

## Acknowledgments

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This book began life as a series of graduate seminar papers and then a doctoral dissertation in the History Department at Boston College. Thomas H. O'Connor directed the dissertation, and he was generous and supportive. Alan Rogers offered advice that was always cogent. Carol Morris Petillo, a remarkable mentor, inspired me to take on the challenge of the doctoral program in the first place, and understood what I hoped to make of this project almost before I did. I composed an early version of parts of the introduction and chapter 1 in her biography seminar, where Victoria Byerly and Sandra Sandiford were collegial classmates and ideal

first readers. Sue Gogonian of the Bostonian Society sponsored a graduate student writers' group whose members were genial and welcoming. In the course of one twenty-minute conversation after a separation of several years, old friend Jack Zamboni offered two valuable analytical insights into material I was just beginning to explore; such conversations do not happen often enough, even when they are not so productive. A much earlier version of part of chapters 2 and 3 was presented to the New England Historical Association in a panel organized by Alan Rogers. Fellow panelist Ed Hanson and commentator R. Kent Newmyer made kind and constructive comments, as did audience members, in particular Richard Birdsall, the preeminent historian of Berkshire County of his time. I presented most of chapter 1 to the Twelfth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women; I am particularly grateful to Sarah Swedberg for inviting me to join her panel. Lucinda Damon-Bach, Victoria Clements, and all the members of the Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society offered encouragement when I participated in a panel discussion on Sedgwick biography at their triennial conference. Mary Beth Sievens read and critiqued the entire manuscript with great insight. With this much help and good advice, I must take complete responsibility for whatever flaws remain.

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The stories of these Sedgwick brothers and sisters resonated with me in part because of my own experience as a member of a large, close-knit family, and I am grateful to my bothers and their families for their love

and support. It seems almost unfair to single out Tom Kenslea, except that he provided invaluable computer help when a crashing hard drive could have delayed a summer of writing that was already much too short.

My father, Daniel Kenslea, died just as I was beginning this research, but his voice, his love of learning, his drive, his loyalty, his unswerving moral judgment, and his uncanny ability to ask the essential question continue to influence me in all my work. I count it a blessing, completing a first book at age fifty, to be able to present it to and share it with my mother, Clare Kenslea, who taught me to read, to write, and to love books.

Charlie Kenslea has grown up with this book and seen several summer vacations compromised by, if not quite sacrificed to, the demands of its research. I am grateful for his good nature and his curiosity, and proud to be his father. But no one has supported this work more thoroughly or unstintingly than Mary Sprogell Kenslea, who is as much a partner in it as in our life together. I cannot imagine how I would ever have completed this book, or even begun it, without her encouragement and her confidence in me, and I am more grateful for that than I can say.