

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

1. STATE Massachusetts	2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO. Theme XX, subtheme, "Literature, Drama, and Music"
3. NAME(S) OF SITE Craigie-Longfellow House	4. APPROX. ACREAGE 4 acres
5. EXACT LOCATION (County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet) 105 Brattle Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts	
6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (Also administrator if different from owner) Longfellow Trust	

7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant)

This 18 room frame house was built in 1759 by John Vessall. Washington stayed here during his Boston sojourn at times, 1775-76. Longfellow owned and occupied it, 1837-82. It is open to the public, Monday-Friday, 10-5, Saturday, 12-5, Sunday, 1-5, admission 30¢, and is well presented.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 1807-1882, in his day generally regarded as America's greatest poet, was born in Portland, Maine, and studied at Bowdoin College. Here he was professor of modern languages, 1829-1835, having first spent three years in European travel. After another year of travel he became a professor at Harvard where he taught until 1854. Two of his first ambitious works were the novels of European travel, Hyperion and Outre Mer, but he soon realized that his field was poetry. In prosody he covered a wide range from sonnets to the long narratives such as Hiawatha, Evangeline, and The Courtship of Miles Standish. New verse form, previously used in the Finnish Kalevala was introduced in Hiawatha and Longfellow also made extensive use of hexameter.

He became immensely popular in Europe--10,000 copies of Miles Standish sold in London the first day--and the works were translated into 12 languages by 1900. He also translated extensively himself, notably from Dante.

Though he wrote of Indians and of travel on the Mississippi, Longfellow's knowledge was strictly from the library. His fame has receded during the present century somewhat, but he must be accounted a front rank figure in American literature.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Give best sources; give location of manuscripts and rare works)

Harvard University has many of the Longfellow papers. References include T. W. Higginson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, (1902), H. S. Gorman, A Victorian American (1926), W. C. Bronson article in Dictionary of American Biography.

9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (Mention best reports and studies, as, NPS study, I.I.A.B.S., etc.)

None

10. PHOTOGRAPHS* ATTACHED: YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	11. CONDITION excellent	12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.) House museum	13. DATE OF VISIT 6/24/61
14. NAME OF RECORDER (Signature) <i>J. W. Coleman</i> J. W. Coleman	15. TITLE Staff Historian	16. DATE 8/7/61	

* DRY MOUNT ON AN 8 X 10 1/2 SHEET OF FAIRLY HEAVY PAPER. IDENTIFY BY VIEW AND NAME OF THE SITE, DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH, AND NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER. GIVE LOCATION OF NEGATIVE. IF ATTACHED, ENCLOSE IN PROPER NEGATIVE ENVELOPES.

(IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED USE SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET, 10-317a, AND REFER TO ITEM NUMBER)

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1. STATE Massachusetts	2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO. (Literature) Theme XX - Architecture (Colonial), Themes X, XX, /
3. NAME(S) OF SITE Vassell-Craigie-Longfellow House	4. APPROX. ACREAGE 1 acre
5. EXACT LOCATION (County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet) 105 Brattle Street, Cambridge, Middlesex County.	
6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (Also administrator if different from owner) Longfellow Memorial Trust.	
7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant)	

Erected in 1759, the Vassall-Craigie-Longfellow House is a splendid example of the better typical New England houses of the Late Georgian period. It also served as George Washington's headquarters for nine months beginning in July, 1775, and more significantly, it was the home of the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow from 1837 until his death in 1882.

Constructed by Col. John Vassall, Jr., the two-and-a-half story house is almost square and has a double-hipped roof, with four lower slopes crowned by balustrades which conceal four upper slopes ~~crowned by balustrades which conceal four upper slopes~~ of very low pitch. The balustrades, steps, and terraces enhance the posture of the house, and the five-bay facade is adorned by a central pavilion and pediment with fan window, rather prominent modillioned cornice, and four giant Ionic pilasters. The windows, however, are simple openings, equipped with both interior shutters and exterior blinds.

The plan is of the usual central-hall type with two rooms on either side and with two interior chimneys, differing from the norm only ~~in~~ the depth of the hall, which permits a partitioned back hall with separate servants' staircase. The house has four rooms on each floor and all fireplace walls are paneled. The room to the right of the front central hall was Washington's council chamber and later Longfellow's study. Behind this is a large library which is paneled on all four walls. This room was redecorated in 1793. The rooms above these served as General Washington's quarters. The east and west one-story piazzas and the service quarters at the northwest rear corner of the main house were added by

8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Give best sources; give location of manuscripts and rare works) (Continued)

See page 2.

9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (Mention best reports and studies, as, NPS study, IIABS, etc.)
Historic American Building Survey: (13 sheets, 1935) (4 photos, 1940).

10. PHOTOGRAPHS* 4584-87 ATTACHED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	11. CONDITION Excellent	12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.) Museum	13. DATE OF VISIT Sept. 21, 1967
14. NAME OF RECORDER (Signature) Charles W. Snell		15. TITLE Historian	16. DATE Jan. 8, 1968

* DRY MOUNT ON AN 8 X 10 1/2 SHEET OF FAIRLY HEAVY PAPER. IDENTIFY BY VIEW AND NAME OF THE SITE, DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH, AND NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER. GIVE LOCATION OF NEGATIVE. IF ATTACHED, ENCLOSE IN PROPER NEGATIVE ENVELOPES.

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SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET

This sheet is to be used for giving additional information or comments, for more space for any item on the regular form, and for recording pertinent data from future studies, visitations, etc. Be brief, but use as many Supplement Sheets as necessary. When items are continued they should be listed, if possible, in numerical order of the items. All information given should be headed by the item number, its name, and the word (cont'd), as, 6. Description and Importance (cont'd) . . .

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STATE Massachusetts	NAME(S) OF SITE Vassell-Craigie-Longfellow House
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8. References:

Hugh Morrison, Early American Architecture (New York, 1952), 493-495, fig. 415; Dorothy and Richard Pratt, A Guide to Early American Homes--North (New York, 1956), 7-8; Massachusetts: A Guide to its Places and People (American Guide Series) (Boston, 1937), 192-193; Fiske Kimball, Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and of the Early Republic (New York, 1922), 70, 73, 75, 88, 89, 94, 96, 97, 99, 101, 106, 110, 117, 119, 122, 129, 266, 288; James G. VanDerpool, "Historical Development of Architecture in the U.S.A., 1632-1912," (N.P.S. Ms., 1966), 77; Mary H. Northend, Historic Houses of New England (Boston, 1914), 230-240; Drawings of House in Donald Millar, Measured Drawings of Some Colonial and Georgian Houses (New York, 1916-1930), Vol. 2, plates 52-62.

7. Continued:

Dr. Andrew Craigie, who acquired the house in 1793.

Longfellow rented apartments in the house of the widow Mrs. Craigie in 1837 when he came to take a position as professor at Harvard and in 1843 he received the house as a wedding present from his father-in-law. The house is owned by the Longfellow House Trust, which was formed in 1913 by members of the Dana and Longfellow families to preserve the structure. The poet's oldest unmarried daughter, Mary Alice Longfellow, lived in the house until her death in 1928.

Condition

The house is maintained in excellent condition and is open to the public. The present furnishings reflect the period of the poet's residence. The house has been little altered and the excellent interior woodwork remains intact.