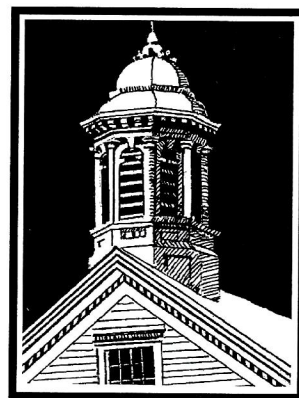


the CASTINE VISITOR

CASTINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Spring 2016

vol. 26 no. 1



THE SIX STAGES OF THE CASTINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Lynn H. Parsons

This summer we will be observing the 50th anniversary of the creation of the present iteration of the Castine Historical Society in 1966. But the CHS's "history"—if we can use that term—reaches back much further than that. By looking at both published and unpublished sources, we can discern no fewer than five different predecessors to the present CHS. The records for some are slim, but their existence would seem to be undeniable. Let us begin with "CHS I," and work our way down to the present "CHS VI."

CHS I

According to Louise Wheeler Bartlett's revised edition of her father's *History of Castine*, the first historical society "was said to have been formed in 1865," and was probably the result of an attempt by the high school principal of that time, Ellis Peterson, to produce a history of the town. There are no records pertaining either to his "history of the town" or to this society.



Dr. George Wheeler (1837-1923), author of *History of Castine, Penobscot and Brooksville* in 1875, was a member of the first Castine historical society in 1878 and president of the third in 1915.

CHS II

The second iteration was formed in 1878, under the leadership of Rev. Alfred E. Ives, formerly the pastor of the Trinitarian Congregational Church on Main Street. Members of the society included George and William Witherle, Thomas Hale, Alfred Adams, Frederick and Philip Hooke, Samuel Noyes, and of course Dr. George Wheeler. His daughter says nothing about the activities of this group, other than to note that "one important object accomplished was the uncovering of the old French fort, which yielded numerous relics and important information."

CHS III

The third historical society was created in 1915. In that year fifty-two people signed a document expressing support for its establishment, noting that the meetings of the proposed group "are not likely to cause any

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

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2015-2016**

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**The Castine Historical
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In Memory of:

Kenneth R. Howard
Barbara Corey Mallonee
Eileen Morrison
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James Whittemore

And

In Honor of:

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**The Castine Historical
Society welcomes these
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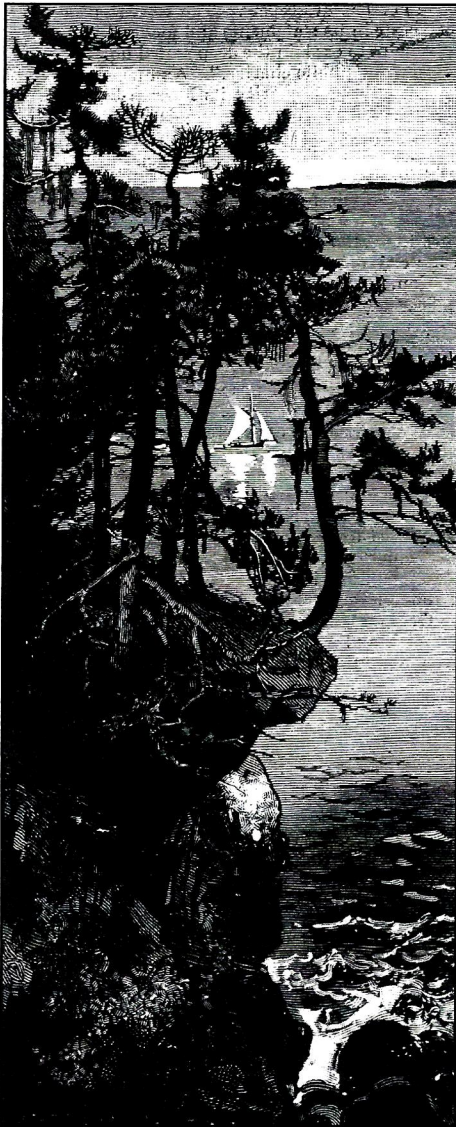
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Join us on Facebook—**

for photos of interesting items in
the CHS archives and sights
around Castine, as well as CHS
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Editor's Note: Please feel free
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Contact Wendy Knickerbocker
by phone at 326-8205 or email:
newsletter@castinehistoricalsociety.org

For more history and CHS news,
visit our website:
castinehistoricalsociety.org



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
www.castinehistoricalsociety.org

**Castine
 Historical Society**

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

I am honored to be writing this letter to our readers. As a long-time summer resident and now a full-time Castine resident, I have a growing appreciation of the interesting people and events that shaped the Castine of today.

The shelves in the state-of-the-art archival space in the recently renovated Grindle House contain manuscripts, books, photos, maps and artifacts saved in our effort to preserve Castine's rich history. Most items are, by and large, from the 18th and 19th centuries with fewer items from the 20th century and even fewer from the 21st century. Lynn Parsons' front-page article tells a more in-depth story of the Society's own history.

What about our present? Does CHS make history as well? I believe it does. Last year's July 14 *Hermione* event, winner of the DownEast & Acadia Regional Tourism Award for Excellence in Marketing and Promotion, began what will very likely be an annual town celebration of our French heritage. The Castine Bastille Day 2016 promises to be the beginning of many fun-filled celebrations. This year's event is supported and organized by town volunteers; visit castine.me.us for updates. Might our descendants question when and why Castine celebrates July 14 yearly? The CHS archives will tell the story.

The CHS archives have documentation of Castine House and Garden tours dating back to 1924. Mark your calendars now for the Castine Historical Society's 2016 House and Garden lecture on July 12 and tour July 13. The event begins on Tuesday July 12 with a lecture by Bruce Riddell, creative artist for two spectacular gardens in Castine. On July 13 you will have a rare opportunity to stroll through twelve beautiful homes and four gracious gardens, Dyce Head lighthouse and the John Perkins House at the Wilson Museum. See castinehousetour.com for updates about the purchase of tickets, lunch reservations at the Manor Inn, tea at the Castine Inn and other activities planned for the day. You can be sure that the brochures and photographs of this event will be added to the archives.

Dr. Ken Scheer has been videotaping interviews with a variety of residents and visitors in Castine to capture memories of bygone days. The videos may be viewed on the CHS website, under "Collections," and then "Digital Media."

Every day in many ways history is made. Today, tomorrow and beyond we all need to collect and donate materials illuminating OUR time. CHS curator Paige Lilly tells me that videos of the town band and documentation of family reunions, weddings, and graduations as well as photos of changes to buildings and children's winter activities are but a few examples of items that are welcome. It's important to collect and preserve evidence of these events so that our descendants will know our thoughts, our lifestyle, what was important to us, and what made us proud of our Castine. As you and your families enjoy Castine and celebrate milestones please consider donating documentation of these life events.

Brooke P. Tenney

interference with the meetings of any of the various societies and organizations now existing here." The society was formally launched on December 15 at a meeting in the Unitarian Parish House, and bylaws were adopted a week later. The preamble, probably written by Wheeler, stated that the society's purpose was to "promote an intelligent interest in the collection and preservation of everything relating to the Municipal history of the Town, its public records, social customs at different periods, amusements, businesses, etc., and also to stimulate interest in the history of our State and especially the early coast settlements."

Wheeler was chosen president. Charles Noyes, the perpetrator of the town's "Historical Signs," was elected vice president, with Dr. George Parsons as secretary.

The CHS archives in the Grindle House contain the record book of the first five years of this society. The group was considerably smaller than the group of fifty-two signers in 1915. From 1916 at least through 1921 they met on a monthly basis, with occasional cancellations owing to the weather; in the case of the meeting scheduled for January 1919, it was due to the influenza epidemic sweeping parts of the country. Meetings were held at the members' homes, and attendance varied from seven to seventeen. The subjects of the presentations varied according to the interests of the presenters. Louise Bartlett noted pointedly that although the officers were nearly always men, women predominated among the attendees.

In 1916 the society organized a "Field Day" exploring off-neck sites, especially the cemetery in "North Castine" near the abandoned ferry road. At the time it contained the graves and headstones of prominent citizens of Penobscot and Castine, most notably that of the Reverend Jonathan Powers, Penobscot's first established minister. The tombstone was found to be in a dilapidated condition, and the following April the society estimated that the costs of rehabilitating it would be no more than \$8.00. At some point between 1917 and the present, attempts were made for its preservation, but the stone remains in poor condition. (For more on Rev. Powers, and the 1916 "Field Day," see "The Troubled Tale of Jonathan Powers," *Castine*

Visitor, Winter 2010; and "Castine Historical Society Field Day," *Castine Visitor*, Spring 2014.)

Although the minutes for CHS III cover the period of The Great War (as World War I was called at the time), there is little or no mention of it until late November 1918, when members were urged to collect materials about "our boys in service." The following February members reported on the activities of local committees who contributed to the war effort.

By the early 1920s interest in CHS III had slackened. Meetings became sporadic. Many of the original founders of 1915, including Wheeler and Noyes, had either moved away or died. But interest in preserving Castine's history had not been lost. With the opening of the Wilson Museum on Perkins Street in 1921 an opportunity emerged for the deposit and storage of many of Castine's records and papers. In the following year a few of the surviving founders of CHS III, including Wheeler's son-in-law Boyd Bartlett and Amy Witherle, formed a "historical committee ... to facilitate obtaining local historic material" for preservation at the Museum. For the next forty years the Wilson Museum became the sole depository for Castine's records and papers. But so far as the record shows, there was no attempt to hold regular meetings.

CHS IV

The next iteration of the CHS, although it became the ultimate legal foundation for the present organization, remains something of a mystery. All that we have in our records is the certificate of organization, dated August 17, 1966, as well as a list of officers that included Shirley David, president; Mary Jenks, vice president; Charlene Devereux, secretary; Frances Vogell, treasurer; and five other directors. No original copy of the constitution, drawn up with the assistance of Judge Herbert Silsby of Ellsworth, has been found. There is no record, either, of any of the society's activities. The Castine Town Reports for 1966 and 1968 make brief references to it, but nothing more.

CHS V

In September 1980 several Castine citizens were gathered on the town dock, lamenting the lack of a functioning historical society. Following some discussion, Gardiner Gregory, a former principal of

the Castine High School, was persuaded to lead an effort to establish another historical society. Gregory readily agreed, and for the next ten years he was a key figure in cultivating an awareness of the history of Castine and its environs. "The purpose of this society," its first report declared, "is to bring together those people interested in fostering an awareness and appreciation of the history and heritage of Castine, Maine, to collect and preserve artifacts, and to publish and preserve records."

There followed a list of projects, including acquiring a permanent home for storing materials, opening Indian trails, restoring a cannon to its "original position" at Fort Madison, providing brochures and maps for tourists, providing materials and programs for schools and organizations, organizing summer events, and publishing a newsletter. It was an ambitious list, perhaps too ambitious, as subsequent events would suggest.

The officers of the re-constituted society included Gardiner Gregory, president; Philip Perkins, first vice president; Virginia Koffman, second vice president; Anne Gregory, recording secretary; Nancy Carr, corresponding secretary; and Patricia Higgins, treasurer. The members were to meet once a month at Emerson Hall.

Under the Gregorys' leadership, along with that of town clerk Elizabeth (Betty) Duff and many others, CHS V attained a prominence in Castine unmatched by any of its predecessors. No longer a small group reading papers to one another in private homes, in the next ten years the membership rose to more than 100. CHS V sponsored lectures by prominent historians and archaeologists, established a newsletter, sponsored essay contests at the Adams School, and designed plans for a walking tour of Castine. In 1984, the 200th anniversary of the departure of Castine's loyalists for St. Andrews, New Brunswick, was re-enacted, with

help from visiting officials from St. Andrews itself. And in 1987 the Society sponsored an enthusiastic celebration of the 200th anniversary of the signing of the United States Constitution.

Throughout these years, however, the Society had no fixed headquarters. Its monthly meetings continued to be held at Emerson Hall. Hopes for a home for the CHS were raised in 1981 when the old Methodist Bethany Chapel on the Shore Road was deeded to the Society by its owner, Charles Chester III. Built in the 1840s as a private home, the chapel had been converted into a small church by Castine's Methodists in the 1890s but had fallen into disuse after the Methodists consolidated with the Trinitarian Parish. The hopes for a home for CHS V were to be disappointed, however, once it became clear that the costs of refurbishing the structure into a public building would be excessive. After a building fund drive fell short of its goal, the building was sold and reverted back to a private residence. The funds were set aside for the future.

CHS VI

In 1990, the Society entered a new phase with the election of James Day as its president. Those who, like Gardiner Gregory, had assisted in the reconstitution of the Society ten years earlier were stepping aside in favor of a new, and for the most part, younger, group of leaders. But CHS VI faced the same obstacle that

confronted its earlier iterations, namely, the lack of a proper home. "We continue to search for a permanent home for the society and its collections," reported Day in CHS VI's Annual Report for 1993, adding, "We hope we are getting closer to our goal."

Exactly what the "goal" was became clearer in 1994, when the Society became the owner of the Abbott School, located on the Town Common. Formerly the Castine High School, the building had been used as a



Gardiner Gregory preparing a slide show in 1985

private residence for many years, until the Society was able to purchase it from Conrad and Catherine Jones.

At last, after five iterations, the Castine Historical Society had found a home.

But the acquisition of the Abbott School marked both an end and a beginning. Like the Bethany Chapel before it, the building required extensive repairs, remodeling, and modernizing to meet the needs and requirements for a late-twentieth-century public building. As it turned out, those needs more than matched the price of the purchase. The Society established an ambitious goal of \$400,000 to meet its needs. Then followed one of the most remarkable fund drives in Castine's history.

Under Day's leadership, the Society organized a steering committee and a finance committee to spearhead the drive. An Advisory Committee of Castine notables was created. Noted architect Christopher Glass was hired to direct the necessary remodeling and restoration. In the course of three short years, from 1994 to 1996, the Society not only met but also exceeded its goal, raising a total of \$416,000. \$80,000 was raised through benefit events and programs, house and garden tours, and dinners. The remaining \$336,000 came from individual contributions, totaling 485 persons and businesses. There were nine contributions of more than \$10,000 each. According to the Society's fundraising *Gazette*, "nearly everybody in Castine contributed in one way or another to the success of the Abbott School Campaign." The building was formally opened on July 1, 1996, coinciding with Castine's Bicentennial.

In the meantime, membership for CHS VI surpassed more than 400. To keep up with its expanding membership and mission, the 1980 bylaws were revised and updated in 1993, in 1994, and again in 2000, each time in recognition of the Society's new status, responsibilities, and mission. Among other things, it was established as a 501(c)(3) entity, thus permitting donations to be exempt from taxes. An

enlarged board of directors was created, along with an executive committee.

In 2000 and again in 2008, CHS VI was the benefactor of the estates of two Castine citizens, Elizabeth (Betty) Duff and Deborah Pulliam. Duff, who died in 1999, had served for many years as the Castine Town Clerk and had been prominent in the affairs of CHS V. Pulliam, who died in 2008, had edited the Society's newsletter, *The Castine Visitor*, and had contributed extensive financial support to a number of causes in Castine and in the state of Maine. Combined, the generosity of Betty Duff and Deborah Pulliam amounted to over \$4 million.

Those resources have permitted CHS VI to purchase both valuable documents and maps, as well as its next-door neighbor, the Grindle House. Named after Samuel P. Grindle, who built the house ca. 1851, the building had passed through a number of owners until it came on the market at about the time of the Pulliam bequest. After considerable discussion, the building was not only acquired, but also remodeled and expanded.

In a spectacular fashion, the structure was raised and moved off its foundation to allow for greater stability. An extension was added to house: a climate-controlled facility for the storage of valuable documents, town records, and genealogical materials. The house itself was redesigned to provide for a curator's and an administrative office. Finally, a geothermal energy system was installed, providing for both heat in the winter and cooling in the summer months. In short, the building is now a state-of-the-art facility in which research concerning the history of Castine and its environs may be conducted.

The opening of the Grindle House in 2015 marked the end of the Castine Historical Society's physical expansion, but it by no means marked the end of its commitment to tell the story and preserve the record of Castine's past, and the men and women who made it. That is an ongoing story.

[NOTE: The author wishes to thank Jim Day, Paige Lilly, Brooke Tenney and Anne Parsons for help with both content and style. If any errors remain, they are his responsibility, not theirs.]

Mark your calendars for this special event hosted by the Castine Historical Society!



The 2016 Castine House and Garden Tour will feature thirteen beautiful homes, four gracious gardens and the Dyce Head Lighthouse. For tickets and more information please visit castinehousetour.com, email info@castinehistoricalsociety.org or call 207-326-4118. Tickets are \$35 in advance and \$40 after July 1st.

CHS Appreciates Your Support

We would like to thank all of our members for your generous support of the Castine Historical Society. Including life members, our membership numbers around 650. Each new, renewed, or gift membership conveys all the privileges of being a CHS member, including a subscription to *The Castine Visitor*, published three times a year.

If you have a change of address, either winter or summer, please let us know. It is important that we keep our records accurate, to insure that all members will receive all CHS mailings. Your support is what makes the CHS and its members, near and far, an active part of the Castine community.

A Tale of Another Bucksport Mill

Wendy Knickerbocker

In April of 1875, a square-rigged, 200-foot long, 1200-ton ship was launched near Bucksport. The *Henrietta* was a classic Downeaster, the renowned family of ships that succeeded the clippers. The owners of the *Henrietta* were two retired sea captains from Searsport, and 115 skilled Maine shipwrights built her at the yard of mill owner William Buck, the great-great-grandson of Col. Jonathan Buck. The *Henrietta* was the largest wooden ship ever built in South Carolina.

Henry Buck was born in Bucksport, Maine, in 1800. His father was a carpenter, and Henry worked in shipyards in Bucksport and Searsport. While working on a Charleston-built ship, he was intrigued by the quality of the wood. He was familiar with the South Carolina pine tar and pitch used in ships' rigging and seams, but here was longleaf pine planking that was superior to Maine white pine.

In 1825 Buck travelled to Winyah Bay, South Carolina, fifty miles north of Charleston. The bay was formed by the juncture of four rivers, and Georgetown was its port. From there Buck went up the Waccamaw River until he left the luxurious rice plantations behind and encountered thickly forested land. He purchased some timberland on the river, just south of Conwayborough (now Conway), the main town of Horry District.

In need of both a loan to build a sawmill and a buyer for his lumber, Buck returned to Maine. In 1827 he married a woman from Gouldsboro, and soon after that he got a loan and a lumber contract from a Searsport ship owner. Buck returned to South Carolina, while his wife stayed behind. He rented some slaves from a nearby plantation, and with their help he cut and sawed a load of lumber.

The proceeds from his lumber sale allowed Buck to purchase mill equipment, and in 1828 he opened the first steam-powered sawmill in South Carolina. Over the next two years he bought slaves and more land, expanded his operation to include making turpentine and pitch, and built a wharf and a landing.

Buck's customers were shipbuilders in Bucksport, Searsport, and Bath, and he regularly went back to Maine on the lumber ships. His wife bore him two children. Buck built a house next to his sawmill in South Carolina, naming his new home Upper Mill Plantation, but his wife refused to move south. Buck divorced her and took his son and daughter to Upper Mill.



Ship *Henrietta*, built at the Buck shipyard in 1875

Over the next several years, Buck's operation grew until it was one of the largest mills in the area. His lumber market also expanded, reaching the West Indies, South America, and Europe. In 1837 Buck bought 400 acres of timberland a little south of Upper Mill and opened another sawmill. He called the second mill Lower Mill at first, later changing the name to Bucksport. The next year he married a local woman, with whom he had seven children.

In 1841, Buck bought the business of a competitor located between Upper and Lower Mills and named his third mill Middle Mill. He replaced the existing facility with a larger steam-powered sawmill and built a quarter-mile-long series of wharves. When the community around the mill expanded, he renamed it Bucksville. After a while some couples and single men from Maine made their homes in Bucksville.

Buck's business prospered throughout the 1840s, and he became a wealthy man. As his need for labor grew along with his sawmills, he bought more slaves; by the end of the decade he owned 133. By then southern pine had become the preferred wood of many of Maine's shipyards, and Buck bought shares in Maine ships. In 1855, he paid William McGilvery, a Searsport ship owner who was a friend as well as a customer, to build the brig *Waccamaw* for him. Buck used the brig to transport lumber and other cargo between Bucksville, South Carolina, and Searsport. There were times when the crew of the *Waccamaw* consisted entirely of slaves.

In December of 1860, William L. Buck, Henry's oldest child, moved to South Carolina with

his bride, the daughter of William McGilvery. The younger Buck was put in charge of the mill at Bucksville. At the time, his father owned 312 slaves, making him the largest slave-owner in Horry District. Still, Henry Buck opposed South Carolina's secession.

When the Civil War broke out, the Mainers who worked in Buck's mills wanted to go home. The *Waccamaw* left Bucksville and sailed to St. Thomas under a Confederate flag. From there she went directly to Searsport, becoming the only vessel ever to land there flying the flag of Dixie.

After the war ended, Henry Buck hired his freed slaves to work in his mills and gave them land for their homes. His son William continued to run the Bucksville sawmill, while another son, Henry Lee, returned from the Confederate army to run the mill at Bucksport. The elder Buck used his connections in the North to get new lumber contracts right away, and the business was soon back to pre-war levels.

Henry Buck died in 1870, and his son took over the business, renaming it William L. Buck and Company. In 1871 the mill at Bucksville was the largest in the state, and the company branched into shipbuilding, in partnership with William McGilvery. Maine shipwrights and carpenters moved to South Carolina, and the Bucksville mill built two schooners before the Downeaster *Henrietta*.

That square-rigger had to be towed several miles downriver and then all the way to Charleston for her deep-water launch, and she was so large she never returned to shallow Winyah Bay. The *Henrietta*,

with Maine captains at the helm, sailed mostly in Pacific waters, in trade with Asia and Australia. She was lost in a typhoon in Kobe Harbor, Japan, in 1894.

Wm. L. Buck & Co. did not build any more ships after the *Henrietta*. For one thing, the expenses of importing and towing supplies proved too great; for another, the Maine workers did not fare well in the southern climate, and many moved home. The company continued to thrive, however, producing millions of cypress shingles and pine and cypress boards.

William Buck died in 1880, and Henry Lee Buck took over. Around 1885, competition from other sawmills in the area took a toll. As production lagged, mill workers and their families moved away. Buck sold the Bucksport mill in 1892. He died in 1904, and the mill at Bucksville burned that same year.

There is little left today of Henry Buck's South Carolina enterprise. His home at Upper Mill Plantation has been restored as a historic site, placed on the National Register in 1982. The Bucksport mill burned in 1918, and only scattered ruins remain. Bucksville dwindled to a small farming village, with a public landing used by fishermen and boaters on the Intracoastal Waterway. The landing was later moved a few miles upriver toward Conway, and now it is a marina, with a restaurant and campground, operated as Bucksport Plantation Marina. Myrtle Beach is about twenty-five miles away.

CHS Wins 1st DART Award

The Castine Historical Society is pleased to announce that it is the winner of the first annual DART Award for Excellence in Marketing and Promotion. The award recognizes the Society for its promotional outreach leading up to the visit of the square-rigged frigate *Hermione* to Castine last July.

CHS received the award at a symposium and luncheon on November 13, 2015, by DownEast & Acadia Regional Tourism in Winter Harbor. DART, founded in 1995, was organized by local chambers of commerce and business non-profits for the purpose of promoting the Down East region as a whole and at the local level. This is the first year that DART has organized an awards competition.

Thank you to everyone who supported the Society in making *Hermione's* visit to Castine the fantastic success that it was!

Documenting 20th- and 21st-Century Castine

Paige Lilly

CHS President Brooke Tenney makes a strong case in her letter on page 3 of this *Visitor*. Historian of interior design Gail Winkler develops the question further in her article "Photographs: Windows on the Past," featured on the CHS website (castinehistoricalsociety.org). How will residents and researchers learn the customs, changes, and community activities of our time if we do not take care to preserve that information?

I want to expand on this topic. We invite you to donate photographs, recordings, videos, and documents of anything you see or do that you think might be of interest two weeks or two hundred years from now. For example, see the photograph below of the Adams School's annual practice of meeting together in a circle on the Castine Common the first day of school. The full student body and staff, along with parents and grandparents available to attend, gather to greet each other and participate in activities to begin the school year as a community. Did you know about this tradition? Won't it be fascinating for someone to discover this gem of information in 2116?

A 21st-century year in Castine is full of such annual traditions, yet your historical society's collection currently has very little to show for it. Do you have video of the chili competition? Are you a Grange member who could donate photos of activities or meeting flyers? What about church fairs, Halloween parades, club dinners, road races, Memorial Day ceremonies, fireworks displays, and town meetings?

Please contact me by email (curator@castinehistoricalsociety.org) or phone (326-4118) to donate digital or hard copy materials for these events or others. Or perhaps you'd like to come to the reading room at the Grindle House (13 School Street) to explore customs and community events from the past three centuries! Call or write for an appointment to study or donate Castine's history, right up to the present.



Adams School morning meeting, September 3, 2013 at 8:46 a.m.



Cougar Classic 5K and Fun Run/Walk, August 26, 2014 at 4:30 p.m.

CASTINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Clip and mail with your check to Castine Historical Society, P.O. Box 238, Castine, ME 04421, or to pay by credit card contact the CHS Administrator at 207-326-4118 or admin@castinehistoricalsociety.org

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At a meeting of the Castine Historical Society, May 18, 1990, Emerson Hall
(left to right: Phil Perkins, Jim Day, Deborah Pulliam)