



Study

The south- and east-facing room to the right of the [front entry](#) was used by George Washington as his dining room and meeting room, and later by Henry Longfellow as his study. It connects through two small passages to the [library](#) to the north.

The majority of the woodwork dates to 1759, including the deep window seats and hinged shutters; the window sashes date to the 1790s. The original fireplace was wider than the one seen today. Longfellow installed the Gothic iron coal grate after 1847 and added the brown painted wallpaper with the faux bamboo molding in 1868.

Next to the fireplace stands the armchair made from the "spreading chestnut tree" which Longfellow made famous in his poem "The Village Blacksmith."

The chair is carved with horse-chestnut leaves and inscribed around the base with lines from the poem. The children of Cambridge presented the chair to Longfellow on his seventy-second birthday, February 27, 1879. To express his gratitude, Longfellow wrote his poem "From My Arm-Chair," exclaiming:

Am I a king, that I should call my own
This splendid ebon throne?
Or by what reason, or what right divine,
Can I proclaim it mine?

Only, perhaps, by right divine of song
It may to me belong;
Only because the spreading chestnut tree
Of old was sung by me.

...

And now some fragments of its branches bare,
Shaped as a stately chair,
Have by my hearthstone found a home at last,
And whisper of the past.



The armchair sits in a vignette with a watercolor of the blacksmith's shop and a small anvil made from the chestnut tree.

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