

# Sweet Auburn

Spring 1991 Vol.6, No.1

*The Newsletter of the Friends of Mount Auburn*

## Mount Auburn's Administration Building — Renewed and Restored for the Years Ahead

By Ann Beha, AIA, Principal, Ann Beha Associates of Boston

**D**esigned in 1896 by Willard T. Sears in the "English Perpendicular Style," the Administration Building at Mount Auburn is for many visitors their first introduction to the Cemetery. Each work day the staff welcomes the public there, answering inquiries about horticulture, historic figures or individual grave sites, and providing bereaved families with information about their plots and a place to meet and plan memorial services. The Cemetery's administrative staff, including engineering, financial and executive functions, and membership and programs, has long been housed there. The last significant remodeling, however, was nearly thirty years ago, and with the advent of computerized systems and changes in operations, changes were needed. The office layout and equipment were outmoded and overcrowded,

William C. Clendaniel  
*President*  
Mount Auburn Cemetery

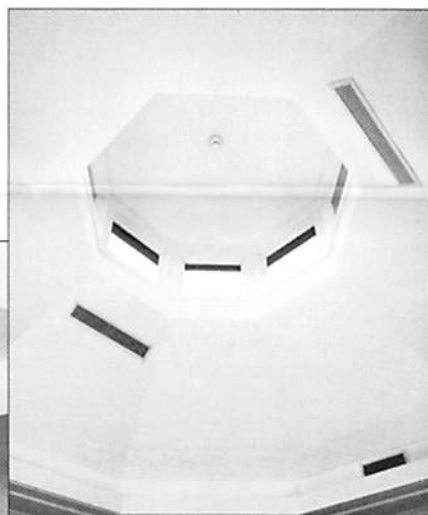
Janet L. Heywood  
*Assistant Director for*  
*Interpretive Programs*

Kathleen D. Leslie  
*Archivist/Librarian*

Nancy Murphy  
*Newsletter Designer*



*Reception Area*

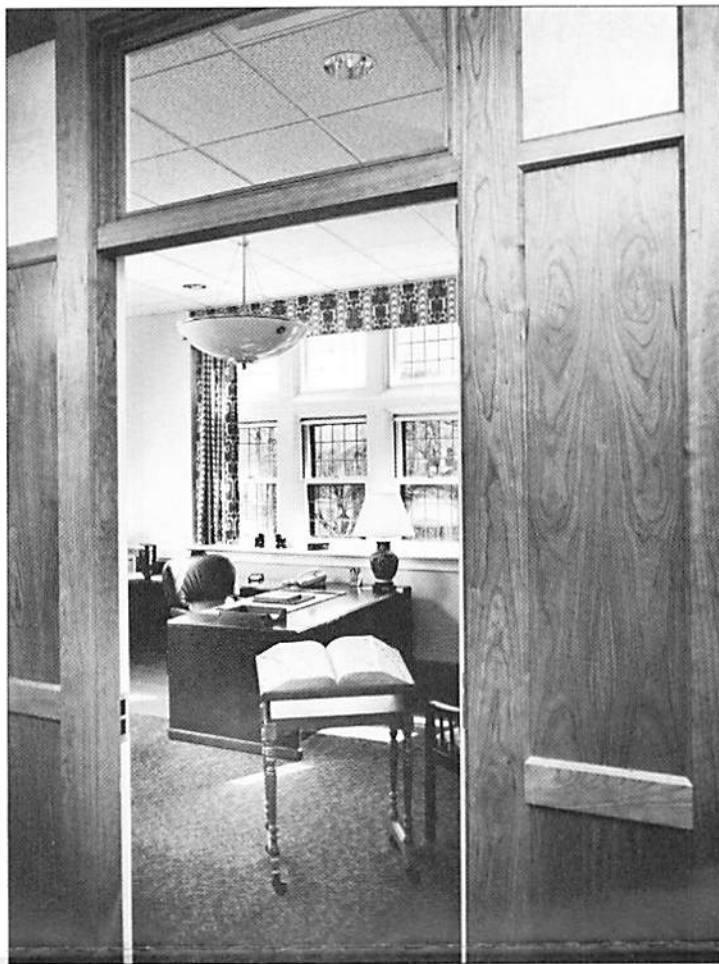


*The lantern*

while many of the building's electrical, plumbing, heating and air conditioning systems were antiquated.

As part of its ongoing, long-range planning process, the Cemetery examined several alternative layouts for the building that would modernize the space while preserving and restoring the building's historic features. The building shell was sound, and the principal public rooms handsomely proportioned and detailed. What was needed was a reclamation of elements of the original design that had been lost over time. For instance, a clerestory skylight in the middle of the building, related to the display of four sculptured figures commissioned by the Cemetery, had been obscured by an earlier modernization. The renovation brings back natural light into the reception and administrative areas by replacing the skylight with a lantern. Blocked up windows in the Library and at the back of the building have also been reopened.

In addition, the stair to the lower level has been redesigned to provide a conference and archival study area, reclaiming an underutilized corridor. A climate-controlled archival storage room has been added, and the staff lounge relocated and upgraded. A display rack for the Cemetery's interpretive materials has been provided and space for small exhibits created. More individual administrative offices have been created behind a glazed partition wall of cherry and birch, designed to allow clerestory light into the office areas. The heating and air conditioning systems have been overhauled. Finally, handicapped access to the building has been provided by raising the level of the pavement outside and redesigning the front door and vestibule, now covered with



*President's office*



*More individual administrative offices have been created behind a glazed partition wall of cherry and birch, designed to allow clerestory light into the office areas.*



Vermont slate. New landscaping has been installed this spring in the enlarged planting beds outside to complement that already put in across the driveway. An enlarged and redefined parking area has been established to accommodate office visitors and staff.

The renovations were completed at the end of 1990, and the staff is now back at work in this revitalized facility, having been operating out of Story Chapel since just after Memorial Day. New furniture, lighting, paint, carpeting and photographs of Mount Auburn reinforce the historic character of the building's interior, providing a gracious welcome to visitors and families.

*Ann Beha Associates, consulting architects for the Cemetery, designed the renovation, with LeMessurier Consultants as engineers and The Halvorson Company, Inc., the Cemetery's master planner, as landscape architects. Pamela W. Hawkes, AIA, was Principal in Charge for Ann Beha Associates and John Englund was Project Associate. Ann Beha Associates is presently assisting the Cemetery in planning renovations and repairs for Story and Bigelow Chapels and the Service Yard buildings. It is also conducting a pilot study for the conservation of historic monuments at the Cemetery as part of Mount Auburn's master planning process.*

*All photos for this article are by © David Hewitt and Anne Garrison. Reproduced with permission.*



Friends members who wish to see the renovations are more than welcome to stop in during business hours. We're very happy to show off our refurbished quarters.

## The Friends Becomes a Charitable Trust and Receives Its First Grant

On November 20, 1990, the Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery became a charitable Massachusetts trust. We made the Friends a separate entity from the Cemetery so that it could receive a charitable tax exemption from the IRS, allowing us to seek grants from individuals, foundations and corporations for our restoration, preservation and interpretive programs. Although your gifts in the past have been deductible, being a Section 501(c)(3) organization will now give us increased flexibility in seeking financial help.

I'm very pleased to report that we received our first grant, also in November, from the Frank M. Barnard Foundation. The \$4,500 award, in memory of Frank M. Barnard and J. Howard Atkins, will enable us to rebind seven 19th-century guidebooks to Mount Auburn, among the most valuable volumes in our archival collection. The grant is particularly appropriate since Mr. Barnard was a book binder and both he and Mr. Atkins, his business associate, are buried at Mount Auburn.

When my predecessor, Alan Chesney, announced the formation of the Friends in 1986, I suspect he did not entirely anticipate the enormous success that your organization has had. With over 850 members contributing nearly \$18,000 a year and having sponsored a total of 127 programs attracting some 4,500 participants, the Friends has certainly succeeded in its mission of "encouraging more people to enjoy the wonders of Mount Auburn." The Friends has added a very special extra dimension to Mount Auburn.

As we look to the future of this wonderful Cemetery, however, it is increasingly clear that keeping it available as an outdoor museum and maintaining its grounds, buildings and particularly noteworthy monuments in a quality condition will challenge our existing financial resources. There are a number of ways we can meet that challenge, and we intend to pursue all of them. One particularly appropriate avenue, however, is to ask the public — individuals, foundations and corporations — for their financial help. The lot owners over the years have contributed their share towards creating the endowment necessary to maintain Mount Auburn's grounds, and frugal administrations and trustees have put aside additional funds from the sale of interment space for the general needs of the Corporation. But as the public increasingly enjoys the many benefits Mount Auburn offers, and as we strive to provide the interpretive and other services that the public needs, it is appropriate for the public to contribute its share.

You, the loyal members of the Friends, have already been doing just that, and we are grateful. We now hope that your example will inspire others to contribute as well, by joining and contributing to the Friends. We welcome your help in this effort.



William C. Clendaniel, President

## Do You Have a Picture of Mount Auburn?

With the completion of the renovation of the Administration Building, we are decorating our walls with images of Mount Auburn and planning exhibits of art, archival material and historical objects in our new display area. Two portraits have been rehung: John White Alexander's magnificent 1904 painting of Israel Munson Spelman, President of the Cemetery from 1874 to 1905, and Frank Duveneck's painting of Alexander Wadsworth, the original surveyor of the grounds. Four superb contemporary photographs of the Cemetery by Cambridge resident Ann Fuller have been purchased and hung. Some empty spaces remain, however, and we are anxious to fill them with additional pictures of Mount Auburn, whether old or new. If any of you have such a picture or know of someone who does, we would be most interested in discussing a gift or purchase. There is a provision in the tax code that expires in December, 1991 that makes a gift of personal property to a nonprofit organization particularly attractive from a tax point of view.

## Jean Rosenberg Resigns

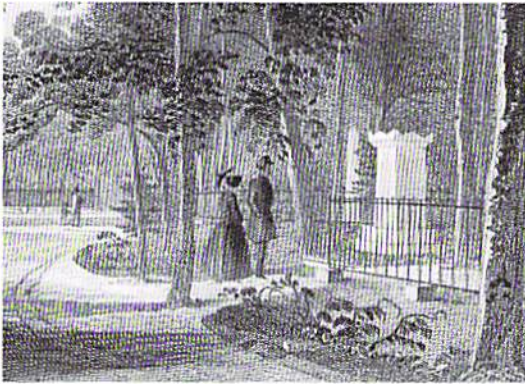
After three and a half years as our membership and program director, Jean L. Rosenberg resigned at the end of January. Jean, building on the pioneer work of Eden Sizemore, the first Friends director, leaves a valuable legacy of outstanding programs and a newsletter of considerable distinction. Under her leadership the Friends membership grew to over 800, raising over \$17,000 in dues and contributions in 1990. She has left us high standards to live up to, and we all wish her well in whatever she chooses to do in the future. We will miss her many contributions to the Friends and the wonderful photographs taken by her husband, Peter Southwick, which have appeared frequently in *Sweet Auburn*.

We are very fortunate that Janet Heywood, Jean's assistant for the last year, has accepted the position of Assistant Director for Interpretive Programs. Janet, a resident of Watertown, a graduate of the University of Chicago and a former PhD candidate at Harvard University, has been familiar with Mount Auburn for many years as an avid birder. In the last 17 months she has performed a wide variety of duties here with great distinction, including the production of *Mount Auburn in Bloom* and *Birds at Mount Auburn - Spring Migrants* and the design of our new brochure rack in the Administration Building. She brings professional experience in the printing industry and a keen interest in computers, both valuable skills for us as we expand the range of our publications and try to increase the efficiency of handling a growing Friends membership. During Jean's maternity leave last summer, Janet came to know many of you who attended our programs, and she is most enthusiastic about getting to know many more of you.



## Results of the Visitors Survey

As many of you know, over 700 visitors were surveyed in May and June, 1990, as part of the master planning project. The results show that visitors are diverse in age, residence, frequency of visits and in the number who come together. They fall into two groups of nearly equal



1847 engraving by James Smillie depicting visitors at the monument erected by subscription to Hannah Adams (1755-1831), historian and scholar

size — grave site visitors and leisure visitors. Well over half of all visitors come from Boston, Cambridge, Watertown, Arlington, Belmont and Medford; only 8-10% come from outside eastern Massachusetts. Women are in the majority, particularly in the leisure visitor group. Over 80% of the leisure visitors walk and admire the trees, shrubs and flowers, 50% look at historic monuments and buildings, and 42% bird-watch. Much lower percentages of

grave site visitors mentioned these activities (53% said they enjoyed the trees, shrubs and flowers, 24% walking, 21% historic monuments and buildings, 9% birdwatching). Of the visitors surveyed, 92% have been to Mount Auburn before and most visit several times a year (average between 4-5 times).

The two groups of visitors have pronounced differences, but there is a strong, common appreciation for the beauty and serenity of the grounds and repeated pleas that any changes to Mount Auburn be unobtrusive and well planned. Areas of concern included confusion about parking regulations, car traffic around the grounds, and the availability of information about the Cemetery.

We and the master planners are very grateful to all of you who answered our questions, and the specific comments and concerns will be taken into account as we plan for the future. It is gratifying to know that the great majority of our visitors love Mount Auburn and return often, and we are also relieved to know that we and our visitors agree in large part on how to make things better. We look forward to introducing subtle improvements in the months ahead.

If you wish to fill out the questionnaire that was used in the survey,

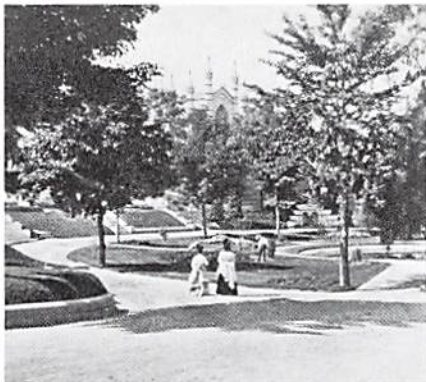
copies are available at the Gatehouse, where a wide range of publications and other information is also available. If you have questions, suggestions or comments about any aspect of the Cemetery, please do not hesitate to talk with one of the staff at the Office during business hours (8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. on weekdays, 8:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. on Saturdays).

Illustrations are from the Mount Auburn Cemetery Archives.

Visitors at Asa Gray Garden pictured in a late 19th-century stereographic photograph



Auburn Lake and Fountain shown in an 1874 woodcut





**Thomas  
Mayo  
Brewer**  
1814-1880

Thomas Mayo Brewer, ornithologist, oologist and publisher, was born in Boston, November 21, 1814. After graduating from Harvard College and Medical School, he practiced as dispensary physician for several years

before his political interests led him to become an editorial writer for the *Boston Atlas*, a leading Whig newspaper. In 1857 he joined the publishing firm of Swan & Tileston (later Brewer & Tileston) and served as its president until his retirement in 1875. He had a great interest in public education and was an active member of the Boston School Board from 1844 until his death.

Throughout his life, regardless of his business profession, he was a devoted ornithologist. He was a friend of Nuttall and Audubon, who, in *Birds of America*, makes acknowledgment of his help in supplying specimens and information. Brewer's particular interest was oology, the study of birds' eggs and nests, and in 1857 the first part of his major work, *North American Oology*, was published by the Smithsonian Institution. Unfortunately the great cost of illustrations prevented the publication of the rest of this treatise. Brewer's egg collection, considered to be one of the best of the time, was willed to the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard. Brewer collaborated with Spencer F. Baird and Robert Ridgway to produce the famous classic, *A History of North American Birds*, to which Brewer contributed the life histories, comprising two-thirds of the text. During the national debate over the merits of the introduced House Sparrow, Brewer vigorously defended the bird and engaged in long-running acrimonious exchanges with ornithologists who deplored the proliferation of the species.

Brewer's memory lives on in the names of two birds of western North America — Brewer's Blackbird, named for him by the grateful Audubon in 1843, and Brewer's Sparrow (*Spizella breweri*), a name selected by Cassin of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences in 1856 — and in the Hairytail or Brewer's Mole (*Parascalops breweri*), reflecting the name given by Audubon and Bachman on their finding the new species in specimens forwarded by Brewer.

From 1870 to 1880, Brewer served as a Trustee of Mount Auburn Cemetery. During his term of office, he chaired the Special Committee on Birds, dealt with such matters as the selling of a Mount Auburn swan that had attacked a woman visitor and wrote a report on the birds and waterfowl of the Corporation.

Contemporary biographies emphasize Dr. Brewer's warm sympathy, his loyalty to friends and to his convictions of truth and duty, and his indefatigable enthusiasm in developing his chosen field of study.

He died in Boston, January 23, 1880, and is buried on Yarrow Path, Lot 792, F8 on the map.

*Article is taken from Charles F. Batchelder's Nuttall Ornithological Club 1873 to 1919, published by the Club, 1937; Foster W. Russell's Mount Auburn Biographies, 1953; and The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, Volume 22, James T. White Co., 1932.*

## An Invitation to Join The Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery

### Please enroll me as a member.

- \_\_\_ Senior Citizen/Student \$10
- \_\_\_ Individual \$15
- \_\_\_ Household \$25
- \_\_\_ Contributor/Organization \$50
- \_\_\_ Additional Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

The Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery is a Section 501 (c)(3) charitable trust promoting the appreciation and preservation of the cultural, historic and natural resources of America's first garden cemetery, founded in 1831. Contributions over membership dues are deductible from income taxes to extent provided by law.

Enclosed is my check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ payable to  
*Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery.*

Names(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like this to be a gift membership, please enclose your name and address so that we may notify the recipient.

**Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery**  
**580 Mount Auburn Street**  
**Cambridge, MA 02138**  
**617/864-9646**

## The Bowditch Statue

Visitors to Mount Auburn may notice that recent landscaping changes draw attention to the life-size bronze statue of Nathaniel Bowditch (1773-1838), astronomer, mathematician and author of the *American Practical Navigator*, a seagoing guide still in use in updated editions aboard ships today. This monument, raised by public subscription, has greeted those entering the Cemetery's front gate for over one hundred and forty years.

The James Smillie engraving on the back panel of this newsletter shows the statue as it appeared in 1847 soon after its placement. The monument, the work of sculptor Robert Ball Hughes, was the first large bronze figure cast in the United States. Hughes depicted the elderly scholar seated with a globe and sextant beside him. By the 1880s, weathering of the bronze had

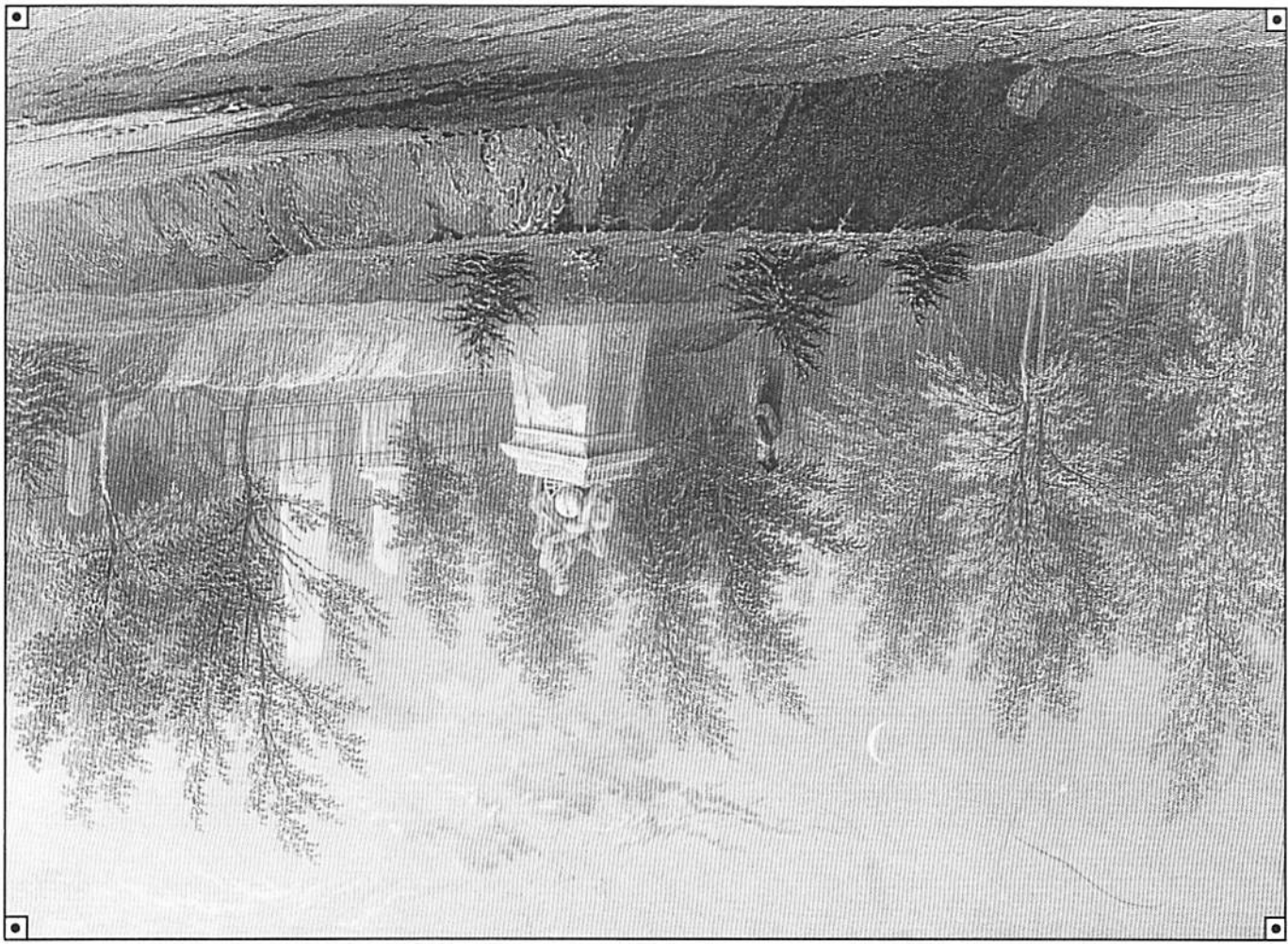
brought it to such a state of disrepair that it was recast in Europe, as an inscription on the base shows.

Nathaniel Bowditch is buried in his family's lot on Tulip Path, E4 on the map.



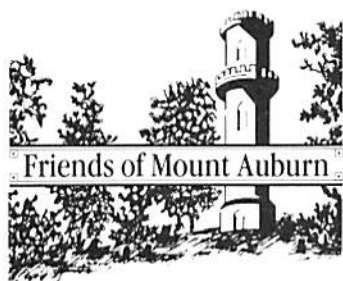
*Bowditch Statue seen in a 19th-century stereo view*

Bonditch Statue, Engraving by James Smith, circa 1847



MAC Archives

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