



Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Art Commission  
State House  
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

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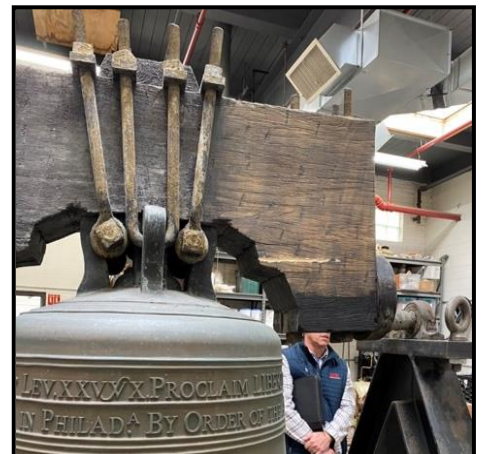
## FY'22 Annual Report

I respectfully submit the *Annual Report* of the State House Art Commission for the year ending June 30, 2022. While the State House re-opened to the public in February 2022, the Curator continued to work a hybrid schedule that she began during the second half of FY'21 - monitoring the collections on display and in storage, while addressing research requests and other office correspondence from home. Our ongoing collaboration with the Bureau of the State House, the Division of Capital Asset Management and the DCR State House Rangers on projects ensured the preservation of the historic building and its contents. The curator also served as the primary liaison between the board, other state agencies and our constituents.

Once again, on behalf of the board, I would like to thank Tammy Kraus, Superintendent of the State House, and her staff for their support of activities and concerns of the Art Commission and the Curator, especially during the pandemic. The Curator also wishes to acknowledge the valuable assistance and collegial friendship of Elizabeth Carroll-Horrocks, outgoing Chief of Special Collections, State Library of Massachusetts, with whom she worked closely for many years.

## Collections Care

**Liberty Bell.** The replica *Liberty Bell*, one of fifty-three distributed to the states by the U. S. Treasury in the early 1950s, was moved from Doric Hall to the Bulfinch porch in the 1970s. Since the closing of the porch in 2001, the bell has been inaccessible. In November 2020, as part of the multi-year Water Infiltration Project, the bell was removed to Daedalus Art Conservators, Watertown, for



conservation. There, it was treated and prepared for return to the State House in the fall of 2022. Working with engineers, general contractors, BSH and DCAMM, we are planning to install the bell in an interior location where it can be viewed at all times and be protected from the elements.

**Sculpture maintenance.** Daedalus also conducted annual maintenance of the equestrian *General Joseph Hooker* statue in June. Regular washing and waxing ensures that the statue remains in good condition, requiring no additional treatment. The monuments on the grounds will receive scheduled care in September 2022.

## Proposed Additions

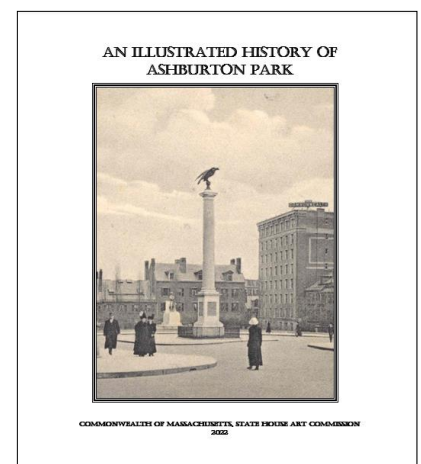
Each year the Art Commission is contacted with proposals for tributes and other artwork for the permanent collection. In some instances, the members have rejected proposals that do not meet the Commission's guidelines for relevancy, appropriateness, or are duplications of objects already in the collection. In these cases, we usually refer such donors to institutions whose collecting policies align more with their projects.

## Outreach

The Curator addressed nearly one hundred requests for research and/or images from the collections. More than half concerned the state battle flag collection and the holdings in the Grand Army of the Republic memorial room. We continue to contribute information to educational, art, historical and genealogical research and publications. While requests for exhibition support declined during the pandemic, we were pleased provide assistance for a number of noteworthy projects. These include Ken Burn's documentary on Benjamin Franklin, initially aired in April 2022; Ken Bresler's updated *Boston Witch Trial Trail*, and .....,

New additions to the website this year include:

*An Illustrated History of Ashburton Park* – one in a series of themed publications highlighting the history of the State House and the art collection. Past publications include: *Women Subjects*, *Women Artists in the Massachusetts State House Art Collection*, *Art of the Civil War at the Massachusetts State House* and *Italy under the Golden Dome*.



GAR inventory – an index to the holdings in the Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Room (27) at the State House.

## **Board**

I am pleased to report that the Senate President appointed L'Merchie Frazier to the board in April. Frazier comes to the Commission with impressive and relevant credentials as Curator and Educator at the Museum of African American History, Boston and Nantucket. As noteworthy is her textile art and her inter-disciplinary work in supporting voices in recovery. After the short-term display of her quilt “Bronze Muse: Frances Ellen Watkins Harper” in the State Library, the loan was extended until June 28 for display in Nurses Hall to honor Juneteenth. Harper was a human and civil rights activist and writer who lectured throughout the US and Canada, including Boston in 1854 and 1864, and was a founder of the National Organization of Colored Women.

The Art Commission members remained in good spirits about meeting during the year, whether in person or in a combination of Team online and in-person conversations. Their good humor and wise direction served the Commonwealth well, for which I am grateful.

Our excellent Curator was steadfast in her commitment to the Commission’s mandate and mission all through the pandemic. Her expertise in all matters relating to the preservation of the historic spaces and State House Art Collection was never more tested than during this time.