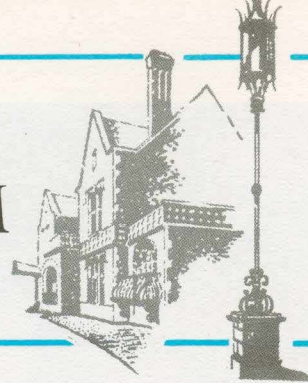


QUARTERLY NEWS  
MARY BAKER EDDY MUSEUM  
*and Historic Sites*



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## THE LATHROPS

Those who have visited the Youth Room at the Mary Baker Eddy Museum will undoubtedly remember the photograph of John Lathrop who, at the age of twenty-five, began the public practice of Christian Science in 1896.<sup>1</sup> Also our readers may recall that *Quarterly News* articles have mentioned Laura Lathrop, John's mother.<sup>2</sup> One article referred to the

fact that Mrs. Lathrop sent her student, Mrs. Frances Thurber Seal, to Germany in December 1897 to further Christian Science in that field. Another article mentioned both Laura and John as pioneer Christian Scientists.

Mother and son were both active in the Christian Science movement before the turn of the century. That they

were close is illustrated by the fact that they read together at Second Church of Christ, Scientist, New York City at the end of the old and the beginning of the new century. Mrs. Lathrop was First Reader, and John, Second Reader. In the January 20, 1898 issue of "Leslie's," a weekly newspaper, under the adjacent photograph, a short article about them began as follows: "Among the brilliant ranks of American teachers — from which might be culled scores of world-renowned men and women — it would be impossible to find another mother and son who occupy the same platform, stand before the same people, and alike devote all their energies to the promulgation of the same truths, both as Christian Science teachers and healers. Even to the most initiated in that platform the sight of this woman and this son inspires a subtle and tender interest, as well as a profound respect for them and for whatever they represent." The article closes by stating that Mrs. Lathrop "is the first mother to experience the honor and gladness of seeing her son stand shoulder to shoulder with her in a practical Christian work that claims no personal merit, but proves the unlimited power of good over sin, sickness, and all ungodly conditions."

Laura Best Lathrop was of Dutch and Scottish-Irish ancestry. Both parents were very religious; her father was a Methodist minister. Her mother would not take medicine but relied on prayer for healing. However, by the time she was seventeen Laura



Laura Lathrop and her son, John, in their home on West 59th Street, New York City.

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1. *Quarterly News*, Summer 1971, Vol. 8, No. 2, p. 117. See also booklet, "Young Pioneers," published in 1976 by the Museum.

2. *Quarterly News*, Autumn 1971, Vol. 8, No. 3, p. 123; Spring 1972, Vol. 9, No. 1, p. 131. See "Pioneers in Christian Science" for reproductions of their portraits in the Museum.





When a young man, John Lathrop began the public practice of Christian Science.

found it impossible to accept the doctrine of her parents' religion.

John Carroll Lathrop's father was Orvis Christy Lathrop, a lawyer, who was adopted by his uncle, John H. Lathrop of Chelsea, Vermont, as his own son. That there was also religious devotion in this family background is shown by the fact that one of the Lathrop ancestors was Reverend John Lathrop of Yorkshire, England. The early John Lathrop came to the New World only fifteen years after the landing of the Pilgrims, settling first in Scituate, Massachusetts and later moving to Cape Cod.

Orvis and Laura Lathrop lived in South Haven, Michigan, and their son, John Carroll, was born there. A few years later, in the 1870's, the family moved to Freeport, Illinois where John attended the public schools and the Sunday school of the First Presbyterian Church. The Lathrops also had a daughter.

Laura, who had been a delicate child, became a chronic invalid. In spite of this handicap she read and studied as much as possible. When

she heard of Christian Science, because she was nearly helpless, her husband felt it would not be sensible for her to travel over a hundred miles for treatment. Shortly afterward her husband passed on. He had been wealthy, but at the time of his death there was little left.

At the urging of friends and acquaintances, Mrs. Lathrop finally went, with considerable difficulty, to Chicago, where she was treated by a student of Mrs. Eddy's, Mrs. Hannah Larminie. As soon as possible thereafter she went to Boston and had instruction in one of Mrs. Eddy's classes, beginning on September 7, 1885. Before the end of the class, Mrs. Lathrop was asked to go to New York City to begin the practice of Christian Science there. In 1886 she had Normal class with Mrs. Eddy and, later, a third course.

Mrs. Lathrop gives her recollection of her initial meeting with Mrs. Eddy as follows: "I well remember my first impressions of her as she came into the classroom at my first lesson. She appeared to me the most graceful

woman I had ever seen. I can see her now as she stepped up on the platform, and after seating herself and crossing her little hands, she looked around at us and bowed and smiled. I have never changed my opinion of her from that time until this. She appeared to me to be at once the sweetest and the strongest woman I had ever seen."

The year 1885 also saw John beginning the study of this new religion. He went to New York with his mother in 1886, obtaining work with the H. C. Judd Company. Later, when he was eighteen years of age, the secretary of the company wrote his mother that John was "the best young man I have ever had with me, and is thoroughly appreciated."

In 1895 he joined The Mother Church having made the choice between a career in business and one in the public practice of Christian Science. He received Primary class instruction from his mother, and began such practice in New York City the following year.

Laura and John Lathrop visited Mrs. Eddy at Pleasant View soon afterward, and, in 1898, John was a member of Mrs. Eddy's last class in Concord.

John Lathrop served the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science at Pleasant View for a total of about eighteen months over a period of five years. He served in many capacities, including that of corresponding sec-



Mrs. Laura Lathrop



retary. In *We Knew Mary Baker Eddy, First Series*, Mr. Lathrop provides his "Recollections of Mary Baker Eddy." He relates his experiences at Pleasant View in this article, and his impressions of Mrs. Eddy are descriptive and provide an inspiring word picture of her.

Laura Lathrop helped establish First Church of Christ, Scientist, New York City, and later Second Church in that city. It was in the latter church that she and her son served as Readers.

In 1899 Laura was invited to become one of three teachers in the Board of Education. The other two were Edward A. Kimball<sup>3</sup> and Judge Septimus J. Hanna<sup>4</sup>. She was also one of the "First Members" of The Mother Church, and thus was familiar with some of the details of the building of the original edifice.

John Lathrop continued his active practice, and taught his first class in New York City in 1902. In 1911 he became First Reader in The Mother Church, and on completion of this service, became its President. When he was appointed Reader in The Mother Church, his mother moved to Boston, living with him at 385 Commonwealth Avenue, and in 1914 the Lathrops settled in Brookline, Massachusetts on Colchester Street. Here Mrs. Lathrop continued to do the healing work and to teach.

Membership on the Board of Lectureship gave Mr. Lathrop further opportunity to serve the Cause of Christian Science. He lectured in the United States and other countries from 1918 to 1924, making a tour around the world in 1921-1922. In 1929 he again lectured from June to November.

Several articles written by him appeared in *The Christian Science Journal* and the *Christian Science Sentinel*. Three of the articles for the *Sentinel* are entitled: "Demonstration," "Watching," and "There is Always a Way Out."

The only poem known to have been written by John Lathrop begins:

"Step by step, inch by inch,  
The rugged path we trod  
Out of the melting mists we gain  
Glimpses of our God."

(Continued on page 208)



Laura Best Lathrop



John Lathrop and his wife, Della



Mr. Lathrop when First Reader in  
The Mother Church

3. *Quarterly News*, Spring 1975, Vol. 12, No. 1.

4. *Quarterly News*, Autumn 1964, Vol. 1, No. 3.





Both Laura and John Lathrop did indeed pioneer the way in Christian Science, and they gained such clear "glimpses" that they were able to further the Cause well beyond the cities of New York and Boston. Mother and son dedicated their lives

to this Science which had liberated her from a life of invalidism. The words of the Master, "Well done, good and faithful servant: . . ." might well apply to John Carroll Lathrop, C.S.B., and Laura B. Lathrop, C.S.D.

Richard C. Molloy

## NEW EXHIBITS AT THE MUSEUM

The Mary Baker Eddy Museum curatorial staff each year plans new exhibits for our visitors. The Mary Baker Eddy Portrait Exhibit was left on display for two years because of the importance of its theme. As there was much interest in this exhibit, the major portraits will still be available for viewing in one gallery, Gallery 22.

Two new major exhibits are in preparation. One will feature furniture owned by pioneer Christian Scientists including a desk used by Asa Gilbert Eddy. The other will display artifacts and special items related to J. Robert Atkinson and the Braille Institute. The inspiring history of Mr. Atkinson and the organization he founded, with the financial assis-

tance of Mr. and Mrs. Longyear, is recorded in the *Quarterly News*, Winter 1972-73 (Vol. 9, No. 4). His contributions to the sightless include the printing in Braille of the King James version of the Bible and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy. Early volumes of these as well as other writings of Mrs. Eddy in Braille will be on display.

## CHARLIS VOGEL RETIRES

Charlis Vogel, Vice President of Longyear Foundation, retired on December 1, 1976. For over 15 years she gave dedicated service to the Foundation as attested to by her many friendships developed both through correspondence, and by personal contacts at the Museum.

Charlis was graduated from Simmons College in the School of Business. She came to Longyear in 1961 from seven years of service to the Christian Science Benevolent Association. She brought with her a deep love and respect for our Leader, Mary Baker Eddy; a wealth of knowledge of the early workers; and an appreciation of Mrs. Longyear's gift of a Foundation to care for original Christian Science material. Drawing on that backlog of spiritual inspiration and on her many years of managerial and business experience, Charlis was admirably equipped to bring out the best in her fellow workers and to nurture their talents.

Her official title was Corresponding Secretary and Administrative Assistant to the Board of Trustees until December 1973 when she became Assistant to the Director. This last year Charlis was appointed Vice President.



Mrs. Charlis F. Vogel

LONGYEAR FOUNDATION: Board of Trustees: Mrs. Marian H. Holbrook, Frederick D. Herberich, Robert C. Dale, Mrs. Marion D. Pierce. President: Richard C. Molloy. QUARTERLY NEWS is published four times annually, in the Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter, at the headquarters of Longyear Historical Society, 120 Seaver Street, Brookline, Massachusetts 02146. Inquiries about memberships, subscriptions, and its services are welcome.