

# The Massachusetts Historical Review®

Published by the Massachusetts Historical Society

VOLUME 18, 2016

Massachusetts and the Origins of American Historical Thought

Conrad Edick Wright, *Ford Editor of Publications*

Ondine Le Blanc, *Director of Publications*

James T. Connolly, *Associate Editor*

Katheryn P. Viens, *Reviews Editor*

Nancy Heywood & Laura Wulf, *Collection Services*

## Editorial Board

David Blight

John Brooke

Ronald Formisano

Joanne Freeman

Richard Godbeer

James O. Horton

Jacqueline Jones

Jane Kamensky

Daniel Richter

Reed Ueda

## PUBLISHED AT THE CHARGE OF THE PUBLICATION FUND

The Massachusetts Historical Society publishes the *Massachusetts Historical Review* (ISSN 1526-3894 [print], 2155-1316 [online]) annually. The *MHR* and the MHS disclaim all responsibility for the contributors' statements of fact or opinion. Please direct all inquiries concerning manuscript submissions to the *MHR* editorial office at the Massachusetts Historical Society, 1154 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02215, 617-646-0512, e-mail: [cwright@masshist.org](mailto:cwright@masshist.org). To order a copy of volume 18 (\$30.00 for individuals, \$35.00 for institutions, \$45.00 for foreign addresses) or a subscription beginning with volume 19, call 617-646-0513, e-mail: [publications@masshist.org](mailto:publications@masshist.org). Articles in this volume are abstracted and indexed in *Historical Abstracts*, *America: History and Life*, and *A New England Bibliography*. A digital edition of the *MHR* is published by JSTOR.

Editorial policy: The *MHR* follows *Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th ed. Authors should submit their essays completely double-spaced with double-spaced endnotes as an e-mail attachment in Microsoft Word for Windows or rich text format.

© 2016 Massachusetts Historical Society  
*Massachusetts Historical Review* is a registered trademark  
of the Massachusetts Historical Society.  
All rights reserved.

# MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL REVIEW®

VOLUME 18, 2016

Massachusetts and the Origins of American Historical Thought



## Contents

Introduction <i>Conrad Edick Wright</i>	iii
ESSAYS	
John Winthrop and the Shaping of New England History <i>Francis J. Bremer</i>	i
“Seeing Things Their Way”: The Lord’s Remembrancers and Their New England Histories <i>Reiner Smolinski</i>	19
Thomas Hutchinson: America’s “Enlightenment” Historian <i>John W. Tyler</i>	65
Women Writing War: Mercy Otis Warren and Hannah Mather Crocker on the American Revolution <i>Eileen Hunt Botting</i>	89
Byles versus Boston: Historic Houses, Urban Development, and the Public Good in an Improving City <i>Whitney A. Martinko</i>	119

## Byles versus Boston

*Historic Houses, Urban Development,  
and the Public Good in an Improving City*

WHITNEY A. MARTINKO



IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE more eccentric residents of the newly incorporated city of Boston of the 1820s than Mary and Catherine Byles. As Bostonians observed the fiftieth anniversary of American independence, the spinster sisters continued to proclaim their loyalty to the British king. Born in 1750 and 1753, respectively, the women lived in the same house in which they had weathered the Revolution. As their other family members removed their loyalist proclivities to other parts of the empire, they remained in Boston's South End, alongside their famous father, the Reverend Mather Byles, who had been placed under house arrest for his loyalist sympathies in 1777.<sup>1</sup> Fifty years later, the elderly women seemed to form a living tableau of the past not only in their political opinions but also in their domestic life. They curated a material version of British-American colonial history with treasured family belongings, showing off to visitors their portraits of loyalist relatives, pieces of ancestral plate, a letter from King George III, old-fashioned furniture with familial provenance, and a box of their father's old parlor amusements.<sup>2</sup> Alternately described as entertaining historical curiosities or treacherous enemies of American democracy, the sisters garnered much attention for their proclaimed attachment to the colonial past, even in Anglophilic, Federalist Boston.

---

WHITNEY A. MARTINKO is an assistant professor of history at Villanova University. She is currently the Hench Post-Dissertation Fellow at the American Antiquarian Society, where she is completing a book manuscript tentatively titled "Public Properties, Private Profits: Debates over Historic Preservation in the Early United States."

Scholars have echoed these characterizations of the Byles sisters by explaining their attitudes and responses to them in terms of the politicization of historical memory of the Revolution emergent with the second party system.<sup>3</sup> But the quixotic historical personae of the sisters, fashioned by themselves and onlookers in the 1820s and 1830s, resulted as much from the sisters' place in Boston's built environment as it did from the partisan politics of the Revolution and its memory. Entrenched in a peninsular city where many residents sought to build urban infrastructure to serve a growing market economy, the Byles house stood on a likely spot for straightening and widening a thoroughfare across the Boston Neck. In 1831, city aldermen marked it as the origin point for a project to extend Tremont Street from the heart of Boston to the neighboring town of Roxbury. The Byleses' abode gained notoriety as the sisters loudly refused to sell their plot to the city and then sued Boston for higher compensation when the city took the land by eminent domain. It is no coincidence that Bostonians began to characterize the Byles house as historic at this very moment. When onlookers assessed the historic value of the old house and formulated adulatory or mocking commentary on the property and its residents, they took sides in the property battle between the Byleses and Boston. Individuals threatened violence against the mansion of the aged loyalists, Catherine and Mary Byles staged odd performances of filial devotion, and antiquaries wrote about the historic curiosities of the Byles house to weigh in on debates about the value of the old estate in the improving city. The desire to shape the contours of urban improvements, in other words, influenced characterizations of the sisters and their old-fashioned lifestyle as much as did ideological commitments to political positions.

While characterizations of the Byles sisters and their home as historic arose in the context of a highly localized property dispute, accounts of the elderly eccentrics and their old house gained broader traction in the popular press. After the resolution of the legal suit in 1834, popular authors and newspaper editors printed stories about the sisters because they fed conversations about private property and public improvements in an urbanizing nation. In an era of urbanization defined by a speculative real estate market, building booms and busts, and contested improvement projects, growing attention to the fates of historic sites was not simply a nostalgic reaction to rapid change. To debate the historical and cultural value of old properties was to debate how Americans should shape the urban environment in the interest of the public good. While the particular brands of domestic history and old-fashioned politics performed by the Byles sisters were undeniably eccentric, they were part of a common discussion in Jacksonian America about how to weigh

individual property rights with interest in the commonweal. In executing the Revolution, the people of Boston had allowed Mary and Catherine Byles to stay put in a republican town. Shaping their estate in an image of the past, both on the page and on the ground, was a way to determine what place their old house should have in an improving city and who should get to decide.



Mary and Catherine Byles occupied a precarious place—quite literally—in early national Boston. Their home was tucked into the southwestern part of the urban peninsula, just below Boston Common and just above the narrow neck of land that connected the city to the mainland. City residents knew the property as Nassau Green, a moniker that invoked the generous yard and mature trees of the eleven-thousand-square-foot tract.<sup>4</sup> The house, a two-story, eighteen-by-thirty-eight-foot wooden structure, sat at the elbow of Nassau Street, where it took a 130-degree turn to intersect with Washington Street, the main thoroughfare over the narrow isthmus.<sup>5</sup> Their father had purchased the house in 1741 and subsequently built a family, a career as a popular Congregational minister at the Hollis Street Church, and a reputation as a witty writer. Mary and Catherine Byles grew up in the house and, never marrying, continued there with their father until his death in 1788. After years of disputes over their father's inheritance, the sisters obtained title to the property and continued at the same abode for the remainder of their lives.<sup>6</sup>

By 1825, the Byles house sat at the junction of the old and new city plans, where private citizens and municipal leaders alike began to imagine how to straighten and widen old streets and join them with new ones to divert traffic over the enlarged land mass of the Boston neck (fig. 1).<sup>7</sup> As shown in the plan drawn by city surveyor Stephen P. Fuller, Boston developers proposed to fill the receiving basin of the Charles River on the northern shore of the neck to increase the crowded city's footprint. Landfill that widened the land bridge made archaic the streets that followed the original curve of the peninsula and funneled all traffic to Washington Street. Area residents looking to increase the speed and capacity of commercial traffic flowing in and out of the city immediately sought to eliminate the crooks in streets like Nassau, renamed Common Street in 1824, to alleviate arterial congestion. As townspeople targeted the Byleses' corner as an area ripe for urban improvements, they lobbied the men elected to the city's new mayoralty and board of aldermen with petitions for support from the municipal government.<sup>8</sup>

By 1827, Mary and Catherine Byles must have felt that local urban reformers posed as much of a threat of displacement as patriots had fifty years



Fig. 1: Stephen P. Fuller plan, 1826, Harvard Map Collection.

earlier. Their property had come under attack in recent years, first under the pretense of retaliation for their Tory ways. In 1820, one harasser had lobbed a physical threat at their house, warning that “unless you alter your proud course of conduct within one month your old rotten house shall totter and your first warning will be broken glass.” To the anonymous tormentor, the sisters’ loyalism was a way of life registered in their household. They were

“paupers,” “simple dried up old virgins,” who “would be more proud to kiss the hand or great toe of the fornicator George the fourth than perform the command of Deity [to] Increase and multiply and replenish the earth.” Their love for their deceased loyalist father was not much better. The writer found the sisters’ aristocratic love of monarchy and patrimony particularly worthy of disdain because of the contrast of those pretensions with their lowly domestic circumstances. By the explanation of the letter-writer, an attack on the Byles house was an assault on the material manifestation of offensive political views.<sup>9</sup> A year later, the sisters woke up to find that “villains” had stripped the bark of a number of trees in their yard. Perpetrated around the Fourth of July, this arboreal violence may have been a symbolic act of retribution for continued loyalist protestations.<sup>10</sup> For Bostonians, these attacks on the Byles house must have recalled the violence at Thomas Hutchinson’s house in 1765, whereby rioters tore apart the massive pile to lodge their disapproval of the lieutenant governor’s seeming support of the Stamp Act.<sup>11</sup>

Protestors long had attacked houses as a way of opposing the politics of their residents, but the destruction of the Byleses’ property carried another valence of meaning in a neighborhood ripe for development. To threaten the sisters’ house and damage their trees as political protest was also to help clear a new course for the street that crooked eastward at their doorstep. The sisters, reclusive as they were reported to be, were well aware of the wave of modernization projects undertaking in Boston. They kept a close eye on urban reforms, reporting changes in the city to distant correspondents like their nephew Mather Brown, who in 1823 thanked them for their “description of the Alterations in the City (not town) of Boston.”<sup>12</sup> City plans fresh from the desk of city surveyor Stephen Fuller seemed to show as many streets projected for building as extant.<sup>13</sup> By 1827, it would have been impossible for the sisters to ignore the mentions of their property that regularly cropped up in local newspapers describing the increasingly insistent agitation for the opening of a new road beginning “at the point where the house of the late Dr. Mather Byles stands.”<sup>14</sup> With the Byles house newly poised as a local landmark on the landscape of urban change, these notices carried an implicit threat of demolition for the public good that dovetailed with earlier, less popular threats of property destruction as political retribution.

As long as the city encouraged the development of the new neck road as a private enterprise, residents unwilling to sell land for the right of way could resist pressure from fellow citizens. In the late 1820s, the city council affirmed the benefit of the proposed road, agreeing with petitioners “that the public convenience and the safety of that part of the city from danger in case

of fires, would be greatly promoted by the laying out of a street."<sup>15</sup> However, as the *Columbian Centinel* reported in 1828, the city council ruled "that the land wanted for the street as prayed for will exceed 10,000 square feet; and that from inquiries they had made as to the price the city could obtain such a street thirty feet wide, the committee were satisfied that it is not expedient for the city to open said street at its own expense."<sup>16</sup> The written report implied that *landowners* would make the city's efforts too expensive or too difficult. The council concluded to support the petitioners by rewarding any citizen determined or wealthy enough to secure clear titles from necessary *landowners* and carve out sections of the proposed road. In 1828, the council offered two thousand dollars to any person who could offer up a thirty-foot-wide road, ready for paving, that connected Pleasant to Warren Streets or Warren to Common Streets, as sketched out by Fuller's plan of 1825. Tellingly, the city also offered six hundred dollars to any citizen who could carve out a road half as wide between Warren and Common, "near the northerly line of estate of late Rev. Dr. Mather Byles."<sup>17</sup> The city would pay developers over three times as much money for a road surface only double the area, and the identifying factor named by the council was not a topographic feature but a property line.

Despite the council's resolutions to support *ex post facto* remuneration to private street developers in 1828, residents of Boston, Roxbury, Brookline, and other mainland towns continued to petition the city council. Perhaps they wanted to try their appeals on a new administration led by Harrison Gray Otis, whose installation as mayor in 1829 marked the city's first new leader since Josiah Quincy's consecutive terms began in 1823. Otis, well known as a land developer and real estate speculator, proved willing to use his public power to make municipal improvements to enhance opportunities for individual profit.<sup>18</sup> Petitioners' increasingly frequent tactics of linking private profit with the public good may have been a deliberate effort to appeal to Otis's commercial views of urban development. On January 4, 1830, a group of residents of Roxbury and Brookline petitioned him to eliminate the bend in Common Street—recently renamed again as Tremont Street—by extending the Boston road across the new neck land to Roxbury.<sup>19</sup> The petitioners hoped to meet this new road at the city line with their own new road, which would be funded by private subscription and begin near Guy Carleton's leather manufactory.<sup>20</sup> By coordinating the construction of this road across municipalities, the parties hoped to create a new artery that would direct and ease communication between the urban commercial hub and their own manufacturing district. In April 1831, eighty-six petitioners urged the Boston city

government that the Tremont plans should be put into "immediate effect" because they were ones of "great public utility and individual accommodation." The new road would provide an emergency and fire route that was five times shorter than the present one. The extension also would increase the price and sale of the city's new neck lands to the west, thereby speeding the reduction of municipal debt. But the petitioners also emphasized that the new road would ease commercial travel to the center of Boston's business district by shortening the trip from the mainland by three-quarters of a mile. As such, the plan was an enterprise of "strict political economy and public utility," especially because there were "no valuable buildings in the way."<sup>21</sup> Another group of prominent men submitted a similar petition in June.<sup>22</sup>

Other petitioners, however, expressed a different argument about the relationship between the private and public to argue against the proposed Tremont Street extension. Seven prominent residents of newly developed land just south of the Byles tract registered their resistance to the improvement project because it would turn private space into public. In a petition of July 8, 1831, they argued that there was no need to divert neck traffic away from Washington Street, where there were "shops and stores for its accommodation." A public street bringing travelers before their doors, they said, "would materially and injuriously affect the comfort and convenience of the Remonstrants."<sup>23</sup> In other words, Washington Street was public commercial space, their homes near Fayette Place and Cabot Street were private domestic space, and the Tremont extension would destroy that laudable separation. Increased foot and cart traffic would bring the nuisance of the public gaze, disruptive noise, and street disrepair as well as attract businesses that would compound these developments. As Bostonians worked to draw clearer lines between public and private spaces, these men wanted to keep their residences along roads frequented by their intimates, not the general population.

The city council dismissed these protestations on July 11, 1831, when it ruled that interest in the public good required the city to build a thoroughfare that divided privately held property and subsumed private residential streets. The council "resolved, that the public safety and convenience require, that a street be laid out, beginning at the easterly corner of the old mansion house of Catharine and Mary Byles in Tremont street; thence running southwesterly by the front of said house," and then southerly through their land.<sup>24</sup> A plan drawn up by Stephen Fuller one week later showed the northeast corner of the house jutting into the proposed road (fig. 2). The Byleses were not the only property owners who stood in the way of a straight course, and in the year after the resolution, a committee of three aldermen intermittently worked

to settle details that prepared a course for the road. In the summer of 1832, these men formed a commission to coax reluctant residents into turning over parcels of land; giving permission to demolish landscape features, including buildings; and accepting the rate of compensation for property taken by the city.<sup>25</sup> On June 18, 1832, Francis Cabot Lowell, Jr., finally deeded his ownership of the privately developed Cabot Street to the city.<sup>26</sup> With this significant stretch of land secured, and its wealthy owner out of the way, the city council finally deemed that the public good derived from the completion of the impending road outweighed the rights of private citizens to block it. On June 25, 1832, the council ruled that they would begin removing buildings in the way of the Tremont Street extension, regardless of owner consent.<sup>27</sup>

When the municipality undertook the Tremont project as a publicly directed and funded one, the power of eminent domain forced landowners to negotiate the issue of compensation rather than consent.<sup>28</sup> In July 1832, Land Commissioner Francis Jackson directed excavations that destroyed private property of citizens who had not agreed to conditions of its removal. This included a 4,147-square-foot swath of highway that ran through the middle of the old Nassau Green, rending the Byles estate in two and taking out the sisters' prized horse chestnut trees, their well and pump, a fence, and, most severely, the northeast quarter of their house itself (fig. 3).<sup>29</sup> In the last months of 1832, Boston aldermen negotiated a number of settlements with the Byleses' neighbors for property losses.<sup>30</sup> Alderman Benjamin Russell likely thought he was making headway with the Byles sisters when they accepted fifteen dollars toward payment for their chestnut trees.<sup>31</sup> But the Byleses remained unsatisfied by the price offered for the destruction of their property and made a bold statement by asking for five dollars per foot of land taken at a time when most citizens were accepting a dollar per foot.<sup>32</sup> On October 1, Mary Byles died in the old house, expiring under the shadows of passing traffic rather than the leafy shade of the horse chestnuts.<sup>33</sup> Catherine Byles continued to press the city for compensation on her own terms. When the city council refused her unyielding demands, reiterated in a memorial to the council in December 1832, Catherine Byles filed suit against the City of Boston.<sup>34</sup> A jury in the Suffolk County Court of Common Pleas would determine a fair sum of compensation for the private property destroyed by the public project of urban improvement.



By 1833, many Bostonians saw the Byles estate as a historic landscape cherished by the public. Its value was not just economic but also cultural: its

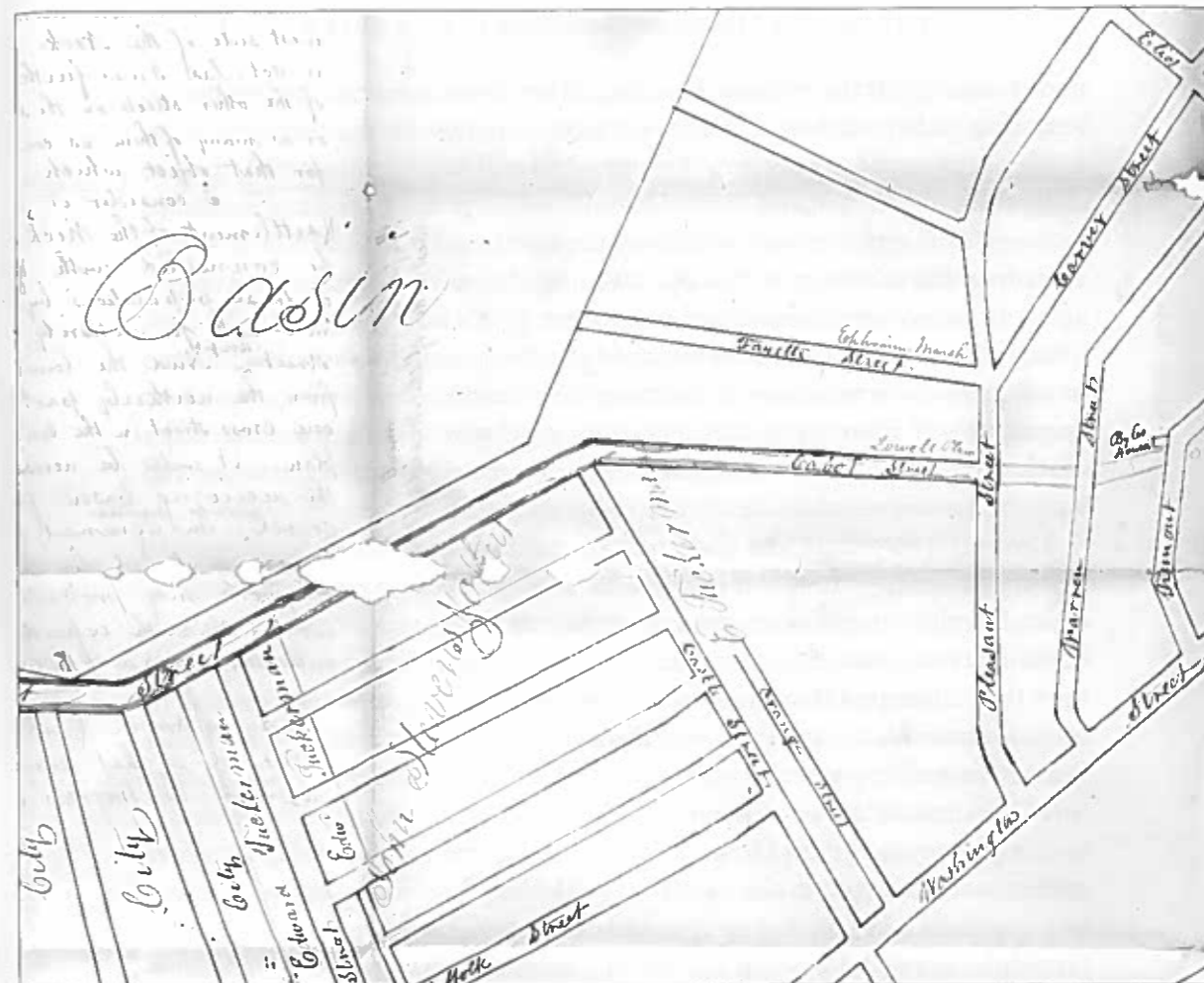


Fig. 2: Detail from Stephen P. Fuller, *Plan of Tremont Street extension*, July 18, 1831. Docket 1831-0083-A25, Case files, Records of the City Council of Boston, Boston City Archives.

physical features connected modern observers to the past. These descriptions of the Byles home as historic did not arise from inevitable or unthinking responses to sweeping urban change that looked to the past simply to celebrate disappearing evidence of revolutionary history. In the 1820s and 1830s, observers and the sisters themselves crafted descriptions of the Byles house as interesting, instructive, or significant because of its age and associations to inform specific conversations about the Tremont Street improvements. In turn, they spoke to broader debates about the relationship of private and public property and the common and individual good.

The Byles house had not always been considered historic. After the Revolution, the sisters had avoided decades of real estate taxation because of the

poor condition of their house. In 1793, Mary Byles had described its decay, reporting to her nephew, "We now live in our own house, though it is so much out of repair, we are afraid a high wind will carry away part of it, especially the poor kitchen and your old study over it which have many breaches in them."<sup>35</sup> A city assessor confirmed the continued deterioration in 1814, describing the residence as "an old dwelling House . . . so much decayed by age that the occupants are constantly in fear of it's falling down."<sup>36</sup> Neither Charles Shaw nor Caleb Snow included the Byles house in their descriptions of ancient Boston structures in their city histories, printed in 1817 and 1824 respectively.<sup>37</sup> Even sympathetic neighbors, who would have defended the character of the elderly sisters against their detractors, might well have agreed with the anonymous harasser in 1820 that the house was decrepit.

The year 1825 marked a shift in characterizations of the Byles house. As many scholars have noted, the fiftieth anniversary of the Siege of Boston and other Revolutionary events drew attention to living relics of the era, who could enliven commemoration ceremonies, written histories, and fictional tales that celebrated the period with increasingly rare firsthand accounts. In preparation for her historical novel *The Rebels* (1825), set in the 1770s, Lydia Francis visited the sisters to interview them about revolutionary Boston and loyalist sympathizers. Although Francis famously angered the Byles sisters over a portrayal of their father that they considered unfavorable, the novel strengthened interest in the memory of Mather Byles upon its publication in 1825.<sup>38</sup> In addition to excerpts and reviews of Francis's book that mentioned the Reverend Byles, it was not uncommon to find anecdotal accounts of his infamous puns sprinkled throughout the popular press in the 1820s and 1830s.<sup>39</sup> Although *The Rebels* drew far more direct attention to the house of colonial lieutenant governor Thomas Hutchinson, a lavish mansion that stood in Boston until 1833, the tale also revived interest in extant sites associated with the life and times of Mather Byles, including the humble abode inhabited by his daughters.<sup>40</sup>

Beyond Francis's novel, another document created in 1825 had a more deep-seated effect on changing views of the Byles house: Stephen Fuller's plan of urban improvements to be made near Boston Neck. The landscape changes this plan ushered in threw the old-fashioned features of the Byles property into sharper relief with its modern surroundings. Passersby would have seen the estate's archaic features as evidence of the way of life for previous generations: its board fence and wooden latch, gable-end orientation, urban courtyard, wooden walls, and dark, paneled interiors with low fireplaces and rudimentary firebacks all stood out as distinctive. Appreciation for these

old-fashioned features converted the house's weathered facade and decaying front steps into signs of venerable age, not evidence of poverty or lack of care. The Byles house was also notable as a "patrimonial estate" inhabited by the same family over multiple generations. During an era when increasingly fewer Americans lived where they were born, the sisters distinguished themselves by keeping the interior of their forefathers in place. Even critics who disavowed the sisters' deep emotional attachment to their natal spot appreciated that their house gave insight into their family's history, especially the biography of their father.<sup>41</sup> The material contrast between the Byleses' estate and surrounding urban improvements certainly would have attracted new attention to the old house and sparked a new sense of urgency to document evidence of the past that was increasingly uncommon and might soon disappear.

But perceptions of the Byles estate as historic did not result from passive observations of change and contrasts in the built environment. Growing public interest in the landmark's historic aspects reflected Mary and Catherine Byles's deliberate efforts to shape the public image of their property in a favorable light. The sisters certainly valued their family possessions and house in their own right. But with interest in old houses on the rise, the sisters accentuated the old features of their house and grounds in ways that attracted sympathetic visitors to their parlor in the years when they fought to maintain it as domestic space instead of a public thoroughfare. By honing their storytelling techniques, perfecting a routine to show off their treasured antiques, and receiving interested strangers in their home, the sisters parlayed their private appreciation of their family's and house's history into a public appreciation of its historic features. In so doing, they created allies who valued their home in terms other than strict political economy and supported their efforts to keep their property intact in the improving city.

As Catherine and Mary Byles refused negotiations with city aldermen, they made their protestations against impending improvements to a swelling stream of guests. Antiquaries, in particular, called on the Byles sisters with new interest. For instance, though he had visited Boston many times before, the antiquary Reverend Thomas Robbins first mentioned the sisters in his expansive diaries on June 7, 1832. He noted that during the previous week, he had "visited two aged women, daughters of Dr. Byles. They and their house are a great curiosity."<sup>42</sup> Young Edmund Quincy, son of the city's recently retired mayor, noted a series of visits to the Byles house in 1832 and 1833.<sup>43</sup> Both men arrived at the sisters' house at moments when its fate was highly contested in city council meetings. Published accounts of the sisters in-

timated that other writers visited the abode during the Byleses' disputes with city developers as well. Indeed, one writer professed to having seen the same performance of parlor tricks and antique show-and-tell over fifty times, each upon the introduction of a new guest to the Byles sisters. These visitors reportedly came from all parts of the United States and included Philadelphia's renowned painter Thomas Sully, who was particularly happy to study old family portraits painted by John Singleton Copley.<sup>44</sup>

The sisters' notoriety grew as they showed off their historic house, artifacts, and stories. In 1831, Eliza Leslie published one of the earliest descriptions of the Byles house as a notable historic site. Leslie, a Philadelphia resident who wrote domestic manuals, prescriptive children's literature, and cooking guides, included the house in her *Cards of Boston*, "an instructive and amusing game for young people." She classed the Byles abode under the heading "Old Houses," emphasizing its superlative age as "one of the oldest houses in Boston, and is much visited." The author distilled its historic features as they appeared in the modern-day city:

It is a very ancient frame building, at the corner of Nassau and Tremont Streets, and the outside is nearly black. It stands in a green inclosure, shaded with large trees. In this place was an encampment of the British during the first summer of the revolutionary war. In the sitting-room is a good portrait of Dr. Byles, by Copley, and a curiously carved arm-chair, surmounted with a crown, sent from England to his father-in-law, Governor Taylor. Also, an antique writing-table, which, when closed, has a singularly narrow top; and a pair of bellows two hundred years old, with a very large nozzle or spout, and some remarkable carving on the sides.<sup>45</sup>

Leslie's description reflected the Byleses' desire to attract sympathetic attention by propagating their domestic history through an unvarying routine of object lessons. Indeed, when Robert Carr wrote to Catherine Byles from Philadelphia in 1835, he reflected fondly on the cup of tea that he took at her "renowned oak table" and reported that his "little friends enjoy the Cards of Boston very much when I permit them to play with them."<sup>46</sup> Accounts like Leslie's, written in the context of urban history and improvement, thus increased the notoriety of the sisters in tandem with their domestic domain, earning an unusual spot for both of their names on the 1830 federal census rolls and spurring more writers to identify the old structure as the house of the Misses Byles rather than that of their late father.<sup>47</sup>

By the time that Catherine Byles filed her petition against the city in January 1833, she had helped to create an image of her recently sundered estate

as a cultural historic resource. Although this characterization had failed to stave off the appropriation of land by the city, Byles and her lawyer, Samuel D. Parker, leveraged their arguments for compensation on it. They emphasized the age of the property and the length of her residence there, calling it her "patrimonial estate."<sup>48</sup> The sole citizen affected by the Tremont project to bring suit against the city, Catherine Byles asked for recompense for making her "Dwelling House and other contiguous lands . . . of no value, leaving them misshapen, triangular, and incommodious, and of no use or value" to her. Twenty years earlier, she herself—and many observers—had described her house's aged decrepitude in similar terms, arguing that it had no taxable value. Now, when she claimed that city improvements had rendered her property "wholly worthless," Byles likely hoped that a jury would reimburse her with a sum that accounted for the shared historic value of her home, not just the economic value of the property. In 1833, the April session of the Court of Common Pleas heard her case; whether swayed by Byles's petition or well-known sympathizers, the jury ordered the City of Boston to pay her \$5,323.45—over \$1,000 more than the city had offered the previous December.<sup>49</sup> This elevated sum did not pass unremarked. Boston newspapers noted that the award "was about \$1200 more than the city offered to pay her."<sup>50</sup> Catherine Byles recorded the amount of her award in her daybook on June 4, 1833, taking \$300 and depositing the rest with her lawyer. She spent most of the initial and subsequent withdrawals on repairs to her house, where she died under a new roof in 1837.<sup>51</sup>

Interest in the property's fate did not end with the house's renovation or the death of its final resident. Memories of the Byles property continued to resonate with former visitors, many of whom published accounts of the sisters in periodicals between 1837 and 1842. The death of Catherine Byles in 1837 certainly afforded writers more candor in recounting their visits with the eccentric sisters. But, more importantly, writers saw the memory of the sisters and their conflict with the City of Boston as an opportunity to ruminate on the complications of defining public good in cities developed by persons pursuing private profit. In linking stories of the sisters and their outmoded Revolutionary politics with a narrative of their relationship to city improvers, authors wrote histories that countered the whiggish histories of Tremont Street that equated all development of the urban landscape with economic growth and unequivocal public good.<sup>52</sup> In this way, writers shaped memories



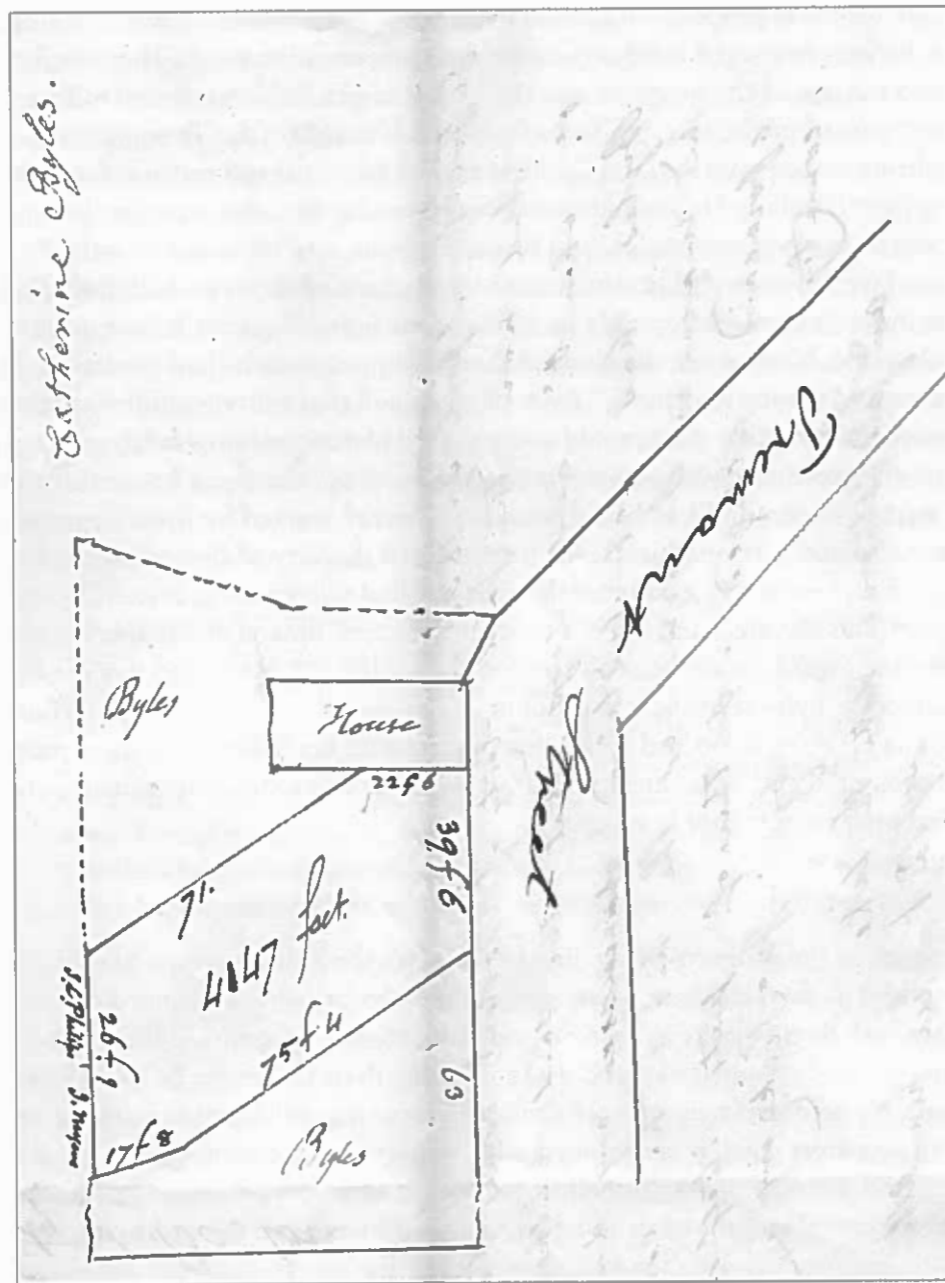


Fig. 3: Detail from Suffolk, Court of Common Pleas, file #579, June 1833, Byles v. City of Boston, Judicial Archives, Massachusetts Archives, Boston.

of the Byles sisters as anachronistic loyalists to consider the difficult project of reconciling republican ideals of private sacrifice for public improvement with public projects driven by hopes for private profit in a speculative real estate market. As a result, stories of the Byles property, framed by political values of the Revolution, gained traction in the national periodical press because they addressed much broader concerns about morality, economy, and urban development that Americans shared in a variety of locales.

In addition to the death of Catherine Byles, 1837 ushered in two events that caused some Americans to rethink the merits of improvements to the built environment. First, a widespread financial panic swept the Atlantic economy and launched a five-year depression. Whether they laid ultimate blame for the economic downturn with political leaders or transatlantic financiers, many individuals expressed a fundamental concern that Americans' growing obsession with maximizing individual financial profit in the market economy had hastened the ruin.<sup>53</sup> To these critics, a second event seemed to confirm that the U.S. legal system supported this maximal pursuit of profit. In February 1837, the *Charles River Bridge v. Warren Bridge* decision introduced the philosophy of "creative destruction" into the national business landscape. This principle held that governments should not be bound to enforce legal terms, such as charters, deemed to be detrimental to the common welfare.<sup>54</sup> Broadly speaking, it rewarded innovation and equated the public good with business development. In so doing, it affirmed local and state lawsuits in the 1820s that had equated the public good with environmental change, particularly in the context of urban planning and development guided by the Corporation of the City of New York.<sup>55</sup> The coincidence of these two events prompted many Americans to reconsider the material losses and moral limitations of urban and domestic infrastructure built solely according to economic calculations. In an economy that increasingly seemed to reward individual financial profit above all else, and a legal system that promoted this same philosophy by supporting municipal improvement projects, many Americans wondered whether there should be exceptions or limitations to development.

In the late 1830s and 1840s, accounts of the conflict over the Byles property provided opportunities for thinking about this question in relationship to historic properties. By 1837, even supporters of the Tremont Street improvements recognized the old mansion as historic. In 1835, improvements to the road had transformed the house again.<sup>56</sup> In October, Catherine Byles reported that the "city government have taken from me ye whole front end of my poor house to make themselves a St. I now own only a parlour, chamber, and garret and ye little green spot attached to my house; ye is all ye real estate

and all ye looks like my d[ea]r home."<sup>57</sup> This time, the city paid Byles the same elevated rate that the jury of 1833 had demanded, and even supporters of the street improvements noted the house's admirable historic qualities that had disappeared.<sup>58</sup> In a meditation on a trip down Tremont Street, from the Boston Common to Roxbury, an editor of the *New-England Galaxy* lauded the old house for its ability to call to mind the life of the witty Mather Byles. He grieved when street improvements changed the house's appearance because it diminished local memory of the city's history. "We always loved that house," he wrote, as "one link in our minds between the present and past. It brought back the stirring scenes, the heart-thrilling incidents of other days—and now it is but half of itself—it has lost its venerable look of antiquity in its unromantic covering of new clapboards!" The editor shared an appreciation of the Byles house with many antiquaries and residents who looked on its walls as an instructive history lesson, a picturesque pleasure, or an entertaining curiosity. Still, the author judged, the freer communication of traffic on the neck's growing artery outweighed the preservation of the house's historic qualities: "we can afford to have our sensibilities wounded for the greater convenience we enjoy in turning the corner."<sup>59</sup> Urban improvements came at a cultural cost of displacing historic features, he judged, but it was a necessary tax for living in a modern city.

The *Galaxy* writer bookended his description of the Byles house with a discussion of Boston Common and homebuilding in Roxbury to consider a broader question: "How great a sacrifice of personal comfort, wishes, or whims, should a man make to society?" Although he offered no clear answer about the magnitude of sacrifice, he did make clear that the municipal government should be a force in deciding. When private citizens failed to shape the environment in the interests of the community at large, he argued, the city should take charge of urban architecture. For instance, stretches of rotten fence rails detracted from the beauty of Boston's Common, he argued, making it "look like a monument of decay, or of gross negligence and want of all public spirit." If wealthy neighborhood residents, "whose estates will be increased by the value of the improvement," would not fund the project, the city should build an economical but sturdy fence to set off the green.<sup>60</sup> In this case, an aesthetically pleasing green defined the public good, not unrestricted access for city residents who might want to graze animals or drive carts onto the grass. Similarly, citizens should not erect new private buildings that detracted from the enjoyment of public space. When citizens failed to make choices in the public interest, like the man who recently had blocked a Roxbury street with his new home, city governments should intervene and

use their "power to move mountains, fences, and houses" to secure the public good through environmental design.<sup>61</sup> The Byles house was one of the things that had to be removed. Yet the writer made clear that the public good demanded these city improvements *in spite of* the old-fashioned features of the Byles house, not because of them.

This is not to say that writers who described the old house as admirably historic lauded Mary and Catherine Byles's form of domestic history as a way to manage property in a modern city. To them, the sisters' professed loyalty was not simply a devotion to British monarchs but also an attachment to an old-fashioned view of property as family inheritance and identity. At best, their patrimonial devotion was comically misguided. In a widely reprinted article entitled "Mather Byles and His Daughters," biographer Samuel Knapp sketched an affable gloss on the sisters' struggles over the fate of their house for the *New-York Spectator*.<sup>62</sup> He reported visiting the sisters in their home three times late in their lives, and he described the relics of their father with interest, portraying visitors who were eager to sit in the crown-topped antique chair of Mather Byles, valued "for its great antiquity and for the sake of its former occupant." But Knapp's use of sacred language painted the sisters' antiquarian proclivities as absurd. They were "priestesses of loyalty," worshipping both British royalty and their father. "Every trifling article of their father's property had acquired a priceless and holy value in their minds," he wrote. The duo "were in themselves a court of heraldry," assessing visitors as much by their genealogical lines as their personal interactions. The arrival of Tremont Street should have punctured their inflated view of their modest plot as a sacred hereditary bastion, but in the mind of the writer, the sisters foolishly persisted in their old-fashioned views to the end, "retreating to a nook of their castle until all repairs were finished."<sup>63</sup>

Domestic reformer Eliza Leslie leveled a more direct criticism of the sisters' motivations for cultivating old ways. Ten years after she published a short description of the Byles house in her *Cards of Boston*, she wrote a two-part magazine essay about her visits to the sisters. "The almost idolatrous devotion with which they clung to the inanimate objects that had been familiar to them in early life, showed an intensity of feeling which was both pitied and respected by their friends," and perhaps indulged by them too much, she wrote in 1842.<sup>64</sup> The sisters' domestic lives were a cautionary tale against narrow living: by confining themselves to their home, eschewing travel, and dwelling on the past, Mary and Catherine Byles "had wrought themselves into a firm belief that no way was right but their own way, no opinions correct but their own opinions: and above all, that in no other dwelling-place but

their paternal mansion was it possible for them to be happy or even exist."<sup>65</sup> Leslie's writings affirmed that visitors to the house had found that the property, its contents, and even its inhabitants constituted an instructive view of the past. But the sisters had cultivated this tableau for the wrong reasons: their attachment to the past stemmed from a narrow worldview and overly emotional attachment to material objects and patrimonial inheritance, not the rational appraisal of history's lessons in a modernizing republic. In the afterlife, Leslie hoped, "they have learnt the futility of having set their hearts too steadfastly on a dwelling erected by human hands; and more than all, of fostering prejudices in favor of that system of government which, according to the signs of the times, is fast and deservedly passing away."<sup>66</sup> The lesson extended to readers—they should not maintain material relics of the past out of an unchristian love of material things or an unrepresentative commitment to perpetuating the past.

Still, Leslie and other writers who published accounts of the sisters after 1837 most often described the conflict over the Byles property in a way that questioned the motivations and effects of the urban improvements that had sundered it. Although the proclaimed loyalists were not models for maintaining evidence of the past on the modern landscape, the highway that rent their property raised questions about the nature of improvements perpetrated under the pretense of the public good. The citizens who sought to develop Tremont Street could very well have been driven by an equally regrettable attachment to material comforts: the pursuit of luxury goods rather than the dogged maintenance of old possessions. Dozens of citizens had petitioned for the extension of Tremont Street according to the values of political economy. When Boston councilmen developed municipal streets in accordance with these wishes, they aligned the city with others like New York City and Philadelphia that linked the public good with opportunities for citizens to accumulate private wealth. When these old cities pursued projects of improvement that reshaped old urban features into more commodious ones for business transportation and transaction, they deliberately aimed to increase opportunities for private profit in the urban economy.<sup>67</sup> When commentators remembered the Byles sisters as standing against the wishes of "the public," this is the public that they invoked.<sup>68</sup>

These writers reflected on their experiences at the Byles house to meditate on the potential drawbacks of urban improvements, particularly as a weapon of greedy capitalists and a threat to domestic economy. When writers presented sympathetic views of resistance to impending improvements, they gave credence to criticism of urban developers as money-hungry individuals intent

on personal gain rather than public good. For instance, in his popular *New-York Spectator* article, Samuel Knapp described Mary and Catherine Byles as women who "were haters of modern reform, and spoke of mushroom families with all the bitterness of mortified satirists."<sup>69</sup> Despite his "own virtues and his ancestral honors," Mayor Josiah Quincy had earned their disdain for serving as an agent to these *nouveau riche* families intent on rapid financial and social gain. The city father "had turned reformer, and panted for their hereditary lands, for public benefit," proving traitorous not only because his ancestors had rebelled against the King of England but also because his reforms infringed on inherited property rights of private enjoyment to support businessmen intent on private profit.<sup>70</sup> By describing the conflict from the perspective of the aged sisters, Knapp prompted readers to place the "ruthless hand of reform" under as much scrutiny as the sisters' devotion to the past.

Edmund Quincy printed a more devastating indictment of urban improvements in the Byleses' neighborhood in his article "Old Houses," written in the summer of 1837. Published in the *American Monthly Magazine* in October 1837, and in the *Southern Literary Messenger* two years later, the essay narrated a walk through improving Boston from the perspective of a septuagenarian narrator.<sup>71</sup> Quincy, the twenty-nine-year-old son of Mayor Josiah Quincy, adopted the persona to condemn the practices of his own generation of capitalists, masking their desire to get rich quick with labels of public improvement. The young man had visited the Byles house several times earlier in the decade, recording in his journal that he was much interested in the "old curiosities" at the place.<sup>72</sup>

Although he did not specifically mention the Byles house in his published essay, his assessment of old houses in Boston certainly reflected his visits to the old estate around the time of the Tremont extension. While his father directed many of these changes during his stint as mayor, Edmund Quincy wrote of the changes to Boston's urban landscape as excessive in speed and scope: "It is my delight to take my solitary walk through those streets of our city which have suffered least from the leveling hand of modern improvement. I eschew, as I would an infected district, that mushroom growth of human habitations which has climbed the airy heights of West Boston, and filled up its pleasant vallies where in my boyhood I used to play, with a profane load of brick and mortar." New habitations marked the place of families whose wealth and status also sprang up overnight, forming a material scourge in the built environment parallel to the one their inhabitants spread in modern society. These new buildings stood on the spot of formerly verdant urban courtyards, much like the Byleses' yard, and formed "a staring row of vulgar modern brick

houses; presuming, like some upstarts newly rich, to turn their backs to their betters." Another spot of land, once occupied by old houses, had "given place also to a crowd of upstart heirs, who perk their common-place, vulgar visages in your face as if they were of better worth than the noble ancestral stock from which they sprung."<sup>73</sup>

Quincy's character admitted that he loved pondering the Tories in his historical perambulations and reminiscences. Yet he insisted that he supported the principles of the Revolutionary patriots and "reverence[d] the fathers of our liberty." He aimed his criticisms not at a previous generation of political rivals but at a new generation who indiscriminately demolished their former dwellings. This "round-hatted, frock-coated, breeches-less generation" assessed the value of real estate solely in terms of dollars and cents. "Too few, alas! of these abodes, consecrated by the memory of departed worth," exclaimed Quincy, "have escaped the ruthless hands of the money lovers of our age; who regard one of my dear old houses as only so much improveable real estate; and who think of nothing when they gaze on its time-honored walls but how much the old materials will bring."<sup>74</sup> When it came to real estate transactions, no property was off limits for development.

Quincy advocated the voluntarily preservation of some old urban properties as a strategy for stemming real estate development directed solely for individual profit. In his mind, old houses—whether they were loyalist mansions or humble homes of patriots—offered instructive views of the past. As he wrote of Benjamin Franklin's childhood home, still standing in Boston's Hanover Street in 1837, "If walls had tongues as well as ears, what histories might not these unfold! Reader, if you are worthy to look upon this hallowed scene, make haste—delay not your pilgrimage till tomorrow, nor even after dinner—for even while I write its fate may be sealed and its destruction begun. In other countries, the roofs which have sheltered less eminent men than Benjamin Franklin are preserved with filial reverence, and visited with pilgrim devotion. It should be so here."<sup>75</sup> Quincy was not encouraging readers to maintain inherited properties in the same way that the Byles sisters had, worshipping their genealogical forefathers and professing disengagement from contemporary society. Rather, he hoped that fellow Bostonians would begin to consider the collective cultural value of old properties whose historic forms could revive the past. Property owners should make decisions about the fate of increasingly rare old houses by weighing their interest to fellow citizens more heavily than potential for individual financial gain. From the remove of his aged persona, Edmund Quincy tested the argument that historical consciousness should be a determinative force in shaping the nation's modern

landscape—a position that he would develop into a full-throated plea for historic preservation later in life.<sup>76</sup>

In 1842, Eliza Leslie and Hannah Farnham Sawyer Lee registered similar qualms about the profit motive of urban improvements in articles about domestic economy. By then, both women had published popular volumes that encouraged consumer thrift, modern standards of housekeeping, and efficient use of time and material resources. In many ways, they recounted, urban improvements had wrought domestic improvements in the Byles household. When Leslie reflected in 1842 on her first visit to the Byles house years earlier, before two phases of the Tremont extensions had changed it, she positioned the house as a spatial metaphor for its residents' attitude toward improvements. Walking from the Common to "the aristocratic section of Boston" in the late 1820s, Leslie spied an abode "at what seemed the termination of the long vista of Tremont street, an old black-looking frame-house, which . . . seemed to block up the way by standing directly across it." In the years after Leslie's initial visit, the old ladies "steadily refus[ed] to sell either the building or the lot of ground attached to it, though liberal offers for its purchase had repeatedly been made to them."<sup>77</sup> When she eventually learned that the sisters had had to cede part of their property to the city to open the road, Leslie reported, she was glad that the city had compensated them well, and "their house was made as good or rather better than ever besides being new roofed and thoroughly repaired."<sup>78</sup> Although the sisters continued to protest their treatment by city officials, both they and town residents benefited from dovetailing urban and domestic improvements.

In a long sketch of the Byles family for the *New World*, a "weekly family journal," Hannah Lee echoed Leslie's sentiment that city improvements ultimately benefited the sisters. While "they were compelled to yield to the city authorities, and give up part of their land for a street, . . . they received ample remuneration." When "their land was converted into money, and, though they always considered themselves grievously ill-used, they finally consented to a less penurious mode of living."<sup>79</sup> They hired a domestic worker, whom Catherine Byles rewarded generously for devoted service, and updated their home to modern living conditions. In this telling, the Tremont Street affair had improved the lives of the Byles sisters, conforming to the lessons that Lee imparted in her wildly popular *Three Experiments of Living* (1837), which followed the domestic affairs of the fictional Fulton family and aimed to improve "the great cause of good morals, virtuous habits, and domestic and social comfort."<sup>80</sup> Urban improvements, though unwelcomed by the Byles sisters, ultimately encouraged them to live respectably within—and not under—their means.

Yet in the minds of their post-panic chroniclers, the old-fashioned domestic ways of Mary and Catherine Byles were instructive not simply because they gave a window on the past but also because they caused fellow Bostonians to consider the effects of unchecked urban improvements more completely, acknowledging the costs as well as benefits. The sisters' land had been converted to money, as Lee put it, and Catherine Byles used that money to spruce up her home. But this narrative of transformation did not fully account for the effects of urban improvements. In a retrospective view at the end of a five-year economic depression, the Byles sisters' spare spending habits appeared more virtuous than the financial practices of those who developed the city by speculating in real estate. In a financial downturn, many writers lauded "old-fashioned" personal economy as an admirable, and increasingly rare, way to live. In one pamphlet, printed in Boston in 1837, an author calling himself "Old-Fashioned Man" argued that the young age of the United States was its blessing and its curse: "We do not regret that we have no time honored abuses to cling to—but we do regret that there is not something to check the spirit of innovation." The panic, he argued, was hastened by Americans who spent every dollar and false compliment possible "to appear in the eyes of the world, rich and liberal."<sup>81</sup> Mary and Catherine Byles's stringent ways appeared less despicable from this vantage. Indeed, by keeping a close eye on her finances, Catherine Byles managed to accumulate a personal estate exceeding fifteen thousand dollars on her death.<sup>82</sup> At a time when the desire for "expensive living" had "swept over the whole country, like an epidemic," the tight purse strings of the Byles sisters, their refusal to relinquish old-fashioned manners and materials, and their defiance of profit-driven improvements seemed to merit some level of approbation, if not perfect emulation.<sup>83</sup>

Similarly, the loss of some physical characteristics of the old house provoked an ambivalent response from the domestic reformers. As Leslie reflected about one of her last visits, renovations that made the old abode unrecognizable made visits to Catherine Byles less appealing. "The main part of the old house was yet standing," and the ancient, "weather-blackened walls (which the sisters would not allow to be painted, lest it should look *totally* unlike itself)" remained. But the historic orientation of the gable end fronting the street was gone. Improvements that were admirable on their own, such as a "fresh-looking wooden door-step" and a newly tiled roof "seemed out of keeping." Inside, Leslie entered "a room which I could scarcely believe was the original parlor. The homely antique furniture had disappeared, and was replaced by some very neat and convenient articles of modern form. The floor was nicely carpeted; there were new chairs and a new table,—a bed with

white curtains and counterpane, and window-curtains to match." Only the "antique crown chair" and family portraits remained, most certainly standing out as select antiques rather than contributing to the sense that the room embodied former times, as before. It hardly seemed like the place where they had "told me many little circumstances connected with the royalist side of our revolutionary contest, that I could scarcely have obtained from any other source."<sup>84</sup>

As an advocate of modern housekeeping, Leslie acknowledged that her appreciation of the old features erased by improvement put her in an awkward position. Renowned for popular volumes like *The House Book*, first published in 1840, Leslie admitted, "I take shame to myself when I confess that I felt something not unlike disappointment, at seeing such a change in the ancient lady and her attributes. The quaintness, and I may say the picturesqueness of the old mansion, and its accessories, and also that of its octogenarian mistress, seemed gone forever."<sup>85</sup> Leslie struggled to reconcile the valuable view of the past made manifest in the old house with her intellectual approval of the modernizing renovations. In so doing, she affirmed the view of her *Cards of Boston* that old houses might have an instructive place in a modernizing city should they be set outside the bounds of domestic and urban reforms.

As the Byles house stood half-improved and half-preserved, though, urban reforms disrupted the private tranquility that characterized ideal home life. On her final visit to the Byles house, Leslie found "new tenements had been run up all about the now noisy vicinity, which had entirely lost its air of quiet retirement. All was now symptomatic of bustle and business."<sup>86</sup> The reformer's characterizations tacitly buoyed the sisters' private criticisms of the street's effects. As Catherine Byles had lamented to a cousin in 1832, "Our delightful green enclosure at the front of our house, which you remember, and those noble and beautiful trees before our door, are all taken from us, and the noisy and dusty street is now coming close to us,—no longer—'Home, sweet Home.'"<sup>87</sup> Byles's poignant invocation of the popular song by John Howard Payne succinctly evoked the cherished domestic tranquility that the sisters had lost in the name of improvement. Ten years later, Leslie gave credence to this view, explaining, "There were many indulgent hearts in Boston that felt as if the improvement of this part of the city might yet have been delayed for a few short years, till after these venerable and harmless females should have closed their eyes for ever," and that no harm would have come, "even if the march of public spirit should in consequence have allowed itself to pause a little longer in this part of its road."<sup>88</sup> In voicing sympathy for the elderly sis-

ters' desire for domestic tranquility over public convenience, Leslie made clear that urban improvements could have private costs as well as public benefits.

The old Byles house remained standing only a few years longer than Catherine Byles herself. In 1837, executors of her estate distributed the cherished moveable items to heirs throughout the United States and British Empire and sold her remaining effects at public auction.<sup>89</sup> The house still stood on the truncated estate when executors put it up for auction on behalf of the far-dispersed Byles heirs in 1839, but it likely came down soon after Harrison Gray of Roxbury purchased the lot.<sup>90</sup> As told by Eliza Leslie, Catherine Byles would have seen this final sale and demolition as another black mark against democratic rule. Leslie reported that Byles had lamented earlier destruction of her property by weeping, "this is one of the consequences of living in a republic." Monarchical rule offered a better framework for land tenure: "Had we been still under a king, he would have known nothing about our little property, and we could have enjoyed it in our own way as long as we lived."<sup>91</sup> Had the Revolution not pushed most of her relatives out of New England, Byles's heirs also might have held on to the family estate on Tremont Street.<sup>92</sup>

Yet analyzing this political language in a geographic context shows that the old-fashioned loyalist identities of Mary and Catherine Byles offer as much insight into histories of urbanization and preservation as they do into memories of the American Revolution. *Byles v. Boston* makes clear that the sisters' statements of loyalist proclivities, in words and material practice, responded in part to the exigencies of the modern urban economy. During a showdown with city councilmen, the Byles sisters welcomed guests who valued their home as a historic space to garner support for keeping it standing. They asked fellow Bostonians to confront difficult questions about morality, economy, and urban development that were growing with the market economy, not fading with the end of the Revolutionary generation. When observers judged that the sisters' "loyalty attained strength with years," this reflected not just an eccentric attachment to British monarchs but also growing disaffection with links between republican government and liberal development of land and buildings for maximal personal profit. Maintaining the material remnants of the past to which the sisters harkened was a means of resisting the political economy of urbanizing Boston. At a time when many citizens argued that municipalities should shape the built environment according to strict political economy as the measure of the public good, the Byles sisters cultivated

allies who encouraged city dwellers to assess the cultural value of the built environment when shaping it.

By telling the story of the sisters' conflict with the city, observers too grappled with the uncomfortable implications of living in a place that increasingly defined the public good by the opportunity to pursue private interest in the market. The Tremont Street extension, as much as any interest in memory of the Revolution, motivated antiquarian visitors to beat a path to the door of the old house. By painting the ancient proprietors as historical anachronisms, driven by an eccentric retention of colonial political loyalties and a refusal to engage with republican society and democratic rule, they set up the Byleses versus Boston as a contest between past and present, old ways and new. By aligning the women's arguments about property with British loyalism, a view that seemed safely historical, writers framed the Byles case to critique the effects of unchecked development of real estate without questioning the broader system of the liberal market economy. In this way, they helped to set the terms of debate for emergent conversations about historic preservation that would continue to define—and plague—these movements in the decades to come.

## NOTES

The author wishes to thank Conrad Edick Wright for the invitation to submit an essay to this volume, as well as the two anonymous peer reviewers who provided helpful comments on the first version of this essay. Research was generously supported by the Massachusetts Historical Society, the National Museum of American History and the Smithsonian Postdoctoral Fellowship program, and the Albert R. Lepage Research Fund in the History Department of Villanova University. Elizabeth Bouvier, head of archives at the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court; Marta Crilly, assistant archivist at the City of Boston Archives; Daniel Gorman, Jr., graduate student in the History Department of Villanova University; and Nick Baker, graduate student in the History Department of Dalhousie University, also deserve thanks for invaluable research assistance.

1. For more on Mather Byles's trial, see Edward M. Griffin, "A Loyalist Guarded, Regarded, and Disregarded: The Two Trials of Mather Byles the Elder," *Common-Place* 13(2013), accessed May 19, 2016, <http://www.common-place-archives.org/vol-13/no-04/griffin>.
2. Catherine Byles to Mather Brown, May 14, 1793, Mather Brown Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston; Inventories of Mather Byles estate, Byles Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society (microfilm ed. [Boston, 1984], reel 1). For one extended account of the sisters' parlor routine, see Eliza Leslie, "The Daughters of Dr. Byles: A Sketch of Reality: Part I," *Graham's Lady's and Gentleman's Maga-*

zine, Jan. 1842, pp. 64–65.

3. To some, the sisters' political loyalties seemed to provoke anxiety that the past was not as distant as some Americans had hoped, that the republican legacy of the Revolution had not yet been secured. To others, their living tableau seemed more anachronistic than dangerous, and visits to their aged abode promised to inform the historical tales and annals produced with increasing frequency in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Edward M. Griffin, "Stubborn Loyalists," *Common-Place* 7(2007), accessed May 19, 2016, <http://www.common-place-archives.org/vol-07/no-04/griffin>; Thomas H. O'Connor, *The Athens of America: Boston, 1825–1845* (Amherst, 2006), xiii; Alfred F. Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution* (Boston, 1999), 143–154. See also Gary B. Nash, *First City: Philadelphia and the Forging of Historical Memory* (Philadelphia, 2002), 2; Michael Kammen, *A Season of Youth: The American Revolution and the Historical Imagination* (New York, 1978), and *Mystic Chords of Memory* (New York, 1991); Sarah J. Purcell, *Sealed with Blood: War, Sacrifice, and Memory in Revolutionary America* (Philadelphia, 2002); David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776–1820* (Chapel Hill, 1997); Len Travers, *Celebrating the Fourth: Independence Day and the Rites of Nationalism in the Early Republic* (Amherst, 1997); G. Kurt Piehler, *Remembering War the American Way* (Washington, D.C., 1995); and Andrew Burstein, *America's Jubilee: How in 1826 a Generation Remembered Fifty Years of Independence* (New York, 2001).

For more on loyalists in Massachusetts after the Revolution and their memory, see David Maas, *The Return of the Massachusetts Loyalists* (New York, 1989); Elisa Tamarkin, *Anglophilia: Deference, Devotion, and Antebellum America* (Chicago, 2008), 87–177; and Whitney A. Martinko, "Brattle Street," in "From the Road to Watertown to Tory Row: The Cultural Memory of a Nineteenth-Century Street" (A.B. Thesis, Harvard University, 2005), 48–81.

4. In 1821, one writer described the green filled with "a number of beautiful and elegant trees, which have been objects of admiration for forty years, and which could not in a shorter time be raised to the same degree of beauty and maturity." "Wanton Malice," *Boston Galaxy*, July 6, 1821, pp. 154–155, reprinted in the *New York Evening Post*, July 9, 1821, p. 2, and the *Washington (D.C.) Gazette*, July 12, 1821, p. 2. The sisters frequently remarked on the green to their relatives as well. See, for example, Mary and Catherine Byles to Rebecca Almon, May 10, 1827, Mary and Catherine Byles Letterbook (1825–1827), series A, Almon Family Fonds, microfilm 807, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax.
5. Property and house dimensions are recorded in "List of lot of ground and Dwelling House, owned and occupied by Mary Byles and Catharine Byles on the first day of February 1814, within the eleventh district of Massachusetts in the Town of Boston," Byles Family Papers, reel 2.
6. Arthur W. H. Eaton, *The Famous Mather Byles* (Boston, 1914), 68–69; John H. Edmonds, "An Account of the Mather-Byles Portraits," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 33(1923):285–290.

7. Stephen P. Fuller, "Plan of Boston, Comprising a Part of Charlestown and Cambridge" (Boston, 1826), Harvard Map Collection, Cambridge, Mass. For more on urban improvements in Boston, see Nancy S. Seascholes, *Gaining Ground: A History of Landmaking in Boston* (Cambridge, 2003), 169–170. For an overview of city life and campaigns for urban improvement in the United States during the first half of the nineteenth century, see Dell Upton, *Another City: Urban Life and Urban Spaces in the New American Republic* (New Haven, 2008).
8. Jon C. Teaford has explained how eighteenth-century Bostonians resisted municipal incorporation as a means of instituting economic regulations, as common in Europe and colonial North America. Instead, Bostonians pioneered the municipal corporation as an instrument of political organization to address concerns about urban infrastructure, public health, and community safety—a form of municipal government that would spread in the nineteenth-century United States. Jon C. Teaford, *The Municipal Revolution in America: Origins of Modern Urban Government, 1650–1825* (Chicago, 1975), 36–47.
9. The anonymous letter (in series G, subseries 2, no. 89, Almon Family Fonds) is transcribed in Griffin, "Stubborn Loyalists."
10. "Wanton Malice," *Boston Galaxy*, July 6, 1821, pp. 154–155, reprinted in the *New York Evening Post*, July 9, 1821, p. 2, and the *Washington (D.C.) Gazette*, July 12, 1821, p. 2.
11. Robert St. George presents an extensive discussion of the relationship between bodies and houses, including the Hutchinson house, in *Conversing by Signs: Poetics of Implication in Colonial New England Culture* (Chapel Hill, 1998), 116–292, 303, 348–361.
12. Mather Brown to Mary and Catherine Byles, Sept. 6, 1823, Mather Brown Papers. In 1827, the sisters reported to Eliza Brooke of New York State, "Buildings from one end of ye city to ye other are going up fast." Mary and Catherine Byles to Eliza Brooke, June 9, 1827, Mary and Catherine Byles Letterbook (1825–1827).
13. See, for example, Fuller, "Plan of Boston."
14. "City Affairs," *Boston Patriot and Mercantile Advertiser*, Oct. 24, 1827, p. 2. See also "City Affairs," *Boston Patriot and Mercantile Advertiser*, Oct. 22, 1828, p. 2; and "In Common Council," *Columbian Centinel*, Oct. 22, 1828, p. 2.
15. "City Affairs," *Boston Patriot and Mercantile Advertiser*, Oct. 24, 1827, p. 2.
16. "In Common Council," *Columbian Centinel*, Oct. 22, 1828, p. 2. See also "City Affairs," *Boston Patriot and Mercantile Advertiser*, Oct. 22, 1828, p. 2.
17. "In Common Council," *Columbian Centinel*, Oct. 22, 1828, p. 2.
18. For instance, in 1829 and 1830, Otis indirectly and directly supported efforts to remove cows from Boston Common so that he and his fellow landowners on Beacon Street might enjoy an idealized pastoral view and increased property values. Michael Rawson, *Eden on the Charles: The Making of Boston* (Cambridge, Mass., 2010), 58–64.
19. This petition, spearheaded by H. A. S. Dearborn, was read at a meeting of the Board of Aldermen on January 11, 1830. "City Affairs," *Boston Patriot and Mercantile Advertiser*, Jan. 13, 1830, p. 2. For a detailed history of the naming of sec-

- tions of Tremont Street, see "Annual Report of the Street Laying Out Department for the Year 1894," City Doc. No. 35, in *Annual Report Street Department City of Boston* (Boston, 1895), 292-293.
20. In Roxbury, the road originated near Carleton's Morocco leather manufactory. H. Dearborn et al., petition to mayor and aldermen, June 13, 1831, folder 1831-0084, series 1.4 (1831), City Council Case Files, Boston City Archives, West Roxbury, Mass.
  21. Petition to mayor and aldermen, Apr. 18, 1831, folder 1831-0010, series 1.4 (1831), City Council Case Files.
  22. H. Dearborn et al., petition to mayor and aldermen, June 13, 1831.
  23. Signers of the petition were James T. Austin; J. Parker, Jr.; James Freeman; Thomas Bartlett; Amos Laurence; Warren Dutton; and Martin Brimmer. James T. Austin et al., petition to mayor and aldermen, July 8, 1831, folder 1832-0005, series 1.7 (1832), City Council Case Files.
  24. Records of City of Boston, Mayor and Aldermen, July 11, 1831, vol. 9, 165, Boston City Archives.
  25. F. Jackson to mayor and aldermen, Apr. 18, 1831, folder 1831-0083, series 1.4 (1831), City Council Case Files; Records of City of Boston, Mayor and Aldermen, Oct. 3, 1831, vol. 9, 232; Records of City of Boston, Mayor and Aldermen, June 25, 1832, vol. 10, 256-257.
  26. Cabot Street ran southwest from Pleasant Street, and the Tremont Street extension subsumed it. Records of City of Boston, Mayor and Aldermen, June 18, 1832, vol. 10, 240; "City Affairs," *Boston Weekly Messenger and Massachusetts Journal*, June 21, 1832, p. 3.
  27. Records of City of Boston, Mayor and Aldermen, June 25, 1832, vol. 10, 255.
  28. On defining streets as public space in the early nineteenth-century United States, see William J. Novak, *The People's Welfare: Law and Regulation in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill, 1996), 115-148.
  29. *Catherine Byles v. City of Boston*, Record Book of the Court of Common Pleas, vol. 1833, 148-149, Docket Files, case 579, Suffolk County Court of Common Pleas, Boston, Mass.
  30. Most people claimed compensation for some combination of land tracts and a built feature. Samuel Jepsen held the next largest claim behind the Byles sisters, the city having taken 3,051 feet of land and an "old building" used as a store. Six other Boston residents filed claims for damages to houses and land. Otis Morton claimed a corner of a house along with 156 feet of land. James Hendley received \$445 "for damage in cutting off his buildings and taking" 415 feet of land and part of his house. John F. Myers received a much higher compensation for the removal of his entire house; he got \$3,750 for the building and 2,500 feet of land (an average of \$1.50 per foot). Records of City of Boston, Mayor and Aldermen, Oct. 1, 1832, vol. 10, 364; "Aldermen's Room, [Dec.] 1832," and Report of the Committee of the Southern District, Dec. 24, 1832, folder 1832.0115, series 1.7 (1832), City Council Case Files; Records of City of Boston, Mayor and Aldermen, June 25, Aug. 24, 1832, vol. 10, 256-257, 328.

31. Catherine Byles, account book, Aug. 30, 1832, Byles Family Papers, reel 2.
32. *Catherine Byles v. City of Boston*; untitled report, folder 1832.0115, series 1.7 (1832), City Council Case Files.
33. Death notice for Mary Byles, *Boston Weekly Messenger and Massachusetts Journal*, Oct. 4, 1832, p. 3.
34. "Municipal," *Columbian Centinel*, Dec. 5, 1832, p. 2.
35. Mary Byles to Mather Brown, May 14, 1793, Mather Brown Papers.
36. "List of lot of ground and Dwelling House."
37. Charles Shaw, *A Topographical and Historical Description of Boston* (Boston, 1817); Caleb Snow, *A History of Boston, the Metropolis of Massachusetts* (Boston, 1825).
38. L. M. Francis to Mary and Catherine Byles, May 6, 1826, series A, Almon Family Fonds, microfilm 808. For more on Francis's visits and the disdain that the Byleses expressed for her novel, see Griffin, "Stubborn Loyalists." Thanks to his article for pointing me to this letter.
39. As one correspondent of the sisters put it in 1827, Mather Byles's "life supplies the history of the City of Boston with so much pleasing anecdote." Abraham H. Quincy to Mary and Catherine Byles, Oct. 9, 1827, series A, Almon Family Fonds, microfilm 808. See, for example, "Fashions," *New Haven Connecticut Herald*, Sept. 12, 1826, p. 2; "Reminiscence," *Pittsfield Sun*, May 3, 1827, p. 1; "Dr. Mather Byles," *Portland (Maine) Advertiser*, Aug. 21, 1827, p. 1; "Preaching Politics," *Salem Gazette*, Sept. 25, 1832, p. 1; and "Mather Byles," *American Advocate* (Hallowell, Maine), May 28, 1834, p. 1.
40. Popular accounts often referred to the contemporary state and location of the Hutchinson mansion while linking it to the historical narrative. See, for example, "Attack on Gov. Hutchinson, by the Rebels in 1765," *Salem Observer*, Dec. 31, 1825, p. 2; "The Rebels," *Boston Patriot and Mercantile Advertiser*, Jan. 3, 1826, p. 2; and "The Rebels," *Easton (Md.) Gazette*, Jan. 21, 1826, p. 4.
41. In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, American biographers began to replace their focus on public deeds of notable figures with a more intimate view of their domestic lives. In so doing, space and biography became more intricately linked, and Americans began to seek out the former homes of historical figures as windows into their lives. In the case of the Byles house, in the 1830s, several newspaper editors anecdotally noted it "still standing at the angle of Nassau st., which was formerly without pavement," to recall one of Mather Byles's puns about a muddy street corner. See, for example, "Stirring in the Matter," *Newark Daily Advertiser*, Apr. 1, 1836, p. 2; "Mather Byles," *Norfolk Advertiser* (Dedham, Mass.), Dec. 8, 1838, p. 4; and "Mather Byles," *Madisonian for the Country* (Washington, D.C.), Mar. 16, 1839, p. 2. For more on the history of biography, see Scott Casper, *Constructing American Lives: Biography and Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill, 1999), 34-42, 202-211.
42. Thomas Robbins, Diary, June 7, 1832, in *Diary of Thomas Robbins, D.D., 1796-1854*, ed. Increase N. Tarbox (Boston, 1886-1887), 2:267.
43. Edmund Quincy, Diary, Oct. 4, 1832, Mar. 22, Apr. 29, 1833, Quincy Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.



44. Leslie, "The Daughters of Dr. Byles: Part I," 65; Eliza Leslie, "The Daughters of Dr. Byles: A Sketch of Reality: Part II," *Graham's Lady's and Gentleman's Magazine*, Feb. 1842, p. 114.
45. Eliza Leslie, *Cards of Boston* (Boston, 1831), Games Collection, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.
46. R. S. Carr to Catherine Byles, June 29, 1835, series A, Almon Family Fonds, microfilm 808.
47. Census taker John Stevens recorded the names of both sisters in their single household as he enumerated Boston's eleventh ward. Such a notation was unique—previous schedules had not included both names, and Stevens did not list two residents of any other household, headed by male or female, in the entire ward. In the 1790, 1810, and 1820 decennial censuses, census takers had recorded the household under the name of Mary Byles, the elder of the sisters. The entry reads "Byles Mary and Cathe". 1830 U.S. federal census, ward 11, Boston, Suffolk Co., Massachusetts, p. 379 (handwritten pagination).
48. *Catherine Byles v. City of Boston*.
49. They compensated her \$1.25 per square foot of land taken by the city. *Catherine Byles v. City of Boston*; Catherine Byles, account book, Nov. 10, 1835.
50. *Boston Daily Advertiser and Patriot*, May 7, 1833, p. 2; *Boston Weekly Messenger and Massachusetts Journal*, May 9, 1833, p. 3.
51. Byles continued to receive money from the settlement via her lawyer through the end of her life. She likely spent the initial three hundred dollars on repairs to the house itself, which she recorded ordering in June and July 1834. Mather Byles and Catherine Byles, account book, 1759–1837, Byles Family Papers, reel 2.
52. Many of these histories appeared before the road had even been paved. Newspapers published Francis Jackson's "History of Tremont Street," which he appended to his report of the city land commission in 1832. "Report of the Land Commissioner," *Boston Daily Advertiser and Patriot*, Dec. 26, 1832, p. 2; "History of Tremont Street," *Columbian Centinel*, Dec. 26, 1832, p. 2; "Tremont Street," *Norfolk Advertiser*, Jan. 5, 1833, p. 4.
53. For more, see Jessica Lepler, *The Many Panics of 1837: People, Politics, and the Creation of a Transatlantic Financial Crisis* (Cambridge, 2013).
54. John Lauritz Larson, *The Market Revolution in America: Liberty, Ambition, and the Eclipse of the Common Good* (Cambridge, 2010), 25.
55. Hendrik Hartog, *Public Property and Private Power: The Corporation of the City of New York in American Law, 1730–1870* (Chapel Hill, 1983), 76–79.
56. In July, Byles had submitted a statement to the city council stating that "if the City authorities and the public require her house to be removed from Tremont street, she prays that the same may be done soon." The council moved to make the alterations. "Municipal," *Columbian Centinel*, July 22, 1835, p. 2.
57. She also noted that she hoped that she would receive compensation from the city and that she was putting the matter into the hands of her lawyer. Catherine Byles to Sarah DesBrisay, Oct. 15, 1835, Catherine Byles Letterbook, series A, Almon Family Fonds, microfilm 807.

58. On Nov. 10, 1835, Catherine Byles received over seven hundred dollars from Parker, noting that it was "paid by the City for Six hundred square feet of my land and four trees, including the front end of my house in Tremont Street at One Dollar twenty five cents a square foot—and give a quit claim or Deed to the city—by Mr. Parker." Mather Byles and Catherine Byles, account book.
59. "Peregrinations—No. II," *New-England Galaxy*, Sept. 19, 1835, p. 2. Selections about the Byles house were reprinted as "The Last of the Byles Family," in the *Norfolk Advertiser*, Sept. 26, 1835, p. 2, and the *Baltimore Gazette*, Oct. 7, 1835, p. 2.
60. When the Common was enclosed with a decorative iron fence in 1836, private citizens paid about 20 percent of the cost while the city paid the remainder. Rawson, *Eden on the Charles*, 65.
61. "Peregrinations—No. II," *New-England Galaxy*, Sept. 19, 1835, p. 2.
62. [Samuel L. Knapp], "Mather Byles and His Daughters," *New-York Spectator*, Aug. 7, 1837, p. 1. Editors at the following newspapers reprinted the article under various titles: *Boston Courier*, Aug. 7, 1837; *New-York Commercial Advertiser*, Aug. 8, 1837; *Alexandria (Va.) Gazette*, Aug. 9, 1837; *Daily National Intelligencer (Washington, D.C.)*, Aug. 10, 1837; (Philadelphia) *National Gazette*, Aug. 15, 1837; *New-Bedford (Mass.) Mercury*, Aug. 18, 1837; *Charleston Courier*, Aug. 19, 1837; and *Hartford Connecticut Courant*, Aug. 19, 1837. Although the article was published anonymously, Samuel Knapp's obituary identifies the sketch as one of the writer's last published pieces. "The Late Col. Knapp," *Columbian Centinel*, July 14, 1838, p. 1.
63. [Knapp], "Mather Byles and His Daughters."
64. Other correspondents had reminded the sisters to turn their laments from the decay and demolition of old things in the material world to attention to everlasting salvation in the spiritual realm. See, for example, Mrs. Charles Meats to Catherine Byles, "Suggested on Leaving Family Church for the Last Time," Dec. 1828, Byles Family Papers, reel 1; and Mary Starr to Catherine Byles, Oct. 8, 1832, series A, Almon Family Fonds, microfilm 807.
65. Leslie, "The Daughters of Dr. Byles: Part II," 118.
66. Leslie, "The Daughters of Dr. Byles: Part II," 118.
67. Hartog, *Public Property and Private Power*, 76–79; Sam Bass Warner, Jr., *The Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of Its Growth* (Philadelphia, 1968), 3–5, 79, 99.
68. For example, Samuel Knapp wrote, "They were inexorable in their opposition to the wishes of the public; no eloquence or blandishments had the least effect on them." [Knapp], "Mather Byles and His Daughters."
69. [Knapp], "Mather Byles and His Daughters." Knapp implies that the sisters criticized families whose wealth and status sprang up overnight, like mushrooms.
70. The article identifies Quincy simply as "the second Mayor of Boston" and correctly relates that the demolition of the Byles property occurred after his retirement. [Knapp], "Mather Byles and His Daughters." Josiah Quincy served from 1823 to 1829, and Harrison Gray Otis served from 1829 to 1832. George Adams, *The Boston Directory for the Year 1851, Embracing the City Record* (Boston, 1851), 7; Justin Winsor, *The Memorial History of Boston* (Boston, 1880–1881), 3:236–237.

71. Y. D. [Edmund Quincy], "Old Houses," *American Monthly Magazine*, Oct. 1837, pp. 336-348; Y. D. [Edmund Quincy], "Old Houses," *Southern Literary Messenger*, Dec. 1839, pp. 793-798. Quincy arrived at his signature by taking the initials of his name spelled backwards: Ycniug Dnumde. He signed some of his letters D. Y.: Dnumde Ycniug. Both sets of backward initials emphasize the importance of looking to the past.
72. Edmund Quincy, Diary, Mar. 22, 1833, Quincy Family Papers. See also Quincy, Diary, Oct. 4, 1832, Apr. 29, 1833.
73. [Quincy], "Old Houses," *American Monthly Magazine*, pp. 337, 344, 346.
74. [Quincy], "Old Houses," *American Monthly Magazine*, pp. 343, 338.
75. [Quincy], "Old Houses," *American Monthly Magazine*, p. 347.
76. For more on the development of preservation in the context of urban planning in Boston in the second half of the nineteenth century, see Michael Holleran, *Boston's "Changeful Times": Origins of Preservation and Planning in America* (Baltimore, 1998).
77. Leslie, "The Daughters of Dr. Byles: Part I," 62.
78. Leslie, "The Daughters of Dr. Byles: Part II," 116.
79. [Hannah Farnham Sawyer Lee], "Reminiscences of the Byles Family," *New World: A Family Journal of Popular Literature, Science, Art and News*, Aug. 13, 1842, p. 101.
80. [Hannah Farnham Sawyer Lee], preface to *Three Experiments of Living* (Boston, 1837), v.
81. Old-Fashioned Man, *The Pressure and Its Causes* (Boston, 1837), 11-12, 14.
82. Catherine Byles, account book; Arthur W. H. Eaton, "Old Boston Families," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 69(1915):108-109.
83. Old-Fashioned Man, *The Pressure and Its Causes*, 29.
84. Leslie, "The Daughters of Dr. Byles; Part II," 117, 114.
85. Leslie, "The Daughters of Dr. Byles: Part II," 117; Eliza Leslie, *The House Book; or, A Manual of Domestic Economy. For Town and Country* (Philadelphia, 1840).
86. Leslie, "The Daughters of Dr. Byles: Part II," 117.
87. Catherine Byles to Emily Clark Merriam, Sept. 13, 1832, William Stoughton Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society. The writings of Catherine Byles (No. 31, microfilm 808) in series A of the Almon Family Fonds also contain an undated poem about the destruction of the trees and her green.
88. Leslie, "The Daughters of Dr. Byles: Part II," 116-117.
89. On September 6, 1837, Daniel Hersey advertised in the *Columbian Centinel*: "On Friday next, at 10 o'clock, At the residence of the late Mrs. Catharine Byles, deceased, Tremont street, I shall sell sundry articles of household Furniture, consisting of 1 feather bed—2 bedsteads—chests of drawers—chairs, &c. &c. Per order of the Executor." "Sales at Auction," *Columbian Centinel*, Sept. 6, 1837, p. 3. Writers emphasized her declarations that no republican citizen would benefit from their inheritance. However, Catherine Byles deeded land to her nurse, Julia Goodnow, and had heirs living in New Jersey as well as Nova Scotia and England. For more on the distribution of Catherine Byles's estate, see Eaton, "Old Boston Families,"

- 108-109; and "Mather Byles' Watch," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 46(1912):249.
90. "Real Estate at Public Auction," *Columbian Centinel*, Mar. 30, 1839, p. 3; Eaton, "Old Boston Families," 108-109.
91. Leslie, "The Daughters of Dr. Byles: Part II," 117.
92. A letter from Amos Lawrence, giving counsel on the drafting of wills, reveals the legal restrictions that the sisters faced when wanting to bequeath real estate to aliens. Amos Lawrence to Catherine Byles, Oct. 15, 1832, series A, Almon Family Fonds, microfilm 807.