

Charitably



Speaking

353 Southern Artery

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A PUBLICATION OF THE MASSACHUSETTS CHARITABLE MECHANIC ASSOCIATION

President's Message

Officially I am one third through my presidency, and I would like to express my thanks to the Board of Government for the great support they have given me over this past year. I never realized what went on behind the scenes to ensure the everyday function of the organization, and I really appreciate the fine work done by all those who make it happen. In the year ahead, we'll be focused on bringing new members into MCMA. Chuck Sulkala and Tom Crowdis III will be directly involved in that effort, but all of us need to step up to the plate and do our part. – **Arthur**

Recent Happenings

Our Annual Meeting took place on January 25, 2017 and was held once again at the Neighborhood Club in Quincy. Following an invocation by Past-President Bud Hanson, the members enjoyed an excellent luncheon, then attended to the business of the day.

Minutes of the previous Quarterly Meeting were read and approved, as were the reports of Secretary Joyce and Treasurer Hanson. The reports of the Board of Government and the Finance Committee were presented by Trustees Stickney and Lordan respectively, following which reports summarizing the 2016 activities of each of our other committees were presented by representatives of those committees. Expenditures for 2017 were authorized in the amount of \$390,000, the names of two new applicants for membership were announced, and President Anthony presented MCMA plaques to outgoing trustees Bill Scott and John Lordan in appreciation for their years of service on the Board of Government.

The president then spoke on his first year in office, thanking all those who have helped him through the year, and noting that our focus for the coming year will be on membership. Lastly, the full membership approved the recommendations of the Committee on Nominations, voting to elect for three years to the Board of Government Thomas Crowdis III, Harold Flight, Richard Peterson, Steven Anderson, and Thomas Carroll; for three years to the Committee of Relief Harry Dodakian, Steven Anderson, and Glenn Tocci; and for one year as secretary Martin Joyce, and as treasurer Kurt Hanson.



Above, John Lordan (l.) and Bill Scott (r.) are thanked for their service as trustees by President Arthur Anthony at the MCMA Annual Meeting.



Helping Others

We've noted before that most of the organizations considered for grants by our Planning Committee each year are "old friends" with whom we have a lot of familiarity and for whom we have a lot of affection and respect. But each year we also encounter new (to MCMA) organizations, many of which do earn our support, and such was the case last year with **Boston CASA** (Court Appointed Special Advocates).

The CASA program began in 1977 when a Seattle juvenile court judge, concerned about making drastic decisions with insufficient information, conceived the idea of assigning civilian volunteer "advocates" to speak up for the best interest of abused and neglected children in the courtroom. That first program has grown to a network of nearly 1000 CASA and guardian *ad litem* programs that are recruiting, training, and supporting volunteers across the country.

Boston CASA was created in 1982 and initially funded by the Suffolk County Juvenile Court. It became an autonomous nonprofit in 2012 with Charles Lerner, a former foster child himself, as its executive director. Since that time it has tripled the number of volunteers and more than doubled the number of children served annually. It has also begun working with the Attorney General's office on an Older Youth Mentoring Initiative to address how to best support teenagers aging out of the foster care system in Massachusetts.

Boston CASA advocates are appointed by juvenile court judges to be the eyes and ears of the court in complicated foster care cases. (A judge often gets very different versions of the "facts" when first hearing from parents, lawyers and authorities in a given case, and looks to a volunteer advocate to gather information, communicate directly with all parties, and ultimately help the judge make a better-informed determination as to the child's future.) CASA volunteers regularly visit children, serve as mentors, attend school meetings, and guide and support caregivers. They have access to all records, report quarterly to the court, and stay with the child until his or her case is closed.

Not surprisingly, this program works. Abused or neglected children who have a CASA volunteer are more likely to receive the services they need, half as likely to re-enter the foster care system, more likely to succeed in school (4 times more likely to graduate from high school), and more likely to find safe, permanent homes.

Boston CASA works with a staff of only six individuals, and its main functions are recruiting, training, and supporting the volunteer advocates who work directly with and for children in real need. (Currently, 72 volunteers are actively working on cases.) This staff was working with refurbished and unreliable laptops that cramped their efficiency. MCMA was able to eliminate that problem with a grant for new laptops and software, and we were very pleased to be able to do so.



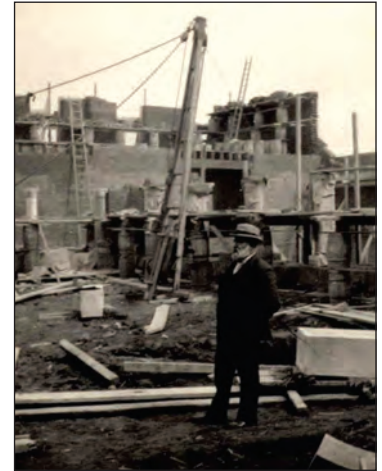
MCMA History

As often happens, research into one subject for these articles opens our eyes to other possibilities, and our recent article on Gridley J. F. Bryant is a case in point, as two of the young architects who worked under Bryant went on to a successful architectural partnership of their own. **Willard Thomas Sears** was born (in 1837) and educated in New Bedford, and ancestors on both sides of his family were *Mayflower* descendants. He received his initial architectural training in that town (from Solomon Eaton) before moving to Boston to apprentice with Bryant. There he met and worked with Charles Amos Cummings, who had been educated in the Boston Public Schools and graduated from Rensselaer Institute [*Its name was later changed to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.*] in New York prior to returning to Boston and joining Bryant's firm. After the two men had left Bryant's employ, they joined forces in the 1860s to form their own architectural practice, Cummings and Sears, a practice that would endure until Cummings' retirement in 1890.

Early commissions for Cummings and Sears included Brechin Hall and Stone Chapel at Phillips Academy in Andover, both of which received positive notice and brought additional opportunities to the firm. They later designed the New England Hospital for Women and Children (1872), the first facility in New England (and second in the country) to be run by female doctors. (It is now part of the Dimock Center in Boston.) And following Boston's Great Fire of 1872 the firm was enlisted in the reconstruction of many downtown buildings, one of which is the still-impressive Bedford Block at 99 Bedford street, an example of Venetian Gothic architecture. And in that same time period they participated in the residential build-out of the Back Bay, where they designed 22 residences, including Cummings' own medieval-style home at the corner of Newbury and Clarendon Streets. In addition to commercial and residential structures, Cummings and Sears were also capable of designing utilitarian projects and did the design of a number of aqueducts and railroad bridges.

A significant part of the Cummings and Sears practice focused on ecclesiastical architecture, building churches throughout Massachusetts and northern New England. By far their most notable accomplishment in this area, often attributed primarily to Cummings, was Old South Church (1873) on Boston's Copley Square. [*The church is also called New Old South Church.*] The church was designed in the Venetian Gothic style, constructed mainly of Roxbury Conglomerate ("puddingstone"), and its trademark feature is its 246-foot tower, or *campanile*.

Cummings and Sears' Boston Cyclorama Building (1884) featured a 127-foot diameter steel-trussed dome, which at the time was the largest dome in the country after the U.S. Capitol Building. It was built to house the cyclorama of



Above, Willard T. Sears (1837-1920) inspects the construction site of the Gardner Museum in 1900.



Bedford Block (1875), Boston



Old South Church (1873), Boston



At left, the crowd gathers at the Cyclorama Building (1884) in Boston to view the 360-degree painting of *The Battle of Gettysburg* by Paul Philippoteaux.

At right is a section of the painting, now on display at the Gettysburg Museum and Visitor Center.



The Battle of Gettysburg, and did so until 1889 when that cyclorama was replaced by *Custer's Last Fight*. The public's fascination with cycloramas ended by the early 1890s, however, and the building was then relegated to various roles until 1970 when it became part of the Boston Center for the Arts.

[The cyclorama of The Battle of Gettysburg displayed in Boston was the second of four versions of the painting created by the French artist Paul Philippoteaux for display in different cities. It depicts Pickett's Charge, the failed infantry assault that was the climax of the 1863 battle. Cycloramas were a type of 360-degree painting (this one was 42 feet high and 377 feet in circumference) with the intended effect of immersing the viewer in the scene being depicted. In this building visitors proceeded along a dark passageway, then ascended a winding staircase to emerge on an elevated viewing platform. The restored Boston painting is now on display at the Gettysburg Museum and Visitor Center, and is among the very few cyclorama paintings remaining in the country.]

Cummings traveled extensively in Europe, primarily Italy, and also wrote about Italian architecture. Those experiences influenced his work, and toward the end of his career he gave more attention to his literary efforts. In 1901 he published his largest work, *A History of Architecture in Italy from the Time of Constantine to the Dawn of the Renaissance*, with over 500 illustrations. Cummings was also a collector of medieval sculpture, and on his death (in 1905) bequeathed his vast collection to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and funded the Charles Amos Cummings Bequest Fund for the collection and care of ancient sculpture for the museum.

Sears, meanwhile, remained focused on his architectural practice. Among his later (post-Cummings) achievements were the New Riding Club at 52 Hemenway Street in Boston. Constructed in 1891 in the Tudor Revival style and built to utilize the nearby bridle paths of Frederick Law Olmsted's Back Bay Fens, the building has since been converted to indoor tennis courts and residential apartments. And Sears was hired by Isabella Stewart Gardner to design Fenway Court in Boston to house Gardner's extensive art collection. Built to evoke a 15th-century Venetian palace, the structure featured three floors of galleries surrounding an interior courtyard, and upon her death in 1924 it became the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. In 1897 he designed what would later be known as the Roosevelt Cottage for Mrs. Hartman Kuhn at what is now Roosevelt Campobello International Park in New Brunswick, Canada. In 1907 Sears was commissioned to design the Pilgrim Monument in Provincetown. That 220-foot tower, with its cornerstone laid by Theodore Roosevelt, was modeled after the Torre del Mangia in Sienna, Italy.

Though Cummings never joined MCMA, he was active in many other organizations. Cummings was a trustee of both the Museum of Fine Arts and the Boston Athenaeum, and he (along with Sears and others) was a founding member of the Boston Society of Architects in 1867, later serving as president. Willard T. Sears did join MCMA (in 1872) and was a lifetime member until his death in 1920. Both he and Cummings are buried at Mt. Auburn Cemetery. (Sears also designed Story Chapel at that cemetery.) Most structures mentioned in this article are on the National Register of Historic Places, and for those that were completed during the Cummings and Sears partnership, it is difficult to assess each partner's contribution. Bryant himself, under whom both men learned, is likely due a modicum of credit as well. But there is no doubting the fact that there is an MCMA association with all of these structures and their stories, and we can and may take a little pride in that.



**New Riding Club (1891)
Boston**



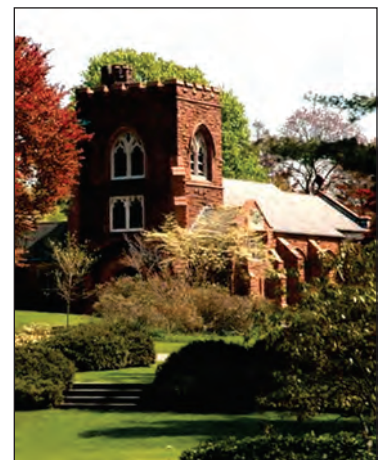
**Fenway Court (1903)
Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum
Boston**



**Roosevelt Cottage (1897)
Campobello Island, N.B., Canada**



**Pilgrim Monument (1907)
Provincetown**



**Story Chapel (1898)
Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge**