

**THE MARYELLEN V. FITZGERALD  
BICENTENNIAL COLLECTION**

**Donated to  
The Cambridge Historical Commission  
by  
Maryellen V. Fitzgerald**

**2006**

2 ½ inches

Prepared by H. Alice Dodds  
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Cambridge Historical Commission  
831 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139

## Description

The Maryellen V. Fitzgerald Bicentennial Collection of photographs was donated to the Cambridge Historical Commission by Ms. Fitzgerald in 2006. Ms. Fitzgerald collected these photographs while serving as Coordinator of the Cambridge Bicentennial Office from 1974-1977. The photographs record not only the events of the Bicentennial celebration but Ms. Fitzgerald's personal contribution and vantage point with respect to them.

In 1974, Ms. Fitzgerald answered an ad in the "Cambridge Chronicle" for the position of Coordinator of the Cambridge Bicentennial Office. She was interviewed over lunch at the Window Shop of the Blacksmith House by Jane Reed, Director of the Bicentennial Office. After being hired, Ms. Fitzgerald worked first in office space donated by the Cambridge Center for Adult Education at 5 Story Street and then in space provided for the consideration of \$1 by Harvard University in Holyoke Center.

Ms. Fitzgerald worked closely with Jane Reed and Robert Moncreiff, a former Cambridge City Councilor, a lawyer, and Chairman of the Bicentennial Corporation. Mr. Moncreiff incorporated the bicentennial undertaking and the Corporation functioned independently of the City Council. It received some financial support from the city, and contributions were also received from private donors and other sources.

The major events of the Bicentennial celebration recorded in this collection started with the dedication of Dawes Island in Harvard Square on April 19, 1975 and ended with the Benedict Arnold Expedition in September 1976. The final bicentennial celebration, the Knox Trail event in January 1977, is not recorded here. In the intervening months there were many other events. Of the two parades included here, the first, on July 4, 1976, was the major event of the Bicentennial Celebration, and was followed by evening fireworks. The second, a historical parade commemorating the Benedict Arnold expedition, came on September 20, 1976.

Bicentennial Celebration

Photograph #1- Presentation of the  
Massachusetts Bicentennial Banner

October 1974

This photograph records an occasion in October 1974 when the Massachusetts State Bicentennial banner, seen here with its unique logo, was presented to the State. Receiving it on behalf of Massachusetts was Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill, Massachusetts Congressman and Speaker of the United States House of Representatives.

Seen from left to right

Toni Mahan	Coordinator, Tobin School's programs for children
Pat Harrington	Coordinator, Massachusetts State Bicentennial Commission
Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill	Massachusetts Congressman and Speaker of the United States House of Representatives
Jane Reed	Director, Cambridge Bicentennial Office
Maryellen Fitzgerald	Coordinator, Cambridge Bicentennial Office

Bicentennial

Photograph # 2 – Cambridge Bicentennial Office and Howitzer

This photograph was taken outside the Harvard University Information Office in Holyoke Center, where Donald Moulton, Director of Governmental and Community Affairs at Harvard, arranged free space for the Bicentennial Office.

The howitzer in the foreground was brought onto the scene by E. Lane Whiting, a private individual, to help celebrate the Bicentennial. The usual location of the howitzer, for all passersby to see, was just behind the floor to ceiling plate glass windows of the Information Office. It was maneuvered there, with difficulty through the wide glass doors, by the Department of Public Works. The flag came with the howitzer.

Mr. Whiting had arranged for the howitzer on the basis of his personal rental agreement with its owner. However, he defaulted on his rent payments, resulting in repossession of the canon by its owners, and widespread negative coverage in the press.

Seen from left to right in front row

Jane Reed	Director, Cambridge Bicentennial Office (holding flag)
E. Lane Whiting	Private Individual, renter of the howitzer
Donna Pina	Friend of Maryellen Fitzgerald
Maryellen Fitzgerald	Coordinator, Cambridge Bicentennial Office

Seen in the back on right in white suit

Marcel St. Martin	Foreman, Department of Public Works
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This photograph commemorates the festivities surrounding the dedication of Dawes Island in Harvard Square, the site William Dawes passed on April 19, 1775 on his ride to Lexington to warn of the approach of British troops. A series of brass horseshoes fixed in the cement of the sidewalk represent the paces of Dawes' galloping horse.

The occasion included a Patriots Day parade, a dedication ceremony at Dawes Island, located at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Garden Street, and a celebratory dinner at the Harvard Faculty Club. A number of members of the Dawes family, now living in Ohio, attended the festivities. The family contributed \$10,000 toward the cost of the commemorative horseshoes and its accompanying explanation.

The concept of the brass horseshoes originated with the Robert Neiley of the Cambridge Historical Commission and was carried out with the strictest possible regard for historic accuracy. The length of the horse's strides was measured by Arthur Brooks to a millimeter's degree of accuracy, based on the strides of a horse galloped by his niece on a dirt lane in Lincoln. Charles Sullivan, Executive Director of the Cambridge Historical Commission, scoured museums in the area, and even as distant as Williamsburg, Virginia in an effort to find a horseshoe dated to the Revolutionary period. Finally, he found a blacksmith in Old Sturbridge Village with such an historic piece and able to do the casting.

The photograph shows C. Burr Dawes, the current head of the family, presenting Cambridge Mayor Al Vellucci with a book probably on the Dawes family history.

On a wry note, a suggestion by Walter Sullivan that Cambridge present C. Burr Dawes with a Paul Revere bowl was vetoed as a needless reminder that Paul Revere was immortalized by Longfellow for his unsuccessful ride, while William Dawes has suffered in obscurity for his successful ride.

Seen standing left to right

Robert Neiley	Architect
Jane Reed	Director, Cambridge Bicentennial Office
Maryellen Fitzgerald	Coordinator, Cambridge Bicentennial Office
Robert Moncreiff	Chairman, Cambridge Bicentennial Corporation

Seen seated left to right

C. Burr Dawes	Descendent of William Dawes
Al Vellucci	Mayor, City of Cambridge

Bicentennial

Photograph #4 – AUSA Meeting

May 1, 1975

This photograph was probably taken to promote the publicity needs of the Association of the US Army and to encourage the participation of the AUSA in the Cambridge July 4, 1997 parade. The occasion recorded here was a meeting of two AUSA officials with members of the Bicentennial Corporation to plan the parade.

Seen standing from left to right

Unnamed AUSA representative

Walter Sullivan

John Corcoran

Robert Mancreiff

Mayor, City of Cambridge

Former City Manager, City of Cambridge

Former Cambridge City Councilor, Chairman,  
Cambridge Bicentennial Corporation

Seen seated from left to right

Thaddeus B. (name unknown)

Maryellen Fitzgerald

AUSA Representative

Coordinator, Cambridge Bicentennial Office

Bicentennial

Photograph #5 – AUSA Meeting

May 1, 1975

This is simply a second shot of the promotional photograph described in Photograph #3.

Bicentennial

Photograph #6 – AUSA Meeting

May 1, 1975

This photograph was undoubtedly taken on the same occasion as Photographs #4 and #5. In this instance the two AUSA representatives are shown alone with Mayor Walter J. Sullivan, who is standing in the center.

Bicentennial

Photograph #7 – Parade Route and Logo

This photograph is of particular interest as it shows the Fourth of July 1976 parade route and the unique Bicentennial logo of the City of Cambridge.

The map held by John Corcoran delineates the parade route, starting in the parking lot of Lechmere Sales at First Street, proceeding down Cambridge Street, on through Prospect Street and Massachusetts Avenue to the reviewing stand on the Cambridge Common.

The logo depicted in this photograph, patterned on the elm tree under which George Washington took command of the army on July 3, 1775, was designed especially for the City of Cambridge by Daniel McCarron, a staff member of the "Harvard Magazine." An historic print commemorating this event hangs on the wall in the background of the photograph. The elm tree logo was widely used and applied to many surfaces including bumper stickers, posters, arm bands and T-shirts.

Seen from left to right

John Corcoran

Former City Manager, City of Cambridge

Maryellen Fitzgerald

Coordinator, Cambridge Bicentennial Office

Bicentennial

Photograph #8 Fourth of July Parade

1976

The planning of this parade, with its hundreds of entrants and complex logistics, was an enormous undertaking, two years in the making. The large number of participants -- schools, ethnic groups, churches, social and fraternal groups, military groups, floats, bands, fife and drums, and fire engines -- to name some -- required that the order of placement in the parade be made by lot. The parade route is described in connection with Photograph #7. The logistics did, of course, involve enlisting the assistance of a number of state and local service agencies including the Department of Public Works, the Cambridge Police, the Harvard Police, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority and the Red Cross.

This photograph shows the marchers, members of the Bicentennial Corporation and its staff, who followed the leaders of the parade -- the town and state dignitaries

Seen left to right

Donald Moulton

Director of Government and Community Relations  
Harvard University

Robert Moncreiff

Chairman, Cambridge Bicentennial Corporation

Jane Reed

Director, Cambridge Bicentennial Office

Maryellen Fitzgerald

Coordinator, Cambridge Bicentennial Corporation

Frank Budryk

Member of the Cambridge Bicentennial  
Corporation

Seen in back

Hugh Lyons

Member of the Bicentennial Corporation  
(in white coat)

Bicentennial                      Photograph #9                      Fourth of July Parade                      1976

In this photograph, the students and teachers representing every Cambridge public school are being led out of the Lechmere Sales parking lot by the school honor guard. In the parade sequence, the schools followed the Bicentennial Corporation members and staff, as shown in Photograph #8.

The sister of Maryellen Fitzgerald, Kathleen Fitzgerald, is depicted here holding one end of the school's honor guard banner. She served as a volunteer and was wearing the Bicentennial armband with its Washington elm tree logo.

Bicentennial                      Photograph #10                      Fourth of July Parade                      1976

This is another shot of the school honor guard leaving the Lechmere Sales parking lot. The identity of these individuals is not known.

Bicentennial                      Photograph #11                      Fourth of July Reviewing Stand                      1976

This reviewing stand was located in the Cambridge Common facing Massachusetts Avenue. The dignitaries who marched in the parade mounted the stand and followed its progress for the next three hours. On completion of the parade, a reception was held at the Hotel Sheraton Commander on Garden Street.

Bicentennial                      Photograph #12                      Fourth of July Fireworks                      1976

The fireworks were set up in the soccer field of the Harvard Stadium. Seen here working on this are Jimmy Gucci and his assistant, whose name is not known.

Seen left to right

Jimmy Gucci

Name unknown

Pyrotechnics professional

Assistant to Jimmy Gucci

This photograph shows Jane Reed and Jimmy Grucci igniting the fireworks display on the evening of July 4, 1976. There were no spectators in the Harvard stadium, as the display was designed to light the skies for miles around and to be viewed by spectators in the suburbs.

The danger of this undertaking led to high insurance rates for the Bicentennial staff, Maryellen Fitzgerald and Jane Reed, who had to be on site.

Jimmy Grucci's family owned its own pyrotechnics business, Fireworks by Grucci, on Long Island. Jimmy became a friend of Maryellen Fitzgerald and Jane Reed, and later whenever in Boston invited them to his displays, such as Boston's First Night. In 1979, he was the first American to win the prestigious Monte Carlo fireworks competition. Jimmy was killed in 1983 when an explosion destroyed the Grucci facility.

Seen here left to right

Jane Reed	Director, Cambridge Bicentennial Office
Jimmy Grucci	Pyrotechnics professional

Bicentennial Photograph #14 Arnold Expedition Parade September 20, 1976

This parade began the celebration of the Benedict Arnold Expedition's departure from Cambridge in 1775. The parade, including minute men led by a covered wagon, came down Massachusetts Avenue from the parking lot of the Grace Company in North Cambridge and ended at a reviewing stand on the Cambridge Common opposite the Radcliffe Yard. The marchers seen here are carrying the Massachusetts Bicentennial banner with its distinctive logo.

Seen from left to Right

Norman Novak	Volunteer and employee of Harvard University's Smithsonian Observatory
Sandra Ferrar	Volunteer
Jane Reed	Director, Cambridge Bicentennial Office
Maryellen Fitzgerald	Coordinator, Cambridge Bicentennial Office



Bicentennial                      Photograph #15                      Arnold Expedition                      September 20, 1975  
Reviewing Stand

This photograph shows the reviewing stand, across from the Radcliffe Yard, where the parade ended and the ceremonies, including fife and drums, took place. The ceremonies were followed by a “feeding of the Expedition,” sandwiches for all, provided by the First Church Congregational. The speaker on the reviewing stand (in a white suit) is thought to be Thomas Mahoney, a prominent state political figure.

Bicentennial                      Photograph #16                      Arnold Expedition                      September 20, 1976

Bicentennial                      Photograph #17                      Arnold Expedition                      September 20, 1976

Bicentennial                      Photograph #18 Eileen Murphy Fitzgerald                      September 20,1976

Eileen Murphy Fitzgerald, the mother of Maryellen Fitzgerald, is seen here at the Arnold Expedition event. Mrs. Fitzgerald (1906-1993) migrated to the United States from Ballyhaumis, County Mayo in Ireland through Ellis Island in 1912. Original plans to travel on the Titanic were fortuitously changed because of a family death. The family traveled instead on the Cedric and on arrival settled in Cambridge. In adulthood, Mrs. Fitzgerald worked at the Cambridge Riverside Press, married Thomas Fitzgerald and had two daughters, Maryellen and Kathleen.

“She was beautiful, outwardly and inwardly.”

Bicentennial                      Photograph #19                      Arnold Expedition                      September 20, 1976

This photograph shows volunteers at the First Church Congregational feeding the Arnold Expedition.

Seen Here

Front left

Eileen Fitzgerald, Volunteer and mother of Maryellen  
Fitzgerald

Front right

Arnold Expedition Member

Bicentennial                      Photograph #20    Arnold Expedition                      September 20, 1976

This is a second photograph showing volunteers feeding the Arnold Expedition.

Seen here

Front right

Barbara Davies, Volunteer and friend of Maryellen  
Fitzgerald

Back right

Eileen Fitzgerald, Volunteer and mother of Maryellen  
Fitzgerald

Bicentennial                      Folder # 20                      Memorabilia

This folder contains one item of Bicentennial memorabilia -- a green, fabric armband displaying the Bicentennial logo of the Washington elm tree.

Bicentennial                      Folder #21                      Fitzgerald Verse

This little piece of doggerel was written by Mary Ellen Fitzgerald after the Bicentennial celebration came to a close.

**Scope and Content**

The Maryellen V. Fitzgerald Collection consists of twenty photographs and two pieces of memorabilia. The photographs document some of the events and many of the individuals involved in the Cambridge celebration of the American Bicentennial. The photographs cover the period 1974-1976. Also included are one piece of memorabilia, an armband, and a few lines of light verse composed by Ms. Fitzgerald.

## Folder List

1. Photograph #1	Presentation of the Massachusetts Bicentennial Banner	March 1974
2. Photograph #2	Cambridge Bicentennial Office and Howitzer	?
3. Photograph #3	Patriots Day Dawes Island Celebration	April 19, 1975
4. Photograph #4	American Army Association Meeting	May 1, 1975
5. Photograph #5	American Army Association Meeting	May 1, 1975
6. Photograph #6	American Army Association Meeting	May 1, 1975
7. Photograph #7	Fourth of July Parade Route and Logo	?
8. Photograph #8	Fourth of July Parade	1976
9. Photograph #9	Fourth of July Parade	1976
10. Photograph #10	Fourth of July Parade	1976
11. Photograph #11	Fourth of July Reviewing Stand	1976
12. Photograph #12	Fourth of July Fireworks	1976
13. Photograph #13	Fourth of July Fireworks	1976
14. Photograph #14	Benedict Arnold Expedition Parade	September 20, 1976
15. Photograph #15	Benedict Arnold Expedition Reviewing Stand	September 20, 1976
16. Photograph #16	Benedict Arnold Expedition Reviewing Stand	September 20, 1976
17. Photograph #17	Benedict Arnold Expedition Reviewing Stand	September 20, 1976
18. Photograph #18	Eileen Murphy Fitzgerald	September 20, 1976
19. Photograph #19		September 20, 1976
Photograph #20		September 20, 1976
20. Memorabilia		
21. Light Verse		