



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Jane Wald

Executive Director of the Emily Dickinson Museum

t. 413/542-5084

f. 413/542-2152

jhwald@emilydickinsonmuseum.org

Museum Muses on Emily Dickinson and Science in Darwin's Anniversary Year

AMHERST, Mass.—On Sunday, March 8, at 2 p.m., the Emily Dickinson Museum presents a lecture on “Edward Hitchcock: Science and Religion in the Embrace of Nature,” by Robert L. Herbert, Professor Emeritus in the Humanities at Mount Holyoke College.

The talk, part of the Emily Dickinson Museum's Replenishing the Shelves Lecture Series, is free and open to the public. It will be held at Pruyne Lecture Hall in Fayerweather Hall on the Amherst College campus. The lecture will be followed at 3:30 p.m. by a discussion for the museum's “Kinsmen of the Shelf” book group.

The year 2009 marks the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin and the 150th anniversary of the publication of his *The Origin of Species*. In honor of those anniversaries, the Emily Dickinson Museum offers this session to explore the work of a local eminent geologist, Edward Hitchcock (1793-1864). An educator and minister as well as a scientist, Hitchcock served Amherst College for almost forty years as a member of the science faculty and as president, and is credited with providing Amherst with its reputation for scientific teaching. His work was primarily dedicated to reconciling Christianity with science. Though Darwin's career overlapped chronologically with Hitchcock's, the British naturalist's work departed radically from the Amherst scientist's approach. The Hitchcock and Dickinson families were intimately connected, and several of Hitchcock's titles graced the Dickinson library shelves.

Robert L. Herbert is a distinguished historian of nineteenth-century art and author of several well-known books on Impressionist and Post-Impressionist artists. He was awarded the 2008 Distinguished Lifetime Achievement for Writing on Art from the College Art Association.

Herbert has had a life-long interest in the relationship between art and science and has recently turned his attention to the Hitchcocks of mid-nineteenth-century Amherst. In 2008 he edited and published *A Woman of Amherst: The Travel Diaries of Orra White Hitchcock, 1847 and 1850* and is now preparing Edward Hitchcock's travel writings for publication.

For more information about the lecture, the “Kinsmen of the Shelf” reading group, or to receive advance readings for the discussion, contact Nan Fischlein, Program Coordinator, at 413-542-2034 or nfischlein@emilydickinsonmuseum.org.

Replenishing the Shelves is a museum initiative to recreate the libraries of the Homestead and The Evergreens as accurately as possible by acquiring books in the same editions as the Dickinson family owned. For more information about Replenishing the Shelves please visit www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org/books.html or call executive director Jane Wald (542-2154).

The Emily Dickinson Museum, comprising the Dickinson Homestead and The Evergreens, is devoted to the story and legacy of poet Emily Dickinson and her family. Both properties are owned by the Trustees of Amherst College. The museum is overseen by a separate Board of Governors charged with raising its operating and capital funds. The Homestead was the birthplace and residence of the poet (1830-1886). The Evergreens was the 1856 home of the poet's brother and sister-in-law, Austin and Susan Dickinson.

The Emily Dickinson Museum is located at 280 Main St. in Amherst, Mass. The official museum website is www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org. Beginning March 1, hours are Wednesday through Sunday, from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m.; the museum is closed on major holidays.

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