

Notes From the Firehouse

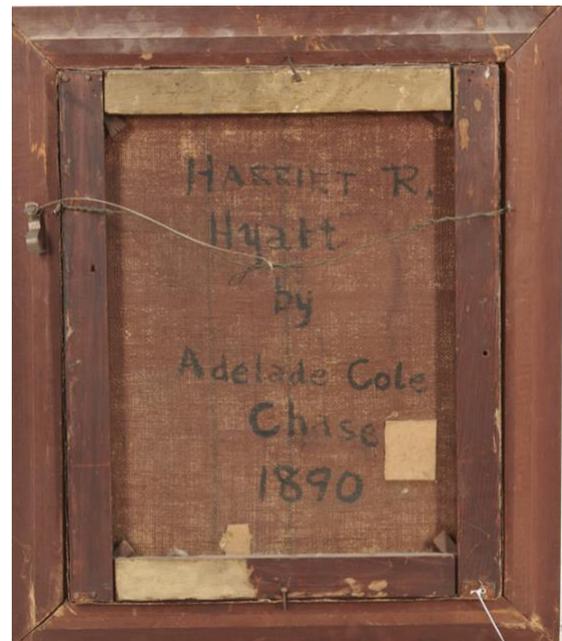
Home of the Annisquam Historical Society

February, 2024



Harriet Hyatt Mayor: Sculptor

Rita Littlewood Teele
&
Kathleen Purdy



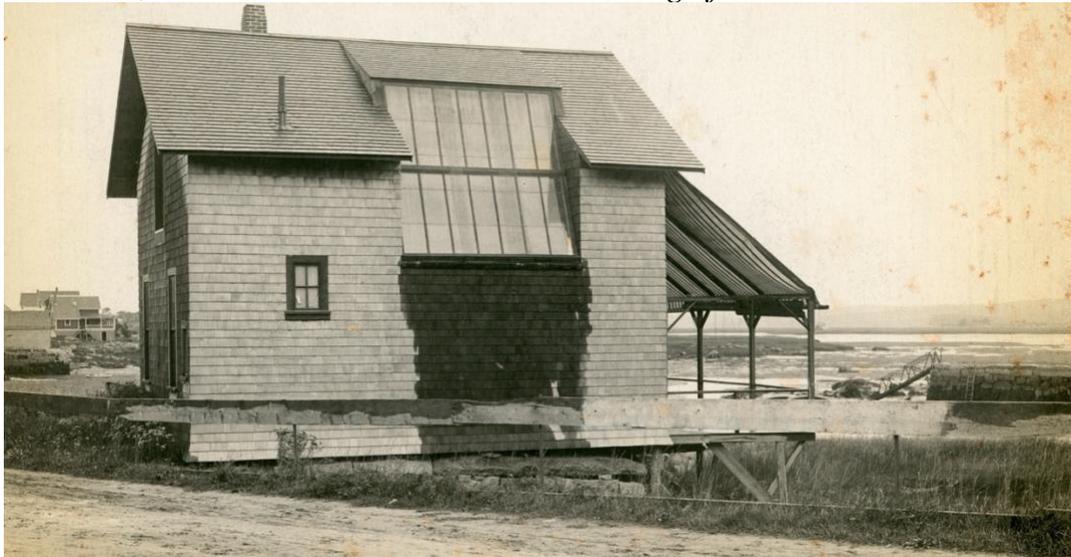
Harriet Hyatt Mayor was an Annisquam friend of artist **Adelaide Cole Chase**.

Harriet (Randolph) Hyatt Mayor, older sister of Anna (Vaughn) Hyatt Huntington, was the initial sculptor in the family. In a recorded interview, Anna told of Harriet giving her lessons in sculpting. However, Harriet was first to be married and four children followed. Anna married Archer Huntington after she had established her career, had no children, and had both time and money to continue making monumental sculpture, such as *Joan of Arc*.

In January of 2023, AHS published the text of a handwritten letter that had been sent in 1947 from Harriet Randolph Hyatt Mayor to Lelia (Norwood) Adams.

Harriet and Lelia were good friends, judging from the tone of the letter's contents. They were connected by age and by their family history. Harriet had lived for some years in the house now often referred to as the Norwood-Hyatt house and Lelia was a proud descendant of the Norwood family. Harriet's letter revealed parts of Anna's and Harriet's early artistic life:

When father bought the piece of land by the tide-gates, Mr Gallison, the artist wanted to build a studio-dwelling for himself and wife. Father would not sell, but let him build with the understanding he would have the first refusal, should they wish to sell. After Gallison died, father bought it from his widow, and here Anna modelled her sketch of Jean d'Arc, and here Marion Boyd Allen, painted her three quarter's length of Anna at work, that is now in some southern college for women.

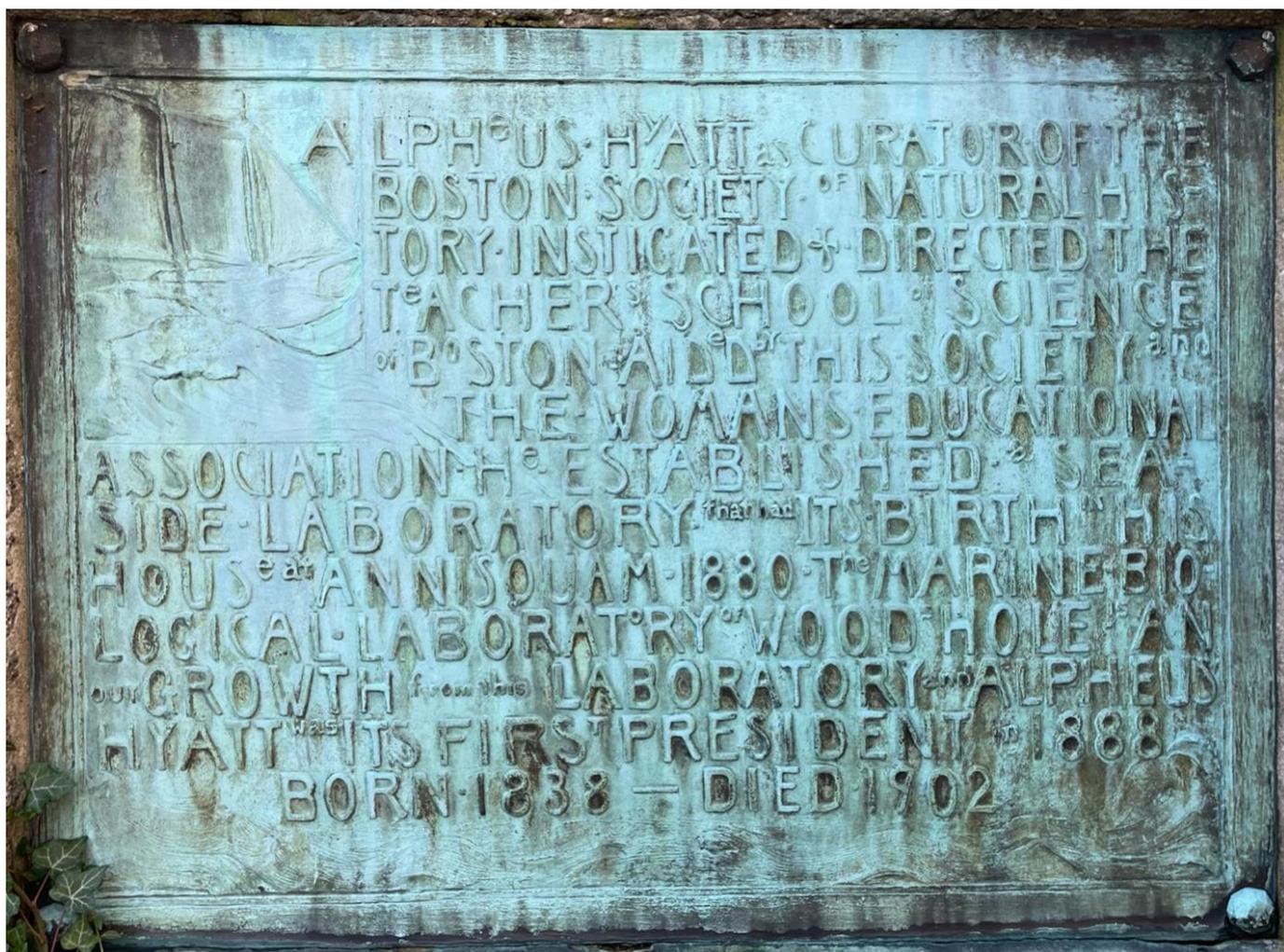


AHS 1299.jpg Gallison's Studio on Hyatt property. Date unknown

I did some teaching here-and seem to have sprouted tablets, one for Alfred G. Mayor in Princeton University, one for Church green, one at Stage Fort Park, the one in the boulder at Seven Acres, and smaller ones. Before I had the studio, father put a skylight in the woodshed attached to our house. Here I modelled a head of father, now in Guyot Hall Princeton University, and two bas-reliefs-one in the library, Woods Hole Laboratory one in Boston Soc. Natural History.

In 2023, Harriet Mayor's grandson, Alfred Mayor, and Alfred's wife, Bruni, gave permission to photograph the large plaque, designed by Harriet, that had been mounted in a large granite boulder near the Norwood Hyatt house. It commemorates the founding of the seaside laboratory, first established there by her father in 1880, that grew into the Marine Biological Laboratory at Wood's Hole, and his schooner, *Arethusa*.

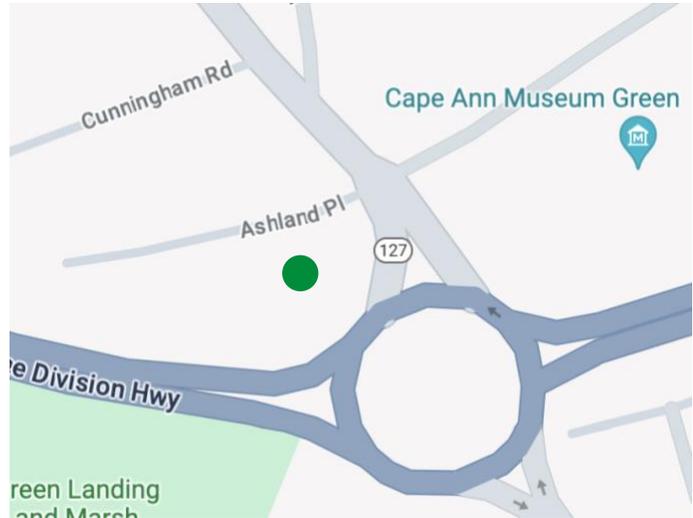
"the one in the boulder at Seven Acres".



Mention of "sprouted tablets" in Harriet's letter, began our hunt for others she had created. (Her style of letter writing is quite informal; using her first name seems appropriate.)

"one for Church green"

The plaque at "Church Green", which is also known as "Meeting House Plain", is on a patch of land beyond Ashland Place, adjacent to Washington Street/Route 127, and bordering the edge of the Rte. 128 rotary.



This was the location of First Parish Church, and the Ellery house--the latter now residing on the Cape Ann Museum Green. The plaque commemorates the early history of the site.



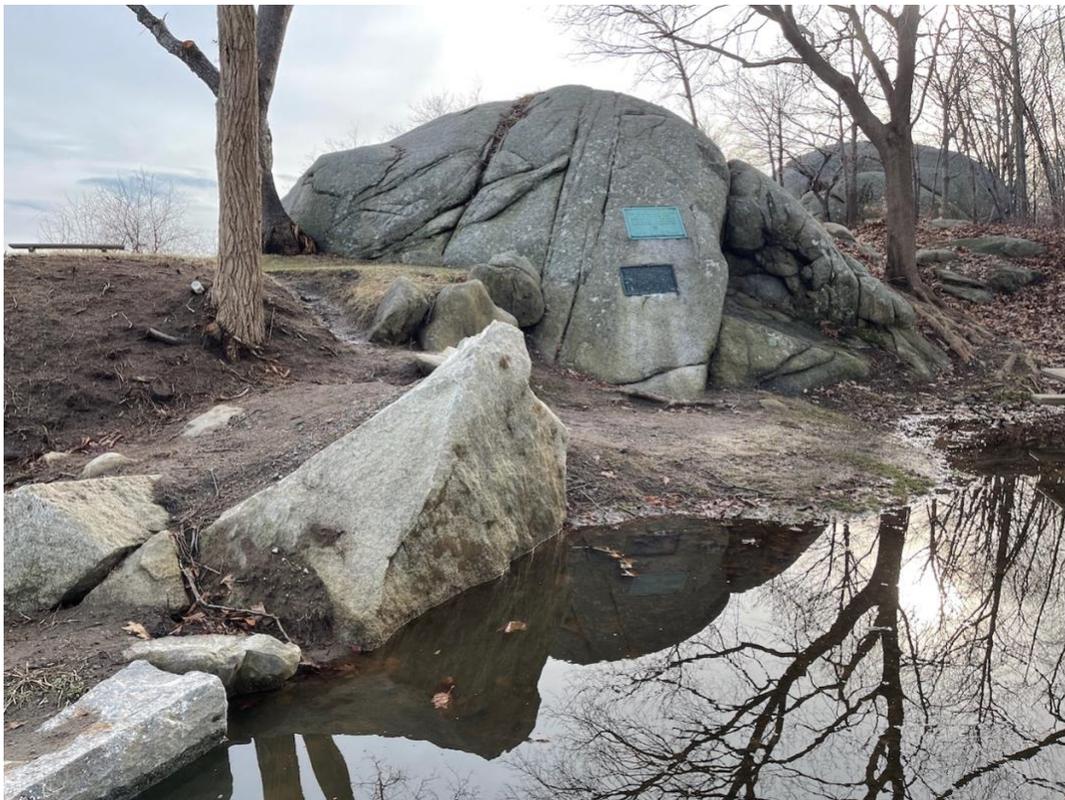
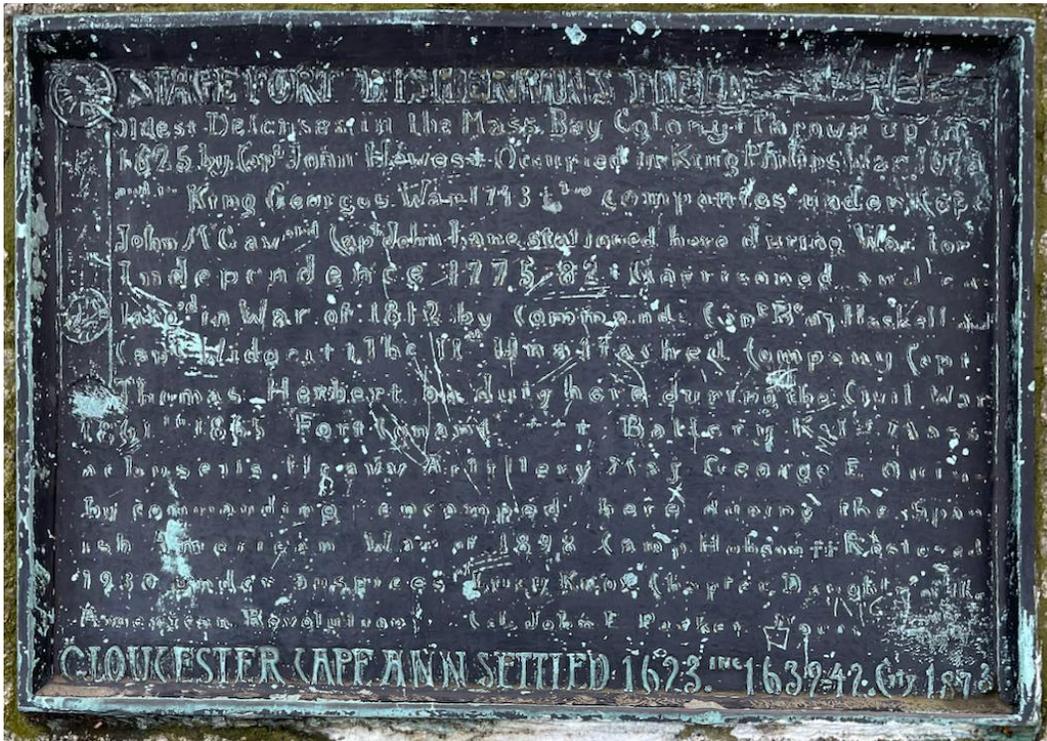
MEETING HOUSE PLAIN
 FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST 1646 This
 one on the same sight built 1752. Parson
 Whites h^ouse 1704 later Cap^t J Ellery's
 Little building called the store. On extreme
 right corner of Babson House 1740. Colonial
 dwelling beyond church n^ot in view here
 W^m Cunningham's Built by David Low 1793
 Divines who preached were --
 Blynman, Emerson, White and Rogers

Note the misspelling: "sight" for "site". It has not been unusual to find errors in spelling in Harriet's correspondence as well; it is a rather charming hallmark of her work! Typical of her carved script is change in font size, variable height of letters, and curving stem of a lower case "y".

"MEETING HOUSE PLAIN" was a 300th anniversary plaque of commemoration. The raised egg-shaped area on the plaque was carved with the following: **Gift of the City of Gloucester 1923.**



"Stage Fort Park"

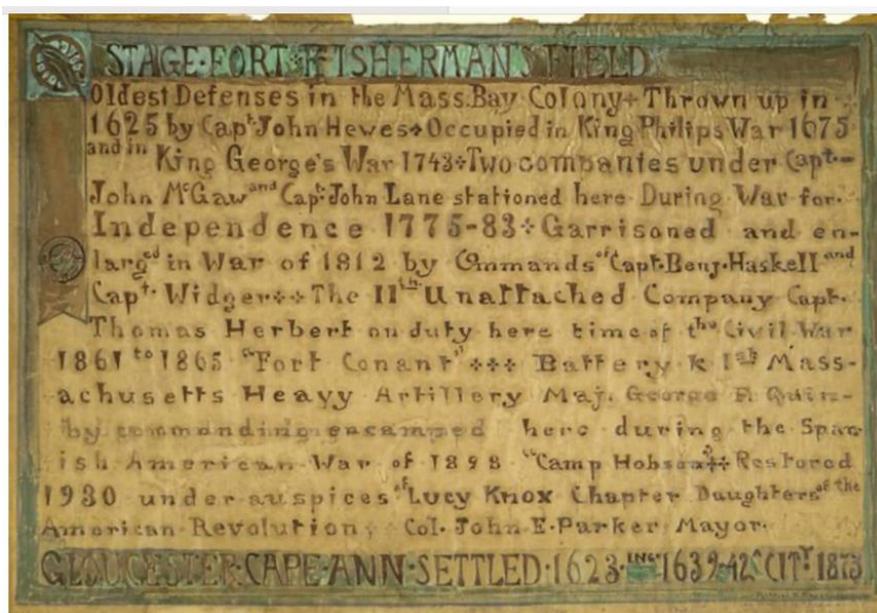


Harriet's plaque is the lower of the two on the rock shown above. This site is north of Half Moon Beach. The plaque is in poor condition, and the small size of the script is barely readable. Note Harriet's style of separating sentences and her use of "elevated" lettering.

STAGE FORT+FISHERMAN'S FIELD

Oldest Defenses in the Mass. Bay Colony+Thrown up in
1625 by Cap^t John Hewes+Occupied in King Philips War 1675
and in King George's War 1743+Two companies under Cap^t-
John M^cGaw and Cap^t. John Lane stationed here During War for
Independence 1775-83+Garrisoned and en-
larg^{ed} in War of 1812 by Commands of Cap^t. Benj. Haskell and
Cap^t. Widger++The 11th Unattached Company Cap^t
Thomas Herbert on duty here time of t^{he} Civil War
1861 to 1865 "Fort Conant" +++ Battery k 1st Mass-
achusetts Heavy Artillery Maj. George F. Quin-
by commanding encamped here during the Span-
ish American War of 1898 "Camp Hobson" ++ Restored
1930 under auspices of Lucy Knox Chapter Daughters of the
American Revolution. Col. John E. Parker Mayor.

GLOUCESTER CAPE ANN SETTLED 1623. INC 1639-42 CIT^y 1873



Preliminary drawing, after conservation, courtesy of CAM.

"one for Alfred G. Mayor in Princeton University"



Courtesy Princeton University Art Museum.

Alfred G. Mayor, Professor at Princeton University, and Harriet's husband, was a brilliant marine biologist and artist. His particular area of expertise was the genus *Medusae*.

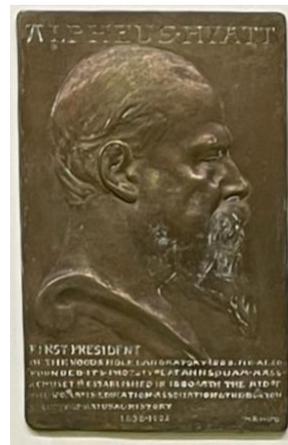
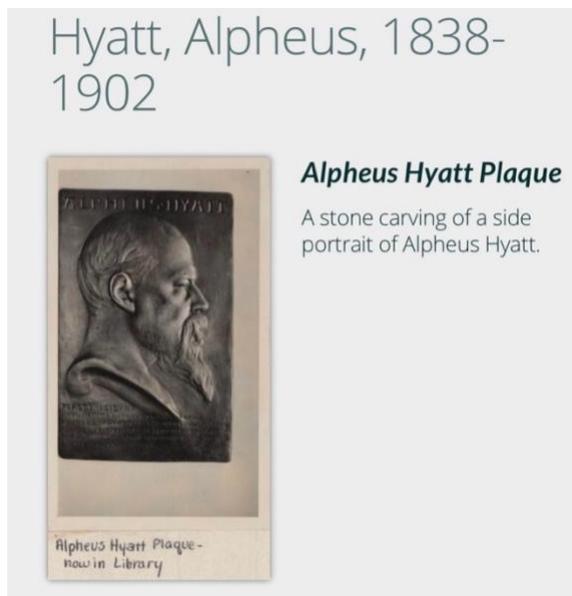
His illustrations of jellyfish were noted for being beautifully drawn and colored. Dr. Mayor established a marine laboratory on the Dry Tortugas in 1903. Sadly, after collapsing from chronic tuberculosis, he drowned there in 1915. Did Harriet carve rippled water at the base of the plaque, shown above, as a sculptural epitaph? In Mayor's biography by Stephens and Calder, *Seafaring Scientist*, 2006, some details of Harriet's life are included. Although she, too, had recurrent episodes of illness from TB, she survived to live into her early nineties.

Our search for Alfred Mayor's plaque took twists and turns. An online photograph of the plaque was tagged to a collection at The Amon Carter Museum in Texas. It seemed unusual that it be located there, when Alfred had no known connection with Texas. Curator Arianna Tejada quickly responded by email when asked for information about the plaque. It was not at Amon Carter Museum; they had only the photograph. She suggested we contact Karl E. Kusserow at Princeton University.

An email response from Professor Kusserow arrived just hours later. He included the above photograph of the stone plaque which is at Princeton University. Note the variation in sizes and styles of letters and the curvy "Y"s, typical of Harriet's work.

"two bas-reliefs--one in the library, Woods Hole Laboratory"

Jeanne Harper & Daniel Hennen, (helpful relatives of R. Teele), located and photographed the stone bas-relief carving (below left) of Harriet's father, Alpheus Hyatt, in the library of the Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole and the bronze bas-relief (below right.)



Alpheus Hyatt, who had begun the Annisquam Seaside Laboratory in the Norwood Hyatt house in 1880, was invited by Spencer Fullerton Baird, to visit Woods Hole on several occasions during the next decade. At the time, Baird was Commissioner of the U.S. Fisheries, founder of the Woods Hole Fisheries, and interested in creating a research laboratory. In 1882, Hyatt moored his boat, *Arethusa*, there.

The seaside laboratory, which Alpheus Hyatt had founded in his Annisquam home, moved, circa 1882, to a house beside Lobster Cove. The school continued to be supported by the Woman's Education Association until 1886. After that summer, the Association decided that their monetary support was no longer needed for the Annisquam Seaside Laboratory.

Not only was lack of future income an issue for Hyatt, Lobster Cove in Annisquam was becoming seriously polluted. In 1887, the Woman's Educational Institute pledged money to support an independent marine biological laboratory. Alpheus Hyatt went to Wood's Hole, met with Baird and in 1888, Alpheus Hyatt became the first president of the Board of Trustees of the Massachusetts Biologic Institute. (*The Scientific Monthly* Vol LXXIV, No. 2, 1952.) The Annisquam Seaside Laboratory had lasted from 1880-1886.

There may well be plaques by Harriet Hyatt Mayor that are undocumented. Some that are referenced and located outside Cape Ann, include those of Reverend Benjamin Bulckeley and Howard Crosby Warren, and of her parents, Audella and Alpheus Hyatt II, who are buried in Congressional Cemetery.

Special thanks to Professor Karl E. Kusserow at Princeton University.