



## In This Issue

[New Digital Collection:  
Elliot's Birds of North  
America](#)

[Remember When?](#)

[Researching the  
Athenæum](#)

## Reminder

The Athenæum closes at 1:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve, Wednesday, December 24, and remains closed Christmas Day, Thursday, December 25.

The Athenæum also closes at 1:00 p.m. on New Year's Eve, Wednesday, December 31, and remains closed New Year's Day, January 1, 2015.

The institution will be open regular hours on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

Happy Holidays!

## Follow the Athenæum!



## Director's Letter

As the days draw short and the shops grow crowded, remember the Athenæum. Here, without cost or kerfuffle, our **reference librarians** stand ready to connect you with the books you need, even by suggesting titles that you might intend to purchase elsewhere.



Seeking an instructive, enjoyable novel for the youngster embarking on a semester abroad? Or the perfect book for your WWII-expert neighbor? Or the catalogue raisonné of your cousin's favorite artist's work? Our librarians would be delighted to recommend the ideal volumes to suit your needs. We would also be happy to find just the right title to match your own tastes during this, the coziest season for curling up with a book.

Of course, if you are still searching for the perfect present, our membership staff would love to help you find it. A **gift of membership** is sure to suit any curious reader, thinker, or connoisseur, and the enjoyment lasts a whole year long.

From all of us here at 10½ Beacon Street, to all of you in the Athenæum's extended family, Happy Holidays!

Elizabeth E. Barker, Ph.D.  
Stanford Calderwood Director

Credit for image above: Elizabeth E. Barker on the second floor spiral staircase (Mark Ritter, 2014)

**New Digital Collection: *Elliot's Birds of North America***

## Quick Links

Renew Membership

Find a Book

Ask a Question

Children's Library

Exhibitions

Events Calendar

## Featured Events

Please check the **calendar** or your booklet for the full autumn schedule. If you find these events interesting, you may wish to browse these **books related to events**.

Book Talk: **Brooks Headley's Fancy Desserts**

Tuesday, Dec. 2,

6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Lecture: Margherita Desy, **"A Nation's Ship:" Chronicling USS Constitution with the Boston Athenæum Collections**

Wednesday, Dec. 3,  
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Children's Event: **The Tailor of Gloucester - A Children's Opera**

Saturday, Dec. 13  
2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Young Patrons Tasting Event: **Let's Get Spirited**

Following in the footsteps of Audubon, Daniel Elliot took on the project of reproducing life-size images of all species of birds that had been discovered since the publication of Audubon's *Birds in America*. He did many of the drawings himself from specimens held by the Smithsonian Institution, the Chicago Academy of Natural Sciences, the London Zoological Society, and the British Museum. All seventy-two plates were lithographed and hand colored by Bowen and Company in Philadelphia. While he had to compromise and illustrate one of the larger birds at half scale, the scope of the work ranges from tiny hummingbirds to large owls, ducks and shorebirds.



**Volume one** and **volume two** were completely conserved and rebound in leather with marbled paper on boards by Jeanne Goodman, the Athenæum's 2013 Von Clemm Fellow in Conservation. A generous donation from Trustee Emeritus Jerrold I. W. Mitchell made both the conservation and scanning of these volumes possible.

Stanley Ellis Cushing  
Anne C. and David J. Bromer Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts

Credit for image above: "Graculus Perspicillatus, Pallas' Cormorant," in Daniel Giraud Elliot, *New and Heretofore Unfigured Species of Birds of North America*, 2 vols (New York, 1869). Boston Athenæum, Purchase, George F. Parkman Fund, 1910

## Remember When? Ghost of Christmas Past

So often, the past will encroach on the present. Ebenezer Scrooge had Jacob Marley, the Boston Athenæum has Reverend Harris, and yes, the Red Sox had Babe Ruth. My memories of prior Christmas seasons here at the Athenæum come back to haunt me as well.

In the 1980s, when Circulation and periodical tables filled the Henry Long Room, most events took place on the second floor. Those holiday scenes were as plentiful as the number of fruit cakes traveling through the Postal Service. In one festive alcove, members could enjoy a Christmas tree decorated and its base encircled by a stationary antique locomotive from a much simpler time, puffing smoke and disappearing around the back if only in our



Tuesday, Dec. 16,  
5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

## Athenæum Encyclopædists

The first meeting of the **Athenæum Encyclopædists** will be Thursday, December 11, 2014, at 6:00 p.m. On this occasion, the meeting location will be the second floor, where there is easy access to computers. We will help members who wish to register on Wikipedia, discuss possible projects, and highlight research resources. This will also serve as a chance for everyone to meet.

We hope to see you there.

## Children's Library

Stories, Songs, & Activities  
Thursdays: Dec. 4, 11, 18  
10:30 a.m.

Family Story Time  
Saturdays: Dec. 6, 13, 20  
10:30 a.m.

Story Time & Craft  
Tuesdays: Dec. 9, 30

Look for Children's Librarian Suzanne Terry's **books recommended** for the holiday season.

## New Member Benefit

Members can cut 50% off the cost of parking at the Boston Common Garage when you visit the Athenæum at night or on the weekends.

Discounted vouchers can be

minds. Also occupying a place of prominence was an antique crèche, a relic of Christmas past, generously placed loaned by a longtime member.

With ghosts, come spirits, as well, although never in the distilled form. A fine way to raise one's spirits is to feast on holiday cookies and sweets. You could indulge in both on the second floor if you were fortunate enough to get reservations for the "Christmas Tea." (Some things have not changed.) This was always a special occasion, featuring hot beverages, chilled eggnog, and warm greetings, too. No, the caroling wasn't from "Angels on High," but you did have the pleasure of listening to a choir of cherub-faced boys singing from the gallery level above.

With the magic of Christmas also came magic for children and the young at heart. Franco the Magnifico could make that rabbit, as well as your worries, disappear, if only for a morning. Wait, have we forgotten the big man himself? No, we were not playing games here, not even "Reindeer Games." Good Ole St. Nick could be depended upon to pay us a visit with sack upon his back, his cheeks like roses, and his nose like a cherry. I won't say that his belly shook like a bowl full of jelly, because I still consider Mr. Armstrong a good friend of mine.

If not able to recall these days of Christmas past, please enjoy the days of Christmas present, and to all, "God Bless Us Everyone." Enjoy the holiday season, and have a happy and healthy New Year!

James P. Feeney  
Howard Lang and Barbara Lang Hacker Head of Circulation

Credit for image above: Christmas Tree, first-floor Long Room (Emily Anderson, 2014)

## Researching the Athenæum at Sister Institutions

Many sister institutions share founders, membership and staff with the Athenæum. New England, one can say, was a small town. Papers of the Athenæum's librarians and publications are among the holdings of the Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS), the Phillips Library in Salem, and other neighboring libraries. Recently, I visited MHS to review the Charles Folsom Papers (1794-1872), librarian from 1847 to 1856. It was wonderful to be a



purchased for \$9 at the Circulation Desk with cash, check, or credit card.

**To qualify for the discounted rate:**

on **weeknights**, enter between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m., and exit by 8:00 a.m.

on **weekends**, enter after 6:00 a.m. and exit by 8:00 a.m. the following day

Upon exit, simply insert the parking voucher in lieu of payment.

Please note that you cannot use more than one voucher per parking ticket.

Posted rates apply if you exit after 8:00 a.m.



researcher, to follow another library's reading room rules, and to study Folsom's early letters.

Folsom's letters included his youthful adventure on the USS Washington. Folsom was chaplain (whose duties included leading prayers and teaching mathematics) during the ship's eighteen-month voyage to the Mediterranean. Folsom wrote, "The ship Washington is the finest in the Navy. She is going to the pleasantest part of the world in the pleasantest season of the year." To his sister Sophia, he raved, "I shall have a well-furnished library, devotional books, medical books, and books of all sorts." The ship left Boston on May 2, 1816, bound for Annapolis, where guests boarded, giving Folsom the chance to meet President Madison, coincidentally, just months after Librarian William Smith Shaw welcomed Madison to the Athenæum.

Soon after, the ship reached Kent Island, and Folsom, a naturalist, explored and collected unfamiliar specimens. Folsom reported to his friend John Ware of Cambridge, "[...] a snake, 4 or 5 feet long, which they [sailors and crew] call a black moccasin, was found crawling up our rudder, when the nearest land was 2½ miles distant. I skinned and filled it with sand very neatly, to the huge surprise of the sailors, who shrunk with unaffected horror from the touch of this descendent of the Dragon of Eden. Take this as an earnest of what I'll do when I can get hold of valuable objects."

I am relieved that skinning and stuffing a snake is not a prerequisite to librarianship; however, the adventurous spirit embodied in Folsom serves well when browsing the stacks, even though there is no risk of snake bite.

Carolle Morini  
Caroline D. Bain Archivist / Reference Librarian

Credit for image above: Charles Folsom to John Ware, 8 June 1816. Charles Folsom Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society (Photography courtesy of MHS)