You and Me and the LOC

A few weeks ago I was down in Washington D.C. paying a visit to the Library of Congress. I was meeting our friend Charles Stanhope, a Mainer and long-time Senior Advisor at the Library, and we were talking about ways MHS might coordinate its teacher-training efforts with the LOC’s terrific Teaching with Primary Documents program. It was a very productive discussion, but then came the tour: Thomas Jefferson’s complete library, displayed in the round so that every title could be pondered; Gershwin’s gleaming black piano and a room full of Stradivarius violins; Martin Waldseemüller’s 1507 map of the world, one of the rarest in existence (the first to name America) and one of my very favorites. I was thrilled; and there was so much more behind the scenes, in all media, from every period of history and every region of the U.S. and the world. Two thoughts occurred. The first was that we Americans are a lucky people to have an institution like this, conceived and maintained on such an ambitious intellectual scale. (Go there! It’s yours. Or visit www.loc.gov as soon as you can.) The second thought was about MHS. We’ve always kept an eye on the LOC, as both a model and an inspiration. Their pioneering work with online collections, for instance, directly influenced the creation of the Maine Memory Network. But being there made me think again of what it is we aspire to: collecting fine and significant things, showing the complexity and variety of history, increasing the store of human knowledge and sharing it broadly. It reminded me, in other words, of the point and pleasure of my job. Yes, it pays to travel.

Richard D’Abate
Executive Director

ABOUT THE COVER

One of many stories highlighted in Maine History Online (story next page) is that of Walter Hustus from South Portland (1921-1999), a B-17 tailgunner during WWII. Shot down on a bombing run to Oranienburg, Germany, on April 18, 1944, he spent time in solitary confinement, then thirteen months in the POW camp Stalag 17B. The cover photograph was taken by the Germans after his capture. The numbers on the sign he is holding match the numbers on his dog tags. He made it back home to Maine on June 14, 1945. His family kindly donated many letters, cards, pictures and objects from his sojourn, now to be shared not only in our collections – but with visitors worldwide.

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MHS Launches New Online History of the State

MHS is extremely pleased to announce the launch of Maine History Online, a major new interpretive component of the Maine Memory Network (www.mainememory.net). In development for three years with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, MHO provides a comprehensive introduction to key themes, periods, and topics in Maine history, using newly written essays, special illustrative exhibits, and hundreds of primary documents.

Designed to let people explore history at multiple levels, MHO is an accessible and enjoyable work of reference for the public, while offering indispensable resources and information for Maine teachers and students. Contributions of organizations and communities from across the state are presented in the context of new scholarship. Important emphasis is placed on the interplay between local, state, and national history. Special sections stimulate critical thinking about history itself. Exhibits illustrate an amazing variety of topics in depth, from the story of a tuberculosis sanatorium in Hebron, to the industrial development of Saco and Biddeford in the 19th century.

According to MHS Director Richard D’Abate, MHO takes advantage of the richest and most interesting potential of the internet and Maine Memory Network: “It enables us to not only pull together a vast amount of new and previously inaccessible material, but to present it in flexible, user-directed ways. This launch is just the beginning; new materials and exhibits will be added regularly. MHO has drawn national attention, and is enabling MHS to continue to demonstrate its leadership in the sharing of history online.”

To ensure that MHO represents the history and experience of people from every corner of Maine, staff worked closely with many of Maine Memory’s 200+ contributing partners, identifying local stories to tell (see Walter Hustus on the cover), digitizing collections, and collaborating on online exhibits. Key scholars are likewise from different parts of Maine: Elizabeth DeWolfe, University of New England; Richard Judd, University of Maine (Orono); Karen Kimball, University of Maine at Machias; and our own Candace Kanes, in Portland.

Maine History Online (www.mainememory.net/mho/) launched in April and will be promoted across the state. Please take a look and let us know what you think.

Steve Bromage
Assistant Director

MHS MUSEUM EXHIBIT

ZOOM IN: NEW APPROACHES TO MAINE HISTORY

June 25, 2010 – May 29, 2011

Zoom In will tell compelling stories of Maine’s history, drawing on images and text from Maine History Online. Supplementing those stories will be physical objects from MHS and Contributing Partners. With experiential activities, visitors will explore the ways that the online resource can enhance the understanding of Maine’s history.
**The Thomas K. Jones Carpet Bag**

MHS recently purchased a carpet bag from a Philadelphia dealer thanks to a friend who saw it in an online catalog. Stenciled markings on the bag – T. K. Jones / Band 11 ME. INF. – connected it to Maine and provided us with a name to research in the records of Maine Civil War soldiers. The carpet bag and the information discovered, provide a tangible connection with a Maine volunteer and his time in the Civil War. The bag is a modest but colorful piece of evidence that illustrates this important time in our nation's history.

Thomas K. Jones was a sign painter from Portland who joined the 11th Maine in 1861, and served as a member of the Regimenal band for a year. Jones re-enlisted in 1864 as a private and mustered out with the 1st Maine Heavy Artillery later in 1865.

During his service in the army Jones would witness battles in Yorktown and Williamsburg and then later in Petersburg and Appomattox. As a member of the regimental band Jones performed music to entertain his comrades in arms, to lift their spirits, and intimidate the enemy troops. Unfortunately, we do not know what instrument he played, but Jones most likely used the bag to carry his music and supplies.

In other records we found advertisements for Jones' sign painting business which operated on Exchange Street in Portland. An 1893 newspaper article included a story about Jones who was “the only person in Portland who ever learned the art of ringing chimes” which he did for the Union Church starting in 1855. Jones learned this art while at Christ’s Church in Boston.

He died from pneumonia on September 29, 1901 and is buried at Evergreen Cemetery, Portland.

**Sarah Gillis Intern**

**A True Maine Bookman: Francis M. O’Brien**

MHS received more than 200 letters and newspaper clippings spanning from 1938 to 1994, written by the Portland antiquarian book seller and collector, Francis M. O’Brien (1908-1994).

The letters cover a wide range of topics from business correspondence to personal letters, the author’s passion for books clearly evident in it all. In typical O’Brien style, a simple note requesting one book could turn into a prolonged correspondence about related historical facts. He was an expert on Irish and Maine history, particularly the city of Portland.

During the 1960s Mr. O’Brien was a strong advocate for what is now the MHS Brown Research Library. Because of his efforts to preserve the history and cultural landmarks of Portland, he is fondly remembered.

*A Backward Look: 50 Years of Maine Books and Bookmen* (1986) is a published speech given by O’Brien which eloquently summarizes this collection – and his long career.

**John Mayer Museum Curator**

**Funds Provided by the Friends of Collections**

Allow MHS to selectively acquire and conserve invaluable artifacts of Maine history.
Maine Olmsted Alliance Merges into MHS

After 20 years of pioneering work on the history of the designed landscape in our state, the Maine Olmsted Alliance for Parks and Landscapes has decided to pursue its cause through the Maine Historical Society. Building on the overlap of missions and a fruitful relationship established in recent years, the board of the Alliance recently agreed to transfer its research collections and financial assets to the Society. In return, MHS will continue to offer related lectures and tours; make the Alliance’s extraordinary Survey of Designed Historic Landscapes available to researchers and the public; and extend the benefits of MHS membership to all former Alliance members.

In his final message to the Alliance membership, Charlton Ames, President, praised MHS for both its interest and its reach: “We believe they have created a statewide platform for the understanding of how a designed landscape provides the context for significant architectural sites.” MHS already maintains the largest collection of architectural drawings in the state, but it has long been aware that most landscapes have a human history and that the designed landscape, in particular, comes with special communal meanings. As Christopher Livesay, current president of the MHS board notes: “Our interests and the Alliance’s are mutually supporting; the fit could not be better.”

Olmsted Alliance for Parks and Landscapes has worked tirelessly to sensitize Mainers to the existence, aesthetics, and social implications of the designed landscape: from residential settings, to parks and gardens, to golf courses, town plans, cemeteries and subdivisions. Between 1991 and 2000 over thirty volunteers, working in cooperation with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, conducted what remains one the most complete landscape surveys in the country. Every designed site known in Maine was documented; historical information and maps compiled; and photographs taken. All this material is on its way to MHS; the plan is to make at least some part of it available online within the year.

The Alliance’s long history of fine programs and informative publications was capped in 2009 with the publication of Designing the Maine Landscape, by Theresa Mattor and Lucy Teegarden. Drawn from the survey, the book is a beautifully illustrated and informative guide to some of Maine’s most extraordinary historic landscapes. Still in print, the book remains a fitting and exuberant mark of the Olmsted Alliance’s years of accomplishment.

WHO WAS FREDERICK LAW OLMS TED?

Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903) was the founder and most famous practitioner of the profession of landscape architecture in America. Beginning with the design of New York’s Central Park in 1858, Olmsted and partners went on to design Boston’s “Emerald Necklace,” the grounds of the U.S. Capitol, and the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition, among many other major sites. In Maine, Olmsted’s firm was responsible for Portland’s Eastern and Western Promenade, the grounds of the Governor’s mansion, State House and Capitol Park in Augusta, the village green in Camden, the motor roads of Acadia National Park, and much more.

Olmsted’s design principles, especially his respect for natural scenery and the “genius” of a place, have helped make our world more livable and beautiful.

(Based on an Article by Charles E. Beveridge, from the first newsletter of the Maine Olmsted Alliance.)
On January 15, 1901, Lewiston received a $60,000 grant from the Carnegie Corp. of New York for a new public library. It was the largest amount Carnegie gave in Maine, and the first for an entire project. The structure, designed by Coombs and Gibbs, had granite from North Jay and Norridgewock, a Greek-inspired vestibule, and fine oak woodwork.

In all, 20 facilities in Maine received funding from the noted industrialist between 1897 and 1912.

Andrew Carnegie's life story is well known. Writing about philanthropy, Carnegie stated that men of fortune should set an example by living moderately and by using their "superior wisdom, experience, and ability" to distribute their surplus funds. He wrote, "In bestowing charity, the main consideration should be to help those who will help themselves."

Therefore, between 1896 and 1919, Carnegie gave more than $39 million to communities – mostly small ones where cultural resources might be limited – to build libraries.

The money came with stipulations: the town must own the land where the building was to be constructed, there should be room for expansion, the town must set aside money for maintenance, and the library would be free to patrons.

Especially after 1908, Carnegie imposed guidelines for the interior design and rejected plans that did not meet his company's general philosophy of libraries.

John Calvin Stevens, a Portland architect whose firm designed the Carnegie libraries in Houlton and Rumford, left notes in his copy of a book of library designs that was distributed to communities seeking grants. It was compiled in 1907 with images of existing Carnegie buildings along with floor plans.

Maine towns that received Carnegie funding were Gardiner, 1897; Lewiston, 1901; Rockland and Waterville, 1902; Auburn, Houlton, Old Town, Pittsfield and Rumford, 1903; Madison, 1904; Freeport, 1905; Presque Isle and Vinalhaven, 1906; Guilford and Milo, 1908; Caribou, 1910; Fort Fairfield, 1911; and Oakland, 1912.

All Maine Carnegie libraries are still standing, and all but two – Freeport and the University of Maine – are still libraries, although most have additions that have increased the space and modernized the facilities.
Carnegie was not the only person interested in libraries. With efforts at reform in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries came mandatory public education, along with efforts to help immigrants and urban residents who suffered with low wages and crowded and unsanitary living conditions.

Free libraries were one method of helping immigrants and others learn about America, about issues important to a democracy, and as Carnegie articulated, how to achieve success.

Numerous Maine communities built libraries without the help of Carnegie; many relied on grants or endowments from other philanthropically minded citizens.

*Candace Kanes
MMN Curator*
The flooded water pumping station in Brunswick.

Water pouring over a bridge next to the Cabot Mill in Brunswick.

On Saturday, March 14, 1936, the Androscoggin River in Brunswick rose rapidly. The Central Maine Power Co. station on the riverbank had managed to stay open Friday night, keeping electricity flowing.

By Saturday, water reached the second story windows and workers had to shut off power. A fire department pumper called in to remove water from the power station got stuck in the high water and another truck had to get it out.

That was only the beginning. The same day, the Maine Central Railroad bridge over the Androscoggin buckled.

Nearly a week later, after the spring storm seemed to fade, it returned with equal fury. On Friday, March 20, the new bridge between Brunswick and Topsham was damaged and the pumping station flooded, leaving the town with no water service. The pedestrian bridge over the river flipped over and its deck broke into pieces.

On March 21, three men were swept over the dam in Brunswick as their boat swamped.

The Flood of 1936 is legendary in Maine, New England, New York, Pennsylvania, and the Ohio River valley. A heavy snowpack was let loose by a week of extremely heavy rains and warm temperatures. Ice jams and log jams added to the problems. At one point, the Androscoggin River rose more than a foot an hour.

Damage in Maine was estimated at $15 million. Newspapers printed special editions and postcard companies produced commemorative postcards. The Flood of 1936 still evokes stories and memories.

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MAINE COMMUNITY HERITAGE PROJECT
INTO THE HOME STRETCH

PHASE ONE of our three year project is fast drawing to a close. With funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services we have brought together libraries, historical societies, and schools in 16 towns around the state to digitize historical items and build local history websites.

In June, the second group of eight teams will unveil their completed local history websites in festive public celebrations. The websites will showcase many of the 150+ historical items digitized by the teams, as well as online exhibits, a local history narrative, and a section that explains the team’s process. Visit “Living History,” the MCHP weblog at http://mainechp.wordpress.com/ to read more about the day-to-day work of these teams—and check out some fun photos!

Last year’s teams continue to add items to Maine Memory, creating new online exhibits, bringing community history into the classroom, all proof that MCHP is a successful vehicle for fostering ongoing collaborations.

But we are not resting on our laurels. Another grant proposal has been submitted to IMLS to implement PHASE TWO, a broader, custom-designed dissemination of the program. Whether or not we receive the funding, MCHP will live on in some fashion because we are committed to this kind of substantive community outreach in every pocket of the state.

Larissa Vigue Picard
MCHP Community Partnership Coordinator

In Hallowell, city historian Sumner “Sam” Webber watches as a student lines up a photograph on the scanner.

Bangor teacher Ron Bilancia pours over “Brady Gang” photos with his students. In 1937 Bangor businessman, Shep Hurd, aided in the apprehension of these infamous bank robbers in a dramatic downtown shoot-out.

Longfellow Piano Restoration

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow purchased the Chickering piano pictured above in Portland when he came here on his honeymoon with his second wife, Frances Appleton, in 1843. He had it shipped to their Cambridge home, Craigie House, and eventually moved it to their summer home in Nahant. It was donated to Maine Historical Society in 1908, and has been a focal point of the parlor in the Longfellow House ever since.

In the fall of 2009, an anonymous gift in memory of the Bears made possible the restoration of this historic piano. Tim Hamilton, a restorer of forte pianos and harpsichords who has worked all over the world, did the work, which will be completed by late spring. When complete, the piano will be in a playable condition.

We are planning a series of events in the house featuring music played on the piano. The Longfellows were a musical family, and we are looking forward to filling the space with melody once again.


2009-2010 TEAMS: Bangor, Biddeford, Blue Hill, Cumberland/North Yarmouth, Guilford, Hallowell, Lincoln, Scarborough

Tour the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow House and Garden
Hours: 10-5 Monday-Saturday
12-5 Sunday (Last tour leaves at 4:00)

Longfellow Trail, Family Walking Tours:
Fridays, 11-Noon, July 9-Aug 27

The Children’s Family Hour House Tours: Mondays & Wednesdays,
11:00-Noon, July 12-Aug 25
Local History/
Local Schools Update

The feature story in our last newsletter was about “Local History/Local Schools,” our museum-school partnership program with the Portland Public Schools, now in its fifth year. We are very pleased to announce that through the generous support of RBC Wealth Management, Oakhurst Dairy, the People’s United Community Foundation and the Morton-Kelly Charitable Trust, we are expanding the program numerically and geographically, and will be running four sessions of eight classes each year, drawn from Portland and the surrounding communities. In April and May, we will begin a pilot session from Greater Portland with participants from the Wentworth Intermediate School in Scarborough and the Small School from South Portland.

Carolin Collins
Director of Education

CELEBRATE LIKE A REVOLUTIONARY!

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW’S FAMOUS POEM
“PAUL REVERE’S RIDE” TURNS 150!

Paul Revere T-shirts available in children’s sizes S-XL $15.95
Tri-Corner hats $7.95

More great Paul Revere books, puzzles & dolls at our museum store and online at www.mainehistory.org

Visit WWW.PAULREVERESRIDE.ORG to view a list of events celebrating the poem.

This group of photos shows attendees at the Maine Historical Society for the final celebration for the winter 2010 session of Local History/Local Schools. It included third and fourth grade classes from East End Community, Lyseth, and Reiche Schools. The students’ final projects will be on display in the MHS Showcase Gallery through the end of April, when they will be replaced by the work of students participating in the spring session of the program.
GENEALOGY IS HOT

Two recent TV series, “African American Lives” on PBS and “Who Do You Think You Are” on NBC have fueled renewed interest in what is already America’s #2 most popular hobby, genealogy. As we mark the one-year anniversary of the Brown Library reopening, it’s good to remind family researchers of just a few of our assets:

• John Savage’s *Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England.*

A mainstay in any search for families arriving in New England before 1692, this was first published in 1860 and is still in print. It is now easier to use with a new index to females, compiled by Patty Barthell Myers (Genealogical Publishing, 2008).

• Martin E. Holliock’s *New Englanders in the 1600s: A Guide to Genealogical Research Published between 1980 and 2005.*

Works cited include *The American Genealogist* and the *Register* from New England Historic Genealogical Society; the Mayflower five-generational “silver books”; and the *Great Migration* series by Robert Charles Anderson. The Society of Colonial Wars has issued a CD which includes all proven eligible ancestors.

• Newly published local resources include births, deaths, and marriages for Cumberland, 1702-1892 (Islandport Press, 2009); Portland, 1786-1814 (Picton Press, 2005); and Cape Elizabeth (Picton, 2009).

• Online resources available in the library are HeritageQuest, Sanborn Digital Maps of Maine, Ancestry.com and New England Ancestors.

• The *1850 U.S. Census* is helpful because it lists all individuals in a household and indicates where they were born.

MHS member Larry Glatz has recently created a series of books to make access to this census easier and to provide more information on individuals. Glatz has also transcribed, edited, compiled, and indexed the Maine Mortality Schedule of 1850.

New to the search or seasoned pro, you will find our research librarians helpful. We are open Tuesday through Saturday, 10-4. If you cannot visit, consider our fee-based Research Services, described at www.mainehistory.org.

Nicholas Noyes
Head of Library Services

IN YOUR ATTIC? BACK OF THE CLOSET?

HIGH SCHOOL YEARBOOKS HAVE GREAT INFORMATION FOR GENEALOGISTS. THERE ARE MISSING YEARS IN OUR TOWN HIGH SCHOOL COLLECTIONS AND WE ALWAYS APPRECIATE DONATIONS. WE ALSO SEEK MATERIAL DOCUMENTING WORLD WAR TWO, KOREAN, AND VIETNAM MILITARY SERVICE OF MAINERS.

SEARCH YOUR ROOTS BY JOINING MHS TODAY!

Unlimited access to the Brown Library with all the benefits of one of the largest and most comprehensive collections related to Maine history in the state; and MHS members’ only databases, accessible from the comfort of your home computer:

• Portland Voter Registrations 1891-1902
• Town of Deering, Record of Naturalization Papers, 1873-1898
• Maine History, the only periodical devoted to scholarship on Maine History

To join: visit us at www.mainehistory.org/membership. Or contact Laurie Puzio: (207) 774-1822 ext.216 for all membership inquiries and online account info.
DON’T MISS THESE UPCOMING PROGRAMS!

May 13, 7 pm  
**Seated by the Sea: The Maritime History of Portland, Maine, and Its Irish Longshoremen**  
Michael Connolly, Professor of History, St. Joseph’s College

May 18, 12 pm  
**Looking Astern: An Artist’s View of Maine’s Historic Waterfronts**  
Loretta Krupinski, Maritime Artist

May 27, 7 pm  
In partnership with the Maine Women Writers Collection…  
**Laying Claim to the Land(scape): Chansonetta**  
Shawn Michelle Smith, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

For a complete and up-to-date listing of our many lectures, workshops, book events, and trips, visit our website www.mainehistory.org. To sign up for program notices by e-mail, please click on the “stay connected” link.

**First Friday Art Walk**  
May through October • Opening Receptions 5-8pm

**EXPOSED:**  
Rare Photographs Of Life in Maine

Featuring rare, obscure, and intriguing images of life in Maine throughout history.  
Online Gallery • Print Sale

www.VintageMaineImages.com