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Vision in Action

Who is a Mainer? If you have visited MHS or followed the local news this winter, you have noticed MHS’s participation in a critical community conversation. Across the state, people are grappling with significant economic stress. As has happened regularly throughout Maine history, immigration has become a flashpoint.

Our recent exhibition *400 Years of New Mainers*, curated by Tilly Laskey and Reza Jalali (Coordinator of Multicultural Student Affairs at the University of Southern Maine) under Kate McBrien’s leadership, demonstrates the invaluable role that history can play in Maine. It also exemplifies the MHS “laboratory” that we are using to test new ideas and ways of practicing history, and our vision for MHS going forward.

The exhibition came together quickly in response to what MHS staff observed: troubling, vitriolic exchanges in the media about the supposed negative impact of immigrants in Maine. Using the photographs and stories of recent immigrants featured in the book that Jalali produced with Jan Pieter van Voorst van Beest and Pat Nyhan as a jumping off point, the team wove together a story that features the experiences and contributions of various groups who have arrived in Maine over the centuries. The exhibition both affirms the common experiences all Mainers have shared as new arrivals, and is unflinching in acknowledging negative reactions to immigration.

As part of the initiative, street artist Pigeon installed posters from his “Mainer” project on the front of the MHS building, helping enliven MHS’s physical presence and, more importantly, bringing the dialog in the exhibit out onto the street and into the community.

The question “Are you a Mainer” can be asked playfully. It can also be loaded, exclusionary, and have consequences that we don’t intend. One of the richest programs I’ve been part of in my near fifteen years at MHS was a panel in March that featured four Maine women, each of whom arrived here over the past two decades, describing their lives in Maine.

What stood out was not where they came from (Cambodia, Iraq, Zambia) or that they have been in Maine for years rather than generations, but the universality of what shapes their lives—the joys and challenges of raising kids, caring for aging parents, trying to fit in at school, struggling to keep a business afloat in Maine—and what each appreciates about Maine—the warmth of its people and the communities they’ve become members of.

Thank you to everyone who has been part of this special initiative. It’s a sign of things to come.

There’s much to look forward to in the months ahead—including an exhibition and events related to Acadia National Park’s centennial, an exhibition commemorating the great Portland fire of 1866, a wonderful partnership with the Biddeford Mills Museum, new content on Maine Memory Network, and The Magical History Tour which will include several sites that feature immigration stories.

Finally, please join us for MHS’s 194th Annual Meeting at the Abbe Museum in Bar Harbor on June 4! Thanks so much for your interest and support.

Steve Bromage
Executive Director



ABOUT THE COVER:

Khadija Guled, 2009 © Jan Pieter van Voorst van Beest. Photograph featured in MHS’s exhibition, *400 Years of New Mainers*.

What does “Mainer” mean to you?



Bushra Islam, Mufalo Chitam, Makara Meng, Maryam Hassoon, and Reza Jalali. Photo by Meg Webster.

Maine Historical Society took on the contemporary and controversial subject of immigration in Maine with two recent exhibitions, *400 Years of New Mainers*, and *Pigeon’s Mainer Project*.

Since opening in February, attendance to these exhibits is ten times that of the same period in 2015, and school visits have risen by 900%. We’ve experienced record crowds coming during February (in a snow

storm!) and March First Friday Art Walks, and the projects have been featured in major news articles in *The Portland Press Herald*, *The Bangor Daily News*, *The Forecaster*, and *The Portland Phoenix*.

This success can be traced to collaboration. Outreach Curator Tilly Laskey co-curated both exhibitions with community members; *400 Years of New Mainers* with Reza Jalali, an educator, writer, and scholar, who manages the University of Southern Maine’s Office of Multicultural Student Affairs, and *Pigeon’s Mainer Project* with street artist and activist Orson Horchler, a.k.a Pigeon (pictured, top right).

These exhibitions and public programs are initiating dialogue and encouraging new perspectives at MHS. Reza Jalali’s efforts have connected MHS with communities that we have not formerly reached. An overflow crowd attended a community night that featured a welcoming song by Jason Brown (Penobscot)



Jason Brown performs a welcoming song at the 400 Years of New Mainers community night.

followed by the all-girl Pihcintu Multicultural Chorus led by Con Fullam. Photographer Jan Pieter Van Voorst Van Beest, author Pat Nyhan, and contributor Reza Jalali talked about their book, *New Mainers: Portraits of our Immigrant Neighbors* (2009) to another rapt audience. “Making a Home in Maine” was a panel discussion about the experiences of immigrant women, where Mufalo Chitam, Maryam Hassoon, Bushra Islam, and Makara Meng shared their histories. Through social media and a noon-time talk, street artist Pigeon has expanded MHS’s audiences, and called into question perceptions on who can call themselves a “Mainer”.

We physically brought the conversation *outside* of our building as well—through the installations of *Pigeon’s Mainer Project* on MHS’s Congress Street façade, and buoys painted with the flags of 70 countries by immigrant and refugee students in the *Make it Happen!* program at Lyman Moore Middle School, with mentors from Casco Bay High School.

Exhibiting contemporary topics may be unexpected for a historical society. By citing the Wabanaki people as the first people of Maine, and telling the stories of immigrants who came to Maine 400 years ago alongside those who have been here a few months, we are restating the similarities between immigrant stories over four centuries and working toward more understanding in our state.



In January MHS purchased Jason Brown’s Creation cuff. Brown, a Penobscot jeweler, makes contemporary jewelry informed by his culture. His bracelet melds traditional Penobscot ash basketry weaving techniques with copper, which was historically mined by Wabanaki people in the Bay of Fundy. On this bracelet is a depiction of the Wabanaki creation history, where hero/creator Glooscap shot an arrow into a brown ash tree and the Wabanaki people emerged.

< Creation cuff bracelet by Jason Brown, black ash and copper, MHS 2016.002



KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Interest from schools in *400 Years of New Mainers* has been significant and the response from teachers and students has been overwhelmingly positive. Educators appreciate that the exhibit examines an important topic that is both part of the social studies curriculum, and is also relevant to many students’ personal stories.

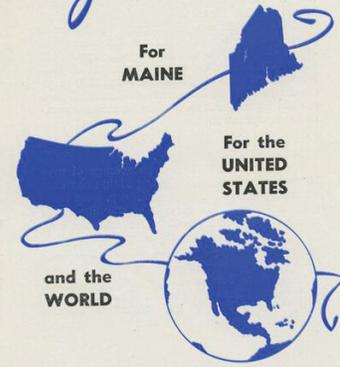
The exhibit has value for diverse ages, backgrounds, and interests. Portland and Scarborough elementary school students participating in MHS’s *Local History, Local Schools* program explored and discussed immigration with a museum educator in their classrooms and in the exhibit itself, responding to what they learned with original poetry and artwork.

They excitedly pointed out friends and neighbors they recognized in the photographs featured in the exhibit, and delighted in the exhibit’s interactive aspects, such as sharing what they would bring with them if they had to leave their country with only one suitcase. A documentary class from Harpswell Coastal Academy was curious to see how Maine stories were documented and presented, and took from their visit some useful tools on non-fiction storytelling. A class from Portland High School, planning to mount their own exhibit about immigration, visited MHS to gain insight on the immigrant experience in Maine as well as to start generating ideas for their own project. This group also met with MHS staff to discuss the logistics and best practices of exhibit creation. The PHS exhibit will include interviews with Mainers in their native languages about their own immigrant experiences. It’s scheduled to open at the school in spring 2016.

Through an intriguing pairing of art and history, and with a thoughtful examination of the past that also points to the present, *400 Years of New Mainers* has provided Maine students with historical knowledge, as well as inspiration, a place for lively discussion, and a chance to share their own stories.



A Great Asset



BANGOR
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A School of the Prophets

President HARRY TRUST, D. D.

Archiving the Bangor Theological Seminary



In 1810, the men who would soon found the Bangor Theological Seminary referred to Maine as a “deplorable” spiritual wasteland in dire need of proper ministering. A century later the school they founded had become known as the “institution that [did] more than any other to make the State of Maine a Christian commonwealth, and, in proportion to its means, as much as any other to evangelize the world.” The Seminary had made fertile the wasteland.

For 200 years, Bangor Theological Seminary’s reputation as a hidden gem nestled in the Maine wilderness and on the edge of the continent attracted spiritual searchers and deep thinkers. Seminary graduates ministered in all imaginable scenarios: tiny hamlets, inner-cities, suburbs, hospitals, prisons, and the military—from Minot to Micronesia. Its affiliates include John Sawyer, Jonathan Fisher, Joshua Chamberlain, Cyrus Hamlin, Samuel C. Fessenden, Elias Bond, Daniel Dole, and Enoch Pond.

When it closed in 2013, the Seminary chose Maine Historical Society to properly archive its extensive records. Over the past 18 months archivist Patrick Ford has led a team who processed hundreds

of linear feet of paper records, hundreds of books and periodicals, thousands of photographs (including glass lantern slides, daguerreotypes, and tintypes), three-dimensional artifacts and works of art, all manner of audio-visual material, and many, many scrapbooks.

The collection is richest in the sermons and lectures of its affiliates. These resources are primary documents of scholarly Christian reactions to, and interpretations of, two centuries of social, political, and spiritual development, covering such topics as temperance, abolitionism, missionary work, and rural ministry. The minutes and materials of the faculty and trustees are rich with discourse regarding the flux and

↑ *Missionary work played a major role in the history of the Seminary. The Seminary cultivated students who went on to minister both close to home and around the globe, as this 1947 pamphlet suggests.*

↖ *Chapel Row, top, the heart of the Seminary’s historic campus, from a late 19th-century photograph. To the left of the Chapel is the Old Commons, and to the right is Maine Hall.*

fissures of 19th, 20th, and early 21st-century Protestantism and theological pedagogy. It would be hard to find a collection that better epitomizes the triumph and struggle of the small religious college.

The BTS Collection will be accessible for research by late spring. A downloadable and searchable finding aid will be available on the MHS library catalog, and will include a database of graduates and extant theses. Several hundred photographs were scanned and will be available through Maine Memory Network.

← *President Harry Trust (in gray suit and glasses) and Professors Charles Cumming (top row, second from right) and future BTS President, Frederick Whittaker (middle left, in light brown coat), lead students in a day trip to the shore, ca. 1950.*



Our statewide digital museum now has its own Facebook Group! Search within Facebook for “Maine Memory Network” and click “Join” – as soon as you’re added to the group, you can post comments on items we share, and add your own historic photos and memories of Maine.



Our biggest event of the year! May 20 & May 21 in Portland

Join us for our 2nd annual exploration of fascinating historical sites in Portland that you've never seen – and maybe didn't even know existed!



TICKETS
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or call
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THE PARTY 5:30PM at the U.S. Custom House. Built in 1872 & listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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- Great for families
- Share your photos on social media using #mainehistory

Interested in volunteering? E-mail events@mainehistory.org or visit mainehistory.org for more information.

Legends of the American West

AUGUST 27 – SEPTEMBER 4, 2016

Join Maine Historical Society as we celebrate the Centennial of the National Park Service

Mount Rushmore National Memorial—Yellowstone National Park—Grand Teton National Park. Vast in myths, landscapes and monuments, the American West is larger than life and our custom-designed tour will take you to its heart and soul, from the grand designs of Mount Rushmore and Crazy Horse Memorial, to the breathtaking vistas of Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks.

Cost: From \$3,682 per person

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*For reservations, contact AAA Northern New England
Eric Baxter 207-780-6998 or Dana Widen 207-780-6957*

SAVE THE DATE!

MHS 194TH ANNUAL MEETING
BAR HARBOR, JUNE 4, 2016

Maine Historical Society is pleased to announce that its annual meeting will be held at the Abbe Museum in Bar Harbor on Saturday, June 4. Holding the annual meeting on Mount Desert Island represents a wonderful confluence: in 2016, Maine celebrates the centennial of the founding of Acadia National Park, one of the state's most iconic locations, and of the National Park System. Mount Desert Island is also home to one of the most vibrant historical communities in the state. MHS works closely with the MDI Historical Society, the Abbe Museum, and historical societies and libraries across the island on Maine Memory Network projects, collecting initiatives, and other programs.

The annual meeting will report on the state of MHS to its members, and highlight the rich history of Mt. Desert Island. Our host, the Abbe Museum, is dedicated to inspiring new learning about the Wabanaki, Maine's first people. Among other experiences, the meeting will feature a behind the scenes tour of the Abbe's much anticipated new exhibition, *People of the First Light*, which opens in May.

Designing Acadia

COMING UP JUNE 16, 2016 – JANUARY 14, 2017

The outdoors is an essential part of Maine's history and identity, and Acadia National Park (ANP) has a special presence in the imagination of both Mainers and visitors from around the world.

While we often travel to Acadia and other national parks to experience and enjoy nature, that experience has been designed and planned for us. When ANP was created, it was on land that had been used for centuries by Native Americans, local farmers and fisherman, and, more recently, wealthy rusticators. The purposeful design sought to create vistas, sight lines, and diverse opportunities for visitors to experience Mount Desert Island's special and varied landscape. From the breathtaking view to the roads and trails we use, each part of the park was carefully considered to both protect the environment and to enhance the visitor experience. It is that deliberate design that visitors continue to enjoy today.



**MHS PROVIDES
ACCESS TO JSTOR,
IN-HOUSE & REMOTE!**

The Brown Research Library is proud to provide access to JSTOR, a premier digital library dedicated to providing full-text access to academic journals and scholarly content. Brown Library patrons may access JSTOR in-house via the patron computer terminals, and MHS Members may access JSTOR remotely by logging in using their institutional MHS username and password.

A leader in high-quality digital content, JSTOR provides access to interdisciplinary journals on such topics as the arts, business, economics, education, history, humanities, political and social sciences, as well as numerous other areas of the larger academic and research community. Maine Historical Society's institutional membership includes access to nearly 1,500 full-text journals, fully searchable by conventional methods (author, title, subject) as well as keyword. While JSTOR is constantly digitizing and adding new holdings, traditionally journal issues three years or older are available through the service.

All MHS members in good standing may access JSTOR via the Society's Online Resources webpage: maine-history.org/online_resources.shtml. Under the Member's Only Section, select JSTOR and follow links to log in. The username and password will be provided. You must first log in to the Member's Only section with your own credentials prior to retrieving the JSTOR username and password. If you need assistance with establishing a Member login, please contact the MHS Donor Relations Manager at 207-774-1822 x216.



^ Postcard of Cadillac Mountain road, Acadia National Park, ca. 1935.
Collections of Maine Historical Society. Item #17469 on Maine Memory Network.

Designing Acadia celebrates the centennial anniversary of ANP by exploring the concept, design, and layout of the park. A series of historical maps of both Mount Desert Island (MDI) and the Acadia land area will help the visitor to understand the changing use of MDI and the acquisition of land for the national park; landscape design drawings and blueprints, along with photographs of construction, will provide evidence of the planned design of each visitor area to the park; and supplementary artifacts such as tools of the era, archaeological evidence from the island, and examples of trail signs will enhance the exhibit.

The exhibition will be supplemented by public programs and educational activities. Charles Birnbaum, President of the Cultural Landscape Foundation, will deliver MHS's annual Olmsted address on May 19, 2016.

Join us!

Narramissic



^ Peabody-Fitch farm, ca. 1910

Narramissic, also known as the Peabody-Fitch farm, sits on an open hillside in Bridgton, with a spectacular mountain view. This well-documented and relatively untouched farmstead embodies the story of northern New England hill farms. The house was built in 1797 by William and Sally Peabody. Their son-in-law, George Fitch, and his wife Mary, built the ell, carriage shed, blacksmith shop, and barn. Being a strong temperance man, George refrained from supplying the usual barrel of rum at the barn-raising, and for generations it has been known locally as the “Temperance Barn.” The farm prospered throughout much of the 19th century, but with time suffered declining fortunes. In 1938 it passed from the Peabody-Fitch family to Margaret Monroe of Providence, Rhode Island, who named it Narramissic, a word she found in an Abenaki dictionary meaning “hard to find.” The Monroes used it primarily as a seasonal home until she passed away in 1986, leaving the property to Bridgton Historical Society (BHS).

In 1991 the society was contacted by the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association in Deerfield, Massachusetts, which was deaccessioning a number of items they purchased from the Fitch family in 1916. BHS purchased most of them, which are collectively known as the Peabody Collection. A commemorative pitcher showing the Portland Observatory, a candle stand attributed to the Radford Brothers of Portland, a Federal-era tea set and other

FOUNDED: Bridgton Historical Society was founded in 1953 to encourage an appreciation and understanding of the events, customs, and traditions of the Bridgton community by collecting and preserving historically significant material and making it available through programs, publications, and exhibitions. The society operates and maintains museums, historical properties, and research facilities; advocates for preservation; and consults with town officials and other interested parties on matters that effect the town’s identity and sense of place.

COLLECTIONS: Bridgton Historical Society’s collections include genealogical materials, letters and documents from the late 18th century on, extensive records from the Bridgton & Saco River Railroad and the many mills that operated throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, tax assessing records from the late 1930s, ephemera and other documents from schools, businesses, and other community organizations, and well over 10,000 photographic images. In addition to

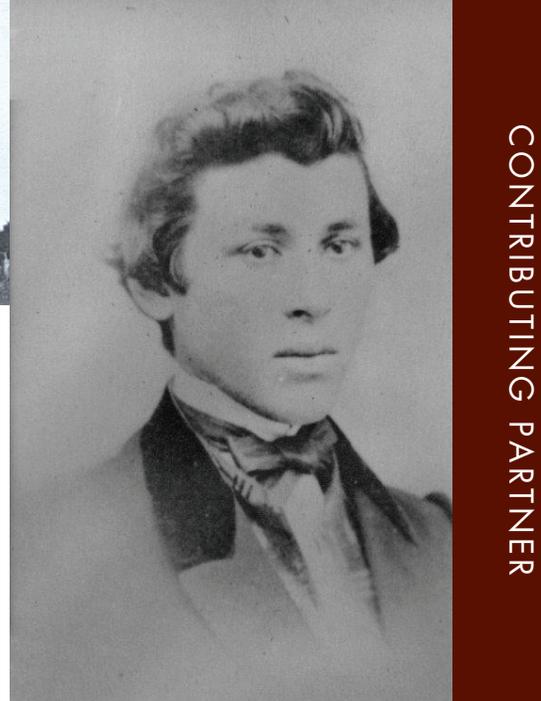
ceramics, all similar or identical to objects in the Wadsworth-Longfellow House collection, tell the story of a household on the inland Maine frontier enjoying a lifestyle similar to that of prominent coastal families.

In addition to the remarkably intact collection of original artifacts, we have a vivid picture of life on this farm in the mid-19th century, thanks to Edwin Peabody Fitch. Born in 1840, he grew up in the house and fought in the Civil War. After being captured and exchanged, he returned home, married Hannah Powers, his childhood sweetheart, and headed west. They ended up in California and at his children’s request, just a year before he died, he wrote (or dictated) his memories of growing up on a Maine farm. Published along with his Civil War diary, *Ninety Years of Living* contains fascinating stories of everyday life: how his father raised the barn up six feet with a home-made wooden jack screw; how Edwin worked with his brothers planting beans and corn; and how a 290-pound woman came each year to spin their wool and stink up the house with her pipe, just to name a few.

After discovering major problems with the foundations of the barn and house, Maine Preservation placed Narramissic on its list of most endangered historic places. The first phase of the remedy, a major project to redirect the water that is at the root of the problem, will be completed this spring, and the full

the furnishings and artifacts from the Peabody and Fitch families at Narramissic, the museum collections include household artifacts, tools, agricultural and manufacturing equipment, furniture, transportation vehicles, an exhibit on the narrow-gauge railroad, quilts and other textiles, fine and decorative arts objects and other items that illustrate the history of the Bridgton community.

FACILITIES: The Society operates two facilities: a museum and archive in downtown Bridgton, and “Narramissic,” the Peabody-Fitch Farm. The museum and archives contain two large exhibition galleries and a research facility. The farm includes a house, barn, carriage shed and working blacksmith shop, and functions as a historic house museum as well as a venue for workshops, educational programs, and other events that emphasize early American life and crafts. Both the museum and Narramissic are open seasonally on a regular schedule, and the museum is open year-round by appointment. The Narramissic grounds are open year-round from dawn to dusk.



^ Edwin Peabody Fitch ca. 1860



^ A loom inside the house, one of many original artifacts on display

restoration is expected to be completed over the following three to five years.

Ned Allen
Executive Director
Bridgton Historical Society

HOURS:

Museum & Archives, summer hours:

Tuesday-Friday, 1:00 - 4:00 pm

Labor Day to Memorial Day:

Tuesday & Thursday, 1:00 - 4:00 pm, and by appointment or chance (visitors always welcome)

Narramissic:

July & August, Tuesday-Saturday, 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm.

By appointment early summer and fall. Occasionally the Narramissic facilities are rented to private parties for weddings and other functions; please call ahead.

CONTACT: Bridgton Historical Society
5 Gibbs Ave., PO Box 44, Bridgton, ME 04009
(207) 647-3699 / info@bridgtonhistory.org

All images from the Collections of Bridgton Historical Society. BHS is a leader in contributing tax records for their town—visit mainememory.net and search for Bridgton Historical Society.



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Closed holidays and some holiday weekends,
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May 1 – Oct 31: Open to public, house tours
on the hour
Mon-Sat: First tour 10:30am (last tour 4:00pm)
Sun: First tour 12:00pm (last tour 4:00pm)
Garden open to the public during the season
from 10:00am-5:00pm

MUSEUM AND MUSEUM SHOP

Jun 1 – Oct 31
Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri, Sat: 10:00am-5:00pm
Thu: 10:00am-7:00pm
Sun: 12:00pm-5:00pm
Nov 1 – Apr 30
Tue-Sat, 10:00am-5:00pm

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Mon-Fri, 9:00am-5:00pm
Tel: (207) 774-1822
Fax: (207) 775-4301
E-mail: info@mainehistory.org

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489 Congress St.
Portland, ME 04101

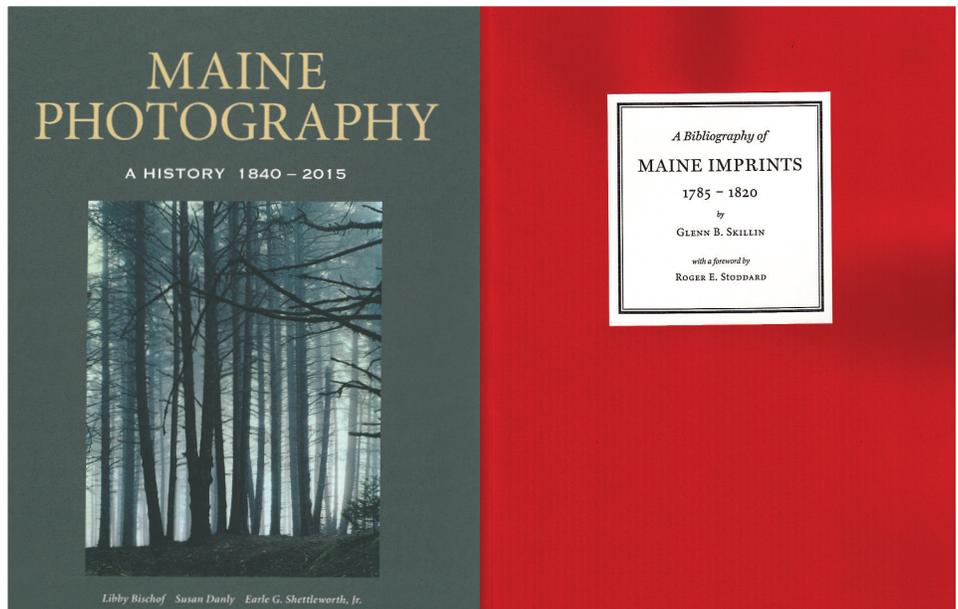
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www.hwlongfellow.org

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MHS PUBLICATIONS

Maine Photography, a History 1840-2015

For more than 150 years, photographers, like other artists, have made their way to Maine to capture the natural beauty and human culture of the state. Beginning with the earliest daguerreotype portraits of the 1840's, this book traces the growth of the medium through to the present. Key topics addressed throughout the book include the importance of photography in documenting labor and economic life, the close relationship between photography and the growth of tourism, and the role of Maine photographers in advancing the medium as a fine art form. Also includes a chronological glossary of photographic terms, a list of significant photographic archives and collections in Maine with addresses and notes for each, bibliography and index. Authored by Libby Bischof, Susan Danly and Earle G. Shettelworth, Jr. Co-published by Downeast Books and the Maine Historical Society.

A Bibliography of Maine Imprints 1785-1820

Serving as a revision of R. Webb Noyes' *Bibliography of Maine Imprints to 1820* published in 1930, the contents of *A Bibliography of Maine Imprints, 1785-1820* includes over two thousand items transcribed in detail with collation and in many cases, copious notes together with locations of copies seen. A brief biographical sketch of printers, publishers, booksellers and agents is included, as well as lists of book auctions, copyright entries, extras and supplements to Maine newspapers for the period, proposals and prospectuses, and of theatrical performances and entertainments. A full author and title index completes the work. Compiled by Glenn B. Skillin, with foreword by Roger E. Stoddard. Co-published by Ascensius Press and the Maine Historical Society.

Available for purchase at the MHS Museum Store at
489 Congress Street in Portland, or online at mainehistorystore.com.