

The Blacksmith's son graduated at Harvard, and became a Grammar School Teacher, and afterwards Clerk of the Court in the town of Portland. He was noted for his penmanship and his wit. The clerical Longfellow was succeeded by a surveyor, who afterwards became Judge of the Court of Common Pleas. The son of the judge and the father of the poet was a lawyer of some note who was sent to Congress in 1822. And so the line of descent on the father's side passes down through the battlefield, the forge, the Academy, the Bench, and the Legislative Halls, to the Laurel Crown of the "Poet of grace and sentiment."

On the maternal side of the house, Longfellow looked back to the landing of the Mayflower and all the sacred associations surrounding that historic vessel. His mother was a descendant of "the damsel Priscilla, the loveliest maiden of Plymouth," who did not think it out of place to say to the young John Alden who was sounding the praises of "Miles Standish, the Captain of Plymouth," "Why don't you speak for yourself, John?" To John and Priscilla Alden were born eleven children, and among their descendants there are at least two of the most noted American poets, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and William Cullen Bryant. Longfellow was born on the 27th of February, 1807, in the beautiful sea-board City of Portland. The surrounding forests and the numerous trees in the streets, which give it the name of the 'Forest City,' are referred to in his poem entitled "My Lost Youth."

"I can see the shadowy lines of its trees
And catch, in sudden gleams
The sheen of the far surrounding seas
And islands that were the Hesperides
Of all my boyish dreams.
"I remember the black wharves and the ships
And the searides tossing free,
And the Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
And the magic of the sea."

The warlike preparation during the war of 1812 are thus referred to:—

"I remember the bulwarks by the shore,
And the fort upon the hill;
The sunrise gun with its hollow roar,
And the bugle wild and shrill."