MAINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Preserving History • Engaging Minds • Connecting Maine
I can’t tell you how excited we are to announce the launch of *Maine Eats: The Food Revolution Starts Here*. It reveals so much about Maine Historical Society’s approach to history.

You have heard me say that only part of what we do is to look backwards. A critical aspect of MHS’s work is to demonstrate the extent to which history connects to our lives today.

There are few current topics that capture people’s interest and imagination more than food.

You can see it everywhere: in the flourishing of farmers’ markets, the revitalization of Maine’s agriculture sector, and the evolving choices on the shelves of grocery stores. You can see it in the lines at Red’s Eats, and the reputations of Maine’s nationally-celebrated chefs and restaurants. You can see it in Eimskip’ success in re-connecting Maine products with European markets; the demand for Maine eelers in Asia; and the development of new/old products like kelp.

Food shapes Maine’s economy, its culture, and its identity.

None of this is new. One of the remarkable elements of the current food craze is the extent to which it takes us back to our roots. The trends and desires we see today—to eat slow and local, to experience food—reflect how Mainers have eaten for millennia.

Beginning with the Wabanaki, the foods Mainers have eaten have been sourced locally and seasoned with the ingredients, traditions, ethnicities, tastes, and spirit of the people who have come here. Maine foodways are distinctly “Maine”—shaped by the state’s climate, geography, and culture. Think lobsters, blueberries, potatoes.

Food is a universal topic. We all have unique, personal relationships to food based on where we grew up, the meals we ate as kids, who prepared them, and our own tastes, interests, and experiences.

*Maine Eats* will be both fun and serious. Climate change could fundamentally alter the species that can survive and thrive in Maine. What would Maine be like if we didn’t have lobsters? *Maine Eats* will provide an opportunity to consider food security, the importance of early childhood nutrition, and sustainability.

*Maine Eats* is designed for your participation. What is your Maine food experience? Please go to [My Maine Stories](https://www.mainememory.net/mymainestories) and tell us! You can upload video or audio recorded from your phone, text, photos, and digitized copies of historical items you might have. Photos of a family picnic or meal? An old advertisement or paystub from the sardine factory? A tattered but much-loved recipe? Collections of Maine Historical Society

Thank you so much for your interest.

Let’s eat!

Best,

Steve Bromage

Executive Director

**ABOUT THE COVER:**

Rosemary brand Maine blueberries canning label from the Pleasant River Canning Co. in Columbia Falls, Maine, c. 1935.

Canned corn label for green corn, produced by Nathan Winslow of Portland, c. 1880.

Collections of Maine Historical Society
SPARK!
MAINE ART STORIES
EXHIBITION OPENS TO RAVE REVIEWS

More than 200 people, including many of the featured artists, attended the opening of MHS’s Spark! Maine ART Stories exhibition on November 3, 2017 during Creative Portland’s First Friday Art Walk. Called “One of the most interesting contemporary art exhibitions in Portland right now,” Spark! Maine ART Stories was featured as the Audience section cover story in the November 12 edition of the Portland Press Herald/Maine Sunday Telegram.

The Spark! Maine ART Stories exhibition explores the varied ways Mainers express themselves today, and features sixteen contemporary Maine artists who are diverse in their geography, their artistic mediums, and in what compels them to create. The sixteen artists are: Titi de Baccarat, Gina Brooks, Brendan Bullock, Barbara Burns, Katharine Cobey, Donna Decontie Brown and Jason Brown, Ayumi Horie, Hector Jaeger, Karen Jelenfy, David Johansen, Daniel Minter, Geo Neptune, Edmond and Brian J. Theriault, and Ian Trask. MHS is preserving the stories of the Spark! Maine ART Stories artists by incorporating extended My Maine Stories (www.mainememory.net/mymainestories) components online and alongside the artists’ physical works.

Bob Keyes, arts writer for the Portland Press Herald/Maine Sunday Telegram, noted about the artists, “Their stories are woven in Maine culture. Some descend from families who have called this region home for centuries; others are new arrivals. All embody the creativity history of Maine.”

The exhibition is visually stunning — there is a book sculpture, intricate jewelry, large- and small-scale paintings, tapestries and haute couture fashion. Casting a warm glow on the gallery is neon artwork by David Johansen while close by is a pair of snowshoes made by Edmond and Brian Theriault. Intricate baskets share space with delicate ramen bowls, and peering down from one side of the gallery is Katharine Cobey’s “Mime for the Gulf War Birds,” (1991), a large black bird “knit” from black plastic.

The press noted that it’s “Unprecedented for the Historical Society” to dedicate an exhibition solely to work by living artists. MHS Executive Director Steve Bromage countered “We don’t just think of history as looking backward, but looking at the continuum between the past and present. What we do today shapes Maine in the future and will be written in our history.”

Spark! Maine ART Stories is on view at Maine Historical Society through March 31, 2018.

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Maine Historical Society is excited to announce our next exhibition opening March 2, 2018 — Maine Eats: The Food Revolution Starts Here.

A universal building block of existence – food has helped to shape Mainers’ lives and identities since long before statehood. Our upcoming exhibition, Maine Eats: The Food Revolution Starts Here will explore through first-person accounts, interactive experiences, photographs, and historic artifacts how the identity and economy of Maine and its inhabitants are fundamentally tied to the food we grow, gather, prepare and eat.

Maine Eats: The Food Revolution Starts Here will be on exhibit in the museum gallery from March 2018 through February 2019, alongside a year-long smorgasbord of rich programming to expand upon the themes presented in the exhibition. Hungry for more? Watch for updates in our electronic newsletter and social media channels as we get ready to open Maine Eats in March!
5th Annual Maine History Maker Award

CELEBRATING A CENTURY OF SUCCESS AND SERVICE

Each year, Maine Historical Society recognizes a contemporary individual or group for their outstanding impact on and contributions to Maine. On Tuesday, October 24th, 2017, MHS welcomed a family of history makers to the growing list of distinguished recipients of the Award!

The Maine History Maker Award 2017 honored the direct descendants of Ralph and Edna Cianchette — their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. One hundred years of Cianchette family history reflects essential aspects of the Maine experience — Ralph’s immigration to Maine, his sons’ service during World War II, and the family’s hustle and acumen in building Cianbro, Main Line Fence, and other businesses. The Cianchette children and grandchildren continue to lead in diverse endeavors. MHS Executive Director Steve Bromage remarked: “Cianchette leadership—past, present, and future—is what we honor here tonight.”

The event, hosted at Hannaford Hall at the University of Southern Maine, was kicked off by a visual interpretation of the Cianchette family’s history led by Bromage, who then presented the Maine History Maker Award 2017 to family patriarch Ken Cianchette. Ken Cianchette was then interviewed by grandson Michael about his accomplishments, his family and his legacy.

Rounding out the program was a panel discussion on “Maine: What’s Next?” with Cianchette family members Andrea Cianchette Maker, an attorney at Pierce Atwood whose practice supports Maine businesses and whose civic leadership focuses on ensuring that Maine’s economy will thrive in the future; Jason Cianchette, founder of Liquid Wireless and Huzzap and focused on growing the digital economy here in Maine; and Michael Cianchette, business executive, former Chief Legal Counsel and Senior Advisor to Gov. Paul LePage, and Maine Turnpike Authority Member. The panel discussion was moderated by Cindy Williams, News Anchor with WCSH6.

Reflecting on the meaning of the Maine History Maker Award, Bromage remarked, “Only part of what Maine Historical Society does is look backwards. We gather, celebrate and draw on Maine stories to look forward.”

Your Gift Matters

Sam Kelley enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1967, knowing he was headed for Vietnam. His platoon faced almost daily firefight in the jungles there. Fifty years later, Sam’s memories are still fresh and he shared them with Maine Historical Society’s My Maine Stories project. “You need the soldiers to tell what war is really all about.” Sam’s stories—and those of his fellow veterans from WWII through today—are being permanently saved by MHS as part of My Maine Stories on Maine Memory Network.

Your investment in MHS helps preserve stories like Sam’s and the manuscripts, art, and artifacts that tell the history of Maine. Please help us continue to preserve Maine’s stories — your support makes a huge difference.

Make your gift online at www.mainehistory.org/annualfund or call our Office of Institutional Advancement at 207-774-1822 to pay by credit card or make a gift of stock.
Focusing on Photographs

One of the most common questions librarians and archivists get is, “Are you digitizing that?” Thanks to our current Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grant-funded photo digitization project, the answer to that question is a resounding, “Yes!”

The 19-month project, organized by Director of Library Services Jamie Rice, and managed by Photo Archivist/Curator Patrick Ford, is now just past the midway point. With cataloger Shannon Schooley and photo technicians Gail Dodge and Henry Caiazzo aboard, the project is steaming ahead. We are excited to share some of our discoveries with you!

The goal of this photo digitization project is to give greater visibility to complex photographic mediums, so we are focusing on two cornerstone collections: early cased photographs (c. 1840-1870), and the glass plate negatives of the Portland Press Herald (c. 1920-1940). Together these collections consist of roughly 20,000 items, all of which are being scanned, cataloged, and posted on the MHS Museum Collections Online Catalog (http://mainehistory.pastperfectonline.com/). The images that tell the most resonant stories or are most eye-catching—referred to around here as VIPs (Very Important Photos)—are posted to Maine Memory Network.

MHS’s early cased photograph collection is speckled with clear-cut treasures including an 1854 ambrotype of the burned ruins of the original Merchants’ Exchange building and a circa 1848 daguerreotype of First Lady Dolley Madison, one of only two known photos of her. However, the bulk of MHS’s early cased photos are portraits of little-known or unknown people. One of our newest acquisitions is thankfully identified: a rare four-in-one case of ambrotypes depicting the Fred Burrill family of Auburn, Maine (right). The particularly ornate mat and preserver of each photo tells us these date to the late 1850s. Perhaps most notable here is the case itself, a Thermoplastic Union Case, often simply called a Union Case. Though often confused as being connected to the Civil War, the word union when used here actually refers to the “union” of the case’s physical components: shellac, sawdust, dye, and other chemicals. This unusually durable material is collectible, particularly when fashioned with great embellishment such as that found on the front of this case (above), decorated with a sensitively rendered bas-relief of three children playing with toys in a pastoral landscape.

The glass plate negatives of the Portland Press Herald, donated to MHS in 2005, are similarly strewn with riches. Given that the newspaper included images of nearly every subject under the sun, we never know what we will come across next. A box of negatives can yield eight shots of the Deering High School football team followed by six images of mining in Scarborough followed by three grisly shots of a Portland murder scene. One startling discovery was this photo (top right), which depicts Franklin D. Roosevelt alongside Maine Governor Louis J. Brann on Halloween, 1932. Brann had just been elected for the first time, and Roosevelt similarly was days away from being elected President for the first time. Though he gave a speech in Boston later that night predicting victory in Maine, it would be one of the six states he lost. Another pleasant surprise was this aerial photo of Portland (above), looking southwest. Particularly notable is the heavily built-up working waterfront at the center, and the Million Dollar Bridge at the upper left, which, having been built in 1916, was only about four years old when this picture was taken.

Prints of most pictures on Maine Memory Network, some of those displayed here, are available for purchase through Vintage Maine Images (https://www.vintagemaineimages.com/).
It has been an exciting and eventful year for My Maine Stories (mainememory.net/mymainestories)—the online storytelling forum where anyone can tell their story about Maine with text, video, audio and photographs—which launched in January 2017 on Maine Memory Network. For the first time in sixteen years, individual contributors may now participate in Maine Memory Network—previously only collecting institutions could contribute.

The work done this year showcases the vision of Maine Historical Society and My Maine Stories to—in one central place—collect, honor, hear, appreciate, and imagine how the voices and perspectives of contemporary Mainers from diverse backgrounds connect to each other and to broad historical themes. Once posted, the stories are catalogued for easy searching online, and archived on Maine Memory Network for educational purposes and future research.

My Maine Stories are integral to MHS’s onsite museum exhibitions. The initial stories gathered and posted on the My Maine Stories portal early in 2017 were from Maine’s veterans. The veterans who participated in My Maine Stories and their families were a strong presence at the opening of MHS’s exhibition World War I and the Maine Experience in February, connecting the past to the present and providing a sense of endurance and continuity. One of the featured veterans in My Maine Stories, Vera Cleaves, a Women’s Army Corps WWII veteran, passed away in January 2017 underscoring for MHS the importance of capturing stories like Vera’s and making them permanently accessible on My Maine Stories.

Working with Maine’s Paper and Heritage Museum in Livermore Falls, our team recorded stories of paper mill workers that were then featured in the Making Paper, Making Maine exhibition. They also recorded the My Maine Story of Donna Cassese, mill manager at SAPPI Skowhegan, one of several stories featured in the exhibition.

For the Spark! Maine ART Stories exhibition, the MHS team preserved the stories of the artists featured in the exhibition and incorporated extended My Maine Stories components alongside the artists’ physical works. By exhibiting the work of Mainers from all walks of life, all parts of Maine, and all media in Spark! Maine ART Stories; MHS encourages visitors to “see themselves” in the art and stories featured and to also contribute their own creative Maine story to My Maine Stories.

Late this fall a promotional campaign kicked off for My Maine Stories on Maine Memory Network’s Facebook page to increase visibility for MHS’s contemporary histories and to highlight the diverse voices and perspectives that are participating, creating engaging content, and bringing in new audiences to Maine Historical Society through My Maine Stories. Through the individual stories of everyday Mainers, My Maine Stories extends MHS’s reach to established and new audiences across Maine, and helps to diversify the perspectives and voices of Maine history.

As the focus shifts to the new year, MHS is poised to increase the reach of My Maine Stories throughout the state and to continue to educate those connected to Maine how My Maine Stories provides the opportunity for anyone, anywhere, to contribute to Maine history.

Decontie and Brown’s venture in high fashion design by Decontie and Brown

Penobscot haute couture designs from Bangor

As Maine’s first participatory storytelling portal for the personal stories of Maine’s residents and those who love Maine, the development of My Maine Stories was made possible through a National Leadership Grant from the Institute of Museums and Library Services.

MHS Digital Engagement team, led by Kathy Amoroso, Director of Digital Engagement, and Tilly Laskey, Outreach Curator, traveled the state this year recording stories, spreading the word about My Maine Stories, and providing education and resources for story gathering. Their stops included:

- New Sharon Historical Society
- Camp Kawanhee
- Biddeford Mills Museum
- Space Gallery
- Whitefield Historical Society
- Maine Muster of Storytellers
- Border Historical Society, Eastport
- Passamaquoddy Cultural Heritage Museum
- Women’s March coordinators
- Maine Archives and Museums conference
- And many more!

**EVERYONE HAS A STORY... WHAT’S YOURS?**

- Maine’s Paper and Heritage Museum
- Southern Maine Agency on Aging: Vet to Vet
- Scarborough Public Library
- Aroostook County Historical and Art Museum
- Presque Isle Library
- Presque Isle Historical Society
- Museum L-A
- First Amendment Museum
In 2016, Maine Historical Society and the Stanley Museum in Kingfield, ME entered into a partnership surrounding the Chansonetta Stanley Emmons Photography Collection. The Collection includes over 1,500 glass plate negatives, lantern slides and photographic print images dating from the turn of the twentieth century through the 1930s taken by photographer Chansonetta Stanley Emmons and her daughter Dorothy Emmons.

Chansonetta Stanley Emmons (1858–1937) was a photographer whose work focused on family and farm life in New England. Born in Kingfield, ME, Emmons was the younger sister to the famous Stanley brothers, known for their many inventions including the steam-powered automobile known as the ‘Stanley Steamer’ and a dry plate photographic process later sold to Kodak.

Widowed at age forty, Chansonetta Stanley Emmons dedicated her life to her photography, simultaneously progressing the art form while documenting rural and agricultural life in Maine. Along with her daughter Dorothy, Emmons toured Maine communities photographically documenting family and farm life, specifically the older and younger generations. Her family relationship to the photographic medium adds an additional layer to the already rich and nostalgic narrative of her work.

A biographical entry authored by Elizabeth Bischof in Maine Historical Society and Down East Book’s recent publication Maine Photography: A History 1840-2015, highlights the significance and impact of Emmons work on Maine photography and on the medium as a whole.

The Chansonetta Stanley Emmons Photography Collection was physically deposited by The Stanley Museum at the Maine Historical Society in 2016 to provide secure, year-round public access to the Collection within the Society’s Brown Library. Currently, Maine Historical Society is working to fully digitize the collection and present it online on Maine Memory Network. Through the Maine Memory Network, the partnership provides superior digital access to the Stanley Museum’s collection and offers online interpretation which will in turn promote broader use of the Collection for research, publication, and general interest.

The relationship between The Stanley Museum and Maine Historical Society provides a fantastic opportunity to document and foster research into one of Maine’s most significant photographers, as well as opportunity to further explore rural life in New England. In addition to being of superior artistic quality and photographic skill, Emmons’ photographs provide keen insight into life in northern New England and the American South during this period. The Stanley Museum’s Chansonetta Stanley Emmons Photography Collection represents the most comprehensive collection of her work.

The Stanley Museum is a long-time contributor to Maine Memory Network and is committed to improved online access to historic collections.
VISIT MHS
Call ahead for holiday hours

BROWN RESEARCH LIBRARY
May 1–Oct 31:
Tue–Sat, 10:00am–4:00pm
Nov 1–April 30: Wed–Sat, 10:00am–4:00pm
Closed holidays and some holiday weekends, and the last two weeks of the year

LONGFELLOW HOUSE AND GARDEN
May 1–Oct 31: Open to public
May: Mon–Sun, 12:00pm–5:00pm
June–Oct: Mon–Sat, 10:00am–5:00pm, Sun 12:00pm–5:00pm
Call for tour times
Garden open to the public during the season from 10:00am–5:00pm

MUSEUM AND MUSEUM SHOP
May 1–Oct 31:
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Sun, 12:00pm–5:00pm
Nov 1–Apr 30:
Tue–Sat, 10:00am–5:00pm

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BASKETS of Time
Browse topics from genealogy to Maine crafters and local authors from Henry Wadsworth-Longfellow to Anita Shreve and more.

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