

# *The Muse*

Newsletter of the Slater Memorial Museum  
Summer 2009



## **Sarah Huntington: Standing on Tall Shoulders**

This month, the Slater Museum, Norwich Historical Society, Park Congregational Church, Mohegan Tribe, City of Norwich, Faith Trumbull Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution and Lebanese American University (LAU) will recognize Norwich native Sarah Lanman Huntington Smith's contributions as a missionary and



Sarah Huntington, oil on canvas, artist unknown, circa 1833, courtesy of Park Congregational Church

educator. Born in 1802 at 181 Broadway, and like Norwich's Historian, Frances Manwaring Caulkins, Huntington was educated in Lydia Huntley's Norwich Female Academy at 185 Broadway. An active member of the Second Congregational Church of Norwich, she initiated a mission to the Mohegan Indians, helping to establish a Mohegan school and the Mohegan Congregational Church.

In 1834, Huntington went to "Beyroot" as the wife of a missionary and established a school for girls, an act still controversial in many parts of the Islamic world. Her Female Academy spawned other schools including the American School for Girls (1854), American Junior College for Women (1924), Beirut College for Women (1948), Beirut University College (1974) and Lebanese American University (1991) with 7,000 female and male students on campuses in Beirut and Byblos, Lebanon today.

The survivor of an all too common shipwreck on her return to Norwich, ill with tuberculosis, Huntington died and was buried in Boojah, Turkey. The Rockwell House of the Faith Trumbull Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution owns a sampler made in Huntington's honor by Raheel Atta, Sarah's student and ward. The Park Congregational

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## A Message from the Director



By the time you read this, Norwich will have begun its long-awaited Semiseptcentennial celebration. The Slater staff has been collaborating on many of the festivities. We are pleased to have an opportunity to join with several Norwich institutions to present the exhibition *Veils and the Lebanese American University*. These programs, along with those to be presented at our neighbor, Park Church, celebrate the life of Norwich native Sarah Lanman Huntington Smith (1802-1836). As you will learn, Mrs. Smith joined a long line of Connecticut natives who in the 19<sup>th</sup> century felt compelled to place their lives at risk to help others in foreign lands.

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### Upcoming Exhibitions, Programs and Events

**Please join in celebrating Sarah Lanman Huntington Smith Day!**

**June 20, 2009**

**6:00 p.m. Opening of LAU's *Veils*:** Held in the Slater Memorial Museum's Converse Art Gallery. Light refreshments will be served. Exhibition will be on view June 20 - August 2, 2009.

**June 21, 2009**

**4:00 p.m. Sarah Huntington Day Dedication:** Reading of SLHS Day proclamation and plaque unveiling at 181 Broadway.

**5:00 p.m. Sarah Lanman Huntington Smith: Norwich Missionary to the Mohegan Tribe and Arab Females:** A lecture by Rev. Robert D. Stoddard, Jr. To be held at Park Congregational Church - Chapel.

**6:00 p.m. Lebanese American University Reception:** Honored guests include LAU president Dr. Joseph Jabbra, Norwich Mayor Benjamin Lathrop and Mohegan Tribal officials.

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The Muse is published up to four times yearly for the members of The Friends of the Slater Memorial Museum. The museum is located at 108 Crescent Street, Norwich, CT 06360. It is part of The Norwich Free Academy, 305 Broadway, Norwich, CT 06360. Museum main telephone number: (860) 887-2506. Visit us on the web at [www.slatermuseum.org](http://www.slatermuseum.org).

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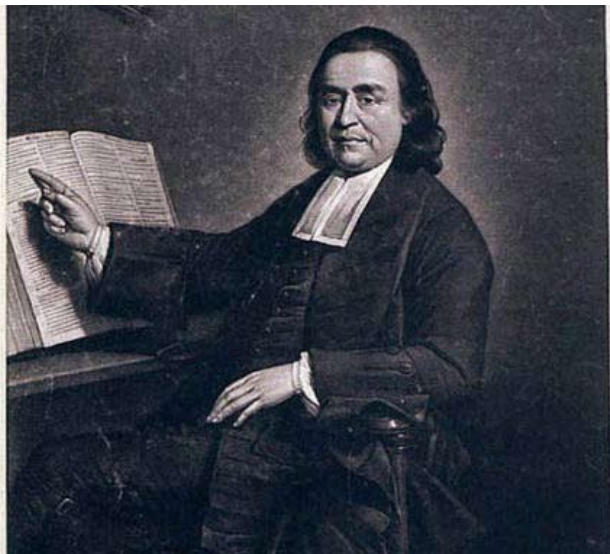
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**Samson Occom**

Church owns a spectacular portrait of Sarah, probably painted the year she married Rev. Eli Smith, 1833, perhaps in Boston. Rev. Robert D. Stoddard, Jr., vice president (retired) of the Lebanese American University who has conducted definitive research of Sarah's life and work, will present a lecture about Huntington and the University.

Huntington's place in the history of missionary work, especially that of American women, cannot be underestimated. She was at the forefront of a movement that gained steam as the 19<sup>th</sup> century advanced. However, she stood on the tall shoulders of remarkable people who reflected the diversity of the young country.

The Reverend Samson Occom (1723-1792) (often spelled Occum), a Mohegan Tribe member, became a Presbyterian minister and is credited the first Native American to publish in English. Born to Joshua Tomacham and his wife Sarah, Occom is believed to be a direct descendant of Mohegan Sachem, Uncas. At the age of sixteen, Occom was exposed to the teachings of Christian evangelicals in the Great Awakening and studied theology with Eleazer Wheelock.

Wheelock's success in preparing Occom for the ministry encouraged the former to found a school for Native American children in Lebanon, Connecticut, supported by charitable contribution. Its purpose was to educate boys in both secular and religious

curricula so they could return as missionaries to their native culture; the girls were taught "housewifery" and writing. His plans for "Moor's Charity School," located on the Lebanon town green and named for benefactor Joshua Moor, however, did not progress for many students became sick and died.

Occom was a missionary to Native American people in New England and Montauk, Long Island, where he married a local woman and where on August 30, 1759, he was officially ordained a minister by the presbytery of Suffolk. Although promised otherwise by the church leaders, Occom was never paid the same salary as white preachers, and he lived in deep poverty for much of his life.

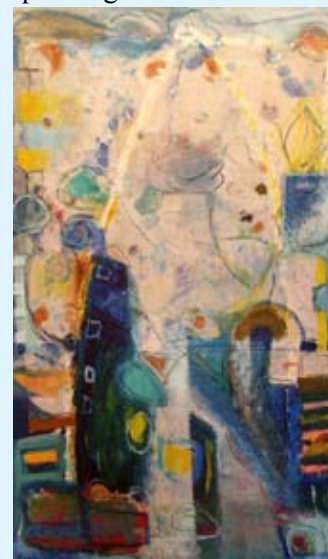
Wheelock persuaded Occom to go to England in 1766 with the Rev. Nathaniel Whitaker to raise money for the expansion of the school. Occom preached throughout England delivering over three hundred sermons in less than a year and a half and attracting

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### **New Acquisitions**

The Slater recently augmented its collection of work by Connecticut artists with the donation of two pieces by Oxford resident Vincent Baldassano from his studio; a collograph entitled "Labrynth" and "Blues for Pablo", a painting.

Vincent has been a visiting artist and lecturer at over twelve institutions including the universities of Cincinnati and Buffalo. As an artist, his work has been exhibited both locally and worldwide including galleries in New York, Portugal, France, Germany and Switzerland; and at the Butler Art Institute and the Hammond, Housatonic and Albright-Knox Museums.



***Blues for Pablo, Vincent Baldassano, oil on panel, 2005***

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**Membership certificate in the American Missionary Association of Nathaniel Hitchcock, New York, 1865**

large crowds. By the end of his tour he had raised over twelve thousand pounds for Wheelock’s school. King George III donated 200 pounds, William Legge, Earle of Dartmouth, 50 guineas. The friendship between Occom and Wheelock dissolved when Occom learned that Wheelock had neglected to care for Occom’s wife and children while he was away. Occom also took issue with the fact that Wheelock had put the funds toward establishing Dartmouth College for the education of Englishmen rather than of Native Americans.

Upon his return from England, Occom lived in Montville,; he moved in 1786 with other Indians from New England and Long Island tribes to Oneida territory to what is today New York state. He helped to found Brothertown and lived among the Brothertown Indians, the first Native American tribe to become American citizens, by requiring that they relinquish their Tribal affiliation. Occom died on July 14, 1792.

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) was the first American Christian foreign mission agency, founded in 1810 by graduates of Williams College. The first five ABCFM missionaries were sent overseas in 1812, and up to 1840, hundreds of representatives went to India, northern Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii), China, Singapore and Siam (Thailand); Greece, Cyprus, Turkey, Syria, Palestine (now Israel), Western Africa and Southern

Africa.

By the 1830s, based on its experiences, the ABCFM prohibited unmarried people from becoming missionaries. Couples were required to have been engaged at least two months prior to setting sail. ABCFM maintained a list of women who were “missionary-minded” as well as “young, pious, educated, fit and reasonably good-looking” to encourage men to marry. In 1961 ABCFM merged with other societies to form the United Church Board for World Missionaries.

In addition to Christianity and conversion, the ABCFM missionaries addressed education, medicine and social service. Schools provided captive audiences for preachers. Native students were boarded in missionary homes to expose them further to Christian life.

The first American missionaries overseas, Adoniram and Ann Judson, endured debilitating tropical diseases and vicious opposition and imprisonment under the king of Burma. They lost children to disease and labored for seven years before acquiring their first convert from Buddhism. Like Sarah Lanman Huntington Smith, Ann Judson died early (at 36) as a result of her work. Most of the missionaries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly the wives, died young.

Ann Hasseltine Judson (1789-1826) attended the Bradford Academy and was a teacher from graduation until marriage. Her father, John Hasseltine, was a deacon at the church that hosted the gathering that founded the ABCFM. Ann first met and married her husband Adoniram Judson (1788-1850) two weeks



**Ann Judson visits husband in prison in Burma**

### Opening Soon at the Slater Musum

*Around the World on the Yacht Eleanor: The Slaters' Grand Tour* is a new permanent exhibition that follows William And Ellen Slater's 'round the world cruise in 1894/95 as they sailed out of New London and on to the Azores, France, Egypt, India, China, Japan, Alaska and home. The Slaters' voyage lasted more than a year and a half, took along some of their closest friends and included elegant



**William and Eleanor (Peck) Slater aboard their yacht *Eleanor*. Archives of the Slater Museum**

dinners on board and shopping trips on land. Artifacts, photographs and fine art represent the phenomenon of 19th century luxury travel aboard an elegant yacht graced with Tiffany windows, Persian rugs and Barbizon School paintings.

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before they embarked on their mission to India. They later moved to Burma. Ann had three pregnancies, but in each case, she either miscarried, or the child died in infancy. Post-partum complications killed Ann after her third birth, before which she had returned to the United States in 1822-23 because of liver disease. During the first Anglo-Burmese war, her husband was imprisoned for 17 months, and Ann moved into a shack outside the prison gates to support him. After his release, they remained in Burma continuing their work.

Sarah Hall Boardman (1803-1845) was born in New Hampshire but spent 20 years of her life in Burma. She and her husband George Boardman sailed to Burma in 1824, just one week after their wedding. She was widowed in 1831, and although a widowed missionary wife would have normally returned to her

hometown, from 1831 to 1834 she preached in the jungles and supervised mission schools. In 1834 she married the widower Adoniram Judson. She translated secular works, some still used today in Myanmar, and the *New Testament*. Her illness finally forced the family's return to the United States in 1844, but like Sarah Lanman Huntington Smith, she died en route.

While home in the U.S., Adoniram Judson asked Emily Chubbuck (1817-1854), whom he subsequently married, to write Sarah Boardman's biography. Emily Chubbuck was born to poor parents in New York. She became a teacher, joined a Baptist church, and, in 1840, entered the Utica female seminary and wrote her first book, *Charles Linn*. She developed a literary friendship with Nathaniel Parker Willis, whose publication of her work in his *New York Mirror* facilitated further publication in other journals. Her pen name was Fanny Forrester.

Adoniram and Emily Chubbuck married in June 1846 and two weeks later sailed from Boston to Burma. Their daughter Sarah was born in 1847. A son, Charles was born and died on the same day in 1850, three weeks after Judson's own death at sea. After learning of his death, Chubbuck returned in 1851 to the United States in poor health. Before resuming her own writing, she collected materials for Judson's biography, eventually written by Francis Wayland. Emily Chubbuck died of tuberculosis in New York.

Norwich native Harriet Lathrop (1796-1833) married Vermont native and Middlebury College graduate Miron Winslow (1789-1864) in January 1818 and in June embarked with him to Ceylon under ABCFM. They were stationed at Uduvil, where they worked among the Jaffna Tamils. Harriet focused on



**Emily Chubbuck**

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**Harriet Lathrop Winslow**

educating girls, often taking them into her own family. A central boarding school for girls overseen by the Winslows was established in January 1824 and became the well-known Uduvil School.

Harriet developed the arithmetic and geography curricula, supervised instruction in sewing and the household arts, and served as her husband's

secretary. Every girl who graduated in the first 50 years became a Christian. Harriet Winslow died suddenly in childbirth in January 1833. In July, her sister Elizabeth Coit Lathrop Hutchings sailed to join the Ceylon mission before word of Harriet's death had reached her. Harriet was buried beside two other sisters, both missionaries, Charlotte H. Cherry and Harriet Joanna Perry. Miron Winslow was widowed three more times before his last marriage in 1856. Charlotte Cherry (1811-1837) was born Charlotte Huntington Lathrop and later married Henry Cherry. The Cherrys were both missionaries to India in the spring of 1837. Like her sisters and so many women missionaries of the era, she had a short life, dying of consumption in 1837 at age 26. The Rev. Henry Cherry remained as a missionary in India until 1849.

Hiram Bingham I (1789 - 1869), born in Bennington, Vermont, was among the first Protestant missionaries to introduce Christianity to the Hawaiian Islands. Bingham is descended from Deacon Thomas Bingham, who had come to the American colonies in 1650 and settled in Connecticut. Hiram attended Middlebury College and the Andover Theological Seminary. He married Sybil Mosley, and on October 23, 1819, the ABCFM sent them from Boston to Hawaii; they arrived in Honolulu in 1820 aboard the brig *Thaddeus*. By 1823, Queen Ka'ahumanu and six high chiefs requested Christian baptism. Queen Ka'ahumanu, an extremely powerful and charismatic

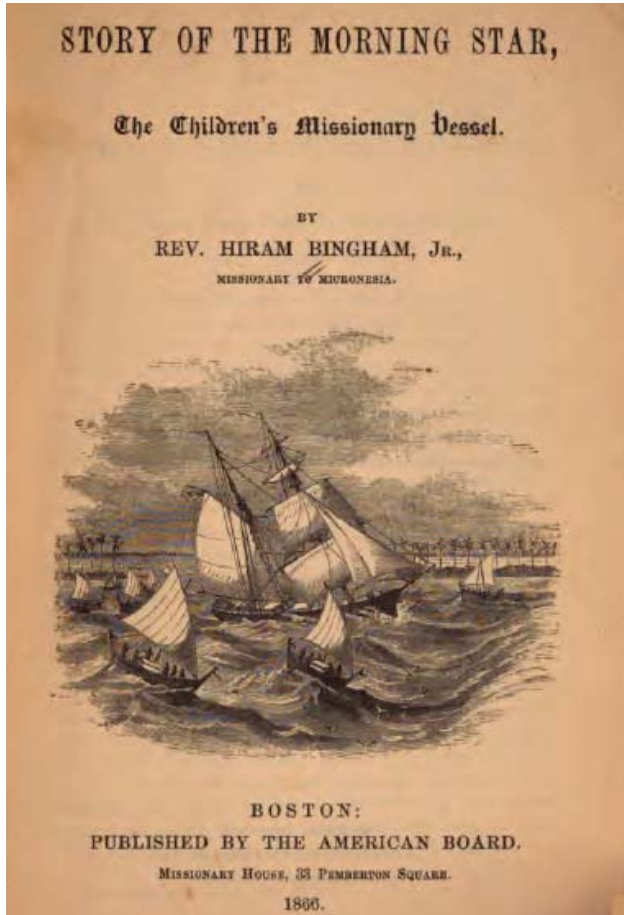
leader, changed Hawaiian native traditions, religion and politics after adopting Christianity.

Soon after her conversion, the government banned prostitution and drunkenness. The shipping industry and the foreign community resented Bingham's spiritual impact. The Protestant missionaries persuaded Ka'ahumanu to abolish from the island nation the Roman Catholic Church, which had established the Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace in Honolulu. On July 7, 1827, she ordered the first Catholic missionaries to leave, and in 1830 she signed legislation banning Catholic teachings.

Bingham was involved in the creation of the spelling system for the Hawaiian language and translated portions of the Bible into Hawaiian. He also designed the Kawaiaha Church, on the Island of Oahu, constructed between 1836 and 1842. Built in the New England style of the Hawaiian missionaries, it is now one of the oldest standing Christian places of worship in Hawaii.



**Queen Ka'ahumanu**



**Story of the Morning Star: The Children's Missionary Vessel by Hiram Bingham, Jr. [Micronesia] 1866**

**Don't Miss Us!**

The Slater will participate in the Norwich 350 Memorabilia Show June 14, 2009 from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. at the Howard T. Brown Park in Norwich.



**Unidentified photograph from the archives of the Slater Museum**

On display will be unidentified photographs from the Slater's collection. Stop by our table and see if you can recognize some of the area's previous residents!

ABCFM grew concerned with Bingham's frequent interference in Hawaiian politics. The Bingham family returned to New England in the 1840s for what was intended to be a sabbatical because of Sybil's poor health, but ABCFM refused to reappoint him as a missionary even after Sybil's death in 1848. He published a memoir, *A Residence of Twenty-One Years in the Sandwich Islands* in 1847. He remained in New England as the pastor of an African American church and remarried in 1851. Hiram Bingham, I, is buried in Grove Street cemetery in New Haven.

Hiram Bingham, II was also a missionary to Hawaii, grandson Hiram Bingham, III was the Yale scholar who discovered Machu Picchu and became a U.S. Senator and Governor of Connecticut. Great-grandson Hiram Bingham, IV was the U.S. Vice Consul in Marseille, France during World War II who rescued Jews during the Holocaust.

As in the case of Samson Ocom, education did empower indigenous people to a certain degree, enabling them to develop their own church leaders and take a greater role in their communities. ABCFM missionaries established some form of education at every station, and some ABCFM missionaries also received medical training before leaving for the field. Some trained physicians and ordained as missionaries, concentrated on preaching. Others, like Peter Parker (18040-1888), a Massachusetts native, Yale Medical School graduate, and missionary to China, practiced both missionary work and medicine.

Calista Holman Vinton (1807-1864) was a Baptist missionary who worked for 30 years in Burma. Born in Union, Connecticut, at the age of sixteen, she became gravely ill and sought her first baptism before death. A seemingly miraculous recovery led her to devote her life to religion and missionary work. She met Justus Vinton, who was studying at the Hamilton Literary and Theological Institute (now Colgate University). They were married in 1834 and sailed in July 1834 for Burma after a year at Hamilton studying Karen (Burmese).

Justus and Calista worked in the jungles, traveling by native canoe, horseback, elephant, buffalo cart, and foot, braving possible attack by large wild animals. Initially, they traveled together preaching  
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**Justus and Calista Vinton**

to the multitudes. Later, they went separately to accommodate the many invitations from distant villages. They combined preaching with ministering to the sick. Calista established schools in mission stations and staffed them with native scholars she had trained herself.

From 1840 to 1846, Calista had three children, but by 1847, her health failing, it was thought best to return to the U. S. to recover. Rev. Vinton accompanied her and returned with his own native disciples. En route, while the family awaited a transfer ship in Cape Town, South Africa, their third child Harvey Howard, fell ill and died.

After their return, Mrs. Vinton, while resting at the home of Deacon Granger in Suffield, Connecticut, held gatherings in her sickroom. With a keen wit and a knack for story telling, from her bed in Suffield she raised money for Bibles, supplies and a new church for the Burmese mission.

In 1850, the Vintons returned to Moulmein accompanied by a large contingent of missionaries who worked to convert the natives and to teach in Karen schools established by Mrs. Vinton. They brought tracts and copies of the *New Testament*, translated into Karen, risking the ire of the intolerant local authorities.

Churches were deeply affected by the Second Anglo-Burmese War (1823 to 1826). At the fall of Rangoon to the British, Mrs. Vinton and the family set up an emergency hospital in a vacant monastery to treat people with smallpox, measles, whooping cough, dysentery, and cholera. Hunger was an equally urgent

reality and the Vintons fed both Christians and -non-Christians with provisions procured on trust. Evicted from the monastery, the Vintons purchased land and built a mission center, hospital and school.

Mrs. Vinton was responsible for running the mission school in Kemmendine, with nearly 250 pupils. Besides teaching, conducting prayer meetings, acting as physician and nurse to her own pupils and the neighborhood sick, and making and translating text books and hymns, she traveled the north and west of Rangoon, preaching the gospel. In addition, she educated her son Brainerd and daughter Calista. In 1854, Brainerd was sent to Hamilton, NY, and Calista to Suffield, Connecticut, to continue their studies. After war had subsided in Rangoon, the Vintons finally built their new church and school. The Karen Home Mission Society was also housed in the building known as Frank's Church and later as Reverend Vinton Memorial Church.

In 1858 Rev. Vinton returned with a jungle illness after an excursion to post his native preachers and died on March 31. Mrs. Vinton continued the mission work assisted by native preachers and her daughter, who, upon returning to Burma from Suffield, taught mathematics and vocal music and supervised the boarding school.

What inspired the "Greatest Century of Missionary Advance"? The Long 19th Century, as defined by British Marxist Eric Hobsbawm, refers to the period between the years 1789 and 1914, beginning with the French Revolution and ending with the start of World War I, as having such a strong influence on world history and culture that it defined an era. It



**Missionary woman in Fochow, China**



### Close of Another Successful Year

The Children's Art Program at the Norwich Art School concluded its term with the opening of the 115th Children's Art Show. This exciting exhibition celebrated the achievements of the students enrolled in school's Saturday morning art classes.

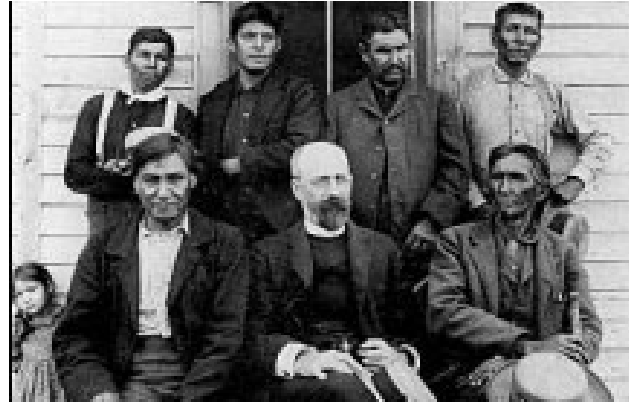
You can find more information about registering your child in the upcoming 2009/2010 program on the museum's website.



**Families and friends enjoy the opening of the 115th Children's Art Show.**

was also the greatest century for missions. In 1793 William Carey of Northampton, England launched the modern missionary movement encouraging Christians to fulfill an obligation of "Conversion of the Heathens." Over the ensuing 100 years, Bible translations multiplied from 50 to 250 and mission organizations from 7 to 100. Protestant missionaries were sent out to every corner of the world, converting entire tribes and nations. By 1900, the number of professing Christians had more than doubled from 215 million to 500 million.

Much American missionary work began at home, among Native Tribes and Freed (or still enslaved) people. It was work that allowed women more responsibility and satisfaction than available to them at home. Indeed, throughout the nineteenth century, nearly 60% of American missionaries were women, both accompanying missionary husbands and single, traveling and working independently. Some missionaries had more respect for native customs and cultures than most. Even early on, a faction advocated leaving, even closing, schools,



**Episcopal missionary with Dakota Indians, Minnesota, 1897**

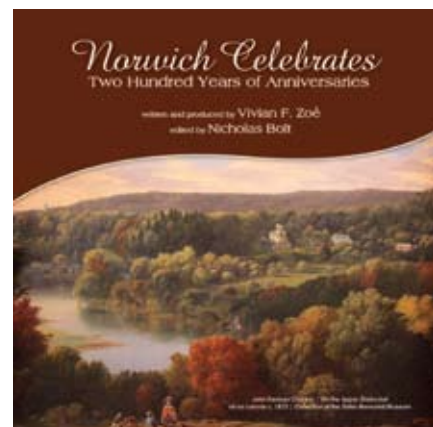
immediately after a critical mass of native people had been successfully converted. Later, however, Westernization – Americanization – of host cultures became the goal.

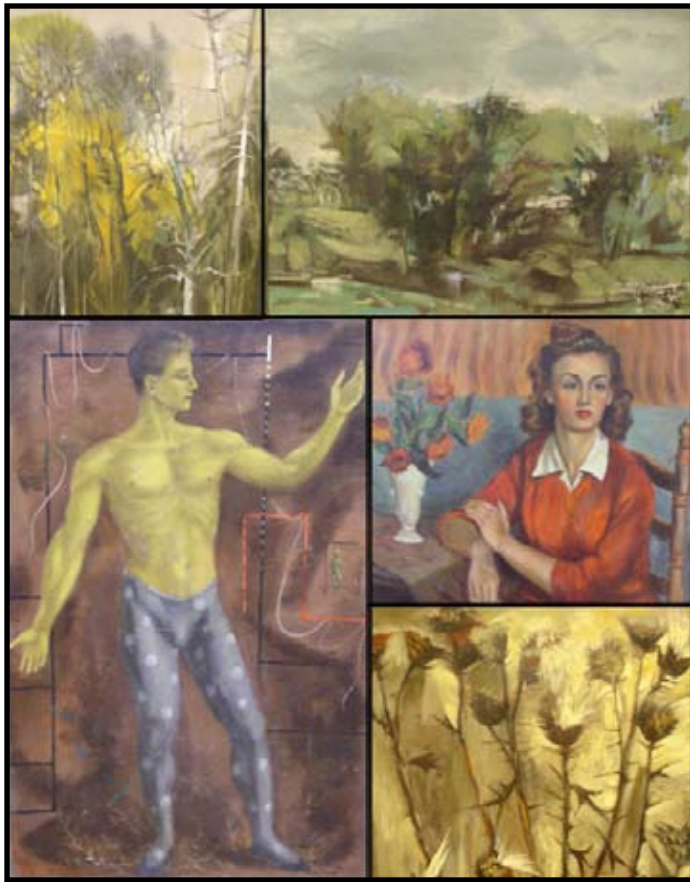
By the end of the nineteenth century American missionaries had brought significant resources to their targeted regions, including building churches, schools, hospitals and clinics, orphanages, and even publishing houses. Through organizations like the Laymen's Missionary Movement, American industrialists contributed generously. By the early twentieth century, Americans outnumbered the British, comprising about 40% of the missionaries worldwide.

Because of their number, sources cited are available upon request.

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Coming soon to the Slater Museum:

**REMEMBERING PAUL ZIMMERMAN**

**September 11, 2009 - November 1, 2009**

**September 11, 2009**

Opening reception in the Converse Art Gallery

**October 30, 2009**

Auction of select Zimmerman works

More information at [www.slatermuseum.org](http://www.slatermuseum.org)

Through his work, Paul Zimmerman (1921-2007) reveals a synthesis of form and light which evokes in the spectator a strong and sustained emotional response. As an artist, Paul transcends the present with all its limitations and approaches the eternal and universal.

Paul taught at the Hartford Art School at the University of Hartford for more than fifty years, and his work has been included in major national and regional exhibitions since 1947 including dozens of one-man exhibitions throughout the United States.



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