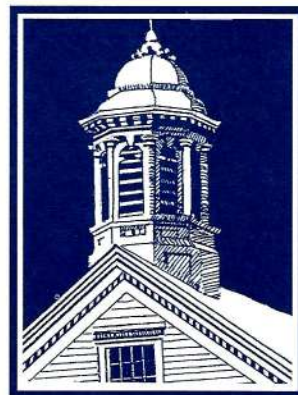


the CASTINE VISITOR

CASTINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Summer 2008

vol. 18 no. 2



2008 Summer Exhibit at the Abbott School

ON THE WATERFRONT: CASTINE'S ART FROM THE PAST

The new exhibit this summer at the Castine Historical Society will showcase artists of various media who had connections with Castine. Oil paintings, watercolors, sketches, line drawings, pastels, photographs, lithographs, sculptures, carvings, ceramics, metal work, folk art and more will be featured. Artists whose works will be displayed in the exhibit include Fitz Henry (Hugh) Lane, George Wasson, Waldo Peirce, Alexander Longfellow, Thomas Fransioli, Mary Blood Mellen, Stow Wengenroth, and A. H. Folsom. More recent works by Clark Fitz-Gerald, Frank Hamabe, Alice McLaughlin, Ellenore Doudiet, Judy Payne, Jay Pratt, Cam Petri, Janet Hughes, and Mary Kirk will also be on view as well as items made by anonymous artists. One notable example in the folk art section will be the large double-sided sign that hung in front of the Castine Variety for many years. If anyone knows who painted the sign, or when, please let us know.

While some of the images will, of necessity, be reproductions, most will be originals. The earliest works will be images made during the British occupation of Castine in the 1780s. Recently deceased artists such as Clark Fitz-Gerald will highlight late 20th century work. To be included, an artist must either have lived or worked in Castine, made a Castine-related work, or had artwork

represented as depicting Castine. The last category is mentioned because certain works to be included in the exhibit are labeled Castine but bear little, if any, resemblance to the area. Since the theme of the exhibit is "On the Waterfront," only works relating in some way to boats, the sea, the harbor, and sea animals are included.

Some of the works, such as the oil painting of the "William Witherle" and Fitz Henry Lane's lithograph "Castine from Hospital Island", both owned by the Witherle Memorial Library, will be familiar to many. Other paintings, such as "Dennett's Wharf, Castine" and several works in private collections may be new and pleasant surprises.



The outward bound US Ship *Castine*, a painting by Francis Hustwick
On loan for the Summer Exhibit by James and Leila Day

Many individuals and establishments have agreed to loan their artworks to the Historical Society for the exhibit. Organizations participating include the above-mentioned Witherle Memorial Library, the Maine Maritime Academy, the Castine Scientific Society (Wilson Museum), the Maine Historical Society, the Penobscot Marine Museum, the Farnsworth Art Museum, the Maine Maritime Museum, the Cape Ann Museum, the Boston

Museum of Fine Arts, and the Old Print Shop.

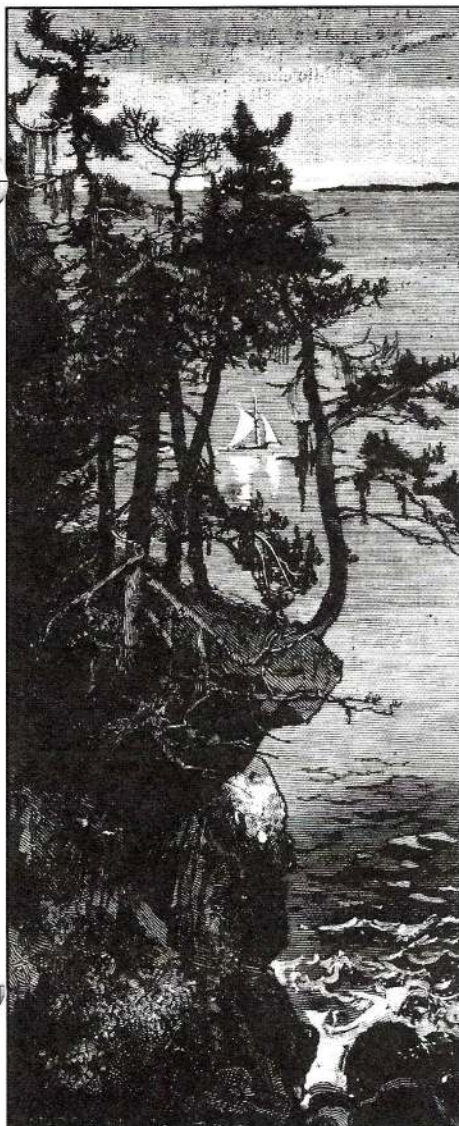
The exhibit promises to be a visual delight. Following the opening reception on Sunday, June 29, the exhibit will be free and open to the public from July 1 through Labor Day.

CASTINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2008 SUMMER SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- 4:00-6:00 pm
Sunday
June 29
Opening reception at the Abbott School and town green, with live music and light refreshments. Preview of new seasonal exhibit, **"On the Waterfront: Castine's Art from the Past."** Public is invited.
- 7:30 pm
Wednesday
July 16
"Artists of the Maine Coast" an illustrated talk by Carl Little, former Associate Editor of *Art in America* and contributor, editor or producer of several books devoted to art in New England. Mitchell Room of the Abbott School.
- 10:00 am-4:00 pm
Saturday
July 26
"Touring Through Time" A collective open house of nine historical organizations of the Eastern Penobscot Bay area. Activities include exhibits, demonstrations, lectures, walking tours and refreshments. For more information, please see www.eastpenobscothistory.org
- 1:00 pm
Saturday
July 26
Walking tour of military sites in Witherle Woods led by Jim Stone, starting at Ft. George.
- 1:00-4:00 pm
Sunday
July 27
"Touring Through Time" A collective open house of nine historical organizations of the Eastern Penobscot Bay area. Activities include exhibits, demonstrations, lectures, walking tours and refreshments. For more information, please see www.eastpenobscothistory.org
- 2:00 pm
Sunday
July 27
Members of the Trinitarian Congregational Parish of Castine will present a program highlighting the history of the church. The congregation was formed in 1820 and the original church structure was erected in 1829.
- 7:30 pm
Wednesday
August 20
"The Importance of Architectural History in Community Development" an illustrated lecture by Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., Director of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission and Maine State Historian. Co-sponsored with the Castine Historic Preservation Commission. Delano Auditorium on the campus of the Maine Maritime Academy.
- 7:30 pm
Wednesday
August 27
Castine Historical Society Annual Meeting in the Mitchell Room of the Abbott School followed by an open house in the Nelson property next door. Light refreshments.

Please check our website, www.castinehistoricalsociety.org and the local papers for any additions or changes to the CHS Summer Events Schedule



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.

Lynn H. Parsons &
Anne H. Parsons.....Editors

info@castinehistoricalsociety.org
www.castinehistoricalsociety.org

**Castine
Historical Society**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

My report in the previous issue of the Visitor began by stating "this year promises to be one of great change for the Castine Historical Society." Little did I know at that time how soon and in what form the change would come. A few days before the March meeting of the Board of Directors a representative of the Nancy Nelson family asked if the Historical Society would be interested in purchasing their property between the Abbott School and the Unitarian Universalist Church. At the March meeting it was generally agreed that this was a rare opportunity that should be thoroughly explored. In the next few weeks the Society had two building inspections and an appraisal conducted on the property, and retained the services of a Bangor real estate lawyer.

The Board decided at its April meeting to make an offer for the property. Seasonal resident board members and others not able to attend had been kept informed through e-mail and other communications. Of twenty Board Members, eighteen supported the purchase and two were not in favor of purchasing the property at this time. After some negotiations, a contract to purchase the property was signed in late April. Assuming the issue of obtaining a deeded easement from the town is satisfactorily resolved, settlement will occur on June 13.

Without Deborah Pulliam's extraordinarily generous gift, purchase of the property would be very difficult - if not impossible. At a planning session of the Board last August to discuss how to manage Deborah's gift, the topic of where and how to obtain additional space was addressed. While the desirability of obtaining property contiguous to the Abbott School was mentioned, no one then knew the Nelson property might become available so soon. Detailed plans for use of the additional space are still being developed. An illustrative list of the potential uses of the property include office space for future professional staff, additional exhibit space, an enlarged/improved gift shop, a kitchen for social functions, a room for small meetings, additional parking spaces, additional storage space, a small apartment for staff, curators or visiting lecturers and fellows. Should all the space not be required in the near future, there is also the possibility of renting one or two rooms to other community organizations to address their unmet space needs.

Regarding the issue of hiring staff to help manage the activities of the Historical Society, while discussions are continuing, there is nothing concrete to report at this time.

This summer's new exhibit, "On the Waterfront: Castine's Art from the Past" continues to take shape. For more information on the exhibit, please see the article on page one. Other summer activities include the opening reception from 4-6pm on Sunday, June 29. This year's reception will be similar to last year's with live music and refreshments on the town green. For a complete listing of the Historical Society's summer activities, refer to the information on the opposite page.

Delacroix Davis III

**CASTINE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

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2007-2008**

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**In Memoriam
Carleton Ashley**

Carleton Ashley, who with his wife Marilyn, was a longtime friend and supporter of the Castine Historical Society, died on April 26, aged 89. He was a graduate of Yale University and served in the U. S. Army in World War II. During his many years in Castine, he not only was active in the Historical Society, but served as treasurer for both the Castine Hospital and the Conservation Trust, and was a volunteer counselor for the Maine Maritime Academy. In 2003 he and his wife moved to the Piper Shores retirement home in Scarborough. Contributions in his name to the Historical Society are welcomed.

**The Castine Historical Society
gratefully acknowledges
contributions received**

**In Honor of
Mr. and Mrs. G. Barry McMennamin**

and

**In Memory of
Carleton Ashley
Carol Badgley
Julia Lampson Blackwood
Philip Booth
Frances Caske
Caroline Y. Fenn
Gene Fisher
Elizabeth Hardwick
Deborah Pulliam
Susan Semple
Charlotte Sholod**

*As of this writing, there is a certain degree of tension between Castine's Select Board and some of its citizens on the one hand, and Maine Maritime Academy on the other, regarding MMA's purchase of the Abbot House for use as a residence for its future presidents. Your editors have no official position on this matter, which will eventually be resolved in the courts. We are grateful nonetheless, to former **Visitor** editor Paul Gray, for his research (assisted by former Abbot House resident Sally Foote) in uncovering the history of the house itself, built in 1802. The information used by the authors is from the archives of the Castine Historical Society and from a January, 2008, interview with Sara F. (Sally) Foote.*

ABBOT HOUSE AND ITS OWNERS

Paul H. Gray, with the assistance of Sara F. (Sally) Foote

Whether or not Abbot House is the most beautiful home in Castine is disputable. What is not disputable is that at present it is the most talked and written about home in town thanks to the ongoing litigation between the town of Castine and its new owner, Maine Maritime Academy. But despite all that has been recently written and said about the house, its own story has been obscured. It is a fine story.

Keep in mind that Abbot House has also been the William Abbot home, the Charles Abbot home, the Margaret Abbot home, the Samuel Whitney home, the Katherine Whitney home, the Frederick Foote home, the Elizabeth Foote home, the Foote Grandchildren's home, and the Deborah Pulliam home. The 206-year history of Abbot House is inextricable from all those who called it home.

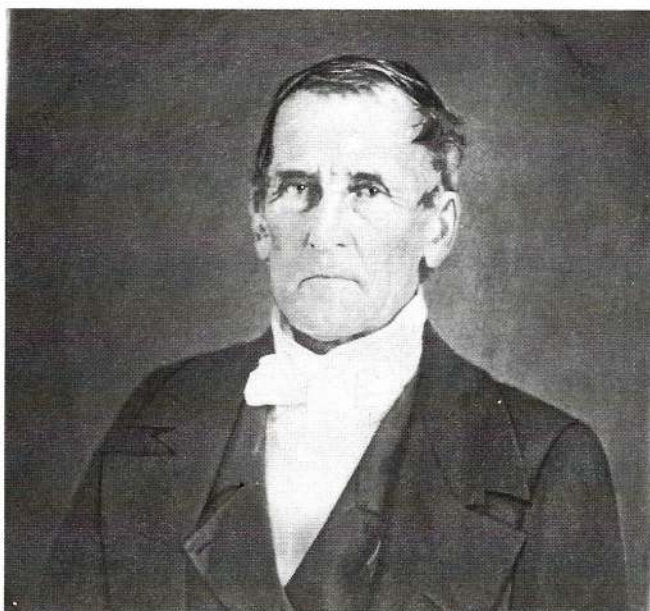
The Owners

William Abbot (1773-1850) built the house in 1802, and was among the most important citizens in Castine's history. The Abbot family had been prosperous farmers in Andover, New Hampshire, since the middle of the seventeenth

century. We don't know why William chose to settle in Castine, but prior to entering Harvard College he had attended a private school in Andover run by the Reverend Jonathan Fisher, who later accepted the position of Congregational minister at Blue Hill. Fisher may well have encouraged Abbot to move to the new shire town for Hancock County after graduating from Harvard in 1797 and being admitted to the legal profession a few years later.¹

In any event, Abbot moved to Castine to set up his practice in 1801. The next year, he built Abbot House and married Rebecca Atherton of Lancaster, New Hampshire. A year later, "Squire Abbot," as he was locally known, was appointed Registrar of Probate in Hancock County, a post he held for eighteen years.

His political career began in 1813 with election to the Massachusetts Senate, and just three years later, he served as a member of the Electoral College for the state. (The Massachusetts delegation, Federalists all, voted for Rufus King, whom James Monroe trounced 183 to 34.) In the same year, 1816, he was appointed a member of the Brunswick Convention, charged with deciding if Maine should separate from Massachusetts. (Abbot voted



William Abbot

Foote Collection

with the minority against separation since Castine had voted 65 to 7 against it.)

In 1819, as an elected delegate to the Portland Convention, he was appointed to the committee designated to draw up a constitution for the new state of Maine. He was elected a state representative through the 1820s. In 1829 he moved to Bangor, another new shire town, and served as selectman until the citizens voted to become a city. He chaired the committee to draw up a city charter for Bangor and served two terms as its first mayor. He died in 1850, aged seventy-seven.



Rebecca Atherton Abbot Foote Collection

William and Rebecca had seven, possibly eight, children born between 1803 and 1815.² William, Jr., the oldest, died at the age of nine, and we have few records of the others excepting the second boy, Charles, born 1806. He graduated from Bowdoin College in 1825, along with fellow classmates Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Franklin Pierce. He studied law under his father and set up practice in Bangor. When William moved to Bangor in 1829 he and Charles traded practices, the latter moving back to Castine and occupying Abbot House.

In spite of serving two terms in the Maine Senate beginning in 1866, Charles' life and career were much more centered on Castine than his father's had been. In addition to his law practice here, he served twice as selectman of the town, and was twice Collector of Customs (1841-45; 1850-53). But perhaps his greatest contribution to the town was his unstinting

commitment to its education system. A few years after returning to Castine from Bangor, he convinced the citizens of the need for better schools. According to a letter to *The Castine Visitor* (not to be confused with this publication) following Abbot's death,

at a distinct [district?] meeting held in the old Town House, [Abbot] so forcibly presented the then deplorable condition of our schools, and the conviction that far better things were within our reach, that, without a dissenting voice, the schools of Castine were placed in his hands, to do with them what he wished.

This meeting took place sometime in the 1830s. The reforms included "improved methods of recitation or instruction," compulsory attendance, and non-corporal discipline. The result, if the letter writer is to be believed, was

a system of schools, admired and appreciated even more by educators who. . . copied our methods of recitation, who wondered at our percentage of attendance, who noted the excellence of discipline, and who saw – what is so seldom seen in the school room, – the full power of the scholar called into active exercise.

The culmination of Charles's efforts on behalf of the schools was the erection in 1861 of a new elementary school. Samuel Adams, Stover Perkins, and Abbot constituted the building committee, which purchased a lot from John Gardner in 1859 and oversaw the construction. The building was named for Charles.³ We know it today as Adams School, but evidence is convincing that the signs for Adams and Abbott schools were taken down sometime in the 19th century and put back up in the 1950s, but on the wrong buildings. They have remained so ever since.

Charles Abbot died in 1882, and his obituary in the local paper included the following intriguing description:

As to his private character, Mr Abbot can scarcely be spoken of dispassionately at the present time. He was a man of marked peculiarities, . . . and though he was apparently of a repelling nature, this was in appearance only . . .

One of these "marked peculiarities" was Charles' tendency to spell his last name with two t's. The

CHS archives contain no instance of his father ever spelling it "Abbott." Nor had it ever been spelled so before William. The genealogy of the family, published in 1847, is entitled *A Genealogical Register of the Descendants of George Abbot of Andover, George Abbot of Rowley, Thomas Abbot of Andover, Arthur Abbot of Ipswich, Robert Abbot of Branford, CT and George Abbot of Norwalk, Ct.* Charles, though his name is spelled the traditional way on almost all legal documents, seems to have spelled his name with two t's at every opportunity. His orthographic peculiarity has clearly won the day with his descendents and with local historians from George Wheeler to Gardiner Gregory, who all follow his example.



Charles Abbot Foote Collection

Following Charles' death, ownership of Abbot House passed to his unmarried daughter Margaret, or Madge, as she was known, then 39 years old. The photograph of the house on the next page was probably taken during her ownership. She was the last of the Abbot family in Castine. After her death in 1915, Abbot House passed to Samuel A. Whitney.

The Whitneys were a Castine family as old as the Abbots and as prominent in maritime commerce as the latter were in civic affairs. The story of how the house passed to the Whitneys suggests how common intermarriages between and within families were in small, isolated villages. After Margaret Abbot's mother, Sarah, had died in 1843, her father, Charles Abbot, married Temperance (Tempe) Johnston Whitney, the widow of John Perkins Whitney, a prominent New Orleans merchant⁴ who had died there in 1848. Temperance's father, Daniel Johnston,

was a banker and built the handsome yellow house on upper Main Street. Her mother was a Perkins. Temperance and John had had five children, including Josephine Allen Whitney, who, in 1853 married Thomas Heston Whitney, co-owner with his brother, Samuel, of the Whitney Glass Works in New Jersey, a company purchased by his father, Ebenezer Whitney, after he was shipwrecked on Cape May during a voyage from the island of Madeira to Philadelphia.

The Samuel A. Whitney who acquired Abbot House in 1915 was the son of Josephine Allen Whitney and Thomas Heston Whitney, born in 1864, and therefore Temperance Whitney Abbot's grandson by her first marriage.⁵

For the next quarter century the house was occupied by the Whitney family, and old timers today still refer to it as the Whitney House. Samuel died in 1937, leaving the house to his daughter, Katherine, known locally as Kay. A short time later, she became engaged to a man from Chicago. A thorough urbanite, he wanted nothing to do with Castine, and Kay put the house on the market. (Nonetheless, he is buried in the Castine cemetery!)

The next owner was Frederick Foote of Greenville, Pennsylvania, who bought the house in 1940. Foote and his brother had financed and promoted the development of Cor-Ten,⁶ a rust resisting steel for railroad coal cars. Foote was an avid sailor, and a friend suggested he give up lake sailing in Pennsylvania and try the coast of Maine. His wife, Alice, had died in 1923, but he and his son Fritz spent several summers sailing here.

In 1956 Frederick married Elizabeth (Betty) Taylor. Her family, long-time members of the summer colony, owned the house on Perkins just east of Dresser Lane. With Frederick's death in 1963, ownership passed to Elizabeth, and, following her death in 1991, to the four children of Fritz and Sara (Sally) Fogg Foote. But the difficulties of joint ownership and arranging for stays here during the summers led to their decision to sell.

Deborah Pulliam, a resident of Castine since the mid-eighties, purchased Abbot House in 2003 and lived there until her death in 2007. Pulliam, the daughter of Eugene S. Pulliam, the former publisher of *The Indianapolis Star* and *The Indianapolis News*, had come to Castine to edit *The Patriot*. She was later one of the first editors of this newsletter. After purchasing Abbot House, she undertook considerable

research into its history. Much of the CHS archival file on Abbot House is the result of her investigations. Shortly after her death, the house was purchased by the Maine Maritime Academy.

The House

The first fully developed Federal house in the village was built in about 1802, the William Abbot house. This house has the feeling of lightness and delicacy characteristic of the Federal style. The roof is also a lower hip roof; there is a very delicate portico in front of the broad doorway with a fanlight over it—a very handsome mid-Federal period house.

Earle J. Shettleworth, Jr.,
Director Maine Historic
Preservation Commission.

Viewed from the front, Abbot House is situated on rising banks of a lawn. We don't know what the front of the house looked like originally, but Deborah Pulliam uncovered evidence that it included a bell tower. Inside the house, the downstairs conformed to the typical layout for Federal houses, a hall running front to back with two rooms on either side. What is unusual about the hall is the absence of a staircase. The actual staircase, a rather unimaginative affair, rises from the north room, what would have been the kitchen. By this architectural strategy, William Abbot intended to give his guests an impressive feeling of space unbroken by a staircase. Tradition tells us that his wife, Rebecca, on seeing the hall, complained that Main Street houses with hall staircases were far more impressive. Apparently Mrs. Abbot was as ambitious socially as her husband was politically. With seven or eight children in residence, the house must have been one of the liveliest in town.

The front rooms were parlors, with the kitchen in the back north room, and the dining room across the hall from it. Upstairs consisted originally of the

hall and four bedrooms. A bathroom at one end of the hall was later added. The ell behind the house

was original with it and contained two or three more bedrooms. Attached to the ell on the west side was a servants' room. Behind the ell was a large room, possibly the carriage house and later, the garage. Northwest of the ell stood a large barn.

Neither the Abbots nor the Whitneys made any significant changes in the property. Even the furniture was pretty much what had been collecting there over the life of the house. When Katherine sold the house, she took with her or gave away all of it. During the Whitney period, although they were residents of Castine, they used the house mainly as a summer home. Deborah

Pulliam found evidence of a tennis court built by the Whitneys near the west side of the house. No other changes were made.

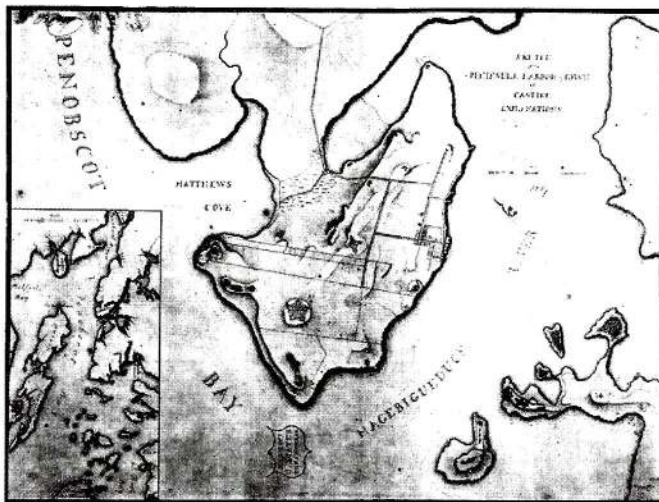
Frederick Foote, on the other hand, altered both the interior of the house and the size of the property. As the map on the next page shows, the first lots in Castine ran from the Bagaduce shore to the Penobscot River. Between Battle Avenue (then High Street) and the Bagaduce shore these lots underwent considerable subdivision, but those on the Penobscot side of Battle Avenue did not. The original Abbot lot, like many others,⁷ ran all the way downhill to the "back shore."

Foote purchased considerable land adjacent to the original lot. He purchased the Baldwin Cottage⁸ and lot, which included what is now the field on the west side of Abbot House along Battle Avenue and a considerable part of Witherle Woods. He had the land immediately behind the house planted in red pine and hackmatack, both native trees. The grove is still there, where the woods begin for those entering from behind Fort George. He also purchased the house and property just east of Abbot House. Later he



Abbot House 1860's

Foote Collection

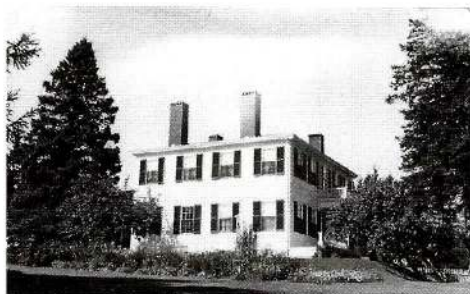


Map of 1817. Courtesy National Archives, Washington, D.C.

sold the house (current occupant, Madeline Stuckey) but kept the land behind it. He also purchased the field across Battle Avenue that runs to Tarratine Street. After Frederick's death, his wife Elizabeth negotiated an easement agreement with the Brooksville, Castine, and Penobscot Conservation Trust stipulating that it would remain a mown field, as it is to this day. During Frederick and Elizabeth's ownership, the estate included more land than at any other time in its history. After Elizabeth's death, the Foote grandchildren gave 36 acres in Witherle Woods to the Maine Coast Heritage Trust.

Foote also altered the interior by knocking out the wall between the two west rooms making the resultant space a larger living room. He added another bathroom to the one upstairs and another in the ell and tore down the barn attached to the ell. He also tore off the servants' room.

When his grandchildren sold to Deborah Pulliam, they kept the land along Battle Avenue and the Baldwin Cottage site above it. Pulliam moved the kitchen out of the house into the ell, and with the encouragement of David Hatch, restored the outhouse. It is believed that Pulliam's will, still in probate as of this writing, deeds the field across Battle Avenue to the Maine Coast Heritage Trust.



Abbot House

Foote Collection

In January of 2004, after she had moved into Abbot House, Deborah Pulliam spoke at the Unitarian Church on the topic

What We Can Learn From Old Houses

So just what is it I've learned from the Abbot House? As always, I've learned about the people who lived in it. . . . Why is this so important? I think because I want to know and understand what makes the Abbott House such a warm and comfortable home, not the grand and formal, not to mention imposing, house (I will not say mansion!) it appears to be. What makes [buildings like Abbot House] special? Is it because they're old? Because they're beautiful? It's because of people, of course. The people who built them, certainly, built them with an eye to the future - building carefully, and for the future, with no thought of planned obsolescence. But there are other people to consider, who are just as important as the builders. The subsequent generations who lovingly and carefully maintained the buildings to be enjoyed and used by them and their descendants.

There are many beautiful old houses in Castine and the coast of Maine, and all over New England. Many have been restored and renovated and even, unfortunately, turned into McMansions. Why is the Abbott House so much warmer and inviting than a similar house that has had millions spent on it? Because, sadly, as most of us know, money is never enough, no matter how much people try. The care and thought that went into maintaining Abbott House was just as important as the money spent on it.

¹The attraction of new shire town for new lawyer was irresistible. Other Harvard-educated lawyers around Abbot's age who started in Castine were Isaac Parker, who wound up as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts; Isaac Story, who "established *The Castine Journal*, and edited it assiduously, probably at the expense of his law practice"; and William Wetmore, who "was one of the six lawyers in Maine ever to be

raised to the exalted state of 'Barrister'." See "The Unorganized Harvard Club of Castine," *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*, n.a., n.d.

²The Abbot children and birthdates are: William (1803 [died 1812]), Charles Jeffrey (1806), Rebecca (1807), Ellen (1810), George (1812), William (1813), Francis (?), Diana (1815). Diana is referred to in a letter by Herman Abbot, brother of William, a physician and resident of Belfast.

³Frieda Hatch Matheson in an unpublished essay, "History of Education in Castine," argues that the signs for what we know today as "Adams School" and "Abbott School" have been reversed. According to relevant documents, the building committee was instructed to build a school

58 feet by 34 feet, 'with a cupola on top' at the estimated expense of ten thousand, eight hundred dollars. This building was to be known as the 'Abbot School,' obviously named for Charles Abbott. In 1861, to honor another member of the committee, the district voted that the older high school building should hereafter be known as the "Adams School." Those familiar with the two buildings today immediately recognize the reversal of names. After checking building measurements, considering deeds and location of buildings, I am forced to conclude that this has been done. . .

I attended school in both buildings and taught in the high school in the late twenties. I do not recall either building being called anything but "the grammar school" and "the high school." It would seem, therefore, that when the names were brought to light and the attempt was made to restore them, they were accidentally reversed and the Adams School became the Abbott School, and the Abbot School the Adams

⁴For more on the Whitney/New Orleans connection, see Richard Ames, "Henry Whitney, Prominent Ship Captain," *Castine Visitor*, vol. 12 no. 2; and Richard Ames, "Castine Sisters at Sea During the Golden Era of Sail" *Castine Visitor* vol. 13 no. 1

⁵The U. S. census for 1880 lists four people living in Abbot House: Charles J. Abbot, age 74; Margaret Abbot, age 41, Ina Mills, age 16, servant; and Samuel A. Whitney, age 15, born in New Jersey. Samuel was one of seven children of Thomas Heston Whitney and Josephine Whitney. We are grateful to Richard Ames for his help in untangling the Abbot-Whitney web.

⁶Cor-Ten was a breakthrough in coal-car construction. Because coal cars had to be constructed of steel for its strength and were open to the elements, rusting was a major problem. Cor-Ten solved it. When first exposed to the elements this new steel would briefly rust at an accelerated rate and then stop. Although the patent expired, it is still in use today. Architects and artists are frequently attracted to it for the deep rust red it produces. The most famous example of this is the Picasso sculpture in Chicago's Civic Center Plaza, where it echoes the Cor-Ten steel in the Civic Center building.

⁷The Tenney property just west of Fort George is another example of those old lots.

⁸The Baldwins were a Philadelphia family. Their summer house was behind and west of Abbot House, and was locally famous for its gardens, the remains of which are still visible as are the square stone pillars that mark the entrance. The Baldwins shared what is now the Abbot House driveway. With the depression, the Baldwin sisters stopped coming, and the house had begun to decay when Foote demolished it.

CHS Appreciates Your Support

We would like to thank all of our members for their generous support of the Society. Including life members, we now number more than 600. Each new or renewed gift membership conveys all privileges of being a member of the Society, including a subscription to *The Castine Visitor*, published three times a year.

If you have an address change, winter or summer, please let us know. It is important to keep the files accurate so you receive all the CHS mailings. Thank you for your support. It is what makes the CHS and its members, near and far, an active part of the Castine Community.

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Hugh or Henry and Why?

Lynn H. Parsons

It was on July 1, 2006 that the *Boston Globe* broke the story that the Luminist artist Fitz Hugh Lane (1804-65), who lived in Castine during the 1850's, was not really Fitz Hugh Lane at all, but Fitz Henry Lane. Complicating matters further was the fact that Lane was not born with either of the given names, but was born Nathaniel Rogers Lane, opting to change his name in his mid-twenties.

How all this came to be known is only one example of how historians sometimes work as detectives, weighing the evidence, searching for clues, and drawing conclusions in a Sherlock-Holmesian fashion.

It all started in September 2004, when John Wilmerding, Lane's principal biographer, spoke at the Cape Ann Historical Museum in Gloucester, Massachusetts, Lane's home town. Wilmerding knew there had been a name change, but was unsure why. So he threw out what he must have thought was a rhetorical question: "Where and why did Fitz Hugh Lane become Fitz Hugh Lane, since he was born and baptized Nathaniel Rogers Lane?"

Members of the Gloucester Archives Committee took up Wilmerding's challenge. First, they launched an internet search of all name-change petitions filed in Massachusetts in 1831, the year Wilmerding believed the change had taken place. No mention of a "Fitz Hugh Lane," only a "Fitz Henry Lane." The Committee assumed there had been an error.

To confirm their hypothesis, they went next to some raw data, namely the list of name-change petitions in the state archives book, a copy of which was kept at the Lynnfield Public Library. The change was still listed as "Fitz Henry Lane." The hypothesis now appeared to be somewhat shaky.

The only thing to do was to laboriously examine every name-change petition filed with the Massachusetts Legislature in 1831. This required a trip to the state archives in Boston. The stack of petitions was several inches thick, and next to the very last petition was that of Nathaniel Rogers Lane, who, in his own handwriting, asked "your Honorable Body, that he may take the name of Fitz Henry Lane, instead of Nathaniel, Rogers, Lane."

The revelation of Lane's real name led only to a further question: How and where did the mis-naming come about? The Boston city directories in the

1840's list a "Fitz H. Lane," as do the Gloucester real estate records. When he died in 1865, the *Gloucester Telegraph and News* referred to him in the same way, as does his will. Two paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City are clearly signed "Fitz Henry Lane." When Lane's namesake nephew died in 1915, the obituary in the Gloucester *Daily Times* described him as "a nephew of Fitz Henry Lane, the famous marine artist of this city, for whom he was named." According to Eleanor H. Gustafson's article "Fitz who Lane," published in the June 2005 edition of *Magazine Antiques*, it was assumed at that time that the "H" in Lane's middle name stood for "Henry." Therefore, the mis-naming probably occurred some time after 1915.

Indeed it did. In 1938, Lane's "View of Gloucester, 1859" was offered for sale and listed as "Drawn by Fitzhugh Lane/L. H. Bradford Lithograph." The new name stuck. In 1949 a collection of Lane's paintings was given to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston by Maxim and Martha Karolik, ascribed to "Fitz Hugh Lane." Alexander Eliot's *Three Hundred Years of American Painting*, published in 1957, mentions "Fitz Hugh Lane" as did John Wilmerding's biography in 1971. The well-known "Lumber Ships" donated to the National Gallery of Art by Frank Hatch in 1980 was listed in the same way.

Wilmerding, who had planned to re-publish his biography of Lane, hastily changed its title but not the references in the text. Museums, including Boston's Museum of Fine Arts and the Peabody Essex Museum, had their work cut out for them, setting about the changing of the labels in their collections of Lane's work. So did the city of Gloucester, where Lane's chiseled gravemarker clearly says "Hugh," not "Henry."

Yet Wilmerding's original question remains unanswered. "Why" did Nathaniel Rogers Lane change want to change his name in 1831? A wicked stepfather? An ancestor accused of witchcraft? Merely a whim? Historians, like detectives, must accept the fact that some mysteries will always remain unsolved.

For more on this, see "Art world adjusts to Lane change," *Boston Globe*, July 1, 2006; Eleanor H. Gustafson, "Fitz who Lane?" *Magazine Antiques*, June, 2005; and the *Essex Genealogist* for April, 2005.



Dennett's Wharf, Castine, a painting by Thomas Fransioli
On loan for the Summer Exhibit by the Maine Maritime Academy

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