

TESTIMONY
OF
Stephen Bromage, Executive Director
Maine Historical Society
February 23, 2021

130th Maine Legislature

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
And the Joint Standing Committee on Education & Cultural Affairs

LD 221 – LD 221 An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2021, June 30, 2022 and June 30, 2023

Senator Breen, Representative Pierce, members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs; **Senator Daughtry, Representative Brennan**, members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Steve Bromage, Executive Director of the Maine Historical Society. I am speaking in support of the Historical Society’s item in the Biennial Budget.

Mission and programs

By way of background, Maine Historical Society (MHS) was founded in 1822—two years after Maine became a state— and has been collecting, preserving, and promoting research, scholarship, and engagement with Maine history ever since.

MHS is a private 501(c)3 non-profit whose mission is to preserve and share Maine’s story.

With headquarters in Portland, MHS includes the **Brown Research Library**, **MHS Museum**, and **Maine Memory Network**.

(1) The **Brown Research Library** includes the most comprehensive collection of archival material related to Maine history in the state and serves researchers, scholars, educators, students, genealogists, the general public, and professionals from across many fields.

Through our research library, MHS supports extensive scholarly and collections activities—the foundation for meaningful civic dialog. MHS publishes the scholarly journal *Maine History* in partnership with the History Department at the University of Maine. We also host fellowships and scholarly forums, and have recently completed major collections care and access initiatives related to our photographic and clothing collections.

With funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, we have just embarked on a major initiative to digitize our Proprietors and Northeast Boundary collections which document the settlement and distribution of land in Maine from the 17th through 19th centuries.

(2) The **MHS Museum** offers changing exhibitions and public programs that use Maine history to provide context for issues of contemporary interest and concern. Recent major initiatives explored immigration, veterans’ issues, Maine’s food heritage and economy, and Maine’s evolving paper industry.

The first of our two major Bicentennial exhibitions, ***Holding Up the Sky: Wabanaki People, Culture, History & Art***, which was open throughout 2019, explored 13,000 years of Wabanaki presence and stewardship of

Maine. It provided context for the Bicentennial by acknowledging that 200 years of Statehood is just one part of Maine's history.

This year's exhibition initiative—*Begin Again: Reckoning with Intolerance in Maine*—will explore how Maine fits into the national dialog on race and equity. Opening in May, it will include an exhibition, digital resources, extensive public programs delivered via Zoom, and educational resources that support remote learning.

Our Museum also includes the Wadsworth-Longfellow House (1785-86), a National Historic Landmark.

These resources are complemented by **public and educational programs** that provide educators, students, and the public with programs and resources designed to increase knowledge of Maine history, connect students to their communities, and build a variety of skills.

(4) Finally, the **Maine Memory Network** (www.mainememory.net), our nationally-recognized digital platform, empowers Maine communities to share their collections, stories, and perspectives. Maine Memory has evolved constantly since its launch in 2001 and become a robust platform for a wide range of historical interests and activity. It includes historical items contributed by 270 partners across Maine, hundreds of digital exhibits, educational resources, [My Maine Stories](#)—a portal that enables individuals to share their stories, and [Maine History Online](#), a sprawling introduction to Maine. The model gives status to local knowledge and expertise, and radically expands the perspectives that are included in Maine history.

Public Service

Through these activities, MHS serves approximately 500,000 people each year on our campus; through outreach programs; and online.

Employees, Total Budget, and the General Fund

MHS is supported by 15 full-time and 16 part-time staff and a current operating budget of approximately \$1.6 million. Our budget is funded by membership, annual fund, earned income, endowment, and foundation and government grants. In the proposed Biennial Budget for 2022-2023, MHS would receive \$44,864 annually from the State of Maine General fund, or approximately 2.8% of our operating budget.

Funding Initiative

State funds received by Maine Historical Society support the development, maintenance, and outreach services provided through the Maine Memory Network. Annual operating costs for Maine Memory are approximately \$250,000 per year. In the current year, state funding accounts for 18% of its operations. Sustaining Maine Memory as a free and vital public resource is one of MHS's foremost strategic priorities. The state's general fund allocation remains essential to its sustainability.

Maine's Bicentennial

While the pandemic fundamentally affected the scale and spirit of Maine's Bicentennial commemoration, MHS was nonetheless able to adapt, provide programming, and create resources related to the Bicentennial that will be permanently accessible.

These include a **new Bicentennial section of Maine Memory** with extensive information about the Statehood process, and **new curricular resources** that MHS created in partnership with teachers around Maine and the Bicentennial Commission. Our second Bicentennial exhibit, *State of Mind: Becoming Maine*, which just closed, considered how multiple communities perceived and experienced Statehood, including the Wabanaki, African-Americans, English-speaking, and the Acadian French.

MHS also published a Bicentennial edition of Ronald Banks' classic book *Maine Becomes a State*, which provides a play-by-play of the statehood process, in partnership with the **Maine Cultural Affairs Commission** and support from the Bicentennial License Plate Fund. You should have each received a copy.

And, finally, we were able to pivot our **Bicentennial public programs online**. Our **Maine at 200** series began in September and will continue through March—each of the programs in the series is available online. In the next few weeks, Earle Shettleworth, Jr. and Colin Woodard will deliver the series' final programs.

Impact of Pandemic

The pandemic has brought both challenges and opportunities.

We estimate that MHS will lose approximately \$300k this year in revenue from admissions, fundraising events, and other sources impacted by the pandemic. We are working hard to replace that revenue and making progress. Maine Cares funding enabled MHS to avoid laying staff off.

Along with challenges, the pandemic has created opportunities for MHS. When it became clear that in-person activities were going to be extremely limited for the foreseeable future, we saw that MHS was well-positioned to adapt and shift our focus to the digital realm where we have developed significant resources and expertise.

With people homebound, socially-isolated, and desperate for connection, information, and entertainment, MHS staff focused on responding to those needs virtually.

Maine Memory Network provided a powerful starting place—giving us a digital platform to share Maine content, including historical context for the pandemic and social equity issues. MHS recorded 1.9 million page views from 500,000 users in 2020, a 47% increase over 2019.

Zoom has provided a new and powerful tool that is now enabling MHS to reach and serve people who care about Maine across the state and country. We have produced Zoom programming on topics ranging from the Bicentennial, to suffrage, to social justice issues, to a wide range of general Maine history topics. This enabled us to triple participation in our public programs in 2020—**from approximately 1,000 people in person in 2019 to more than 3,000 via Zoom in 2020**. Again, you can view each of those programs online.

Conclusion: Looking Forward

As we enter 2021, MHS is focused on what comes next: the opportunity and need to prepare Maine to thrive in its *next* century.

What are our dreams for Maine? What assets and opportunities will drive a strong economy and create prosperity for people and communities throughout the state? How will we address challenges like climate change and social, economic, and geographic inequity? How will we preserve and strengthen Maine's incredible sense of place?

History is essential to this process. Every aspect of Maine today is fundamentally shaped by history. The stories that MHS preserves and shares—the stories of *your* families and communities—provide a road map of how we got here, and of what makes Maine "Maine." They provide the context and information needed to unpack challenging legacies, and keys that can help us build a vibrant, forward-looking Maine.

Thank you for your time, and the critical funding you provide for our work.

Maine Historical Society Board of Trustees 2020-2021

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OUR MISSION

The Maine Historical Society preserves and shares Maine's story to enrich life in contemporary Maine.

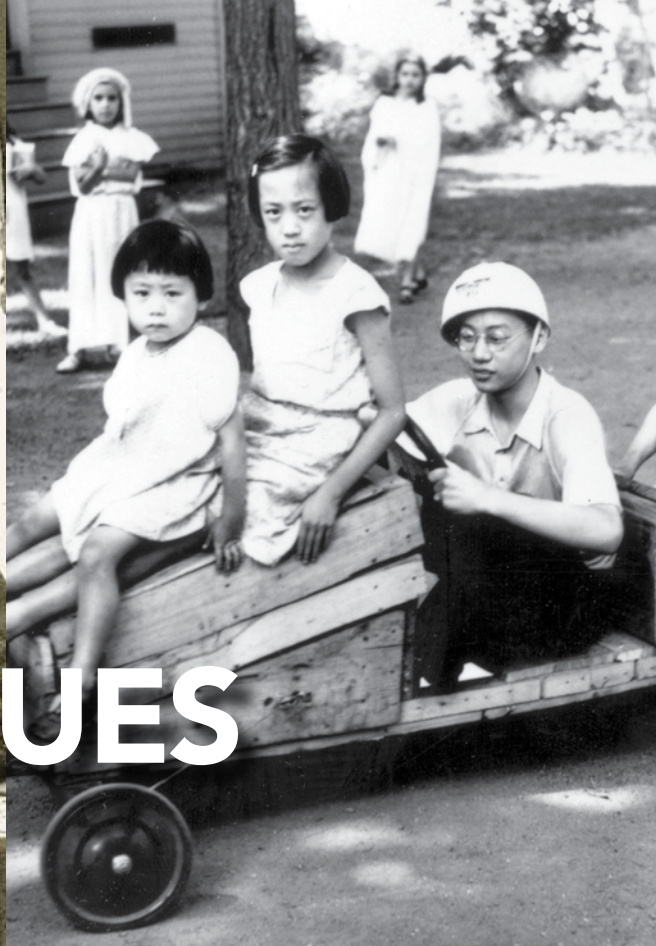
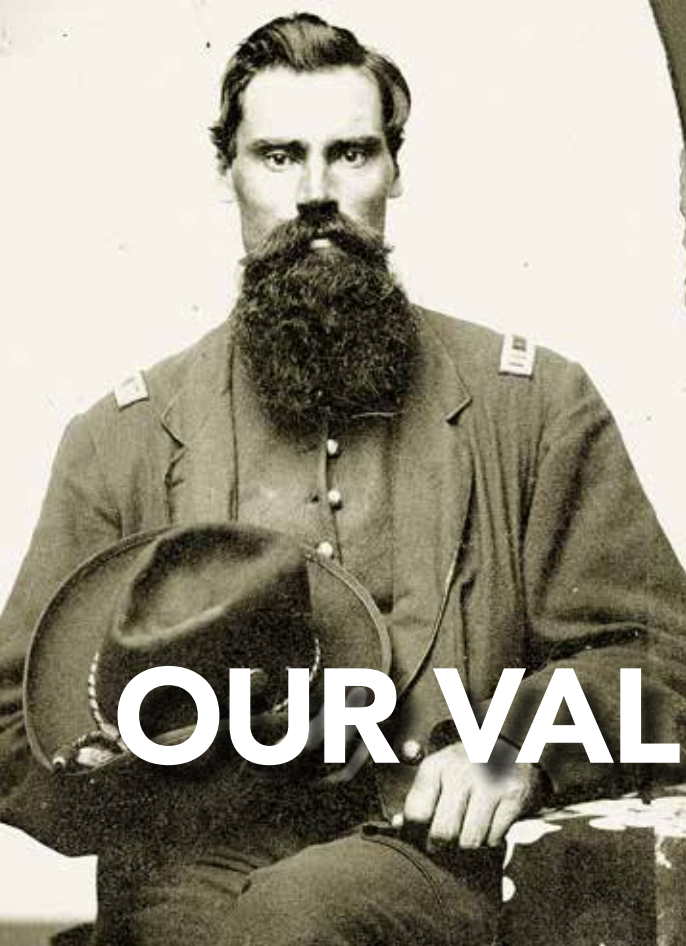
OUR VISION

Maine history is the story of Maine.

- ★ History documents the experiences of Maine's diverse people and communities, and how each contributes to the state's identity, well-being, and vitality.
- ★ History shows us how Maine became the place it is today – how our towns, industries, and institutions emerged and continue to evolve.
- ★ History connects our personal and family experiences to our communities, to Maine, to our nation, and to each other.
- ★ History helps us unpack challenging issues, solve problems, see new opportunities, and imagine the future.
- ★ History is fundamental to Maine's identity and sense of place – the state's most important asset. Our sense of place is a source of pride and connection to Mainers, a magnet for visitors, and a powerful brand that resonates with audiences around the world.

MHS is dedicated to making history relevant and a resource for Maine people. We are committed to engaging and partnering with all who have a stake in Maine, and, to inspiring, informing, and supporting forward-looking thinking and action.





OUR VALUES

Service

We are dedicated to sharing our knowledge, expertise, and resources. We are driven to contribute to the understanding and practice of history, and to the needs of our community.

Civil War captain, ca. 1861
Maine Historical Society Collections

Inclusivity

We are committed to documenting, honoring, learning from, and sharing the experiences and perspectives of all Maine people and communities.

Children of Dogan and Toy Len Goon,
Portland, 1934
Maine Historical Society Collections

Innovation

We are imaginative, entrepreneurial, and forward-looking. We pursue new opportunities, relationships, and ways of thinking that can enrich our work and community.

Vera Cleaves, West Point, 1943
*Courtesy of an individual through the
Westport Island History Committee via
Maine Memory Network*



Collaboration

We strive to be a valued partner, ally, leader, and friend – across audiences, fields, sectors, and geography.

Commitment to the future

We provide perspective that helps Mainers understand the issues that shape their lives today, and to imagine and prepare for the future.

Woodsmen and work horses, Blanchard, 1915
Maine Historical Society Collections

Couple, Old Orchard Beach, 1920
Maine Historical Society/MaineToday Media Collection



OUR CORE COMMITMENTS

Preserving Maine History

We collect, care for, and provide access to materials that support the study of Maine history. We strive to engage Maine people, communities, and institutions in preserving and sharing their unique collections and stories. We are committed to overcoming geographic, social, cultural, and technological barriers to the access and use of historical collections.

Fostering Research & Scholarship

We promote study and use of Maine history by all people. We are committed to rigorous scholarship, freedom of inquiry, confronting all aspects of the historical record, and advocate the use of history to support planning for the future.

Sharing Maine's Story

We help audiences throughout the world explore and learn about Maine through its history. We support lifelong learning and use history to help people of all ages develop knowledge, skills, and deeper connections to Maine.

Mobilizing the Longfellow Legacy

We use the Wadsworth-Longfellow family home to celebrate Maine's creativity, cultural heritage, and to explore Maine's part in the American story.



2020 Was a Year Like No Other

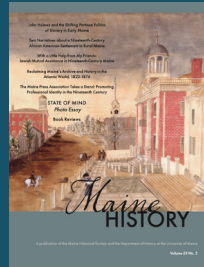
With your support, MHS sustained core activities and gained momentum in new areas. THANK YOU!

Pivoted to Zoom programming, tripling attendance and reaching Mainers across the country

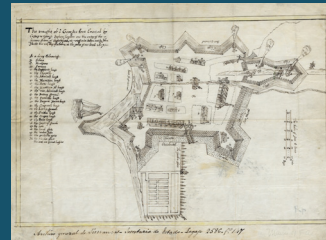


Found creative new ways to commemorate Maine's Bicentennial

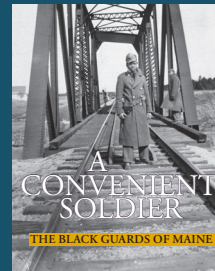
Supported research and several new publications



Hosted nearly 500,000 users on our online digital museum, Maine Memory Network



Mounted three exhibitions highlighting new voices and stories



Continued to radically expand digital access to MHS Collections



Catalogued, rehoused, and digitized our vast costume collection



Maine Memory Network Contributing Partners – June 2020

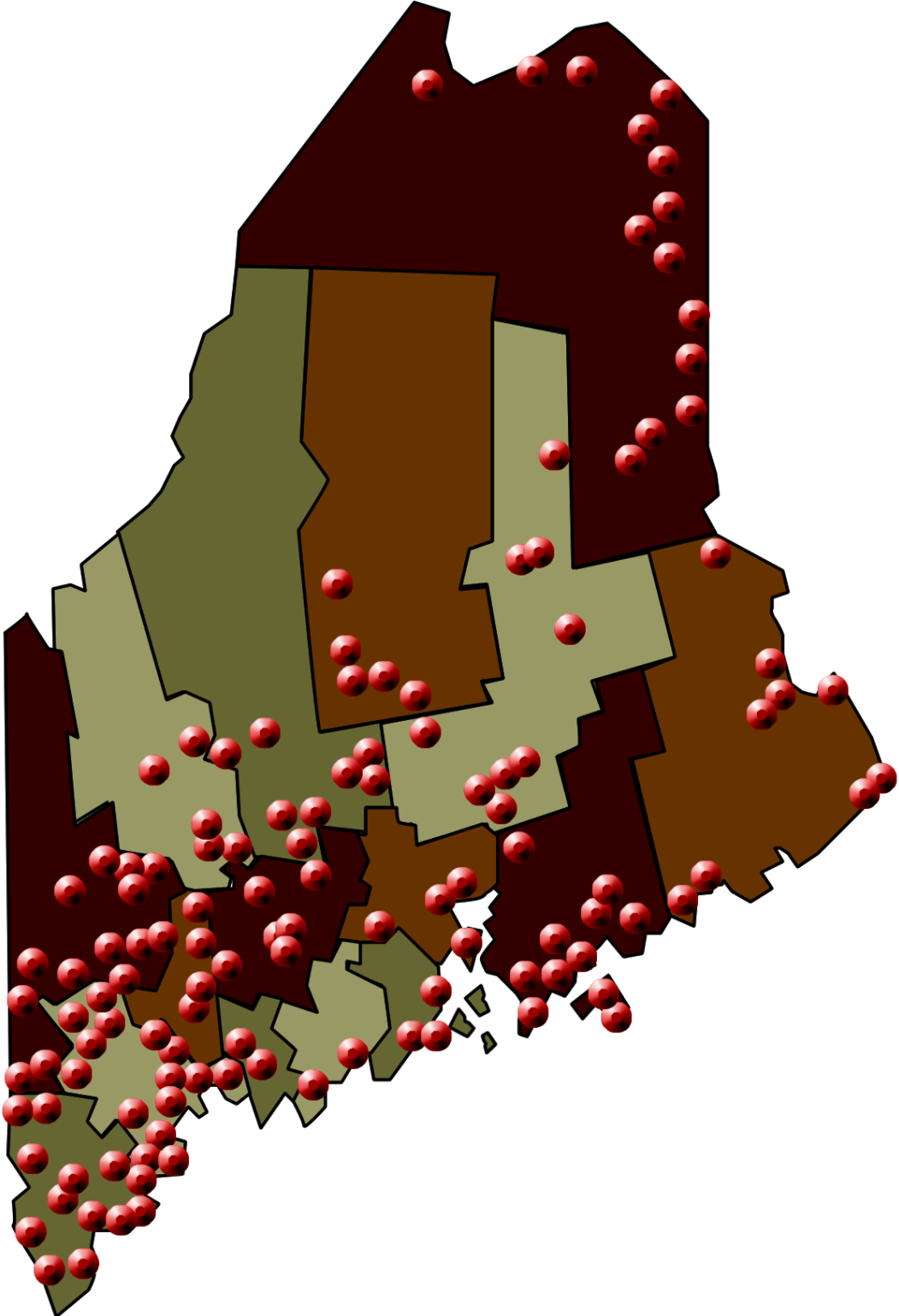
Abbe Museum	City of Portland – Planning & Dev.	Haystack Historical Society
Abbot Historical Society	City Point Central Railroad Museum	Hermon Historical Society
Abel J. Morneault Memorial Library	Clifton Historical Society	Hiram Historical Society
Abplanalp Library, UNE	Clinton Historical Society	Hollingsworth Fine Arts
Acadia National Park	Colby College Special Collections	Hose 5 Fire Museum
Acadian Archives	Congregation Shaarey Tphiloh	Houlton Grange
Acton-Shapleigh Historical Society	Cornish Historical Society	Hubbard Free Library
Alexander-Crawford Historical Soc.	Craig Brook National Fish Hatchery	Hudson Museum, Univ. of Maine
Alfred Historical Society	Cumberland Historical Society	Island Falls Historical Society
Allagash Historical Society	Davistown Museum	Islesboro Historical Society
Ambajejus Boomhouse Museum	Dedham Historical Society	Jesup Memorial Library
Androscoggin Historical Society	Dixfield Historical Society	John Bapst Memorial High School
Aroostook Co. Hist. & Art Museum	Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society	Jonathan Fisher Memorial, Inc.
Baldwin Historical Society	Durham Historical Society	Kennebec Historical Society
Bangor Daily News Library	Dyer Library Archives / Saco Museum	Kennebec Valley Comm. College
Bangor Museum & Center for History	East Grand School	Kennebunk Free Library
Bangor Police Museum	Easton Historical Society	Kennebunkport Historical Society
Bangor Public Library	Eastern Maine Medical Center	Kings Landing Historical Settlement
Bar Harbor Fire Department	Eddington Historical Society	L'Heritage Vivant Living Heritage
Bar Harbor Historical Society	Edythe Dyer Community Library	L.C. Bates Museum / Good Will-
Baxter State Park	Eliot Baha'i Archives	Hinckley Homes
Belfast Historical Society	Ellsworth Historical Society	L.L.Bean Corporate Archives
Biddeford Historical Society	Ellsworth Public Library	Lamoine Historical Society
Biddeford Mills Museum	Farmington Historical Society	Leeds Historical Society
Blake Library Spec. Collections	Farmington Public Library	Lewiston Public Library
Blue Hill Historical Society	Fifth Maine Regiment Museum	Life Story Center
Blue Hill Public Library	First Parish in Portland	Lincoln Academy
Boston Public Library	Fort Kent Historical Society	Lincoln Historical Society
Bowdoin College Library	Fort Kent Public Library	Lithgow Public Library
Bowdoin College Museum of Art	Franco-American Collection, USM	Lisbon Historical Society
Brewer Public Library	Franco-American Heritage Center at	Long Creek Youth Development Ctr
Brick Store Museum	St. Mary's	Longfellow Garden Club
Bridgewater Historical Society	Freeport Historical Society	Longfellow National Historic Site
Bridgton Historical Society	Friends of Wood Island Lighthouse	Lovell Historical Society
Buck Memorial Library	Friendship Historical Society	Lubec Historical Society
Buckfield Historical Society	Frontier Heritage Historical Society	Lubec Landmarks
Bucksport Historical Society	Friends of the Kotschmar Organ	Lubec Memorial Library
Bureau of Parks and Lands	Fryeburg Academy Archives	Lyman Moore Middle School
Buxton Hollis Historical Society	Fryeburg Historical Society	Maine Aviation Hist. Soc. & Maine
Byron Historical Society	Fryeburg Public Library	Air Museum
Camden Public Library	Garland Historical Society	Maine Bureau of Parks & Land
Camden-Rockport Historical Society	Gorham Historical Society	Maine Conservation Corp
Camp Runoia	Great Cranberry Island Historical Soc.	Maine Central Institute
Camp Winnebago	Great Harbor Maritime Museum	Maine Department of Transportation
Caribou Fire & Ambulance Dept.	Greater Portland Landmarks	Maine Folklife Center, UMO
Caribou Public Library	Greater Rumford Area Historical Soc.	Maine Forest Service
Carmel Historical Society	Guilford Historical Society	Maine Granite Industry Historical Soc.
Cary Library	Hallowell Fireman's Association	Maine Historical Society
Cary Memorial Library (Wayne)	Hamlin Memorial Library	Maine Historic Preservation Comm.
The Cedars	Hampden Historical Society	Maine Irish Heritage Center
Charlotte Hobbs Memorial Library	Harmony Historical Society	Maine Maritime Museum
City of Brewer	Harrison Historical Society	Maine Medical Center Archives
City of Portland Dept. of Public Works	Hartland Historical Society	Maine State Archives

Maine State Library
Maine State Museum
Maine's Paper & Heritage Museum
Maine Today Media
Mantor Library at UMF
Margaret Chase Smith Library
Mark & Emily Turner Library
McArthur Public Library
Mercy Hospital
Mexico Historical Society
Milbridge Historical Society
Millinocket Fire Department
Milo Historical Society
Minot Historical Society
Monhegan Museum
Monmouth Museum
Monson Historical Society
Montpelier, The General Henry Knox
Museum
Moosehead Historical Society
Moosehead Messenger
Mt. Desert Island Historical Society
Mt. Desert Island Hospital
Museum at Portland Head
Museums of Old York
Muskie Archives & Special Coll. Lib.
Naples Historical Society
National Archives at Boston
New Gloucester Historical Society
New Hampshire Historical Society
New Portland Historical Society
New Sharon Historical Society
New Sweden Historical Society
Norcross Heritage Trust
Nordica Memorial Association
Norridgewock Historical Society
North Yarmouth Historical Society
Northeast Harbor Library
Northeast Historic Film
Northern Maine Museum of Science
Norway Historical Society
Norway Memorial Library
Nylander Museum
Oakfield Grange #414
Oakfield Historical Society
Old Berwick Historical Society
Old Canada Road Historical Society
Old Orchard Beach Historical Society

Old York Historical Society
Otisfield Historical Society
Owls Head Transportation Museum
Palmyra Historical Society
Paris Cape Historical Society
Paris Hill Historical Society
Parsons Memorial Library
Parsonsfield-Porter Historical Society
Patten Free Library
Patten Historical Society
Patten Lumbermen's Museum
Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum
Pejepscot Historical Society
Penobscot Marine Museum
Peru Historical Society
Phillips Historical Society
Phippsburg Historical Society
Pittsfield Historical Society
Poland Spring Preservation Society
Porter Memorial Library
Portland Harbor Museum
Portland Public Library
Portland Water District
Pownal Scenic and Historical Society
Presque Isle Air Museum
Presque Isle Fire Department
Presque Isle Historical Society
Prince Memorial Library
Princeton Public Library
Raymond H. Fogler Library
Robert A. Frost Memorial Library
Rockland Historical Society
Rumford Historical Society
Saco Museum
Salmon Brook Historical Society
Sanford Historical Committee
Scarborough Historical Society
Seal Cove Auto Museum
Seashore Trolley Museum
Sebago Historical Society
Sedgwick-Brooklin Historical Society
Ski Museum of Maine
Skowhegan History House
Skowhegan Public Library
Skyline Farm
South Bristol Historical Society
South Portland Historical Society
South Portland Public Library

Southern Aroostook Agricultural Mus.
Southwest Harbor Historical Society
Southwest Harbor Public Library
St. Albans Historical Society
St. Croix Historical Society
St. Joseph Healthcare
Stanley Museum
Ste. Agathe Historical Society
Steep Falls Library
Stetson Historical Society
Steuben Historical Society
Stockholm Historical Society
Strong Historical Society
Sullivan and Sorrento Historical Soc.
Surry Historical Society
Swan's Island Educational Society
Tate House
Telephone Museum
Thomaston Historical Society
Topsham Historical Society
Town of Cumberland
Trenton Historical Society
Trescott Historical Society
Turner Historical Society
United Society of Shakers
University of Maine at PI Library
Vaughan Homestead Foundation
Waldoboro Fire Department
Walker Memorial Library
Warren Memorial Library
Washburn Memorial Library
Washburn Norlands Living History Ctr
Waterford Historical Society
Waterville Public Library
Westbrook Historical Society
Westport Island History Committee
West Quoddy Head Light Keepers
Association
Western Maine Cultural Alliance
Whitefield Historical Society
William Fogg Library
Wilson Museum
Windham Historical Society
Winslow Historical Preservation
Committee
Winter Harbor Historical Society
Yarmouth Historical Society

Map showing geographic representation of Maine Memory Network Contributors





MAINE AT 200



Manie Historical Society presents a powerhouse series of online programs commemorating the Bicentennial of Maine Statehood!

SEPTEMBER 2020 – MARCH 2021



2020 has been a remarkable and challenging year, heightening the need for information, context, connection, and dialog. Join us for compelling talks, panels and conversations with distinguished historians and authors. Explore how Maine became a State in 1820, what that has meant to Maine people, and how 13,000 years of history shape the issues that matter to Mainers today. The series is part of Maine Historical Society's ongoing effort to preserve and share Maine's story, and to recognize the experiences, perspectives, and contributions of all Maine people.



SOME OF OUR FEATURED PRESENTERS:
(each held 6:00 to 7:00 pm)

See the COMPLETE schedule of additional programs with details and how to register on mainehistory.org/programs. Please register early; we expect these events will fill up quickly!

September 14, 2020

Freedom's Woods: The African American Community of Peterborough in Warren, Maine

Dr. Kate McMahon, Smithsonian Institution



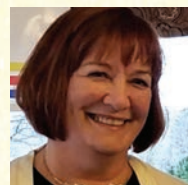
October 22, 2020

Becoming Maine
Liam Riordan,
Professor of History,
University of Maine



January 21, 2021

Acadiens in Maine
Lise Pelletier,
Director, Acadian
Archives University of
Maine-Fort Kent



November 11, 2020

Pandemics in Wabanaki Communities
James E. Francis, Sr.,
Director, Cultural and
Historic Preservation, Penobscot Nation



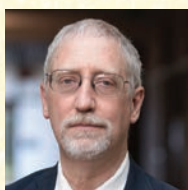
February 25, 2021

Maine Art Collection at MHS
Earle Shettleworth,
Maine State Historian



October 8, 2020

Liberty Men, Great Proprietors, and Maine Today
Alan Taylor,
Author and Professor of
History, University of Virginia



January 7, 2021

Medicine in Early Maine
Dr. Richard Kahn,
Medical Historian
and Author



March 11, 2021

Maine's Bicentennial: Looking Backward and Forward
Colin Woodard,
Award-winning Author
and Journalist



STATE OF MIND BECOMING MAINE



OPENING Thursday, March 12, 2020

5 – 7 pm



MAINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY





MAINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
2019 Maine History Maker Award

Join us to celebrate
THE HILDRETH FAMILY

Friday, November 1, 2019
5:00-7:30 pm

Hannaford Hall
University of Southern Maine
Portland, Maine



MAINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

presents the 2019 Maine History Maker Award to

THE HILDRETH FAMILY

For their contributions to the life, well-being, and vitality of Maine.
Family members reflect core Maine values and have helped shape
modern Maine for generations through leadership in politics, business,
environmental conservation, and the arts.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2019
5:00-7:30 pm

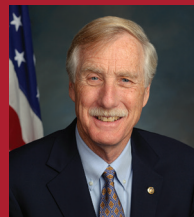
Hannaford Hall
University of Southern Maine
Portland, Maine

Learn more about the event and the Hildreth family at www.mainehistory.org/HistoryMaker

EVENING PROGRAM

5:00 pm **RECEPTION**
Cash Bar and Light Fare

6:00 pm **MAINE HISTORY MAKER AWARD PRESENTATION**
The program will include a keynote address
by Senator Angus King, as well as entertainment, family
stories, and presentation of the award.



Tickets \$55 per person
Patron and Sponsorship opportunities are also available.

RSVP By October 28
Buy tickets online www.mainehistory.org/HistoryMaker
or contact Kate Raymond, Donor Relations Manager,
at kraymond@mainehistory.org or 207-774-1822 ext. 216.



*Maine Historical Society's
annual Maine History Maker Award recognizes
contemporary Mainers who are making
a significant contribution to Maine today.
It recognizes traditions of innovation, leadership,
and commitment to community that have defined
Maine throughout its history.*

PATRONS

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Sue and Rusty Atwood | Leslie and Peter Merrill |
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| and Nathaniel B. Bates | Tobey Scott |
| Myron Beasley | and Amy Woodhouse |
| Tom Cattell | Eileen and John Skinner |
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| Nancy Cline | Charles Stanhope |
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| Jean and John Gulliver | Andy Verzosa |
| Katie and Tyler Judkins | Lee Webb |
| David Lakari | Tim Woodcock |

SPONSORS

- Baker Newman Noyes
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Spinnaker Trust

*Proceeds will support Maine Historical Society's statewide celebration of Maine's Bicentennial in 2020
and will be recognized as "Funds raised in honor of the Hildreth Family, 2019 Maine History Maker Awardees."*

COVER PHOTO:
Twins Horace and Charles Hildreth played football together
at Bowdoin College (Class of 1925).

Examples of MHS's Responsive Programming: Exhibits and Public Program Initiatives

State of Mind: Becoming Maine

March 13, 2020 to January 30, 2021



Description

State of Mind: Becoming Maine explored Maine as the homeland of the Wabanaki people, as a European province, as part of the District of Massachusetts, and the State of Maine. It considered Maine's Bicentennial milestone in relation to Maine's formation as a state 200 years ago; the significance of the Missouri Compromise; how the idea of "Maine" is perceived by people today; and how the changing landscape could alter Maine's future. The exhibition featured manuscripts and items relating to statehood, historic maps, contemporary artwork, and opportunities to learn about the experiences of Wabanaki people alongside the early settlers, including: European American, African American, and Acadian communities.

Direct collaborators

Curated by Tilly Laskey, Maine Historical Society.

Advised by:

Deborah Cummings Khadraoui, Abyssinian Meeting House, Portland;

James E. Francis Sr. (Penobscot) Director of Cultural and Historic Preservation, Penobscot Nation;

Bob Greene, Author, Portland, Maine;

Daniel Minter, Indigo Arts Alliance;

Lise Pelletier, Director, Archives Acadiennes, University of Maine, Fort Kent;

Darren Ranco (Penobscot), Professor of Anthropology and Coordinator of Native American Programs, University of Maine;

Donald Soctomah (Passamaquoddy) Director, Passamaquoddy Cultural Heritage Center and Passamaquoddy Tribal Historic Preservation Officer

Collaborators

Jason K. Brown

Donna Decontie Brown

Canadian-American Center

Thérèse L. Provenzano

Liam Riordan

Outcomes

- Purchased 4 items for MHS permanent collections
 - James E. Francis Sr. (Penobscot) "[We Walk On: Eternally](#)", 2020
 - Decontie & Brown (Penobscot), "[Dawnland Couture](#)" 2019
 - Jason K. Brown (Penobscot) musical soundscape, 2020
 - Therese Provenzano (Acadian) pastel, "Buckwheat No 2, Hooked diversion ditch red and green"
- 1 Exhibition added online: www.mainememory.net/stateofmind

Holding Up the Sky: Wabanaki People, Culture, History & Art

April 12, 2019 -February 1, 2020



Description

Holding up the Sky explored Wabanaki philosophies of leadership and obligation relating to humans and non-humans by highlighting 13,000 years of Wabanaki residence in what is now known as Maine. Wabanaki co-curators guided the exhibition, interpreting 17th century colonial treaties, photographs, heritage items, and contemporary artworks— everything from ash baskets to haute couture fashion. Wabanaki voices provide context for the present-day relevance and repercussions of 400 years of shared histories between

Wabanaki people and immigrants to their region. The exhibit featured 60 artists, 42 of them living.

Direct collaborators

Co-curated by:

Lisa Brooks (Abenaki) Professor of English and American Studies, Amherst College, Massachusetts;

James Eric Francis Sr. (Penobscot) Director of Cultural and Historic Preservation, Penobscot Nation;

Suzanne Greenlaw (Maliseet) Ph.D student, University of Maine, Orono;

Tilly Laskey, Curator, Maine Historical Society;

Micah Pawling, Professor of History and Native American Studies, University of Maine, Orono;

Darren Ranco (Penobscot), Professor of Anthropology and Coordinator of Native American Research, University of Maine, Orono;

Theresa Secord (Penobscot), Artist and Maine Historical Society Trustee;

Ashley Smith (Wabanaki descent), Assistant Professor of Native American Studies and Environmental Justice, Hampshire College, Massachusetts;

Donald Soctomah (Passamaquoddy) Director, Passamaquoddy Cultural Heritage Center and Passamaquoddy Tribal Historic Preservation Officer.

Collaborators who provided stories and label copy

Patricia Ayala Rocabado (Widow of David Moses Bridges, Passamaquoddy)

John S. Banks (Penobscot, Director of the Department of Natural Resources for the Penobscot Indian Nation)

James Boyce (Micmac)

Gina Brooks (Maliseet)

Jason Brown (Penobscot)

Donna Decontie Brown (Penobscot)

Catherine Burns, PhD (University of Wisconsin)

John Dennis (Micmac)

Jeremy Frey (Passamaquoddy)

Bunny McBride

Geo Neptune (Passamaquoddy)

Jennifer Neptune (Penobscot)

Harald Prins

Donna Sanipass (Micmac)

Emma Soctomah (Passamaquoddy)

Frances Soctomah (Passamaquoddy)

Chris Socklexis (Penobscot)

Wabanaki REACH

Outcomes

- 1 exhibition added to [MMN www.mainememory.net/holdingupthesky](http://www.mainememory.net/holdingupthesky)
- [13 Wabanaki My Maine Stories](#) added to MMN
- 6 items purchased from Wabanaki artists
 - Gina Brooks (Maliseet) ["Indian"](#) painted leather Jacket, 2018
 - Decontie & Brown (Penobscot) [Gingham Glam](#) fashion dress, 2019
 - James E. Francis Sr. (Penobscot) [Kapase sturgeon painted drum](#), 2019
 - Gabriel Frey (Passamaquoddy) [ash woven Pack Purse](#), 2019
 - Jennifer Neptune (Penobscot) [Waterlily beaded fabric pouch](#), 2019
 - Frances Soctomah (Passamaquoddy) [Strawberry beaded fabric necklace](#), 2019
- 2019 gallery attendance to *Holding up the Sky* numbers doubled over previous year and school visits rose by 900%
- Decontie & Brown Fashion Show in Portland during Magical History Tour events
- Theresa Secord donation of handkerchief basket
- October 14, 2019 Maine's FIRST Indigenous Peoples Day celebration organized by Bridgid Neptune (Passamaquoddy) and Fiona Hopper from Portland Public Schools

Public Programs, including:

- film screening and discussion, *DAWNLAND*
- Decolonization Teacher Workshop, with Portland Public Schools and Upstander Project (teacher program)
- Maine-Wabanaki REACH workshop for MHS staff (not a public program), for MHS staff and volunteers to support the work with public for *Holding Up the Sky*)
- Upstander Project Teacher Workshop (teacher program)
- book launch, *Canoe Maker*, with Donald Soctomah and Jean Flahive
- Children's Hour with storyteller Mihku Paul
- book launch, *Properties of Empire*, with Ian Saxine
- Wabanaki Studies Teacher Workshop, with Joe Schmidt (teacher program)
- film screening and discussion, *Wilderness and Spirit: A Mountain Called Katahdin*, with Huey
- talk, Teaching Wabanaki History & Culture, presented by UNE (MHS a partner)
- Indigenous Peoples Day at MHS, with performance by Huntley Brook Singers, remarks from cultural director for the Aroostook Band of Micmacs John Dennis, remarks from Penobscot Nation Tribal Ambassador Maulian Dana, film screening of *Dear Georgina*, Native crafts with artists and vendors, free admission to *Holding up the Sky*
- film screening of *DAWNLAND*, presented by UNE (MHS a partner)
- panel discussion, Indigenous Communities in America – Understanding Cultures in Clinical Settings, presented by UNE (MHS a partner)
- talk, Wabanaki Place: Language and Landscape, with James Francis
- monthly curator tours of *Holding Up the Sky*



Maine Eats: The Food Revolution Starts Here

March 2, 2018 – March 2, 2019



Description

Using historical and contemporary stories of individual people and communities, *Maine Eats: The Food Revolution Starts Here*, told the Maine food story. Throughout the interactive exhibition, visitors were invited to engage their senses and to think deeply about the past, present and future of Maine's relationship with food.

Direct collaborators:

Dan Blackstone (Aroostook County potato farmer)
Titi De Baccarat (Artist, Portland; Asylum seeker from Gabon)
Mufalo Chitam (Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition)
Maria Cushing (Cape Verde healthcare worker and activist)
Marie and Dell Emerson (Blueberry farmers, Columbia Falls)
George Fowler (Norcross Heritage Trust)
Marian and Albert Fowler (Norcross Heritage Trust)
Debbie Gagnon (Red's Eats)
Henry Gartley (Aroostook County Historical and Art Museum)
Caitlin Gerber (Chebeague Oyster)
Marie Harnois (Passamaquoddy Maple)
Robert Indiana (Artist)
Kheyro Jama (Empower the Immigrant Women)
Muhidin Libah (Somali Bantu Community Association)
Andrew Pershing (Gulf of Maine Research Institute)
Kathy Pollard (Gedakina Indigenous Women's leadership)
Alain Ouellette (Acadian)
Darren Ranco (Penobscot)
Parivash Rohani (Iranian asylum seeker)
Sadie Samuels (Lobsterwoman)
Barton Seaver (Chef and National Geographic Explorer)
Kathy Smith (Wolfe Neck Farm)
Kim Smith (Presque Isle Historical Society)
Brian J. Theriault (Acadian)
Edmond Theriault (Acadian)

Outcomes

- [27 My Maine Stories added](#) to the Food section of Maine Memory Network
- 1 exhibition added to [MMN www.mainememory.net/maine eats](http://www.mainememory.net/maine eats)
- Series of public programs

Making Paper, Making Maine

June 2 through October 22, 2017



Description

Paper has shaped Maine's economy, molded individual and community identities, and impacted the environment throughout Maine. When Hugh Chisholm opened the Otis Falls Pulp Company in Jay in 1888, the mill was one of the most modern paper-making facilities in the country, and was connected to national and global markets. For the next century, Maine was an international leader in the manufacture of pulp and paper. *Making Paper, Making Maine* recognized the historic transition taking place in Maine's paper industry, and asked, what's next for Maine's economy? *This exhibition was generously supported by The Elsie A. Brown Fund, Inc.*

Direct collaborators:

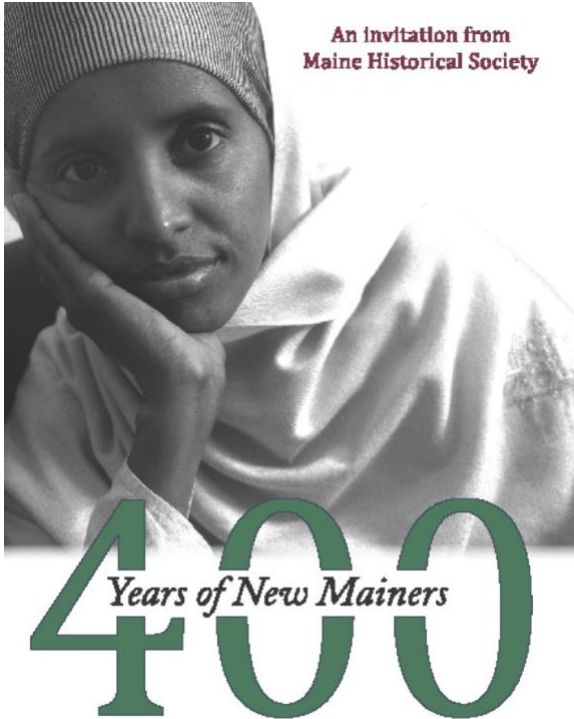
- [Forest Society of Maine](#)
- [Maine's Paper & Heritage Museum](#)

Outcomes

- [1 exhibition](#) added to Maine Memory Network
- [16 Paper Mill Worker My Maine Stories](#) added to MMN
- Series of public programs

400 Years of New Mainers

February 4 – May 30, 2016



Description

Co-curated by Tilly Laskey and Reza Jalali, a Kurd from Iran, educator, writer, scholar, human rights and refugee activist who has lived in Maine since 1985 and currently works for the University of Southern Maine. The exhibition was based upon black and white photos taken by Jan Pieter Van Voorst Van Beest, an immigrant from the Netherlands who has lived in Maine since 1970. The exhibition was augmented with items from MHS's permanent collections and loans from the community. Artist Natasha Mayers worked with international students from Portland Public Schools to paint lobster buoys with the flags of their home countries. The Buoys were installed on the historic iron gate of MHS's Wadsworth Longfellow House.

Direct collaborators

Reza Jalali (USM)

Jan Pieter Van Voorst Van Beest (Artist)

Orson Horchler aka Pigeon (Artist)

Natasha Mayers (USM artist in residence)

Major themes in *400 Years of New Mainers* were racism and nationalism, including the KKK in Maine. Street artist Pigeon was commissioned to wheat paste his series, the Mainer Project on the front of MHS's museum building as well as on the gallery walls.

Outcomes:

- MHS purchased Penobscot artist Jason K. Brown's "[Creation Cuff](#)" for MHS permanent collections and display in 400 Years of New Mainers. Jason sang and did a prayer for the opening of 400 Years of New Mainers.
- Jan Pieter Van Voorst Van Beest's [New Mainer portfolio](#) added to MMN
- 1 exhibition added to [MMN www.mainememory.net/400years](http://www.mainememory.net/400years)
- Visitor attendance rose 10 times over 2015
- School visits increased 900% over 2015
- Series of public programs

Pigeon's Mainer Project: street art meets history

March 4 – May 1, 2016.



Direct Collaborators

Orson Horchler aka Pigeon

Description

Orson Horchler's (aka Pigeon) original artwork was combined with current news, historic photographs, manuscripts, and newspapers from the Maine Historical Society's collections to provide context to social justice issues, events in our past, to inform our future regarding the often contentious subject of immigration, and to ask, what does it mean to be a Mainer?

Outcomes

- MHS purchased Horchler's "[Portrait of Hawa](#)", 2016 for the permanent collections
- 1 exhibition added to [MMN](#)
- Horchler gave a talk on the Mainer Project at MHS

Veteran's Voices

January 12 – May 28, 2017

VETERANS' VOICES

Opens January 12, 2017 at Maine Historical Society



VETERANS' VOICES features first-person stories of veterans from World War II to Afghanistan drawn from Maine Historical Society's new online storytelling portal, MY MAINE STORIES: MaineMemory.net/mymainestories.



Maine Historical Society
489 Congress St., Portland, ME
www.MaineHistory.org

This exhibition received generous support from The Simmons Foundation.

Description

Veterans' Voices featured first-person stories from veterans spanning World War II to the Afghanistan wars. Veterans' Voices was the inaugural exhibition drawn from My Maine Stories, Maine Historical Society's online storytelling portal that, for the first time, opened Maine Memory Network to individual contributors to tell and archive their own personal histories.

Direct collaborators

Veterans: Joy Asuncion, Vera Cleves, Adam Cote, Ted Heselton, William B. Hinderer, Sam Kelley, Nicholas Krier, Mary D. McGuirk, Doug Rawlings, Bob Small
Maine Veterans Association: Karen L. Olson, M.D.

Outcomes

- [35 Veteran stories](#) added to MMN
- Series of public programs

Baskets from the Dawnland: Weaving the past and future together

August 14 – November 28, 2015



Description

Co-curated by Tilly Laskey and Penobscot basketmaker Theresa Secord. The exhibition featured historic and contemporary items from MHS's permanent collections and private collections along with contemporary photos of all the artists taken by artist Christine Macchi.

Direct collaborators

Theresa Secord (Penobscot)

Christine Macchi (Artist)

Program "Dawnland Voies" associated with Baskets from the Dawnland featured Abenaki and Wabanaki writers including Donald Soctomah. This was my initial reintroduction to Donald which led to numerous presentations and work on Holding up the Sky and State of Mind.

Outcomes

- This positive experience led to Theresa Secord joining the MHS Board of Trustees.
- Series of public programs

SPARK! Maine Art Stories

November 3, 2017 – March 31, 2018



Description

Spark! Maine ART Stories explored the varied ways Mainers express themselves, and featured sixteen contemporary Maine artists who were diverse in their geography, their artistic mediums, and in what compelled them to create.

Direct collaborators/artists

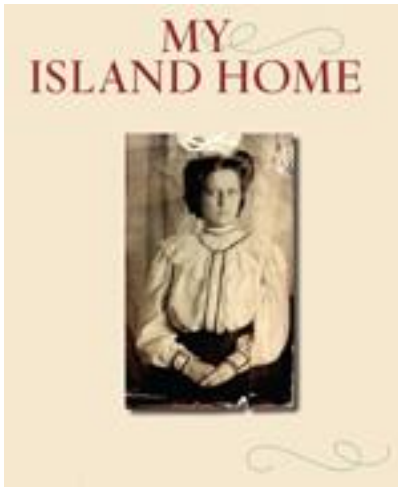
Titi de Baccarat (Asylum seeker from Gabon), Gina Brooks (Maliseet), Brendan Bullock, Barbara Burns, Katharine Cobey, Deontie and Brown (Penobscot), Ayumi Horie (Japanese descent), Hector Jaeger, Karen Jelenfy, David Johansen, Daniel Minter (Black), Geo Neptune (Passamaquoddy), Edmond and Brian J. Theriault (Acadian), and Ian Trask.

Outcomes:

- [13 My Maine Stories](#) added to the Creativity section of Maine Memory Network

My Island Home: Recollections of Verlie Colby Greenleaf of Westport Island

November 8, 2019 through April 25, 2020



Description

Verlie Greenleaf (1891-1992) bore witness to over a century of Westport Island's history during her 100-year life. Verlie donated photographs, personal notes, and sat for an interview in 1987, all part of the Westport Island History Committee's collection today. Her words frame the exhibition, providing a first-person account of her life. Westport Island History Committee is an active partner in Maine Memory Network, a collaborative network of over 270 Contributing Partners administered by Maine Historical Society.

Direct collaborators

Gaye Wagner and members of Westport Island History Committee

Outcomes

- *My Island Home* is the first in a series of Contributing Partner rotating exhibitions in Maine Historical Society's Showcase Gallery.
- 18 items and [1 exhibition](#) added to MMN
- Exhibition will be redeployed at Westport Island's facility

A Convenient Soldier: the Black Guards of Maine

Fall 2020



Description

The Black Guards were African American army soldiers sent to guard the railways of Maine during WWII, from 1941-1945. The purpose of their deployment was to prevent terrorist attacks along the railways to keep Maine citizens safe during the war.

This installation looks at the day-to-day lives of these loyal citizen-soldiers who stood watch during a time of a racially segregated country and military. Their watch embodied the incongruity they faced straddling a complex state of racism, and a citizenship that was exercised as a matter of convenience during war-time.

Direct collaborator

Asata Radcliffe, African American and Indigenous writer and multi-media artist

Outcomes

- All of MHS Black Guard items digitized (14)
- Previously non-digitized collections from Monson Historical Society accessible
- Art installation and collaboration with artist in gallery a new methodology for MHS