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John Phillips Reynolds, Jr. (1863–1920): Civic leader, Businessman, Financier, Amateur Historian, Steward.

BY PAM BURR SMITH

Note: The primary sources for this biography are “Scrapbooks” kept by John Phillips Reynolds, Jr. At times during his busy life, he was too occupied with diverse projects to work on the scrapbooks. At other times, he attended to them with meticulous effort. The result is a remarkable trove detailing some aspects of his productive life. These scrapbooks remain in his family’s possession.

John Phillips Reynolds, Jr. (1863–1920) was born in Boston in the middle of the Civil War, to John Phillips Reynolds, and Jane Minot (Revere) Reynolds. His father was a doctor, and his mother was a granddaughter of Paul Revere. Both his mother’s side and his father’s side had deep roots in Boston’s historical and financial life. In addition to the Revere ancestry, Reynolds was descended from an early lieutenant governor of Massachusetts, Edward Hutchinson Robbins, and from the first mayor of Boston and President of the Massachusetts Senate, John Phillips, and many other prominent Bostonians.

From a young age, Reynolds was in a hurry to establish himself in business. The family tradition was for the men to go to Harvard and become doctors; however, Reynolds did not go to college, instead he went into business after graduation from Boston Latin School. At the age of 17, he began working at J. M. Forbes & Company. John Murray Forbes (1813–1898), a leading Boston businessman and philanthropist, financed and operated a nineteenth-century industrial empire. Reynolds started out as office boy, then a clerk, and “Finally I grew into confidential clerk for Mr. John Murray Forbes.” Forbes was a mentor for Reynolds when he was young, and role model throughout his career. Forbes was also a second cousin of Reynolds.

Pam Burr Smith is a great granddaughter of John Phillips Reynolds, Jr. Like him, she is an amateur historian, and a lover of old buildings. She lives in Maine and is the author of two books of poetry.

At 21, in 1884, Reynolds married Lucretia Revere Munroe (1864–1948)* and started a family. Their daughter Priscilla was born in 1885 and their son John Phillips Reynolds III was born in 1887.

Being a man of business was Reynolds’ first interest and he held a number of positions in his long career. In addition

*Lucretia Revere Monroe was named after her maternal aunt Lucretia Watson Lunt, who married Paul Joseph Revere and was the mother of Pauline Revere Thayer. Lucretia was very proud of her connection to the Revere family and kept Revere as her middle name throughout her life.]



John Phillips Reynolds, Jr. and Lucretia Revere Reynolds, photograph taken in 1885, shortly after their marriage. Reynolds Family Collection.

From the Executive Director...

In 1986, when I arrived for my first day as Director of the Association, I was welcomed by the outgoing Director Patricia Sullivan and two key senior staff members, both of whom (Edith Steblecki and Patrick Leehey) have continued to provide distinguished service to this organization. As you know, however, Patrick has decided to retire. In January he will transition to the role of Consulting Historian, which will allow him to complete some projects, assist the person who fills his job, and likely still do public lectures. I am personally grateful to him for his long service. Pat has a self-effacing demeanor, a kind soul, and an invaluable grasp of the essence of history. He is as comfortable working with renowned scholars as he is with students and non-academic

to his corporate responsibilities, he also worked to promote the financial well-being and vitality of Boston through civic endeavors. A paragraph from a testimonial for Reynolds written by the Massachusetts Charitable Society, of which he was a member, describes him well:

By a long line of distinguished ancestors, by temperament, and by choice, John Phillips Reynolds was a Bostonian. Sitting at his desk in his office at 28 State Street he looked out daily upon the old State House and the scene of the Boston Massacre. He was steeped in the tradition of Boston, a tradition which he loved to foster, always holding himself ready to seek out and preserve the still existent memorabilia of Boston's revolt.

An obituary from a Boston newspaper states, "as a young man [Reynolds] entered the business world in this city, becoming identified with real estate and financial activities. Later, Mr. Reynolds devoted his time mainly to manufacturing interests and trustee work. Besides being treasurer of The Suncook Mills and The O'Bannon Corporation, and a director of both, he was treasurer of the Northern Waste Company, director of The Submarine Signal Company, trustee of the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital, the Atlantic Building Company, The Copley Square Trust, The Reynolds Building Trust, and the Trimountain Trust, and a member of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind."

Reynolds tackled life with enthusiasm, seeing and creating business and cultural opportunities. He admired, interviewed, and studied the great businessmen of his time, using their insights to inform his own decisions. His vision was instrumental in the preservation and growth of many of Boston key landmarks and cultural organizations. For example, he was part of the consortium of financiers and civic leaders who, in the early twentieth century, moved the Museum of

authors. He has been our go to "on camera" expert for numerous television, film, radio, and now on-line history programs. Perhaps most importantly he has guided over one hundred interns, many of who now work in the public history field and still seek his advice.

It has been my honor to call Pat a colleague, valued employee, and friend for over thirty years.

I hope you will join us on November 30 from 5:00 – 7:00 PM as we welcome the holiday season and toast his retirement and transition into a new role.



Nina Zannieri



The daughter of a wealthy family, Elizabeth Van Lew (1818-1901) was an abolitionist and Union sympathizer who organized a pro-Union spy ring in the Richmond, Virginia, area during the Civil War. Van Lew brought food, clothing, writing paper, and other items to Union soldiers held in Richmond's Libby Prison. In the 1880s and 90s, John Phillips Reynolds, Jr. travelled several times to Richmond to bring money from the Revere family to Van Lew thanking her for assisting Paul Joseph Revere and Edward H. R. Revere while they were prisoners of war.

Fine Arts to Huntington Ave., and built the Copley Plaza Hotel on the former site of the museum on Copley Square.

Reynolds also pursued an active interest in history. Known for buying the Paul Revere house in 1902, and thus beginning the process of making it a museum, during his lifetime, Reynolds was involved with a number of historical figures, whom he assisted in various ways. As a young man, in the 1880s, and 90s, Reynolds traveled a few times to Richmond, Virginia, to deliver money to the aging Union spy, Elizabeth Van Lew. The money he brought was from the Revere family, grateful for the former spy's care of two family members, Colonel Paul Joseph Revere and First Lieutenant Edward H. R. Revere, who had been imprisoned at Libby Prison during the war. The money from the Reveres supported Van Lew until the end of her life. After her death, Reynolds had a boulder from the Massachusetts State House transported to Richmond to mark Van Lew's grave, a gesture of respect and gratitude.

Reynolds was the grandnephew of the abolitionist Wendell Phillips. Reynolds preserved Phillips' collection of historical letters from leading abolitionists (1830-1878). Writers of the letters include Susan B. Anthony, William Lloyd Garrison, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Lydia Marie Child, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, and many others. These letters are currently being catalogued at the Harvard Library.

Reynolds was a family man, who maintained an active correspondence with his large family. His "Scrapbooks," which chronicle his life from his marriage in 1884 until his death in 1920, are full of the clippings, photographs, and musings of this busy man. Almost nothing escaped his quick and thorough interest. He copied bills of fare from dinner parties he enjoyed, wrote long reminiscences of family members and traditions, took pictures of the sheep he bred, and wrote long commemorative poems, remarkable for their humor, appropriate for almost any occasion.

One remarkable journey he took, along with a number of other prominent businessmen who, like him, were yacht racers, was to Europe in 1907. Reynolds and his companions raced the German Kaiser at Kiel on the Baltic Sea, and the young King of Spain at Bilbao. Reynolds wrote an account of this journey, and privately and anonymously published it under the title *The Cruise of the Golden Eagle*. This volume can be read today on Google Books, and reprints are available from Amazon.

Also indicative of Reynolds' love of sailing, and his bold imagination, is his vacation home in Maine, which was designed by him to resemble a Spanish galleon. The house still stands and is an architectural icon of the Maine coast (see photograph page 4).

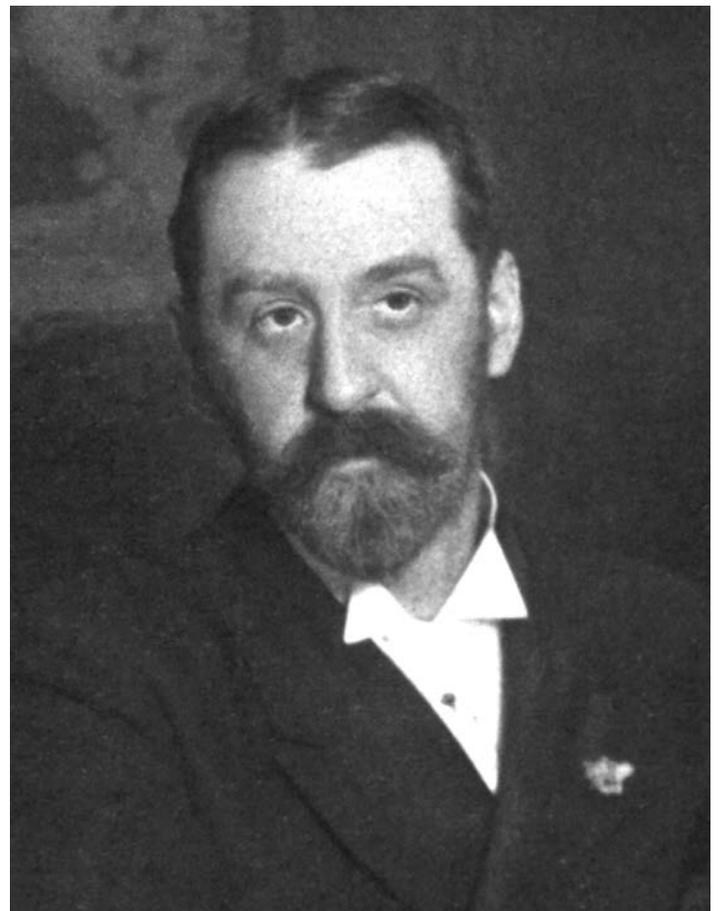
Reynolds was a man of varied interests and undertakings. He preferred to be involved with the creation, running, and operation of businesses, rather than being visibly in charge.

In researching his life, finding a picture of him has been a real challenge. While he was active in many businesses he did not appear to like to have his picture taken, or to publicly take credit for the efforts he led or was instrumental in. In that way, he differed from J. M. Forbes and J. P. Morgan, the two business magnates he esteemed the most. Reynolds' skills in leadership included inspiring and gathering people together to undertake projects. He started associations and consortiums for varied endeavors around the United States as well as in Boston.

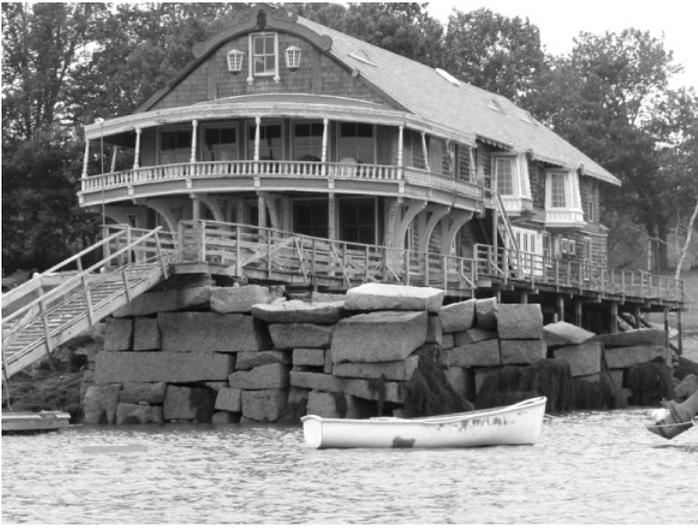
Reynold's personal values emphasized service without claiming credit, resulting in his relative public reticence. But Reynolds also appears to have been a genuinely humble, practical, energetic, and thoughtful person, who was truly happiest busy, and out of the limelight.

Restoration and opening of the Paul Revere House.

Reynolds was deeply proud of the effort to restore and preserve the Paul Revere House. His business method, to form a corporation for the project he was backing, was exactly what he used in establishing the Paul Revere Memorial Association. Reynolds also called on friends and relatives in Boston society, as well as public figures, and the public at large to fund and support the endeavor.



John Phillips Reynolds, Jr. in 1901, when he was 38 years old. Detail from a larger family photograph showing Dr. John Phillips Reynolds (John Phillips Reynolds, Jr.'s father) and his extended family. Courtesy, Edward Reynolds.



Recent view of the Wharf House in North Haven, Maine. Reynolds designed this vacation house to resemble a Spanish galleon. The house still stands on the Maine coast, but it is no longer owned by the Reynolds family. Photo: Pam Burr Smith.

From the 1902 purchase of the old house, to the 1908 opening of the building as a museum, Reynolds kept the restoration visible and documented in the Boston newspapers. Three excerpts below chronicle the process.

A January 1, 1903, article [Boston newspaper's name not recorded] reports in a headline, "PAUL REVERE HOUSE SOLD." The subhead continues, "Purchaser Hopes to Interest Others in the Project to Preserve the Old Landmark."

The article states the house has "passed into the control of Mr. John P. Reynolds, Jr. When questioned as to his purpose in making this purchase, Mr. Reynolds said, 'Being much interested in old Boston and regretting the changes which are rapidly obliterating so many of its historic buildings, it seemed to me when an opportunity arises to secure Paul Revere's house that advantage should be taken of it. It is hoped that others interested in a like way will join in preserving this venerable landmark and that satisfactory arrangements can be made . . . which will allow the public access to it, which it does not have now.'"

By April, 1905, the time had come to form an organization to raise funds to restore the building. *The Boston Transcript*, April 10, 1905, declared, "Well Known Men Call a Meeting to Decide on United Action"

Reynolds was on the Executive Committee of the Paul Revere Memorial Association, which was formed at this April meeting. Other members of the Association were: Officers: Curtis Guild, Jr., president; Henry L. Higginson, treasurer; and W. Sumner Appleton, secretary. The executive committee was comprised of the above officers, plus Reynolds, William D. Sohier, and Walter G. Page. In 1907, when the Paul Revere Memorial Association was incorporated, John Phillips Reynolds, Jr. signed the articles of incorporation twice, as both Secretary and Treasurer, along with executive committee

members Grafton D. Cushing, President, William D. Sohier, and William Prescott Wolcott.

In April, 1908, the restored Paul Revere House was ready to open to the public. But first, it was opened to members of the large Revere family, friends, and sponsors.

The Boston Sunday Herald, April 19, 1908, reported, "Paul Revere's Old House on North Square Opened, Addresses by ex-Governor [John D.] Long and John Phillips Reynolds. Paul Revere's grandchildren and great grandchildren went in numbers yesterday from the Back Bay to Old North Square. They gathered at the opening of their distinguished ancestor's home, recently restored by the Paul Revere Memorial Association and other patriotic associations. It was the 133rd anniversary of Paul Revere's ride."

John Phillips Reynolds, Jr. served as Secretary of the PRMA from 1907 to 1908, and as Treasurer from 1907 until his death in 1920. Annual meetings of the PRMA invariably took place at Reynolds office at 50 State Street, which became the de facto headquarters of the organization.

Reynolds died at his home on Marlborough Street in Boston on December 9, 1920, after a brief illness. At his death he was remembered as "a man of striking personality who strongly defended a proposition which he believed to be right. He was a prominent figure in every organization in which he was interested. His name connected with an enterprise meant its success because he was known to have the ability and persistence to see it through" (*American Wool and Cotton Reporter*, December 16, 1920). ❖



John Phillips Reynolds, Jr. in 1918, sketch by Eli Charles Romberg. Romberg, a trained physician, was probably in his early 20s when he made this sketch. Reynolds probably met Romberg while serving on a Boston hospital board or through one of his relatives, many of whom were physicians. Reynolds Family collection.



Winter Events

AT THE
PAUL REVERE HOUSE
& OUR NEW EDUCATION
AND VISITOR CENTER

19 NORTH SQUARE
BOSTON MA 02113
WWW.PAULREVEREHOUSE.ORG
617-523-2338

From November 1st to April 14th the Revere House is open daily from 9:30 am to 4:15 pm except for Mondays in January, February, and March. The museum is closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. Regular admission is \$5.00 for adults, \$4.50 for seniors and college students, and \$1.00 for children ages 5–17. Members and North End residents admitted free at all times.

TRADITIONS OF THE SEASON AT THE PAUL REVERE HOUSE

*Saturday, December 1 and Sunday, December 2, 2018,
9:30 am–4:15 pm*

Why did New England colonists consider Thanksgiving “the one day above all others”? Which Bostonians kept Christmas and which did not? What types of gifts were exchanged at New Years? Learn the answers while helping us celebrate the holiday season in the style of colonial Bostonians with eighteenth-century music, culinary delights, and crafts.

Festivities will be held on Saturday and Sunday; sample warm, mulled cider and treats baked from period recipes all day. Visit with Rachel Revere, portrayed by *History At Play's* Judith Kalaora, from 11:00 am–3:00 pm throughout the site. Crafts-people working in traditional methods will demonstrate and sell wares from 12:00–4:00 pm in our Education and Visitor Center. R. P. Hale will play eighteenth-century Advent music on the harpsichord and hammered dulcimer from 12:00 pm–4:00 pm in the Pierce/Hichborn House.

Free with admission to the Revere House.



*Judith Kalaora as
Rachel Revere. History
At Play; Claudia
Gustafson Photograph*

R. P. Hale



FEBRUARY SCHOOL VACATION PROGRAMS

Drop-In Family Activities: Exploring Home

*Tuesday, February 19, 1:00–3:00 pm
and Thursday, February 21, 1:00–3:00 pm*

What makes a house a home? Come explore some materials, techniques, and designs used in three centuries of construction in Boston. Facilitated by a staff member, families will have a chance to see some historic building materials up close and learn about the architecture found in and around the Paul Revere House. Design your own piece of block-printed wallpaper! Free with admission to the Revere House.



On the Freedom Trail, in Boston's historic North End, the Revere House was home to patriot and silversmith Paul Revere from 1770 to 1800. Revere left from the house in 1775 to begin the ride that Henry Wadsworth Longfellow immortalized in the poem, “Paul Revere's Ride.” Built c. 1680, the Revere House is the oldest house in downtown Boston. For further information about the Revere House, please visit www.paulreverehouse.org

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The PAUL REVERE MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

19 NORTH SQUARE
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02113

Distinguish yourself as an active supporter of America's cultural heritage. Membership fees help preserve both the Revere and Hichborn Houses, and subsidize educational programs for schoolchildren. In appreciation for your support, you will receive the quarterly *Revere House Gazette*, a 10% discount on all purchases from the museum store, unlimited free admission to our historic buildings and programs, and much more.

Please Join the Friends of Paul Revere Today!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

PLEASE CHECK ONE:

- \$20 INDIVIDUAL
- \$35 FAMILY
- \$50-99 SUPPORTING
- \$100-249 PATRON
- \$250-499 PATRIOT
- \$500 SILVER CIRCLE

My additional donation of \$_____ is enclosed to support the museum's educational programs.

I don't care to join at this time but would like to make a contribution of \$_____ to the museum.

**Please make check payable to the Paul Revere House and mail to:
Paul Revere House, 19 North Square, Boston, MA 02113.**