

# the CASTINE VISITOR

CASTINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Summer 2012

vol. 22 no. 2



## 2012 Summer Exhibit at the Abbott School

### *SCHOONER BOWDOIN ON THE GREENLAND PATROL*

The schooner *Bowdoin* is very much a part of life in Castine, Maine. This beautiful ninety-one-year-old two-masted wooden schooner is a National Historic Landmark training vessel, owned and operated by Maine Maritime Academy. Our 2012 co-sponsored summer exhibit *Schooner Bowdoin on the Greenland Patrol* is the result of eighteen months research by two dedicated Maine Maritime Academy faculty members, Peg Brandon, professor of Marine Transportation, and Betsy Reese, Adjunct Professor of Geography.

Peg told us, "In 2009, MMA was gifted the *Bowdoin's* nautical charts from the war years from the family of David Nutt, who had been the executive officer on USS *Bowdoin* 1942-43. We were inspired by this remarkable collection and it quickly became apparent that there were many important untold stories about *Bowdoin's* wartime service. This exhibit in collaboration with CHS has provided an opportunity to tell a few of these tales of the crew, schooner *Bowdoin* and the storied Greenland Patrol to a larger audience."

Peg and Betsy began their journey by exploring the charts and concluded by immersing themselves in the dramatic story of *Bowdoin's* World War II service gathered from letters, photographs, crew members' log books, oral histories and artifacts. The exhibit focuses on the *Bowdoin's* time on the Greenland Patrol and also highlights her other voyages to Greenland prior to World War II as well

as those since being acquired by Maine Maritime Academy in 1988. Artifacts and memorabilia borrowed from Maine Maritime Academy, the Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum at Bowdoin College, and

private individuals will focus the visitor's attention on the vessel's story and on the stories of her officers and crew.

Objects in the display include the original "ice-barrel" used as a lookout on the schooner's foremast and the official Maine marine flag commissioned in 1939 (see photos pages 5 & 6).

(continued on page 7)



*Bowdoin* on her 2008 trip north

Courtesy of Maine Maritime Academy

# CASTINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## SUMMER 2012 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- 4-6 pm**  
**Friday**  
**June 15**      **Opening reception of the Castine Historical Society and Wilson Museum co-sponsored exhibit, "Celebrating Allie Ryan's Maritime Passion"**  
For members and guests. At the Wilson Museum, 120 Perkins Street in Castine.
- 4-6 pm**  
**Sunday**  
**June 24**      **Opening reception of the Castine Historical Society's Summer Exhibit "Schooner *Bowdoin* on the Greenland Patrol", co-sponsored with Maine Maritime Academy.** The exhibit highlights the story of the Schooner *Bowdoin's* service for the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard in World War II. The reception is free and open to the public at the Abbott School on the Castine town common.
- 10 am-4 pm**  
**Mondays-Saturdays**  
**and 1-4pm Sundays**      **Exhibit is on view from June 25 through Labor Day, seven days a week.** (early Fall hours to be announced later). Also on view is the permanent exhibit "The Penobscot Expedition". Free admission.
- 7:00 pm**  
**Wednesday**  
**June 27**      **Colin Woodard, author, will discuss his recent book, *American Nations: A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America*.**  
Co-sponsored by Witherle Memorial Library, Wilson Museum and Castine Historical Society at the Unitarian Universalist Meeting House.
- 7:30 pm**  
**Tuesday**  
**July 10**      **John Dilks, radio historian and author, will give a presentation titled *Wireless North Pole: Don Mix and the Schooner Bowdoin***  
Co-sponsored by CHS and Castine Yacht Club, in the Mitchell Room
- 10 am-4 pm**  
**Saturday and**  
**1-4 pm Sunday**  
**July 28 & 29**      **"Touring Through Time"** a collective open house of ten historical organizations of the Eastern Penobscot Bay and Blue Hill Peninsula area.  
Free and open to the public.  
For more information, go to [www.eastpenobscothistory.org](http://www.eastpenobscothistory.org)
- Time TBD**  
**Wednesday**  
**August 1**      **Third annual J. McLaughlin trunk show and sale in Castine**  
with a percentage of the proceeds benefitting the Castine Historical Society.  
Time and location to be announced.
- 7:30 pm**  
**Tuesday**  
**August 7**      **Fourth Annual Deborah Pulliam Memorial Lecture**  
**by Dr. P.J. Capelotti, editor of *Life and Death on the Greenland Patrol***  
At Delano Auditorium, Maine Maritime Academy
- 7:30 pm**  
**Friday**  
**August 24**      **Castine Historical Society Annual Meeting**, featuring a screening of historic documentary film footage of maritime collector Allie Ryan, with commentary from Castine artist and ship model maker John Gardner.  
In the Mitchell Room of the Abbott School; light refreshments to follow.
- 7:00 pm**  
**Wednesday**  
**August 29**      **Kevin Mills, author and sports journalist, will discuss his recent books *Sons and Daughters of the Ocean* and *Breakwater***  
Co-sponsored by Witherle Library & CHS; in the Mitchell Room
- Early-mid**  
**October**  
**TBD**      **Closing reception for exhibit "Schooner *Bowdoin* on the Greenland Patrol"**  
to be held on MMA Homecoming weekend or Parents Weekend.  
Exhibit closes on October 15.

*For changes or additions to the schedule, check [www.castinehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.castinehistoricalsociety.org) or the local newspapers.*



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

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[www.castinehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.castinehistoricalsociety.org)

**Castine  
Historical Society**

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Castine's town common has a slightly different appearance this spring. The obvious change is the near completion of the Witherle Library's addition. Less obvious are the changes to the Grindle House, which was purchased by the Castine Historical Society in 2008, and is adjacent to the Abbott School. Its front porch and side deck have been removed because they were not original to the c.1850 structure. The small 1970s vintage garage was also dismantled and removed. Many are aware that the Society's Buildings and Grounds Committee has been meeting regularly and, with the guidance of historic preservation architect Christopher Glass, is close to completion of the design phase for the Grindle House Restoration Project. It is rewarding to see stakes in the ground marking the dimensions of the addition and to be able to visualize how these changes relate to surrounding buildings.

The interior space will include offices, a resource library, and an archival room. Our next task is to research options and costs related to creation of the specialized archival space. Interestingly, an excellent example of high tech archival space is close by in Bucksport at Northeast Film, also home to the Alamo Theater.

Although we have made excellent progress so far, much work lies ahead. The Castine Historic Preservation Commission approved the exterior design with the understanding that further review will be required when the final plans for the front entrance and the chimneys become available. We will also need approval from Castine's Planning Board. Our dedicated Finance Committee is thinking creatively about how to establish a method of payment. We will enlist the grant-writing skills of part-time administrator Sally Chadbourne to seek outside funding for this exciting restoration project.

Castine has one of the most well preserved examples of a 19th century town common in New England. It is fitting that the Castine Historical Society continues in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to take a leadership role in maintaining this heritage.

Please save the date of Sunday, June 24<sup>th</sup>, 4 - 6 pm, to attend the opening at Abbott School of our summer 2012 exhibit *Schooner Bowdoin on the Greenland Patrol*, (see page 5) co-sponsored with the Maine Maritime Academy. The Fourth Annual Deborah Pulliam Lecture features Dr. P. J. Capelotti who will speak about his book *Life and Death on the Greenland Patrol* at 7:30pm on Tuesday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, at Delano Auditorium (see page 11). I look forward to seeing you at these and the other noteworthy events on the CHS summer schedule.

Marcia P. Mason

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HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY  
2011-2012**

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**NEW MEMBERS**

The Castine Historical Society  
welcomes the following new members:

Rosanne Pugliese and William Dudine

Thomas Howland

Alice and Clark Kimball

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS**

If you have already renewed your membership for the year,  
we thank you for your continued support of the Castine  
Historical Society! It's not too late to do so. Payment can  
be sent to CHS, PO Box 238, Castine, ME 04421.

*From your friends on the Membership Committee*

**NEW CHS WEBSITE TO BE LAUNCHED**

The Castine Historical Society is getting a facelift – online, that is.  
We are pleased to announce the imminent launch of an updated  
website. The address will stay the same

[www.castinehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.castinehistoricalsociety.org)

but the look and content will be new and much improved.

Please visit us on the web after June 15.

We are also launching a CHS page on Facebook. If you are a  
current Facebook user, please “like” us at:

<https://www.facebook.com/CastineHistoricalSociety> .

We look forward to your visits – on the web AND in person  
at the Abbott School for our 2012 exhibit, starting June 24.

See you there!

**NEW LOOK FOR *THE VISITOR***

The breathtaking beauty of *Bowdoin* under sail set against the backdrop  
of a vast iceberg in the north Atlantic and the rich detail included in  
our Castine Bicentennial Quilt deserved no less than the full color  
treatment featured in this issue.

We hope you agree with the results.

# SCHOONER *BOWDOIN* AND THE GREENLAND PATROL

Lynn H. Parsons  
Anne H. Parsons

In 1941 most Americans, in the words of one historian, thought of Greenland “as a nondescript white blob at the top of their world maps.” Hundreds of fjords mark its coastline, and in the long winter months it is surrounded by a twenty to thirty-mile belt of floating icebergs that the natives call the “storis.” In winter, only ships equipped for ice-breaking can enter the fjords. In spring and summer the weather moderates, and the icebergs, some of which are as large as several city blocks, float out to sea. One of them was struck by the *Titanic* in 1912.

For many years Greenland had been a possession of Denmark, and when Germans invaded that nation in April 1940, Greenland’s strategic value became critical. It was valuable not only as a weather station and waypoint for ships and aircraft headed for Great Britain, but as a source of cryolite, an extremely important mineral needed for the production of aluminum, and therefore for airplane construction. The cryolite mine at Ivigtut, in southern Greenland, was the largest in the world at that time.

Not long after Denmark’s fall, the local government in Greenland asked for American protection. Germans had already placed weather stations on its eastern shore, stations that were vital to the operations of the *Luftwaffe*, the German air force. Although the United States was not at war with Germany in 1940, protection was given, and soon American newspapers were announcing an “unofficial protectorate over Greenland.” Following numerous civilian casualties owing to the sinking of merchant vessels by German U-Boats, as well as the threat to Atlantic shipping posed by the huge German battleship *Bismarck*, the Greenland Patrol was organized on June 1, 1941. It was later designated as Task Force 24.8, under the jurisdiction of the U. S. Atlantic Fleet. It initially brought together a small assortment of vessels, including a wooden-hulled former survey ship, a former seal catcher, a revenue cutter, an icebreaking tugboat, and the *Bowdoin*.

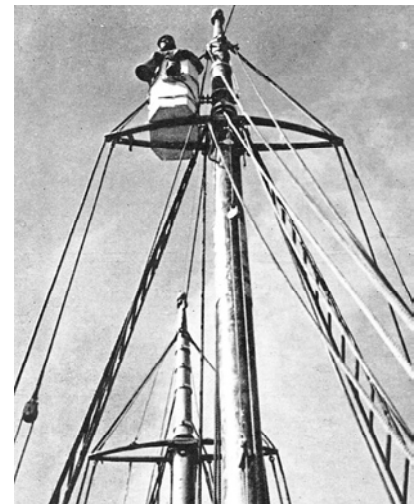
Under the Harvard-educated USCG Commander Edward H. “Iceberg” Smith, the Patrol was ordered to perform a variety of tasks, including

convoying American military and cryolite-bearing ships, breaking through ice, destroying enemy weather and radio stations, performing rescue missions, and conducting hydrographic surveys. It was the last task for which *Bowdoin* was especially equipped.

*Bowdoin* was a privately-owned vessel, but like many similar vessels, from sail schooners to fishing trawlers, she was coveted by both the Army and the Navy. Her owner, Donald MacMillan, himself a Naval reserve Lieutenant Commander, sold it to the Navy for \$35,000, the amount he spent to build her in 1921, although she was worth more. Renamed the USS *Bowdoin*, MacMillan took her on a voyage to western Greenland, where the Americans hoped to establish two airbases.

This was by no means *Bowdoin*’s first voyage to the Arctic. Her first voyage north had been sponsored by the Carnegie Institution in 1921.

MacMillan had taken her on a study of terrestrial magnetism and atmospheric electricity – part of a larger plan to learn more about the earth’s magnetic poles. Now, twenty years later, she was participating in the navigation and charting of western Greenland’s



Commander MacMillan in crow's nest or "ice barrel" on *Bowdoin* from *The Log of the Schooner Bowdoin*, photography by Alfred M. Bailey (World Publishing Co. 1947). Our summer exhibit will display this original ice barrel.

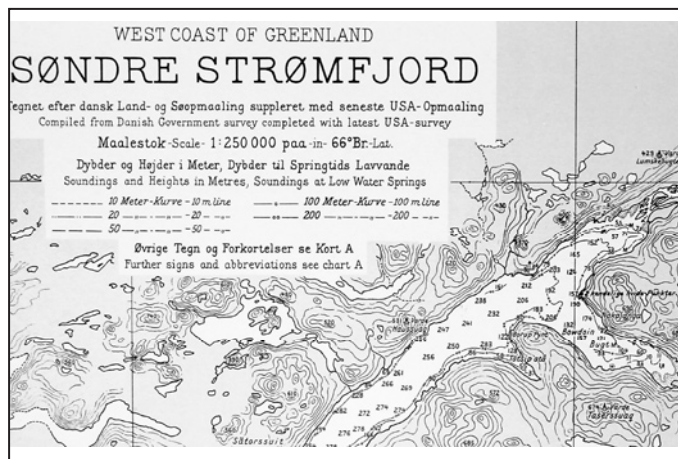
many fjords before returning home to Massachusetts in late November, 1941. A few days later, Pearl Harbor was attacked, and Germany joined with Japan in declaring war against the United States. Commander MacMillan, then in his late sixties, believed he could be of better service elsewhere, and spent the next three years in Washington, editing charts of Greenland and working on a dictionary of Eskimo words and phrases.

*Bowdoin* was turned over to Lieutenant Stuart Hotchkiss, a graduate of Yale University who had joined the Navy the previous year. Although technically a Navy vessel, *Bowdoin*, as well as the entire Greenland Patrol, was under the command of the

(continued on next page)

Coast Guard. Sailing from Boston in the spring of 1942, she stopped first at Casco Bay, where she joined the expanded fleet, thence to Argentia Bay in Newfoundland, and then on to Greenland. As Lieutenant Hotchkiss later remembered it, given a fair wind, *Bowdoin* could easily sail ahead of her motorized companions.

For the next two summers, the Patrol set up range lights, shore markers, and radio beacons at more than fifty sites. (In June 1944, they provided the crucial weather information that allowed General Eisenhower the confidence to proceed with the invasion of Normandy.)



Detail of chart for West Coast of Greenland issued by Royal Danish Hydrographic Office, Copenhagen, 1946.

*Bowdoin's* assignment was to chart the waterways that led to the two airbases. Using overlapping air photos Lieutenant Hotchkiss and his crew surveyed the eighty-five mile fjord at Sondrestrom, which straddles the Arctic Circle on Greenland's western coast. They were able to complete the job by the end of summer, 1942.

Life aboard *Bowdoin* in the Greenland summer was comparatively pleasant. The twenty-four-hour days allowed time for hunting, fishing and exploration. Perhaps the high point of the entire mission was the discovery of the grounded and abandoned ship *Halma*, formerly of Danish registry but later under Panamanian flag. The personnel had vanished, but there was a considerable supply of clothing, beer, and other alcoholic beverages. Although *Bowdoin*, like all the other vessels in the Patrol, was dry, somehow the beverages managed to vanish as well.

Unlike most of the rest of the Patrol, *Bowdoin* stayed behind as winter drew near, dropping 300 miles south to the fjords at Narsarssuak, where there was a small village, complete with schoolhouse and a

church. The natives were friendly and often invited crew members into their homes. Hotchkiss later recalled that "The life of the village was very simple and the entertainment was entirely self-made. It was surprising how many of the people could play musical instruments and had other personal accomplishments to contribute to the entertainment at a gathering. It frequently made us realize how few our own personal accomplishments were, and how much we rely on outside sources rather than ourselves."

Narsarssuak was near a U. S. airbase that served as a refueling point for Coast Guard cutters in Greenland waters. Unlike the men of the *Bowdoin*, however, army personnel there were completely isolated from the native Greenlanders, and thus they missed the insights gained by Hotchkiss and his crew.

In their three years on the Greenland Patrol, the men of the *Bowdoin* never saw combat, but they did once witness its results. In February 1943 the transport *Dorchester* was torpedoed about 100 miles offshore. Although lifeboats and rafts were gotten off quickly, nearly men all died of exposure before they could be rescued. "The sea was literally covered with little bobbing lights on the life jackets of these frozen men," Hotchkiss later recalled. And when he received word that he was to be transferred to another post, he sent nearly all his personal belongings on board the Coast Guard cutter *Escanaba*. He never saw them again. *Escanaba*, too, was torpedoed on the voyage south.



Merchant and Marine Flag of the State of Maine, designed by Marshall S. Campbell of Waterville, approved in 1939 and flown on the *Bowdoin*. It is part of the summer exhibit.

*Bowdoin's* new commander was naval officer John Backlund, who skippered the vessel on her final summer on the Greenland Patrol, surveying the inland passage from Narsarssuak to Ivigtut, before returning home in October 1943. She was taken to Boston, where she was decommissioned and lay idle for the rest of the war.

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Navigational tools and period charts, two meticulous models of the *Bowdoin*, and many documents and photographs will be featured.

*Bowdoin* earned three U.S. Navy campaign ribbons for her service and these are being generously donated for inclusion in the exhibit.

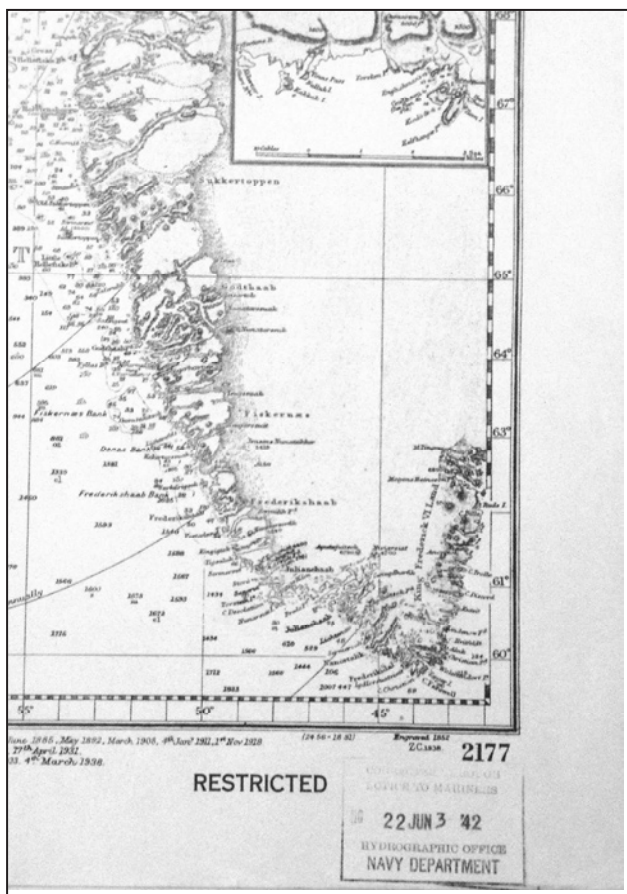
A section of the exhibit focusing on *Bowdoin's* recent history features interactive digital technology that will allow visitors to use Google Earth to view the various voyages of the Schooner *Bowdoin* with corresponding imagery and narrative. Over the past year, MMA students have helped to produce the files for Google Earth by incorporating photos, text, charts and imagery into the interface.

One of USS *Bowdoin's* WWII crew members for two trips to Greenland was Guy R. Abbate (1909-1978), the Pharmacist Mate on board. Peg and Betsy were delighted to learn that Guy kept a journal which provides a fascinating account of his time on *Bowdoin*. In it he provides an enlisted man's perspective on life on the Greenland Patrol as well as adding much color to the voyage accounts written by commanding officers Capt. MacMillan and Capt. Hotchkiss. Guy maintained a close relationship with the MacMillans after WWII, sailing on a post war *Bowdoin* voyage and visiting Mac and Miriam for many years. His children Guy and Christine have happy memories of family vacations at MacMillan's Provincetown home.

The Abbate family continued its connection with *Bowdoin* when Guy's grandson, Chad Maguire, sailed on the schooner to Greenland in 1994 during his student years at MMA. Another strong connection to modern Castine exists through Mike and Kathy Coughlin's daughter Catherine who married another grandson, Chris Abbate. CHS received a generous donation in support of the exhibit from the Abbate family in honor of Marise and Guy R. Abbate, Sr., for which all involved in the preparations for the summer are extremely grateful.

Please come and celebrate the long and heroic history of the schooner *Bowdoin* at the opening reception Sunday, June 24, from 4 to 6 p.m.

# # #



Detail from nautical chart carried on *Bowdoin*, part of the Nutt collection housed at the Maine Maritime Academy. Note the date stamp and the "restricted" label.

*Bowdoin's* size necessarily limited the role that she could play on the Greenland Patrol. But Commanders MacMillan, Hotchkiss, and Backlund could rest in confidence that she was an essential part of a greater whole that, in the words of the great naval historian Samuel Eliot Morison, "performed with exemplary fortitude and faithfulness throughout the war."

# # #

*Editors' note:* For a full history of the *Bowdoin* and a thorough review of the life and accomplishments of Admiral MacMillan, see the *Castine Visitor*, vol. 11, no. 1 (Spring, 2001), and Virginia Thorndike's *The Arctic Schooner Bowdoin: A Biography* (1995). For the complete story of the Greenland Patrol see John A. Tilley's "The Coast Guard and the Greenland Patrol," accessible on the World Wide Web at <http://uscg.mil/history/articles/GreenlandPatrol.pdf> Admiral Morison puts the Patrol in a larger perspective in Volume One of his *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II* (1960), especially pp. 58-64. All of these sources were used in writing this article.

# THE DIARY OF THADDEUS NOVAK

*Editor's note: The following are excerpts from the diary kept by Thaddeus D. Novak printed in Life and Death on the Greenland Patrol, 1942, edited by P. J. Capelotti. Mr. Novak was born Thaddeus Nowakowski in Detroit, Michigan, in 1919. He was the next to youngest in a family of eight boys and four girls. In 1941, he had a new wife and had been laid off his job at an automotive assembly line. Rather than wait to be drafted, he joined the Coast Guard. He served aboard the 120-foot converted trawler Nanok. The selections that follow, written during the last six months of 1942, were chosen for their remarkable descriptive power of the overwhelming vastness and beauty of the north Atlantic and Greenland.*

ahp

## July 23, Thursday; Labrador Sea.

Sight my first iceberg today. It is gigantic! About the length of a city block. I thought it to be an island. We skirt it widely. The sinking of the *Titanic* is recalled. Some claim icebergs lay 4/5 under water, some say 9/10, yet others say 5/6. I say, "a hell of a lot."

When the brand new ocean liner tore her side open on the side of an iceberg and plunged to the bottom of the ocean some thirty years ago it shook the entire maritime world.

After all, the entire world knew the vessel was "unsinkable," but she sank — on her very first voyage! .

The largest bergs are called "growlers." Bergs come mostly from some twenty glaciers on Greenland's east coast. Each year an estimated 15,000 giant bergs and millions of smaller ones travel south in the Labrador Current to meet the warm Gulf Stream and melt away. In their death throes they create thick fog banks that often hide them from even watchful sailor's eyes.

## September 11, Friday; Comanche Bay.

As the time passes, tempers of crew members are growing ever thinner. Most anger easily and at the slightest provocation. Much is caused by the loneliness Greenland's bleak and barren rocks and glaciers impart. Too, not knowing when, if ever, we will return stateside and see our loved ones is a strong factor. Heavy rain turns the world into a caldron of dismal sadness and discomfort. Homesickness is overabundant. Dreariness is Greenland and Greenland is dreariness. It is the world at end, the chill of ages, a tombstone for lost ships and men. It is a blanket of ice smoothed by unbelievable winds. The largest island on earth lying mostly inside the Arctic Circle.

## September 13, Sunday; Comanche Bay.

A deluge of snow falls as we turn to this a.m. Snowflakes the size of large maple leaves are coming down. I catch one after the other in my cold, gloved

hand and study their beauty and structure as quickly as I can before they disintegrate and become water. There must be some designer high in the sky that specializes in filigree design.

## September 14, Monday; BE 1, Optimist, Angmagssalik.

There is a single, high mountain peak on the south shore near the harbor's entrance. The peak is quite pointed, somewhat like a pyramid. A small, dense cloud drifts into the peak and circles around it, slowly at first, then faster and faster. Finally, ever increasing momentum flings fractured sections of the cloud out and away from the peak. Another Greenland phenomenon.

## September 22, Tuesday; Angmagssalik.

I am forever awed by the mountainous glaciers that come to an end at the sea and bottomless fjords. I thrill when they fracture and break apart with roars that tremble the sea and disturb my eardrums. Every roar heralds the birth of a floating iceberg. These giant chunks of emerald and diamond plunge into the sea depths and are gone from sight. An eternity later the chunks reappear. They rise slowly, majestically, to ride proud and high in the blue-black sea. These monstrous giants bob in very slow motion as they begin their voyage southward to eternity. They move by will of wind and current. Eventually they are consumed by warmer water and brine of the sea. They are beautiful but fearful to those who sail their playgrounds.

## October 30, Friday; Angmagssalik.

Icebergs and thick cake ice fields stretch to the horizon. *Nanok* has a narrow escape. As we push

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aside a very large berg, it decides it does not want to be pushed aside. Pressure from the starboard side of the *Nanok*'s bow causes the berg to roll over onto its back. After a great amount of pushing, the berg decides to turn right side up, then down onto the *Nanok*'s bow. The berg's weight pushes the bow deep under water. We slide to port and away from the berg. The action causes both the berg and *Nanok* to bob up and down, up and down, but not in unison.

#### **November 20, Friday; At sea.**

We are southbound through bow-tossed flying chunks of ice and small bergs that perform like ballet dancers atop wave crests. Wave tops fly and splash across *Nanok*'s decks, freeze, and glaze them with crystal ice. Even when hanging onto the lifeline stretched from forecastle to pilot house aft, it is impossible not to slip and fall many times en route. Rain and sleet impairs vision so again we heave-to for the night.

#### **December 14, Monday; At sea.**

We push through miles of icebergs of all sizes. Some look like large white and blue islands. Our travel is very slow and arduous. *Nanok*'s bow is gently eased against one giant iceberg after another. Push, push, push and ever so slowly the monsters move aside for the *Nanok* to pass. One berg replaces the other, ever larger and more towering and threatening. Fortunately the seas are flat calm. Winds are in hiding, ready to pounce at their discretion.

Almost at the moment we enter open sea, a great ground swell develops and wind makes its hiding place known. It bites the cheeks, gently at the beginning, then intensifying like an arousing lover. Near day's end, swells become monumental. Waves and wide become unbridled fury.

It occurred to me that had the ground swell began while we were still amidst the icebergs, they would have become giant grinding blocks that surely would have reduced both vessels to pulp.

I experienced mixed emotions. The ominous rolling of iceberg fields had me wishing we had been unable to penetrate their density. We would then have returned to the safety of BW 1's bosom. On the other hand, I would feel totally crushed not to be able to leave Greenland's frozen hell-hole before the spring of 1943, perhaps not even then. Having successfully penetrated the ice fields, it would be totally impossible to return through them. For better or worse, we are now on our way home. Lord willing, we will get there safely. . . .

**Castine Gazette. November 20, 1884.**

## **DEMOCRATIC TORCHLIGHT PROCESSION AND ILLUMINATION**

**IN HONOR OF THE ELECTION OF  
CLEVELAND AND HENDRICKS.**

The leading Democrats of Castine, in accordance with instructions received from Democratic headquarters at Bangor, made arrangements for a grand torchlight procession and display on Monday night, Nov. 17<sup>th</sup>.

They were favored in having a clear, dark night, which made the illuminations unusually brilliant. The supply of candles at the stores was easily exhausted, and many, that had been treasured for years, made their appearance. A hundred torches were ordered from Bangor by the Committee, also a hundred from Belfast.

Brooksville and Penobscot were invited to join in the demonstration. Several men have been busy for days arranging for the details. Three magnificent roosters flapped their wings in the air for the first time. One small monumental transparency, representing the lighthouse, was displayed.

Those sympathizing with the event were requested to illuminate their residences and accordingly quite a number responded. Some residences were especially elegant, notably so the Acadian House, Mrs. Francis Whiting's, Mrs. Johnston's, Capt. Roland Brown's, John McLaughlin's, Isabel Gardner's, William and Frank Hooper's, Messrs McCluskey's, Dennett's and Robbin's. Many of the houses at the North End were ablaze with fire, Capt. Gross's and Robert Clark's especially so. It is our regret that we cannot give the name of each house illuminated, but our type does not suffice. A huge bonfire was kindled on the top of the hill. Edward Tilden, a Republican, illuminated his house and these mottoes prominently appeared. "The Republican party not dead but sleeping, and will wake in '88." . . .

The procession formed in line at the Town Hall and marched through the principal streets of the town, preceded by the Band, which consists entirely of Republicans. The most perfect order was maintained during the entire procession. It was the firm desire of the leaders that it should be so and their success in this respect deserves the highest praise. Firecrackers and red and blue lights were plentifully used.

After the procession there was a collation served at the Town Hall.

## Curator's Corner

Paige Lilly

“Where’s the Quilt?” Inquiring Historical Society members and friends of Castine will be asking this question when entering the exhibition hall at the Abbott School this summer. The Castine Community Bicentennial Quilt, donated in 1996, is taking a rest for summer 2012 to make room for *Schooner Bowdoin on the Greenland Patrol*. We’ll miss our colorful mural of Castine history, so I decided to take this space to reflect on the history of the quilt and its immediate future.



Members of the Quilt committee deciding about fabric. Left to right: Sylvia Larsson, Charleen Wiseman, Sylvia Muszala, Margaret Hodesh, Caroline Livermore, Lois Cyr.

Several quilters in Castine met in June 1995 at the home of Katherine Marshall to discuss a project to mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the town. They were considering making the third in a series of bed-sized Castine history quilts. As ideas for depicting the rich history of the area developed, the project quickly evolved into a community-wide effort to design and produce a large, complicated wall

hanging. It would be a birthday gift to the town. Meetings and planning sessions, subsequently hosted by Sylvia Larsson, continued through that summer and fall.

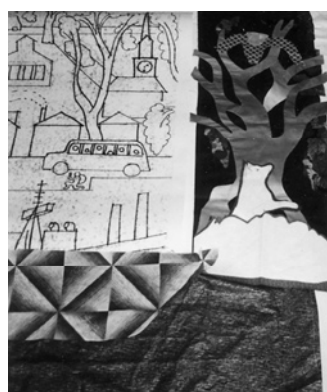
To quote two descriptions of the design process from those who were there:

“Making the final design of the quilt happen was a process. It was accomplished by many people from Castine and its surroundings, plus the Core Committee (Lois Cyr, Margaret Hodesh, Sylvia Larsson, Katherine Marshall, Sylvia Muszala and Charleen Wiseman) brain-storming and compromising. Much consideration was given to balancing the artistic demands of the entire quilt with the need for historical accuracy.”

“There were a few days when ideas clashed and someone was tired and went home mumbling. But we always came back, smiling, ready to work and compromise.” (Lois Cyr)

Artist Margaret Parker Hodesh compiled the concepts and compromises into a coherent design. Fabric selection and appliqué work were done in Emerson Hall from October 1995 through March 1996 (see photos). Nearly 100 community members contributed work by sewing, quilting, designing, doing research, or hanging the quilt for display in the Abbott School. Year-round residents, summer visitors, Adams school students, Girl Scouts, and 4-H members all became involved. Many of these workers signed the back of the quilt.

In a July 1, 1996, letter to the Castine Historical Society, the Quilt Core Committee outlined its goals in giving this “panoramic display of Castine history” to the Society and requested compliance with several conditions of the gift. The first item on the list reads “because we want this hanging to be appreciated by many viewers as a beautifully created and executed work, we ask that it be on display at the Abbott School at least once a year.” The Collections



Drawing and fabric layout for square seven of the quilt. See back page of this issue for finished version of this section of the quilt.

and Exhibit Committees of CHS have enthusiastically met this expectation and welcomed the continuing involvement of the Quilt Core Committee members in the care and proper maintenance of this unique art object. Because of the space needed for the *Schooner Bowdoin* exhibition, our annual showing in 2012

will occur in the quieter months of November and December — please watch for announcements of special hours and activities related to this schedule change.

A special section of the new CHS website, in the works now and available online at [www.castinehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.castinehistoricalsociety.org) by June 15, features detailed photographs of each panel of the Castine Bicentennial Quilt. People around the world can now examine and enjoy the texture and storytelling of this twenty-four foot long artifact year round. A four page handout including “A Guide to the Images of the Quilt” is available for free at the Abbott School and CHS sells a panorama postcard of the Quilt for \$1 in the gift shop.

## Fourth Annual Deborah Pulliam Lecturer



**P. J. Capelotti**

Dr P. J. Capelotti, editor of *Life and Death on the Greenland Patrol*, will deliver the fourth annual Deborah Pulliam Lecture at 7:30 pm Tuesday, August 7, in the Delano Auditorium on the campus of the Maine Maritime Academy. The lecture is in conjunction with our summer exhibit *Schooner Bowdoin on the Greenland Patrol*, created in cooperation with the Maine Maritime Academy. Dr. Capelotti is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the Abington College of Pennsylvania State University. He received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in History from the University of Rhode Island, and his Master's and

Doctor's degrees in Anthropology from Rutgers University.

Dr. Capelotti's unique career has been combined with 24 years of service in the United States Coast Guard Reserve, from which he retires this year with the rank of Master Chief Petty Officer. It was while in the Guard that Dr. Capelotti came across the diary of Thaddeus Nowakowski, a seaman from Detroit who served on the Greenland Patrol in the summer of 1942. *Life and Death on the Greenland Patrol* is Dr. Capelotti's edited version of the diary, excerpts from which appear on pages 8 and 9 of this issue of the *Visitor*.

His research has concentrated on the various forms and experiences of Arctic exploration, more specifically the American explorations in Franz Josef Land and the explorations of Benjamin Leigh Smith. In the course of his research, he has been to the North Pole twice, visited several islands in the Franz Josef Land archipelago, made six trips to Svalbard, and is a regular Visiting Scholar at Cambridge University's Scott Polar Research Institute in the United Kingdom.

While at Pennsylvania State University's Abington College, Dr. Capelotti has been recognized both as Outstanding Teacher of the Year in 2004, and Outstanding Advisor and Mentor in 2009.

## 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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Detail from the Castine Community Bicentennial Quilt (see page 10)

Photo by Gil Tenney