

THE WADSWORTHS: A PORTLAND FAMILY

In 1784 the village of Falmouth was making a new beginning. In the autumn of 1775, the town had been bombarded and burned by British warships, and for almost ten years the people of Falmouth waited to rebuild, fearing that if new houses were erected before the war was over the British would simply burn them down again. Not until 1783 did the rebuilding begin in earnest. Those who took part in Falmouth's rejuvenation were not only former residents, but newcomers who believed in its future prosperity. Among the latter was General Peleg Wadsworth of Plymouth, Massachusetts.

On July 21, 1784, Dr. Samuel Deane, minister of Falmouth's First Parish Church, noted in his diary, "General Wadsworth ... arrived in Capt. Cooper.¹ The General had made a visit to Falmouth in April, probably to look into business opportunities and to find a place for his family to live. When he arrived in July he brought with him his wife, Elizabeth, and their five children: Charles, the eldest, age eight; Zilpah, Elizabeth, John, and Lucia, who had just turned one.

Thirty-six-year-old Peleg Wadsworth was a Revolutionary War veteran. Born in Duxbury, Massachusetts, and a graduate of Harvard University, he was typical of many young men of the period in that following his graduation he became a teacher. Peleg "kept" a private school in Plymouth where he met his future wife, Elizabeth Bartlett. Following their marriage in 1772, they moved to nearby Kingston, where Peleg established himself as a trader. Elizabeth helped Peleg in his store. Their first child, Alexander Scammell Wadsworth, was born in Kingston, and died as an infant.

When the Wadsworths began their married life, America was already well on its way to war with Britain. From the earliest days of conflict Peleg was involved — as the captain of a militia company and a member of Kingston's Committee of Correspondence — and during the war he rose quickly in rank. In 1779, as a brigadier general, he was second in command of the ill-fated Penobscot Expedition, which failed to drive the



Falmouth (Portland) in 1786. In 1784 General Peleg Wadsworth arrived in the village with his wife, Elizabeth, and five children and took up temporary residence in a barn on the corner of Back Street (Congress Street) and Fiddle Lane (the Franklin Street Arterial). Print after a drawing by John Seymour, Jr., courtesy Maine Historical Society.

British out of eastern Maine. Exonerated of any blame in that mismanaged campaign, in the spring of 1780 he was given command of all the troops in the District.²

Peleg, a warm-hearted and devoted family man, did not choose to be separated from his family.³ To his headquarters at Thomaston he brought Elizabeth, four-year-old Charles, and the baby, Elizabeth. Eighteen-month-old Zilpah, who had been named for her father's sister, stayed in Plymouth with her Grandmother Bartlett. Peleg evidently felt it would be safe to have his family with him. He was wrong.

On the bitterly cold night of February 18, 1781, a force of British soldiers from Fort George at Bagaduce (Castine), acting on a tip from a Thomaston Tory-sympathizer who knew that most of Peleg's troops had finished their tour of duty and been sent home, attacked the little snowbound house where the Wadsworths had retired for the night. Peleg was in his night-shirt in his sleeping chamber wielding a pair of pistols and a blunderbuss when he was shot in the arm and taken captive. Hastily, the British helped him to dress. Elizabeth, who was not allowed to tend to his copiously bleeding wound, threw a blanket over his shoulders before he was hurried out into the cold night by his captors.

Peleg was imprisoned at the Bagaduce fort. From his cell he sent anxious letters to his pregnant wife. "I am extremely afflicted with the idea of your situation. The windows dashed, the doors broken, the house torn to pieces and blood and slaughter around you." Within four months Peleg had succeeded in escaping his prison and joining Elizabeth in Plymouth where she had gone via Falmouth.⁴

Peleg returned to Maine after the war, and resolved to go into trade in Falmouth. While he searched for a suitable location upon which to build a store and house, his family lived on the corner of Back Street (Congress Street) and Fiddle Lane (the Franklin Street Arterial) in a barn belonging to Captain Jonathan Paine. Captain Paine's buildings had escaped the 1775 bombardment and, with living spaces at a premium in Falmouth, the barn was converted into a dwelling. Yet it was still a barn; six-year-old Zilpah would remember all her life the discomforts and inconveniences of those first quarters in Falmouth.⁵ She also retained a vivid memory of her father at this time. In 1848 she wrote:

Imagine to yourself a man of middle size, well proportioned with a military air, and who carried himself so truly that many thought him tall. His dress, a bright scarlet coat, buff small clothes and vest, full ruffled bosom, ruffles over the hands, white stockings, shoes with silver buckles, white cravat bow in front; hair well powdered and tied behind in a club so called.⁶

By December 1784, Peleg had bought one and a half acres on the outskirts of the village and built his store and a barn. His choice of land was prudent, for his lot and his store faced Back Street, the principal route of travel onto Falmouth Neck. Farmers bringing their produce to market in the seaport town would go right by his door. Just below his lot was the important Hay-Market Square with its hay scales. He opened for business in January 1785, advertising in the *Falmouth Gazette* "an assortment of Goods . . . , [to be sold] on as good

terms, as at any store in town, for oath, lumber, or public securities of every kind." In the barter economy that prevailed and with the amount of building that was going on, Peleg showed good business sense in his willingness to trade goods for lumber.

Peleg had the resources to build a rather impressive house in Falmouth. The two-story, eight-room house was begun in the spring of 1785. Of thirty-three houses that went up in Falmouth that year, it was the only one of brick. It was perhaps unfamiliarity with the building material that caused the workmen to lay such a thick course of bricks for the walls that they ran out before the house was finished. It took two cargoes of brick, imported from Philadelphia, and two summers to finish the house.⁷ Even as the house was begun, another son, Henry, had been born.

In other ways the brick house was exceptional by Falmouth's standards. The Wadsworth's "best parlor" or "drawing room" was reportedly the largest private reception room in town, and the spinet they installed in it the first in Falmouth. A door opened from Peleg's "shop," which was joined to the house, into the family's second-best parlor. The land upon which both house and store were built sloped down to the street.

The family probably moved in the autumn of 1786. They brought with them to their new home a sampler worked by eight-year-old Zilpah that year, which still hangs in the house. Near neighbors were Joseph and Mary McLellan, who lived south of the Wadsworths on the other side of Back Street. Joseph was a trader like Peleg, but with his son, Hugh, he owned ships that plied the lucrative West Indies trade that was bringing prosperity and growth to Portland (Falmouth was renamed in 1786.) McLellan's friendship and his ships probably were important to Peleg, who quickly expanded his business dealings beyond his small shop. Elizabeth, during these years, gave birth to four more children — George, another Alexander Scammell, Samuel, and Peleg, Jr.

In the spring of 1787 Peleg bought 7,800 acres of land between the Saco and Great Ossipee rivers for twelve and a half



"Elizabeth superintended a busy household while Peleg was attending Congress or in Hiram seeing to his interests there."

Eliza Wadsworth

cents an acre. His holdings would eventually give rise to and encompass the town of Hiram. Peleg surveyed out tracts from his huge holdings to sell or to lease as farms. With mill privileges on the Saco River, he was able not only to see his land farmed, but to harvest lumber for shipment to burgeoning local building markets and the West Indies. By 1795 he had established his oldest son, Charles, in Hiram to superintend the substantial farming and lumbering operations.

Peleg seems to have closed his store by 1792, so Portland-bound goods from the farm and lumber business were probably sold to other local merchants. The wagons from Hiram were not sent back empty, but stocked with supplies not obtainable on the farm: coffee and tea, sugar and molasses, cotton, brandy and rum, fish, ginger, onion seed, occasionally an orange for one of Charles's children, or pies and gingerbread that Elizabeth had baked.⁸ In the autumn Charles's mules were driven in herds to market in Providence, Rhode Island. Pigs were brought to Portland. At the wharves with their legs tied together they were weighed in the great scales and sold by the pound. It was an unpleasant chore that fell to whichever Wadsworth son happened to be available, for the disgruntled



Peleg Wadsworth

hogs bit their handlers at every opportunity.⁹

Most of these activities went forward without Peleg, for in 1792, after six years of serving Portland as a selectman and on various committees, he was elected, first, a senator in the Massachusetts Legislature and then Cumberland County's first representative to Congress — an office he would hold for fourteen successive years. As a member of Congress he was away from home every winter, in Philadelphia and later in Washington.

Although physically separated from his family for the better part of each year, Peleg nevertheless played an active role in bringing up his children. Through frequent letters he guided and supported them. An extensive correspondence with John and George, and letters to Elizabeth and Charles have survived.

It is Peleg's letters to George that tell us the most about him as a father and about daily life in the Portland house. When the stable burned at "The Freemason's Arms," a tavern kept by the Motley family about two blocks south of the Wadsworth house on the same side of the street, Peleg wrote to eight-year-old George,

Your Papa was very sorry to hear that Mr. Motley's barn was burnt down & the poor Horses burnt to death It would have been a very bad thing if it should have burnt down our House and all the things in it, or even our Barn ... Harry & you must be very careful when you go into the Barn with a lanthorne & be sure not to catch the hay on fire.¹⁰

Peleg used his letters to guide and teach his little boys in many ways. In the same letter he noted that he was enclosing a picture of "a horse jumping through 3 hoops" (a broadside advertising an equestrian exhibition in Philadelphia). "Share it with your little brothers," he directed. "The letters will be nice ones for little [Peleg] to learn."

The letters also instructed the boys in the rudiments of business. The winter George turned eleven Peleg wrote to him from Philadelphia that a "Mr. Dyer & some other Folks, who owe me, will bring a good panel of wood by sleding. Ask them to bring us all they can ... It will be cheaper by sleding than afterwards." That same winter George raised pigs in the barn, and Peleg commented, "I ... rejoice to think there is so near a prospect of getting clear of your troublesome family, the Piggs

I want to hear you say *they are gone* & that you have got your barn cleaned out."¹¹

With irregular help from kitchen maids and the aid of her oldest daughters, Elizabeth superintended a busy household while Peleg was attending Congress or in Hiram seeing to his interests there. She kept a watchful eye upon the development and social breeding of the young women and administered to the quite different needs of her lusty schoolboy-sons and active preschoolers. The only likeness of Elizabeth extant is a silhouette taken in 1805, and because Elizabeth was not the letter writer Peleg was, our knowledge of her person and character is limited. She was called "Ma" by her sons and "Mama" by her daughters. From her daughters' correspondence we can discern that she was a careful parent. Elizabeth was fond of "riding out"; such respite from her busy household must have been welcome.

In 1795 Peleg was forty-six years old and Elizabeth was forty-one. Nineteen-year-old Charles was married and the father of the first of eleven children. Zilpah and Elizabeth were seventeen and fifteen respectively. Jack, age thirteen, was furthering his education at Fryeburg Academy. It might have been about this time that his fond siblings gave him a second nickname: Gentleman John. A studious young man, he would go on to graduate from Harvard and would earn his living as a tutor to the sons of the well-to-do. John was the only Wadsworth son to go to college, and his nickname is probably as much a comment on his brothers' less cultured natures than upon his own refinement. Lucia was eleven years old, and nine-year-old Harry (Henry), a student at Portland's South School on Spring Street, was a writer of poetry who exhibited the potential for becoming "a very handsome speaker."¹² Seven-year-old George and the three little boys, Alexander, Sam, and Peleg, Jr., made up the rest of the Portland family, which was regularly augmented by visits from relatives and friends in Portland on business or on extended visits.

On Friday afternoon, March 24, 1797, nineteen-year-old Zilpah wrote in the letter-journal she kept for her Boston cousin, Nancy Doane,

I am sitting at one of the windows in the best chamber. When I look out I see nothing but the muddy street It is fair for Papa if he comes by water. I hope to mercy he may come soon. Mama is quite unwell and low spirited. I think his return will make her better. And I hope it will enliven the house a little, for we are all rather below the pitch of cheerfulness.

It had been a particularly difficult month with all the children sick with whooping cough. The next day she wrote, "Papa has arrived to our great joy." And on April 1 she wrote again to her cousin: "The family are at breakfast, I have only time to bid you good morning. You may be assured I do it sincerely and without any intention of making *you* an April fool, though I have seen many fools made today. The children are very busy at the sport."¹³

Zilpah and her sister Elizabeth (Eliza) were cultured young women whose favorite pastimes were reading, writing letters, playing the spinet, and drawing. As a young woman Zilpah was “tall, attractive, with dark hair, lively blue eyes,” her cheeks “blooming and full.”¹⁴ Zilpah was eighteen when she began her letter-journal which she sent to her cousin by forty and fifty-page installments with friends traveling to Boston or local shipmasters who ran coasting vessels. She also kept a secret diary in which she recorded events and thoughts too personal even for a best friend's eyes. A contemporary described the Wadsworth sisters as “sweet girls indeed. Such an unaffected softness of manners & sweetness of disposition are rarely to be met with in this degenerate age.”¹⁵ That sentiment is echoed in a reference in Zilpah's diary to Portland's Coffin sisters:

A gentleman said he had heard much of the beauty of the Miss Coffins, but he thought Miss Wadsworth quite as handsome & if she were not her manners would make up for every defect of beauty.

Even noting such a compliment in her secret diary seemed too immodest to Zilpah, for she wrote immediately after, “Now I wish I had not recorded this.”¹⁶

This modesty we would expect in a young woman of the late eighteenth century. On one occasion Zilpah played backgammon with a Mr. Parker and worried about improperly exposing her arm and hand as, “My sleeves were short and I had no gloves on.” Yet the diary also exposes a surprising climate of permissiveness. There was much socializing among young people, with large parties gathering at various homes to play games and to dance. If there was no spinet, a violin player would be sent for. Young men and women went by carriage loads of up to thirty to Broad's Tavern in Stroudwater where dancing, singing, and dining — hot apple pies, custards, cakes — were enjoyed “till eleven, then home.”¹⁷ During the winter months there were regular balls or assemblies held in the Assembly Room in a house on India Street. The second-floor ballroom doubled as a Masonic Hall and a theatre.



THE HOUSE AND STORE IN 1786

Assembly gowns were usually white muslin, sometimes with tiffany borders painted by the girls themselves. Zilpah described one of her assembly gowns as “all white, with a musslin skirt and train, and lightning sleeves.” She wore with it a “spangled tiffany Head dress with a plume.”¹⁸ Like the handpainted tiffany borders, bonnets and headpieces were apt to be fashioned by the girls themselves. Such a handwork provided an outlet for their creativity and sewing skills. Zilpah mentions making a green bonnet with straw points and another of “delicate white muslin with a cockade of black sattin ribbon on the left side.”¹⁹

But the prevailing interest of the young women was in young men — “beaux” or “gallants,” as they were called. Portland “gallants” were “as plenty as apples in autumn,” yet those who proved interesting seemed to be rare. The young men Zilpah wrote about were easy prey to her clever pen. She and her cousin attached literary nicknames to a number of them: Sir Toby, Gallant Polydore, Narcissus, and “Despairing Pyramus.” (In classical mythology Pyramus was the Babylonian youth who tragically loved the girl next door, the beautiful Thisbe.) This unfortunate was a frequent caller at the Wadsworth house. “*Pyramus* enters,” wrote Zilpah. “You know the

very soft tone he assumes when he would be exceedingly pleasing to the Ladies.”²⁰ The young men called the young women “charmers,” and pursued them vigorously with romantic flair. One gentleman at a gathering took Eliza’s plain white fan and wrote on it with a pencil,

Zilpah would jump to quit the single life
And take a Prentiss to be made a wife.
Eliza blushing and of man afraid
Death to my hopes declares she’ll die a maid.²¹

But all was not pleasantness in the Wadsworth house. Each year, by mid-November, tailoresses were called in to prepare Peleg’s clothes for his winter away.²² His trunks were packed, and he held himself in readiness for a fair sailing wind. In 1799 on a Friday night just after tea as he sat listening to Eliza playing his favorite tune, “The Pipes So Sweet,” he was called to go on board the packet. “We went immediately,” Eliza told her cousin. Once again Elizabeth was left alone in Portland with her family.

Zilpah provided her cousin with a vignette of that family circle on a Sunday when Charles was down from Hiram.

There sits Mama in her lolling chair by the fire.
[Eliza] is playing on the piano “Ye Tribes of Adam Join.” John and Lucia are singing at the back of her chair. George, Alexander and Sam are singing in different parts of the room. Little Peleg is stepping about the floor surveying one and another. Charles is sitting at the table with me. He was writing. His pen dropt from his fingers, and he listens to the music. Harry is reading beside me, you know he is always self collected I have been singing as I wrote Ten children! What a circle! I should like to know what are Mama’s thoughts as she looks around on us.²³

The turn of the century brought changes to the Wadsworths. By 1800 Portland was caught up in an economic boom. The trade in country produce at Hay-Market Square expanded, raising the level of noise and confusion. The country ambiance

surrounding the Portland house was disappearing, but Peleg was building a house in Hiram that was ringed by mountains. The family referred to visits there as “going to the mountains.” The house took three years to finish.²⁴ It was Peleg’s plan to live in it during the summer until he gave up Congress and then to move to Hiram altogether.²⁵

Gentleman John had graduated from Harvard, and was no longer regularly at home. The “self collected” Harry, who had been studying at Exeter Academy, had achieved what he most desired: an appointment as midshipman in the United States Navy. He had left Portland for Newport in his new uniform to sign aboard the frigate *Congress* for a year’s voyage to the East Indies.²⁶ What would turn out to be a more momentous change for the family, certainly for Zilpah and Eliza, was the emergence of an eligible suitor. His name was Stephen Longfellow.

Longfellow was not an unfamiliar name in Portland. Young Longfellow’s grandfather, Stephen, a Harvard graduate and schoolmaster, came from York to Falmouth in 1745. He held various public offices and built a comfortable house on the waterfront where *his* son, Stephen, was born. The Longfellow house was burned in the 1775 bombardment, and the family moved to Gorham where they settled. There Stephen the schoolmaster died fourteen years after the birth of his grandson, Stephen. It was tradition in the Longfellow family that the first-born son would be named Stephen. The youngest Stephen was rather an imposing young man: serious, ambitious, prudent with his money and his time, somewhat righteous, and not above lecturing his father, who was himself imposing.²⁷ The elder Stephen, although principally a surveyor by trade, like his father before him held numerous public offices, and was a judge of the Court of Common Pleas.

In 1799 the tall, attractive, twenty-three-year-old Stephen was a Harvard graduate and aspiring lawyer in Portland. It is not clear from Zilpah’s papers which of the two Wadsworth girls he found most attractive, but in May 1799 she wrote of a gay gathering of young people taking an afternoon “ramble.” Longfellow walked beside her and she noted that his hand

accidentally touched hers. In early June the young women went shopping. As they passed Longfellow's office window he "turned his eyes from his book to me as I passed I gave him a smile." Again, on an evening when the full moon made the house "seem like a prison," the young people went out to walk up and down in front of the gate. Stephen took Zilpah's hand. "I thought he pressed it," she noted.²⁸

Stephen's conduct was being closely watched and commented upon. At a social event, he "entered, bowed around, [and] sat down next to [Eliza]. 'Tell me, Zilpah,' asked an acquaintance, 'Which is it — you, [Eliza], or Eliza Southgate that he is partial to?' The flustered Zilpah replied that it was neither, adding, 'Yes, yes, it is one or the other.' She later confided to her diary, "I did not say it to Harriet, but I really think myself the most unlikely of the three to engage his heart."²⁹ Although it was Eliza Longfellow's opinion that Stephen Longfellow "would make just such a man as Zilpah should wish for a husband," Eliza confided to Nancy Doane that if Longfellow should address *her*, she was not sure what her answer would be.³⁰

Longfellow did address Eliza, and she did accept. Her letters written during the summer of 1800 indicate that she and Stephen had an understanding.³¹ But Eliza had begun the decline from consumption that would kill her on August 1, 1802. She spent the last winter of her life an invalid, subjected to strange and desperate cures, which included drinking and soaking in solutions of potash. Zilpah devoted herself to nursing her sister, and shared watching by her bedside in the best parlor with Stephen. A likeness of Eliza was painted by the miniaturist John Roberts in October 1801, probably at Stephen's request.³²

Mrs. Ann Smith, a particular friend of the family who was called in to watch at the end, described Eliza's death in her diary. "Friend [Eliza] Wadsworth died perfectly calm and collected. [Her] appearance [was] angelic. Stephen Longfellow her lover held her hand til long after she expired. Her father, mother, sister, brothers were in the room, grieved but not

distressed.”³³ Peleg wrote to Charles in Hiram:

Eliza is no more! She fell asleep about one o'clock last night. It was the 1st hour of the first day of the week ([the] Sabbath) & the 1st day of the month. She uttered about half a dozen hard groans about 15 minutes before she dy'd & said, "God take me." After that she expired without a struggle & went out like an exhausted Lamp The family tho often in tears, are not disconsolate. The dear Eliza has left us every consolation from the manner of her life and death.³⁴

After the funeral Stephen Longfellow said to Zilpah and Lucia, "You will still be my sisters."

"And it is strange," confided Zilpah to her cousin, "that I love him as a dear brother!"³⁵ Indeed, she loved him as more than that, as any reader of her papers could have told her. It was perhaps Stephen who did not know his feelings accurately; but, this love story had, of course, a happy ending. On the evening of January 1, 1804, Stephen and Zilpah were married in the room where Eliza had died. Peleg did not return from Washington, but sent his congratulations and hopes for a crumb of the wedding cake.³⁶

The young couple's wedding gifts included a Chinese porcelain tea set and a double set of English earthenware. Many years later in his poem "Keramos" their son Henry would write of

The willow pattern that we knew in childhood, with its
Bridge of blue
Leading to unknown thoroughfares;
The solitary man who stares
At the white river flowing through
Its arches, the fantastic trees

The early happiness of the young couple was to be marred by the death within the year of Stephen's sister Catherine and Zilpah's brother Henry. Henry had gone to Tripoli with a United States naval squadron under the command of Portland's own Commander Edward Preble to subdue the Barbary pirates. There, as second in command of a volunteer force of

thirteen men on a vessel loaded with explosives whose mission was to move into the harbor to destroy the enemy's gun boats, he was killed. The vessel exploded before they could complete their mission. It was never determined whether the explosion was an accident, a deliberate act, or the result of enemy fire.

Henry was killed on September 4. In November Peleg was writing from Washington, "By the paper you will see that Commander Preble has begun his attack on Tripoli Henry no doubt had his share in it."³⁷ Not until January did the final news come. "I knew the temper of Henry & the feelings of a soldier," wrote Peleg to the shocked family. "His determination to earn a Character & make himself a name gave me a great apprehension that I should see his face no more."³⁸

Word of Henry's death came just as Zilpah and Stephen, who had been living in the Wadsworth house, were moving to their own home.³⁹ They rented the Abigail Larrabee house across from the First Parish Church on the corner of Temple Street. Stephen, a successful lawyer who had already opened his own office, was able to buy from local craftsmen the necessary furnishings.⁴⁰ Zilpah had long held the opinion that "women never appear . . . so much in the line of their duty as when they are married and bringing up children. It gives them consequence to be at the head of a family, both in the eyes of others and themselves."⁴¹ She had entered quickly and fully into that role. A cradle had been commissioned from the Radford brothers, Portland cabinetmakers, that winter for the use of the baby that was due in late summer. On August 14 a son was born and, following the Longfellow family tradition, was named Stephen. Thereafter Zilpah wrote her much less frequent letters to her cousin with the baby in his cradle at her side. "My little boy I must tell you, he is a fine little fellow," she would write. On February 7, 1807, she became the mother of a second son, who was named for her dead brother Henry.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was born on Fore Street on Portland's waterfront in the home of his aunt, Tabitha Longfellow, and her husband, Captain John Stephenson. Stephen and Zilpah had moved in with Mrs. Stephenson while her

husband was on a West Indies voyage. It was a temporary home. In the spring the Longfellows moved again — to the Wadsworth house.

Peleg had decided at last to move to Hiram. His house there, which he called Wadsworth Hall, had been ready for three years. He had refused re-election to Congress and, just about the time Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was born, he and Elizabeth moved on to the final phase of their life. In the spring of 1807 Stephen and Zilpah and their two little boys moved to the Wadsworth house in Portland, and its history as the Longfellow house began.

NOTES

¹William Willis, ed., *Journals of The Rev. Thomas Smith and The Rev. Samuel Deane* (Portland, Me.: Joseph S. Bailey, 1849), p. 356.

²For more details on Peleg's military career see "Peleg Wadsworth," *Maine Historical Society Quarterly* 15 (no. 4/B, Fourth of July, 1976).

³Cora Lusanna Pike, *General Peleg Wadsworth* (Privately Printed, 1942), pp. 19-20.

⁴For a more detailed description of the attack and capture at Thomaston see "The Story of General Wadsworth," *Maine Historical Society Quarterly* 15 (no. 4/B, Fourth of July, 1976). For Peleg's letters to Betsy see Pike, *General Peleg Wadsworth*, pp. 22-25.

⁵William Goold, "General Peleg Wadsworth," Goold Scrapbook, p. 127, Maine Historical Society (hereafter cited as MHS).

⁶William Goold, "General Peleg Wadsworth," Goold Scrapbook, p. 126.

⁷William Willis, *The History of Portland* (1865; reprint, Somersworth, N.H.: New Hampshire Publishing Co., 1972), p. 551.

⁸For details concerning the shipment of supplies to and from the farm in Hiram and related business dealings see the family's letters in Collection 16, MHS.

⁹Elizabeth Wadsworth to Nancy Doane, February 2, 1799, Wadsworth-Longfellow Papers, Craigie House, Longfellow National Historic Site, Cambridge, Massachusetts (hereafter cited as W-L Papers, LNHS).

¹⁰Peleg Wadsworth to George Wadsworth, January 5, 1796, Collection 16, MHS.

¹¹See Peleg Wadsworth, *A Story About A Good Little Boy* (Portland, Me.: Privately Printed, 1903), p. 40.

THE WADSWORTH FAMILY

¹²A poem titled "Retirement" was written by Henry at South School on December 12, 1796, Collection 16, MHS. On Harry's potential as a speaker see Peleg Wadsworth, *Letters of Peleg Wadsworth to His Son John, 1796-1798* (Portland, Me.: Maine Historical Society, 1961), p. 17.

¹³W-L Papers, LNHS.

¹⁴See Lawrence Thompson, *Young Longfellow* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1938), p. 3; and John Wadsworth to Anne Longfellow Pierce, March 15, 1853, W-L Papers, LNHS.

¹⁵Abigail May, Diary, August 23, 1796, MHS.

¹⁶Zilpah Wadsworth, Diary, May 1799, W-L Papers, LNHS.

¹⁷Abigail May, Diary, August 6, 1796, MHS.

¹⁸Zilpah Wadsworth to Nancy Doane, 1797, W-L Papers, LNHS.

¹⁹Zilpah Wadsworth to Nancy Doane, 1797, W-L Papers, LNHS. *Note: I believe the correct date for this letter is 1799 although it is filed under 1797.*

²⁰Zilpah Wadsworth to Nancy Doane, 1797, W-L Papers, LNHS.

²¹Abigail May, Diary, August 27, 1796, MHS.

²²On November 18, 1796, Zilpah wrote to Nancy Doane that it had been a busy week with tayloresses at the house, "two at a time preparing Papa's clothes. He expects to go the first wind." W-L Papers, LNHS.

²³Zilpah Wadsworth to Nancy Doane, November 29 to December 19, 1797, W-L Papers, LNHS.

²⁴Elizabeth Wadsworth to Zilpah Wadsworth, September 1, 1800, W-L Papers, LNHS.

²⁵"Papa contemplates the country as his summer residence excepting occasional visits to the city; Mama will be much with him certainly." Zilpah Wadsworth to Nancy Doane, April 21, 1803, W-L Papers, LNHS.

²⁶Zilpah Wadsworth to Nancy Doane, August 4, 1799, W-L Papers, LNHS; Eliza Wadsworth to Peleg Wadsworth, September 15, 1799, Collection 16, MHS.

²⁷For the young Stephen's character see his letters home from Phillips Academy, 1793-1794, which are with the W-L Papers, LNHS.

²⁸Zilpah Wadsworth, Diary, May, 1799, W-L Papers, LNHS.

²⁹Zilpah Wadsworth, Diary, June 22, 1799, W-L Papers, LNHS.

³⁰Elizabeth Wadsworth to Nancy Doane, n.d., W-L Papers, LNHS.

³¹On August 5, 1800, she wrote to Nancy Doane, "I told you my prospect of happiness was good." W-L Papers, LNHS.

³²Zilpah Wadsworth to Nancy Doane, October 18, 1801, W-L Papers, LNHS.

³³Ann Bryant Smith, Diary, August 1, 1802, Manuscript #67-2675, MHS.

³⁴Peleg Wadsworth to Charles Wadsworth, August 1, 1802, Collection 16, MHS.

³⁵Zilpah Wadsworth to Nancy Doane, September 1, 1802, W-L Papers, LNHS.

THE WADSWORTH FAMILY

³⁶Peleg Wadsworth to George Wadsworth, January 19, 1804, Collection 16, MHS.

³⁷Peleg Wadsworth to Charles Wadsworth, November 28, 1804, Collection 16, MHS.

³⁸Peleg Wadsworth to George Wadsworth, January 29, 1805, Collection 16, MHS.

³⁹On January 1, 1805, Peleg wrote to George, "I hope Mr. & Mrs. Longfellow have not yet moved into their new hired house." Collection 16, MHS.

⁴⁰*Portland Gazette*, December 3, 1804.

⁴¹Zilpah Wadsworth to Nancy Doane, April 1, 1797, W-L Papers, LNHS.

Joyce Butler is curator of manuscripts at the Brick Store Museum, Kennebunk, Maine. She has written widely on early southern Maine life and culture and is the author of WILDFIRE LOOSE: THE WEEK MAINE BURNED, a history of the devastating 1947 forest fires. Her most recent contribution is a history of commerce in early southern Maine, in Laura Fecych Sprague, ed., AGREEABLE SITUATIONS: SOCIETY, COMMERCE AND ART IN SOUTHERN MAINE, 1780-1830.