



# Maine Historical Society

COLLECTING • PRESERVING • PRESENTING THE HISTORY OF MAINE

Fall 2006



*W. E. Chandler's Band, Kennebunkport, 1910. Members of the W. E. Chandler Band of Portland at Kennebunk on August 27, 1910. William E. Chandler was the son of Daniel Chandler, long-time bandmaster of the Portland Band, which was renamed Chandler's Band. William E. Chandler played with that band, before breaking off and beginning his own band.*

*This band uniform, c. 1950, was worn by Gordan Bennett, a mason with the B&M Baked Bean Company of Portland. Bennett loved music and played trumpet in Chandler's Band for many years. Robert Bennett donated his father's uniform, several band books, and photographs to MHS in 2005.*



## *Dynamic & Surprising: The MHS Museums*

Not the first two words that come to mind when you think of history museums? Yet that's the way of it for the dedicated duo of John Mayer and Holly Hurd-Forsyth in the House and Museum Department. These are the folks responsible for the care, use, and development of the artifact collections in our two museums — the MHS Museum and the Wadsworth-Longfellow House.

Giant strides have been made in all facets of the museums' work during recent years. In this edition of the newsletter you will read about:

- To Collect or Not to Collect
- An Exhibit Scrapbook
- New Initiatives
- Meet the Curator and Registrar



**GIVE OR WE PERISH**  
AMERICAN COMMITTEE  
FOR RELIEF IN THE NEAR EAST  
ARMENIA - GREECE - SYRIA - PERSIA  
CAMPAIGN for \$30,000,000

*"Give or We Perish" W.T. Benda, c. 1917. A World War I lithograph poster from the American Committee for Relief in the Near East — Armenia-Greece-Syria-Persia — Campaign. It seeks \$30,000,000 for war relief in that area.*

An important responsibility for the House and Museum Department is collecting objects — acquiring the three-dimensional things of Maine history. The range and diversity of the collection is both intriguing and mind-boggling. Types of artifacts range from extremely rare Colonial-era coins to modern light bulbs in the Central Maine Power collection. There are fine British ceramic pitchers made in the 1800s and fascinating native Indian stone tools from thousands of years ago. Of course, there is much more.

Collecting is a critical activity. It's what makes a museum active and dynamic. It would be hard to imagine a healthy museum that was not continually adding to the collection to expand the stories that can be told. Most things come through donations or bequests, although sometimes objects are purchased or even transferred from other institutions. Recent acquisitions span a range of types and materials from quilts to ship models, paintings to musical instruments.

What is in the collection and what does the Maine Historical Society look to collect? The collection is particularly strong in paintings, textiles, and historical relics — the mementos saved to document a Maine event. But you truly will find a little of everything in the museum collection.

To guide our decision-making in accepting or purchasing objects, we follow a Collections Policy that clearly states our standards for collecting. According to these guidelines, potential acquisitions are accepted only if the artifact is

## To Collect or *Not* to Collect



*Clockwise:*

*Detail, head of a corn husk doll, c. 1820. Made from a corncob and covered with coarse cloth, this doll came from the Johnson family from Turner. The doll served as a reminder of rural life and was a tangible connection to past family members. It was passed down through four generations until David MacClean, a descendant of the family, donated it to MHS;*

*Carved nut, 1909. While serving in the Army Corps of Engineers, David Hayes of Portland was stationed in Panama between 1906 and 1909. There weren't a lot of luxuries available in the Canal Zone, so he carved this nut for his wife Ethel as a Christmas present in 1909. When Hayes returned to Portland in 1910, he worked for Maine Central Railroad and eventually became stationmaster at Union Station. Meredith Alexander, Hayes' granddaughter, recently donated this object to MHS;*

*Ship model, Battleship Georgia, c. 1910. Built in 1904 and commissioned two years later, the USS Georgia was the only battleship built at the Bath Iron Works. It was an important part of the Atlantic Fleet, served during World War I, and saw active duty until it was decommissioned in 1920. Gardner C. Lane Jr. recently donated this model to MHS after discovering it at a local sale.*

relevant to the MHS mission and statement of purpose. Relevance can be shown through an object's provenance, defining its association to Maine's history. Sometimes, a potential gift of an object may be declined either because it doesn't fit with the above standards or because the gift duplicates things in the collection, is in poor condition, or its size or condition suggests that we can't properly care for it. There may be other

reasons as well — but in each case, if we decline a donation we work with the donors to explain our decision and help them find an appropriate place for their objects.

Whether initiated by a gift or an acquisition, every inquiry begins a process to record personal and family stories and gather documentation about each piece. We investigate the potential accession and develop a solid understanding of how the object contributes to Maine history.

Assembling these records ensures that we will be able to connect every object to the people who made, owned, or used it, and help us describe its historical meaning in future exhibits or programs. All this information is retained in the object files. With records for the nearly 15,000 objects in the collection, the information in these files is a vital and valuable resource.

Developing the collection is a fascinating aspect of curatorial work, and you can never tell what you may be asked to consider — whether it's a painting or a yardstick. With careful consideration we ensure each addition to the collection will tell an important Maine story.

# An Exhibit Scrapbook

In the museum gallery, two major exhibits are organized each year and provide opportunities for our members and visitors to see MHS collections and explore current themes in Maine history. A brief sampling of recent exhibits:



Map of Maine from the United States Gazetteer by Joseph Scott, 1795.

*The Shape of Maine: Drawing Borders, Mapping Boundaries* explored the shifting boundaries of Maine from early settlement through the Aroostook War of 1842.



"Lady with Dove" painted about 1830 by the Portland artist Charles Codman.

*A City Awakes: The Arts and Artists of early 19th Century Portland, Maine* traced the rich tradition of art and culture in Maine's largest city and showcased the work of several important nineteenth-century artists.

Sign from Dave "the Guesser" Glovsky, c. 1970, who attracted tourists to his "guess station" on the boardwalk of Old Orchard Beach.

*Amazing! Maine Stories* presented interesting profiles of several surprising personalities from different periods in Maine history along with the objects they had left behind.



## ROCKLAND LIME!

Just received, 200 Casks first quality Rockland Lime. A full supply constantly on hand and for sale by

E. B. CARR.

Wiscasset, March 27, 1867.

Broadside (Rockland Lime) printed in 1867 by Joseph Wood of Wiscasset.

*A Riot of Words: Broad sides and Ballads, Posters and Proclamations* explored ways people used broadsides and posters to communicate news and influence opinion beginning in the 1790s.

Olde Homestead potato bag, circa 1950, from Stephen Thompson's collection.

*Passionate Pursuits: History through the Collector's Eye*, is currently presenting selections from thirteen collectors who have specialized in some facet of Maine memorabilia.



Charlotte Millett of Gorham and Emmie B. Whitney of Lewiston at a campfire during their trip to Katahdin in 1935.

*Umbazooksus and Beyond: The Maine Woods Remembered* presented selections from diaries, photo albums, and other memorabilia to explore the different ways people used the Maine woods beginning in the 1890s.



# New Initiatives in Collections Care



*Doorway to the Wadsworth-Longfellow House, c. 1950. An environmental survey will guide the plans to improve winter heating and provide a more stable environment for the collections in this museum.*

*Museum cataloger, Dana Twiss, has been hired to inventory and document the collection.*



The MHS House and Museum Department has recently launched a number of important projects aimed primarily at improving storage areas and the organization of the collection. In addition to restoring the Longfellow House, producing two changing exhibits each year, and keeping abreast of new acquisitions, things are hopping for the museum team.

Currently there are two major initiatives underway. While the restoration of the Wadsworth-Longfellow House is virtually complete, there are ongoing efforts to ensure that this building is maintained to the highest possible standard. These efforts include investigating better ways to control the interior environment — particularly the temperature and humidity during the heating season.

With support from two grants — one from the National Endowment of the Humanities and the other from the 1772 Foundation — we have begun an intensive, year-long study of environmental conditions that will lead to the installation of a new furnace and control system in the house. The funding allows us to engage experts in the field of environmental control for historic houses and to ensure that the objects and finishes in this important collection are preserved.

With support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, we have begun a comprehensive inventory of the museum collections. The goal of this project is to review every object in the collection, photograph it, and standardize the description and location information in the collection database. It's an important project that will take several years to complete. The end product will provide improved access to the collection and lay the foundation for a future effort to make collections information available on-line.

As part of this progress, we recently hired Dana Twiss as a part-time Museum Cataloger. His task is to inventory and photograph the collections and to verify information in the Museum's database. Dana has been in the museum field just over ten years having retired from a career as a music educator. His specialties include musical instruments and music, militaria, pottery, and folk art, in addition to database management and web design. Still a performing musician, Dana is also active in living history reenactments of seventeenth and eighteenth century events.

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## Meet the Curator and Registrar

John Mayer, curator of museum collections, and Holly Hurd-Forsyth, registrar, staff the House and Museum Department. On any given day they might be cataloging a recent acquisition, or perhaps researching objects for the next exhibit. You might find them working on the furnishings in the Wadsworth-Longfellow house or maybe meeting with a donor who has a new object for the collection.

John Mayer, curator of Museum Collections, has been on staff for just over four years. As curator, he leads the department in developing the collections, planning and producing exhibits, and caring for the Longfellow House and its collections. John has been in the field for over 25 years. His specialty is American urban and industrial history, and he has a personal interest in Maine's maritime heritage (in other words, he is an avid sailor).

Holly Hurd-Forsyth has been the Maine Historical Society Registrar since 1999. She keeps track of, helps care for, and catalogs the 15,000 objects in the museum collection. As registrar for both the museum and library, she accessioned all of the thousands of items donated to the Society annually. A native of Maine, Holly has worked in the museum field for 15 years, and has a M.A. in museum studies from San Francisco State University.



# MHS CONFERS HONORS *at Annual Meeting*

High spirits prevailed amid downpours on Chebeague Island during the 184th MHS Annual meeting on June 3rd. Members of the Chebeague Historical Society graciously hosted the event, giving attendees not only rides around the island — but also engaging chats about the island’s history. During the meeting at the Chebeague Island Inn, Maine Historical Society was pleased to honor four outstanding individuals:



*The Neal Woodside Allen Jr., History Award* was presented to William H. Bunting for a lifetime of intelligent and passionate labor in the field of history. The author of several maritime books, he most recently wrote *Sea Struck* (Tilbury House) which received several awards. Bill lives in Whitefield, Maine, where he raises Milking Shorthorn cattle.



*The James Phinney Baxter Award* was given to Larry Glatz for his article to the MHS Journal, *Maine History* (Vol. 42, No. 3): “The Century of the Oxford Bear: Party Politics, Patronage, and the popular Press in Creating Maine County Identity, 1820-1920.” The article is a wonderful exploration of what he calls “the rise and demise of countyism.”



*The Elizabeth Ring Service Award*, honoring exceptional dedication, commitment, and effectiveness, was given to Betty Umbel for her backbreaking labors in the Longfellow Garden. Betty has accomplished nothing less than a miracle in organizing Longfellow Garden Club workers and converting a viciously undisciplined garden into a small paradise for the people of Portland.



*The Distinguished Service Award* was given to Trustee John White, “Mr. Maine,” who has led MHS through many challenges and changes over his many years of devotion to the organization. In the words of outgoing chair Debbie Reed, “John is the personification of a good trustee. He selflessly gives his time and financial support.”

## YARDSTICKS! YARDSTICKS! YARDSTICKS!

According to *The Book of Alternative Records*, by Philip J. Gould and Ralf Laue, a man in Germany has collected 30,000 yardsticks — a world record. The Maine Historical Society might now hold the Maine record in yardstick collecting, thanks to a gift from Dr. Charles Burden, who donated over 300 yardsticks and other measuring devices.

Dr. Burden became interested in yardsticks that advertise local businesses when his family moved into an old house in Bath when he was 12 years old. The Klippel family lived in the house previously and left behind an old black yardstick that advertised the family’s clothing store. This yardstick had an unusual square shape, and it fascinated the young Charles Burden. After years of collecting other things such as nursing bottles and Maine stoneware, Dr. Burden’s interest in yardsticks was rekindled. His collection grew and he mounted dozens in the hallway of his home.

Jessica Roberts, MHS intern and University of New Hampshire graduate student, has worked tirelessly to inventory, label, catalog, and store this sizeable collection. She’s discovered that although the yard is the most common unit of measure, some sticks also measure the number of gallons left in an oil tank, the length of a fan belt, and the number of board feet that can be made from a log. A few are a meter long, and some, oddly, measure four feet.

Small businesses and organizations in over thirty towns around the state are represented, demonstrating that unusual business pairings were then commonplace. The Ramsay & Gates Co. of Dexter advertised “Household Appliances, Floor Coverings, Draperies & Funeral Services” on its yardstick.

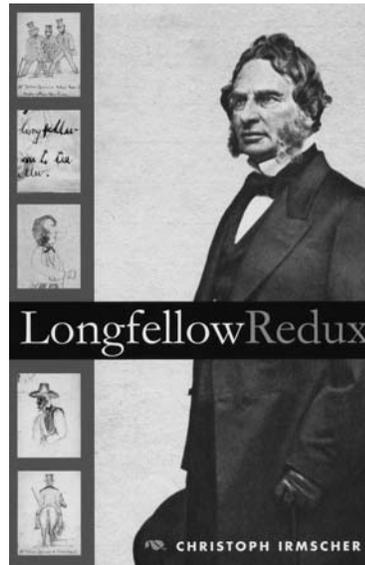
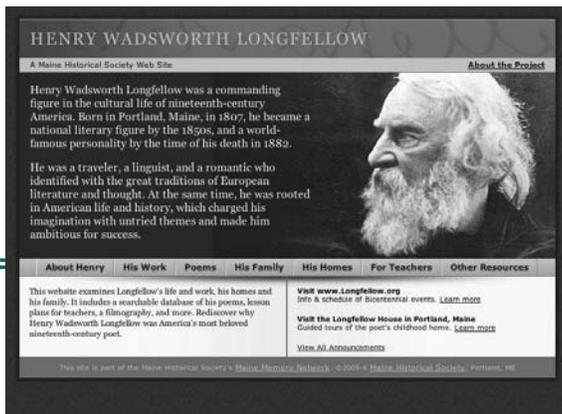


*Intern Jessica Roberts with yards of yardsticks*

## All Eyes on Longfellow Bicentennial!

The year 2007 marks the 200th anniversary of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's birth. A great deal of cooperative public activity is being planned for the Bicentennial, with MHS, the Longfellow National Historic Site, and Friends of the Longfellow House in Cambridge taking the lead. A joint calendar for celebrations, exhibits, conferences, readings, and other events is being planned, and it can soon be found on our wonderful new Longfellow site [www.hwlongfellow.org](http://www.hwlongfellow.org), with additional information also available on [www.longfellow200.org](http://www.longfellow200.org). In Maine early meetings have included the Maine Humanities Council, Bowdoin College, Brunswick's Downtown Association, Portland Stage Co., Portland Ballet, Portland Downtown District, Portland's Convention and Visitors Bureau, USM, and other organizations and individuals. MHS is planning a series of special events for 2007, including an exhibit on the art of the Longfellows, an expanded conference, and a special tribute by poets, among many other events. If your organization is interested in planning a Longfellow event in 2007, we would like to hear from you. Please contact Carolin Collins, at 774-1822.

By the way, next year marks the 100th anniversary of the MHS Research Library, which was dedicated on February 27, 1907, Henry's 100th birthday.



## NEW!

*Longfellow Redux*, by noted scholar Christoph Irscher, is now available at the Museum Store or on-line at [www.mainehistory.org](http://www.mainehistory.org).

Irscher offers a fresh view of the poet's connection with his audience and his passionate commitment to a transnational understanding of literature. The book also contains numerous illustrations includ-

ing previously unpublished sketches by Longfellow himself!

"...one of the most important books on Longfellow ever written. Irscher makes Longfellow exciting!" says Matthew Pearl, author of *The Dante Club*.

## REMEMBER:

YOUR 10% MEMBERS ONLY DISCOUNT  
IS AVAILABLE IN THE MUSEUM STORE AND  
WHEN SHOPPING ON-LINE!

## Oh Canada!

This summer two of our MHS library staff attended conferences in Canada.

Nancy Noble, Archivist, attended the Association of Canadian Archivists annual conference in St. John's, Newfoundland: *Living on the Edge: The Place of Archives in the Heritage and Cultural Community*. Nancy received the Richard W. Hale, Jr. Professional Development Award given annually by the New England Archivists, which enabled her to attend this conference. This award gives recipients \$1000 to participate in an education program, prepare a paper for publication, or complete any other activity that promotes professional development.

Frances Pollitt, Map Cataloger, presented the paper, "*David Thompson's Mapping of the International Boundary, 1816-1826*" at the joint annual meetings of the Association of Canadian Map Libraries and Archives and the Canadian Cartographic Association during the GEOTEC conference in Ottawa. This presentation highlighted the important holdings of the MHS Research Library related to this Canadian mapmaker.

# SEARCHING YOUR ROOTS

- Ancestry.com has completed the indexing for the US Census. In the following website, on the right, under the heading "Search 1790-1930 US Federal Census" you will see the explanation. <http://genealogyblog.com/census-us/official-announcements-from-ancestrycom-dealing-with-the-1910-census-index-5232>
- Ancestry.com has many new databases, such as "Professional Baseball Players-1876-2004." This database was of recent use to a patron searching an ancestor from Maine who played professional baseball. The 1901 Canadian Census has also been added, as well as an update to the "Loyalist in the American Revolution" database. You can check updates by clicking on the "recent" databases heading at the bottom of the Ancestry.com home page. Something new or updated almost every week!
- Kathy Amoroso, Director of Digital Projects, will be talking about Maine Historical Society at the FGS/NEHGS (Federation of Genealogical Societies/ New England Historic Genealogical Society) conference in Boston on August 30th. Kathy suggests that those interested in researching their families attend a genealogy conference; meeting other genealogists often lends insight on just how to go about it.
- New Book in the Library: *Descendants of Daniel Ray of Plymouth & Salem, Vol. 1*, Joseph W. Ray (2006). Gift of author.

## Bequest supports MHS Research Library

The Maine Historical Society Research Library has received a generous bequest from longtime member and avid genealogist, Dorothy Kinmond Lachance, who passed away in May 2005. Mrs. Lachance taught school in Holden, Massachusetts and later worked for 12 years in the United States Foreign Service as a secretary in the American Embassies in several European countries. Her passion for genealogy took her to Scotland, Salt Lake City, and to Boston for research and conferences. Mrs. Lachance was a frequent visitor to the MHS Library. "After years of helping her research her family genealogy, we thought of Dot as a friend. She will be greatly missed," recalls Nick Noyes, Head of Library Services. "Her bequest to the library will help support our work in many different areas — but perhaps most importantly, other genealogists now and in the future will benefit from her generosity."

*Dot Lachance with her granddaughter, Allie Kurlanski, August 21, 2004.*



### INTERESTED IN MAKING A BEQUEST TO MHS?

Our planned giving staff can provide bequest language to share with your attorney or review the wording you already have in place. Please contact Bonnie Vance in the Development Office at (207) 774-1822, ext. 231.



## MAINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Incorporated 1822*

### OFFICERS

Philip H. Jordan Jr, President  
E. Christopher Livesay, 1st Vice President  
Roger Gilmore, 2nd Vice President  
James F. Millinger, Secretary  
Robert P. BaRoss, Treasurer

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Diana Fish, *Membership Coordinator*  
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Carolin Collins, *Education Coordinator*  
Sarah Margolis-Pineo, *Education Assistant*

#### Library

Nicholas Noyes, *Head of Library Services*  
William D. Barry, *Library Reference Assistant*  
Stephanie Philbrick, *Library Reference Assistant*  
Nancy Noble, *Archivist/Cataloger*  
Gabrielle Daniello, *Image Services Coordinator*  
Matthew Barker, *Library Assistant*  
Jamie Rice, *Library Assistant*  
Virginia Ouellette, *Project Cataloger*  
Sue Flaherty, *Project Cataloger*  
Kevin Voyvodich, *Conservation Technician*

#### Museum

John Mayer, *Curator of the Museum*  
Holly Hurd-Forsyth, *Registrar*  
Melissa Spoerl, *Museum Store Manager*  
Robert Kemp, *Visitor Services Coordinator*  
Rebecca Pritchard, *Visitor Services Coordinator*

#### Maine Memory Network

Kathleen Amoroso, *Director of Digital Services*  
Candace Kanes, *Curator*  
Frances Pollitt, *Cataloger, Photo Curator*  
Rick Asam, *Outreach - North*  
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## FALL HOURS

*Maine Historical Society*

### MHS Research Library, ext. 209

Tues-Sat 10-4:00

Closed Sat, Sept. 2 & Oct. 7

Closed Thurs-Sat, Nov. 23, 24, & 25

### Wadsworth-Longfellow House

Mon-Sat 10-5, Sun 12-5

Closed Mon, Sept. 4 & Oct. 9

Closes Oct. 31, open weekends in Nov.

### Museum & Museum Shop, ext. 208

Mon-Sat 10-5

Sundays through Oct. 12-5

### MHS Administrative Offices

Mon-Fri 9-5:00, Closed Holidays

**Tel:** (207) 774-1822

**Fax:** (207) 775-4301

**E-mail:** sarchbald@mainehistory.org

### Mailing Address:

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Portland, ME 04101

[www.mainehistory.org](http://www.mainehistory.org)

## PRINTS IN THE GALLERY

Opening on **September 1st** in the MHS Showcase Gallery will be a display of early prints made in Maine. The exhibit is organized by the scholar David P. Becker in support of a statewide initiative – The Maine Print Project.

On **Thursday, September 28th, 2006, 7:00 p.m.** join David Becker, author of the newly published *The Imprint of Place: Maine Printmaking 1800 - 2005* for a reception and book signing.



*Orramel Hinckley Throop's business card c. 1822. Throop was one of a growing number of printers who set up shop in Portland and provided services for the city's growing business community.*

The Maine Historical Society preserves the heritage and history of Maine: the stories of Maine people, the traditions of Maine communities, and the record of Maine's place in a changing world.

Maine Historical Society  
489 Congress Street  
Portland, Maine 04101-3498



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