, drawings, engravings, and other objects of fine arts, especially the productions of our native artists."<sup>221</sup>

The final detail of their plan called for:

"A Laboratory, which was to include equipment for scientific experimentation, in chemistry and natural philosophy, astronomical observations, geographical improvements, to be used under the direction of the corporation."<sup>222</sup>

A great deal of thought went into their plan as they considered the philosophy this Athenaeum would follow. The Athenaeum "Corporation" document further states:

"The Athenaeum may be recommended as a place of social intercourse. But it will principally be useful as a source of information, and a means of intellectual self-improvement and pleasure. It is to be a fountain, at which all, who choose, may gratify their thirst for knowledge. The value of learning whatever incidental evils it may produce is admitted by all who are qualified to judge upon the subject. Besides the dignity and satisfaction associated with the cultivation of letters and arts, and which constitute their worth to the individual, they have unlimited uses in respect to the community. *Speculative and practical philosophy, history, polite literature, and the arts, bear an important relationship to all the conveniences and elegancies of life, to all the good institutions of society, and to all the great interests of man, viewed as a rational and social, a moral and religious being. Not only, however, should those deep investigations of science and exquisite refinements of taste, which are necessarily confined to a few, be held in respect, as connected with the general welfare; but that love of intellectual improvement and pleasure, and that propensity to reading and inquiry, which are capable of being diffused through considerable portions of the community, should be regarded with interest and promoted with zeal among a civilized and flourishing people. They belong to the regular progress of society. A nation that increases in wealth, without any corresponding increase in knowledge and refinement, in letters and arts, neglects*

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<sup>220</sup> A "Wunderkammer" Quincy p. 23

<sup>221</sup> Quincy, Ibid. p 23 and 86.

<sup>222</sup> Quincy. Ibid. p. 23 (corporation and proprietorships) <https://archive.org/details/historyofbostona00quin/page/n15/mode/2up>

*the proper and respectable uses of prosperity.* A love of intellectual improvement, and of the various objects of literature and taste, in a state or society enjoying freedom and affluence, is to be coveted and maintained, because it produces the best exercise of the faculties; because it strengthens and multiplies the ties, that bind men together; because it enhances the value and satisfaction of social intercourse by supplying worthy and interesting topics of conversation; because it heightens the enjoyment of all of the blessings of life, and enables us to derive advantage from a multitude of new sources." <sup>223</sup>

Books in nineteenth century Boston were still a very precious commodity and the libraries built by the "Brahmin" families of Boston, just like their art collections, were donated as their named family legacies to the Boston Athenaeum. As previously mentioned, their largess ultimately led to the decision to found the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, with artwork and antiquities selected from their Athenaeum collection. The legacy of private giving to a public institution, rather than the purchase of art by the government, was a relatively new idea.

In her critical study, *Culture Club: The Curious History of the Boston Athenaeum* author Katherine Wolff suggests that the Boston Athenaeum was founded by a "conflicted elite," seeking "Culture." In truth, it appears that members were seeking a higher social standing through the hub of knowledge and arts, perhaps aiming to emulate the London intelligentsia rather than the Liverpool merchant class. The truth lies in the history by Josiah Quincy, which presents a clear-eyed assessment of two institutions, either one in consideration to be the pattern for the Boston Athenaeum:

"The Athenaeum of Liverpool has been visited with delight and admiration by numbers of our countrymen; and it is but one of several institutions of a like nature in that city. It includes a public newsroom of a superior kind, occupying the ground floor of 2000 square feet; and a library of a narrower base, but greater elevation, lying over the first and lighted from above. It was begun in January 1798, for three

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<sup>223</sup> Quincy, Ibid. chapter two <https://archive.org/details/historyofbostona00quin/page/n15/mode/2up>

hundred and fifty subscribers, who were to pay ten guineas each, as a capital and two guineas annually. The whole was completed for 4,000 pounds sterling. After six months, it was found sufficient for the accommodation of a larger number, seventy-five new subscribers were added for twenty guineas a piece. *At the end of the year, seventy-five more at thirty guineas each, and the share immediately rose to thirty-five and forty guineas. Thus, a large sum was added to the capital of the institution, and the income destined to the increase and support of the Library, was estimated at that time at four hundred guineas annually.*"

The Liverpool Lyceum, on the other hand was compared to the Liverpool Athenaeum by Anthology member Joseph Buckminster who "praised the Athenaeum for encouraging the consultation of "folios" that stayed put, as opposed to the Lyceum's emphasis on "circulating miscellanies." Whereas a "Cornhill apprentice" may be comfortable at the Lyceum, where the fee of half a guinea allowed access to only wooden books, William Roscoe and other "choice spirits" cherished the more exclusive Liverpool Athenaeum and its collection"<sup>224</sup> Buckminster did note that the Lyceum reading area was "more commodious" than the Liverpool Athenaeum, but he preferred the scholarship in the books that the Athenaeum had to offer:

"I send you herewith the regulations and the list of the Library. The collection of books is, I think, the most select I have ever known. Oh, when will the day come, when the library of our dearly cherished Athenaeum shall boast of including the labors of *Muratori*, the *Thesauri of Graevius* and *Gronovius*, the *Scriptores Byzantini*, the Memoires of the Academy of Inscriptions, the *editiones optimae* of every author in Greece and Rome, the French and English literary journals *ab initio*, and no only possess these books but to have them always accessible to every man of letters who wishes to consult them! By inspecting the catalogue, you will see that there is not a library in America, which contains so general a collection of standard works of every branch of knowledge. Here you may enter at any hour and you will invariably find some busy consulting authors, others taking notes and others reading for amusement. If I were to enumerate the various works which I saw here for the first time, I should fill this page with a very dry catalogue."<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Quincy (quoting Buckminster letters) <https://archive.org/details/cu31924029531542>

<sup>225</sup> Quincy (quoting Buckminster letters) <https://archive.org/details/cu31924029531542>

The second type was found in London: specifically, the Royal Institution and the London Institution. The former is, of course, the theatre where Michael Faraday listened to lectures by Humphry Davy on his discovery of several elements and Faraday himself lectured later on electrical magnetism. Quincy sets forth an objective comparison made by Stephen Buckminster's correspondence to the Anthology Society thus:

"The City of London has been known to have abounded for ages with foundations for the sciences, literatures and for the arts. Two have within a few years been added to those before existing, and supported with a liberality, which we indeed cannot be expected to rival, but which we may properly imitate, according to our exigencies and means. One of these is the Royal Institution, commenced under the auspices of our countryman, Count Rumford, designed for "diffusing the knowledge and facilitating the introduction of useful mechanical inventions and improvements; and for teaching, by courses of philosophical lectures and experiments, the application of Science to the common purposes of life."

"Another is the London Institution having three objects: '1. The acquisition of a valuable and extensive library. 2. The diffusion of useful knowledge by means of lectures and experiments. 3. The establishment of a reading-room, where the foreign and domestic journals, and other periodical works, and the best pamphlets and new publications, are provided for the use of the proprietors and subscribers."

"The persons having the benefit of these institutions are classed much in the manner proposed in the Boston Athenaeum, consisting of hereditary proprietors, life subscribers, and occasional visitors. Within a few hours after the proposals for the London Institution were issued, all the shares were taken in the amount of 100,000 pounds sterling."<sup>226</sup>

Buckminster continues his analysis with a review of other extant American libraries, in New York, Philadelphia, Charleston, establishing his argument:

"The cultivated character and the liberal spirit of the Bostonians have been the subject of encomium. It is probably that the countenance, afforded to this proposal, will furnish a new instance to justify their claim to this praise. "This institution, it was said, is proposed at a suitable time. It bears a correspondence to the

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<sup>226</sup> Quincy (quoting Buckminster) <https://archive.org/details/cu31924029531542>



advancement of society and the state of the metropolis. Boston now contains a sufficient number of those who need, or who can enjoy and improve the advantages and pleasures of the Athenaeum. There is a prevailing opinion that objects of this kind should now engage attention. As a long course of time will be necessary, for the maturity and perfection of the design, it is certainly not too soon to begin. Whatever be the embarrassments or hazards attending the prosecution of our commerce, it is notwithstanding highly productive, and the class of persons enjoying easy circumstances, and possessing surplus wealth is comparatively numerous. As we are not called upon for large contributions to national purposes, we shall do well to take advantage of the exemption by taxing ourselves for those institutions, which will be attended with lasting and extensive benefit amidst all changes of our public fortunes and political affairs."<sup>227</sup>

However, the Liverpool Athenaeum offered the model for a fiscally winning plan focused on library, members and incredible funding. That, more than anything else appeared to resonate the best with the Boston Athenaeum Founders. This is particularly interesting since they were looking to European trends and not the Athenaea located near them. In fact, when the founding of the Boston Athenaeum was announced on January 1, 1807 by the Board of Trustees, "they divulged their intention of founding in Joy's Buildings, in Congress Street, in Boston an institution similar to the Athenaeum, then recently established in Liverpool." The announcement went on "More than one hundred and sixty subscribers at ten dollars a year have been obtained." They expressed the hope that, "Such patronage will be given by a liberal public as will authorize the trustees to procure more commodious apartments." <sup>228</sup>

The Boston Athenaeum has acceded to the hopes of its original planners. While the laboratory and the anticipated experimentations in the basement were deemed untenable for a fast-growing library and cultural center, their turn to art collections certainly increased the

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<sup>227</sup> Quincy (quoting Buckminster) <https://archive.org/details/cu31924029531542>

<sup>228</sup> Quincy. <https://archive.org/details/cu31924029531542>

reception and financial aspirations of its founders. In fact, in his essay, *The Boston Athenaeum* former Director Richard Wendorf lauds the flexibility of the corporation founded by a dozen Harvard lawyers who started the *Monthly Anthology* and grew it into their interpretation of the Liverpool Athenaeum.<sup>229</sup>

### **The Social Conscience and Agency of the Concord Circle and the Boston Lyceum**

I argue that the Concord Lyceum was founded a bit later than the Boston Athenaeum (in 1829) by some of the same proprietors of the Boston Athenaeum who were living in Concord. Functioning philosophically as the "radical" arm of the Boston Athenaeum, they provided "material support"<sup>230</sup> and public discourse for law-breaking abolitionists. They also followed Aristotle's teaching philosophy, and while Thoreau served as curator, he and Emerson, the center of this Concord sphere, were the Lyceum's most frequent speakers. Alexander von Humboldt visited with Thoreau at Walden, inspiring Thoreau with von Humboldt's method of research and writing. It was only after meeting with von Humboldt that Thoreau wrote his work, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*.<sup>231</sup> I argue that this unofficial "branch" of the Boston Athenaeum, in the spirit of Concord's previous context in the American Revolution, was not only a participant in the Underground Railroad, but often contributed material support to abolitionist John Brown (1800-1859) and others. Speakers at the Lyceum included Louis

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<sup>229</sup> Richard Wendorf, *The Boston Athenaeum : Bicentennial Essays* (Boston, MA) Lebanon, N.H.: Boston Athenaeum , distributed by University Press of New England, 2009).

<sup>230</sup> Meaning providing support in safe houses, financially, and in their discourse.

<sup>231</sup> Wolf, Alexandria. *The Invention of Nature, Alexander Humboldt's New World*, Knopf, New York 2015

Agassiz, Theodore Parker, James Freeman Clarke, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Horace Greeley, Wendell Phillips, James Russell Lowell, Henry Ward Beecher, Orestes Brownson, Frederick Henry Hedge and Jones Very. Several of these members inspired the first public speech by Abraham Lincoln concerning the abolition of slavery at Cooper Union, presented by their colleague, New York Post editor William Cullen Bryant.<sup>232</sup> I argue that the circles of the Boston Athenaeum represent the historic memory, moral conscience, and social agency of America.

In his book *The Business of Literary Circles in Nineteenth Century America*, author David Dowling explains the philosophic difference between circle of the Concord Transcendentals, headed by Emerson, and that of the New York Knickerbockers (the nickname emanates from pants of their Dutch forbearers). According to Dowling, the Knickerbockers were comprised of authors Washington Irving, William Cullen Bryant, James Fenimore Cooper and even Walt Whitman. They managed to create a successful business producing books which were a sort of adventurous genre. Emerson disparaged the commercialization of the literature produced in New York in favor of his cadre of disciples in Concord, and caused the "congregation" of Concord to be wholly dependent upon him for both praise as well as material support. Emerson had the advantage of inheriting his first wife's estate and he also earned fees for his lectures. As a graduate of the ministry preparation course of study at Harvard, and the son of William Emerson, he was an excellent and popular speaker. Emerson's writings were not as popular as his appearances in lecture. Although he was supposed to be helping the other members of his circle

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<sup>232</sup> Nysoclib.org/about/history/CooperUnion

as an agent for them to be published, he was not very good at it and he ended up giving them his own money.<sup>233</sup>

There were two individuals in American History named William Ellery Channing. The first was born in Newport, Rhode Island in 1780 and graduated from Harvard. Rejecting the Second Congregationalist Church's teaching, he became a Unitarian church leader and friend of Waldo Emerson. The second William Ellery Channing, his nephew, was a self-styled Transcendentalist after Emerson.<sup>234</sup> According to author Kathryn B. McKee, Channing the nephew, who desired to style himself as a poet like Emerson, found that he, unlike Emerson, was "unsuited to giving lectures." According to McKee, "Channing remains one of the first to recognize the difference between Emerson and Thoreau as 'between Transcendentalism *lived* and Transcendentalism *discussed*'."<sup>235</sup>

Perhaps the most intuitive observation of this circle comes from regular Athenaea visitor and acerbic literary critic Edgar Allen Poe, who noted that nephew Ellery Channing stood in the shadows long before he stood in Emerson's shadow. Poe remarked in his 1843 review of Channing's poetry, "He is a, and by no means the, William Ellery Channing." However, in the article Poe apparently mistook Channing for the son and not the nephew of the famous Unitarian orator.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> David Dowling, *The Business of Literary Circles in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

<sup>234</sup> Kathryn B. McKee, "A Fearful Price I Have Had to Pay for Loving Him: Ellery Channing's Troubled Relationship with Ralph Waldo Emerson," *Studies in the American Renaissance* (1994), accessed 2020/02/22/, [www.jstor.org/stable/30227658](http://www.jstor.org/stable/30227658).

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Poe.

It is true that Emerson always supported the schemes of Bronson Alcott, Hawthorne and Thoreau, but he never joined in any of the ill-planned Transcendentalist-Utopian communal projects such as Brook Farm,<sup>237</sup> Fruitlands, or other life-styled "Transcendentalists."<sup>238</sup>

Elizabeth Peabody, who operated the bookstore in Boston that sold the Transcendentalists books, was smart, intelligent and an emotionally strong woman. Passed over by suitors Nathaniel Hawthorne and Horace Mann in favor of her less ambitious sisters, Elizabeth decided to become successful in her own right, traveling and studying in Germany. Returning to Boston, she opened the first early childhood education center in the German manner, a "kindergarten."<sup>239</sup>

Likewise, Margaret Fuller eventually broke away from Emerson's control.<sup>240</sup> In the Transcendentalist journal *The Dial*, which she edited, she published Thoreau, Hawthorne and Poe, introducing them to the New York market. She published her own essay, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* in *The Dial*, and later turned it into a book considered a feminist manifesto. Frustrated in Concord, she became a foreign correspondent for Horace Greeley's Knickerbocker New York Tribune in Rome.<sup>241</sup> Returning to New York, Fuller, along with her new husband and child, tragically died in a shipwreck.

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<sup>237</sup> Communal experiment by George and Sophia Ripley in West Roxbury (9 miles outside of Boston).

<sup>238</sup> Matteson, *Eden's Outcasts*. Alcott's group with Charles Lane and Sylvester Graham (of the Graham "cracker") refused all non-plant-based food and clothing; Alcott's wife removed the family to Boston as they were starving and wearing linen clothing during their winter in Harvard, MA.

<sup>239</sup> Cheever.

<sup>240</sup> Emerson reportedly shared his home with Fuller while he was married and wrote love letters to her. (Matteson: *Eden's Outcasts and The Lives of Margaret Fuller*)

<sup>241</sup> Matteson, *The Lives of Margaret Fuller*.

The Boston Athenaeum was their library, founded by Ralph Waldo Emerson's father, the Rev. William Emerson. We know from the archival records of several of the other Athenaea (Newport, Salem, Providence, Philadelphia and even Baltimore) that this American Bloomsbury "intellectual circle" visited each of these neighboring circles.<sup>242</sup> As we shall see in the next chapter, there are connections between the "Transcendentalist" type groups who also followed the teachings of Swedenborg and Unitarianism, and another Athenaeum circles. Emerson, because of his success, was the most productive, traveling and giving presentations of his ideas.<sup>243</sup> Emerson's industry bankrolled many of his friends, especially his neighbor Bronson Alcott. Alcott, the father of five daughters, Alcott suffered the greatest loss of his career when his "Temple School" where he taught together with Margaret Fuller and Elizabeth Peabody closed for "poor subscription." In fact, after Alcott insisted on educating a young African American girl in a class of other young white girls and boys, parents removed their children from the school.<sup>244</sup> Co-education at that time was also an issue for the public, as the sexes were heretofore always separated.<sup>245</sup> He approached raising his daughters as a sort of pedagogical experiment and kept his notes on each with his own "scholarly conclusions." <sup>246</sup>

"One of the least appealing facets of Bronson Alcott's social thinking interacted with his understanding of his family. He was strangely taken with an unpleasant form of pseudoscience

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<sup>242</sup> Cheever.

<sup>243</sup> Emerson lost his first wife and his son. His second wife preferred to have Henry Thoreau as a house guest while Emerson was on his lecture tours. (Matteson, *Eden's Outcasts*)

<sup>244</sup> Matteson, *Eden's Outcasts*.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

which held that the inner nature of human beings could be deduced from their physical coloring. In self-serving fashion, he decided that blonde-haired, blue-eyed persons were the most spiritually developed human beings and that darker pigments connoted darker natures that were (like his wife Abigail May Alcott,) nocturnal, earthy, and slumberous. Consequently, Bronson Alcott held his daughter Louisa May, who was olive skinned, dark eyed and of strong character, in a lower regard than her sisters, who appeared to resemble him more. He praised the impregnable Saxon-dom of Old and New England and wrote, without flinching, 'Blood is a Destiny' in *Concord Days*.<sup>247</sup> Bronson's racial categories alarmed even his most dedicated followers.

Matteson<sup>248</sup> quoting Dahlstrand's book, *Amos Bronson Alcott*, pg. 232, reports that, on one occasion when Bronson was discoursing on the attributes of darker peoples, his friend Ednah Cheney objected that Emanuel Swedenborg, a philosopher whom Alcott deeply respected, had called blacks "the most beloved of races." Alcott dismissed the objection with condescending words "that is very nice of Mr. Swedenborg." In private conversation with Emerson, Alcott, descending even lower, suggesting that "male African Americans should be sterilized en masse" What is more perplexing is that Bronson Alcott, like his friend and benefactor, Waldo Emerson, claimed he was against all slavery and pro-temperance.

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<sup>247</sup> Amos Bronson Alcott, *Concord Days* (1872), <http://name.umd.umich.edu/ABR2612.0001.001>.

<sup>248</sup> Matteson, *Eden's Outcasts*. and Frederick C. Dahlstrand, *Amos Bronson Alcott : An Intellectual Biography* (Rutherford [N.J.] [etc.]; London; Toronto: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press ; Associated University Presses, 1982).

## **An Historic Legacy and a Hopeful Present**

Today the Boston Athenaeum maintains a subscription membership. There are "public hours" where one pays an admission fee to attend the social events, such as concerts, workshops, and lectures. The Athenaeum hosts various exhibits and also has an online presence for researching the collection. They maintain the records of books which were borrowed by illustrious members of the community. The Athenaeum is open to the public on a shorter schedule than the member schedule. The Athenaeum is also available for certain function rentals.

The value of the Boston Athenaeum Library's archives cannot be overestimated. The hand written catalogue for every subscriber and every reader remains intact and available. For more notable members, this information, as well as the library listing itself, showing where all of the holdings of the Athenaeum, (over 13,000 full or partially digitized and the collection of over 600 sculptures and paintings owned) can be found, is available in the Boston Athenaeum's online source, "Athena." The computerized reference tool at the Boston Athenaeum is named in honor of the goddess of wisdom. It permits a glimpse into the Boston Athenaeum archives which can reveal the reading habits of various individuals, from John F. Kennedy to Louisa May Alcott.

The Boston Athenaeum has refreshed their community outreach and social agency online through the global COVID-19 pandemic on a regular basis. They have leveraged the forced closure of the Athenaeum to prevent further virus infection as an opportunity to maintain their membership base and to engage new members, and older members perhaps previously unable to travel to downtown Boston for lectures, meetings, book recommendations, recitals, by making them available online at no cost during this time.



It is highly likely that this may serve to develop their membership for future content or perhaps even be a source for outreach to those who are distanced by age or mobility from traveling to Boston. The Boston Athenaeum archives of over 13,000 entries available to viewers, including maps, rare books, photographs, prints, rare books, online for the public. The Boston Athenaeum also provides online resources shared with the New York Society Library in Manhattan.

The usually very active schedule of activities open to Athenaeum members and to the public has weathered the shutdown of the Athenaeum since March 12, 2020, shifting to total online programming. There online tours of the Athenaeum, including the conservation laboratory, profiles of the "Author of the Month" and "Staff Book Suggestions," all available to curious and intelligent minds of all ages. The only activity not available to nonmembers is the report of the Secretary of the Athenaeum to members, which is streamed online through a secure portal.

Mrs. Elizabeth Glover successfully rose against all odds and printed the first documents in America at her little print shop at Harvard Yard in Cambridge.<sup>249</sup> We can only imagine the newly widowed Mrs. Glover and her five children fighting in court for a way to start her own printing business in nearby Cambridge, (despite a theocratic law prohibiting women from business ownership).<sup>250</sup> A drawing of this press has appeared on a stamp twice in American

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<sup>249</sup> Cambridge Historical Society accessed 02.12.14 at: <https://cambridgehistory.org/research/the-beginnings-of-the-cambridge-press-part-1>

<sup>250</sup> George Emery Littlefield and Volumes Club of Odd, *The Early Massachusetts Press, 1638-1711, Library of American Civilization ; Lac 20259*. (Boston, Mass.: Club of Odd Volumes, 1907).

history, celebrating freedom of the press. In this tradition, the Boston Athenaeum presides over 390 years of American History in Boston, where history does matter.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE ATHENAEUM AT THE CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

This chapter builds upon the preceding two centuries of "Intellectual study circles of American Athenaea," derived from the two models I have already discussed. However, unlike its American social library-centered antecedents, the Athenaeum at Caltech was intended to realize the Athenaeum as originally conceived in Plato's Academy and Aristotle's Lyceum, similar to the Aristotelian inspired original Library of Alexander. The Bibliotheca Alexandrina of Egypt, was the center for the promotion of interdisciplinary discourse and provided a support center to host the wider circle of intellectuals in the world community.<sup>251</sup>

Unlike The Redwood and Boston Athenaea, there was no ready circle of affluent businessmen standing by, seeking to invest in a private library,<sup>252</sup> or yet another California effete, private gentlemen's club. This chapter explains why the Caltech Athenaeum was built, and its purpose as an integral part of the Caltech Community, connecting it philosophically and in disciplines to already extant circles of national and international scholars of Science, Technology Engineering, Arts and Mathematics.

This is the story of the convergence of the dreams of two visionary men, Amos Gager Throop who founded Throop Institute, and George Ellery Hale who developed Throop Institute

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<sup>251</sup> Casson.

<sup>252</sup> The Pasadena Library and Village Improvement society was a founded as a private subscription library in 1882, and built in The South Pasadena library was founded in 1895 and built in 1907. Throop Campus designed by Myron Hunt

into the California Institute of Technology. The creation of the Athenaeum at the California Institute of Technology starts with the inspired and thoughtful revision of an awkward, small, and struggling Throop College, founded by Pasadena Mayor and Universalist Unitarian Church founder, Amos Throop (at age 80) in 1891, and later re-envisioned by Astrophysicist George Ellery Hale.<sup>253</sup> Both Hale and Throop benefited from the philosophy of Swedenborgism.<sup>254</sup> Throop followed it, building churches and a school. Hale received the benefit first through the mentorship of Architect Daniel Burnham, then in guiding Throop's Institute in its evolution to Caltech.

At 9,138 feet above sea level, the highest peak of the San Gabriel Mountains (where one can actually see snow in Pasadena, California) there is a metal marker bearing the insignia of the California Institute of Technology and marking this place thus:

THROOPS PEAK  
9,138  
In Honor Of  
AMOS G. THROOP (1811-1894)  
Founder of the Throop University  
Now Known As The  
CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE  
OF TECHNOLOGY<sup>255</sup> <sup>256</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> The photographs and letters provided by the family of Amos Gager Throop, are divided between those given to the Chicago Historic Society, the Archives of the First Universalist Parish of Pasadena, Throop Memorial, Pasadena, and the Archives of the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena. <https://hale.archives.caltech.edu>. Also see for Throop the family archives found at <https://authors.library.caltech.edu/25014>

<sup>254</sup> Wright, Helen. *Explorer of the Universe: A Biography of George Ellery Hale (History of Modern Physics and Astronomy) Vol. 14*. Woodbury, New York: AIP Press, 1966 (reprint)

<sup>255</sup> <https://authors.library.caltech.edu/throopCollection.pdf>

<sup>256</sup> San Gabriel Mountains National Monument is a United States National Monument managed by the U.S. Forest Service

At the age of sixty-nine, Amos Throop and his wife Eliza decided to travel west on holiday by train and arrived in early December in Los Angeles. Gradually, the Throop family relocated from Chicago to Los Angeles to cultivate their orchard and farmlands. However, a short while thereafter, they moved north to the City of Pasadena as Los Angeles was becoming more densely populated with more homes and real estate investors.

Amos Throop went "all in" on the City of Pasadena. He became active in the Board of City Trustees and the President of the school board. Amos was a man who spent much of his life as a prohibitionist, helping men who, like his father, struggled with alcohol, and he formulated Pasadena's "anti-saloon" ordinances. These same ordinances are contributory to the staid, traditional, aesthetic of "Old Town Pasadena" yet today.<sup>257</sup> Throop was elected Pasadena Mayor in 1888 at the age of 77 and served until 1890.

Once at home in Pasadena, California, Throop contributed over \$100,000 to the founding of a Universalist Unitarian Church which is still flourishing, and still bears his name today. Throop's desire was to serve his community as "Father Throop" giving his fortune to the church, and building a school he founded in his name, that follows the Swedenborg religious philosophy to "Do Good" and to "Be Useful."<sup>258</sup>

Visiting the Throop Unitarian Universalist Church and school in early 2020, I found its religious world-view, also evidenced in the stain glass depictions in the church sanctuary, is to be

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<sup>257</sup> Throop's father was an alcoholic and, after the death of Throop's mother, remarried. Still an alcoholic, He threw Throop out of his home at 18 without any assistance.

<sup>258</sup> In his autobiography, Amos Gager Throop identified himself as a follower of Emanuel Swedenborg's philosophy.

positive, and inclusive, and is similar in philosophy, (Christian, based in Lutheranism, negating the Trinity) to the Swedenborg or "New Church" concept, also popular in London, New York, Detroit, Philadelphia, and Chicago. The Throop Church literature connects them to the New Church.<sup>259</sup>

I received a religious tract explaining the beliefs of this Church and an explanation of their logo, the "flaming chalice." This chalice is meant to symbolize the faith in terms of what Swedenborg follower, and the former Unitarian minister, Ralph Waldo Emerson called the "divine spark." the manifestation of divine possibility within each human soul. This same "flaming chalice" is also the logo for the Throop founded Institute school, now Caltech, with the addition of a second hand "passing the chalice and torch."

In 1891, Amos Gager Throop took on yet another vision to provide education to his community, however, it is Throop's vision for a "useful school" which has caused him to be honored and remembered in the annals of Pasadena as the founder of one of the greatest science and technology centers in the United States, if not the world.

Amos opened Throop University on November 2, 1891, as a co-education academy for "sub-preparatory to collegiate." A bulletin in the Caltech archives describes its mission: "to furnish students of both sexes and all religious opinions a liberal and practical education, which, while thoroughly Christian, is to be absolutely non-sectarian in its character." In just two years the enrollment increased from 50 to 200 students, and Throop appointed Charles H. Keyes as the

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<sup>259</sup> Like many who following this philosophy, they regard it on a prima facie level and have not read the eighteen books of Swedenborg written in Latin.

first President of the University. He endeavored to shift some of its focus to "manual arts" while still maintaining the collegiate level program. It also provided dormitory space in its large stone building at the corner of Kansas St. (now Green St. and Fair Oaks Avenue.) Throop explained in his journals that he recognized the need for manual arts training in the area, and that his school would be the first to serve this need for "practical education" on the west coast, changing its name to Throop Polytechnic Institute in 1893.<sup>260</sup> Throop's ministry with the Universalist Church of Pasadena and with the Christian Polytechnic Institute, resulted with his being addressed as "Father Throop," referring to himself as such in his letters. The motto of Throop Polytechnic Institute which distinguished Throop as a practical skill college was "Learn by Doing."<sup>261</sup>

Throop University was created as the local alternative to the colleges of Pomona, Whittier, Occidental, and USC and initially offered courses in everything from elementary education to law on its Green Street campus in Pasadena. It was inclusive with a student enrollment that did not discriminate on the basis of gender or ethnicity. The success of the Throop Institute was so widely known that President Theodore Roosevelt visited the College to address the student body in 1911. College president James A.B. Scherer presented Roosevelt with one of his books, "A Wanderer's Legacy." Roosevelt wrote back to Scherer thanking him for the book and the opportunity to visit Throop Institute. By that time, Swedenborg's philosophy of "God's eternal happiness" was well known by writers in Europe and in America.

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<sup>260</sup> Throop's family provided his original journals which are found partly in Chicago and partly in Caltech archives. Throop's portrait was presented to the Throop Unitarian Church in Pasadena, where it hangs today,

<sup>261</sup> This was also the philosophy of John Dewey in 1896, who started the Laboratory schools which became the University of Chicago. Caltech's Motto is "the Truth Shall Make You Free"

## George Ellery Hale

The story of the visionary George Ellery Hale begins in Chicago where he was born the third, and oldest surviving son, of a wealthy commercial elevator developer, William Ellery Hale. George was raised as a humanist by his mother and was encouraged to read with exposure to a wide variety of books, from classics like Homer's Iliad, to detective novels. His father William designed elevators for architect-builder Daniel Burnham,<sup>262</sup> and he gifted his son with a telescope of the son's design. William Sr. later expanded upon his son's particular interest with the design for the Kenmore Observatory built on their Chicago estate with Burnham.<sup>263</sup> Burnham appears to have mentored Hale through his adult life, and it was Burnham who, according to Hale's biography for the American Academy of Science,<sup>264</sup> suggested that he attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T).<sup>265</sup> Hale did so, and his graduate project was development of the Spectroheliometer, the invention that defined his life's work. He later taught Astronomy at the University of Chicago, working with his more advanced students in his Kenwood observatory. At that time Hale initiated the Astrophysical Journal, still in publication today online. After directing the Yerkes Observatory in Wisconsin, Hale was elected to membership in the National Academy of the Sciences in 1902,<sup>266</sup> later receiving funding from

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<sup>263</sup> Burnham had a colleague who studied architecture at M.I.T and he suggested that George E. Hale might attend there. From Wright, *Explorer of the Universe: A Biography of George Ellery Hale*..

<sup>264</sup> Adams.

<sup>265</sup> Thomas S. Hines and Neil Harris, *Burnham of Chicago: Architect and Planner* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

<sup>266</sup> Hale supervised the creation of their headquarters in Washington, D.C, and was particularly involved in architectural design with architect Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue (Caltech archives Hale papers)



industrialist Andrew Carnegie,<sup>267</sup> another follower of Swedenborg philosophy, to build an observatory at the top of Mount Wilson near Pasadena, California. The observatory was designed by Hale's boyhood mentor, Daniel Burnham.

In the annals of the Mount Wilson Observatory, Hale is memorialized for his social agency as "The chief architect of American Science" and by the Pasadena Star-News, (founded in 1884) as "a maker of institutions" and Hale conceived and designed the world's largest telescopes, four times in succession, The 40-inch refractor at Yerkes Observatory in Williams Bay Wisconsin, the 60 inch and 100 inch reflectors at Mount Wilson, and the 200 inch reflector at Palomar Observatory in San Diego.

### **Daniel Burnham**

In his biography of American architect Daniel Burnham, Thomas S. Hines explains Burnham's empathy and encouragement of future Astrophysicist George Ellery Hale as a young man. Burnham worked with Hale's father William, who supplied elevators to many, if not all, of the new style of skyscraper buildings designed by Burnham.<sup>268</sup> Hines suggests that, about this time, George Ellery Hale was having some learning difficulties and Burnham, perhaps seeing some of the learning issues he had also experienced, encouraged George in his interests and studies and eventually, to apply for entrance to MIT.

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<sup>267</sup> Carnegie and Adams

<sup>268</sup> Hines and Harris.

Young Hale and Burnham were to commence their professional alliance early and it would remain a lifelong friendship and a kind of business apprenticeship in vision, building, and humanity. During this "apprenticeship" Burnham appears to have conferred to Hale a sense of what is now termed "business development" that enabled him to accomplish his professional and personal goals with the support of others.<sup>269</sup>

Burnham's biographers suggest that Burnham, after his business partner passed unexpectedly, was free to become a truly innovative, expert architect and city planner and his famous motto was, "Make No Small Plans."<sup>270</sup> Together, Hale Senior with his elevator systems and Burnham's new "skyscraper" designs rebuilt the City of Chicago after the great fire. Burnham encouraged the young George Ellery Hale, who had an interest in astronomy, to pursue his studies. After George Hale completed a standard technical course, and then a course in what may be called vocational arts, his father commissioned Burnham to build a "backyard observatory" on the property of their Chicago home. Hale developed a love and proficiency in astronomy. This desire and proficiency led Burnham to recommend to him to study at MIT. Burnham, together with Hale senior and junior, planned the design and construction of the observatory. However, that did not end his association or collaboration with Hale. Burnham likely influenced Hale's eventual participation in not only the development of California Institute

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<sup>269</sup> I argue there was encouragement in keeping with the Swedenborgian ethic from Burnham to Hale to "Be useful" and "Do good." In fact, Burnham's parents actually visited the Brook Farm experiment in West Roxbury MA, in which Nathaniel Hawthorne and Sophia Peabody lived for a period.

<sup>270</sup> The designs by Burnham range from churches and the Flatiron building in Manhattan to the Columbian Exposition of Chicago, known as the "White City".

of Technology and the Henry Huntington Museum and Library but also the planning and aesthetic of the City of Pasadena.<sup>271</sup>

### **Swedenborg Philosophy "Lived"**

The importance of this mention again of Emmanuel Swedenborg is to recount the history of how this philosophy, important in the era of the Transcendentalists, first inspired Throop and was taught to future architect Daniel Burnham by his parents. It inspired Burnham's professional career and personal associations, especially his mentorship of the "troubled" young George Ellery Hale.<sup>272</sup> The young Hale was often in Burnham's company as he built the new tall buildings of Chicago, where Hale's father was installing the elevators. As we shall see, there is a connection between the Institute founded by Swedenborg follower and prohibitionist Amos Gager Throop and the vision of George Ellery Hale for a "world class, west coast M.I.T." Hale's correspondence<sup>273</sup> reflects that he had a plan for a discursive, interdisciplinary center to attract donors, students, and faculty to the Institute, in the manner of the east coast American Athenaea, modeled on the London Athenaeum, where Hale met with preeminent scientists. Hale learned from one of his neighbors that such a "mechanics institute" already existed in Pasadena: Throop University. The Hale letters maintained in the Caltech Archives demonstrate that Hale continued

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<sup>271</sup> Hale was so involved in planning that Pasadena dedicated the building and planning office to him.

<sup>272</sup> The substance of Hale's absences is related in his biography for the American Academy of Science which reports that Hale suffered from several "mental breakdowns." The death of Hale in a care facility in Pasadena, might tend to support this. Hale's European travels to Italy and Egypt are mentioned as having given him some relief.

<sup>273</sup> *Caltech Archives*, "George Ellery Hale Papers, Halege. California Institute of Technology Archives and Special Collections., " (caltech.edu.)

many of Amos Gager Throop's community interests of education and cultural engagement with the citizens of Pasadena.<sup>274</sup>

### **Hale, Developments and Achievements**

In his first personal observatory, the Kenwood, Hale, still attending MIT, first utilized his invention of the spectrohelioscope to observe solar radiation. Hale also started the *Astrophysical Journal* and later became the first director of the Yerkes Observatory prior to his 30th birthday. In 1902, at the age of 34, Hale was elected into membership at the National Academy of Sciences (founded by John Adams in 1880). Within two years of this accomplishment, Hale was able to convince the Carnegie Institution to provide funding for an observatory in the very tolerable year-round weather of Pasadena.<sup>275</sup> Hale was later responsible for the building of the National Academy of Sciences using the same architect, Bertram Goodhue, on both this project and the Throop Institute.

Hale's life was consumed with his explorations, his writing, his family, and the obligation to raise funding for current and future projects. Of the sites that were under study for a new reflective telescope observatory, only Pasadena would present an opportunity for the Hale family to live within the United States in a pleasant community with exceptional weather and opportunities for growth. Hale visited Pasadena, California for the first time in 1903, not an easy

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<sup>274</sup> Early on in his own career, Burnham himself was influenced by his private tutor, T.B. Hayward, who explained to him about the practice and history of architecture as well as Hayward's close friend W.P.P Longfellow, a ward and nephew of the famous poet, who later became a professor of architecture at MIT, to pursue his interest in architecture. Also see Wright, *Explorer of the Universe: A Biography of George Ellery Hale*.

<sup>275</sup> There were also had more opportunities for social discourse and community for his wife Evelina and his children than in the isolation of the Wisconsin laboratory and home. (See Wright.)

journey during the first years of the twentieth century. On finally seeing the view, Hale considered that this location was optimum for a new observatory, far away from the "pollution of light" near the city. Hale had struggled with wanting a bigger reflective telescope to further his research.<sup>276</sup>

Ultimately, using photographs of the phenomena of sunspots, magnetism and other observations of the Sun to prove the efficacy of the work in which he and the other astrophysicists engaged, Hale was able to convince Andrew Carnegie to fulfill his need for the funding to build an observatory for the worlds' largest telescope atop of the 6,000 -foot, Mount Wilson as an investment in the future of science.<sup>277</sup> Hale continued his duties at the Yerkes Observatory while the early planning and construction of the Mount Wilson Observatory was arranged. Hale later moved his family to a home where he could watch the construction of the telescope and he also made social contacts in the Pasadena community. In January 1904 the Royal Astronomical Society of England awarded Hale with its Gold Medal for his work photographing the phenomena of the sun with his telescopes and his spectroheliograph.<sup>278</sup>

On one occasion in 1909 Hale was asked to address the Royal Institution in London and stated in his letters that he found himself emotionally moved as he found himself standing at the same desk where Michael Faraday had lectured on polarity to the audience.<sup>279</sup> At that time, the

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<sup>276</sup> Wright, *Explorer of the Universe: A Biography of George Ellery Hale*.

<sup>277</sup> The weather in California would be beneficial to both Hale and his family and give them an opportunity for healthful, social and cultural exchange opportunities not available near the Yerkes Observatory in Wisconsin, in Pasadena.

<sup>278</sup> Wright.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

Hale family resided on Bellefontaine Street near the Arroyo Secco of Pasadena in a modest single-family home. There, his neighbors were A.B. Scherrer, who recruited him to give a presentation to the public at the Throop Institute where Scherrer was president, and later to join the board of trustees for Throop Institute.<sup>280</sup> His other neighbor was Charles Frederick Holder who founded the (still) prestigious Valley Hunt Club, and he originated the first Tournament of Roses Parade. Holder, a zoologist, was previously assistant curator at the New York Museum of Natural History. Holder was now a writer and he organized the California Magazine as well as tourist guides to Pasadena. According to Hale biographer Helen Wright, who was given access to some of Hale's private correspondence, The Throop Institute and the possibilities of the school were already on Hale's mind even before he started the Mount Wilson Observatory.<sup>281</sup>

### **Hale, from Board Member to Co-Founder**

George Ellery Hale almost single handedly revised the fortunes of the failing Throop College into the world renown California Institute of Technology. Charles Holder, a member of the Board of Trustees of Throop Institute invited his engaging neighbor Hale to join the Board. Hale was impressed by the Throop Institute and, since there really wasn't a facility like MIT on the west coast, he started to develop a plan for the possible reorganization of Throop to be a "leading scientific institute of the first rank,"<sup>282</sup> by dropping "all extraneous elementary grades,

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<sup>280</sup> Scherrer left Throop to become Director of the Southwest Museum of the American Indian in Pasadena.

<sup>281</sup> Wright, *Explorer of the Universe: A Biography of George Ellery Hale*.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid. About the same time Hale was offered two extremely prestigious positions: the presidency of MIT, and at the behest of Alexander Graham Bell, Hale was offered the post of Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. However, realizing the demands on his time of both offers, Hale turned these positions down since his desire was to keep exploring with the Mount Wilson Observatory project.

and concentrating on fundamental science and engineering, and ...adequate instruction in the humanities." In that case, he would have not only his observatory but also an institution to attract students from all over the world as well as world class scientists who would also enjoy the opportunities as well as the weather of Pasadena.<sup>283</sup>

In 1907, Hale convinced the rest of the Board of Trustees to immediately follow his academic and development plan for Throop, with one of the first important additions to the curricula was Electrical Engineering. From the very beginning Hale decided, after a scientist had turned down the presidency of the Throop Institute, that perhaps businessman James A.B. Scherer would be a better choice to go out and interface with possible donors while developing plans to build each structure of the university.<sup>284</sup> Hale also convinced Throop trustee Arthur Fleming, a Canadian who had made his fortune in lumber, to donate a 22-acre campus in Pasadena to the Institute. Some of the property, as was most of Northern Los Angeles County, was planted with abundant orange groves.<sup>285</sup>

By the time that Scherer first visited Pasadena and Throop, Hale had already submitted some of his own rough concept sketches to the architectural team of Myron Hunt and Elmer Grey. Hale was already working with Hunt and Grey on the Mount Wilson Observatory and service

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<sup>283</sup> Hale later wrote an article which addressed the possibilities of MIT as well as his thoughts regarding Throop Institute, published in the Technical Quarterly, "A Plea for the Imaginative Element in Technical Education" published by MIT. (Wright, *Explorer of the Universe: A Biography of George Ellery Hale*.)

<sup>284</sup> Hale continued his boyish optimism and "transactional" way of giving a rational argument to further his cause. After his visit to MIT, Hale and his wife took a cruise which they usually did either for Hale to present a paper or to relax, or both. James Scherer, a successful businessman who had previously encouraged a donation from Andrew Carnegie, for Newberry College in South Carolina was also on the voyage, as well as Andrew Carnegie himself.

<sup>285</sup> Wright, *Explorer of the Universe: A Biography of George Ellery Hale*.

buildings to complete posthumously, the plans drawn by Hale's mentor, Chicago architect Charles Burnham.<sup>286</sup>

### **Planning the Campus**

The attention to the most minute decision or selection was regarded with the highest importance and degree of perfection by Hale to make Throop a model campus. Hale made important decisions to encourage a fellowship and discourse among the students in the park-like dormitory grounds, each oriented for a community and though they were basically equipped with the same amenities, each was given its own personality, in fountains, or artwork, and landscape. Hale's planning of Throop Institute evidences his humanistic aesthetic and a desire to present it as a discursive and restorative oasis for study, reflecting the natural beauty and community of Pasadena.<sup>287</sup>

The first building placed on the Fleming donated property was Throop Hall designed by the partnership of Myron Hunt, an MIT trained architect, accustomed to implementing basic designs on budget and minimizing costs, and Elmer Grey who, though not a trained architect, was reportedly a fine draftsman with a sensitivity for aesthetic design and contextual balance. Together, they drafted the first master plan for the Throop Institute.<sup>288</sup> Perhaps the most appealing external feature of Throop Hall was the change made to add some aesthetic detail to the otherwise plain building. Hale decided that they would change the tympanum of the building,

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<sup>286</sup> <https://digital.archives.caltech.edu/hale>

<sup>287</sup> Ibid.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid.



add columns and representations of science and technology made by Alexander Stirling Calder.<sup>289</sup>

Throop Hall was designed with poured concrete and metal rebar reinforcement to withstand the seismic activity in the area. However, after the Sylmar earthquake of 1971, the building developed a crack and it was believed then that it had to be demolished, but the Stirling Calder sculptures were saved, and later re-purposed in 1986.<sup>290</sup>

An article in the May 1986 Engineering and Science Magazine, (now known as the CALTECH Magazine) titled, "Raised Arches, or You Can Go Home Again" celebrated the 1986 return of (Alexander) Stirling Calder's Spandrels that had been removed from the raised Throop Hall to save them from destruction. Since 1971, the sculptures had lain in a Pasadena City Hall storage yard until the idea to repurpose them back on the Caltech campus was suggested by the director of the physical plant of Caltech. They are now installed in the façade of the Arnold and Mabel Beckman Laboratory of Chemical Synthesis.

According the California Art Historian Nancy Dustin Wall Moure book *Painting and Sculpture in Los Angeles 1900-1945*, published by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the sculptures are important because:

"They had the distinction of being the first 'monolithic' sculptures cast in concrete," having first been modeled in clay. They were not, however, Spanish Renaissance, but the contemporary Beaux Arts style. Moure adds, Calder's particular variation

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<sup>289</sup> Calder's father designed the statue of William Penn which is above Philadelphia City Hall. "Stirling Calder" as the son is known, sculpted the Pennsylvania monument, *The Three Rivers* personified by sculptures of three Native Americans, each representing a river. <https://digital.archives.caltech.edu/hale> and Wright. The third generation Alexander Calder is the artist famous associated with his kinetic and "static-stabile" sculptures, Sandy Calder.

"was to simplify the forms, making them seem less effete, more attuned to the vitality of the West."

In the dedication ceremony, Throop Institute President James A.B. Scherer read Stirling Calder's own description of his allegory:

"The design for the sculptural enrichment of the archways of the Throop Polytechnic Institute is an attempt to give plastic utterance to the aims and scope of the school. The motive for this expression, conceived in a free treatment of Spanish Renaissance, has been evolved after a perusal of the President's Inaugural address (Scherer), and broadly covers the whole field of human effort and intelligence under the heads: 'Nature,' Art,' 'Energy', 'Science', 'Imagination,' and 'Law'."

"Beginning with the spandrel on the left is Nature, in the guise of Pan, piping his gentle joy of life. Flanking this is Art, the Poet inscribing his solution of the riddle of life. The left spandrel of the central group represents pure Energy exerting his strength, he knows not why. Then Science, gazing and lighting his torch at the sun, which forms the central cartouche over the archway. The spandrels over the right arch are: (on the left), winged Imagination, exulting in yet unexplored possibilities, and Law with watchful preparedness guarding the ancient tablet of the law.

"The pilaster decorations between the arches have as motives the sunflower (relating to nature); a terminal bust of Minerva, protectress of the Arts; a terminal bust of Mercury presiding over Science; and on the right the emblem of the Law. Below the pilasters—a composition representing Life, Death, Eternity, under the sunflower pilaster; Hammer and Anvil below the Science pilaster; a mask below that of Art; while below the Law pilaster is an open book grasped in a hand. The cartouche on the left has been made in the form of a lyre; that in the center, of the life-giving sun, with a border of the signs of the zodiac; and on the right, a great diamond in a setting of lilies and pearls (the rare and precious things of life)." <sup>291</sup>

While planning the building of Throop Hall, Hale was also planning to construct the Washington D.C. home of the National Academy of Science. According to the memoirs of his friend, California artist Alson Clark, in the essay, *Caltech and Southern California Architecture*, Hale was extremely disappointed with the "aesthetic failure of Throop Hall" and the tension

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<sup>291</sup> "Raised Arches, or, You Can Go Home Again," *Engineering and Science Magazine* (1986), <http://calteches.library.caltech.edu/3494/1/Raised.pdf>.

between Myron Hunt and Elmer Grey. Although they were available to independently submit drawings for the other buildings of their master plan, Hale looked elsewhere for the aesthetic he desired.<sup>292</sup>

However, in a letter by Myron Hunt to Robert Millikan dated August 17, 1932, Hunt praised George Ellery Hale for his selection of A. Stirling Calder for the sculptures placed on his design, stating:

"Years ago, when Elmer Grey and I were building the original Throop building, we worked very closely with Stirling Calder, the sculptor, in connection with the Calder reliefs on the front of the building. When we were through, Mr. Calder gave us the original models for the work, and one of the full-size models for a piece of the detail. We have had these in our office ever since and have been very proud of them. Since that time Calder has come to be one of the leading sculptors of the country and Mr. Hale's selection of him has been amply justified.

We are moving now into smaller quarters in this building and just haven't room for this material. It has a certain historic and very much of an artistic value, and I'm going to have these two pieces sent to Caltech, unless you and Mr. Hale feel you don't want them, in which case I will give them to the Stickney Memorial or the Pasadena Art Institute. Do you want them? <sup>293</sup>

George Ellery Hale then found architect Bertram Goodhue, and became familiar with Goodhue's experience in church building and his aesthetic viewpoint the design of the 1915 Pan America Columbian Exposition in Balboa Park, San Diego<sup>294</sup> Hale not only engaged Goodhue to design the National Institute of Science in Washington but also, for a new master plan for

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<sup>292</sup> Gallery Baxter Art et al., *Myron Hunt, 1868-1952: The Search for a Regional Architecture* (Pasadena, California: California Institute of Technology. Baxter Art Gallery, 1984).

<sup>293</sup> <https://digital.archives.caltech.edu/hale>

<sup>294</sup> The design of Balboa Park may have recalled to Hale the aesthetic of his mentor, Charles Burnham, and Burnham's design for the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago which was such an aesthetic success.

Throop Institute, a new chemistry building and dormitories. For the aesthetic decoration of the three buildings, Goodhue employed the artist, Lee Lawrie.<sup>295</sup>

## **The Pasadena Architectural**

### **Aesthetic**

Since Hale garnered so much publicity and was so enthusiastic about his dream for a "West Coast M.I.T."<sup>296</sup> he was determined to interest business leaders who would eventually rely on such a school to educate and/or hire prospective employees. In the prologue for *Caltech's Architectural Heritage*,<sup>297</sup> Caltech President Emeritus Thomas Everhart stresses the importance of the architectural richness of the campus. He states that Caltech trustees, such as Stephen Bechtel, believe that people achieve more in a pleasant environment than they would otherwise.<sup>298</sup> Everhart went on to mention that many of the neighbors (businesses and residential) "find it a pleasant place to walk and to contemplate."<sup>299</sup>

George Hale worked with a succession of three architectural firms on the Throop Institute, resulting in two different campus plans and one revision of the second plan. Each of these firms was responsible for the major structures of Pasadena, lending it a unique palette<sup>300</sup> and artistic

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<sup>295</sup> Richard Oliver, *Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue*, vol. I, 2 vols., *American Monograph Series* (New York: Architectural History Foundation, 1983).

<sup>296</sup> The Pasadena Library and the Historic Archives center maintain ephemera related to Hale's accomplishments socially in the city.

<sup>297</sup> Wyllie.

<sup>298</sup> Founded in 1898 Bechtel is a global American engineering, construction, procurement and project management company and it is the largest construction company in the United States and the eleventh largest privately owned American company.

<sup>299</sup> Wyllie.

<sup>300</sup> Beige on beige, with flourishes.

aesthetic. In addition, there were individual architects who were hired directly by donors for a specific building, for example, Greene and Greene<sup>301</sup> who built the Caltech Student Union.

In this subchapter, I define the stylistic shifts and contributions of the major architects selected to design and build on the Institute campuses who influenced the selective creation of the Mission, Romanesque, Prairie School, Tudor, Gothic, Mediterranean, Spanish, Mexican, Moorish and Mid century Modern as the aesthetic, often described as simply "California Style," according to their influence received and given to the balance of architecture in the State of California.

The team of Myron Hunt (MIT Architecture) and Elmer Grey designed the initial plan for the Throop Institute campus. This team was responsible for the design of many extant Pasadena buildings including Pasadena Hall (later Throop Hall)<sup>302</sup> at Throop Institute, the Valley Hunt Club, the Mt Wilson Observatory (design by Burnham), Polytechnical school (the first non-profit independent school in southern California founded in 1907, still extant, but was severed from Throop Institute by Hale) the Pasadena Library, the Huntington Residence and Library, the Huntington Hospital, the Ambassador Hotel, the Hollywood Bowl and the Rose Bowl.

Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue first apprenticed in architecture by working on the design of St. Patrick's Cathedral, as well as other churches and libraries on the east coast in the late gothic

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<sup>301</sup> Greene and Greene are famous for the building of Pasadena Gamble House, inventing American Craftsman style incorporating a Japanese aesthetic.

<sup>302</sup> Subsequently taken down after the Sylmar earthquake, the decorative pediments reserved and repurposed on the Beckman Laboratory in 1986. Caltech.

style.<sup>303</sup> Hale probably noticed Goodhue's work from the Rockefeller Chapel at the University of Chicago. In California, Goodhue designed the 1901 Pan American Exposition in Balboa Park.<sup>304</sup> Hale tasked Goodhue to redesign the master plan, to align new science buildings around the Throop building as that was to remain central focal point of the campus. Goodhue designed the interior of building that is now known as the Gates Chemistry Laboratory, while Elmer Grey remained the main architect of the building (1916.) Goodhue brought an aesthetic used in churches, the application of cast stone to the exteriors and small fountains to elevate the "Spanish" character of the buildings, otherwise finished flat in stucco.

Goodhue designed Cuthbertson Hall for performing arts, (now demolished.) In designing the science buildings, Goodhue adopted a Moorish/Romanesque aesthetic, which maximized the ability to build large "box" type buildings but to additionally apply, in further exterior embellishment, philosophically<sup>305</sup> resonant decorative design applications by Calder, and other artists. While Goodhue was working on the design of the other Institute Science buildings, he was also tasked by George Ellery Hale to design the new home of the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C. Goodhue's contribution to both the Institute and the NAS projects aesthetically unites these two buildings, with complimentary design elements reflected in the exteriors as well as interiors. World War I and the Spanish Influenza pandemic slowed the

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<sup>303</sup> Goodhue won a design contest and subsequently designed St. Matthew's Church in Dallas, Tx. as his first major undertaking.

<sup>304</sup> Hale's friend and advisor Daniel Burnham came to notoriety with his design of the "White City" which had at least one building for all religious philosophies, united.

<sup>305</sup> These applications embraced the Greek and Roman mythology of the sciences Nature, Art, Energy, Science, Imagination, and Law. These motifs were eventually applied as a feature to the Beckman Laboratory of Chemical Synthesis at Caltech.

progress at Throop Institute. In fact, students who were not stricken with the flu were conducting field exercises in ready for possible mobilization.<sup>306</sup>

Goodhue also designed the Bridge Laboratory of Physics that was built between 1922 and 1924. It was relocated on the plan because it became apparent that the increasing traffic in the original area would have disturbed testing. The exterior design takes the "operational lack" of windows and fills it with a diaper-quilted design, highlighted by 18 diamond design "windows" on one side and philosophical medallions on the other side, with motifs representing on one side the "Compton effect" on one side and the structure of the carbon atom on the other.<sup>307</sup> In 1924, Bertram Goodhue died unexpectedly, forcing Hale to select a new architect. Based on a recommendation made by Throop Humanities Professor and Scripps College Trustee, Dr. William B. Munro, Hale chose Gordon B. Kaufman, who had just designed dormitories for the women's college in Claremont, California.

Gordon B. Kaufman was an architect who previously designed the most monumental of residences in Beverly Hills, the Doheny Mansion, now known as the Greystone Mansion. Kaufman took the plan for the Caltech Athenaeum previously designed by Goodhue and turned it on its axis so that the arcaded façade that Goodhue designed to face busy Hill Street faced inward to the campus instead. The entry way from an automobile entrance is now shielded by trees and public access to the building is gained from the "carriage entrance." This is considered the "town" side. Access to the campus or "gown" side is from inside the Athenaeum and through

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<sup>306</sup> Four students died of the Spanish influenza pandemic.

<sup>307</sup> Wyllie.

the patio. The Mediterranean style exterior is stately and the entrance with two staircases leading to a landing and the pediment above the double doors is carved with the word Athenaeum and the opening date in Roman Numerals. The interior resembles the quiet elegance of the interior of the London Athenaeum in Pall Mall, and the overall effect is meant to suggest a university club. There are touches of elegance in the ceiling of the main dining room painted by Giovanni Battista Smeraldi<sup>308</sup> The coffered ceilings in the main lobby and the trustees room present high decorated ceilings that impart an elegance to the otherwise spartan interior. There were originally thirty rooms planned, but the rooms were combined doubles and three suites were created of visiting dignitaries. Most of the décor was donated from various sources, including a large Persian room rug from the Huntington estate. When the Caltech Athenaeum was opened in 1930 to celebrate the arrival of Albert Einstein, it appeared on the cover of Architectural Digest in 1931.<sup>309</sup>

The aesthetics of the campus reflect Hale's interest in the building of the City of Pasadena as well as his young adulthood working with his father and Daniel Burnham. At that time in fact, Hale became involved with the Pasadena City Beautiful Project, and he suggested that a competition for architects be conducted to design some of the central features such as Pasadena City Hall, the Central Library and the Civic Auditorium. Ultimately, Hale was the chair of the deciding jury. His early role and his service in establishing the overarching aesthetic of the City of Pasadena is still recognized by the dedication of the Pasadena Office of the City Planning as

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<sup>308</sup> Smeraldi worked on many of Kaufman's Los Angeles projects such as the Biltmore Hotel and Scripps college.

<sup>309</sup> <https://archive.architecturaldigest.com/article/1931/3/atheneum-california-institute-of-technology-pasadena-gordon-b-kaufmann-architect>



the George Ellery Hale building within the City Hall complex. Hale, like the Institute founder, Amos Throop, who built his (original) Throop Universal Unitarian Church<sup>310</sup> in the popular late gothic style of architecture,<sup>311</sup> concentrated on making Pasadena reflective of the new turn toward romantic aestheticism in architecture promoted in the late nineteenth century.<sup>312</sup>

### **Hale's Architectural, Aesthetic, and Social Agency**

Hale was intent on bringing more faculty, and realized that he needed to raise money for specific buildings. Hale pitched the idea to two brothers who made their fortunes in lumber while construction was booming. The Gates brothers lent their name and their funds to construct the chemical laboratory west and north of Throop Hall.

Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, who was known as an excellent sketcher, did not, because of the burden of the cost to his family, have a university degree in architecture. Goodhue apprenticed on St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York and the Rockefeller Chapel at the University of Chicago. Upon winning a competition, Goodhue designed St. Matthew's Church in Dallas as his first professional project and became quite popular traveling from his office in New York to California where he eventually built his second home in Montecito.<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> The original Throop Universal Unitarian Church (1890) fell victim to highway expansion and the 710 freeway replaced the original Church. The "new" Throop Unitarian Universalist Church was built in 1922, also in the Gothic revival style.

<sup>311</sup> This building was later demolished and a similar gothic style church was built on Los Robles Blvd within "Old Town Pasadena". (Pasadena Historical Society and Pasadena Museum of History, book "Old Town Pasadena" published by the Historical Society.

<sup>312</sup> Wylie, Romy. *Caltech's Architectural Heritage, From Spanish Tile to Modern Stone*, South Pasadena: Balcony Press, 2000.

<sup>313</sup> Wylie, Romy. *Bertram Goodhue: His Life and Residential Architecture*, W.W. Norton and Company: New York, 2007

George Ellery Hale seemed (after Burnham) to have found an aesthetic kindred spirit in Goodhue and they worked closely together on a new master plan for the developing Throop Institute, including the Physics Building, Dabney Hall as well as his own Hale Solar Laboratory on Holladay Street in Pasadena. They planned many other projects at Caltech, including the

Architect Bertram Goodhue found the balance for Throop Hall that would become a central square, prevalent in European architecture, (purposely patterned on El Escorial in Madrid).<sup>314</sup> Hale advised Goodhue, who was working with Elmer Grey to implement the exterior design, and that he preferred the ornamentation of the churriguera style (named in Spain for architect Jose Benito de Churriguera (1665-1725)).

Eventually, George Ellery Hale was able to obtain funding for a complex of three buildings from Dr. Norman Bridge, President of the Throop Board of Trustees, who previously taught Medicine in Chicago, before moving to California and finding success in the oil business.

Hale's aesthetic for making the building beautiful as well as functional is again demonstrated in the application of Goodhue's thoughtful addition of a resonant design to an otherwise very plain building. This design is further explained by author Romy Wyllie in Caltech's Architectural Heritage:

"The Bridge Laboratory of Physics has Tower Unit 'East Bridge' which uses exterior medallion reliefs panels by Goodhue to represent the 'components of all matter: Water, Fire, Air and Earth described by Greek Philosophers Empedocles and Heraclitus.' On the 'West bridge' there are other medallions, such as one to illustrate the 'Compton effect which is the scattering effect of electrons, and the other medallion illustrates the design of the carbon atom.' 'On one side of the tower of East Bridge is a plain wall enlivened with 18 elongated quatrefoil-shaped windows

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<sup>314</sup> <https://digital.archives.caltech.edu/hale>

set like jewels into an overall repetitive design called a 'diaper design' and is reflective of the Moorish style and the pattern is repeated on the other side, so that the building would relate better to the Memorial building" <sup>315</sup>

Everywhere on the campus there is a devotion not only to functionality but to the aesthetic of creating a place of contemplative study.

An artistic detail resonant with this laboratory are the relief sculptures of distillation flasks under the windows that are covered with a "mashrabiya" grills in the Muslim aesthetic, providing both fresh air to the building and privacy. There are wonderful, such nuanced and decorative surprises that elevate an otherwise universal monochromatic beige tone, in a thoughtful, thematic context for the serious, technological campus. Elsewhere near the Bridge Laboratory, there are drinking fountains easily located from their brightly colored faience California tiles on the surrounding backsplashes of the wall niches in the Spanish colonial taste. There are other functional and decorative instances, such as a lecture hall that has a motorized skylight was "built by students under the direction of Earnest Watson, who initiated a lecture series which continues and still bears his name today. In the sub-basement of the building two showers and a dressing room were installed for scientists seeking a physical break to play tennis during the day." <sup>316</sup>

Hale, wishing to keep Millikan at the Institute, developed a plan to build a high voltage laboratory with the aid of the Southern California Edison Company which would fund the building in exchange for access to use the facilities. This plan was supported by the two of the

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<sup>315</sup>Wyllie. 2000.

<sup>316</sup> <https://digital.archives.caltech.edu/hale>

Institute trustees, both of whom were directors of Edison. As far as the building specification were concerned, Millikan wrote to Hale with specifications to ensure that the building would withstand the high voltage use anticipated. Since the resulting building would prohibit the use of windows, Goodhue again utilized a decorative geometric pattern in the stone to enhance an otherwise plain-box solid structure. The application of glass tiles in the stone in a diamond pattern transformed an otherwise concrete mausoleum-type structure into an exotic, sparkling canvas in the Pasadena sunshine. Over the entry door, Goodhue's favorite artist, Lee Lawrie, created a sculpture of a man and a woman on either side of the door, each holding a cable and pulling to create electricity. This seemed to be a great humanist idea, the concept of birth and electricity, until an objection was made, and was changed, since no women were actually admitted to the Institute for study, to a more chauvinistic design, the mirror image of a single male.<sup>317</sup>

### **A Philosophy and Plan for the Twentieth Century Athenaeum**

George Ellery Hale was aware that, too often, researchers tended to work in isolation. For that reason, he envisioned the Athenaeum as a site of convergence that would welcome like-minded scholars from all over the world to the California Institute of Technology to share and collaborate for the good of mankind. Hale stated:

"Greater worth came from astronomical data and observations shared among the world fraternity of scientists rather than from isolated research with astronomers

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<sup>317</sup> Wyllie.2000

pursuing their own interests changed the manner in which scientific research was conducted from isolation to international collaboration."<sup>318</sup>

Hale's next project was his long held vision of a social gathering place for the great thinkers of Caltech and its associated institutions. He modeled this idea philosophically on the London Athenaeum, as he expected Caltech's members to be "distinguished" in Arts, Literature, Science or public service.<sup>319</sup> Hale envisioned a plan to unite Caltech and its Athenaeum with the Huntington Library and Museum, as a discursive interdisciplinary genius hub in Southern California.<sup>320</sup>

Hale's memorandum in the Caltech Archives defines his rationale:

"There is in Southern California the nucleus of a group of men of intellectual power and achievement as comprehensive and important as exists in any center in this country."

This document further states the purpose of the Athenaeum: "It should be a place for principal investigators in a variety of disciplines to discuss their work with each other as well as with graduate students; for academics to communicate with civic leaders; for staff to live; and for members of the community to spend leisure hours in a comfortable library or club room. Special dinners or regular gatherings could be held, "to hear discussions on topics of interest in science and art, literature, history and government by those best prepared to tell of the fascinating developments in those fields." <sup>321</sup>

To fund the Athenaeum, Hale sought the philanthropy of Balch, an electrical engineering graduate from Cornell who served as the President of the Caltech Board of Trustees from 1933

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<sup>318</sup> George Ellery Hale, "National Academies and the Progress of Research," *Science* 38, no. 985 (1913), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1639764>.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid.

<sup>320</sup> Walter S Adams, "Biographical Memoir: George Ellery Hale," *American Academy of Sciences: Biographical Memoirs* XXI, no. V (1939).

<sup>321</sup> Ibid.

till his death, and had founded the independent support group for Caltech, the Caltech Associates. He contributed one million dollars toward the Geological Science Building on campus, and in 1929, just prior to the stock market crash, he donated stock to fund the Athenaeum. The Athenaeum had only collected \$500,000 toward realization of this project and fortunately they converted Balch's stock to cash just days before the crash.

The Hale papers reveal that around 1927<sup>322</sup> an original draft of a memoranda titled *ATHENAEUM* announced the creation of the first Athenaeum to be built in the twentieth century, on the California Institute of Technology campus. Hale's statement of purpose announces that this is a project for the betterment of the community. It states:

#### **PURPOSE**

"The purpose of the Athenaeum is to promote social intercourse among the lovers of science, literature and art, by creating a center of intellectual and social life, more particularly for persons connected with the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, the Mount Wilson Observatory of the Carnegie Institute of Washington, and the California Institute of Technology."

Hale presents here in this memorandum his specific guideline for membership in the Athenaeum:

#### **ATHENAEUM**

Membership is open to persons associated with the teaching, research, or executive staffs of the three institutions above mentioned. The following groups of persons are eligible for membership:

1. Members of the governing bodies of one or more of the above three institutions
2. Those persons who hold high executive positions on the administrative staffs of one of the three institutions.

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<sup>322</sup> This date is the death of Henry Huntington and Huntington previously formed a corporation that bore the name of the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery placing George Ellery Hale on its Board of Directors.

3. Members of the faculty of the California Institute.
4. Those persons who hold high executive positions on the administrative staffs of one or more of the three institutions.
5. Research Associates and visiting professors temporarily associated with any of the three institutions.
6. Graduate students who have been admitted to candidacy for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the California Institute.
7. The California Institute Associates.<sup>323</sup>
8. Individuals whose status is deemed equivalent to one of the above classifications.<sup>324</sup>

Hale was key to all development and participation of the Athenaeum, establishing it as a conduit between Caltech, the Mount Wilson Observatory, the greater Los Angeles County business community, the residents of Pasadena and San Marino, and the Huntington Library and Museum.

Hale and his circle were originally members of the (still extant) business circle, The California Club in Los Angeles, where businessmen would share the halls with faculty and administrators.<sup>325</sup> Hale's papers reflect that he had in mind that the Caltech Athenaeum would join in the discursive circle as a preeminent club similar to the many intellectual circle clubs where he had been hosted in America and in Europe. He even caused letters to be written to the international science societies announcing the new Pasadena Athenaeum and requesting a copy of their seal/logo to be painted in a place of honor in the Caltech Trustees Meeting room within the Athenaeum. This would assert that the Caltech center would stand in the company with the

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<sup>323</sup> The Associates are a paid membership of community members not directly affiliated with Caltech or its network.

<sup>324</sup> Caltech archives: George Ellery Hale Papers, HaleGE. California Institute of Technology Archives and Special Collections., searched on 1.15.2021.

<sup>325</sup> According to the California Club, which is still a private social club, Caltech faculty departed after the founding of the Caltech Athenaeum. Re Telecall on 1.15.21.

Accademia dei Lincei, Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, the Alexandrian School, the Royal Society, and other scientific institutions. The Accademia dei Lincei is the oldest scientific academy and Library of its kind. In the seventeenth century, Copernicus and Galileo were members. Giordano Bruno was also a member, however, he suffered the consequences of his controversial belief such as that the solar system exists and that the universe is infinite.<sup>326</sup> The Accademia today is administered by the Italian Government and it meets to discuss questions of science predominately, but also is concerned with social issues, and the arts. During the 2020 pandemic they meet to discuss such as health and public agency for questions such as masks, quarantine, etc. In the twenty-first century the Accademia is accessible on the internet in real time participatory broadcasts on YouTube. It has hundreds of members internationally and they come together to discuss concerns of mutual concern in the Palazzo Corsini, their historic home, a short walk to the Vatican. Hale solicited the "stemma" or symbology of other such prestigious scientific societies where he often participated as a lecturer. The list of the stemma he requested were sister facilities into which learned society sisterhood the Caltech Athenaeum would stand as another discursive international partner.

The eventual cornerstone of this Institute, following the predecessor institutions of Redwood and Boston, would be an Athenaeum that would serve the Institute as an outreach center, first to the public and private sectors of Pasadena for raising development contribution resources and as a meeting place to include local arts groups,<sup>327</sup> and business leaders. Hale's vision for the

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<sup>326</sup> Bruno was condemned to death by the Inquisition, and publicly burned alive in the *Campo dei Fiori* (Flower Market) in Rome.

<sup>327</sup> Hale was a founder of the Pasadena Art Club.



Athenaeum was that of a faculty and advanced student center where business and community members could be invited to engage themselves, as well as raise funding for Institute programs and buildings by business development, private patronages with naming rights, or both.

### **Developing the Athenaeum**

Hale employed the Athenaeum to attract an international cadre of Nobel laureate scientists to Caltech to work with students. Hale enticed his former colleagues to come to Pasadena to collaborate with him. In 1919, Nobel Laureate for Chemistry Arthur Amos Noyes left his position at MIT to lead the new Chemistry Division at Throop College. He was followed by Nobel Laureate for Physics Robert Andrew Millikan for three months each year, providing public lectures. In 1920, Millikan decided to make permanent his move to join Hale and Noyes, after a building for Physics had been funded by Throop Trustee, Dr. Norman Bridge.<sup>328</sup>

In 1920, A.B. Scherer left Throop Institute to become director of the nearby Southwest Museum of the American Indian, and Robert Millikan became Chief Executive Officer of the Institute. After the end of the World War, the Board of Trustees of Throop Institute of Technology voted to change the name, perhaps to better identify its position to the international world, to the California Institute of Technology.<sup>329</sup>

Hale also invited other international scientists, including Albert Einstein, to live there while on faculty. Caltech archives reveal that the nominal President of the Institute, Robert Millikan,

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<sup>328</sup> Wyllie.

<sup>329</sup> <https://digital.archives.caltech.edu/hale>

hosted Einstein at the Institute in order to excite interest and for the development of funding. In turn, Einstein took advantage of George Hale's assistance at the Mt Wilson Observatory to help proving his Theory of Relativity.<sup>330</sup>

Hale also brought Theodore van Karman and seismologist Beno Gutenberg to Pasadena to collaborate with and mentor Caltech student Charles Richter. Gutenberg worked with Richter to help him develop the earthquake magnitude scale that now bears Richter's name. Hale championed the idea that scholars should not work entirely in isolation but should collaborate and share their ideas.<sup>331</sup>

Once the major Science and Technology Buildings were in place, Hale looked to the project which would bring international scholars as well as the local titans of industry (and their funding) to the Institute to meet, discuss and plan, in a relaxed setting, the future of the Institute, which he named the Caltech Athenaeum. The University handbook, printed in 1931 and concurrent with the Athenaeum's opening, reiterated the founding philosophic frame of the Athenaeum and its purpose.

The concept of the Athenaeum was quite familiar to George Ellery Hale. Hale's archives reveal that he had visited the London Athenaeum and appreciated the idea of a fraternity of scholars and highly cultured and talented people from all over the world to bring their ideas and knowledge to share. Moreover, Hale's aim was that they be made comfortable with rooms to relax and read, to sleep and a place to share meals, before after and during scientific and

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<sup>330</sup> Judith Goldstein, "Einstein at Caltech," *Engineering and Science* (1979).23

<sup>331</sup> Ibid.

"humanist" discussions of common interests. The Athenaeum was always thought of by Hale in the master plan of the Institute campus.<sup>332</sup> Hale and the other scholars visited the London Athenaeum founded by Sir Walter Scott and Sir Thomas Moore in 1824.

For Hale it represented the venue where "Town" (meaning the "non-academic") visitors enter the Institute from off campus, and the professors and graduate students entered at "Gown" from the patio, near access to dormitories and hidden from the ordinary distractions of public access.

Hale stated in his letter to Henry E. Huntington:

"There is in Southern California the nucleus of a group of men of intellectual power and achievement as comprehensive and important as exists perhaps in any center of this country." "... It should be a place for principal investigators in a variety of disciplines to discuss their work with each other as well as with graduate students; for academics to communicate with civic leaders; for staff to live; and for members of the community to spend their leisure hours in a comfortable library or club room." "Special dinners or regular gatherings could be held, 'to hear discussions on topics of interest in science and art, literature, history and government by those best prepared to tell of the fascinating developments in those fields.'" <sup>333</sup>

Originally, the planned site of the Athenaeum resided within the campus. However, in his revision of the master plan, Bertram Goodhue moved it to the edge of the campus on Hill Street, where visitors would be able to visit the Athenaeum but were physically restricted from uninvited access to the remainder of the campus. This placement of the Athenaeum also connects it geographically as the closest access point to the Huntington Library, just an easy walk away in

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<sup>332</sup> Adams

<sup>333</sup> <https://digital.archives.caltech.edu/hale>

a lovely, tree lined, upscale residential community just past Hale's personal solar laboratory<sup>334</sup> on Holladay Rd in San Marino, on land he purchased directly from Huntington.

Goodhue's original sketches for the Athenaeum were re-examined after his unexpected death and rather than revise them, Hale suggested to the Executive Council that they should work with architect Gordon Bernie Kaufman, whose design aesthetic favored a simpler, Mediterranean aesthetic.

Kaufmann re-oriented the site of the Athenaeum so that the "gown" entrance for faculty and graduate students would embrace the campus, unseen from the street, with the entrance cutting through a large 60' square west patio. Today, in Spring/Summer/Fall, the west pavilion functions for member wedding receptions as well as Friday night lawn parties and buffets outside. The "town" entrance is a discrete car entry via a "porte-cochere" and the "Greco-Roman-Moorish" entrance design features Corinthian style columns, quatrefoil screening elements in the Moorish taste, and a simple beamed ceiling in the Italian taste, similar to the beam ceiling of the Accademia Lincei at the Palazzo Corsini in Trastevere, Rome. The roof is terracotta tile, similar in material and design to Palazzo Corsini, also.<sup>335</sup>

There is a double, divided stairway leading to the landing and the main "town" entry door and in a pediment over the entry door is a semi-circular tympanum with the word

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<sup>334</sup> Located in a residential neighborhood, the Hale Solar Laboratory, with its replication from a Theban tomb of Akhnaton by Berlin born, NY artist Lee Lawrie is a U.S National Monument, is not visible from the street as the landscaping has been arranged as a high hedge wall. Hale traveled with his colleague from the University of Chicago to Egypt, and apparently this motif resonated with personal interest in solar research.

<sup>335</sup> I have noted in my research that Hale's artistic aesthetic suggesting other monumental edifices or motif is usually resonant to his aesthetic and his work, and is always intentional.

ATHENAEVM incised in stone in the Roman style and the year of founding within the semi-circle: AD above MCMXXX. The "gown" entrance to the west is unmarked.<sup>336</sup>

It is famously decorated with lights and elegant roping with greenery at Christmas. The style of the building is suggestive of an Italian palazzo, a suggestion which is further made by the landscaping by Lucille Yoch, a landscape designer who "studied and visited the great gardens of Europe, landscaping in Italy and the finest residences of Los Angeles and Beverly Hills of movie moguls such as David O. Selznick, for whom she also designed the movie landscaping of "Tara" for the epic, *Gone with the Wind*. The overall effect changed the abandoned orange grove to an idyllic garden and her styling set a "new and effortless Mediterranean refreshing respite which recalls a meeting place in an ancient classic space."<sup>337</sup>

While the landscaping reflects a relaxed Italian palazzo, the interior of the Athenaeum reflects an effort for utility, the lounges and library have multiple applications, as well as the exterior patio, well entering this Athenaeum into the context of other academic meeting spaces experienced in Europe. Similar to the London Athenaeum, the Caltech Athenaeum offers twenty-three bedrooms as well as a corridor of four independent suites. Each of the bedrooms is simply but classically decorated.

The main dining room which is available to all Athenaeum members and is a "business attire," waiter service, sometimes a "themed" buffet style, which presents a more fun opportunity

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<sup>336</sup> The effect is so remarkable that the outdoor entrance balcony is generally used as the "formal" focal point for photographs featuring faculty members and visiting dignitaries as well as students

<sup>337</sup> Yoch.

to kibitz while waiting for sushi or shrimp refills with scholars from all over the world.<sup>338</sup> The room is now even more famously recognized for its formal portrait of the three Founders, George Ellery Hale, Robert Millikan and Arthur Amos Noyes by Texas native artist, Seymour Thomas.

The ceiling of the Athenaeum main dining room is crowned with beams, decorated with motif paintings by Giovanni Smeraldi.<sup>339</sup> Great consideration was made by Hale to connect this Athenaeum to other academic clubs by an inclusion of a "Hall of the Associates" by a display of their seals in this formal meeting room. Hale was not only the President of the National Academy of Science of the United States in Washington, D.C., but he was appointed to membership in each of the academies displayed by their seal in this room. Although the Athenaeum opened in 1930, the official opening was held until the arrival of Albert Einstein in 1931 with his second wife, Elsa.<sup>340</sup>

Ultimately, there are 25 American and International institutions represented in the painted seals around the walls of the room which can be read from below. There is also a framed Guide to the Seals available in the room. The ceiling in this room is also enriched with the squares with gold rosette centers, chandeliers and a Flemish tapestry. There is a baby grand piano in this room since it is often used for dining.

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<sup>338</sup> A fast-serve Rathskeller inaugurated in 2019 in the Athenaeum basement for members to obtain an informal drink and meal.

<sup>339</sup> Smeraldi was trained in decorative painting and worked at the Vatican in Rome. (Wylie, 2000) and [m.museivaticani.va](http://m.museivaticani.va)

<sup>340</sup> Hale archives available from Caltech and also the online archive of California: [oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13](http://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13) (for complete record see also see: [digital.archives.caltech.edu/hale](http://digital.archives.caltech.edu/hale). California Institute of Technology Archives and Special Collections)

On October 14, 1930, Professor George Ellery Hale received a notification from Professor William B Munro,<sup>341</sup> the Secretary of the Athenaeum, advising Hale that, "By vote of the Governing Board, you have been invited to become a member of the Athenaeum." Professor William Bennett Munro's portrait, also by Seymour Thomas, hangs in lounge of Caltech's Dabney Hall of Humanities. Munro, born in Canada, studied law at Edinburgh, then decided on study Government and Civic affairs at Harvard, and was awarded a doctorate. Munro taught writing, government and civics at Williams College before returning to Harvard. Most of Munro's teaching career was spent at Harvard, and he would winter in Pasadena with his in-laws, until both he and Millikan were invited to teach at the California Institute. He was on the Board of Trustees for the Scripps College of Women and he suggested to Hale, after the death of the Athenaeum architect Goodhue, that Hale hire the Scripps architect Gordon Kaufman to finish building the Athenaeum and the student dormitories. Munro was named Director, as he was a natural to present lectures to dignitaries and possible donors at the Athenaeum

There was also an intent, initiated by Hale, that the Institute would include "An appreciation of all side of human activity: History, Literature, Art, Economics, the nature sciences, such as a broadly educated scientist or engineer should possess." In the fall of 1928, the Dabney Hall of Humanities was created upon the donation of an endowment from the Dabney Family and others totaling approximately \$400,000. This building was designed by Bertram Goodhue and has

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<sup>341</sup> Munro was a professor of English literature. He was able to present "public" lectures that were enjoyable by members and their guests. However, he is one of the names to be removed from Caltech public buildings due to the "Eugenics controversy announced by Caltech on January 15, 2021." (Los Angeles Times) Also see Caltech archives, Munro.

recently been renovated while keeping as much of the original building and fixtures as possible<sup>342</sup>

Additional Caltech Athenaeum members are the *Friends of the Athenaeum* Group and pay a yearly donation of five thousand dollars for member access to the facility and programs. The Athenaeum is rented out for special events such as weddings, and holiday parties. One of these groups is the Pasadena Art Association which was originally invited by George Ellery Hale and who still have regular meetings and events there.<sup>343</sup> Even tea at The Athenaeum is served on an array of donated fine porcelain. The Athenaeum was reproduced quite faithfully to the original, and is now widely recognized all around the world by the portraits of Hale Milliken and Noyes. The Athenaeum is made available to Pasadena Societies for meetings and lectures, such as the Pasadena Art Society and the California Club.

On February 13, 2019 Caltech announced the launch of a new research institute for the History of Science and Technology with the Huntington Library. Inasmuch as George Ellery Hale developed a relationship with Henry Huntington which led to the architectural design and construction of the Huntington Library and its dedication as a Research Institute in close proximity to the Caltech Athenaeum, this is a very natural collaboration, and the fulfillment of Hale's vision.<sup>344</sup> Although not contiguous, and not under the same management, the

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<sup>342</sup> Professor Monroe also raised an additional \$750,000. For Humanities programs from Anonymous donors. <https://digital.archives.caltech.edu/hale>

<sup>343</sup> As a result of a wedding scene on the popular television program "Big Bang Theory" the Athenaeum has become a sought after location, receiving international interest. The loggia of the Athenaeum has a remarkable view of the campus and is well appointed in graceful furnishings.

<sup>344</sup> Unfortunately, there is absolutely no recognition of George Ellery Hale's contributions to the Henry Huntington Library which "coincidentally" also celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. See Adams.



Huntington<sup>345</sup> now contains one the largest History of Science Collection in the World, the Dibner Hall of History of Science.<sup>346</sup> Huntington always collected scientific papers of interest to him. In fact, Hale's papers from the Mt Wilson Observatory are found not at Caltech but in the Huntington Library.

By the end of his life, Henry Huntington had amassed an important library of art and history, British Literature and early manuscripts. He had also amassed a collection of books and manuscripts pursuant to the history of science, which are available for use of Huntington Library vetted readers as well as Caltech students, and qualified scholars. The History of Science Dibner Institute which consists of models pertaining to the History of Science collected by Dibner as well as the Burndy Library of the History of Science and Technology were moved in part to the Smithsonian from its original home at MIT.<sup>347</sup> This collection was formerly at MIT however, when the building needed to be razed, and a percentage of the books and models were presented to the Smithsonian Museum of American History and the balance of the models and the library were donated for research at the Huntington Library.

### **Henry Huntington's Legacy**

George Ellery Hale was not only a brilliant astrophysicist, but equally important, he also a consummate humanist with an extraordinary business sense. Hale's correspondence with Henry

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<sup>345</sup> The Huntington campus resembles a long, closed, rectangular complex with several themed extraordinary botanical gardens throughout.

<sup>346</sup> The Dibner Collection was formerly part of Harvard University

<sup>347</sup> Dibner invented the solderless connector and amassed a fortune which he invested in the collection of materials to teach others the history of science (Huntington Library archives: <https://www.huntington.org/research>)

Huntington, the purchase of the property from Huntington for his personal Pasadena Solar Laboratory next to the Huntington, and his kindness to Mrs. Arabella Huntington and his assistance to her son Archer were the acts of a brilliant humanist as well as a born negotiator. Hale had a deep understanding of people, and the motivational factors he could appeal to in order to see *his* plans to fruition. In view of my research, the only training in this area he might have received was the mentorship and kindness displayed toward him by Daniel Burnham. George Ellery Hale's genius circle was as multi-faceted as he. His closest friends were Nobel laureates, and his aesthetic side was decidedly a cadre of the best talents of architecture and art. He used this artistic "genius" circle on several of his projects. he tended to be loyal and kept them occupied working together.

Hale's humanist and detailed approach to architecture privileges art as an outward expression of Science and Technology, as well as lending gravitas to the structural significance. We recognize this from his detailed letters between Henry Huntington regarding his proposed Library of the History of Science at Huntington's estate in which he recommends the style the building should take (the original Bibliotheca Alexandrina)<sup>348</sup> and the specific type of marble, contrasting it with that less attractive, cheaper material used on the British Museum.<sup>349</sup> A review of the original hand-written letter drafts and notes by Hale in the Caltech archives suggests that Hale was endeavoring to maintain a cogent record of all of his correspondence. What is actually

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<sup>348</sup> An Egyptophile, Hale made this specific assertion regarding the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in his letter to Huntington with a very specific recommendation on the materials, Hale had already consulted with a builder for specific costs projections and suggested Pentelic marble in this extensive letter to Huntington. (Caltech.edu/archives/gehale)

<sup>349</sup> <https://digital.archives.caltech.edu/hale> (all correspondence and drafts of Hale found here, including the American Academy of Science papers)

revealed however, is a careful, "master-class" on private development and project planning.<sup>350</sup> Most of the drafts of Hale's letters, held in the Caltech Archives, reflect heavy editing by Hale with deletions and additions to the draft which suggest the serious manner in which Hale treated his correspondence, especially in connection with donors.

Hale recalled in his personal notes an unexpected first meeting with Henry Huntington at the base of Mount Wilson as he was intending to ascend. Another time, Hale and Huntington were "coincidentally" seated next to each other at a dinner party and Hale seized the opportunity to strike up a conversation with Huntington about his interest in art and books. Hale first suggested the founding of a Pasadena Arts Association and Huntington agreed to the plan. Hale then set about having all of the paperwork for the Pasadena Arts association prepared and wrote Huntington to that effect and was interested in Huntington's collection of science books, especially his affinity for collecting the original manuscript autobiographies of Benjamin Franklin.<sup>351</sup> The archival drafts also reveal how Hale was socially savvy and able to leverage his knowledge in the "Humanities" to engage conversation. On one occasion, Mrs. Arabella Huntington mentioned to Hale that her son, Archer Milton Huntington was a Hispanophile, who lived in New York.<sup>352</sup>

In a letter dated February 14, 1914, Hale first wrote to Arabella Huntington acknowledging her son's study and explained his role of Foreign Secretary of the National Academy of Sciences.

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<sup>350</sup> Ibid.

<sup>351</sup> Franklin wrote many individual books, similar in this scheme to Alexander Hamilton.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid.

Hale stated that he was tasked by the Academy to compile "A special study of the foreign academic relations of the United States."

"Up until this time I have written a series of articles primarily devoted to the National Academy focused on physical and natural science" Hale acknowledges that the National Academy also has member artists, and he wishes to bring to her attention Napoleon's remarks concerning, "The Work of European Academies" which gives Napoleon's opinion of the value to a nation of scholarship and research. Hale stated that although he learned that her son was acknowledged internationally, attention to his achievement should also be recognized in the United States. Hale further explained that acknowledgement of all international awards is significant because according to an acknowledged standard of intellectual achievement, the recognition by other countries indicates an unbiased measure. Hale requested a copy of Archer's work and explained that "A student of physical science is handicapped by the limitations of his library and is compelled to seek assistance when he strays far from his own field of research."<sup>353</sup>

On April 15, 1914, Hale, (evidently visiting New York) received a note from a secretary for Mr. and Mrs. Huntington relating that they have "returned" and Mrs. Huntington spoke with her son about meeting him in New York. An invitation was extended to Hale to meet with Archer Huntington at his New York Office the following day so that Hale could tour the Hispanic Museum as Archer was sailing for Europe that weekend.<sup>354</sup>

On April 17, 1914, he wrote to Henry Huntington from New York, concerning about his visit with Archer Huntington, that Huntington intended to "To make both your books and pictures ultimately available for the public benefit." Hale then proceeded to explain why he considered Huntington's decision a great boon, focusing on the absence of such collection in

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<sup>353</sup> Ibid.

<sup>354</sup> Archer Huntington was married to sculptor, Anna Hyatt Huntington

southern California and congratulated Huntington on the usefulness and prominence the collection would go on to have with visitors globally.<sup>355</sup> Hale then states:

"Dr. Carter who is the Director of the American Academy of Art in Rome, recently said that in his opinion we are soon to experience a great development in art in the United States which will move eastward, from California. I believe our climate and sunshine, and the close resemblance of the topography to that of Greece, are in favor of such a view. The Pacific Coast is fast becoming a center of world interest and the possibilities of its future are greater than most men realize. Under such conditions your collections can exercise a tremendous influence, provided that they are utilized for the public good.

In this connection, and in view of your remark that they might go to the County of Los Angeles after Mrs. Huntington's death, may I venture to ask your consideration of the possible advantages of another form of control?

Under existing conditions, it is unlikely that men with a knowledge and appreciation of rare books and masterpieces of painting will form a majority of the board of Supervisors, or even be represented on it at all. The outlook for the future is little better and would be much worse if by any unfortunate chance the labor leaders acquired any such power as they have in San Francisco. But such knowledge is essential to a proper administration of a trust. Librarians and curators must be chosen; priceless books or pictures possibly injured by accident, must be repaired or preserved by the best means known to art; printed matter describing the collections must be brought out in the most perfect form, in harmony with the importance of the collections themselves; the buildings and grounds must be kept in order, requiring discriminating judgement and taste not possessed by the average politician. ***In short, if cheap and provincial methods and imperfect care of priceless objects are to be avoided, a body of trustees selected because of their knowledge, taste, and experience, would seem to me preferable to the Board of Supervisors. This might have further advantage of preventing the public from associating the collections with the County of Los Angeles, which to the outside world would suggest Los Angeles itself.***"

At this point there is a hand-written note on the typewritten draft by Hale: "Which I had reason to believe he would dislike."<sup>356</sup>

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<sup>355</sup> <https://digital.archives.caltech.edu/hale>

<sup>356</sup> <https://digital.archives.caltech.edu/hale>

"As for the safety and stability of such a Board of Trustees, the fact that Mr. Carnegie and Mr. Rockefeller have adopted this plan in establishing their great funds (two of which exceed 100 million dollars each) is a strong argument in their favor."<sup>357</sup>

"At present the best body of trustees available appears to be that of the Pasadena Music and Art Association.<sup>358</sup> This could be modified in any desired way if you wish to make use of it. For example, Mrs. Huntington, Mr. Archer Huntington, and others could be added to the Board, in sufficient number to assure you that the control would be in safe hands, identified with your personal interests. Furthermore, if you wished to have the constitution of the Association modified, there would be no difficulty in carrying out your wishes. To ensure additional safety, a reversionary clause could be provided in the trust deed."

"In this way you could ensure the proper care of the collections, and the constant exercise of good taste and good judgement which the suitable administration of such a trust implies. But I believe that you could also accomplish much more. The value of the collections will depend in large degree on the means employed to educate the public to appreciate them and use them, and the establishment of widespread relations with scholars at home and abroad who are prepared to use the library in the best way. Under suitable administration it could be made a center of study and research of international importance. The books would then serve not merely as rare and interesting curiosities, glanced at by many, appreciated by few, but as a continual source of literary and historical study, which would make them known and valued by thousands otherwise ignorant of their existence."

"The Art Association, which is rapidly establishing cooperative relations with the ablest scholars and artists, could guarantee you such a result. After an extensive study of Academies and other associations in Europe and America, I have in mind plans which will enable us to develop the Association in many promising ways. The experience gained in the development of the National Academy of Sciences, in the organization of the International Union for Cooperation in Solar Research, and in seven years work as the representative of the National Academy in the International Association of Academies will be of use in this connection. There would be no difficulty, for example, in providing for work similar to that of the American Academy in Rome. Thus scholars, architects and artists would acquire opportunities for the study and use of the Huntington collections.

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<sup>357</sup> Hale persuades Huntington he can enter the realm of public benevolence of both Carnegie and Rockefeller.

<sup>358</sup> George Ellery Hale was a founder of the Pasadena Music and Art Association and they meet to this day at the Caltech Athenaeum.

"On the other hand, there is the education of the public to consider. The Association could agree to provide an Art Museum in Pasadena, and to equip it with an educational and general exhibit which would prepare the way for a broader use and appreciation of your pictures. Courses of lectures on art and literature, given under the auspices of the Association would serve the same end. Without further remark it is easy to see how a competent board of trustees, operating a subsidiary museum and various other suitable agencies, could render the Huntington collections of the greatest possible service to Southern California and to the world at large."

"Pardon me for writing at such length. I am sure you will realize, however, that my object is not to interfere with any plans of your own, but to offer suggestions that may not have occurred to you."

Very sincerely yours," <sup>359</sup>

On April 20, 1914, Henry Huntington responded to Hale acknowledging his letter of the April 17th and the receipt of the Act of Incorporation of the Pasadena Musical Association and also stated simply in regard to Hale's comments that, "Some of your suggestions are most excellent and I will take them under consideration."<sup>360</sup>

On May 11, 1914, Hale drafted an extremely excited and effusive ten-page letter to Henry Huntington, which was full of ideas for a Huntington Museum and Library project. Hale explained in detail his background with regard to founding international societies as well, providing some historic citations relating to his particular interest in ancient histories, Greek, Roman and his particular interest, Egyptian.<sup>361</sup>

Hale also discussed the prospect of founding an art instruction school and soliciting as director, Channel Pickering Townley, who organized the summer school for William Merritt

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<sup>359</sup> <https://digital.archives.caltech.edu/hale>

<sup>360</sup> Ibid.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid.

Chase as a possible director. Hale spoke of the Huntington collection and its possibilities for collection expansion with regard to Egyptian antiquities as a kind of Library of Alexandria.<sup>362</sup>

Hale also said that he already contacted Mr. Coolidge, an architect from the firm, Shepley Rutan and Coolidge, who were the original architects for Stanford University. Mr. Coolidge also recommended the use of fine Pentelic marble for the museum building; which Hale suggested could appear similar in style to the Eretheion in Athens. Hale then stated, "No man of wealth has ever made a copy of the Parthenon." Hale also informed Huntington that, "Mr. Coolidge some years ago did a study for a similar building and estimated the cost for building in Pasadena will be 3-4 million dollars."<sup>363</sup>

Hale further explained that with the completion of the Panama Canal would facilitate the transport of the Pentelic marble from Athens and will, "In the words Sir Francis Younghusband, the distinguished British military officer and explorer, who recently conducted the expedition to Llassa, that the Panama Canal opening will bring visitors from Europe especially since the voyage can be made in southern waters. This would greatly facilitate the plan of making your collections of international importance." Hale went a bit further and stated, "It is not unlikely that some of the papyri that formed a part of the great library of Alexandria might be found."<sup>364</sup>

On October 5, 1914, Hale received a handwritten note from Henry Huntington, stating that he received Hale's letter just before leaving for Europe. Huntington mentioned that he has given

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<sup>362</sup> Ibid.

<sup>363</sup> Ibid.

<sup>364</sup> Ibid.



the suggestions some thought but was not yet ready to reply but he believed that Hale had "planted a seed" as Huntington closed by saying that they returned last week from the "Far flung battle lines" in 1914 Europe.<sup>365</sup>

On June 15, 1915, Henry Huntington acknowledged in a hand-written note to George Ellery Hale that he received Hale's invitation to hear a lecture by Professor Breasted, an Egyptologist from Universities of Berlin and Chicago, but he and Mrs. Huntington had a previous engagement. Instead, Mr. Huntington invited Professors Hale and Breasted to call first but to bring by Prof. Breasted to see their pictures.<sup>366</sup>

On March 21, 1916, Hale drafted another long letter to Huntington recalling a remark that Huntington "made the other day" and their conversation from two years prior with regard to Huntington's desire to build a "permanent home for his books."<sup>367</sup>

Hale continued on to explain in detail that in the meantime,

"Some important developments have occurred here, and I can now see greater possibilities than were then within sight. These indicate that the Pasadena Music and Art Association should be replaced by a much broader institution, so planned as to unite the various intellectual interests of this region in a single focus, which could easily be made of international importance."<sup>368</sup>

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<sup>365</sup> Ibid.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid.

<sup>367</sup> <https://digital.archives.caltech.edu/hale>

<sup>368</sup> Ibid.

Ultimately, Henry Huntington decided to construct his own Board of Trustees for the Henry Huntington Art Gallery and Library from his business colleagues at the Los Angeles Railway, and not the Pasadena Art Association.<sup>369</sup> However, Huntington named Hale to his Board.

The Hale archives at the National Academy of Science<sup>370</sup> reveal, from what appears to be an oral history dictated by Hale and perhaps written by a very close friend. It reveals that, although he had suffered several mental breakdowns that caused delays in the accomplishment of his vision, it was always Hale's plan that The Huntington Library and Museum and Caltech would be working in lockstep together as one association for interdisciplinary discourse, especially in regard to the History of Science and its devotion to the Humanities.

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<sup>369</sup> Huntington Archives at The Huntington Library searched 2/8/2020 on site.

<sup>370</sup> Hale archives at National Academy of Science: <http://www.nasonline.org> and [cpnas.org](http://cpnas.org) There is an "oral interview history" including his accomplishments as well as Hale's candid discussion of mental struggles (presumably to help other members dealing with similar issue) on this site. Hale traveled to improve his mental health as he suffered from insomnia and depression and he was in sanitariums in the east on a few occasions. Hale died at the Las Encinas Hospital in Pasadena in 1938. Other material is available in the Astrophysical Journal founded by Hale.

## CHAPTER 5

### OTHER ATHENAEA AND SIMILAR INSTITUTIONS

I shall mention several Athenaea here that, although they are not addressed in my close study of three, are nevertheless facilities that either provide extraordinary programming or have a particular specialization, such as the Natural Philosophy exhibits at the Salem Athenaeum and some orators who had membership in or visited more than one Athenaeum circle. In effect, these genius circles were intersecting in other locations and social paradigms.

#### Providence Athenaeum

Poe met Whitman at one of the salons at the Providence Athenaeum conducted by Anne C. Lynch, who extensively studied the work of Roger Williams.<sup>371</sup> Margaret Fuller already was acquainted with Sarah Whitman, as Whitman married an attorney from Boston after a four-year courtship and he died, leaving her both without an income and childless, and Whitman returned home to Providence.<sup>372</sup> During her life in Boston, Whitman knew Bronson Alcott, his Temple School and some of the other Transcendentalists.<sup>373</sup>

Margaret Fuller came from the same Alcott-Emerson circle. Taught Latin by her father, and Greek by Emerson, she was also often found in the Providence Athenaeum circle with many other beautiful women. In the words of a British visitor, James Buckingham: "It may be

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<sup>371</sup> I've already noted the major contributions of Williams with regard to freedom from theocratic government and proper treatment for all persons regardless of race or gender in founding Rhode Island and ending slavery there.

<sup>372</sup> Ibid.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid.

mentioned as another good feature of this institution, that ladies are admitted as shareholders, subscribers and visitors, as well as gentlemen; and that, besides having the accommodation of books at their homes, for the library is a circulating one, they frequently honour the reading room with their presence." He added, "Several very beautiful women were engaged there at a time of my visit." In addition to Sarah Helen Whitman, Margaret Fuller known from her editorship of the Transcendentalist *Dial*, was also found in the Providence Athenaeum.<sup>374</sup>

Poe is known for courting Sarah Helen Whitman, seven years his senior, in the stacks of the Providence Athenaeum after their exchange of poems. The Providence Athenaeum is therefore a kind of discursive, romantic shrine to Edgar Allen Poe and there is "votive" evidence of this relationship in the form of notes and poems, left by many Poe enthusiasts who visit the Athenaeum to feel a bit closer to his history. On the world wide web there are many independent circles devoted to these histories today, and as such, their literature speaks to newer generations.

One reminder of the anticipation of opening an Athenaeum in Providence is the otherwise unexplained object observed in the middle of the basement floor of the Providence Athenaeum, behind the stairwell. It is the famous "Masonic-style" cabinet, the first object created for that Athenaeum<sup>375</sup>

In the Providence Athenaeum, which seems to radiate everywhere with the melancholy presence of Poe, and perhaps to a lesser degree Hawthorne, there are keepsakes of Whitman,

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<sup>374</sup> (*Inquire Inside: The Providence Athenaeum*)

<sup>375</sup> It was built to house the Athenaeum's anticipated subscription of Denon's travels with Napoleon to Egypt, an illustrated set purchased even before the Providence Athenaeum was built. Now the cabinet remains a decorative aspirational reminder, under the stairwell, and the books are preserved in a conservation cabinet.

such as the Raven drawn and sent to her by Edouard Manet after the translation of Poe's poem *The Raven* was published in France. This American circle's connection with the French "genius circles" began when Charles Baudelaire first discovered Poe's poetry in 1847 and shared it with his contemporaries. Baudelaire wrote that he felt that "Poe was his kindred spirit" and he translated most of Poe's works into French. This connection is illustrative of the power of the genius circles in America and the cultural diaspora resulting from their intersection with those in Europe. In this case, Poe's *Raven* circulated to France, where it was well known and immortalized by the French circle as *Le Corbeau*, translated by Stephanie Mallarme and illustrated by Manet. The evidence of these "circles" is that Poe himself never once traveled from America, but his works are well known internationally.

During my visit to Providence, I noticed on the desk of the Providence Athenaeum librarian a small poster advertising the recent exhibition, "*Walt Whitman, Poet of the Body*" on loan from the Grolier Club in New York. The Club was named to honor a fifteenth century French bibliophile, Jean Grolier, and I had recently visited there for a lecture on the occasion of Leonardo di Vinci's 500<sup>th</sup> birthday. The announcement stated that in Providence, a marathon reading of *Leaves of Grass* in honor of Whitman's 200th birthday was held October 15, 2019. Whitman may be seen as a transitional figure between the Transcendentalists (whom he knew and visited, especially Emerson) and early modern realism. In fact, in 1842, Walt Whitman, while writing in New York for the *Aurora*, went to hear Emerson speak and to review his lecture. Whitman wrote that Emerson's lecture was "One of the richest and most beautiful he had heard anywhere at any time." The *History of New York Society Library* indicates that they both met

again the following year when Emerson returned to deliver another lecture for the New York Society Library.<sup>376</sup>

### **Salem Athenaeum**

As famous, or perhaps infamous, as Poe is to Providence, is the previously mentioned Salem Athenaeum which, like the Redwood Athenaeum, was originally conceived in 1750 as The Monday Evening Club. A men's club of ministers, merchants and attorneys met at Mrs. Pratt's Tavern in the town square, to "promote the study of literature and Philosophy." Ten years later, the Monday Evening Club added a Social Library, created by contributions, similar to the Redwood Athenaeum Philosophical Library. It remained a local men's club, where men participated in discourse, until it suddenly developed as a result of the purchase of spoils of the Revolutionary War. A local pirate ship, the Pilgrim, sailed from the close port of Beverly, Massachusetts and seized the Duke of Gloucester which was sailing in Irish waters. It returned to Beverly with the booty, part of which was the library collection of Richard Kirwan, who had just been elected to the Royal Society for his work in Chemistry and was moving his household to London. Kirwan's library was sold at auction and purchased by the newly formed Philosophical Library in Salem. A beneficiary of this library purchase was Nathaniel Bowditch, who used the

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<sup>376</sup> Cooper, Lawrence, and New York Society; Austin Baxter Keep, *History of the New York Society Library, with an Introductory Chapter on Libraries in Colonial New York, 1698-1776* ([New York: Printed for the Trustees by the De Vinne Press, 1908).

books to teach himself navigation, later writing his own improvement on them *The American Practical Navigator*, which is still widely in use, including by the U.S. Naval Academy.<sup>377</sup>

The *Practical Navigator* was first published in 1802, just two years before the other famous Nathaniel (Hawthorne), was born in Salem. In 2017, the Salem Athenaeum hosted an exhibition centered on Nathaniel Hawthorne, and what he read as a member of the Salem Athenaeum to inspire his novels<sup>378 379</sup>

Charles Grafton Page, also a Salem Athenaeum member, was a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Medical School and, after graduation, returned to practice medicine in Salem. He used the Salem Athenaeum technical library to pioneer his inventions of the circuit breaker and the induction coil, for his other invention, the motor.<sup>380</sup> These historic books are still available to read and found on display at the Salem Athenaeum.

### **Nantucket Athenaeum**

The Caltech archives of George Ellery Hale include a letter dated April 26, 1911, which advises Hale that he has been nominated for membership into the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association. On the actual letter there is a notation that a "life membership" fee of \$10.00 was paid in full on August 3, 1911. The letter is accompanied by a certificate dated August 3, 1911,

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<sup>377</sup> At the Salem Athenaeum there is a note from Kirwan forgiving the theft of his library as it has been "put to such beneficial use"

<sup>378</sup> The exhibition, "What Hawthorne Read" recognizes him as still "felt" in the community that uses the image from the television show "Bewitched" as tourist guideposts in Salem.

<sup>379</sup> According to Salem Athenaeum subscriber records, Hawthorne borrowed books of philosophy, history, poetry, fiction, religion, science and travel, written in English, French, German and Spanish.

<sup>380</sup> Grafton Page's son Harvey studied to be an architect and in Washington, DC, he designed the Metropolitan Club, the Phoebe Hearst House and the Army and Navy Club.

attesting to Hale's life membership standing. What is particularly interesting about the committee which nominated Hale is that it consists entirely of women who apparently were very much interested in a new observatory founded in 1908 on the Island of Nantucket, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Hale supported the legacy of someone he would not have known personally, but through her accomplishments and interests.<sup>381</sup>

"Nantucket, isolated as it was from the 'continent' became a place of immeasurable opportunity where the intellectual growth paralleled that of the great whaling industry. And the nucleus for this growth was the Athenaeum. Here learned societies flourished—the Nantucket Philosophical Institute with William Mitchell (Maria's father) as president; the Social Reading Society in which men and women joined to read original stories and poems, and discuss contemporary literary works—Leaves of Grass, Dombey and Son, Wuthering Heights. Here, too came the greatest scholars of the age to expound their ideas in Lyceum lectures, to meet afterward in the Hall above the Bank to debate philosophical and scientific questions. Some of these, like Thoreau and Agassiz returned often; others. Like Audubon, came only once but were never forgotten."<sup>382</sup>

The Nantucket Athenaeum hosted many luminaries on the island, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, whose discourse Mitchell described, in terms of an astronomer, as "Like a beam of light moving in undulatory waves, meeting with occasional meteors in its path—and it was so exceedingly captivating!"

"That night, after the lecture, and again in later years when he came to the island, Emerson climbed "up scuttle" to their little observatory. Maria never forgot those nights! Afterward, when his diary was published, she read, 'In William Mitchell's observatory I saw a nebula in Cassiopeia, the double stars at the pole, the double stars of Zeta Ursi.'<sup>383</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> An anomaly in early nineteenth century America, Maria Mitchell was the Librarian of the Nantucket Athenaeum and an astronomer.

<sup>382</sup> The element which may have most resonated personally with Hale was that Maria Mitchell served as the Librarian of the Nantucket Athenaeum, choosing all of the books and organizing all of the lectures.

<sup>383</sup> Bergland.



Herman Melville visited with his father-in-law, Lemuel Shaw, a judge who was on Nantucket to hold court. Shaw recounted in a letter that he had:

"...made the occasion an opportunity for pleasure and relaxation for Herman (Melville), who was weary from his literary labors. We passed the evening with Mr. Mitchell, the astronomer, and his celebrated daughter, the discoverer of comets."<sup>384</sup>

Maria Mitchell as the Librarian cultivated, in part, the reception for the authors who arrived at Nantucket by presenting their books in the Athenaeum, as the Librarian. She is reported to have stated in this regard, "Let us buy (For the Athenaeum), not such books as people want, but books above their wants and they will reach up to take what is put out for them."<sup>385</sup> Maria Mitchell eventually traveled to Europe to receive a gold medal won for her discovery, presented to her by King Frederick VII of Denmark. The inscription on the medal states "Non Frustra Signorum Obitus Speculamur et Ortus" (quoted from Virgil's Book I line 257, of *Georgics*).<sup>386</sup>

This was Maria Mitchell, who was a lifelong Quaker but perhaps, with the influence of Emerson, later followed the Unitarian religion. When she traveled to Europe to receive her award and to finally make a "European Tour," she was not without contacts to visit and examine their facilities. In the case of her trip to Italy, she met with Sophia Peabody Hawthorne, and her husband, Nathaniel, who was then writing the *Marble Faun*, and others in their orbit. So, very much like Edgar Allen Poe, her accomplishments were already recognized throughout Europe,

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<sup>384</sup> Wright, *Sweeper in the Sky: The Life of Maria Mitchell*. Nantucket Maria Mitchell foundation, published, 1949.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid.

<sup>386</sup> Bergland.

via the "intellectual circles" and Mitchell was welcomed by most, if not all of the European astronomers.<sup>387</sup>

### **New York Athenaeum and the NY Society Library**

The obvious question one might ask is whether there was ever a New York Athenaeum. The response to that is a definitive, "yes and no." While the New York Athenaeum was indeed founded in 1824, and it was to also follow, like Boston's and Philadelphia's, the plan of the Liverpool Athenaeum, it never really got off the ground. This failure was due in part, to the New York Society Library, the New York Historical Society and other competing groups controlled by New York political and social factions. They planned to hold "public discourses in literature and the sciences" and "popular discourses open to both sexes." This group received permission to use the chapel at Columbia (College).<sup>388</sup> In fact, the New York Athenaeum did develop a very exciting schedule of lectures, with many luminaries, mostly businessmen seeking information about the sciences and the arts supporting the efforts. The reality of this plan was that due to the long work day of men, including expansive lunch and dinner hours, the classes were entirely subscribed to by women, so they were discontinued.

There is a record of the evolution of the New York Athenaeum spanning fourteen years, until such time when they failed in their agreement to purchase a building for the purpose of their lectures on Broadway. The library and records collected by the New York Athenaeum were turned over to the New York Society Library, which was also left with the burden of paying for

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<sup>387</sup> Ibid.

<sup>388</sup> Cooper, Lawrence, and New York Society.

the building. Eventually they shared it with a new tenant, the National Academy of Design, from 1840-1847. It at this time that the lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman and Edgar Allen Poe were given, in an effort to bring in membership and cover financial losses from the New York Athenaeum's fiscal mismanagement. This was pivotal, not just for the New York Society Library, but for the speakers who came to New York and who were reviewed by those arbiters of aesthetics who were integral to the report of daily news and trusted by the New York public. In fact, it introduced writers, such as Emerson, widely regarded as a riveting speaker, Edgar Allen Poe, and Walt Whitman, to a sophisticated and cosmopolitan audience.<sup>389</sup>

Beginning in March 1842, Emerson, from Boston and Concord circles, placed the New York Society Library on his tour rounds which helped to support him and the rest of his Concord Circle. Many heard his famous lecture style for the first time at the Library. He spoke on *The Poet* which evidently also struck a chord with at least one attendee, Walt Whitman, whom Emerson subsequently met and with whom he later corresponded. Whitman also met and corresponded with Thomas Eakins, who was in these circles. Ultimately Whitman settled in Camden, New Jersey, and visited with Eakins, who painted Whitman's portrait while working in nearby Philadelphia.<sup>390</sup>

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<sup>389</sup> Cooper, Lawrence, and New York Society.

<sup>390</sup> Whitman is honored with a suspension bridge dedicated to him between Philadelphia and Camden County, New Jersey.

Whitman spent one month in service as editor of the American focused newspaper, the *Aurora*, utilizing this position to review "Waldo" Emerson's lecture:<sup>391</sup>

"The Transcendentalist had a very full house on Saturday evening. There were a few beautiful maids—but more ugly women, mostly blue stockings; several interesting young men with Byron collars, doctors, parsons; Grahamites<sup>392</sup> and abolitionists; sage editors, a few of whom were taking notes; and all other species of literati. Greeley was in ecstasies whenever anything particularly good was said, which seemed to be about once in five minutes—he would flounce about like a fish out of water, or a tickled girl—look around, to see those behind him and at his side; all of which plainly told to those far and near, that he knew a thing or two more about these matters than other men. The lecture was on the "Poetry of the Times" ... Suffice it to say, the lecture was one of the richest most beautiful compositions, for its manner and style, we have ever heard anywhere, at any time."

An even more ardent devotee of Emerson's lectures was Henry James Sr., father of novelist Henry James and philosopher William James. A theologian who trained at Princeton Theological Seminary, Henry James Sr. was a strong supporter of Swedenborg philosophy. After attending all six of Emerson's lectures, he wrote to the speaker stating:

"I listened to your address this evening, and my bosom glowed with many a true word that fell from your lips. I felt fully assured that before me I beheld a man who in very truth was seeing the reality of things.... And...let me once feel the cordial grasp of a fellow pilgrim and remember for long days the cheering Godspeed and the ringing laugh with which he bounded on from my sight from this time".<sup>393</sup>

The Athenaea find that they often share members who have lent their patronage to multiple circles within their sphere of interest, or of travel, or both. Perhaps the most prodigious may have

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<sup>391</sup> Stacy, Jason. "The New York Aurora." The Walt Whitman Archive. Gen. ed. Matt Cohen, Ed Folsom, and Kenneth M. Price. Accessed 17 September 2021. <<http://www.whitmanarchive.org>>.

<sup>392</sup> This remark concerns Bronson Alcott's friend, Sylvester Graham, who was a proponent of a strict vegan diet. He developed a non-animal-based cracker, now known as Graham's crackers.

<sup>393</sup> Henry S. F. Cooper, Jenny Lawrence, and Library New York Society, *The New York Society Library : 250 Years* (2004). (NY Society Library) The History of the New York Society Library reports their close relationship began then.

been Edgar Allen Poe who was a member of several, including Baltimore, Boston, Providence, Philadelphia, and Salem. Poe spoke the New York Society Library on a lecture tour in February 28, 1845 just after the publication of his poem, *The Raven*.<sup>394</sup> Another such traveling member was Herman Melville, a member of the Berkshire Athenaeum, who famously met and immediately visited with Hawthorne in nearby Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Hawthorne inspired Melville to develop a manuscript he was working on for the classic novel, *Moby Dick*. Hawthorne and Melville corresponded, and Melville later met with Hawthorne when he was in Europe. Hawthorne's wife, Sofia, remarked that she had never heard Hawthorne speak as engagingly or animated as when he was in the presence of Melville.<sup>395</sup> Such circles of literati men and women appreciated an enlightening conversation and whatever romantic developments might ensue. Such was the case of Edgar Allan Poe and Sarah Whitman, and Hawthorne who enjoyed the company several ladies in these circles.<sup>396</sup>

### **The Bibliotheca Alexandrina<sup>397</sup>**

The twenty-first century re-envisioned *Bibliotheca Alexandrina* contains hard text libraries in Arabic, French and English at present, as well as digitized texts and archives. It integrates

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<sup>394</sup> It is the lore of the Providence Athenaeum that Sarah Helen Whitman, a poetess in her own right and an avid member of the Providence Athenaeum, sent Poe a poem she wrote, in response to the *Raven*, to be delivered to him on Valentine's Day in New York.

<sup>395</sup> Megan Marshall, *The Peabody Sisters: Three Women Who Ignited American Romanticism* (Boston/New Work: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005).

<sup>396</sup> Jane Lancaster and Providence Athenaeum., *Inquire Within : A Social History of the Providence Athenaeum since 1753*, 1st ed. (Providence, RI: Providence Athenaeum, 2003).

<sup>397</sup> Author's note: My rationale for discussing the Bibliotheca Alexandrina is because this facility was greatly anticipated the U.S. Board Members of the International Conference of Museums to host the 2022 International Triennial Conference. As the time of the 2019 Kyoto Triennial neared, there was no strategic plan for the ICOM conference actually submitted, therefore, the second applicant, a consortium of Prague national museums, was accepted instead. The anticipation of participating in a

Science, Technology, the Arts, and Mathematics in programming and outreach and is discursive in many world languages. It aims to connect life-long students locally and internationally via the world wide web and yet to be discovered, future technologies for translation and communication. It presently hosts international conferences in its Conference Center and on the internet:

"The dissemination of cultural and scientific knowledge, and spreading the culture of dialogue and tolerance, these are the goals that the BA aims to achieve through its projects and activities. The BA continually organizes new projects, as well as numerous cultural and scientific events, every year, such as annual book fairs, art exhibitions, conferences, seminars, concerts and theatrical performances."<sup>398</sup>

In addition, the Bibliotheca Alexandrina publishes *Memory of Egypt Magazine of Heritage*, and they offer accredited courses in Hellenistic Studies.

The structure and organization of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina<sup>399</sup> is similar to the Getty Research Library in Brentwood, California, and the Huntington Research Library in San Marino California, and also the British Library in London, as it provides access to the libraries controlled by the use of open and closed storage of texts and many materials scanned for use on site for vetted scholarly members and virtually via the world wide web.<sup>400</sup> Presently, the Getty Center and Research Library are closed by the Covid-19 pandemic, they might eventually consider a plan to adapt their extensive compartmentalized pod system that could easily conform with the addition of polycarbonate type barriers between the readers. Given the opportunity to consider a

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program in the twenty-first century library named for Aristotle's student, Alexander the Great, remains, and may come to fruition in the future.

<sup>398</sup> [www.bibalex.org](http://www.bibalex.org)

<sup>399</sup> The Bibliotheca Alexandrina has a networked computer system accessible in every pod of the facility, to facilitate use, while minimizing introduction of unauthorized software. In a twenty-first century American Athenaeum these pods could also function as listening posts for books, music or lectures.

<sup>400</sup> The Bibliotheca Alexandrina is also presently closed as of this writing because of a very high rate of Covid-19 virus.

new-build plan for the twenty-first century Athenaeum, systems for proper ventilation, air exchange, and personal distancing can be design-engineered into the architecture.

### **The Wadsworth Athenaeum**

An Athenaeum need not be entirely built at one time or even under one roof as in the case of the Wadsworth Athenaeum in Hartford Connecticut, originally conceived as an art gallery by Henry Wadsworth:

"Daniel Wadsworth originally planned to establish a "Gallery of Fine Arts," but he was persuaded to create an Athenaeum, a term popular in the 19th century used to describe a cultural institution with a library, works of art and artifacts, devoted to learning history, literature, art, and science."<sup>401</sup>

There are five buildings in the Wadsworth Athenaeum that are each connected but as each was constructed years apart, there are many styles popular as there are buildings. timeframe:

In 1844, Wadsworth's first art gallery was constructed in the Gothic Revival Style by Ithiel Town and Alexander Jackson Davis who were prominent architects in Harford at that time. It housed the art gallery, the Hartford Library, the Harford Historical Society. A library was added to the original building around 1860. In 1910, a Collection was donated as the Colt Memorial and the building was styled in Tudor Revival and between 1910 and 1915 the Morgan Memorial was designed by Benjamin Wistar Morris in the Renaissance Revival aesthetic"

"The aesthetics changed in 1910 to Tutor Revival with the Colt family endowment. In 1934, the first American style building, Avery Memorial, was built in a Modern International Style, and in 1964, all groups not directly affiliated with the Athenaeum were removed from the buildings. The last which opened in 1969 was the Goodwin Building that houses only fine art and was built in the Late Modernist style."<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>401</sup> <https://www.thewadsworth.org/about/history/> accessed 09.19.2020.

<sup>402</sup> Ibid.

## **The J. Paul Getty Foundation**

The J. Paul Getty Foundation could qualify, as a private *Athenaeum* dedicated for the public good.<sup>403</sup> The Brentwood (Los Angeles) Getty Center, designed by architect Frank Gehry, is legally one single building, despite appearances. There is one central sublevel operations and maintenance center for the entire complex. There is subterranean collections storage because of the ever-present fire threat posed by its topography. The Brentwood Center contains *auditoria*, a *museum*, *aulae*. and a *librarium* for art and cultural research. The Getty Research Library hosts vetted scholars for programs and provides research access to various archives on their portal.

## **Palazzo di Brera**

The Palazzo Brera in Milan has experienced a renaissance that has reestablished it, now refreshed and revitalized under the direction of James Bradburne, a Canadian national, appointed by the Italian Ministry of Culture. Since I visited the Brera before and after Dr. Bradburne's appointment, I argue that it now *functions* as a very active Athenaeum, while not an athenaeum in name. Nearly all areas, Pinocoteca Brera galleries, the Bibiloteca Nazionale Braidense, and the Brera Academy are re-energized to address not only the students, but the Milanese public and international visitors who visited before Covid 19 closures, but who still receive active alerts for live performances in the library or a directors' lecture in the galleries. It was Austrian Empress

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<sup>403</sup> As a Special Agent assigned to the Los Angeles FBI, I participated as an advisor during the building of the Getty Center and the renovation of the Getty Villa.



Maria Theresa's express intent to provide, "an open library for the common use of anyone who wants to cultivate his mind and acquire new knowledge."<sup>404</sup>

The Brera enjoys an extensive history of service, first as a monastery and church and later as a college for men. Napoleon is reported to have used the *osservatorio* telescope to assist him in mapping northern Italy. He also used the Palazzo Brera as a sort of clearing house for art his troops sacked from small village churches. The best art he forwarded to his curator, Denon, for the Louvre, and the rest remained in the Palazzo Brera.

The Brera today is inviting to students as well as to visitors of the Art Gallery, Botanical Gardens, and Library, The Palazzo style contains this space securely with one main entrance to the compound. Access to the actual galleries is by way of a choice of two stairways that flank the front of the Palazzo. The main entrance to the galleries has been reopened after decades of closure. Well lighted signage is now presented in Italian and English throughout. On one of my visits, a conservator was working publicly behind glass, on one of the paintings inside a large gallery. The Brera also employs an "open storage" plan for art not presently hung in the extensive galleries. This technique is both informative and interesting inasmuch as we see both the aesthetic and the curatorial decisions involved in managing conscientious display of the collection. The Brera Academy is noted for the education of many innovative Italian-Swiss

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<sup>404</sup> Coincidentally, the Barrett Collection was researched in our seminar with Dr. Brettell and includes an original portrait of Empress Maria Theresa by Jean-Etienne Liotard. Several of the Brera Academy trained artists are represented in the Barrett Collection.

artists, such as former students: Giovanni Segantini, Carlo Carra, and Lucio Fontana whose work is reflected in the Brera collection.<sup>405</sup>

"In Milan, a monastery and church, Santa Maria di Brera was built in approximately the twelfth century by the religious order of the Umiliati and after the Umiliati were disbanded it was given to the Jesuit order who founded a in the monastery. Architect Francisco Maria Richini created the original building during the early 17<sup>th</sup> century when it was operated as a school (for men) in 1773 the Jesuit order was operating a Colegio di Brera<sup>406</sup> for 3000 students.<sup>407</sup> The school was disbanded after the Jesuits were suppressed by Pope Clement XIV, and at that time the Palazzo passed to the ruling family of Northern Italy, the Hapsburgs of Austria. The courtyard was completed at that time by Giuseppe Piermarini and the classic entrance gate from Via Brera was also completed. The Church was deconsecrated in 1806 and the church building was converted into an art gallery upstairs and a sculpture gallery on the first floor. In 1773, the Palazzo Brera as the complex is known, became the home to several educational concerns as the Osservatorio Astronomico di Brera founded in 1764 by the Jesuits was opened an upper floor and a telescope was installed. In 1773 Maria Teresa of Austria founded the massive Regia Biblioteca Braidense and in 1774 she converted the Jesuit's former herb garden in the Orto Botanico di Brera and in 1776, Maria Theresa founded the Reale Accademia di Belle Arti. The Brera Palace also housed the Scuole Palatine for Philosophy and Law, the Gymnasium, laboratories for physics and chemistry and the Societa Patriotica, an agricultural circle. The Royal Institute of Science and Letters that was founded in Bologna by Napoleon in 1797 was moved to the Brera as the *Istituto Lombardo Accademia di Scienze e Lettere*."<sup>408</sup>

The Pinocoteca di Brera is located within a short walking distance of the center of historic Milan, the Piazza del Duomo di Milano. As such, due to its age, the Palazzo Brera architecture is likely to have informed the other neoclassical architecture in the area.

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<sup>405</sup> Many of these artists are featured in the Barrett Collection.

<sup>406</sup> A school

<sup>407</sup> In the 17<sup>th</sup> century there was a plague in Milan

<sup>408</sup> <https://pinacotecabrera.org/>

## Architecture as a Unifying Theme of the Athenaeum

I have considered the architecture of the Athenaeum and the cues that we can assess from my three selected American Athenaea that contribute to their success. I have noted that in each instance the architecture either establishes or addresses the taste aesthetic of the community. This is an element of cohesion with the community it represents and contributes to its longevity. Peter Harrison's neo-classical style, derivative of Palladio's Roman Classical aesthetic, as I've already discussed, set the taste not only for Newport Rhode Island but also was later adapted by Thomas Jefferson for his Virginia home, Monticello and for the University of Virginia.<sup>409</sup> The University of Virginia has maintained faithful to the aesthetics of Jefferson's design.

The Boston Athenaeum was purposefully designed also in the Neo-Palladian style by architect Edward Clark Cabot. This architectural style recognizes its context within the historic center of Boston and reflects its proximity to the "Freedom Trail" cemetery.<sup>410</sup>

George Ellery Hale's selection of the architects, the style and the materials for not only the Caltech Athenaeum and the University set the aesthetic as a seemingly decorative aesthetic that is an amalgamation of Spanish/Mediterranean/ Mexican flair and an overarching classical aesthetic. It even has its own name, "California Style."<sup>411</sup> The Athenaeum as well as the university buildings on campus are built for function and longevity and aesthetic quality.

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<sup>409</sup> It was also adapted by Myron Hunt for his design of Throop Hall at Caltech.

<sup>410</sup> The margins between the Athenaeum and the cemetery are quite thin in fact, suggesting that it could encroach on the "sacred space" of the cemetery.

<sup>411</sup> The first architect selected, Goodhue, who designed the campus originally, died and was replaced.

The architecture of the Athenaeum which harmonizes with that of the other buildings on campus, on close examination is quite plain, utilitarian and as one might expect, relatively inexpensive to build. The Giovanni Smeraldi painted ceilings elevate the Roman taste in the interior. The charming aesthetic of this design however is noted in the applications of Batchelder tiles<sup>412</sup> to highlight the otherwise beige stucco sameness of not only the campus but Pasadena as a whole.

In California, a plan formulated by George Ellery Hale and his later philosophical "heirs" have joined Caltech, Caltech Athenaeum, JPL (NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory), Pasadena City College, together with the Huntington Library, Museum and Botanical Gardens, Burndy Science Library, and the Rose Hills Foundation Conservatory for Botanical Science in an alliance that I consider unique.<sup>413</sup> The placement of all of these elements within the footprint of the City of Pasadena is similar to both the Redwood Athenaeum and the Boston Athenaeum, as there is easy for public access virtually, and also via public or private transportation with available secure parking.

### **Considerations for Future Athenaea**

After conducting my extensive survey of Athenaea, with particular emphasis on the pattern of sustainability exhibited by my three selected American Athenaea, I have considered the

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<sup>412</sup> Batchelder was a friend of George Ellery Hale's and fine art instructor at Caltech.

<sup>413</sup> My continuing research will utilize archives at the Huntington Library, Caltech and the Caltech Athenaeum Archivist to reveal the intentions of George Ellery Hale and the Board of Caltech with regard to

features of successful American Athenaea still in service in the twenty-first century, and consider some university Athenaeum and summarize them here.

I envision that a future Athenaeum built on a university campus as a center representing the overarching philosophy of the campus. This Athenaeum should contain the Athenaeum club, Libraries, Museums, a gallery for the presentation of student art and also a gallery for innovative technological design, and abundant green space.<sup>414</sup> In those respects it could be modeled after Caltech's Athenaeum, and its connection to the campus programs of emerging technologies and to the Huntington Library, Gardens, Museum and Research Institute. A new-built Athenaeum<sup>415</sup> on a university campus might present suitable accommodations for visiting faculty and foreign luminaries, as well as an elevated food and housekeeping service to serve meals for members and their guests and perform dining services, business service management, cleaning, facility maintenance, and security. Keeping visiting scholars on campus to interact with faculty and advanced students should be the goal. The management of the Athenaeum would also provide an opportunity to provide advanced business students with hands-on experience.

Neither learning nor life ceases at graduation commencement. Given the advantages of modern society we now have access to competing cascades of 24/7 prepared media and social media. Since adult enrichment is a life-long occupation and quest, I submit that a discursive interdisciplinary center as a conduit of the university to students and to the community it shares

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<sup>414</sup> I have already discussed a relationship with the Caltech Archives which would permit the loan of history of science related objects, etc, for temporary display, without cost other than shipping and insurance.

<sup>415</sup> The other Athenaea I've cited are functioning as twenty-first century Athenaea, but they were built at least on hundred years ago.

would privilege the community. An Athenaeum that includes a Visual and Performing Arts center provides a "first stage" for student efforts, as well as a community cultural hub for the arts. I would also propose a co-located broadcast center for podcasts, television, and radio outreach for the enjoyment of programming in the Arts Center.<sup>416</sup> As an integral center of the campus the Athenaeum library should to be placed near other extant libraries so as to "bridge" with them. The Athenaeum should be situated so that the flow of visiting traffic is compartmented and entry regulated and vehicle access would be independent from the rest of the campus, especially if there is a performing arts center integrated into the plan.<sup>417</sup> Similar to Caltech, it can look to its history and archives to rediscover and rethink those hypotheses which were beyond the technology of its day and explore them again.

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<sup>416</sup> This could possibly be designed in the model of the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism at Arizona State University. This space was first outlined in my original drawing plan for a University of Texas at Dallas Athenaeum as my seminar project for Dr. Richard Brettell.

<sup>417</sup> This is similar to the *Auditoria* of Hadrian's *Athenaeum* and the Getty Center in Brentwood, California, and the Getty Villa in Malibu, Ca.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

This dissertation has examined the development of the conceptual frame of the Athenaeum. First established in antiquity, it is a foundation for the concept of western universities. I have highlighted this legacy by comparing the Redwood Athenaeum and Library in Newport, the Boston Athenaeum, and the Athenaeum at the California Institute of Technology. My research has situated these institutions in their historical, political, cultural and social contexts to celebrate their unique role as promoters of scholarship, interdisciplinary discourse, and social agency.

My research reveals that American Athenaea uniquely function as community hubs, and whether explicitly taking the name Athenaeum or not, they are and have always been engaged in discursive exchanges with each other, since the founding of the Redwood Library and Athenaeum in 1747 and the New York Society Library in 1754. Each Athenaeum has been guided historically by an enlightened circle of "proprietors,"<sup>418</sup> and in pursuing this study I found that each circle is linked by the mutual recognition of a kindred spirit of intellectual curiosity and wonder, an appreciation of beauty, and a desire to address and facilitate positive social agency for the community. In addition, they share values such as the interchange of scientific information, the building of cultural understanding, and the possession of a social purpose. When

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<sup>418</sup> "Proprietor" suggests a term of "ownership" or "stake holding" in the responsibility of administering an athenaeum that is not found in library or museums. It is your author's opinion that this responsibility is key to the continued viability and social agency of the American athenaea.

matters of concern to all the member-proprietors had to be settled, these circles operated through consultation and consensus.

Members, which included women as well as men, also enjoy learned conversation as well as the more formal lectures and performances by prominent visiting artists, writers and lecturers. The result is a relaxing interdisciplinary environment which allows ideas to flourish. My examination of three American Athenaea represents a history of nearly three hundred years of American Philosophy, in which I have attempted to compare geographically, architecturally, economically, and socially. Each presents an enduring and diverse model of success. Each of these Athenaea locations, Newport, Rhode Island, Boston, Massachusetts, and Pasadena, California exhibited similar relative standard of living profiles, comparative levels of education, and social engagement from the time of their respective institution's founding to the present day.

The comparison of these Athenaea also raises the question whether such an institution could or should be created today on a university campus to continue the opportunities for productive and meaningful new dialogues between the Sciences, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Humanities, and Mathematics. The transformative power of such dialogues in these library circles can be firmly demonstrated by their longevity and by their successful history of performance.

Each of the three American Athenaea profiled in my study represents the best efforts made by each community to build a discursive center that, as Winthrop first remarked, functions as a "City on a Hill." Perhaps the most characteristic feature of an Athenaeum is the spirit of open interaction and dialogue between members with a range of social, cultural, intellectual, scientific, philosophical, and artistic backgrounds that creates a comfortable aesthetic and discursive



environment for its members. Thus, the Athenaeum is an enduring and successful example of lifelong learning and philosophic discourse that could be replicated on a university campus in the company of its extant and successful sister-circles, internationally.

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## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Virginia Malloy Curry was born in New York City and raised in Northern New Jersey. She completed a triple major Bachelor degree in Spanish, Italian, and Education, and is a permanently certified teacher of Spanish and Italian in New Jersey. While teaching in New Jersey high schools she studied for a Masters Degree in Italian at Rutgers University and a Spanish Masters Degree at Montclair State University.

Virginia joined the Federal Bureau of Investigation, completed training as a Special Agent and Language Specialist in Spanish and Italian. During her career she was assigned to the Las Vegas, Los Angeles and Dallas Field Offices, and also served as relief Assistant Legal Attaché in the U.S. Embassies in Rome and Paris. During her tenure at the FBI, Virginia earned an academic degree from the Gemological Institute of America as a Graduate Gemologist, utilizing her skills as an agent, trainer, security expert and instructor while assigned as the FBI Los Angeles' Art Crime Special Agent. Virginia's cases included investigations of stolen and fraudulent cultural artifacts, high value property crimes, and internal theft, embezzlement, and money laundering by the first convicted American museum director. Virginia worked in cooperation with other field offices of the FBI, the Italian Art Crime Squad of the Carabinieri, the French Art Crime Team, the German Art Crime Team and the Organised (sic) Crime Squad of the Metropolitan Police at Scotland Yard. While assigned to the Las Vegas Field Office, Virginia also obtained a private pilot's license, becoming the first female Special Agent to do so, flying surveillance and evidence recovery missions in Las Vegas and Los Angeles.

After her retirement from the FBI, Virginia worked as a Texas licensed investigator while completing a Master's Degree in Art History on a Meadows Foundation Scholarship at Southern Methodist University. Virginia currently serves on the Board of Directors for the United States of the International Conference of Museums, and lectures on art crimes and topics consistent with her Master's Degrees.

## CURRICULUM VITAE

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### EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

**Ph.D. Candidate**, (Present). The University of Texas at Dallas  
**M.A.** Art History, Southern Methodist University  
**M.A.**, Italian, Rutgers University, New Jersey  
**M.A.**, Spanish, Montclair State University, New Jersey  
**B.S.**, Spanish, Italian and Education, New Jersey  
**Graduate Gemologist**, Gemological Institute of America  
**Federal Aviation Administration**, Private Pilot-Land License/FBI Surveillance Certified

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### PROFESIONAL EXPERIENCE

#### **Federal Bureau of Investigation, Violent Crimes Program, Special Agent Specializing in Fine Art and Jewelry Crimes**

- Dallas Field Office, Domestic Terrorism and North Texas Joint Terrorism Task Force Field Agent and Training Coordinator
- Los Angeles Field Office Administrative Supervisor, Chief Security Officer and Field Agent, Violent Crimes and Art and Jewelry Crimes
- Los Angeles Media Office, liaison to Castlerock Entertainment for the motion picture Miss Congeniality, assisting with the producers of the film with the development of a fictional character with some similarity to SA Curry.
- Las Vegas Field Office Case Investigator Organized Crime, Field Agent and Surveillance Pilot, Foreign Counter Intelligence and White-Collar Crime Unit
- Assistant Legal Attaché in the American Embassies of Rome and Paris
- Liaison to the Italian, French and German National Art Crime Teams
- Liaison to the Organised (sic) Crime Squad of the Metropolitan Police at Scotland Yard

#### **State of New Jersey, Office of the Attorney General, Division of Gaming Enforcement**

- Atlantic City, New Jersey; Casino Investigations
  - Division of Criminal Justice, Mercer and Hudson Counties. Economic Crimes.
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### TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- The University of North Texas, Denton, Texas  
Instructor of Italian, Fall, 2012
  - Stonehill College, Easton Massachusetts, “The World of Art and the Fine Art of Crime,” adult seminar, designed, co-instructed with Richard Ellis, Fine Art and Antiques Squad, New Scotland Yard, London
  - The University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, TX  
Teaching Assistant to Dr. Richard Brettell, Edith O’Donnell Institute of Art History (2014-2018)
  - Southern Methodist University, Art History Program,  
Teaching Assistant to Professor Gregory P. Warden. 2009-2012
  - FBI North Texas Joint Terrorism Task Force  
Trainer for Task Force Partners, Dallas, Texas
  - International Police Training at the Smithsonian Institution and the FBI Academy
  - Immaculate Conception High School, Lodi, New Jersey , Teacher of Italian and Spanish
  - Becton Regional High School, East Rutherford, New Jersey, Teacher of Italian and Spanish
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## PUBLICATIONS

1. Curry, Virginia Malloy, *Villains, Thieves, and Scoundrels*:, Chapter concerning the criminal economy of the art, antiques, jewelry and collectible trade and the thresholds of risk to the consumer in “Art Crime and Its Prevention,” Lund Humphries, London (2016)
  2. Curry, Virginia Malloy, *Familia in Eternam*: The Intimate Imagery of the Egalitarian Etruscan Couple, Masters Thesis, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas (2012)
  3. Curry, Virginia Malloy, *United States v Steven Cooperman* in The Journal of Art Crime, volume 1, issue 1 (2009) (Criminology analysis by FBI Case Agent) and Two Book Reviews: The Art Thief, by N. Charney and The Art of the Heist by Myles Connor.
  4. Curry, Virginia Malloy, *Orlando Furioso and Don Quijote*: The Problem with Women Causing Madness, Masters Thesis, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey (1982)
  5. Curry, Virginia Malloy, *Picturing The Political Family Circle in the Afterlife: The Affinal Etruscan Burial Monuments*: The University of Houston, Dia de los Muertos Conference, Houston, Texas (2010)
  6. Curry, Virginia Malloy, *The Affinal Couples: The Evocative Erotic Art of Etruscan Burial Monuments*: University of Southern California Classics Conference, Los Angeles, California (2011)
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## PRESENTATIONS

1. Curry, Virginia Malloy, *Causarum Cognitio*: Interdisciplinary Discourse in Antiquity and Modernity, concerning the construction of a 21st century athenaeum. International Council of Museums, Council on Documentation, Meeting in Heraklion, Crete, September, 2018
2. Curry, Virginia Malloy, *In the Eyes of the Beholder*: A Convicting Correspondence, presented at the “Preserving and Privileging the Original Archive” ICOM-CIDOC panel, also at Heraklion, September 2018.

3. Curry, Virginia Malloy, *Familia in Eternam: The Intimate Imagery of the Etruscan Affinal Couple at the Art History Seminar at Kings College/The Courtauld Institute*, pursuant to the 2018 Conference Theme, "Looking Out," presented as a first draft of the above cited paper, April, 2018
  4. Curry, Virginia Malloy, *Re-envisioning the Athenaeum in the 21st Century: Sustainability and Interdisciplinary Life Long Learning on an American Public University Campus*, presented at the International Triennial Conference of the International Council of Museums in Milano, Italy, July, 2016
  5. Curry, Virginia Malloy, *In the Eyes of the Beholder: A Convicting Correspondence*, presented at the Association for Research into Crimes Against Art (ARCA) annual International Art Crime Symposium in Amelia, Italy, June, 2016
  6. Curry, Virginia Malloy, *Art and Law: Art in Conflict*: juried paper at Christ College, Cambridge University, Art and Law Conference, concerning the need to teach with objects in Art Programs, highlighting the Harvard Museums, the Kier Collection at the University of Texas at Dallas and the Dallas Museum of Art. Invited by the Government Judge and Organizer of this conference to be an honored guest at the Library Losses of Literary Assets Conference at the British Library later the same week.
  7. Curry, Virginia Malloy, *Thefts by the Most Trusted: An Introduction to Art Crime Cases of Institutional Theft by the Investigating FBI Special Agent*, presented at the ARCA International Symposium, Amelia, Italy. (While attending the SMU Poggio Colla Field School in the Mugello Valley of Italy), 2009.
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## LITERARY REFERENCES AND INTERVIEWS

1. Jason Felch and Ralph Frammolino, *Chasing Aphrodite: The Hunt for Looted Antiquities at the World's Richest Museum*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing, New York (2011) Profile of Special Agent Virginia Curry's investigation into the smuggling of Etruscan antiquities by Dr. Marion True of the Getty Villa. Pursuant to FBI policy, SA Curry is not identified in the book, but was interviewed, with FBI approval, by the authors concerning her investigation.
  2. Cannon, Carl M and Dillon, Patrick. *Circle of Greed: The Spectacular Rise and Fall of America's Most Feared and Loathed Lawyer*: Crown Publishing, New York. (2010) FBI Special Agent Curry's investigation in the case of United States v Steven Cooperman is profiled as the lynch pin to the domino-like interstate criminal conspiracy and resulting fall of the largest Tort Law Association in the United States, Milberg Weiss.
  3. Boser, Ulrich. *The Gardner Heist: The True Story of the World's Largest Unsolved Art Theft*., Harper Collins, New York, (2010). Interviews with FBI Los Angeles Case Agent for investigation, and member of the FBI Art Crime Team, SA Virginia Malloy Curry.
  4. Watson, Peter and Todeschini, Cecilia. *The Medici Conspiracy, The Illicit Journey of Looted Antiquities from Italy's Tomb Raiders to the World's Greatest Museums*: Public Affairs Publishing, (2006.) Chapter on the Getty Museum focuses on FBI Special Agent Virginia Malloy Curry's investigation and interviews of Getty Villa Curator of Archeology, Dr. Marion True and her part in the smuggling of antiquities from Italy to the United States.
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## **ACTIVITIES AND AWARDS**

- Edith O'Donnell Scholarship, University of Texas at Dallas
  - Meadows Foundation Merit Scholarship, Southern Methodist University
  - Rigsby Award for Masters Travel, Southern Methodist University
  - Distinguished Alumna in the Fine Arts Award, Academy of the Holy Angeles, Demarest, New Jersey,
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## **PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES**

- Society of Former Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation
  - Board of Directors of the International Council of Museums for the United States of America
  - Board of Directors of the International Council of Museums, Council on Collections
  - Gemological Institute of America Graduate Gemologist Alumni
-