

MAINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
INCORPORATED 1822

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History Unburied

I've been thinking a good deal lately about how history is never quite over. We think an event or conflict is safely stowed in the non-controversial past, but then something happens to show us we are wrong. It's as if history is really just at rest: all it needs is the sharp noise of the present to wake it into relevance. That's the case with our story in this issue about the fate of Henry Wadsworth and the 12 other sailors who died in Tripoli in 1804—the "Intrepid 13." Why, we might ask, after all these years, is there now legislation before the U.S. Senate calling for the repatriation of their remains? For one thing, the improperly buried always exert an emotional claim on us, especially if they are veterans fallen in a foreign land. But for another there is Gaddafi. His hostility toward the U.S. in his early reign caused concern amongst descendants about the treatment of their ancestors (the mass graves are apparently known and marked). His later change of heart and warming to the U.S. gave them hope and helped launch an effort to make the story known. His impending fall from power—with all the uncertainty that implies—has brought the matter to a head. We do not think of the U.S. House and Senate as historical organizations, because they are not. Congress is where contemporary political passions and national interests play themselves out, and that is the noise that has recalled Henry Wadsworth from the sleep of history.

Richard D'Abate
Executive Director



ABOUT THE COVER:

Detail of the painting of the *Battle of Tripoli* which took place on July 25, 1804. The *Constitution*, in the foreground, was commanded by Edward Preble. This painting is signed "J. Proctor, Portland, Maine" and was created about 1830.

The painting is based on the 1804 hand-colored print by John B. Guerrazzi, Maine Memory Network print #13204.

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CORRECTION

MHS would like to correct the following omission and errors in our recently published campaign donor report. Our deepest appreciation and thanks go to the following donors for their generous support of the capital campaign:

Holmes and Didi Stockly
Margaret Kinsley Johnson
and David Johnson
Gerald E. Korn* in honor
of Anne Carroll Moore
*Deceased

The Elaine May Robinson Wedding Dress from 1939

Looking good – or how we present ourselves during special moments – is one of the organizing themes of the new exhibit *Dressing Up, Standing Out, Fitting In: Adornment and Identity in Maine*. Dressing up is something we all do, although with our own perspective and flair. We may be members of special groups, raised in a unique cultural environment, or just enjoy some wildly different interests. Whatever the case, the things we wear are symbols of our interests and often document personal moments and special events.

The collections of Maine Historical Society are filled with artifacts of adornment – the artifacts that reflect personal stories and experiences in Maine, and these are the things that are the core of our new exhibit.

A wedding is an intensely personal and meaningful moment. Because of this, wedding dresses are powerful keepsakes. The Elaine May Robinson wedding dress from 1939 is a richly supported example.

Elaine grew up at the family homestead in Peru, Maine. She was 26 when she married Wilder Mitchell, 39, of nearby Mexico, who operated a saw-mill. They had been dating for a while and her family described him as “an ardent suitor.” The wedding took place on June 26, 1939 at a Robinson family summer home in Peru. There wasn’t much room in the log house, so only family and a few close friends were invited.

Mabelle Florence (Sawyer) Robinson, the bride’s mother, made the dress from a Butterick pattern. The fabric is sheer cotton (organdy), decorated with white ribbon and bows on the skirt, neck, and very puffy sleeves. The style of the dress evokes costumes worn by Hollywood stars, and added a feeling of contemporary fashion to what was a small scale, rural event.

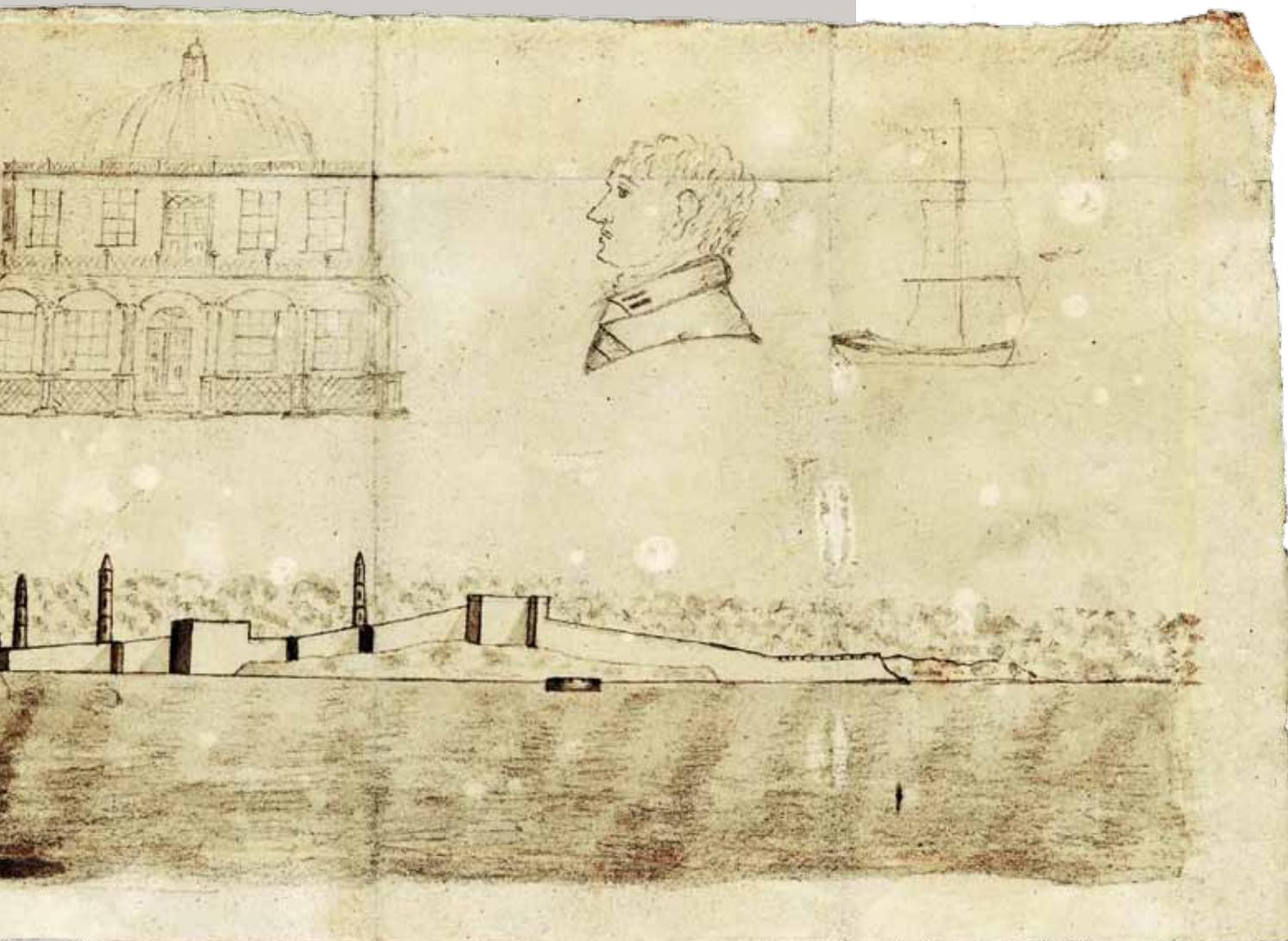
In 2003 Carolyn Small, a direct descendent, donated the dress, shoes, accessories, photographs and even a doll used as a centerpiece to the MHS collections. Together, with notes about the family history, this group of objects speaks to life in rural Maine in the early 20th century.

*John Mayer
Curator*

↑ *The Elaine Robinson Mitchell wedding dress, made in 1939 by Mabelle Robinson, Elaine’s mother.*

← *A hand-colored photograph of Elaine Robinson wearing her dress with the groom, M. Wilder Mitchell, 1939.*





Serving under Preble was the young Henry Wadsworth, a promising and already battle-tested twenty-year-old lieutenant from Portland. Late in the summer of 1804 he volunteered for a stealth raid aboard the fire ship *Intrepid* intended to destroy enemy vessels guarding the inner harbor.

Packed with explosives, the ship sailed on the night of September 4, 1804: Richard Somers, Jr., captain, Henry Wadsworth, second in command, and eleven other sailors. Their mission ended in disaster. A premature and gigantic explosion killed all on board. Now sometimes called the “*Intrepid 13*,” their mutilated bodies washed ashore in the harbor of Tripoli and were buried in two mass graves, where they remain to this day.

The death of Henry Wadsworth was deeply felt by his family. For his father, Revolutionary War General Peleg Wadsworth, it was an act of heroism and patriotic sacrifice. For his sister Zilpah (the wife of Stephen Longfellow) it was a tragedy. It was probably she who wrote the very moving death notice of Jan 11, 1805 (right), and it was certainly she who, two years later, would keep her brother’s memory alive in the name of her first born son: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow—a boy who would grow up to become one of America’s most revered poets.

As if to prove that history is never quite over, there is today an amendment before the U.S. Senate to bring back the remains of the “*Intrepid 13*” from the shores of Tripoli. As for Henry Wadsworth, a memorial marker, long in place, awaits him in Portland’s Eastern Cemetery.

Richard D’Abate
Executive Director

The Death Notice of Mr. Henry Wadsworth, Portland, January 11, 1805

Most probably prepared by his sister, Zilpah

Died, before Tripoly, in the twentieth year of his age, Mr. Henry Wadsworth, third son of Peleg Wadsworth, Esq. of Portland. In an engagement on the beginning of September last, he with 12 men on board a fire ship was blown up. In one moment, in the twinkling of an eye, he passed from time to eternity, from earth to heaven. Never! O never more, shall my eyes behold him! Never again shall my ears hear the sound of his voice. Oh! My Brother! Thou art laid low. No funeral rites for thee! No afflicted mourners consign thee to the grave. But thou, alone, unheeded, unprepared, was in one moment, slain, and buried. Thou fell the fairest flower that e’er has bloomed: so soon, so suddenly cut down. Think, O my Soul, think what it is to die, and be not unprepared.

Joining Together

Joining together into clubs, societies, and fraternal groups – to help others, to enrich one’s knowledge, to help group members, or for social purposes – has long been a tradition in Maine and other American communities. Individuals and the community have benefited from the activities of such groups in direct and less predictable ways.

Robert Putnam, author of *Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital* (2000), suggests that membership in all types of fraternal, civic, and social clubs and organizations has declined in America, with the result that many of the less direct societal benefits are lost. He wrote that people now are more likely to be involved in individual pursuits or to join mass membership groups that don’t provide the opportunity for informal discussions about social and civic issues, hence less “social capital.”

As the collections of historical organizations and the Maine Memory Network can attest, community organizations – large and small and for numerous purposes – have existed in Maine.

Voluntary organizations whose aim was to help the needy began to crop up by the early nineteenth century, supplementing town charitable efforts. For instance, in 1829, the Rev. William I. Reese, pastor of the First Universalist Society in Portland, concerned about the fate of widows and orphans during cold winter months, founded the Widows’ Wood Society. Funded by the city’s religious organizations and individual donors, the group was incorporated in 1850, and still operates.

Other private charities also responded to a variety of needs within their communities and some fraternal lodges and similar groups used membership dues to provide insurance or assistance to members. For instance, the Aged Brotherhood of Portland, incorporated in 1869, accepted members who were 65 years or older and “of good moral character.”

Members paid \$1 a year and the funds were used “to relieve the wants of destitute members.” Members came from throughout Maine, as well as nearby states. Most allocations, according to the 1876 rules, were not to exceed \$5 a month. In 1873, the group set up the Mussey Endowment Fund, to help the effort to help members and “inculcate the lesson of social sympathy on the community at large.”

Many other groups, on a voluntary basis, have run orphanages or homes for the infirm, and provided funds for a large variety of needs within their communities. Others come together temporarily to meet a particular need such as help in natural disasters or war relief.



↑ Littleton Grange officers, ca. 1948. Contributed by Southern Aroostook Agricultural Museum.

There was the Female Samaritan Association of Portland, the Social and Humane Society of Paris, the Women’s Relief Corps of Garland, the Martha Washington Society, the Portland Benevolent Society, the Greek Ladies Society of Portland, the Dorcas Society – and many more.

Some groups have operated mostly for the enrichment and improvement of members. As historian Karen Blair has noted, such groups helped women become involved in civic affairs and employment. Women in Bridgton started the Philomadelphoi Society in the early nineteenth century and embraced “every opportunity to encourage female Education.” Members could take books from the organization’s library. Young women in the Woodfords section of Portland in the late 1880s formed the WGs, a “literary improvement” society for young women. The Urban Club of Portland, a women’s literary group, started in 1897. Members presented papers on various topics, heard musical performances, and discussed topics mostly related to cities.

The Fraternity Club, a men’s literary and social club of Portland, founded in 1873 by ministers, soon drew businessmen, artists, and other civic notables, all of whom were men of “scientific and literary tastes.” They, too, read papers on various topics. For instance, the Rev. Thomas Hill of First Parish Church, a founder of the group, gave papers on “Straits of Magellan,” “The Nautricon” (his invention for ship navigation), and “Metres” (primarily relating to poetry) during the club’s first two years.





↑ Aged Brotherhood of Portland gathering at Cushings Island, 1886. Contributed by Maine Historical Society.
 ↓ Pomona Grange, Caribou, ca. 1910. Contributed by Caribou Public Library.
 ↘ Thomas Hill of the Fraternity Club, Portland, 1873. Contributed by Maine Historical Society.

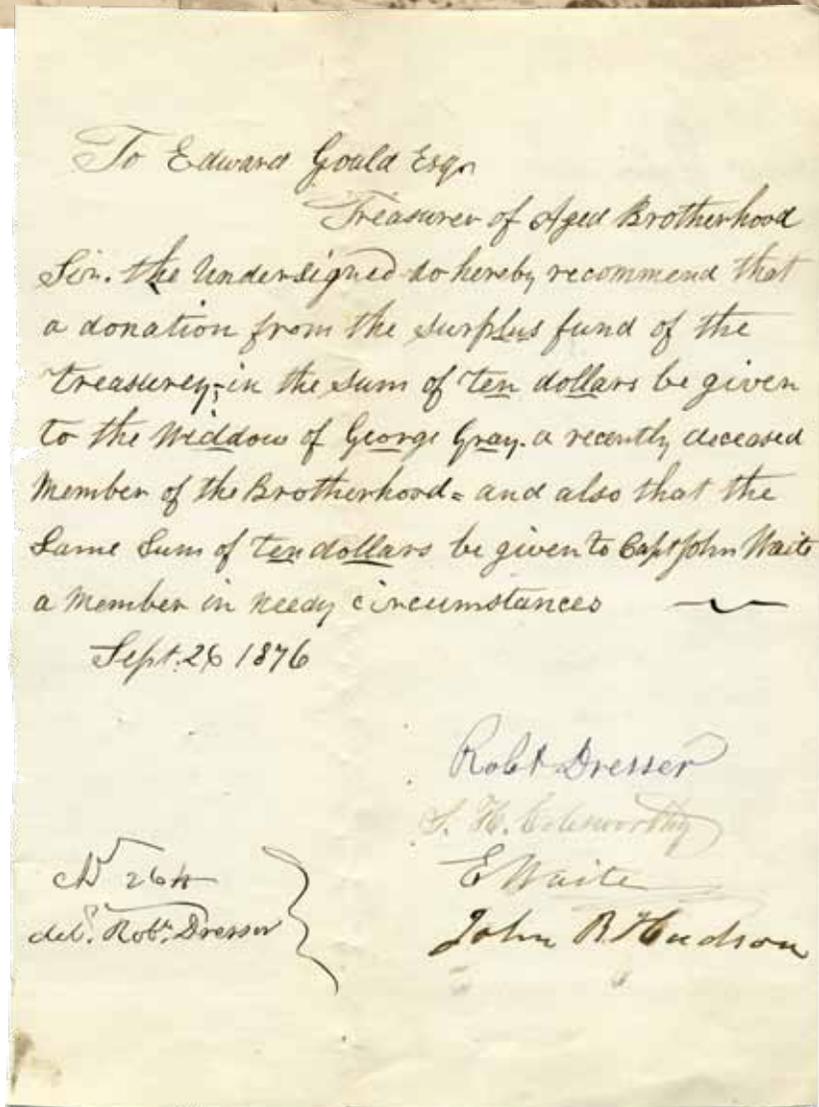


Among the most active self-improvement, fraternal, and political action group in Maine has been the Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry. The group, focused on rural and agricultural issues, was founded nationally in 1867 and in Maine in 1874. Grange meetings ranged from social to educational and intellectual. Granges have lobbied for agricultural issues and a variety of other concerns, including free rural mail delivery.

More than 100 Grange chapters still exist in Maine, as do many other fraternal, service, educational, and charitable groups. Numerous groups, however, as Robert Putnam suggests, have ceased to exist. ■



Candace Kanes
 MMN Curator



↑ Aged Brotherhood of Portland request for funds for widow, 1876. Contributed by Maine Historical Society.



← Paris Hill Common, 1822.

↓ Hannibal Hamlin residence, ca. 1900.



SPOTLIGHT ON MAINE MEMORY NETWORK CONTRIBUTING PARTNER:

HAMLIN MEMORIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

Paris Hill: A Spotlight Removed

When the train came through Oxford County in the 1850s, it brought new opportunities for industry, tourism, and economic development. The location of rail lines, and later highways, could help determine a community's fate. So it was with Paris Hill.

When Oxford County was created in 1805, Paris Hill was chosen as the shire town or county seat. What had been a community of subsistence farmers since the late 1770s was transformed. A courthouse and jail were built, lawyers and others concerned with the county business began settling nearby, supporting businesses and industry took hold, and the population grew.

The town boasted many notable residents, among them Hannibal Hamlin, governor, U.S. senator, and vice president for Abraham Lincoln's first term; three other governors, one other senator, and 12 members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Then, the railroad was laid out. The line that connected Portland to Montreal stayed to the west, traveling through South Paris. It no longer made sense for the county seat to be in Paris Hill; by 1895, new buildings that housed county offices were ready to occupy in South Paris.

In 1902, the old jail became the library. A golf course, built in 1899, brought visitors and summer people. The colonial style homes of the early 19th century remained and Paris Hill, while considerably smaller than before, took on its own character. In 1973, the entire community was put on the National Register of Historic Places. ■

Images courtesy of Hamlin Memorial Library and Museum.

CONTRIBUTING PARTNER PROFILE: HAMLIN MEMORIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

FOUNDED: The Ladies' Association of Paris Hill incorporated on August 21, 1901, later naming itself the Paris Hill Library Association. In 1902, Augustus Hamlin deeded the renovated Oxford County jail to the Association, stating that it be called "Hamlin Memorial Hall," to be used as a museum for minerals of Oxford County, that it be a receptacle and depository of relics and memorials of the Hamlin family and other "distinguished" families of Paris Hill, and that it be a library for the residents of Paris Hill.

COLLECTIONS: Includes 5,686 volumes of adult and juvenile fiction and non-fiction and audio books, videos and DVDs some dating back to the library's beginning. The Augustus C. Hamlin collection includes a gem and mineral collection, 19th century art, artifacts and archival

material belonging to the Hamlin family. The Seward and Warren Stearns collections include materials related to the history of the Stearns family and other local families. There are portraits of local families, maps, furniture, and town reports.

VISIT: April through October
Tues & Thurs: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sat: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Library (free to local residents) and Museum (free to all):

LOCATION: 16 Hannibal Hamlin Drive
P.O. Box 43, Paris, ME 04271
207-743-2980

CONTACT: Jennifer Lewis, Librarian
hamlinstaff@hamlin.lib.me.us
Ann McDonald, Museum staff
museum@hamlin.lib.me.us



↑ Oxford County Jail, ca. 1890 .



↑ *The reproduction crown glass sits next to one of the completed leaded glass windows prior to delivery to the MFA.*

A glass bullseye in Maine Historical Society's collection served as a model for new leaded windows replicated for the 1704 Brown Pearl Hall in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts new \$504 million dollar Art of the Americas wing. The museum commissioned stained glass conservator Robin Neely to recreate leaded glass windows for the colonial era period room originally from the Boxford, MA home of farmer Cornelius and Susannah Brown. The room represents domestic life in America's founding years and displays the MFA's unparalleled collection of 17th and early 18th century silver, portraits, textiles, and furniture.

To reproduce the windows Neely contacted MHS Registrar Holly Hurd-Forsyth seeking examples of antique glass. "My research revealed the need to have glass custom blown to replicate the colonial crown glass. Modern glass cannot match the intricate appearance of antique glass," Neely commented. Neely and Portland glassblower Ben Coombs visited MHS to view a glass pane originally from the Woolwich Maine home of Reverend H. O. Thayer. The pane served as a model for Coombs to reproduce the crown glass that was to be included in the room's leaded windows. Crown glass, the glass commonly available in 1700, was spun while still molten into large round platters up to 48" in diameter. The centrifugal force of the spinning left distinctive curved striations in the glass. Neely then cut Coomb's glass platters into small diamond shapes and fabricated the windows to accurately reproduce the three hundred year old originals. "The glass, the lead, and even the nails that held the leaded glass panels into the wooden frames, were all custom made for this project. No detail was too small," Neely reflected.

Neely, as well as glassblower Ben Coombs, Berwick timber framer Aaron Sturgis, and Lebanon blacksmith Norm Faucher, were recently awarded Maine Preservation's 2011 Honor Award for Excellence in Preservation Trades for their conservation work in the MFA's Brown Pearl Hall. ■

Leaving a Legacy at Maine Historical Society

Give a meaningful gift that will cost you nothing during your lifetime. Bequests are a significant way to provide generous support for the Maine Historical Society. They require no outlay of financial resources while you are alive and the long-term benefits of such foresight are immeasurable.

The work of collecting and preserving Maine's rich history is important not just for ourselves, but for those who come after us. By including a gift for MHS in your estate plans, you make a promise to future generations that the artifacts and stories of Maine's heritage will always be there. Your generosity lives on, leaving a legacy that enriches the lives of those who come after you.

The Anne Longfellow Pierce Society was created to recognize the foresight and generosity of individuals who have made a planned gift or included MHS in their estate plans. If you have done so, we thank you. To be recognized in the Anne Longfellow Pierce Society and Annual Report, or to learn more about making a planned gift, please call the Development Office at (207) 774-1822.



Portrait of Anne Longfellow Pierce, (1810-1901) benefactress of the Maine Historical Society. She bequeathed the Wadsworth-Longfellow House and the property for the Research Library to the Maine Historical Society in her will. She was sister to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Brown Library Hosts Scholars

The Alida Carroll and John Marshall Brown Library is a member of the New England Regional Fellowship Consortium, a group of 18 cultural agencies who each year award \$5,000 stipends to about twelve scholars to facilitate their research at the various repositories.

This year MHS will host three winners for two or more weeks each:

- Lisa Brooks of Harvard has as her topic "Turning the Looking Glass on King Philip's War."
- The proposal of Kara French of the College of William and Mary is "The Politics of Sexual Restraint: Debates over Chastity in America, 1750-1850."
- Robyn McMillin of the University of Oklahoma is working on "Science in the American Style, 1680-1815: A School of Fashion and Philosophy, of Liberty and People."

Using our online catalog Minerva, these young scholars have identified collections here which should provide additional material for their doctoral work. The marked increase in recent years of graduate research is the result of our participation in the NERFC and enhanced access to our cataloging via the internet and Maine Memory Network.

*Nicholas Noyes
Head of Library Services*

Talk to us!

Pamela Reidy found a picture of the Falmouth Hotel (shown below) on Maine Memory Network. It prompted her to write to us that her grandfather, uncle and father had owned the hotel in the 1950s and that her mother worked there. "It's where my mom and dad met," she wrote. "Great memories."

Maine Memory Network receives numerous letters like hers, along with corrections, additions, and questions about items on the website. The comments often humanize the history the items represent. Ms. Reidy's comments also provided the names of owners of the hotel.

At the bottom of every MMN page there is a form asking for feedback. We like hearing from you.

The current museum exhibit, *Dressing Up, Standing Out, Fitting In* also offers opportunities for feedback. You, like these teachers (above right) who visited the exhibit as part of the Knox Museum Summer Teacher Institute on July 12, took their photo in front of the photographer's backdrop in the exhibit and e-mailed it to us. It has now joined photos of other exhibit



↑ Teachers, who visited MHS as part of the Knox Museum Summer Teacher Institute on July 12, took their photo in front of the photographer's backdrop in the current exhibit and e-mailed it to us. Visitors' photos sent to MHS are added to the exhibit's slideshow.

visitors and some historic images in slideshow in the exhibit.

You also can use our cell phone tour of the exhibit to hear what various staff members have to say about some of the featured pieces – and you can leave your comments for us on the cell phone.

So, talk to us. ■



← Falmouth Hotel, Portland, ca. 1900.

→ *Lizzie Fitch and Will Burgess, Leeds. Wilbur worked for many years at H.F. Webb canning company at Leeds Center. They had one son, Clyde W. Burgess.*

"Imagine my surprise when I put "Burgess Leeds Maine" in the Google search. I am Clyde's daughter, Deborah, 3rd child. I have never seen this picture before. Mom and Dad have been gone for many years." Debbie Burgess Litalien.





CROWD CYCLES IN FOR JOHN CALVIN STEVENS AND BICYCLE HISTORY TALK AND RIDE, LED BY SAM SHUPE, JULY 14, 2011.

MHS Proudly Presents Annual Awards

JUNE 4, 2011 MHS ANNUAL MEETING



The Neal Woodside Allen Jr., History Award, recognizing and honoring outstanding contributions to Maine history, was given to Charles Calhoun. Among many others, his most important contribution came in 2004, with his biography, *Longfellow, A Rediscovered Life*, published by Beacon Press. It was the first

serious, full-length reappraisal of the poet in 40 years, and in the words of presenter Richard D'Abate, it "began a rebirth of scholarly and public interest that continues to this day. Charles is an intellectual guide of extraordinary range and subtlety."



The Distinguished Trustee Award, established by the MHS board to recognize the extraordinary service of one of its own, was given to Charles D. Whittier II. In Richard's words, "His gifts have been substantial and strategic. Drawing on his retail experience, Charlie also taught us to think about and

count our "customers" more carefully, and we have become a better, more goal-driven organization for it. Like the good skipper he is, Charlie has encouraged us to be unafraid of open water: to take on and champion the creation of a new museum and all that it implies."

The Elizabeth Ring Service Award, recognizing outstanding volunteer service was presented to Charlie Lane. In Richard D'Abate's words, "the happiness of many a researcher can be traced back to Charlie's orderly habits in the face of chaos and complexity, whether among photographs, manuscripts, maps, or architectural drawings. In all of these collections he has done outstanding work: organizing, researching, cleaning, flattening, re-housing. It is important to be reminded how much work it really takes, but even more important to know that the work is being done well: by people who care deeply about history and its documentation."



The James Phinney Baxter Award is a prize given each year for the best article published in *Maine History*. Christopher Volpe received this award for his article "Maria J.C. a'Becket: Rediscovering an American Artist" – a fascinating cultural story depicting an independent, self-assured 19th century artist. Christopher is an award winning landscape painter, as well as a poet, writer, and scholar. He teaches at the New Hampshire Institute for Art, in Manchester, and lives with his wife and son in Newmarket, New Hampshire.





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CLOSED SAT SEPT. 3, OCT 8
CLOSED THURS-SAT. NOV 24, 25, 26

LONGFELLOW HOUSE AND GARDEN

MON-SAT 10-5, SUN 12-5
(LAST TOUR AT 4:00)
CLOSED MON SEPT. 5
CLOSES FOR SEASON OCT 31
OPEN SATURDAYS IN NOV

MUSEUM EXHIBIT

SEPT – OCT
SAME HOURS AS THE HOUSE
NOV MON-SAT 10-5

MUSEUM STORE

SEPT – OCT
SAME HOURS AS THE HOUSE
NOV MON-SAT 10-5

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FAX: (207) 775-4301
SARCHBALD@MAINEHISTORY.ORG

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Newsletter design: Elizabeth Margolis-Pineo

SUPPORT THE MHS ANNUAL FUND BEFORE FISCAL YEAR END

Despite challenging economic times, MHS has remained strong, thanks to generous friends who value and support the work we do. The Annual Fund is an essential part of this support—it provides approximately 20% of the MHS budget and supports core activities across the organization.

Our Annual Fund goal for this fiscal year is \$260,000—a 15% increase over last year. Ambitious, but critical to maintaining our programs and ensuring they reach and serve as wide an audience as possible. Our fiscal year ends September 30 and we need your participation.

Please take this moment and support the MHS Annual Fund with a gift online. It's easy to do—just go to www.mainehistory.org/support. Our sincere thanks in advance for recognizing the importance of our work. ■



One of the many great programs your gifts have supported this year – The Dave Astor Reunion Show, June 4th, 2011. l-r, Tony Boffa, Dave Astor, and Steve Romanoff.

FOOD, Don't Waste It!



Take it to the Farmer's Market, take it to the Library, take it to the MHS Museum Store and fill it up! Our sturdy canvas tote bag has a variety of uses. Image created by the U.S. Food Administration during World War I to address the issue of civilian food supply. Circa 1917. – \$20
www.mainehistory.org

FOOD DON'T WASTE IT – STILL GOOD ADVICE!