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Citation
Thomas, Richard F. 1997. Virgil, Theodore Roosevelt, and John Davis Long Neighbors in the Widener stacks. Harvard Library Bulletin NS 8(1): 31-48.

Published Version
http://hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/houghton/public_programs/hlb_toc.cfm#1997;http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/2573358?n=19945&s=4

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Accessibility

Virgil, Theodore Roosevelt, and John Davis Long
Neighbors in the Widener Stacks

Richard F. Thomas

One of the powerful functions of a library—any library—lies in its ability to take us away from worlds that are familiar and comfortable and into more surprising ones that we can neither predict nor control, but which provide us with new perspectives and lead us down new roads whose contours and vistas compel us through their novelty. Sometimes, if we are fortunate, those other worlds turn out to have more points of familiarity than we had thought. Sometimes we make connections back to our home terrain, and when we have returned we do so supplied with new perspectives that enrich our lives as scholars and enhance our role as teachers. Sometimes the experience even responds to us in ways that transcend our lives as scholars and teachers. My theme is the library as the guardian of memory, which connects us through time to all humanity.

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For the last four years I have been the fortunate occupant of Widener 547, a modestly sized study on the west side of the fifth stack level of Widener Library. Among its many delights is the fact that it is the study closest to the library's Greek and Latin texts, including the rich collection of editions and translations of, and commentaries and monographs on, the poet Virgil, on whose reception by translators, editors, poets, and others I have recently been working. We shall return to Virgil, but not before elaborating on a second happy accident, one that brought me into another world, close at hand in the micro-geography of Widener, less so in other ways—or so I once thought.

One floor below my study is Harvard's wonderful collection on American history. My favorite part, located on 4 West and South, almost immediately under the Greek and Latin collection, is the state-by-state collection of local and family histories, biographies, county or city histories of various types, and other records assiduously collected over the last centuries. Anyone who wishes to gain a sense of the mission of comprehensive collecting that Widener, and Harvard, has carried out, may easily do so by spending some time in this part of the stack.

This is the full version of which a much abbreviated selection was published as "Browsing in the Western Stacks," in *Widener Library: Voices from the Stacks,* HLB, n.s., 6 (1995): 27-33.

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Embedded in this priceless part of the tiara is a special jewel, the Theodore Roosevelt Collection. It is to that collection that serendipitous recreational browsing took me last year, as it has done frequently before and will continue to do. On that occasion, I happened to take down, pretty much at random, a volume entitled *Papers of John Davis Long*—a genre of which I am fond. The papers were selected and edited by one Gardner Weld Allen, and constitute volume 78 of the *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* (1939); they had been undisturbed, or at least not checked out, since 1971.[1] From the introduction I discovered that the aforementioned Long, son of Zadoc Long, born October 27, 1838 in Buckfield, Maine, was a Harvard College graduate (1857), who went on to practice law in Boston, at the same time enjoying an active career in public life: a member of the Massachusetts legislature, who served terms as Speaker, he was governor in 1880, 1881, and 1882. In the next years, until 1889, he served in the House of Representatives, and ended his public career serving as Secretary of the Navy under McKinley (March 4, 1897 to May 1, 1902), including some months under Roosevelt, who assumed the presidency after McKinley's assassination on September 14, 1901. Long died in his home in Hingham, Massachusetts, on August 28, 1915.

Governor Long (as he was generally known) has excited interest—if that be the right verb—chiefly because in 1898, during this last public office, his life was made somewhat difficult by his impetuous Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Theodore Roosevelt, the eponymous hero of the fourth floor stack. Although Roosevelt, justly enough, comes to mind as a writer on naval matters, Long himself was no stranger to the American navy, on which he was later to produce an informed and thorough study, in two volumes, *The New American Navy* (New York, 1903)—also to be found in the Roosevelt Collection. Harvard's Library played an early role in this interest. Indeed, it may have planted and germinated the seed that would produce one of the leaders of the modern American navy. While a fourteen-year-old Harvard freshman, the future Secretary of the Navy notes, on October 7, 1853 (*Journal*, 25):[2] "I have much time to read and write, and since I have so good opportunity of getting useful books from the College Library, I improve my time. I am now reading Cooper's *Naval History* which I find very interesting." Two days later, on Sunday, October 9, Long takes a break from his reading: "I went over to the Charlestown Navy Yard yesterday and saw some big men of war, one over 100 guns." The next entry has him turning fifteen and recalling Virgil's *Aeneid,* on which more anon.

From the very moment of the sinking of the *U.S.S. Maine* in Havana harbor, and throughout the war, Long's focus never shifted from those who suffered loss; he ends the journal entry on the night of February 16, 1898 (a day that began at 1:30 a.m., when his daughter Helen woke him with the news) with the following sentence, whose syntax perhaps suggests his stressful and weary state: "The

1 Fortunately the Roosevelt Collection is immune to the necessities of transferral of volumes to remote storage. Had this volume been removed, this entire avenue of enquiry would presumably have been closed to me. In some ways, there is no real substitute for browsing the shelf of a library, and the current incapacity of HOLLIS to do any sort of satisfactory virtual browsing (via call number searching) will, we hope, only be a temporary situation.

2 The designation "Journal" refers to Margaret Long, ed., *Journal of John D. Long* (Rindge, N.H., 1956), while "Mayo" refers to Lawrence Shaw Mayo, ed., *America of Yesterday as Reflected in the Journal of John Davis Long* (Boston, 1923). Where I have drawn from Long's unpublished papers I have so indicated, and in those instances I thank the Massachusetts Historical Society, and its wonderful library and librarians, for generous assistance.

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Portrait of John D. Long while Secretary of the Navy, 1897–1902. From John D. Long, The New American Navy *(New York, 1903), facing p. 116 of vol.1.*

saddest thing of all is the constant coming of telegrams from some sailor's humble home, or kinspeople, inquiring as to whether or not he is saved, or asking that, if dead, his body may be sent home (*Journal,* 215)." In the ten days that followed Secretary Long worked hard to cope with the impending crisis, beginning with a recommendation, which passed on Friday, February 18, of a House appropriation of $200,000 for the raising of the *Maine.* He doubtless wished, however, that the investigation might have supported accidental rather than hostile causes. He was clearly taxed by the suspense, and on February 24 writes: "Today has been a day of especial gloom, in view of the possibilities of international conflict." He did not sleep that night, and the next day, Friday, February 25, decided to take the afternoon off: "so sleepless and nervous, that I was half inclined today to go away for a little while. I have, therefore, taken the afternoon off."

This decision was to provide Long with his enduring moment in history's memory. My 1959 *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* which like others has no entry for Long, refers to this very afternoon in the course of its entry on Roosevelt:

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> During a temporary absence of his chief, John D. Long, he took it upon himself to instigate preparations which he had in vain asked the secretary of the navy to make. He ordered great quantities of coal and ammunition, directed the assembling of the American fleet, stirred the arsenals and navy yards to activity and, finally, cabled Commodore George Dewey what would be expected of him in case war came.

A few years later, as Margaret Long notes (*Journal,* 219), though here in a different context, Long came to realize his fate: "I fear this is the way in which history is made. In great part it is a record of things that are not so." Long in fact rescinded Roosevelt's initiatives, with no loss of preparedness to the navy.[3] Pierce Long should not simply be accused of partiality in his defence of his father (quoted by Margaret Long, *Journal,* 217, 218):[4]

> Father decided he better return to the office. When he arrived there, he saw that the reports had hardly been exaggerated and he rescinded the orders which Roosevelt had sent out. He then explained to Mr. Roosevelt that his orders were disrupting the plans which had already been made and the movements which, in some instances, had already started. After considering the matter for a few moments, Roosevelt admitted to my father that he guessed he had speeded up a bit too much, and both had a good laugh over it.

The Long children also objected to some comments of Henry Adams, in his correspondence, published after the death of both Adams and Long. Discretion prevents them from actually quoting the bluntest of Adams's comments. They object, rightly as I believe, to Adams's designation "cheap Yankee politician," but they simply ignore a letter dated January 18, 1902 to Elizabeth Cameron:[5]

> He (McKinley) was humorous; his cabinet dinners were devoted to chaff; no one ever talked seriously; dreary imbeciles like Gage and Alger and Long made dreary fun of each other; no one ever made a speech; no one ever lost his temper.

Long might well have agreed with much of this; four years earlier, in 1898, he himself wrote of a cabinet dinner (Mayo, 153):

> The President is quiet; his wife, who is an invalid, is very gentle; the Vice-President [Hobart, host of the dinner] is inclined to be humorous; the Secretary of State is getting a little forgetful and tells the same story twice. The rest of us sit around in the usual fashion, of rather dull commonplace. After the ladies retire, we smoke and talk trifles. There happens to be nobody who tells a good story; nobody who has the art of interesting monologue. My experience is that most men, and most gatherings of men, are not interesting. It is the rare man that can entertain his fellows, either in the way of pleasantry or instruction.

Long was in fact a frequent after-dinner speaker, but it is also true that his poetic side, indeed his soul, is to be found chiefly, and abundantly, in his journal and his other papers, although also in two small books of poetry, *Bites of a Cherry* and *At the Fireside,* on which more anon.

3 He let stand the order cabled to Admiral Dewey that he be prepared to prevent the Spanish fleet from leaving the Asian mainland.

4 The statement comes from the *Boston Herald,* 17 October 1927, after the death of both Roosevelt and Long, to which period the attacks on Long and magnifications about the role of Roosevelt also date. When President Roosevelt accepted Long's resignation as Secretary, he said of him, "It has never been my good fortune to be associated with any public man more single-minded in his devotion to the public interest"; see *The American Monthly Review of Reviews* (April 1902): 400.

5 *Letters of Henry Adams,* ed. Worthington Chauncey Ford (Boston and New York, 1938), 368.

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When war broke out, Roosevelt, of course, resigned from the assistant secretaryship and joined the army; he had business on San Juan Hill. Long stayed on and oversaw the triumph of the new American navy at Santiago, Manila, and Puerto Rico. Long's entry for April 25 has a certain irony, and also shows, as do other entries, Long's continued goodwill and support for Roosevelt, despite what was generally construed to be a hostile act on the part of the latter:[6]

> My Assistant Secretary, Roosevelt, has determined upon resigning, in order to go into the army and take part in the war. He has been of great use; a man of unbounded energy and force, and thoroughly honest, which is the main thing. He has lost his head to this unutterable folly of deserting the post where he is of most service and running off to ride a horse and, probably, brush mosquitoes from his neck on the Florida sands. His heart is right, and he means well, but it is one of those cases of aberration—desertion—vainglory; of which he is utterly unaware. He thinks he is following his highest ideal, whereas, in fact, as without exception every one of his friends advises him, he is acting like a fool. And, yet, how absurd all of this will sound if, by some turn of fortune, he should accomplish some great thing and strike a very high mark.

Indeed. There is more irony here than meets the eye. McKinley wanted Long as his vice-president in the 1900 election, and we can assume that, had Roosevelt not gone off to join the army and returned a hero, Long would have been elected vice-president in 1900, and would have assumed the presidency upon the assassination of McKinley.[7]

When Admiral Sampson destroyed Cervera's fleet at Santiago, the Secretary, whose journal now took the form of copies of letters to his family,[8] shared in the general rejoicing, but his sense of triumph was squarely in the context of the movement towards peace: "I can give you very little idea of the excitement here," he writes "and the feeling of triumph which is in the air. I do hope that Spain will see the idleness of further contest, and that we are on the eve of peace." This shows the same humanity and concern that Long exhibited at the sinking of the *Maine,* qualities that are further evidenced by his pride in the American sailors' rescuing their Spanish foes from their sunken or grounded ships (*Journal,* 228); so it is by his wish to annex the Philippines from Spain: "Indeed they will have what they did not have before; a chance for independence, if they prefer it. America will not hold a people in subjugation, who do not desire it" (*Journal,* 229). We will return to the theme of humanity and clemency.

My interest in John Davis Long might have ended with my initial and casual perusal of the 377 letters of the *Papers*—of which only 24 are by Long, with the rest addressed to him, mainly by naval personalities, and often quite tedious. But

6 On February 26, 1899 Roosevelt, now governor of New York, visited the Department; Long was clearly happy to see him (*Journal,* 235): "It was very delightful to see him again and to enjoy his hearty and breezy presence. He renewed his acquaintance with everybody in the Department. He made merry over old associations. I sincerely congratulated him on the splendid fortune he has had and the brave way in which he has marched to successful glories." This warmth toward the assistant whose fame so greatly surpassed his own only changed when Roosevelt quit the Republican party to set up the Progressive Party after losing the nomination to Taft in June, 1912. So *Journal,* 325-30; cf. 330 (Tues., November 5, 1912): "Stayed at home. Election Day. Wilson, Democrat, elected. Roosevelt has smashed the Republican Party for this year and solely because, like a boy that won't play unless he is captain; he did not get the nomination."

7 Cf. *The American Monthly Review of Reviews* (April, 1902), 400: "Though never worth while to speculate much upon what might have been, it is interesting to remember that Mr. Long had been selected by Mr. McKinley as the most desirable candidate for the vice-presidential nomination in 1900."

8 Mayo, 197

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one, on page 348-49, caught my attention. It was from Henry S. Pritchett, president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a letter of January 7, 1901, thanking Secretary Long for an address he had given at MIT, and proceeding to discuss the future publication of the speech in *Technology Review*. Long and Pritchett had clearly had other scientific discussions, but not just scientific, as emerged from the second half of the letter:

> I thank you for reminding me it was the *Aeneid* and not the *Iliad* that you translated. This was a careless slip of the tongue on my part, as I have known the book almost from its publication, which occurred soon after I left college, although I did not know until a few months ago that the Mr. Long who translated the *Aeneid* was the former governor and present secretary of the navy. You of course did not know that during my college life I devoted myself principally to the classics, and went into a scientific education later. At one time I was much interested in all translations of the better known classics, having attempted a metrical translation of the Oepidus Tyrranus [sic] myself, which however, fortunately never saw the light. In saying what I did the other night regarding your translation I was not attempting to give my own opinion, which is of no value in such matters, but was simply repeating the statement made to me by one of the best known literary men in New England, who said that he considered your translation the most useful one of the *Aeneid* in the language by reason of the fact that it gave the real sense of the author.

My first reaction was a classicist's natural satisfaction (immediately tempered by a classicist's sense of the constancy of decline) in observing the president of MIT and the secretary of the navy discussing their translations of Sophocles and Virgil; but I also shared Pritchett's enlightenment, for I too had not connected the translator (whose work I knew) with the Secretary and Governor (with whom I was only just becoming acquainted). A quick HOLLIS search confirmed the identity, and sent me back to the fourth level, this time outside the Roosevelt Collection to US 13608.35 (in the Massachusetts section), specifically to the two other works of hagiography on Governor Long to which I have been referring: the first, *America of Yesterday,* was a selection from the 24 volumes of Long's journal (which reside in the Massachusetts Historical Society in Boston), edited by Lawrence Shaw Mayo (Boston, 1923); the second was the work of Long's daughter Margaret Long, ed., *The Journal of John D. Long* (Rindge, N. H., 1956). Again the genres were those that I have come to admire, though now I looked to them with an interest that was more than simply recreational—for I was now dealing with a fellow Virgilian, and one who had emerged as a most likeable person, even before I knew we shared common ground.

Twenty years before the sinking of the *Maine,* Long, having just been elected Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives for the third time, notes in his journal (January 17, 1878) "A quiet day. Buy Bryant's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Read a book in the former." Five days later, one assumes as a result of this activity, he records (January 22) "Begin this evening a translation of Virgil. Perhaps I shall finish it and publish." For the next year, we find steady references to his task, interspersed with references to the family, to activities in his law practice, and to the workings of the state legislature: "*January 25 Friday* . . . Am working on my translation of Virgil; *January 26 Saturday* A quiet day . . . Spend hours and hours on Virgil. It is midnight; *January 30 Wednesday* . . . Midnight. 15 lines Virgil; *February 3 Sunday* On Virgil. Mary and I have a sweet walk; *February 11 Monday* . . . Finish first book of Aeneid yesterday. Today begin the second;

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THE

ÆNEID OF VIRGIL

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

BY

JOHN D. LONG.

BOSTON
LOCKWOOD, BROOKS & COMPANY.
1879.

February 15 Friday A quiet day in the office, and in the legislature. Spend the evening at home on Virgil; *February 21 Thursday*. . . . Pleasant evening with Mary [his first wife] and my Virgil; *February 24 Thursday* Finish 2d and begin 3d book of the Aeneid; *March 7 Thursday* Translate Virgil this evening till 9 o'clock; *March 9 Saturday* Finished yesterday 3rd book Aeneid. Began 4th; *April 28 Sunday* Virgil and indoors; *May 5 Sunday* Virgil and Nth. American Review 11 o'clock in the evening; *May 10 Saturday* Busy in office. Virgil; [now in Hingham] *November 17 Sunday*. Today, am so delighted to be at home, with my wife and babies and my

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fire and my Virgil, and to go to church, and to go to bed; [back in Boston] *November 29 Friday*. Quiet day. Begin 11th Book of the Aeneid; *December 1 Sunday* At home. Virgil. Pleasant day with Mary and the babies; *December 11 Wednesday* Office. Virgil. Home. Children. Mary; [1879] *January 10 Friday* Finished translation of *Aeneid*. Began it Jan. 22, 1878; *February 27 Thursday*. A quiet evening at home. Lockwood proposes to print my Virgil; *March 23 Sunday*. How time reels off! Lockwood is printing my Aeneid: Prof. Howison is proofreader; and I find the task of revision almost equal to that of the original translation. It makes too much work; *April 4 Friday*. Revision of proof of Virgil; *April 10 Thursday*. Too busy to write. The proof of Virgil is immense work, and that, with the law and the State House, occupy me all the time. [Hingham] *June 8 Sunday*. Have been busy with the final revision of my Virgil; *June 10 Tuesday*. The *Journal* and *Traveler* notice my *Aeneid* at length and very favorably; *June 11. Wednesday*. My Virgil issued today. Give a copy each to Mary, Margaret, Helen. Mean to give one to Mr. Allen [JDL's law partner]; *June 27 Friday*. My *Aeneid* is well received. Some criticism—verbal—but universal praise of its spirit, force, literalness. They cannot believe that I wrote it in a year; *November 16. Sunday*. I am elected Governor of Massachusetts, Nov. 4th. It was a terrible campaign."

Many of these references are, perhaps understandably, not in Margaret Long's selection in the *Journal,* since they are quite repetitive, but I have given all references from his manuscript for the period of the translation, for it is precisely the way Virgil entered into the rhythms of Long's life that is of interest. The project seems in his mind to be connected with his family ("with my wife and babies and my fire and my Virgil"), and to constitute with them a welcome refuge from the pressures and annoyances of professional and political life. His daughters, Margaret and Helen, are a special treasure and help to him.

The translation has a short preface, containing some curiosities of judgement, at least in the first (1879) and second (1880) editions:

> After all this pleasant work, I confess disappointment at finding, in comparison with the better literature of modern time, such dearth of humor, the next best thing in the world; such leanness in the poet's insight into nature, catching only its most obtrusive aspects, and nothing of its finer exquisiteness; so little homely humanity; such holocausts of men to man; so faint a glimmer of God. And yet, because of its rare, though irrenderable, sweetness of versification, and its masterfull fidelity in portraying those workings of the human heart with which it deals, and because Virgil struck so many of the chords that thrill from the first man to the last, the Aeneid is an immortal poem, though the world could better lose it than a psalm of David or the higher reach of moral sentiment which is suggested in a verse of Whittier.

Among Long's papers there is a letter from one R. M. Morse, Jr., dated July 9, 1879, which ends as follows: "May I say in a P.S. that the proof reader needs a little more care and that I wish you could qualify your comparison of Virgil with Whittier or even David."[9] The reviews also note this lapse, one in particular (*The Parisian* July 10, 1879) is to the point: "Such being the opinions of Mr. Long on the merits and comparative value of Virgil, we are astonished that he should have undertaken a translation at all, but still more astonished that he should have produced such a hearty and honest rendering." Long's critical judgement is perhaps not so surprising if one considers his own verse, which is quite

9 Cf. John Davis Long Papers, Letterbook 4 (1879, June-Sept.), MHS.

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sentimental, though at times also quite powerful, as will emerge, I think. At any rate, by the third edition, Whittier and David had left the preface, to be replaced by a compelling evocation of memory:

> Perhaps some will read this. If so, they will renew, as I after twenty-five years have done, not only the kindly acquaintance of this Roman story-teller, but the happy morning of the school-boy's shining face and eager heart.

And in a letter to his daughter Margaret, written thirty years later, his view of Virgil seems more mature, though some may disagree with parts of this too (*Journal,* 319, letter to Margaret Long, Wed., July 6. 1910):

> I am reading Bryant's translation of the *Iliad.* I do not care greatly for the *Iliad.* Virgil is much superior. He copies the battles & the fighting, but he abounds in real tenderness, in better study of the human heart, in more picturesqueness of natural scenery, in reaching the common humanity, as true today as then. The *Iliad* is so repetitious. Homer is no Shakespeare & does not deserve his repute. If he were not the earliest of poets, he would not be one of the most conspicuous.

Long's papers also preserve some of the reactions to the translation. There are some eighteen reviews from newspapers and journals, clipped by Long, and now in his collection at the Massachusetts Historical Society, mostly produced by clergymen and mostly positive and appreciative, particularly of the spirit and literalness of the work. G.H. Howison, a classicist it seems, had been appointed by the press as proofreader and advisor; he also did a review, in the *Boston Daily Advertiser* (June 18, 1879); his positive reaction was tempered only by criticism of some colloquialisms, which he must have tried to dissuade Long from printing. In the third edition Long defends his decision to use "where I thought the context warranted it, the language of common talk—to bring out for the most part in to-day's phrase, so far as I could, the force of all the Latin words." Howison writes to Long from his summer vacation place, Willoughby Lake House, West Burke, Vermont, on July 2, 1879:

> I have just had word from Mr. Lockwood of your gift of the Plato, which I feel is altogether undeserved. But I shall value it all the more for that. And I am more than pleased, I assure you, at the thought that my small labors on your excellent work have not merely satisfied you, but in a measure won your friendship.
>
> I have just had a note from Mr. Goddard of the *Advertiser,* saying that he considers the review of your translation, after examining the latter, "entirely just." I thought you would be glad to hear this. The *Transcript* notice, though essentially identical in judgment with mine, I fear will leave a somewhat different impression upon cursory readers; and, I believe that you will agree with me, that, in a number of instances, the critic has been hyper-critical; though in others, as you see, I had already anticipated him in my marginal notes on the original proofs. . . .

One reviewer, in the *Journal,* had taken issue with Long's translation for its failure to reproduce precisely the bulk of the original; Long seems to have thought Howison the author, and must have sent a sample of a different translation, doubtless more or less isosyllabic with the Latin. Howison was horrified (August 5, 1879):

> I have read and re-read the translation, and after all due consideration, I feel unable to say that you have done yourself justice in it. I cannot get reconciled to the metre. It is essentially un-English, and would make the final word-work

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> heavy: it is mainly the fault of the metre, I am sure,—which is about as much like the movement of poesy as walking in snow-shoes is like dancing.
>
> Where in the world did you get the notion that I approved a translation in metre of the identical number of syllables and lines of the original? I repudiate the whole idea! I hope to heaven you didn't suppose I wrote that notice in the *Journal*! Goodness me! I could have taken that fellow's head off for his general nonsense.

Closer to home, Long's brother-in -law [Nelson D. White] expressed surprise: "June 16, 1879. . . Dear Bro. You take me by surprise. I never before knew that you were a poet"; his niece, Julia White showed admiration: "I had so little time I was unable to read all your book, so selected the books I am most interested in, the second and fourth; I think the fourth intense and had selected the last few lines as being especially beautiful, to tell you, when I saw the next day in the *Advertiser* the same selection and criticism—I am glad you are so good and great." A friend or relative (perhaps an old teacher) from Buckfield in mid-1879 reveals something of the inner soul of Long (visible from his journal), and perhaps helps to explain his having undertaken the task:[10]

> Dear John,
>
> How shall I congratulate you now? In what words shall I express the pleasure that the notices of your book give me?
>
> During the long evenings of the past winter, while musing over my books, I have thought of the hopes and aspirations you used to cherish, and wondered if they were still a part of the promise of the future.
>
> I remembered how, in the midst of my congratulations on your first successes in your profession, you used to say:—"but Aurelia, I want to do something in a literary way", and wondered if politics had smothered what the law had spared. I feared it might be, and so the news that you have so improved the scanty leisure that your busy life affords, makes me glow; and I am proud that in the midst of your labors, such a work should have been your recreation. . . .
>
> Very sincerely, Aurelia H. P.

John Long's translation is not much known nowadays, and there is plenty of competition, but his reputation for representing a true sense of Virgil is well-deserved. And in some key areas, not the least in areas that have been crucial to the poem's problematic reception through the last two millennia, Long's translation does well by its model. Gender representation, particularly with the figure of Dido, is well handled. Long dedicated the work to his wife and two young daughters:

> To my wife and two little girls
> so often the companions of my work
> I dedicate it

His affection for his daughters is most evident from his poems, to which we shall return. He was also a vocal supporter of women's suffrage, when it was not a popular cause, and in 1881 spoke forcefully for it in his inaugural speech after his election to a second governorship.[11] Perhaps some of this is reflected in Long's treatment of Dido, which in its sympathy and empathy is closer to that of Virgil

10 For both letters, cf. John Davis Long Papers, Letterbook 4 (1879, June-Sept); other expressions of appreciation come from less intimate sources, clearly well-informed about Virgil.

11 Cf. *Journal*, 150-51.

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than is Dryden's version, and those of most translators, particularly up to Long's time.[12] At *Aen.* 4.522–32 comes the famous passage in which man and nature all sleep, while Dido lies awake:

> nox erat et placidum carpebant fessa soporem
> corpora per terras, silvaeque et saeva quierant
> aequora, cum medio volvuntur sidera lapsu,
> cum tacet omnis ager, pecudes pictaeque volucres, 525
> quaeque lacus late liquidos quaeque aspera dumis
> rura tenent, somno positae sub nocte silenti.
> [lenibant curas et corda oblita laborum.]
> at non infelix animi Phoenissa, neque umquam
> solvitur in somnos oculisve aut pectore noctem 530
> accipit: ingeminant curae rursusque resurgens
> saevit amor magnoque irarum fluctuat aestu.
> sic adeo insistit secumque ita corde volutat . . .

Long's version is worth recording:

> 'Twas night; and weariness o'er all the earth
> In peaceful slumber sank to rest. No breath
> Was in the woods or on the fitful sea.
> It was the time when, half their circuit o'er,
> The stars began to fall; when fields and flocks
> Lay still, and birds were nestling 'neath their wings
> Of many hues; when all that lives within
> The water depths, and all that in the fields
> And forest dwell, under the silent night
> In deep sleep lying, dreamed all care away,
> And human hearts forgot that life is toil.
> But not the aching heart of Dido. Ne'er
> In slumber resteth she, nor in her breast
> Nor on her eyes the blessing of the night.
> Her soul is dark; her love springs fresh again,
> And wild with every gust of passion beats.
> So now she ponders and her heart o'erflows . . .

Translation and hermeneutics are inseparable. Long has given us a fully sympathetic Dido whose feelings and pain are intensified, without the royal "angers" of the Virgilian Latin, and the dangers to Aeneas thereby implied. Dryden had gone in the diametrically opposite direction, creating a formal picture of the "furious queen," thereby overemphasizing the element of danger to his hero:

12 I will resist exploring here the unhappiness of Dryden's wife, Lady Elizabeth Howard, who is said to have wished she might be a book, since then her husband might pay her more attention. "'Be an almanack, then, my dear,' said the poet, 'that I may change you once a year'" (Ezekiel Sanford, *Life of Dryden* [Philadelphia, 1819]). As Sanford notes, "the bitter invectives against matrimony, which so frequently occur in the writings of our author, can never have come from a man, who enjoyed much domestic felicity" — a marked contrast with Long.

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All else of Nature's common gift partake;
Unhappy Dido was alone awake.
Nor sleep nor ease the furious queen can find:
Sleep fled her eyes as quiet fled her mind.
Despair and rage and love, divide her heart;
Despair and rage had some, but love the greater part.
Then thus she said within her secret mind . . .

As the years went by, Virgil did not leave the mind of John Davis Long, particularly Virgil the poet of war, loss and grief. While he was secretary of the navy, more than twenty years after his translation came out, he tells of sending the Marines off to China in connection with the Boxer rebellion (*Journal,* 253; letter to his younger daughter, Helen Long, July 24, 1900):

> On Sunday last, I took Lt. Washington U.S.N. and Mrs. Washington with me in the carriage, to go to the corner of ninth and Maryland Avenue, to see the detachment of the Marines, five hundred strong, start for China. There was a large gathering of people. The Marines were in the cars, in two long sections. The Marine Band was playing. The boys were looking out of the windows. The women in the streets were waving their handkerchiefs. Major Dickins, who goes in command, came up and saw me and I gave him a cordial shake of the hand and a blessing. There is something very pathetic and at the same time, very stirring, in such scenes. Yesterday, I took my translation of the Aeneid and read the scene where King Evander sends troops, under the command of his son, Pallas, to fight the battles of Aeneas. After all, it was the same scene over again; the same tears of parting, and the same high spirit of the boys that were going to the front. The same parade, in marching and glistening of arms; the same love and sorrow of mothers, wives and sisters.

Helen was in Colorado Springs, dying of tuberculosis, as her mother had; I suspect her father, as he was writing to her, remembered not only Virgil's Evander and his ill-fated child, but their own sad situation, their own separation. The following year, 1901, saw the opening of "The Zadoc Long Free Library" in his home town of Buckfield. In memory of his father Long himself contributed "2,500 well chosen volumes," as he records on August 17, closing with pride and full of memories: "It is an exquisite day, dedicated more than my pen can write to the memory of my father and mother. A sacred day to me." A month later McKinley had fallen to the assassin's bullet; two months later Helen was dead at age twenty-six. He writes on the last day of the year: "As I look back, the one prominent figure before all others constantly in my mind and before me is little Helen. Then President McKinley."

Long's poet, Virgil, was acutely attuned to the fragility of memory, and to its connection with grief, but also to its necessity for the functioning of history and the survival of poetic and other traditions. In one of the most famous lines of the poem, Aeneas, an exile from his homeland, shipwrecked on a foreign shore, looks to the day, never actually secured in the Virgilian vision of history, when remembrance of misfortune will bring even pleasure:

> forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit
> "Some day / May yet be happier for remembering this" (Long)

And in the last lines of the poem, it is the memorial of the dead Pallas, the baldric that Turnus despoiled from the surrogate son of Aeneas, that prevents what

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Aeneas almost achieved, Christian mercy in a poem written two decades before the birth of Christ: *oculis postquam saevi monimenta doloris exuviasque hausit* . . . "No sooner drank Aeneas' eyes that sight— / The spoils that called to mind so keen a grief" (Long). I know of no better, no more accurate, translation of the line. A final example: At *Aeneid* 2.12, at Dido's request, Aeneas begins his story of the fall of Troy, and wanderings in exile, in spite of the difficulty he is caused by recalling the calamity: *quamquam animus meminisse horret luctuque refugit.* An anonymous (the usual practice) reviewer in *The Golden Rule Magazine* 4 (August 1879) no. 8, otherwise favorable, takes issue with Long's version: "the idea of 'shuddering at the thought,' which is intended in the Latin 'animus meminisse horret' is entirely misrepresented and lost in Mr. Long's 'aches at the memory.' " I disagree; Long has shifted the metaphor, a curious one as often in Virgil (how does a mind "shudder"?). It seems to me that Aeneas' difficulty is caused precisely by the ache that comes from the memory—and the reviewer, but not Long, would remove Virgil's crucial mnemonic indicator, *meminisse.*

Virgil was twenty years old when Caesar crossed the Rubicon and swept down through Italy; it would take another twenty years before there would emerge a glimmer of the security—relatively speaking—that was to come. John Davis Long was two years older, twenty-two, when the bombardment of Fort Sumter sparked the war between the states. His civil war was shorter, but no less memorable. Moeris, the poet-shepherd of Virgil's ninth *Eclogue,* is evicted from his farm by the victorious veterans settled there in the years of Virgil's young manhood—probably reflecting his own, or rather his father's, eviction by Antony's or Octavian's soldiers: "our songs," sings Moeris, "have as much power amid the weapons of Mars, as do Chaonian doves at the coming of the eagle." By the end of the poem, Moeris loses memory of song and his very voice, just as he loses his Arcadia:

> omnia fert aetas, animum quoque. saepe ego longos
> cantando puerum memini me condere soles.
> nunc oblita mihi tot carmina, vox quoque Moerim
> iam fugit ipsa
>
> (Ecl. 9. 51-4)

> The years carry off everything, including even memory.
> I remember as a boy I'd often put long suns to sleep with song.
> So many songs now gone from my mind, now even his voice
> itself flees Moeris.

His song will return when Menalcas, the master singer, returns, but the poem ends before that time can come.

Civil war and memory come together also for Long, as the following speech, given twenty years after the war began, two after the publication of the translation, brings out; here too, Virgil is on his mind:[13]

[13] John D. Long, *After-Dinner and Other Speeches* (Boston and New York, 1895), 82, Memorial Day, May 30, 1882, before Grand Army Posts of Suffolk County, Mass.

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> As I look, veterans, upon your faces, your thinner ranks, your brows on which time is writing in plainer lines its autograph, true, indeed, I know it is that the number of the survivors is fast diminishing, and that with the close of the century few will remain. But they will all still live in the works that do follow them,—in a civilization better because purified by the searching fire from the dross of human slavery and political inequality, and in a country lifted up to a higher plane of justice, mercy and righteousness. They will live, too, in history,—in the history of a patriotic people, pictured in pages more graphic than those of Plutarch or Macaulay, in the songs of poets who shall sing a nobler than Virgil's man, and an epic loftier than the Iliad.

It is memory of Virgil and his boyhood love of Virgil and Latin poetry that brought Long back to the poet. One of his earliest entries in the journal comes from Monday, July 24, 1848; the nine-year-old boy writes excitedly: "A cloudy, rainy, misty, and muddy day. Our school keeps two or three weeks longer. *I have begun the study of Latin* [Long's underlining]. Zadoc will hear me recite."[14] And in the preface to the Aeneid he harks back to those days:

> Perhaps some will read this. If so, they will renew, as I after twenty-five years have done, not only the kindly acquaintance of this Roman story-teller, but the happy morning of the school-boy's shining face and eager heart.

For Long the memory that connects parent to child and child to parent is that which is most poignant, as we saw with the death of his daughter. Such death, of the child before the parent, also of the parent, is what disrupts memory, what creates oblivion. In this focus, as I have said, Long also resonates with Virgil, particularly with the end of the *Aeneid,* but really with the whole of that poem. Two entries in Long's diary show the intensity of this type of memory; both have to do with *monimenta,* memorials, of Long's beloved father, Zadoc, and both have to do with music and poetry, as was the case with Virgil's shepherd Moeris. Neither is included in Margaret Long's collection; perhaps they were too difficult for her—*animus meminisse horret*. One appears in Mayo (135-36) and is a form of poetry; the year is 1875:

> Received a valentine from Geo. F. Emery, Esq., of Portland, Maine, in the shape of an old letter, written Valentine's Day, February 14, 1855, twenty years ago, by my dear father to Judge Emery of Paris, Maine, father of Geo. F. These two men were friends from boys, and often corresponded and visited. Father's letter is in his plain and neat handwriting and contains a copy of his pretty verses on his 'old violin.' When I looked at the familiar characters, the signature, how all the dear old home and past rushed over me! . . . I could see the wintry scene, the snow, the white roofs, the frozen river, the lonely streets, the snug sitting room with its fire, father's nervous fingers on his pen, mother with her work and angel face, the journals and newspapers on the table. I must then have been home on college vacation.[15] How they loved me, and did and hoped for me!

14 Zadoc, Jr., his brother, died suddenly on September 14, 1866. He writes to his father (*Journal,* 106) on October 2, comforting him, but also communicating his own despair that "Zadoc's death and his memory and the old associations rush upon me overwhelmingly."

15 In contrast to Long's joy in his parent's home, he later claims he was miserable at Harvard, as he himself relates in a paper, "Reminiscences of My Seventy Years' Education," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 42 (1908-09): 348-58, delivered at the Society; cf. 352: "There was an entire lack, to me, of all moral or personal influences. I look back with a certain pathetic commiseration on myself, unwarmed for the whole four years by a single act or word expressive of interest on the part of those to whom my education was entrusted. . . . No instructor or officer ever gave me a pat on the shoulder physically, morally, or intellectually. . . ." By the time he gave his paper, things seemed to have improved: (353) "I meet young men today from Harvard, touched and toned by the personal influence of men whose names readily occur to you, and I feel it would have been of priceless value to me if only in those days some such man could have taken me by the hand, or even by the ear, if only half a dozen times in the whole four years."

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How few days ago it seems! How trite and commonplace all the words we use to describe such memories, and yet how deep they go into the springs of feeling. Father and mother and Zadoc are dead. I am in middle life and in new scenes, in new relations, among new people, hard at work, ambitious, eager, struggling. The family is scattered, the old home is gone, the hearth is cold. There are strangers in the sacred places. And we drift on like straws upon a torrent, always vainly looking back and trying to cheat ourselves into the belief that it is not all gone—all past—never, never to return. I loved and still love my father and mother. It is a constant sorrow to me that I can never mention their names to sympathizing ears. Perhaps my baby will some day like to hear of them.

A second one, written while the translation was in proof, I found in Long's diary in the Massachusetts Historical Society; he was working on his Virgil at the time:[16]

> 1879 Boston March 9 Sunday. This afternoon go to rooms of T. H. Howe, a composer, and hear Mrs. Howard sing a song he has composed to dear father's words 'My old violin.' I thought it very sweet—perhaps the words misled me. Poor father wrote them perhaps 20 or 25 years ago in the old sitting room. I recall it all. I put them in my little volume of poems, where Howe saw them. And now, father dead, a stranger sets them to music and perhaps, if the song is popular, many a voice will sing them and they will become familiar. Realized now are the last two lines:—
>
> 'A sorrowful touch on the heart's shattered strings
> That soon will respond nevermore'
>
> Dead and cold now many a year has been the heart that was so full of love for me, its strings shattering till it broke. Perhaps it responds in heaven.

We in fact have the letter (*Journal*, 127), in which Zadoc thanks his son John for including the poems in his volume. It is worth quoting, I think:

> Zadoc Long to John D. Long
>
> Winchendon, Mass. April 13, 1872
>
> Dear Johnny:
> I received your daily favors which are no small comfort to me. I like to know how you are, & what you are doing, and how you are doing, every day, as if I were with you.
>
> Julia Matilda [White, niece of J.D.L.] came home safe last evening, & brought your pretty little volume of poems, *Bites of a Cherry* [1872], a very unexpected favor. I thank you for the honor of dedicating them 'To my Father.' I have read the book through this morning. I see you have inserted my poem, 'My Old Violin' to gratify me. The book contains only a small part of your best poetry; but I am pleased with it.
>
> Aff. yours
> Zadoc Long

Later in the year (19 September 1872), just six months before his death, Zadoc asked his son to return the actual "old violin," which the latter had taken, in exchange for a supposedly better one that he had given his father (*Journal*, 128–29):

16 John Davis Long Papers, Journal, 1876, Dec. 12 - 1883, Jan. 6.

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> It is an old acquaintance, its familiar tone is pleasanter to my ear than that of any other. . . . The *old* fiddle will, in some measure, relieve the loneliness of my confinement, carry me back to earlier & happier days, the days of your infancy, when I charmed you to sleep with 'Sweet Home,' & 'Kate's Rambles,' and other old tunes. . . ."

Margaret Long prints the poem of the grandfather whom she never knew (*Journal,* 129) immediately after this letter:

My Old Violin

While evening's dim folds round me gather fast,
And the chill breezes chant a low moan,
My fancy is busy with scenes of the past,
As I sit by my fireside alone.

The group that once cheered me affection recalls;
Beloved ones I ask, where are they?
My own voice comes back from the echoing walls,
And sadly repeats—Where are they?

A sound like a serenade, plaintive and sweet,
An almost inaudible strain,
Now rises and swells into tones more complete,
Now sinks away softly again.

It seems like a spirit of many a lay—
A voice from the past that I hear
In lingering cadences dying away,
On memory's faltering ear.

Or the music of dreams in the stillness of night,
By some spirit guardian sung;—
'Tis the air through the cracks and the vibrations slight
Of my old violin all unstrung.

How many a cherished remembrance it brings
Of dear friends and pastimes of yore;
A sorrowful touch on the heart's shattered strings
That soon will respond nevermore.

And, finally, the poem, *At the Fireside* (May 1877), which gives its name to the little volume of poems, published in 1892. Long connects through memory his four-years-dead father to his four-year-old daughter, in a poem that at first seems sentimental and even technically strained,[17] but which gains power when put in the context of Long's poetics of memory and in the context of his father's poem, to which there are clear intertextual bonds. Zadoc's lonely fireside is crowded once again:

17 Is the postposition in line 2 ("me near") part of a frame concluded by the one two lines from the end ("did he") — a stylistic oddity designed to connect his father Zadoc to his daughter Margaret? Long notes on September 13, 1874, his fourth wedding anniversary: "Father died in Winchendon on Feb. 3, 1873. Our baby, Margaret, was born on October 28, 1873." Margaret's mother, incidentally, died of tuberculosis on February 16, 1882, as would her sister Helen. Long's journal breaks off and is silent in the several months leading up to his wife's death (*Journal,* 151).

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At the Fireside

At nightfall by the fireside's cheer
My little Margaret sits me near,
And begs me tell of things that were
When I was little just like her.

Ah, little lips! you touch the spring
Of sweetest sad remembering,
And heart and hearth flash all aglow
With ruddy tints of long ago.

I at my father's fireside sit,
Youngest of all who circle it,
And beg him tell me what did he
When he was little, just like me.

Virgil was a great poet, Roosevelt, a great character of American history. John Davis Long was not quite either, but there cannot have been many better men in public life than he. Virgil was in my view better served and realized by Long than by many of his translators and critics, and he would also have brought to the office of president, to which he came so close, much that has there been missing in the years since he lived and so well served the public good. At the time vice-president of the Massachusetts Historical Society where his papers now reside, Long died of congestive heart disease in the house that he loved, in Hingham, Mass., on August 28, 1915, some two months after the Harry Elkins Widener Memorial Library was opened, and not two hours before Margaret could reach him (she was on her way from Denver). As president of the Harvard Board of Overseers from 1902 to 1914, John Long, who himself lost a nephew on the *Titanic,*[18] would have received reports of the Library Visiting Committee (whose members included J. P. Morgan), and would have been at the meeting of the Governing Boards in November 1912, which approved plans for the building of Widener on the site of the previous library, Gore Hall.[19] Six years earlier, on September 26, 1906, the beginning of Harry Elkins Widener's senior year at Harvard, Long had come to Cambridge, to attend a meeting of the Overseers, but also to bring his son Pierce (by a second wife) who was beginning his freshman year (*Journal,* 302):

18 *Journal,* 327, April 20, Saturday [1912]: "At 3, call on Edith, widow of my nephew, Percy White, who went down, with his son Richard, who was just out of Bowdoin College; in the terrible foundering of the Titanic. The horror has been on me all the week."

19 William Bentinck-Smith, *Building a Great Library: The Coolidge Years at Harvard* (1976), states, p. 69, that "the Governing Boards approved the revised plans for the library in November."

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> I took him into the college yard at the same entrance at which I went on a similar errand 53 years ago, in 1853. How well I remember that morning: Father walked with me up the avenue to the steps of the library, Gore Hall. On them we sat & there parted, I, going to my lessons, he, returning home. I was a little boy, only fourteen years old, a child, homesick. I remember that I cried, & though he did not cry I doubt not his heart broke more than mine.[20]

There is, in Harvard's Massachusetts Hall, not far from Room 22 (John Long's room in senior year), a commemorative plaque, dedicated on his birthday, October 27, in 1947 by Margaret and Pierce—*quod ego ipse vidi*.[21] I hope this article will serve as another Harvard memorial for Long, whom I was fortunate to meet first through a chance encounter in Harvard's Elysium, the stacks of her Widener Library, where he now resides, among the collection of his old Assistant Secretary and a close neighbor to the poet who so touched him, and like them accessible to all of us who care to enter this storehouse of memory of which we are all both guardians and beneficiaries.

20 Memory often intensifies, or even creates, emotion, for 53 years earlier, just two weeks into his freshman year, the boy wrote in his journal for September 18, 1853 (*Journal*, 24): "Looking back in my journal, I find that while I was in Hebron [Academy] I predicted much unhappiness rising from homesickness. I am happily disappointed. I am very glad to say that I have not yet felt any of the loneliness that I dreaded so much." On Friday, June 19, as an 18-year-old senior, he delivered his Commencement Ode, submitted May 13 ("wish it were better," *Journal*, 53). It opens so:

> How bright were the hopes that incited the throng
> When wandering in search of the truth,
> We came to the fountain, whose waters so long
> Have nourished the bloom of our youth:
> How sad are we now, that this time-hallowed spot
> Shall echo our voices no more;
> Behind us, the past with sweet memories fraught;
> The future, uncertain, before."

21 *Journal*, 46. Margaret Long does not say so, but she presumably decided on the location while working on the Journal; cf. Long at *Journal*, 48 (September 28, 1856): "I begin to think that I love my room better than any other place in the vicinity."

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