MAINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY | CALENDAR

HOLDING UP THE SKY:
Wabanaki People, Culture, History & Art Exhibit
April 12, 2019 through February 1, 2020

RECREATING HYGGE:
Scandinavians in the Pine Tree State Exhibit
July 25 through November 2, 2019

ICONS AND INFLUENCES:
Celebrity Photographs from the Evening Express, 1920-1935 Exhibit
August 30, 2019–February 1, 2020

BEHIND-THE-SCENES LIBRARY TOUR
First Wednesday of the month, (September 4, October 2, November 6, December 4)
12:00-12:45 pm

EXPEDITION TO THE WRECK OF THE STEAMSHIP PORTLAND
Live Feed Broadcast
September 18, 7:00 pm

BEER IN THE GARDEN
September 17, October 15
5:00 - 7:00 pm 21+ Event.

SPECIAL CURATOR TOUR
Holding Up The Sky
One Wednesday a month, (September 25, October 16, November 20, December 18, January 15)
12:00 noon-1:00 pm

WILDERNESS AND SPIRIT,
A Mountain Called Katahdin Film Screening
September 26, 6:00 - 8:00 pm

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES IN AMERICA: UNDERSTANDING CULTURES IN CLINICAL SETTINGS
Partnership with University of New England (Biddeford)
November 6, 12:00 - 1:30 pm

BEACH CLEANUP
November 9, 10:00 am

THATCHER PAPERS BOOK LAUNCH
November 7, 6:00-8:00 pm

RESTORING YOUR HISTORIC HOUSE BOOK LAUNCH
With Scott T. Hanson
November 14, 6:00-7:00 pm

MHS MEMBERS HOLIDAY PARTY
December 5, Evening

CIRCA — SUMMER 2019
EDITOR: Elaine Tselikis
DESIGNER: Patricia Cousins
CONTRIBUTORS: Steve Bromage, Jean Guilliver, Tilly Laskey, Kathleen Neumann, Nancy Noble, Kate Raymond, Jamie Rice, Ian Saxine
PRINTING: JS McCarthy Printers

From Glass Plate to Pixels
Digitizing Early Maine Photographs

By Jamie Rice
Director of Library Services

Maine Historical Society is proud to present two new additions to the Maine Memory Network (MMN). In 2016, MHS was awarded a Collections Stewardship grant through the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The project entitled “Complex Photographic Mediums” included inventory and digitization for MHS’s earliest photograph collection (ca. 1840-1870), specifically daguerreotypes, ambrotypes and tintypes, as well as a very large collection of glass plate negatives pertaining to the Portland Press Herald and Portland Evening Express.

The early photograph portion of the project created a MMN portal where users can explore the different collections and themes. MHS houses the largest collection of early Maine photography in existence, largely in thanks to the Vickery-Shettleworth collection, the life’s work of the late James Vickery, and an ongoing effort by Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr. Shettleworth authored interpretive essays and programs in support of the project, all of which are available at http://earlymainephotos.mainememory.net.

The glass negative project fully digitized 19,001 negatives from the Portland Press Herald Glass Negative Collection (Coll. 1949). While named for the Press Herald, the images are largely from the Portland Evening Express, which the Press Herald acquired in 1925. The collection spans from 1911 largely from the Portland Evening Express, which the Press Herald acquired in 1925. The collection spans from 1911 to circa 1940 and includes a variety of subjects such as local sports, conventions, sensational news, local interest stories, and aerial photography. Media mogul Guy Gannett, who owned the Press Herald and Evening Express, commissioned an impressive documentary collection that allows us to glimpse at the past through one of the most significant media influencers in Maine. Like its early photography counterpart, MMN hosts a portal for Coll. 1949, where themes and imagery are explored at http:// pressheraldglass.mainememory.net.

The MMN treatment of both collections features a curated selection of images. The complete collections can be searched through the MHS Collections & Photography database, at https://mainehistory.pacperfectonline.com.

“The early photograph portion of the project created a MMN portal where users can explore the different collections and themes. MHS houses the largest collection of early Maine photography in existence…”

Glass negative image: Weightlifter bow Johnny McIntire, 1924. Collections of Maine Historical Society/MaineToday Media/ MMN # 40416

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MAINE MEMORY NETWORK | Preserving and Sharing the History of Maine

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MAINE'S BICENTENNIAL
Looking Back, Moving Forward

By Steve Bromage
MHS Executive Director

We are entering an exciting and important strategic moment for Maine and for Maine Historical Society.

The Bicentennial of Maine Statehood in 2020, coinciding with MHS’s own Bicentennial in 2021, provides a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to demonstrate the profound ways that history shapes Maine and its special place of pride in the world. It is a critical moment to reflect on “what makes Maine, Maine,” and to create a vision for and invest in Maine’s future.

The Bicentennial illustrates the unique and vital role that MHS plays in Maine: preserving and sharing Maine’s story. Our core activities turn history into a resource, asset, and source of inspiration.

This spring MHS launched its Bicentennial commemorations with the opening of the exhibition Holding Up the Sky which explores 13,000 years of Wabanaki presence and leadership in Maine. It is impossible to consider Statehood without that critical context. Holding Up the Sky will be followed by a major exhibition about Maine Statehood in 2020. To learn more about MHS’s many Bicentennial initiatives, go to: mainememory.net/bicentennial.

“The Bicentennial illustrates the unique and vital role that MHS plays in Maine: preserving and sharing Maine’s story.”

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Last year the Governor appointed the Maine Bicentennial Commission to organize the State’s official commemoration. MHS trustees Peter Merrill, Meredith Strang Burgess, and I serve on the Commission. Two of its most important functions include providing a clearinghouse for information about Bicentennial activities throughout Maine through its website (www.maine200.org) and a grants program to support Maine communities as they develop local Bicentennial commemorations. The grants program is something that we at MHS advocated strongly for.

MHS has just completed a new 2019-2023 Strategic Plan that outlines the opportunities presented by the Bicentennials and our plans to expand MHS’s reach and impact across Maine. We look forward to sharing the Plan with you this fall.

I’d like to highlight MHS’s leadership as we enter this critical period. In June, the Board of Trustees elected Jean Gulliver as its Chair, and Tyler Judkins as its first Vice Chair. Both bring incredible commitment to MHS. We have built a fantastic management team to pursue the opportunities before us: Karen Pelletier, previously MHS’s Director of Finance, has become Chief Operating Officer, a new position; Christina Traister joins MHS as Director of Institutional Advancement after serving at Bates College and GMRI; and Jamie Rice continues to provide remarkable leadership for MHS collections, research, and interpretive programs.

Bicentennial, here we come!
Maine Historical Society has been committed to building and caring for its historic clothing collection for well over 100 years. Our acquisition of the Wadsworth-Longfellow House in 1901 sparked the Society’s rising commitment to material culture and domestic life. An initial focus on pre-1840 clothing was enhanced by a very large, generous gift of historic costumes from Westbrook College in 1993. The Westbrook College collection now comprises over one-third of the Society’s costume holdings and thereby has rendered the collection a premier example of Victorian era and early 20th Century women’s clothing.

The term “costume” is typically used to describe historic clothing collections in a museum setting. The collection at MHS includes clothing, accessories, outerwear, military uniforms, bathing suits and other unique and specialty items, and consists of about 3,000 pieces.

In 2019, MHS was awarded a $149,000 Institute of Museum and Library Services Museums for America grant to digitize and preserve the collection. Throughout this eighteen-month project, mannequins are dressed and photographed in each piece, and re-housed in archival boxes best suited for the item’s shape, size and condition. The grant provided needed funds to hire a Costume Curator, Abby Zoldowski, a Curatorial Assistant and Digital Technician, Gail Dodge, and two costume interns, Kaila Temple and Molly O’Donnell. The project is also supported by renowned textile and dress historian, Jaqueline Field, who serves as MHS Adjunct Curator.

The project will create thousands of photographs, all added to our collections database. It will also create a guide to the collection on the Maine Memory Network, which will feature illustrative examples, interpretive essays, and a portal into one of MHS’s most exciting collections. The project work will then culminate with a public exhibition planned for 2021. Watch the project’s progress by visiting our collections database at https://mainehistory.pastperfectonline.com.

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) MA-MA-20-18-0018.

Left: Wool and Persian Lamb cloak, ca. 1900. Associated with Elizabeth McIntosh Bux (1873-1965) of Saco, Lewiston, and New Portland. The cloak was worn during her time in Lewiston in 1902 and 1903. Collections of Maine Historical Society

Photos: Gail Dodge
Exploring Ideas About Diversity in Maine History

By Tilly Laskey Curator

HOLDING UP THE SKY: Wabanaki People, Culture, History & Art
April 12, 2019 through February 1, 2020

Holding Up the Sky was co-curated with seven Wabanaki advisors: Lisa Brooks (Abenaki), James Francis (Penobscot), Suzanna Greenlaw (Maliseet), Darren Ranco (Penobscot), Theresa Secord (Penobscot), Ashley Smith (Wabanaki descent), Donald Sootomah (Passamaquoddy), and Tilly Laskey, MHS curator. Together, we designed an innovative exhibition infused with Wabanaki perspectives, language, and voices that contextualize 13,000 years of Wabanaki history.

“This exhibit reflects a unique collaboration between MHS and the Wabanaki peoples in Maine, and thoroughly marks the diversity of Wabanaki experience in our homeland over the last 13,000 years.”

– Dr. Darren Ranco (Penobscot), 2019

The exhibition avoids a traditional timeline, and includes a mix of archaeology, colonial-era manuscripts, heritage items, and contemporary art that reflects Wabanaki resistance, survival, and beauty of cultural expression. Portions of the exhibit are also viewable online mainememory.net/holdingupthesky

POWER OF POTENTIAL: Photographs of the 1925 National Business and Professional Women’s Convention
May 3 through August 25, 2019

This summer exhibit documented women’s empowerment through compelling black and white glass plate newspaper images of the seventh annual convention of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women’s Clubs (NFBPWC). Held in 1925 in Portland, Maine, this convention drew together over 2,000 members from around the country. The Federation was established in July 1919 – eight months before the 19th Amendment allocated voting rights for many American women. From suffrage to the glass ceiling, the NFBPWC continues to empower and mentor professional women today. See the exhibit online mainememory.net/exhibits

OBJECT LESSON | Sturgeon Drum by James Francis

By Tilly Laskey Curator

Maine Historical Society’s mission is to preserve and share Maine’s history. Our recent initiatives are focusing on diversifying, expanding, and contemporizing our permanent museum collections and Maine Memory Network content. The exhibit Holding Up the Sky: Wabanaki People, History, Culture and Art enabled MHS to purchase the following six original pieces from Wabanaki artists:

▪ Gina Brooks (Maliseet), Indian Jacket, 2018
▪ Decontie & Brown (Penobscot), Gingham Glam Dress, 2019
▪ James Francis (Penobscot), kàpahse (sturgeon) drum, 2019
▪ Gabriel Frey (Passamaquoddy), Purse basket, 2019
▪ Jennifer Neptune (Penobscot), Beaded Waterlily pouch, 2019
▪ Frances Sootomah (Passamaquoddy), Beaded Strawberry pouch, 2019

Seeing oneself — and one’s culture — represented in a museum is paramount to feeling included, respected, and welcomed. For Holding Up the Sky, MHS entered a significant collaborative relationship with leaders and cultural specialists in Wabanaki communities. Such shared authority:

▪ Adds breadth and context to MHS collections;
▪ Helps Maine Historical Society reflect inclusive and accurate cultural and historic representation;
▪ And broadens the control of storytelling narratives.

Although MHS caretakes volumes of manuscripts and heritage items relating to Wabanaki people, these recent purchases extend the Wabanaki timeline into 2019. The artists have also permitted MHS to install their stories on Maine Memory Network, to enhance accessibility and educational distribution.

“Museums are dangerous places because they control the storytelling.”
– Moana Jackson (Maori), 2018

James Francis (Penobscot), kàpahse (sturgeon) drum, 2019. Maine Historical Society permanent collections 2019.018 / MMN#104988

Installation of Holding Up the Sky contextualizes the Wabanaki’s 13,000 year presence in what is now known as Maine with a contemporary piece, Indian Jacket, 2018 by Gina Brooks (Maliseet). Photo: Patricia Cousins

Story Basket by David Moses Bridges (Passamaquoddy), on exhibit in Holding Up the Sky. From the Abbe Museum collections, Bar Harbor, Maine, 2013-01-001 A-B

Left: Women came from across the United States to Portland in July 1925 for the annual convention of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women’s Clubs. Collections of Maine Historical Society/MaineToday Media/ MMN #12575

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One Hundred Years of Providing Healthcare

By Ian Saxine
MHS Historian

In autumn 1918, Portland, Maine was struck by the greatest health crisis in its history. Known then as the Spanish Influenza, the 1918-1919 pandemic claimed millions of lives worldwide. The emergency quickly overwhelmed Portland’s limited hospital capacity. Right Reverend Bishop Louis Sebastian Walsh asked the Sisters of Mercy for volunteers to visit homes of the sick. The entire order of 60 women answered the call.

The demand for additional hospital care prompted Bishop Walsh to establish a new facility. Following in the footsteps of Mother Catherine McAuley (foundress of the Sisters of Mercy), his daughter of a distinguished surgeon in Cork, Ireland, Sister M. Constance McCarron was the first superintendent of the nursing school. Sister M. Constance and 16 nurses were equipped to care for 25 patients.

— the new Queen’s Hospital opened, of the founding of the Sisters of Mercy — the new Queen’s Hospital opened, equipped to care for 25 patients.

In 1920, Queen’s Hospital opened a nursing school. Sister M. Constance McCarron was the first superintendent and instructor of nurses. The program took three years to complete, and a diploma led to an RN. Mercy Hospital School of Nursing operated until 1987.

As the United States faced another world war in 1941, the growing City of Portland needed greater hospital capacity. To meet this need, the Sisters of Mercy arranged to purchase property at 144 State Street. They received further control from the diocese to manage Queen’s, which then became Mercy Hospital. Opening in 1943 with 150 beds and 56 bassinets, the new facility was hailed as one of the most advanced of its kind in northern New England. When the old Queen’s Hospital closed in the winter of 1942-43, it contained 60 beds, although old hands recalled it treated up to 98 patients at one time.

By 1951, Mercy expanded again, with construction of an eight-story wing, including an Emergency Department. At the forefront of 20th century medical enhancements, by 1965, Mercy had grown to 285 beds, staffed by nearly 500 Sisters and lay employees. In 2007, Eileen Skinner, CEO of Mercy Health System, oversaw plans for a new, larger Fore River campus. The first stage of the project culminated in a 42-acre facility that opened in 2008 with advanced amenities, diagnostic imaging, and The Birthplace.

Today, Mercy continues to be a major player in meeting Greater Portland’s medical needs, especially among underprivileged communities. Since its 1878 Centennial celebration, Mercy’s Emergency Room treats over 20,000 patients a year. Hospital specialists fulfill a key role in the only statewide health delivery organization in Maine. Mercy runs Mercy Primary Care practices across several Cumberland County cities. Mercy programs like McAuley Residence, fill a need for a comprehensive approach for substance use disorder, with housing for families. Gary’s House provides gracious space for patients or families whose loved ones are undergoing medical care. Each program is a treasured resource for community members.

Current Mercy president Charlie Therrien has announced that Mercy will sell its State Street facility to begin expansion of its Fore River hospital next spring. Operations and more medical services will move to one convenient campus.¶

Online exhibit: mercyhospital.mainememory.net.

Maine Historical Society Board Expands Statewide Representation

By Jean Guilliver
Chair, MHS Board of Trustees

One of the fundamental commitments of Maine Historical Society is to become a truly statewide organization. MHS has had a statewide mission andpurview since our 1822 founding. Our collections reflect every part of Maine. We have served the state through publications and by supporting research and scholarship since our inception. Our innovative work through the Maine Memory Network (MMN) has transformed our ability to reach, serve, support, and collaborate with communities and audiences throughout Maine. We provide training and support to 220 contributing partners through MMN.

One of the explicit goals of our new Strategic Plan (available online in September) is to “institute and expand our efforts to reach and serve all Maine people, regardless of geography…by transforming the geographic representation of the Board of Trustees to ensure that MHS’s strategic priorities align with the needs and interests of constituents in all parts of Maine.”

Myron Beasley (Portland) is Associate Professor of American Studies at Bates College in Cultural Studies, African American Studies, and Women and Gender studies. He has received awards for his research writings on art, culture and social change.

Dennis Damon (Trenton) is an entrepreneur, educator and former legislator. He represented Hancock County in the Maine Senate for four terms.

Steve Hewins (Falmouth) is President/CEO of HospitalityMaine. He formerly served as Executive Director of the Portland Downtown District; Travel and Branch Operations VP at AAI Northern New England; and Founded Hewins Travel.

Dr. Stephen Sears (Belgrade) is Chief of Staff for the VA Health System of Maine. He has held senior management positions at Maine General Health System, and Mercy Health System, and served as State Epidemiologist.

Kimberly R. Smith (Presque Isle) is a consultant and grant-writer. She served as CEO for nonprofit Organizations which won national awards under her stewardship.

Timothy Woodcock (Bangor) is an attorney with Eaton Peabody. He previously served on the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs and was involved in enactment of the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act.

Captain Robert Peacock (Eastport) is a commodore for the City of Eastport. He holds a US Coast Guard Masters license and First Class Pilotage, and serves as a pilot for Quoddy Pilots, USA.¶

MHS is governed by a full board of 32 trustees who hail from communities throughout Maine, as indicated in this map. Learn more about these dedicated leaders: mainehistory.org/about.

Your Support Matters!

Did you know half of our funding dollars come from individual donors like you?

With your support, MHS continues to acquire, care for, and provide access to a world-class collection of unique items (some of which are featured in this publication) that document the Maine experience. There are many ways you can invest in and be a part of this history-saving work, including membership, donating to our Annual Fund and special projects, or by including MHS in your will.

Together, we learn from the past to create a brighter future.

To make a gift or learn more about how your contribution preserves Maine history, call 207-774-1822 or visit mainehistory.org/support.

$820,000 total charitable contributions in 2018

20% from Corporations
30% from Foundations
50% from Individuals

From 2,427 donors including 395 NEW donors.

Thank you!

Data above reflect our 2018 Fiscal Year, July 2017 to June 2018.
A DAY IN THE LIFE  |  Q & A with Nancy Noble, Maine Historical Society Archivist/Cataloger

Q: Nancy, how is an Archivist/Cataloger important to preserving Maine history?

A: The work of the Archivist/Cataloger is key to providing access to our collections, as well as taking measures to preserve materials for generations to come. This work helps researchers and the public find information they need to interpret history.

Q: What does your work involve at MHS?

A: My realm is materials in our Brown Research Library — books, manuscripts, broadsides, sheet music, and maps. All the staff help care for our collections, including photographs and architectural drawings. We also depend on volunteers for the nitty-gritty work that preserves history. One of my current projects — with the help of a volunteer — is processing the vast collection of Duncan Howlett, a Unitarian minister who retired to Maine and was active in the 1960s Civil Rights Movement.

Q: Please share some of your background and what attracted you to archives.

A: Most of my career has been working in libraries. I grew up in California, but after moving to Boston where I received my Master’s in Library Science from Simmons College, I worked with special collections. These include cataloging 19th century children’s literature at the American Antiquarian Society, managing the Portsmouth (New Hampshire) History collections at that public library, and overseeing the Maine Women Writers Collection at the University of New England. While I served on the Maine Historic Records Advisory Board with former MHS director Richard DiBiase, an opening at MHS came along and he hired me. I’ve always loved books and history, and always wanted to live in Maine — especially on an island — so I truly am home!

Q: What training or interests are needed for someone considering this career?

A: A Master’s Degree in Library Science is often a requirement for positions such as mine, although there are alternatives. I firmly believe in volunteering or internships, as evidenced by the many volunteers and interns who have come through our doors and gone on to a professional career, including working here at MHS. After several decades of this work, I am still never bored, so a high degree of curiosity is a must, as well as desire to see items organized and secure. I love the finer aspects of cataloging and the art and science of it.

Q: Could you share a story that illustrates your love for what you do, and what keeps it fresh?

A: I really enjoy blogging about MHS collections, which are so rich. My topics include early Maine imprints, books in the Wadsworth-Langfellow House, menus, and parchments; special themes like love stories; and unique collections that spark my interest, and in which I think people would also enjoy looking about. One of the most fun things I’ve done is researching Armed Services Editions at Bowdoin College’s Library, which came out of my project to catalog our World War I pamphlet collection. This turned into a blog for Bowdoin. From that, we received wonderful Armed Services Editions for our MHS collections. I also serve on the Commission on Archives and History for the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church. Someday I’d love to travel the countryside helping churches preserve their history.

EDUCATION  |  Holding Up the Sky

Learning Wabanaki

By Kathleen Neumann
Manager of Education and Public Programs

“T he Wabanaki people are awesome!” exclaimed the spirited sixth grader as she peered into the display of pouches with intricate, handmade beadwork designs. All around, fellow classmates buzzed with excitement and curiosity as they explored Wabanaki art, culture, and history through the unique collection of artifacts, documents, and stories brought together in Holding Up the Sky; the energy in the room was palpable and learning was authentic.

These students were just a few of the nearly 600 who have already visited the exhibit since it opened at MHS. “The history can be so long and gone on to a professional career, including working here at MHS. After several decades of this work, I am still never bored, so a high degree of curiosity is a must, as well as desire to see items organized and secure. I love the finer aspects of cataloging and the art and science of it.”

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