



Annie Atwood correspondence with the Museum of Fine Arts 1959-1962

Annie Augusta Atwood (1872-1964) was one of nine children of Solomon Dodge Atwood and Florence Adelaide Dodge Atwood of New Boston, N.H. Solomon was the son of the Reverend John Atwood (1795-1873).



In 1845, a 16-year-old artist named Henry F. Darby painted a portrait of “The Reverend John Atwood and His Family.” This portrait, six feet tall and eight feet wide, hung on a wall in the Atwood home in New Boston for over a hundred years.

In 1959 Annie and her sister Florence Frances Atwood (1874-1961) offered the portrait to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, thinking that was the best way to preserve the oil-on-canvas painting. Thomas Maytham of the MFA responded to Annie’s letters politely at first, and with greater enthusiasm after he visited the Atwood sisters in New Boston to see the painting for himself.

Who was Annie’s correspondent? Thomas Northrup Maytham (1931-2029) was the Assistant of the Department of Paintings at the MFA at the time of this correspondence. Maytham graduated from Yale University in 1956 with a Master of Fine Arts degree. He later became the MFA’s Curator of Paintings

until 1967, when he went to the Seattle Art Museum. Maytham was the Director of the Denver Art Museum from 1974-1983.

The Atwood portrait is now on display at the Museum of Fine Arts. The New Boston Historical Society thanks Carly Bieterman of the MFA for sharing Annie's correspondence with us.

A scan of Annie's first letter to the MFA may be seen on the next page. Here is a transcription:

Tel. Trinity 4-5568
August 5, 1959

Director Perry T. Rathbone
Boston Museum of Fine Arts
Boston, Mass.

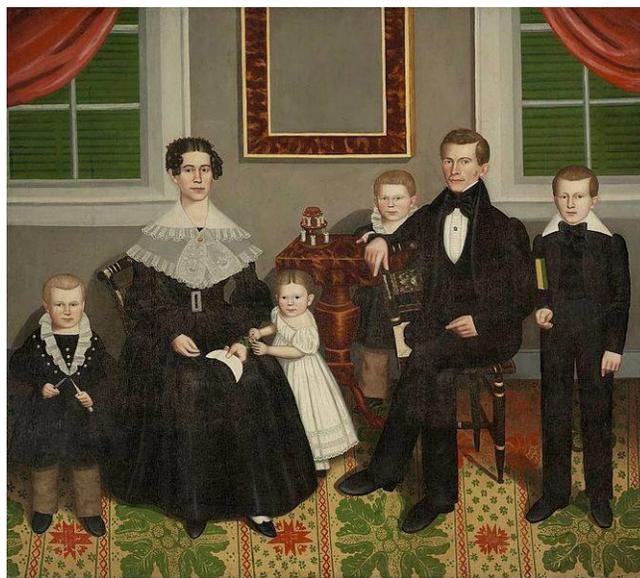
Dear Sir:

In a Boston newspaper of last spring or the late winter appeared a woodcut of the "Moore" family portrait now being shown in the Boston museum, having been exhibited at the Brussels' World Fair.

I am prompted to write to you of "our family portrait," seemingly of the same school, depicting the daily devotional hour in the home of Rev. and Mrs. John Atwood at their home in Concord, New Hampshire, with their six children. The painting was executed in 1845 by H. F. Darby; signature and date appear in lower right-hand corner. Canvas is 8 x 6 ft. and unframed has hung on the wall of an Atwood house, either in Concord or New Boston well over a hundred years. Mr. Atwood was a prominent figure in New Hampshire history both in religion and politics.

If you should be interested in acquiring the painting I'd suggest that New Boston is an easy and pleasant drive from your city. I can give detailed information concerning the life work and political career of my grandfather. I am sincerely yours,

(Miss) Annie A. Atwood



"Joseph Moore and His Family" was painted in 1839 by Erastus Salisbury Field. The oil-on-canvas portrait is 7 x 8 feet in size. It was purchased for the MFA in 1958 by Maxim Karolik, the benefactor who later acquired the Atwood portrait for the museum.

Tel. Trinity 4-5568

Atwood
New Boston
New Hampshire

August 3, 1959.

Director Perry T. Rathbone
Boston Museum of Fine Arts.
Boston, Mass.

Dear Sir:

In a Boston newspaper of last spring or the late winter appeared a woodcut of the "Morse" family portrait now being shown in the Boston museum, having been exhibited at the Brussels World Fair.

I am prompted to write to you of "our family portrait," seemingly of the same school, depicting the daily devotional hour in the home of Rev. and Mrs. John Atwood at their home in Concord, New Hampshire, with their six children. The painting was executed in 1845 by H. F. Darby; signature and ^{date} appears in lower right-hand corner. Canvas is 8 x 6 ft. and unframed has hung on the wall of an Atwood home, either in Concord or New Boston well over a hundred years. Mr. Atwood was a prominent figure in New Hampshire history both in religion and politics.

If you should be interested in acquiring the painting I suggest that New Boston is an easy and pleasant drive from your city. I can give detailed information concerning the life work and political career of my grandfather. I am sincerely yours,

(Mrs.) Anne A. Atwood.



MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
Department of Paintings

August 10, 1959

BOSTON MASSACHUSETTS

Miss Anne A. Atwood
New Boston
New Hampshire

Dear Miss Atwood:

The Director, Mr. Rathbone, has handed me your letter since the matter concerns this department.

I should like to thank you very much for bringing to our attention your portrait of Reverend and Mrs. John Atwood and their Family, by Henry F. Darby. Because we are so shorthanded in this department, it is unfortunately impossible for me to drive up to New Boston. In addition, because we do have the large portrait of the Joseph Moore Family, by Erastus Field, for this very reason we would probably be less interested in acquiring a large picture of a similar type. If however it would be possible for you to have a clear photograph taken of the painting, I would be most happy to see it and give you a decision based on that.

May I thank you again for writing us about the painting, and I hope to hear from you in the near future.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas N. Maytham
Assistant in the
Department of Paintings

Atwood
New Boston
New Hampshire

August 11, 1959

Mr Thomas H. Maytham
Department of Paintings
Museum of Fine Arts.

Dear Mr. Maytham:

I truly appreciate the courtesy of your prompt reply to my letter regarding John's family portrait. The only photograph I have is neither clear, nor adequate, in perspective. I am very desirous that the painting be fairly judged by you.

I am writing to my sister in Wheaton, Ill. for a photograph she once possessed of the portrait and when it is secured, I shall, with your permission, reopen this correspondence.

Sincerely yours,
Annis A. Atwood.

Atwood
New Boston
New Hampshire

Printing Exp.
August 20, 1959.

Mr. Thomas H. Matham
Department of Paintings,
Museum of Fine Arts.

Dear Sir:

In accordance with the suggestion in your letter of Aug. 10, I am enclosing herewith the small photographs of our "family portrait." Rev. John Atwood made the ministry his profession, his farm home being at New Boston. He served the state of New Hampshire as treasurer, as well as chaplain of the state prison for a term of years, residing at Concord during that period.

Returning to the New Boston home, the portrait was placed there: it has hung on the walls of an Atwood home in New Boston over a hundred years.

I am enclosing stamp for return of small photo to me, as it is the only one in my possession. Thanking you for your consideration, I remain,
Sincerely,

Annie A. Atwood



MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

Department of Paintings

BOSTON MASSACHUSETTS

September 2, 1959

Miss Anne A. Atwood
New Boston
New Hampshire

Dear Miss Atwood:

Thank you very much for having sent the photo of your painting by Henry F. Darby, which we have been carefully studying.

Because we too would like to judge the painting fairly, there is a possibility that I or another representative of the Museum may be able to come up to New Boston to see it. This is indefinite at present, but may be decided within the next two weeks.

With your permission, I would like to hold your photograph here, and then write you again concerning the trip.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas N. Maytham
Assistant in the
Department of Paintings

TNM/hsn

New Boston, N. H.
September 5, 1959.

Mr Thomas N. Matham
Museum of Fine Arts.
Boston, Mass.

Dear Mr Matham:

Your letter of September 2nd at hand and
I gladly accede to your suggestion that
you hold the photograph until a later date.
I recognize the value of an expert
appraisal of the quality of the painting,
in conception as well as in execution,
and sincerely hope you will view
our family portrait.

Respectfully yours,
Annie A. Atwood.

Thomas N. Maytham
Assistant in the
Department of Paintings
Museum of Fine Arts,
Boston, Mass.

September 8, 1959

Miss Anne A. Atwood
New Boston, New Hampshire

Miss Anne A. Atwood
New Boston, New Hampshire

Dear Miss Atwood:

Dear Miss Atwood:

I find that it will be possible for me to
drive to New Boston on Thursday of next week,
that is September 10. If that day would be
convenient for you, would you please call me
here at the Museum, collect, to verify it.
The Museum's number is Copley 7-9300; merely
ask for me. I expect that I would be able to
arrive in New Boston by late morning.

I find that it will be possible for me to drive to New Boston on Thursday of next week, that is September 10. If that day would be convenient for you, would you please call me here at the Museum, collect, to verify it. The Museum's number is Copley 7-9300; merely ask for me. I expect that I would be able to arrive in New Boston by late morning.

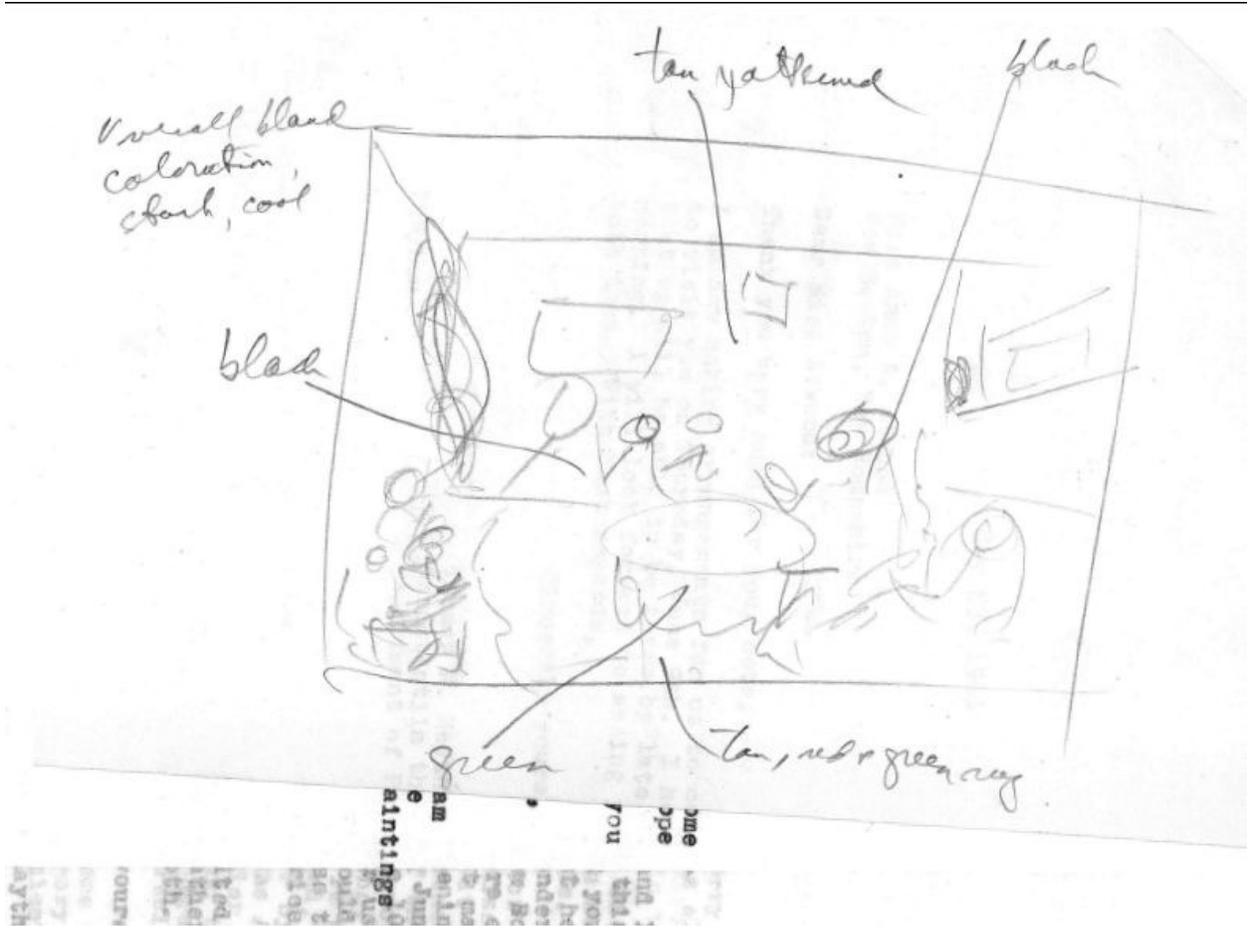
and sincerely hope you
our family portrait

Sincerely yours,

Thomas N. Maytham
Assistant in the
Department of Paintings

Thomas N. Maytham
Assistant in the
Department of Paintings

TNM/hsn



Sketch of the portrait made in 1959, possibly by Thomas Maytham during his visit?



MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
Department of Paintings

September 15, 1959

BOSTON MASSACHUSETTS

Miss Anne A. Atwood
New Boston, New Hampshire

Dear Miss Atwood:

It was a great pleasure to meet both you and your sister last week as well as to see your family portrait by Darby. I have discussed the painting with the benefactor I mentioned, and as I suspected he was very interested to see it.

I have therefore arranged for 3 men from the Museum, not including myself, to go to New Boston this Thursday, September 17. Because our Museum truck is not large enough we have rented one which will hold both the painting and the necessary ladders, for \$30.00. As I mentioned, all of these expenses will be born by the benefactor.

I expect that they should arrive in New Boston near noon. I have explained where the picture is and what appears to be the best way of removing it from the house, so there should be no trouble there. If you have any questions, please ask Mr. McQuade who will be in charge; he will also have a receipt on the painting for you.

Once the benefactor has had a chance to study the painting he will be able to arrive at his own decisions, as well as come to conclusions concerning a price.

With best regards to you both,

Sincerely yours,

Thomas N. Maytham

Thomas N. Maytham
Assistant in the
Department of Paintings

TNM/hsn



MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
Department of Paintings

September 18, 1959

BOSTON MASSACHUSETTS

Miss Anne A. Atwood
New Boston, New Hampshire

Dear Miss Atwood:

As you requested, I enclose herewith your photograph of the portrait. I have discussed the matter of the painting with our benefactor and with the Museum's Director, Mr. Rathbone. They both fully understand your situation, and are happy to let the matter rest until a future date. They have asked me to say that if you decide in the Spring to dispose of the painting, they would be pleased to hear from you.

Meanwhile, I would like to offer my best wishes to you both, and hope that you will have a very pleasant and enjoyable Winter.

With best regards,

Sincerely yours,

Thomas N. Maytham
Assistant in the
Department of Paintings

TNM/hsn

New Boston, N. H.

September 22, 1959

Mr Thomas H. Mayhew
Boston, Mass.

Dear Mr Mayhew,

I regret seeming neglect
in acknowledging the return of photographs
several days since; please believe it was
unavoidable.

Both sister and I are very
desirous that our loved "family portrait"
be honorably preserved and we shall
gladly inform you of our return to the
home in the Spring, and shall welcome
a renewal of your interest.

Thanking you for your unfailing courtesy, I am

Sincerely yours,

Archie A. Atwood.

former mailing address,

P.O. Box 173 Milford, N. H.

April 29, 1960

Mr. Thomas N. Maytham
Department of Paintings.

Dear Mr. Maytham:

In accordance with your suggestion of September last, I am writing our desire to dispose of the painting which you inspected at a reasonably early date.

My sister and I not yet occupying our home but hope to do so soon. Meanwhile

I could probably arrange for "opening the door" to you or whomsoever you suggest, whenever desirable to you.

Always remembering that Spring comes to Massachusetts two weeks in advance of her arrival in New Hampshire.

Thanking you for the courteous consideration extended to us in this delay.

Sincerely yours,

Arthur A. Atwood

May 6, 1960

Miss Anne A. Atwood
P. O. Box 173
Milford
New Hampshire

Sincerely yours,

Dear Miss Atwood:

Thank you very much for your letter. I am sorry not to have answered earlier but this time of year is always extremely busy here.

I am happy to hear that you are interested in disposing of your painting by Darby, and I hope that it can be arranged with as little inconvenience to you as possible.

Along this line, Mr. Perry Rathbone the Director of the Museum here and I would prefer, with your permission, to have the painting brought to the Museum where it can be examined under ideal lighting conditions. I remember that you voiced some concern last year that if the picture were removed to Boston, it might not be purchased. On the basis of what I have seen of the painting, I can assure you that if for any reason this Museum is not interested, or if our benefactor is not interested, that it is a painting which will surely be sought after by one of the museums in the New England area, such as the Addison Gallery of American Art in Andover or the Currier Art Gallery in Manchester, New Hampshire. I mention this simply as a last resort, because I feel quite sure that it is a painting which both our benefactor and ourselves would like to have here in the Boston Museum.

If you are agreeable to letting the painting come to the Museum, I will make all the arrangements necessary to having the picture brought down as securely and conveniently as possible.

May 7, 1960.

Milford, N. H.

1960 MAY 11 AM 11:53

Mr. Thomas H. Maytham,
Department of Paintings,
Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

Dear Mr. Maytham:

Thank you for your prompt reply to my letter of April 28, regarding our family portrait.

Sister and I are convinced that one of our first duties is to place the painting into safe and honorable custody as of the Boston Museum.

I must confess that my feeling of inadequacy in accomplishing the desired objective has increased with the passage of months and I will be thankful to leave all details in your care if we may.

Answering your inquiry concerning price to be asked: I think we must rely on the knowledge and experience of the buyer to make the offer.

You will remember that in speaking
with us by phone last fall you did
mention a sum suggested by your
benefactor. We have never discussed that
phase with any other.

A measure of ill health has delayed our
return to New Boston until May seventeenth.
The country here is beautiful now
and we trust that summer is at hand.

Sincerely yours.

Annis A. Atwood.

May 12, 1960

*Thank you for your prompt and courteous
reply regarding our former gift of
the painting.*

Miss Anne A. Atwood
P.O. Box 173
Milford, New Hampshire

Dear Miss Atwood:

Thank you very much for your letter of May 7. *I am sorry not to
be able to see the painting
is always*

*I am sorry to hear that you have been discomfited during
the winter, but hope that this fine spring weather may be
improving things. With best regards to you both.*

Our benefactor has just returned to Boston, and I was able to show him your letter of April 29 and this last letter. He was very interested to learn that you would like to dispose of the painting, and said that he looks forward to seeing it. Along this line, he wonders if he and I could come to see the painting in New Boston before its shipment to us here. Both of us are extremely tied up until the first part of June. My last major responsibility will be taken care of with the opening of two exhibitions that I have to arrange on Friday, June 3. Any day in the following week, June 6 through June 10, and preferably Thursday, June 9, would be fine for us to come, if agreeable to you. I personally think it would be preferable for our benefactor to meet you and discuss the question directly. Perhaps some preliminary idea of price can also be arranged. *After by one of
the Addison
ourselves would*

*I am sorry to hear that you have been discomfited during
the winter, but hope that this fine spring weather may be
improving things. With best regards to you both.*

Sincerely yours,

*g come to the
cessary to having*
Thomas N. Maytham as
Assistant in the
Department of Paintings

TNM:nn

Dictated by Mr. Maytham and signed in his absence.

Milford, N. H.
May 16, 1960

Mr Thomas W. Maytham,
Department of Paintings,
Museum of Fine Arts,
Boston, Mass.

Dear Mr Maytham,

Thank you for your efforts to fix an early date for the inspection of our family portraits. Any day of the second week in June is acceptable to sister and me.

Trust you and companion will find the drive enjoyable.

Sincerely yours,
Annie A. Atwood.

P.S.

Please mail any further correspondence to New Boston.



MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
Department of Paintings

June 22, 1960

BOSTON MASSACHUSETTS

Miss Anne Atwood
New Boston
New Hampshire

Dear Miss Atwood:

Thank you for your extremely kind letter of June 21.

May I first assure you both, if I understand your letter correctly, that the price is completely satisfactory to our benefactor. If he had thought the price too high, I am sure that he would have indicated his opinion at the time. As I mentioned in my last letter I personally, being somewhat familiar with accepted market prices for pictures of this nature, believe that this price is a fair one for both parties concerned.

It is a generally accepted practice and one familiar to Mr. Karolik, that when acquiring paintings from private individuals unfamiliar with picture sales, that special discretion be observed so that there are no regrets on the part of either buyer or seller. I personally am convinced that disregarding how the price was established, it is a completely fair one.

Mr. Karolik has just returned to the Museum and I have given him the news that you have accepted the price of \$2,000. I have also been in contact with the local trucking company, Fraser & Walker Inc., and have made arrangements for them to go to your home in New Boston on Thursday, June 30 one week from tomorrow. If this is inconvenient for you, would you please let me know as soon as possible and we will try to make other arrangements. I am arranging, as mentioned before, for Mr. McQuade to be in charge and we will supply two more men to help with the removal of the painting from the house.

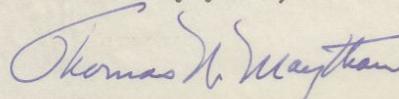
Miss Anne Atwood Page 2.

June 22, 1960

Mr. Karolik has asked me to inquire as to exactly how you would like the check made out. I would be most grateful if you could let me know before Tuesday the 28th to whom the check should be made; that is, to Anne Atwood, or Anne and Florence Atwood or whatever you suggest. I mention the 28th because Mr. Karolik will be going on a trip for several weeks after that date and will not be here to write out the check after that.

As I mentioned before, we will insure the picture at all times, and Mr. McQuade will have the check for you when he picks the painting up. I hope that you will forgive the length of this letter, but I want to make sure that I have mentioned everything. With best regards.

Sincerely yours,



Thomas N. Maytham
Assistant in the
Department of Paintings

TNM:nm

Near Boston, N. H.

August 4, 1960

Mr Thomas H. Maytham,
Boston, Mass

Dear Mr Maytham

With the advent of August many executives may reassume the responsibilities laid aside for a season, therefore I venture to address you now to ask if you have inspected the "Atwood portrait" since its removal from its long residence in our home.

Removal of the painting proved to be a tedious and difficult task. I hope that the canvas arrived at Boston unmarred.

I am enclosing a sheet of easily obtained facts concerning the sons and daughters of Rev. John Atwood and will soon proceed with histories of grand father and grand mother if desirable.

I hope your vacation was very pleasant and profitable in every way. I ...

Detail of portrait of Rev. John Atwood
and family, engaged in daily devotion,
six children seated, are from left to right.

Solomon Dodge, b. May 7, 1839. m. to Florence A.
Dodge of Franconstown, N. H. Feb. 4, 1864
"He operated a "country store" from 1860
until the year of his death. Oct 18-1915

Mary Francis, b. March 26, 1837. d. Nov 13, 1892
A teacher in early womanhood. Unmarried.

Ann Judson, b. March 2, 1835, d. March 15, 1874
Ann married Rev. Atwell Fish, a missionary in the South
but was released by death after bearing five sons
and a daughter.

Sarah Elizabeth, b. Dec. 12, 1829. m. John Blair, Alton, Ill.
d. in year 1916.

Lydia Dodge, b. Oct 7, 1827. d. April 9, 1909. Unmarried.

Roger Williams, b. July 18, 1833. married Emily Leavon
of Beverly, Mass. d. Dec. 19, 1917. He removed early
to Illinois and engaged very profitably in business
at Alton.

The six year old youngster at extreme left of the
"Portrait" is Solomon Dodge Atwood, our beloved
father. Sunny and winsome in disposition,
yet adventuresome and independent in action,
he wandered beyond bounds as an infant,
Grandmother fashioned a small apron
of leather to protect the tender knees as he
crept from house to barn over rough earth.
Solomon did not inherit his political beliefs.
When the Republican party was taking on life
and form he mailed a Fremont-Douglas ^{flag} to the
door of the barn, much to the displeasure of
his Mother who believed only Democrats were
of the elect. Solomon lived in Concord N.H.
from his fourth to eleventh year. He attended
church and school, learned to swim in the
Merrimac River and in summers drove cows
back and forth from the city to a pasture in
vicinity of St Paul's school for one dollar
a season. In 1850 the family returned
to the farm in New Boston and Solomon
took up life in the country with zest. His
education progressed thru public school of town
and academies of Tilton and New London N.H.,
Harmony taught in district schools of various
towns. On coming of age he entered into

partnership with Joseph Whipple, conducting a general store. Finding himself to be very well adapted to commercial life he continued therein until his death in 1915. meeting disaster in fires, financial losses, and nationwide depressions with the same courageous optimism which had marked his youth. "Solomon" received his commission as Post Master of New Boston under the administration of Levedon, and continued in the office until his death, except during Cleveland's administration.

His marriage to Florence A Dodge of Francisstown N. H. took place Feb. 4, 1864. Love and protecting care was the atmosphere in which two sons and six daughters grew to maturity. Small wonder that thro' some of the number travelled far afield as years passed, to each one home was ever a sanctuary and haven.



MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
Department of Paintings

BOSTON MASSACHUSETTS

August 9, 1960

Miss Annie A. Atwood
New Boston
New Hampshire

Dear Miss Atwood:

Thank you for your kind letter of August 4th together with its enclosure giving biographical information on the children of Reverend John Atwood.

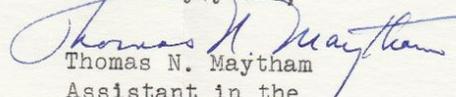
We have had an opportunity to place the picture in a good light here, and I am even more enthusiastic about it than before. Mr. Karolik is of course very excited about it, and what is more valuable, Mr. Rathbone, the Director, admires the picture greatly and is eager to present it to the Trustees for acceptance. Because of the necessary restoration etc., this may not be until early 1961. I will let you know as soon as it is ours.

Mr. McQuade told me that the removal of the painting from your home was more difficult than we had suspected. The picture is here in good condition however and the restoration of it should not take too long.

I am very pleased to have the sheet of biographical information. I am also looking forward to receiving the histories of your grandfather and grandmother. The more anecdotal detail you can give me the better. People are always interested in the personalities and every day philosophy of such a man as well as his public life. I note that you do not mention which of the children is your parent. Of course, the exact tie between your grandparents and yourself would be of great interest to everyone.

I look forward to hearing from you again and hope that you are having a pleasant summer. With best regards.

Sincerely yours,


Thomas N. Maytham
Assistant in the
Department of Paintings

TNM/hv

New Boston, N. H.

August 16. 1926

Mr. Thomas K. Maytham
Boston, Mass.

Dear Mr. Maytham.

Your letter of August 9th brought relief of mind to sister Florence and me, for we realized that the removal of the painting went very badly, and feared that irreparable damage must result from the methods employed.

I am enclosing a sheet which attempts to give idea of my father's temperament and way of living, but I am very embarrassed by the appearance of it and of this letter. I hope to receive a measure of skill and write of our grandparents more acceptably.

Thanking you for your kindness in writing of the painting's possible restoration, I remain,

Sincerely yours,
Amie A. Atwood

August 19, 1960

Miss Annie A. Atwood
New Boston
New Hampshire

Dear Miss Atwood:

I was very pleased to receive your very gracious letter in the mail this morning. Even more was I fascinated with your lucid and perceptive account of your father's life. I have no doubt that your notes on your grandparents will be equally interesting. This is exactly the sort of material which we need, and which will contribute to the public's enjoyment of the picture. With best regards to you both.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas N. Maytham
Assistant in the
Department of Paintings

TNM/hpv

New Boston. N. H.
September 2, 1960.

Mr Thomas & Maytham,
Boston, Mass.

Dear Mr Maytham:

Enclosed please find a faulty estimate of our Grandmother's personality. She was actually strong as steel and tender as love itself. We shall be very happy if the painting is accepted by the trustees and will appreciate your kindness in writing to us the final outcome. We so much regret restoration being necessary.

If a given object can be put into a designated niche or placed in a certain position, one might expect it could be similarly removed therefrom. I think your benefactor may well feel disappointed.

Thanking you for your kind letter
Sincerely yours,
10 0

(1)

Lydia Dodge: b in New Boston, N.H. March 2, 1806,
married to Rev. John Atwood Nov. 28, 1826, died April 29, 1886

Mrs Lydia Dodge Atwood, was eldest daughter of
Deacon Solomon Dodge of New Boston N. H. reared in a
home generous hospitality as well as gaining piety,
with six young brothers and sisters to be guided and
guarded, it followed that Lydia developed a marked
ability to direct and execute all the functions of
a home:

She had joined the Baptist church in her home
town when twenty years of age and a few months later
married its pastor, Rev. John Atwood. As pastor's wife
there was plenty of scope for influence among the
women of the community; who appraise the extent of
Lydia's share in building a strong, harmonious group,
into the First Baptist Church of her native town. After
twelve years of service in this first church shorter pastorates
followed in Franconia and Hillsboro, N. H.
In the summer of 1843 Rev. Atwood and family removed to
Concord, N. H. Lydia and the six children enjoyed life
in the growing city while Rev. Atwood held important public
offices, and both gladly accepted fellowship in the
First Church in Concord under Rev. E. E. Cummings, D. D.
In 1850 the family returned to the New Boston homestead
and Lydia again took up the familiar and engrossing
round of life on a two hundred acre farm.

In 1866 Lydia's youngest son established his family home "just down the road a piece" and unwittingly brought thereby a mission for Lydia's later years.

She had sustained a fractured thigh in matron life, and could walk only by the aid of two crutches, but she continued to order her household efficiently and after the death of her husband carried on the farm by the aid of hired men.

The children in the "little house" became the objects of her efforts and concern. She taught the small girls to read, using the Bible as text book, and rewarding the standard of proficiency attained with a fine copy of the Holy Book. The farm was a child's paradise and Grandmothers placed no boundaries. Pastures and orchards, brook and swamp where grew violets and flagroot, miniature waterfalls and whispering pine grove were all held in complete freedom, and when "out doors" lacked warmth or sun Grandmothers furnished never failing entertainment: dipping candles in the back kitchen, attending the baking of bread and pies in the big Dutch oven in the dining room or parlor, entertaining some friend in the living room, and "little folk must run home."

Lydia was a proud woman, and bore the humiliation of dependence on crutches uncomplainingly, but on the rare occasions when lifted into her carriage for a drive she carefully concealed the obnoxious aids under the robe.

Always ready to entertain visiting clergy, lonely relations or inspecious friends of scarlet days, she was frugal in habit; frowning on display in apparel or waste of food; but there was no lack of wholesome living and by the aid of her faithful namesake daughters all was satisfied.

Lydia died at the age of eighty years with natural force and faculties unabated,
"Her works still follow her"

Dear Mr Maythem:

Sister Florence and I are very happy in receiving the beautiful photograph of the Family Portrait. You will pardon this delay in my acknowledgment since my sister is seriously ill.

I am able to reply as to the infant children commemorated in the small picture on the wall in portrait.

I delete the word "John" with supreme ability you may discern more. The dates I have given are in the official record.

Henry Darby was sixteen years old at the time of painting the portrait, as told us by our "Aunt Lydia"; she thought he was in delicate health at that time.

I shall be very glad to send to you whatever facts I may procure later as promptly as may be.

I appreciate the use of our home mailing address; just now the address of our "nursing headquarters" would perhaps be more businesslike.

With warmest gratitude for your
unfailing kindness I am

Sincerely yours.

Anna Q. Atwood

Address,

Milford, New Hamps.
P. O. Box 173

(undated letter)

September 7, 1960

Miss Annie A. Atwood
New Boston
New Hampshire

Dear Miss Atwood:

Once again I am indebted to you for your efforts and kind interest.

While certainly you are the best judge of your grandmother's personality, I feel as though I have a clear insight into her make-up, as well as a coherent knowledge of her personal history. While this completes the group of biographical sketches, and while I do not wish to impose upon your generosity any more than necessary, I would be eager to have any further notes or anecdotes on the picture itself, on information as to the date and place of its painting, or any other bits of fact or tradition that you have in regard to it or the family.

I hope that we will be able to publish all of these letters, preferably in their present format, when the painting is made available to the public.

As for the painting itself, both Mr. Karolik and Mr. Rathbone grow daily in their enthusiasm for the painting. I have no doubt at all that the Trustees will share their enthusiasm. What little restoration is necessary is unquestionably minor compared to the appeal of the painting. Thank you again and best wishes to you both.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas N. Maytham
Assistant in the
Department of Paintings

TNM:nm

New Boston, N.H.

September 26, 1910

Mr. Thomas V. Maytham,
Boston, Mass.

Dear Mr. Maytham,

I am truly sorry for the delay in acknowledging the receipt of your kind letter of Sept. 7. You have been most considerate, shielding sister and me from realizing the extent of damage caused by the removal of the portrait from our home and we regret the loss and delay resulting from mistaken handling.

The brief sketches which I have sent to you may, in your skillful hands, serve as a foundation for the story of the painting. I have dealt with statistics: you may dust them off and make the story come alive.

The grand children once cherished a pleasant legend relating that the artist Darby came to Concord a young man in delicate health and was entertained in Grandfather's home some months during which period the painting was undertaken. The artist worked in the "parlor" of the return home at Concord N.H.

Rev. Atwood brought his family from
Hillsboro to Concord in Oct. 1843. He, Darby,
affixed his signature with date to his work
in 1845. I have no other information concerning
possible times consumed.

Sister Florence and I will gratefully
receive any report of progress in the
restoration and acceptance of our family.
We wish to thank Mr Karolik, as well
as yourself for the patience and forbearance
shown to us.

We expect to pass the winter months
in Milford N.H. but mail may always
be addressed to us at New Boston and
will be forwarded.

Sincerely,
Arthur A. Atwood.



MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
Department of Paintings

BOSTON MASSACHUSETTS

September 29, 1960

Miss Annie A. Atwood
New Boston, N.H.

Dear Miss Atwood:

It is a great pleasure to hear from you again, and I hope that you have both enjoyed the summer.

Now that our restorer, Mr. Finlayson, has completed work on a very large painting of our own, we are arranging for him to begin on the picture of your family. I expect that the complete job may take at least a month because of the size of the painting, but it will no doubt be in perfect condition when completed.

As plans now stand, and conditioned upon the date of completion of the restoration, the picture will be given to the Museum by Mr. Karolik at one of the early meetings of our Committee on the Museum in 1961. I will of course let you know when that has happened. Also, when the restoration is completed we will have a photograph taken, and I will certainly send you a copy.

Thank you for the additional notes on Darby himself and the circumstances of the picture's creation. Do you happen to know if any of the paintings hanging on the wall in the background of the painting still exist? But perhaps you remember them yourself if they do not.

Once again may I say how grateful I am for all your kind assistance, and I hope that you both pass a very pleasant winter.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas N. Maytham
Thomas N. Maytham
Assistant in the
Department of Paintings

November 10, 196

Mr Thomas H. Maytham
Boston, Mass.

Dear Mr Maytham:

Your kind letter of late Sept was deeply appreciated by sister Florence and myself: you wrote so confidently of a probably successful restoration of our family portrait, we wanted to say "thank you" immediately, but instead I sustained a circulatory disturbance which rendered writing impossible. I used to say "Sheer he had a shock and is good for nothing." I am attempting some writing now and hasten to express our gratitude to you. We would be happy to give to the Museum any object in our possession which pertains to the painting; but do not know the whereabouts of the pictures painted on the rear wall. I will seek information from cousins in Missouri who may be able to locate them (the pictures) for us.

have one chair unblemished by amateur
air efforts to repair or refinish: the front
of its cane seat is broken, not too extensively,
& should not be repaired with cane
unless need, today.

The parer also one of the
all footstools but must state that its
lining of haircloth has been renewed more
or less during the years of use in our
house.

If any fresh information come to hand
will forward it to you. Please address
at New Boston. We expect to remain here,
midland thru the winter but our mail always
receives the most careful attention from our
office.

With kind regards from us both.

Sincerely yours,

Annie A. Atwood.

ATWOOD

November 21, 1960

Miss Annie A. Atwood
New Boston, New Hampshire

Dear Miss Atwood:

I was very distressed to learn that you have been ill. I am glad to see however that you are better; it is always a pleasure to hear from you.

It is most generous of you to want to give the Museum the objects which are represented in the painting. I haven't yet had an opportunity of discussing this with Mr. Rathbone, but I can see no reason to believe that he wouldn't be eager to include these with the picture. I especially feel sure that we would like to have the paintings if you are able to locate them. When we first exhibited our large Joseph Moore Family, we were fortunate in having a number of objects of memorabilia that had come from the sitters' possession. They were not only fascinating to us, but of great interest to the public.

The restoration of the painting is progressing well, and we expect to be able to present it to one of the meetings of our Committee on the Museum early in 1961. I will look forward to hearing from you, and hope that you both spend a very pleasant holiday season.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas N. Maytham
Assistant in the
Department of Paintings

TNM/ih

P.O. Box 173 Milford N.H.
April 5, 1961.

Mr. Thomas N. Maytham,
Museum of Fine Art,
Boston, Mass.

Dear Mr. Maytham,

I am uncertain of what I have written to you since the receipt of the beautiful photographs of our family portrait. So it I neglected to send the dates pertaining to the "two Johns" I am enclosing herewith the small slip which I supposed

I had already forwarded to you. No success as yet in tracing the pictures painted on the wall in our portrait. I alerted all the cousins and still hope something may yet come to light.

I have confidence in the accuracy of the date concerning the artist Darby's age when
Mrs P. O. H. - b. ... s. 18

- My sister Florence died in February, and during the succeeding weeks my mind failed to record much of the daily round of unimportant living.

I expect to remain in Melford some weeks, the weather is so inclement,

Mail addressed to New Boston will always be forwarded to me,

Am sorry that I must continue to use pencils. Thanking you for your patient courtesy I remain sincerely yours,

Annie A. Atwood

April 24, 1961

Miss Annie A. Atwood
New Boston, New Hampshire

Dear Miss Atwood:

I am extremely sorry to learn about your sister Florence. Please accept my deepest regrets.

I am also sorry not to have answered your letter earlier but I was myself incapacitated by a stay in the hospital. My appendix ruptured in mid-March and kept me from work for about a month. Things seem to be going better now.

I am grateful for your sending the dates on the two Jons in the family. This seems to complete the information we need. As I may have written you earlier, Darby's granddaughter has verified Darby's age at sixteen years when he did the Atwood Family. She is also expected to come to the Museum week after next. It will be most interesting to talk with her.

I appreciate your efforts on our behalf in regard to the pictures and furniture represented in the painting. Perhaps something may yet turn up.

I hope now that better weather seems to have returned to New England that you will be able to get back to New Boston. As soon as further developments occur on the painting itself I will let you know. As I mentioned before, now that it is cleaned it is most attractive and striking. I expect that we will be making color transparencies of it, and I will send you an example as soon as I can.

With best regards.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas N. Maytham
Assistant in the
Department of Paintings

TNM/ah

May 5-1961.

Mr Thomas K Mayham.
Boston, Mass.

Dear Mr. Mayham:

Thank you for your kind expression of sympathy in the loss of my beloved sister. Am sorry that you have had to experience so long a hospital confinement: trust you may enjoy robust health now thru the removal of this troublesome member.

I am very interested in the fact that you have achieved contact with artist Derby's family. May I hope to learn from you some day, the answers to my speculations regarding Derby's visit to New Hampshire and my grandfather's acquaintance with him?

Perhaps the granddaughter you are meeting inheritsanny Derby's skill with the brush. I could ask a score of questions,

Weather in this part of New Hampshire
remains capricious but displaying much
springtime beauty to the eye. I should
bring the usual conditions we fully enjoy.

I prize highly the beautiful photographs of
the painting of the Atwood Family.

Hope some other descendants may some day
view the painting on display at the Museum.

With appreciation of all your kindness to
Florence and me,

Sincerely,

Annie Q. Atwood.

ATWOOD

re: Darby picture

May 19, 1961

Miss Annie A. Atwood
New Boston, New Hampshire

Dear Miss Atwood:

Thank you for your very kind and pleasant letter of May 5th.

We have been hoping on several occasions to meet Mrs. Bleecker, Darby's granddaughter. Unfortunately, various circumstances in her family have prevented her visit to Boston. We are now looking forward to seeing her on the 26th of this month. I will certainly let you know the results of our discussions.

We have made numerous discoveries in regard to Darby's connection with your family from his diary, and hope to verify more points when speaking with Mrs. Bleecker. As soon as this is assembled and coordinated, I will let you know in detail.

With best wishes for a pleasant spring.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas N. Maytham
Assistant in the
Department of Paintings

TNM/ah

received Jan 7. 1962

Mr Thomas H Maytham
Boston, Mass.

Dear Mr. Maytham,

I am more than pleased with the outcome of the sale of the Atwood portrait. I feel that it was taken from the old home none too early and I could not ask for a better place to preserve the painting.

I am the last member of the family to have a care as to many things of that generation and I am made happy by this outcome. I cannot hope to visit the Museum ^{and} see the painting for myself but the smaller copy ~~that~~ which you so kindly sent is marvellous.

Annie Atwood was 89 years old when she wrote this letter, a year after her sister Florence died. Annie died two years after this letter was written. (The scan is incomplete.)