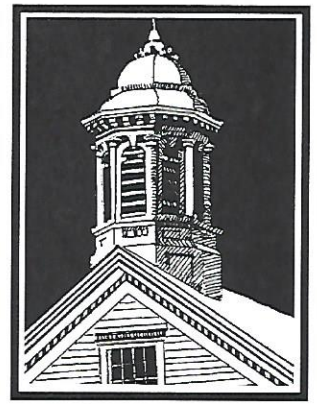


# the CASTINE VISITOR

CASTINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Fall 2016

vol. 26 no. 3



## CASTINE AND THE WORLD WAR

Lynn Parsons

*Next year will see the 100th anniversary of America's entry into the World War, or the Great War, as World War I was called before 1939. We can expect the usual flood of learned disquisitions—and some not so learned—concerning the war's origins, its unprecedented brutality, and whether the national interest was truly served by America's entry into the conflict. What follows is an attempt to describe the war's impact on the town of Castine and its inhabitants.*

On April 7, 1917, the Castine Woman's club voted that "Our Club display the flag and support our Government in any way we may be called upon to do." The town had just received the news that, at the urging of President Woodrow Wilson, Congress had declared war on the German Empire. "This phenomenal struggle," wrote Louise Wheeler Bartlett five years later, "is of too recent a date to be written up with the usual acumen employed in historical writing. It needs the passing of years to adjust the many details connected with it." Now, a century later, we can explore some of those "many details."

The war divided Americans in other parts of the country. Here, however, sympathies were on the Allied side (Britain and France) from the very beginning. Even before America's entry in 1917, the Woman's Club was meeting on a weekly basis to make surgical dressings for the French wounded. Local Campfire Girls aided the women. Later, the Club adopted a young French female orphan, and they sang "La Marseillaise" (the French national anthem) during at least one of their meetings. Children in Belgium were the beneficiaries of a "Tin Box" fund, organized on a statewide level and



The American Red Cross issued this dramatic poster during the World War, showing the United States, seen in the distance, from the perspective of the war's refugees. The Castine Woman's Club was among the groups that contributed to aiding the war's victims. (From "World War I Posters," Library of Congress)

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

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2016-2017**

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**And**

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## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

For some of us connected with the Castine Historical Society this time of year feels like the end of a year. The pace has slowed, the Abbott School is open four days a week instead of seven and the Grindle House public rooms are closed except by appointment. Many of us are taking a deep breath, assessing the summer and pausing for a short while before we begin to look forward to "winter work" and the summer of 2017.

The 2016 summer season at the Castine Historical Society was, as usual, an energetic few months that depended on the support of our many volunteers. The behind-the-scenes work of the exhibit volunteers started in November 2015, culminating in a re-design of the permanent "Penobscot Expedition Exhibit" and the development of the exhibit entitled "Castine and *l'Hermione*: A Celebration of History and Friendship." As I write this in mid-September the number of visitors to the Abbott School this season was 2,504. That number may well top 3,000 by the closing on Columbus Day. The mission of the Castine Historical Society could not be fulfilled without the Abbott School, Grindle House and Collections docents, walking tour volunteers and Road Scholar tour guides. We greatly appreciate everyone's willingness to donate time and talent to ensure that the width and breadth of Castine's story is available to all those who are interested.

The July 13 House and Garden Tour itself included the work of more than 200 volunteers. Over 1,000 guests spent time in the thirteen houses and four gardens on a beautiful day on the Bagaduce in Castine. The reviews were glowing. Many thanks to the house and garden owners, volunteers, organizers and donors; it was fantastic.

The Castine Historical Society website has a little-known gem. For the past five years Ken Scheer has been interviewing and videotaping long-time Castine residents whom many of us know personally and who capture bygone times, a living record we are fortunate to have. These more than twenty videos bring us memories and anecdotes from people who have experienced Castine's many twists and turns over the years. The recent annual meeting talk by Peter Davis, "Truth, Lies and Consequences," is there. It is amusing and informative. I encourage you to go to [castinehistoricalsociety.org](http://castinehistoricalsociety.org) and click on "Living History Videos" to enjoy Peter's talk and the other interviews as well.

Looking forward, the 2017 exhibit will explore the life and times of Molly Dewson, a former resident of Moss Acre in Castine and a protégé of Eleanor Roosevelt. Another focus for the Castine Historical Society Board of Directors this winter will be to finalize our Strategic Plan. Over the past few months, with the help of a consultant, we have been putting a lot of thought into the next five to ten years at the Castine Historical Society. The planning for that time period starts now. You can rest assured that much more information about the CHS Strategic Plan will be forthcoming in the near future.

None of the above would be possible without the support of you, our members. I thank you for your continued support and encourage you to contact any Board member with questions or ideas to make Castine's history more accessible to all.

Brooke Tenney

The mission of the Castine Historical Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is to collect, preserve, protect, and make available a variety of materials that illuminate the historical development of the Castine-Bagaduce River Area from its beginnings to the present.

*The Castine Visitor is published three times a year by the Society for its members and friends.*

Wendy Knickerbocker.....Editor

[info@castinehistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@castinehistoricalsociety.org)  
[www.castinehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.castinehistoricalsociety.org)

**Castine  
Historical Society**



supported by contributions from the Woman's Club. In addition to sending clothing and bandages, members of the Woman's Club were asked to "mend and, refeed" socks sent from Camp Devens in Massachusetts.

Louise Wheeler Bartlett was elected president of a local "Special Aid Chapter," a group that was later folded into the Red Cross. Her group met every other week to listen to lectures on various war topics. A costume party was held at Emerson Hall to raise funds for the war effort. Mrs. Bartlett remembered fondly the support of "the summer colony." It was, she recalled, "a strong factor in bringing the two classes of people together, for they co-operated most generously for the benefit of the town boys who entered the service. ... Castine can surely say that in every case when called upon for help, she was able to 'go over the top'."

In 1915 The Folly movie theater opened in Castine. Three years later, in 1918, The Folly showed the film "Stella Maris," starring Mary Pickford, and raised \$92 for wartime relief, \$72 of which was committed to the support of the Woman's Club's French orphan and the rest deposited in the "Tin Box" fund. In many movie theaters during the war, the feature film was preceded by the appearance of a "Four-Minute Man," whose task it was to deliver a short pep talk in support of the war. According to Mrs. Bartlett, what she called "Five-Minute Men" spoke in Castine, presumably at The Folly.

In an age in which electronic communication was still in its infancy, home folk were dependent upon handwritten letters from those in training or overseas. Although war was declared in April of 1917, it was not until a year later that most American service personnel arrived in Europe. "Passed a ship to-day bound for the States," wrote young Edmund Walker (the son of the Woman's Club's secretary, Caroline Perkins Walker), "and believe me the old American flag at her stern did look great." Walker began his military career at Bowdoin College's ROTC program in 1917, and he proceeded up the ranks from Corporal to First Lieutenant by the end of the war. He saw considerable action in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive in the Verdun sector.

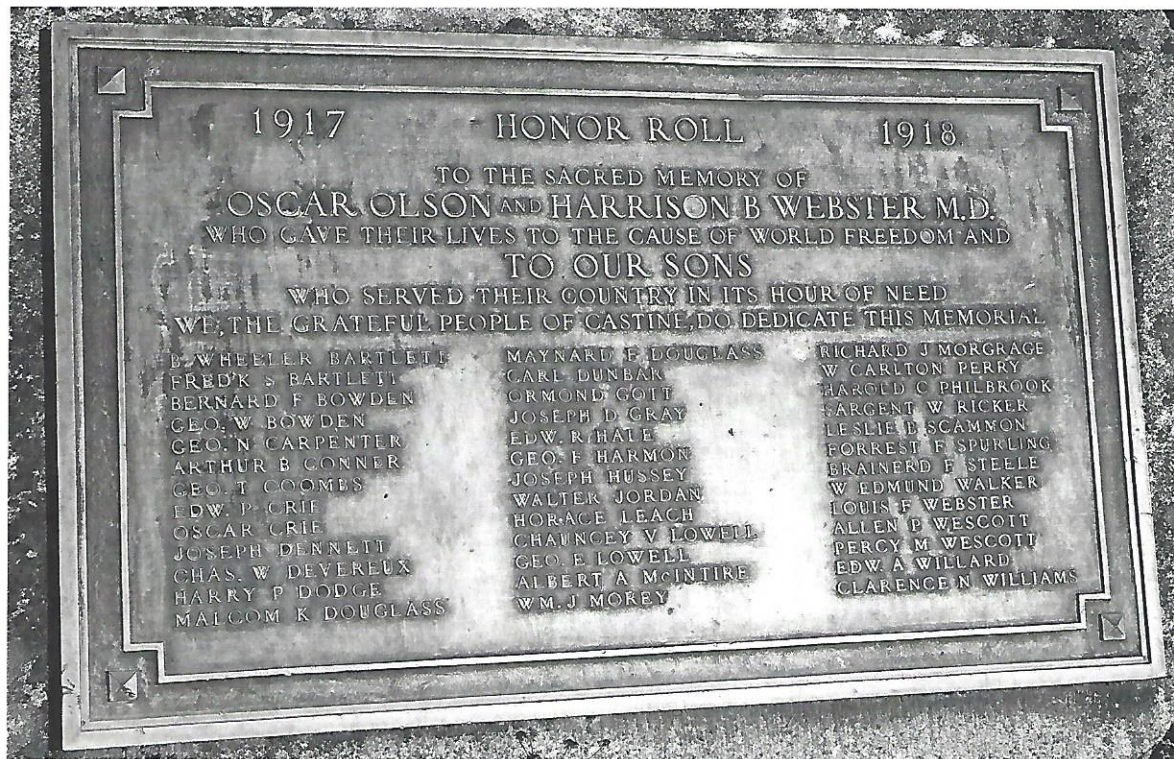
All told, thirty-one Castine men saw some sort of service in the World War, not all of whom served overseas. An additional twelve were in training, and five more were in the Merchant Marine.

Dr. Harrison B. Webster, who helped found what later became Castine's municipal hospital, was the only Castiner to die in battle. As a physician he was first appointed as a director of ambulances, but he preferred to be closer to the action. He was appointed as surgeon to the Forty-Seventh Division of the Army and was killed on October 13, 1918—less than a month before the Armistice—while carrying a wounded soldier from the field. He was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the second highest award bestowed by the U.S. Army. The only other Castiner not to return from the war was Oscar Olson, who served in the Navy. He died in France from pneumonia on October 9, 1918.



Dr. Harrison B. Webster  
(CHS collections)





The stone on the Town Common honors all those from Castine who wore a uniform during the World War. Funds for the memorial were appropriated in 1920, but it was not put in place until 1927. (Photo by Paige Lilly)

Like most Americans, those headed “over there” had no idea of what lay ahead. “I guess we will go over to France all right,” wrote Bernard Bowden. “If we come back, it will certainly be a wonderful experience.” After arriving in France, he found himself assigned to the front lines in an artillery unit. Six months went by without relief. After standing down for about a month, “we went in again and stayed until the Armistice was signed.” It is not known if at the end of the war he still believed it to be “a wonderful experience.”

C. Arthur Sawyer was another soldier impatient to get to the front. Thanking the Woman’s Club for a “most welcome package of useful articles,” he was sure that those at the front would appreciate it even more. “Although I am not one of the lucky ones to be there, I hope I will be soon.” His hope was not granted, since the war ended before he could embark.

The war’s end in 1918 did not mean the end of Castine’s aid to its victims. The following year, the

members of the Woman’s Club received “a very interesting letter” from their French orphan, and as late as 1921 they voted to continue her support for another year, by which time “our orphan girl (Marie) will then be about 15 years of age.” Nothing is known about Marie’s later life.

“Those who were in Castine on November 11, 1918, will recall an impromptu celebration and parade, the ringing of bells throughout the day,” noted William A. Walker, the proud father of Edmund Walker, cited above. “[T]hey were never in doubt as to how the day should be celebrated.”

In 1920 a resolution was passed at the annual Town Meeting authorizing a memorial to all those from Castine who had served in the World War. \$250 was appropriated, but it was not until 1927, ten years after the American entry, that the memorial stone now seen on the Castine Town Common was finally put in place.



*The World War claimed no fewer than five million lives. In France, a whole generation of men was reduced and weakened. Weapons never seen before in any significant number (machine guns, submarines, poison gas, tanks, and aerial bombing) would soon become standard weapons. It was hardly "a war to end war," as British Prime Minister David Lloyd George famously put it, but rather, as his great-granddaughter the Canadian historian Margaret Macmillan has written, "the war that ended peace."*

**Author's Note:** In piecing this account together I have relied upon Louise Wheeler Bartlett's updating of her father's *History of Castine*, published in 1923; Miriam Anne Bourne's editing of the minutes of the Castine Woman's Club, as recorded by her grandmother, Caroline Perkins Walker, and published as *The Ladies of Castine* in 1986; and the assistance of Paige Lilly, the Society's Curator, who helped me locate the relevant primary sources stored at the Grindle House.

## Some Itinerant Notes on Castine Wendy Knickerbocker

Mark Trafton (1810-1901), originally from Bangor, was an itinerant Methodist preacher in the Maine Annual Conference. After a two-year preaching assignment in Orono, he was stationed in Castine from June 1834 to June 1835.

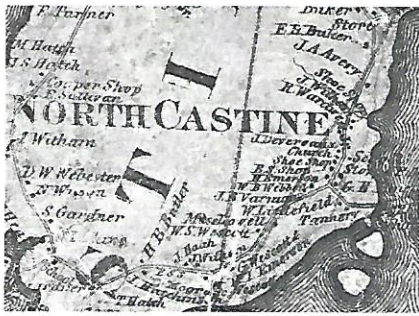
It was not a happy assignment for him. His predecessor, Abel Alton (1803-1867), had been "universally beloved." Trafton "was not rejected, and received the kindest treatment possible under the circumstances. ... It is a good thing to hear people speak well of their minister to his successor, but it is not a good way to encourage the minister to be forever putting the two men in contrast. I used to suffer untold agonies from this course."

In spite of his difficulties as a young preacher, many years later Trafton remembered Castine fondly. It was "a wonderful, healthy, quiet, orderly and religious place." Thinking of the Bagaduce, he said, "What happy hours has the writer spent in a dory on

these waters, casting the deep lead without getting a bite! It was fishing, nevertheless, and dreaming all the same."

Trafton recalled one singular ministerial success in Castine "which gives me a rich satisfaction. In the little church up on the neck, where I spent the most of my time, I found a lad ... who was engaged in a country store as a clerk. He was intelligent, energetic, and sustained a good character. ... I persuaded him to leave the store and go to the Kent's Hill Seminary."

That lad was Henry K.W. Perkins (1812-1884), son of Chesly and Deborah (Mograge) Perkins of Penobscot. Perkins graduated from Trafton's alma mater, the Maine Wesleyan Seminary (now Kent's Hill School), and was ordained a Methodist minister. He became a pioneering missionary to the Wasco tribe of Chinook Indians in Oregon from 1837-1844. Later he was a noted urban missionary in Boston.



North Castine in 1860 (CHS collections)  
Henry Emerson's house was near the church.

Trafton's "little church up on the neck" was in North Castine. "Methodism at the period of which I write was hardly known in the village of Castine. I formed a little class of six or eight which met at the residence of Brother J. Hooper, who was the leader. A total abstinence society was formed by a number of persons, who met casually in his store, which grew into a large temperance organization." Trafton gave "an address which I read before the society in the Court-house, where I now and then preached."

The good Methodist brother who hosted the temperance society in his store was probably Joshua Hooper (1799-1868). A Castine merchant, Hooper was active in Maine's temperance movement. In 1845 he was one of the three men who bought the land for the Castine Methodist meetinghouse.

Trafton boarded in the home of "a Mr. Emerson. ... Though not Methodists," Emerson and his family "treated me with great kindness." That was most likely the Henry Emerson (1794-1870) for whom Emerson Hall is named. He lived in North Castine and was a blacksmith. Emerson was also a Castine selectman during Trafton's time there.

When Trafton's year was done, "I sold twenty dollars' worth of the few books I possessed to pay my board." Then he left for a new station in Brunswick. The next Methodist preacher assigned to Castine was Joseph C. Aspenwall (1809-1887).

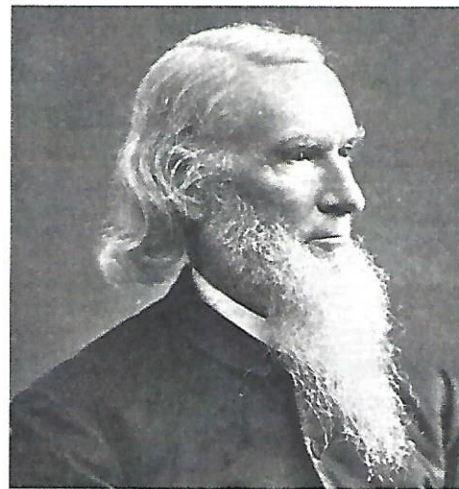
In 1881, Trafton returned to Castine at the invitation of the Methodist minister at that time, George G. Winslow. Castine's Methodist church needed renovation, and Winslow hoped that a lecture

and a sermon by Trafton might raise some funds. "Perhaps the people would give a quarter to see a man who had succeeded in living forty-six years after preaching a year in Castine."

The day after his sermon, Trafton "went up on the 'Neck' to see again the old church, new in 1834, old in 1881, and now used for storing hay!" Most Methodists no longer worshipped in North Castine, since in the village "now we have a fair-sized church, but sadly out of repair." Trafton must have been somewhat successful as a fund-raiser, since Winslow invited him back the following year.

Trafton was transferred from the Maine Annual Conference of Methodists to the New England Annual Conference a few years after his Castine appointment. He went on to have a distinguished career as the pastor of several large and active churches in and around Boston. He served one term in Congress as a Representative from Massachusetts, elected in 1855 as a member of the American (Know-Nothing) Party. He retired from the ministry about ten years after his last trip to Castine.

[Quotations are from Mark Trafton, *Scenes in My Life: Occurring During a Ministry of Nearly Half a Century in the Methodist Episcopal Church* (Cincinnati: Hitchcock & Walden, 1878), p. 124-128; and Mark Trafton, "An Old Charge Revisited," *Zion's Herald*, Sept. 29, 1881.]



Mark Trafton, Methodist preacher in Castine, 1834-35  
(Portrait from *The Birch Canoe: A Forest Idyll*, by Mark Trafton, Boston: McDonald and Gill Company, 1892, frontispiece)



### How Does Your Collection Grow?

Paige Lilly

Thanks to generous donations of objects, diaries, maps, photographs, ephemera, business records and personal papers, the Castine Historical Society's permanent collection is a resource available to everyone. At the beginning, in 1966, CHS members had only their passion for history and preserving information about Castine. Over time, as word spread about this passion, precious documents and artifacts were given to CHS to keep, for the benefit of serving the public interest. Adding historic materials through gifts is still the best way to continue the growth of the collection. When people donate their own history, in stories or as physical materials, CHS has the opportunity to preserve something of importance to the givers AND of historical significance to Castine.

In recent years, the Society's endowment has afforded a small annual budget to purchase rare items that come up for public sale through antiquarian dealers, online auctions or live auctions. When a unique item with a high price tag is available for sale or auction, CHS occasionally hustles to raise funds to buy or bid on the item. Two examples are Noah Brooks's travel desk, presented to him and inscribed by "a few friends Chelsea, May 8, 1854"; and a portrait of Captain Jefferson Devereux (1810-1892) of North Castine.

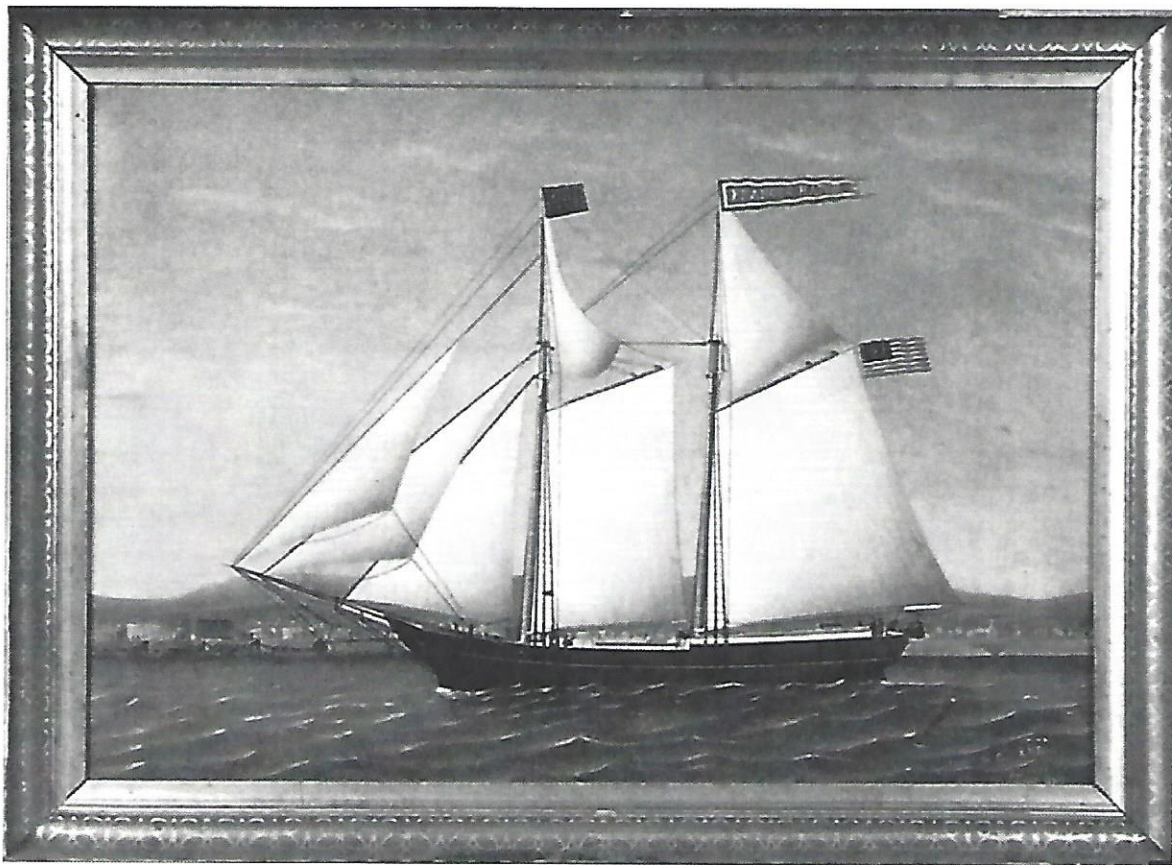
A public sale supplies the added benefit of letting us know that the item exists, even if CHS is not able to make the purchase. The most recent example is a painting of the Castine-built schooner *Frances Hatch* off Rockport, by well-known marine artist James Gardner Babbidge (1844-1919). The schooner was launched in 1854 and owned by several people, including Stover Perkins Hatch whose daughter Frances was born in Castine in 1849. Only a

few days before the auction date CHS learned about the sale and the painting's estimated sale price of \$15,000 to \$20,000. It wasn't possible to put together a coordinated effort to bid on it.

Curious to see the painting up close and possibly learn who would win the bidding, I attended the auction. Imagine a packed auction room with the continuous patter of the auctioneer juggling bids from the floor as well as from telephone and online bidders. Items moved quickly, with winning bids ranging from \$200 for two small samplers to \$330,000 for a sunrise painting by a Hudson River School artist. Finally the Babbidge portrait of the Castine schooner came up for sale. Bidders in the room included representatives from another coastal Maine institution, giving me hope that this painting would move into the local public trust, but those bidders stopped raising their paddles before the final bid of \$17,000. A phone bidder won the auction and, that quickly, the painting went from ownership by one individual into the hands of another private party.

We want to know who the buyer was. Why? For the same reason we collect tidbits of information about men who served in the Penobscot Expedition, search the globe for 17th-century references to Pentagoet and ask people who love Castine to donate their grandmothers' diaries. The mere existence of the schooner portrait adds to the history of Castine and would help CHS document the lives of families and businesses with roots on this peninsula. If we could find out who owns the painting now, perhaps we could someday borrow it to help us tell the story of local shipbuilding families.





*Coastal Schooner Frances Hatch*, oil painting by James Gardner Babbidge, 1877 (From *Artnet.com*)

### CHS Appreciates Your Support!

We would like to thank all of you, our members, for your generous support of the Castine Historical Society over this past year. Your membership enables CHS to continue offering the highest quality exhibits, lectures, tours, and other windows into Castine's extraordinary past. Your commitment to our mission is what makes CHS and its members, both near and far, an active part of the Castine community.

We hope that we can count on your support again in 2017! You can renew your membership, or perhaps even sign up a friend or family member, by using the form found in this edition of *The Castine Visitor*.

Please remember to keep us informed of changes in your contact information so that we can keep your CHS mailings coming to you in a timely manner. If you aren't sure what we have on file, you can always call us at 207-326-4118, or send an email to [admin@castinehistoricalsociety.org](mailto:admin@castinehistoricalsociety.org). Thank you for your support!



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The 2016 House & Garden Tour attracted more than 1,000 visitors. Organized and hosted by CHS, the tour was sponsored by nearly seventy friends, families and businesses. Two-hundred-plus volunteers generously devoted their time to plan, market, staff and serve as shuttle drivers for the event. *(Photo by Sundial Framing & Photography LLC)*