During the years after the American Revolution, the town of Portland (then known as Falmouth) steadily developed and would emerge as a major commercial center by the early 1800s. Trade and shipping, new industries, and the rich resources from the land and sea fueled the local economy and served as the engine of growth for the emerging city and its people.

It was a dynamic period. Between 1790 and 1850 the population increased nearly tenfold from 2,240 to 20,815 residents. Industrial, commercial, and residential districts in the city bustled with business, and local citizens created a diverse range of organizations and institutions to support their needs and interests. Portland served as the state capital between 1820 and 1832 with droves of lawyers, clerks, judges, and politicians engaged in inter-related legal and political activities.

Woven through this story of growth and development is the history of the arts and culture in Portland. In the 1780s itinerant artists found their way to Portland and sold silhouettes, portrait miniatures, and other paintings to patrons of all types. Artists and artisans established craft shops and studios and made furniture and paintings in the latest style. Steadily, their work became part of middle and upper class homes.

Opening on June 24th is a new exhibit that explores this period of Portland history; it’s a period when the city bloomed and artistic and cultural traditions were established. The City Awakes – the Arts and Artisans of Early 19th Century Portland is being organized by museum curator John Mayer and research associate William David Barry. The exhibit will feature over eighty paintings, prints, drawings, and examples of decorative arts made in Portland. Many of these pieces are from the collections of the Maine Historical Society and have not been seen for some time. Others will be borrowed from neighboring organizations such as the Portland Museum of Art, the Maine Charitable Mechanics Association, the Maine State Museum, and from a supportive group of private collectors.

On display will be paintings by familiar artists Charles Codman and John Brewster, Jr., along with works by lesser-known artists such as Sussana Paine and Fredrick Mellen. Together with a wide variety of decorative and historical materials these pieces will present a fascinating survey of the artistic and creative history of early Portland.

The City Awakes has been sponsored by a grant from the Sprague Foundation and through gifts from other generous donors.
For over 183 years the basic mission of the Maine Historical Society has remained unchanged: to collect, preserve and interpret the history of Maine and its peoples. The organization itself, however, as might be expected, has moved and grown and renewed itself many times over. The last ten years, in particular, have seen unprecedented growth at MHS. Fueled by a $3.4 million dollar capital campaign launched in 1995, the Society reached new and broader audiences, added to its facilities, expanded school programs, created new ways to share and promote Maine history throughout the state, and became nationally recognized for its leadership and innovation. Here are a few ways to measure the results.

• Today, the total live and virtual MHS audience is over 100,000 visitors per year-four times what it was in 1995;
• The current operating budget is $1 million — triple the levels of ten years ago;
• Full and part-time staff now number 35 — a 75% increase;
• The number of programs and events has also tripled; and
• In the last ten years archival and museum collections have grown by nearly 4,000 square feet, an increase of 50%.

Growth and success have given us high hopes for the future of the Society, but they have also helped us see the obstacles — limitations and liabilities — that stand in the way of progress. The needs are many: in physical facilities, collections care, visitor amenities, and the long-term stability of critical programs. All of these issues have been under study at MHS for the last two years. Here is what we are thinking about. We welcome your own thoughts.

1. PROTECTING OUR COLLECTIONS
The greatest challenge faced by the Society today is the care of its collections — books, manuscripts, photographs, maps, plans, drawings, paintings, and artifacts, all of which, taken together, number in the millions. Our goal must be to increase storage capacity, add full climate controls, and improve all aspects of collections security, handling and display.

2. ACCOMMODATING THE PUBLIC
MHS needs improved and expanded amenities for the public. Our goals should include a campus plan that provides a clear point of entry and effective flow for tourists and patrons, expanded exhibition galleries and educational facilities, and improved library reading and research areas.

3. CREATING NEW EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES
Recognizing the diversity of the MHS audience and improving the delivery of programs is key to our future. Creative learning approaches for school children are essential. Reaching underserved audiences is essential. Advancing scholarship in Maine and American history is essential.

4. PROMOTING DIGITAL ACCESS TO HISTORY
The Maine Memory Network, a statewide online museum and archive, with accompanying support, education, and outreach components, now serves nearly 130 Maine organizations and over 70,000 users a year. This innovative service to the people and schools of Maine must be sustained and expanded in the years to come.

5. ATTRACTING AND RETAINING CRITICAL PROFESSIONAL STAFF
The success of MHS depends on its ability to attract and retain outstanding professionals in fields essential to its mission. The goal is to provide funding mechanisms to underwrite or endow essential positions, such as Executive Director, Chief Librarian, Curator of the Museum, and Director of Education.

6. CREATING A NEW ARCHITECTURAL PRESENCE
The Society’s administrative headquarters building was acquired in 1992. Though this building has seen fine interior improvements in recent years, its functional drawbacks are significant and its design is completely incompatible with its setting. The goal must be to provide an architecture that welcomes visitors to our campus and provides an appropriate setting for the Longfellow House.
NEW EXHIBIT
at Wadsworth-Longfellow House

This summer, there is something new at the historic Wadsworth-Longfellow House. The Maine Historical Society, with help from intern Gina Platt, a student in the University of Southern Maine’s American and New England Studies program, has created an introductory exhibit to go in the ell of the house.

This exhibit is intended to broaden visitors’ understanding of the history of the house; introduce the residents of the house, circa 1850; and give a sense of Longfellow’s overwhelming popularity and influence on American culture.

This is a permanent exhibit and consists of reproductions of photographs and artifacts from the MHS collection. Highlights include the famous photograph of Longfellow in his later years, taken in London by Julia Margaret Cameron, a series of images of the house showing the evolution of the surrounding neighborhood, and a 1904 calendar depicting a scene from Evangeline.

The Wadsworth-Longfellow House opens for the season on Sunday, May 1st. Guided tours are given from 10:00 to 4:00, Monday through Saturday, and from 12:00 to 4:00 on Sundays.

Mourning Pendant
Purchased by
Friends of Collections

The Society recently purchased an uncommon eighteenth century mourning pendant, a tiny 1.5” x 1” in size, that memorializes the Reverend John Wiswell’s wife and children. The controversial Reverend Wiswell (1731-1812) had a long and tragic history in the district of Maine. He first visited Casco Bay in 1749, soon after his graduation from Harvard College. He returned to teach at Stephen Longfellow’s (the poet’s great grandfather) school during the winter of 1752-53, but did not settle in the area until 1756, when he was ordained over the New Casco Parish, in what is now Falmouth. In 1761, he married Mercy Minot of Brunswick, a woman “of quick sensibility [and] the nicest sense of honor.” The couple lived comfortably in a house on the corner of what are now Middle and Exchange Streets in Portland, and they owned several slaves.

A week after their wedding, Reverend Wiswell ‘became deranged” and was taken to Boston for treatment. He recovered and returned to Maine in 1763. In 1764, his conversion to the Episcopalian faith and allegiance to the Church of England created an uproar in the already turbulent town. Some of his critics credited his “derangement” as the cause of his rejection of the Congregationalist faith. Despite this, Wiswell served peacefully as the first rector of St. Paul’s Church in Falmouth, now Portland, for nearly ten years. In 1774 community discontent flared again, this time at the assistance Wiswell provided to the British naval officers seen about the town on the eve of the American Revolution. In 1775, as Wiswell was walking on Munjoy Hill with British Captain Henry Mowatt, the pair was kidnapped by members of a local militia and held for several hours. It was increasingly clear that Wiswell was no longer welcome in the town. He took refuge on board Mowatt’s ship the H.M.S Canaceus, and escaped to Boston, leaving his family behind. Mercy and their three young children left the town on foot, and only permitted to take clothing, bedding and two days rations with them. When they reached Boston, Mercy and her nine-year-old daughter Elizabeth died from a contagious disease contracted on their journey.

The engraving on the reverse of the pendant memorializes Mercy and Elizabeth, as well as two young sons who died in 1773. The maker is unknown, but research continues to reveal more about the piece, and the man who wore it.

Do you have reels of old film in your attic that you’ve never been able to watch? Footage of long-gone and sorely missed family members? Film that captures a community event, game, or performance way back when? You’re not alone. While many people have such gems on their shelves or in their closets, most don’t have a projector or lack the know-how to handle and assess their films.

If you have your own film that you’d like to see on the big screen, or just want to come watch the home movies that other folks bring in, please join us at the Maine Historical Society for the annual Maine Home Movie Day on Saturday, August 13th (2-4pm). The event is being held in partnership with Northeast Historic Film, and will coincide with similar events held in cities around the country under the auspices of the Association of Moving Image Archivists.

The organizers encourage any interested participants to bring their own 8mm, Super 8 and 16mm family films to Maine Historical for on-site inspection and screening. Archivists from Northeast Historic Film in Bucksport will be present to tell you how to properly store films and plan for their future. Screenings will be free and open to the public.

Organizer Rob Nanovic commented: “The event is a celebration of both amateur film and the home movie experience. Seeing a film projected is an experience that can never be duplicated by watching video on a television set. The projected image creates a lively environment that fills the entire room, as opposed to being confined to a box.”

For additional information about the Portland event, contact Rob Nanovic at 699-0924 or rob@oldfilm.org. For more about HOME MOVIE DAY, see www.homemovieday.com
South Portland Middle School Students Tackle Difficult Subject

With Help From MHS

This winter, South Portland school librarians Connie Burns of Mahoney Middle School and Emily Graham of Memorial Middle School teamed up to offer eighth grade students a chance to work together to tackle a difficult subject – prejudice. Burns and Graham applied for and received a Title V Classroom Incentive Grant from their school department. According to Burns, these are small grants “intended to let staff try something innovative that will improve student learning.”

The librarians decided to focus on the young-adult, historical-fiction novel *Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy*, by Gary D. Schmidt, published in May 2004. The book is set in 1912 and tells the story of a friendship between a white boy living in Phippsburg and a black girl who lives just off the coast from him on Malaga Island. Although the book is fiction, Malaga Island and what happened there is a very real and painful episode in Maine’s past.

The historical record of Malaga’s earliest settlement remains murky, but by the early 20th century it was an impoverished, mixed-race community of mostly fishermen. In 1912, Governor Plaisted ordered the island cleared of all residents. Some were able to relocate to other islands or to the mainland, while others were sent to the Pownal School for the Feebleminded (later Pineland Center). Today, the island remains uninhabited.

The grant money provided copies of the book for 20 students (10 from each school), a lunchtime book discussion with all of the students, a field trip to MHS, and lunch at the Portland Public Market. The project was open to all eighth grade students on a first-come, first-served basis. According to Burns, the sheet at Mahoney filled up so quickly that she had to turn away three students almost immediately.

During their field trip to MHS, under the guidance of Carolin Collins, Education Coordinator, students looked at period maps and photographs showing Phippsburg and Malaga Island. The students then read newspaper and magazine articles collected by the MHS research library and dating from before 1912 up to the present day, including a 1909 article written by Holman Day for *Harper’s Magazine* that drew national attention to the island. Finally, the whole group had a thoughtful and engaging discussion about what they had read and about their own experiences dealing with prejudice.

The students showed a real interest and sensitivity in dealing with a very sensitive topic, and it was a true pleasure to assist them in their work.

SUMMER FAMILY PROGRAMS 2005

In July and August, 11:00 a.m. is “The Children’s Hour” at Maine Historical Society. Bring the family and discover all that MHS has to offer.

- Mondays and Wednesdays beginning Monday, July 11 at 11:00 a.m.
  **THE CHILDREN’S HOUR**
  A special family tour of the childhood home of America’s most beloved 19th century poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. $7 adults, $3 children, includes admission to museum

- Tuesdays and Thursdays beginning Tuesday, July 12 at 11:00 a.m.
  **THE CITY AWAKES: THE ARTS AND ARTISANS OF EARLY 19TH CENTURY PORTLAND**
  Explore the subject of our summer exhibit through art activities perfect for the whole family! $4 adults, $2 children

- Fridays and Saturdays beginning Friday, July 15th at 11:00 a.m.
  **THE LONGFELLOW TRAIL: AN URBAN EXPEDITION**
  Discover the city that Longfellow knew on this guided expedition through downtown Portland. $4 adults, $2 children

Children must be accompanied by an adult. All programs start from Maine Historical Society’s Museum Store, located at 489 Congress Street, and last for approximately one hour. Free admission for members.
From Potato Bags to Quaker Activists

Have you checked out the Maine Memory Network lately? Many new images and exhibits appear on the website regularly. Keep checking www.MaineMemory.net for additions. Here are some suggestions:

- Have you ever thought about potato bags? The Southern Aroostook Agricultural Museum has quite a collection and about 50 of them appear on Maine Memory Network. Type “potato bag” into the MMN search box. You’ll learn something about Maine agricultural history and the variety of potato companies in the state in the 1940s when farmers started using distinctive bags for their potatoes.

- For a fascinating look into nineteenth century religion and social activism, check out several letters to Samuel Taylor, a Society of Friends (Quaker), who lived in Fairfield. The letters discuss problems within the religious group as well as the Quaker efforts to reach out to Indians. Type “Samuel Taylor” into the search box.

- In 1936, Jockey Cap in Fryeburg, a 200-foot rock outcropping, opened for business for skiers and tobogganers. It only operated until 1938, but the area is notable as Maine’s first lift — a towrope. Images of people skiing and tobogganing at Jockey Cap have survived in a collection of glass plate negatives. To see these images, go to www.MaineMemory.net and type “Jockey Cap” into the search box.

NewEnglandAncestors.org Available to Members in our Library

MHS is pleased to introduce yet another new service to our members. When you visit our library you can now access over 2,200 databases on NewEnglandAncestors.org. These databases include over 104 million names and cover hundreds of locations.

NewEnglandAncestors.org is the website of the New England Historic Genealogical Society. Based in Boston, the non-profit organization was founded in 1845 and is the oldest and largest genealogical society in the country. They are adding new searchable databases almost daily, continuously putting sought-after genealogical records on the Internet.

Some of the databases available to search are:

- Abstracts of Court Files of Middlesex County, Massachusetts, 1649-1675
- Cemetery Transcriptions from the NEHGS Manuscript Collections
- Death Notices from the New York Evening Post, 1801-1890
- Death Records of Waterville, Maine, to 1892
- Index to Maine Court Records 1696-1854
- Letter of Marriages of Bath, Maine, 1805-1817
- Marriages and Intentions in the State of Maine, 1831-1870
- Massachusetts Vital Records 1841-1910
- Massachusetts Vital Records to 1850
- Probate Records of Norwich, Connecticut, Volumes 1-3
- Rhode Island Historical Cemeteries Database Index
- Ship Registers and Enrollments of Machias, Maine – 1780-1930
- Social Security Death Index
- The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to New England, 1620-1633
- The Register 1847-1994

A portal to NEHGS’ entire array of goods and services, NewEnglandAncestors.org also offers research articles, a bookstore, and online library catalog. NEHGS’ publications, the New England Historical and Genealogical Register (published continuously since 1847) and New England Ancestors magazine, are also searchable online.

Visit us and discover the depth of material available on this genealogy megasite... just another membership benefit when you join Maine Historical Society.
John Marshall Brown Collection

In 2002, Violetta L. Otis, great granddaughter of Gen. John Marshall Brown of Portland, donated an important group of artifacts and manuscripts to the Maine Historical Society, along with a gift to help complete their conservation and processing. This work has recently been completed and the manuscript collection is ready for study.

The John Marshall Brown Collection consists of correspondence, genealogical research, personal papers, journals, railroad papers, news clippings, as well as other types of collected materials of the Brown and Payson families of Portland. Most documents fall in the period between 1850 and 1910.

Gen. John Marshall Brown was a well-respected figure of Portland. He was the son of John Bundy Brown, proprietor of the Portland Sugar Co. and founder of J.B. Brown & Co, a private banking house. Gen. John Marshall Brown enjoyed a productive life after he returned to Maine from serving in the Civil War. The General participated in many famous battles of the war such as Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg. He returned to Portland in 1864, after which he married Alida Catherine Carroll, from the prominent Carroll family of Carrollton, Maryland, in 1866. Together they had five children; the oldest, Sally Carroll Brown, married Herbert Payson in 1893, establishing the Brown-Payson connection that is also represented in the collection.

This collection provides a wealth of background information for genealogical research into the Brown and Payson families, as well as extensive insight into Portland social life in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Payson genealogies focus on the ancestors and descendants of the famous Edward Payson, DD, born in 1783. Genealogies also include the ancestors of the Carroll family of Maryland and Washington D.C.

Gen. John Marshall Brown was an avid historian; he collected information about Maine history as well as American history as a whole. Correspondence from Joshua Chamberlain and Henry Knox is included in this important collection. The Maine Historical Society library is privileged to preserve and make available to researchers this extensive collection.

The article about the Cushman Bakery in our last newsletter stimulated thoughtful responses from careful readers who found several errors and points that needed clarification. Thanks to all of you for carefully reading this story, and for your devotion to getting Maine history right!

In 1908 at the age of 40, after many years of work and several successful years of operating a bakery business in White Plains, New York, Nathan A. Cushman sold his interest in this business to his brothers, and moved to Portland. Originally he had no thoughts of starting a new business, but after six years of retired life, Cushman saw an opportunity, and then planned, built, and opened a new bakery in Portland in 1914. Cushman drew heavily from his earlier experiences in New York, but these operations were completely independent of the earlier business.

In spite of initial challenges, the Portland bakery proved a success, which enabled Cushman to expand and diversify. He hired young Stanley T. Bennett to work as a driver and salesman. In 1921, Cushman bought Oakhurst Dairy and made Bennett the manager. Bennett was able to acquire complete ownership of Oakhurst Diary by the mid 1940s and it has remained in the Bennett family ever since. When Nathan A. Cushman died in 1952, his sons had long been managing the family company, but in a very interesting turn of events the sons sold Cushman Bakery to Oakhurst Dairy in 1962.

These stories of Cushman Bakery and Oakhurst Dairy tell us a great deal about the nature of business in the twentieth century and about home-life in Maine. And there’s more to learn. If you’re interested please take a look at Nathan A. Cushman: A Rugged Individualist, Franklin P. Cole, editor, and Oakhurst Dairy: The Natural Goodness of Maine, Alice Hellstrom Anderson, available in our library.

IDEAL DOWNTOWN MEETING & RECEPTION SPACES

at the Maine Historical Society

Comfortable conference room • Multipurpose lecture hall
Charming secluded garden • Access to museum exhibits • Full kitchen
Audiovisual capabilities

Call MHS at 207-774-1822 or view the possibilities at www.mainehistory.org
Do you recognize these boys?

Two unidentified boys “hold up” a car in the Woodfords section of Portland. In the car were Portland newspaper reporter Mary Siteman and a photographer, who stopped and took a photo of the “bandits.”

Any background information that you can provide about these boys would be greatly appreciated. You can mail it to Holly Hurd-Forsyth, Registrar, care of MHS, or email her at hhurd@mainehistory.org. The first person to provide us with documentation identifying them will receive a copy of the book, *The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth* by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich.

**A Warm Welcome to the two Jamies!**

Two new staff members have recently joined MHS, each filling a critical gap in services to our members.

**Jamie Kingman**, library assistant, meets and greets library patrons, assuring that visitors are directed to the services that we can provide. As the use of the MHS Research Library has grown, the one research assistant available was often unable to track newcomers or respond to the many tasks required in a busy library.

Jamie received a BA in History from the University of Southern Maine and an MS (cum laude) from Simmons Graduate School of Library and Information Science. Jamie is also the Project Archivist for the John Marshall Brown Collection (see her article on Page 6).

**Jamie Fors**, membership assistant, is working in the development department with the vast data processing, membership mailings, and copy filings that are necessary as membership grows.

Jamie received her BA degree in History from Concordia College in 2004. She completed an internship at the Clay County Historical Society in Minnesota where she assisted in genealogy and exhibit research.

Both Jamies were volunteers in the Research Library before they joined the staff.

We’re featuring new items in the Museum Shop for our new exhibit **THE CITY AWAKES**!

Visit the Museum Shop for great art books such as “A Deaf Artist in Early America – The Worlds of John Brewster, Jr.” and “Meet Your Neighbors-New England Portraits, Painters and Society 1790-1850.”

**Let us know you are a member and receive your 10% discount!**
Upcoming Events at The Maine Historical Society

Ongoing  The Wadsworth-Longfellow House with new introductory exhibit
Tours Mon-Sat, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.; Sun, 12:00 - 4:00 p.m.
$6.00 adults, $5 seniors & students, $2 children, members free

June  Visit Historic New England's (formerly SPNEA) sites
at no charge with MHS membership card during the month of June.
For more information, visit www.HistoricNewEngland.org
183rd Annual Meeting, Maine Historical Society “On The Waterfront”
Sat, June 4, 10:00 a.m., at MHS Shettleworth Lecture Hall; after-lunch tour of the waterfront.
$25.00 members, includes lunch and tour
Portland Book, Print & Paper Show
Sunday, June 12, Preview 8:30 a.m., $15.00; General admission: 10:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., $5.00
Portland Exposition Building, 239 Park Avenue, Portland
The City Awakes: The Arts and Artisans of Early 19th Century Portland
This original exhibit will feature over eighty paintings, prints, drawings and examples of
decorative arts created in Portland during this vibrant period in the city's growth.
Opens Friday, June 24th - Sunday, Dec. 31st. Mon-Sat, 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.,
Sun, 12:00 - 5:00 p.m.

July & August Family Programs
The Children’s Hour: special family tours of Longfellow’s childhood home
Mondays & Wednesdays, starting July 11 at 11:00 a.m.
The City Awakes: Family Art Activities related to the exhibit
Tuesdays & Thursdays, starting July 12 at 11:00 a.m.
The Longfellow Trail: An Urban Expedition
Family tour of the downtown Portland known by Longfellow
Fridays & Saturdays, starting July 15th at 11:00 a.m.

Home Movie Day: Bring in your old home movies!
Saturday, August 13th, 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.