

## Nathaniel Hawthorne Society: "Hawthorne in the Berkshires"

Hosted by Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA), North Adams; June 12-15, 2014

In 1850 Hawthorne moved his family to Lenox, where for almost two years he produced a range of literary work: *The House of the Seven Gables* and a new edition of *Twice-Told Tales*, as well as *A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys*, *The Snow Image and Other Twice-told Tales*, and other works for children. Related to this productivity were his new friendships with Herman Melville in nearby Pittsfield and the circle of women authors in the vicinity, including Catharine Sedgwick, Caroline Sturgis Tappan, and Fanny Kemble Butler. It was while living in Lenox that the Hawthornes learned of Margaret Fuller's death, with all of its accompanying questions about women's professional, authorial, and domestic identities. The scenic region, which had become a summer playground for the very rich, also brought Hawthorne into contact with Shakers, artists, mill owners and workers, and church-goers of all persuasions. During his brief time in the Berkshires, in short, Hawthorne encountered a rich variety of contradictory personalities and complex social forces, all of which bore upon his thinking and writing.

Proposals for "Hawthorne in the Berkshires" should address some facet of the work that was inspired by or produced during the writer's Berkshire phase. Papers that explore Hawthorne's influence on (or work by) neighboring writers and artists, or that examine the cultural, economic, religious, and social contexts of the region in the early 1850s, are also welcome, as are those which reflect on the author's legacy on this 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death in 1864.

Please send 250-500 word abstracts to Jason Courtmanche at [hawthorne.berkshires@gmail.com](mailto:hawthorne.berkshires@gmail.com) by January 30, 2014.

Conference venue will be the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, with affordable dormitory housing available in single or shared rooms, the Holiday Inn in walkable downtown North Adams, and various local B&Bs. Possible planned excursions for Saturday afternoon include Arrowhead and the Berkshire Athenaeum in Pittsfield, Hancock Shaker Village, an iron kiln such as inspired *Ethan Brand*, or a former mill site. Organizers can facilitate individual plans for a Sunday hike on Mount Greylock or Monument Mountain, with a stop at the reconstructed "Little Red House" in Lenox, depending on interest. Other sites within short walking distance of MCLA include historic Eclipse Mill with its artist galleries, Natural Bridge and Hudson Falls, which inspired a description in Hawthorne's *American Notebooks* during a visit in 1838, and the acclaimed Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (Mass MoCA). The downtown architecture is dominated by "the seven steeples of North Adams," a range of monumental 19<sup>th</sup>-century churches and a synagogue. North Adams is easily accessible by car, or travelers may fly into Albany, Boston, or NYC airports and travel by train or bus to Pittsfield, where a short shuttle service is available to North Adams. All inquiries about the conference site and travel particulars should be addressed to Rosemary Fisk at [rmfisk@samford.edu](mailto:rmfisk@samford.edu). Registration and housing costs will be announced by early fall 2013. Graduate students who present papers will be subject to a housing rebate, depending on dormitory availability.