

Distant Relative of Longfellow to Recite Story of Evangeline

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WINDSOR - Layne Longfellow is bringing the story of Evangeline home to Nova Scotia this weekend.

Longfellow, member of the Speaker's Hall of Fame and distant relative of one of America's most beloved poets, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, will read the Acadian love story in Windsor on Sunday.

"We are so excited about this that we just can't wait," said Judy Lynch of Haliburton House Museum, which is coordinating the event. "It's such an important part of the history here that it couldn't be any better."

Longfellow has produced a CD entitled *Longfellow Reads Longfellow*, which includes 18 poems with original music composed for the project and illustrations from one of the poet's first-edition books.

He will read poems from the book this weekend, but says there is one tale in particular that he can't wait to tell - *Evangeline*.

"I'm bringing the work home," he said of the story that recounts Acadian history. "One of the things that I admire about the power of *Evangeline* is that Longfellow was not Acadian, nor did he even visit Nova Scotia, but the story was so compelling that it became part of history. This great poet's telling had the power to replace history, to burn versions of history into cultural memory. He did the same with Paul Revere's ride."

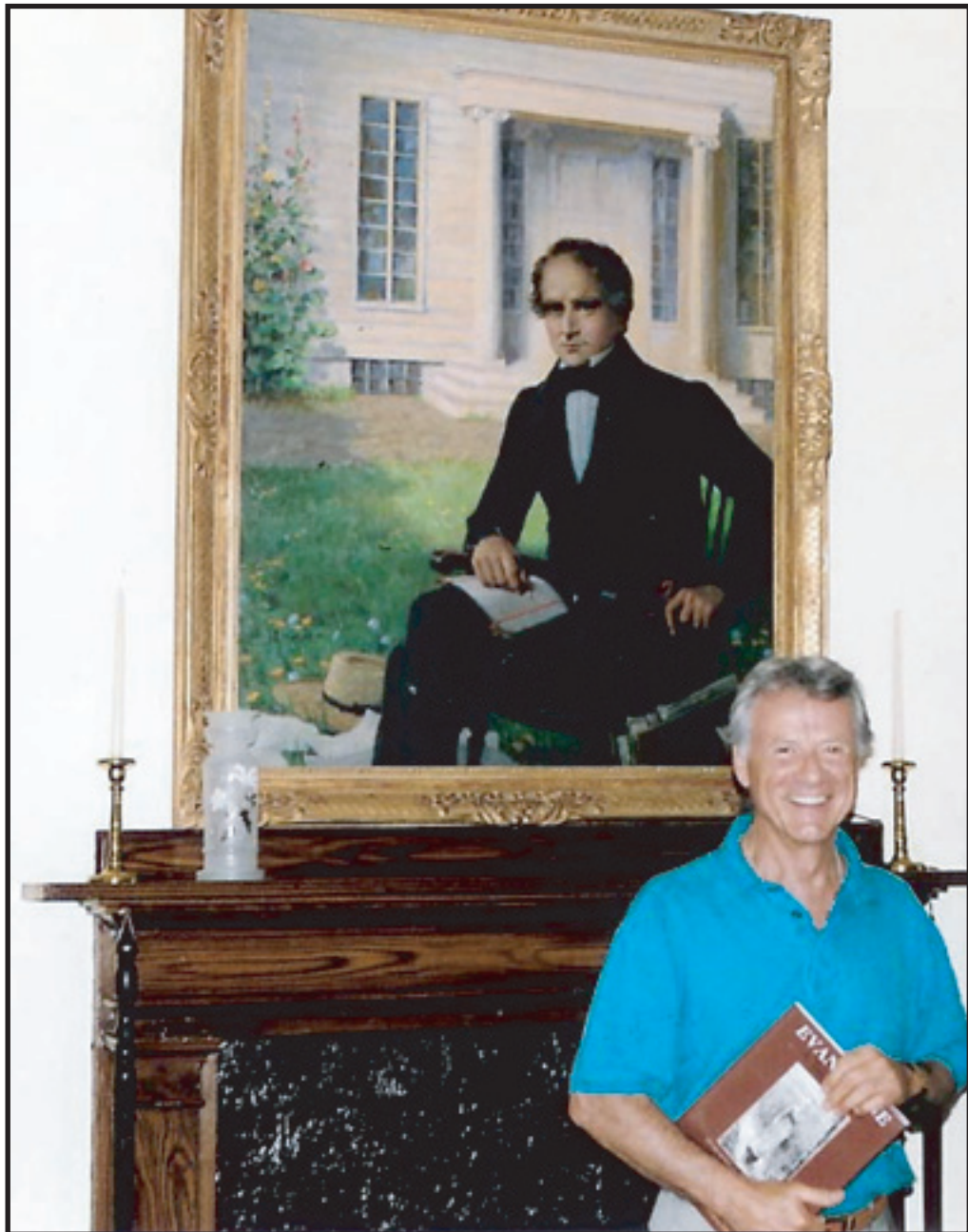


Photo by Judy Lynch

Dr. Layne Longfellow stands before the portrait of Thomas Chandler Haliburton, in the Haliburton House.

The tale of two lovers during the Expulsion of the Acadians also has a strong connection to the museum that is bringing Longfellow to the province. Haliburton House Museum is named for Thomas Chandler Haliburton, whose writings about Nova Scotia gave Longfellow the historical grounding for *Evangeline*.

"These Longfellow readings are the most important work that I have done in my career," Longfellow said Friday. "I cannot tell you how deep the honor goes. When I read this man's work I feel his heart, his

great mind, his earnestness. This poem, which is one of his greatest, is his contribution to the preservation of Acadian culture."

Longfellow, who lives in Cambridge, Mass., moved there to be close to the roots of the famous poet. He then found out that he is actually a distant relative of *Evangeline's* author.

The museum is bringing Mr. Longfellow to the West Hants Historical Society, 281 King Street, Windsor, on Sunday at 7 p.m.