

A Remarkable Woman – Mrs. Annie M. Cobb, (1830 – 1911), architect, builder, painter and illustrator.

Project Abstract – A Remarkable Woman – Mrs. Annie M. Cobb (1830 – 1911)

Throughout history men have largely occupied the fields of building and architecture. How is it that a woman, of some means, but with no formal education could, in the late 1800's, manage to develop the skills as both an architect and builder such that she was able to make a significant impact on the newly emerging suburb of Newton Highlands, just west of Boston Massachusetts?

Mrs. Annie M. Cobb (nee Raeburn), born in 1830, is credited by the Newton History Museum's Historical Survey of Houses, with the design of at least 18 houses. The known houses all exist within a small radius in Newton Highlands and each of these houses possess a very strong character in proportion and detailing that reveal a real talent for design

Working with Susan Abele of the Newton History Museum, we propose to research and document the work of Mrs. Annie M. Cobb. We would like to explore her history, document the buildings as they exist today and hopefully recover drawings and reference to more of her work, so that we can better understand how she came to be a builder and how her work was accomplished.

Almost every residential architectural practice involves at some point, the restoration, renovation or alteration of an existing home. In the Northeast, this involves dealing with homes that are often a hundred years old or more. It then becomes important that we understand the nature of its construction and also the logic of the original design. Documenting and archiving the work of architects and builders, helps us to preserve our local heritage and also move forward making informed and sensitive decisions given the existing fabric of our neighborhoods. Annie M. Cobb had a significant impact on the fabric of Newton Highlands, MA and she was able to do so in a period that had only begun to consider the valuable contributions that women might make outside of the home. Our hope is to preserve her legacy and inspire others with the story of her tenacity and spirit.

The grant amount requested for this project is \$8400.00.