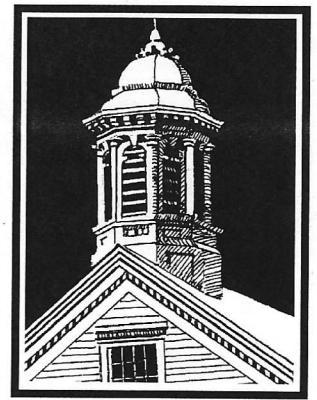


# the CASTINE VISITOR

CASTINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Fall 2017

vol. 27 no. 3



## THE PAINTER OF NOAH BROOKS

Wendy Knickerbocker

At a special Town Meeting on December 10, 1904, the moderator read a letter to the town received from the Boston artist Walter Gilman Page, who had lived in Castine for a short time. In his letter, Page presented an oil portrait of Noah Brooks in a gilt wooden frame as a gift to the town. Louise Wheeler Bartlett, in her 1923 revision of her father's *History of Castine*, recorded that "the customary town thanks were returned."

The "Report of the Library Committee" in the Town Report for 1904-05 included this item. "Mr. Walter G. Page has painted and presented to the town a fine oil painting of our fellow-townsmen, the late Noah Brooks. To Mr. Page, and all the other donors to the library, we extend, in the name of the town, our sincere thanks." Noah Brooks had served on the Library Committee from its creation in 1895 until 1903, and in his will Brooks left his books to the library. The library

had been located in Emerson Hall since 1901, and it was the appropriate place to hang the Brooks painting. Noah Brooks' portrait has watched benevolently over Castine's town library ever since.

Walter Gilman Page was an acclaimed artist primarily known as a portrait painter, but he also painted historical events and subjects and some landscapes. His interest in historical figures and subjects developed early, as both of his parents were proud of their New England families' history. Charles Jewett Page's family had been in Boston since 1630, and Kate (Norcross) Page was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution. At least two of Walter Gilman Page's great-grandfathers fought at Bunker Hill; not surprisingly, he was a charter member of the Massachusetts branches of both the Sons of the Revolution and the Society of Colonial Wars.

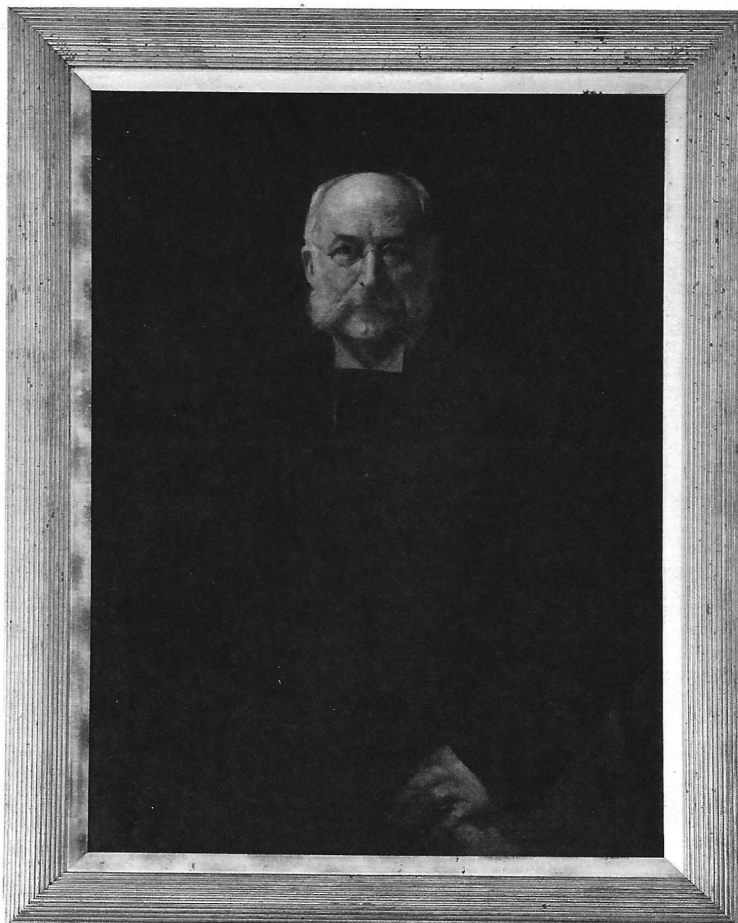


Photo by Rosemary Wyman

Portrait of Noah Brooks  
by Walter Gilman Page

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

The staff and volunteers at the Castine Historical Society thank everyone for their support of the 2017 events and exhibits. Plans are already underway for the 2018 season. To continue your support, you can renew your membership by filling out and sending in the form in this newsletter, or join online at [www.castinehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.castinehistoricalsociety.org) Or share your support, and give the gift of a 2018 membership to a friend or family member. Have a wonderful holiday season!

## **2017-2018 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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

### **In Memory of:**

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### **In Honor of:**

Nancy Mundth, with many  
thanks for the years of beautiful  
flower arrangements

### **New Members:**

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The Castine Historical Society  
website has up to date  
information on exhibits and  
events! See it all at  
[castinehistoricalsociety.org](http://castinehistoricalsociety.org)

## **Thank you to the following for their donations to the Historical Society Collections:**

David Austin  
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suggestions, or ideas for articles.  
Contact editor Wendy  
Knickerbocker by phone at 326-  
8205 or at [newsletter@](mailto:newsletter@castinehistoricalsociety.org)  
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We seek to invigorate our community through collaborative exploration and stewardship of our region's rich history, engaging residents and visitors of all ages in Castine's extraordinary past and, through it, that of New England and North America.

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

Wendy Knickerbocker.....Editor

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**Castine  
Historical Society**

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Change is in the air in Castine and beyond. The nights are cooler, the sun rises later and the leaves will soon show off their magnificent reds, oranges and yellows.

Change is also in the air at the Castine Historical Society. The Castine Historical Society's recent Strategic Plan was accepted by the Board of Directors at their meeting in October of 2016. Inherent in that plan was the acknowledgement of the need to hire an executive director. With that goal in mind an executive director search committee was formed. The committee was ably led by Ruth Scheer, Chair, with members George Hatch, Bill Buchanan, Lynne Dearborn, Susie Hatch, Roger Moss and Stefanie Young. The committee elected to retain the services of C. Jeffery Wahlstrom at Starboard Leadership Consulting to guide them through the process of clarifying the needs of the Castine Historical Society and the talents required to take the next steps in the Strategic Plan. The resumes of many excellent candidates were received, candidates were interviewed by video and those candidates thought to be a good fit for the Castine Historical Society were invited to Castine.

It gives me great pleasure to announce that Lisa Simpson Lutts has accepted a position as the Castine Historical Society's Executive Director. She comes to us from the New Hampshire Boat Museum in Wolfeboro, New Hampshire, where she was the Executive Director for six years. Lisa looks forward to helping the Castine Historical Society grow, prosper and contribute meaningfully to the fabric of the local and regional community. She firmly believes that volunteers, with their commitment, skills and dedication, are an integral part of the organization. Lisa will join us on November 6.

On a personal note, the Castine Historical Society's annual meeting on August 23 marked the end of my two years as CHS President. It has been a busy and exciting time. Sometimes "thank you" is not enough, so I extend a THANK YOU! to the Castine Historical Society docents, walking tour guides, research volunteers, committee members, and others who step right up to make the Castine Historical Society a vibrant and dynamic organization. We would not be who we are without you.

I also want to extend my congratulations and best wishes to Marcia Mason, who is the new CHS President. Marcia has served in many roles at CHS. I know she will lead us with vision, creativity and wisdom.

Brooke Tenney

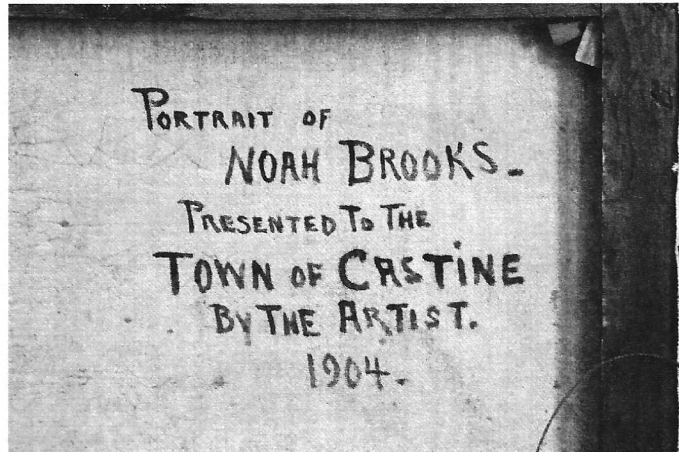


Photo by Rosemary Wyman

Walter Gilman Page's presentation,  
on the back of his portrait of Noah Brooks

Page belonged to several other historical organizations as well as many artists' associations. He was chairman of both the Massachusetts State Art Commission and the Boston Commission on Historic Sites. Along with history, Page was interested in education, especially art displays in schools and drawing instruction. He was one of the founders of the Boston Public School Art League, and he served on the Boston School Board from 1894 to 1897.

Although Page lived in Boston for most of his career, he visited Maine frequently. He had some family ties to Maine, since his mother was from Portland, and he was a lifetime member of the Portland Society of Artists. Portraits by Page of Maine people include Revolutionary War general and Secretary of War Henry Knox, Maine Historical Society, 1894; Declaration of Independence signer and Kittery native William Whipple, Maine Historical Society, 1897; Civil War general and Portland mayor Neal Dow, Portland City Hall, 1898; Maine Congressman and Attorney General Josiah H. Drummond, Colby College, 1903; and Civil War general and Maine governor Joshua Chamberlain, Bowdoin College, 1908.

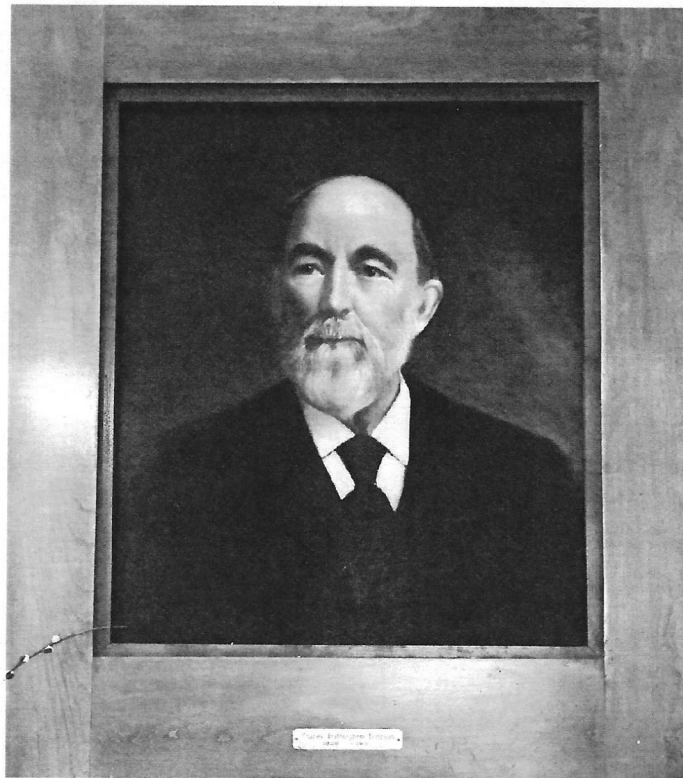
Page was born in Boston in 1862. He attended Boston Latin School and the School of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. He studied art in Paris from 1885 to 1889, when he returned to Boston. He set up a studio at his father's house in the Fenway neighborhood of the Back Bay. In 1891 he married Helen Kelso of New York, and their son Courtney

Kelso Page was born in 1893. In 1897, while serving on the Boston School Board, Page published *Interior Decoration of School-Houses*. Around that time he began making summer visits to the coast of Maine.

Beginning sometime in 1901, and perhaps even a year earlier, Page was living in Castine. He is not listed in the tax rolls, so he rented rooms or a house. He served on the School Committee for 1902-03 and was appointed to the Library Committee for 1903-04. If Page and Noah Brooks did not already know one another, they would have become acquainted then.

At the Town Meeting in March of 1902, the moderator presented a portrait by Page of Charles F. Emerson, who had donated the funds to build Emerson Hall in memory of his father. According to Louise Wheeler Bartlett, "the following resolution was passed, viz.: That the thanks of the citizens of this town are hereby extended to Mr. Walter Gilman Page for the admirable portrait of Charles F. Emerson, this day presented to us; and we assure him that we shall value and care for it as the handiwork of the artist who gave it and as a lifelike representation of the man to whom we are indebted for this hall which it ornaments. Resolved that a copy of the foregoing resolution, suitably engrossed and signed by the Moderator and Clerk, be delivered to Mr. Page." The portrait of Charles Emerson still ornaments the Town Clerk's office.





*Photo by Karen Motycka*

Portrait of Charles F. Emerson  
by Walter Gilman Page

At the same time or shortly after Page was painting Charles Emerson's portrait, he was also working on a portrait of Benjamin F. Butler, Civil War general, Congressman, and Massachusetts governor. Butler's portrait was hung in State House in Boston on December 3, 1902.

Before the Town Meeting in March of 1903, both Page and Noah Brooks had resigned from the Library Committee. Noah Brooks moved to Pasadena, California, hoping to recover his declining health; he died there in August. Page moved away in 1903 also, returning to Boston at some point. He was in Portland for at least a visit in June, when he was photographed on a boat cruise with members of Portland's Society of Colonial Wars.

Page's wife and son probably lived in Castine with him for part of his stay, but the marriage apparently ended during that time. Helen Kosko Page was granted a divorce and sole custody of her child in Maine in 1903. She and her son moved back to Boston within a year or two.

On January 1, 1904, Page married Harriette L. Wolever of Montreal. She went by her middle name, Lisette, and she sometimes posed as the female subjects of Page's paintings. Their marriage lasted until Page's death.

After he left Castine, Walter Gilman Page was productive as an artist and active in his work with historic sites and as state art commissioner. In 1926 he moved from Boston to Nantucket, retaining most of his positions in Boston and adding new memberships in Nantucket historical societies and commissions. He died there in 1934 and is buried in Prospect Hill Cemetery.

*Editor's Note:* In the next few months, do not be alarmed if you notice that Noah Brooks is absent from his customary spot in the library. The Board of Trustees will be sending the portrait away for professional cleaning. When Noah Brooks returns, he will look better than ever.

## Eleanor Roosevelt in Castine

Eleanor Roosevelt visited Castine on several occasions. Not only did her friend Molly Dewson live here, but also Castine was a convenient waypoint on trips to and from the family home on Campobello Island. Here are accounts from three of Eleanor Roosevelt's visits.

### July 26, 1935

In 1935, Castine was a Republican town, along with most of Maine, which was not in step with the rest of the country. Franklin D. Roosevelt would take the 1936 election in a landslide, winning the popular vote by a large margin and carrying every state but two, prompting his campaign manager to remark, "As Maine goes, so goes Vermont."

Eleanor Roosevelt braved the political waters and came to Castine anyway. In honor of her visit, the Castine Woman's Club planned a reception for her at the library. After the Woman's Club's planning meeting, one member cried, "How can we have a reception for a Democrat?" Louise Wheeler Bartlett comforted her by saying, "That's not what we're doing. We're having a reception for the President's wife."

From the Minutes of the Castine Woman's Club, July 26, 1935: "In our beautiful Town Library at 2:30 p.m. a reception was held in honor of Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, the wife of the President of the United States. Miss Anna Witherle presented Mrs. Roosevelt, who was also accompanied by Miss Mary [Molly] Dewson, whose guest she was while in Castine. The group stood at the end of the reading room, which was decorated by many beautiful flowers. Several members of the Club were in constant attendance in order that there should be no confusion among the many who came to greet Mrs. Roosevelt."

Several years later one Club member reported, "My father couldn't stand Eleanor Roosevelt until she came here. Then he fell in love with her."

### July 30-August 2, 1954

Eleanor Roosevelt served as the U.S. Representative to the United Nations from 1945-1953; she was also U.S. Representative and Chair of the UN Commission on Human Rights. After she resigned those positions, she travelled widely to speak in support of the UN and its work for human rights.

From her journal, July 31, 1954: "Castine is not a very long drive from Lubec, Maine, to which the ferry crosses from Campobello Island. Here, we are staying with Bishop and Mrs. [William J.] Scarlett. I am speaking one night in Castine and one night in Bangor for the American Association for the United Nations. I have had a chance ... to talk over what we can do to organize more actively for the AAUN in Maine. And so I feel that I have accomplished a considerable amount for one of my main interests during these very pleasant days."

From her journal, August 3, 1954: "I have always marvelled at the miraculous way in which Maine people manage. They are a grand, upstanding, thrifty people. But on this visit I did not get the feeling that life was easy. So much of their well-being depends on transients—summer tourists. Cabins have multiplied and some are very attractive. But in talking to a man at one of the garages where we stopped to get gas, we learned that tourist trade has not been as good this year as usual. It has fallen off a good deal this summer. ...

"I had been warned it would be difficult to talk to the people of Maine about the United Nations. I was told that they weren't interested and that, at heart, they were as isolationist as any mid-Westerner could possibly be—this in spite of their background of old-time sea captains who sailed the seven seas and whose purchases on long voyages are still keeping the antique dealers going throughout New England. I need not have worried, however, for in both Castine and Bangor, where I spoke on the United Nations, I had large audiences who were attentive and asked very interesting questions."

**August 3, 1959**

Throughout the 1950s, Eleanor Roosevelt was active in the Democratic Party. For the 1960 election, after some initial reservations she supported and campaigned for John F. Kennedy. Kennedy sent her back to the UN as the U.S. Representative in 1961.

From her journal, August 11, 1959: After stopping in Kittery for lunch, she “went on to Castine, Maine, with our usual stop just outside of Belfast, at Perry's Nut House, to buy jams and jellies and

assorted nuts. My granddaughter, Nina Roosevelt, Miss Maureen Corr and I spent the night with Bishop and Mrs. William Scarlett and the others stayed at the Manor House in Castine. Bishop Scarlett invited my old friend, Molly Dewson, to dine along with us, and though she said she had not been very well she seemed to have her old sense of humor and strong personality unimpaired. After dinner about five or six couples joined us and we discussed questions of the present day, such as who should be the next Democratic nominee—a question I never can really answer, since I haven't as yet made up my mind.”

#### **SOURCES:**

**July 26, 1935:** Miriam Anne Bourne, *The Ladies of Castine* (New York: Arbor House, 1986) p. 127.

**July 30-August 2, 1954:** Eleanor Roosevelt, “My Day, July 31, 1954,” The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Digital Edition (2017), [https://www2.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/displaydoc.cfm?\\_y=1954&\\_f=md002921](https://www2.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/displaydoc.cfm?_y=1954&_f=md002921). Accessed 9/13/2017.  
Eleanor Roosevelt, “My Day, August 3, 1954,” The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Digital Edition (2017), [https://www2.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/displaydoc.cfm?\\_y=1954&\\_f=md002923](https://www2.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/displaydoc.cfm?_y=1954&_f=md002923). Accessed 9/13/2017.

**August 3, 1959:** Eleanor Roosevelt, “My Day, August 11, 1959,” The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Digital Edition (2017), [https://www2.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/displaydoc.cfm?\\_y=1959&\\_f=md004507](https://www2.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/displaydoc.cfm?_y=1959&_f=md004507). Accessed 9/13/2017.

#### **CHS Appreciates Your Support!**

We would like to thank all of you, our members, for your generous support of the Castine Historical Society over this past year. Your membership enables us to continue offering the highest quality exhibits, lectures, tours, and other windows into Castine's extraordinary past.

Your commitment to our mission is what makes the Historical Society and its members, both near and far, an active part of the Castine community. We hope that we can count on your support again in 2018! You can renew your membership, or perhaps even sign up a friend, by using the form found in this edition of the *Visitor*.

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

## Seeing Clark Fitz-Gerald

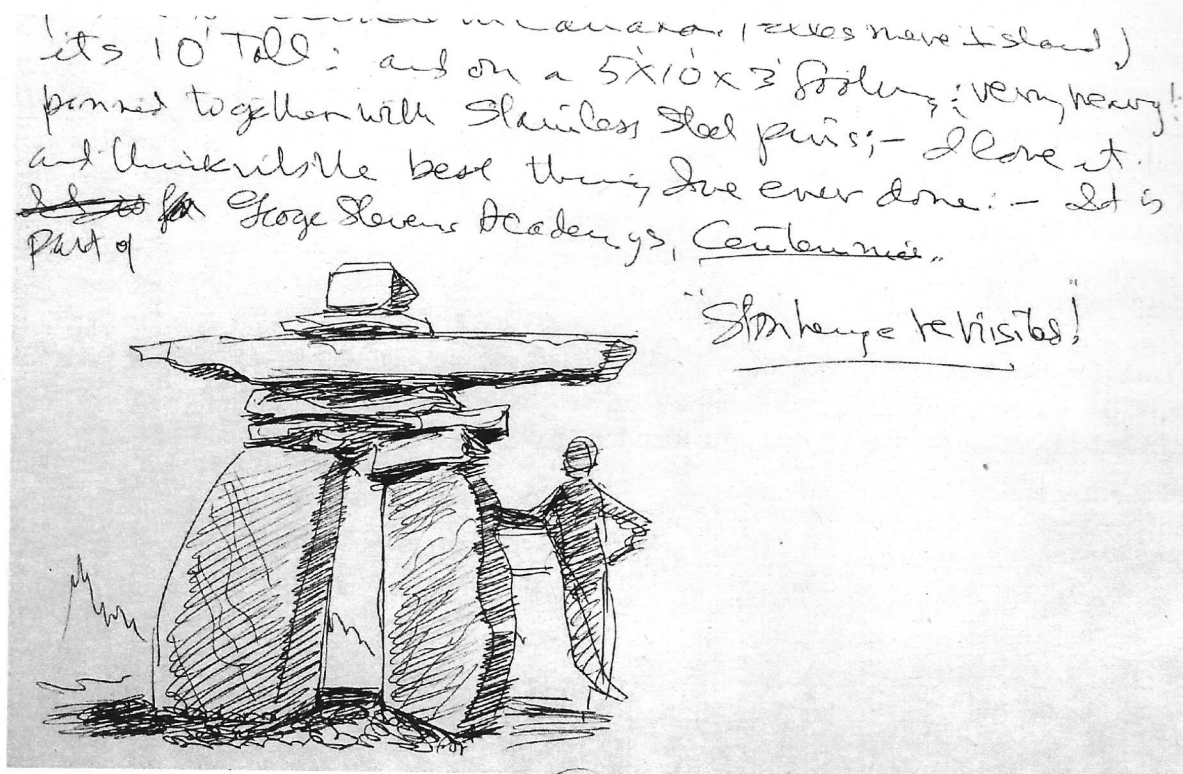
Paige Lilly

"A sculpture makes its own friends and enemies—simultaneous[ly] it doesn't explain nor argue: It just stands there taking applause and abuse. My hope is that you treat this work like anything that is new to you: that you reserve your judgment and guard your tongue. For a while, listen to what it can tell you and think about it."

Castine sculptor Clark Fitz-Gerald (1917-2004) spoke these words to a gathering of faculty, students, and friends after the installation of "I Am the Way," the cairn-like work he created of local granite for the lawn at George Stevens Academy in Blue Hill. He made a brief speech about the Inuit origins of the design, about ways to view the sculpture, and about the four men who helped to install it.

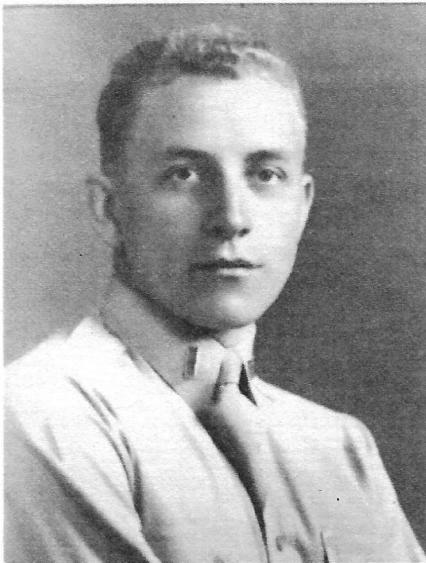
How do we know what Clark said in Blue Hill that day? The two-page, handwritten speech for "I Am the Way" is part of the collection of Clark's papers that his children, Leah and Stephen, donated to the Castine Historical Society in July of this year. In addition to his writings—hundreds of speeches, letters, notes, articles, and lectures—the collection includes fifty-five remarkable sketchbooks, sixteen notebooks and journals, many newspaper clippings, and over 1100 photographic prints. The family also plans to donate more than 1000 slides documenting Clark's early career.

Clark Fitz-Gerald's personal papers, having come straight to the Historical Society from his studio, carry with them an authentic and diverse documentation of the artist's life and work. Educators, researchers, and artists across many disciplines will find in this material the complete story of how a sculptor develops ideas and plays with forms well before picking up a chisel or welding torch. The sketches of flora, fauna, and the human form are scientific as well as artful. In his cartoon images and character studies the artist expresses playful observations of his friends and community. The photographs, a mixture of snapshots and prints by professional art photographers, capture the artist at work in his shop, the finished installations, and family scenes at home.



Detail of a letter from Clark Fitz-Gerald to a niece or nephew, summer 1998





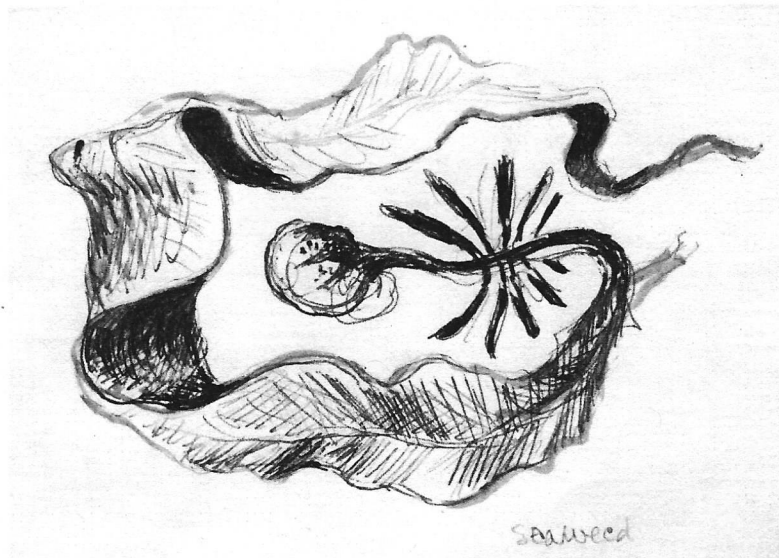
Clark Battle Fitz-Gerald, c1942

The collection demonstrates that Clark's life, from the time he was a teenager, revolved around his art whether as a student, teacher, or creator. It also testifies to a hiatus from the art world during his U.S. Army service in the Second World War. His parents saved both the letters he wrote home and copies of the letters they sent to him over several years. The correspondence reflects a close family relationship. It also includes many details of Clark's engineer training, his job as a lieutenant, his emotional life, and his experiences after being wounded. Though the focus of his life in the early 1940s was the war, he also kept a sketchbook of scenes of camp and his fellow soldiers.

As of this writing, the Fitz-Gerald collection is not ready for researchers to examine in the Grindle House reading room. It will take time to properly process, re-house, and catalog everything before making the collection available. The end result will include a description of the scope and context of the material as well as a list detailing the contents of the boxes and folders. Once this is done,

the Historical Society will publicize the availability of Clark Fitz-Gerald's papers for use by students and researchers. The donors and the Historical Society plan to seek support for a scanning project to make many of the photographs and sketches available to art instructors and students around the world via the internet.

For many sculptures in Clark's body of work, it is possible to find in this collection a drawing of early ideas for the work, a photograph of the finished piece, reviews and gallery comments, related letters, and the artist's notes. Take, for example, the cairn sculpture that was the focus of the Blue Hill speech quoted in the beginning of this column. The accompanying image shows the design of the cairn on the school lawn, which Clark sketched in a family letter. He wrote, "I love it and think it's the best thing I've ever done."



Clark saw inspiration for art and sculpture everywhere, especially in nature, and he not only drew but closely studied his subjects. ("Seaweed," undated sketch)

## Give the Gift of CHS This Season!

The Castine Historical Society gift shop is open by appointment year-round. Can't get to Castine in person? Would you like to see everything else we offer? Go to [www.castinehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.castinehistoricalsociety.org) and browse the gift shop! Then order online, or use the form below to purchase some of our most popular items. Please note that shipping costs and sales tax (if delivered in the state of Maine) are calculated separately. And don't forget the 10% discount you get as a CHS member!

CHS Apron (Circle Color) BLUE or BLACK	\$20 _____	Salt Water Town	\$23.95 _____
CHS Logo Baseball Cap (One Size)	\$18 _____	Redcoats at Castine	\$10.00 _____
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Call 207-326-4118 or order at [www.castinehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.castinehistoricalsociety.org)

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Join the hundreds of CHS supporters who have remembered their parents, children, friends, and even pets by purchasing a personalized brick for the Abbott School walkway. This is the perfect gift for the holidays, a great way to support the Society, and a lasting remembrance for future generations.

Please indicate below how you want the brick to look, using up to 12 letters, numbers, and spaces on each of 3 lines.

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The tax-deductible price for each brick is \$50.00. Make checks payable to Castine Historical Society and mail to P.O. Box 238, Castine, ME 04421. To pay by credit card, call 207-326-4118 or order at [www.castinehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.castinehistoricalsociety.org).

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Permit #76  
Bangor, ME



The Clark Fitz-Gerald Papers recently donated to the Historical Society feature hundreds of cartoon character sketches. "Students!", an undated sketch on 8 1/2 x 11 paper, could be particular students he taught at Beloit College in the 1950s or any students, anywhere.

## Become a Member of the Castine Historical Society!

Thank you for your support. What we do is not possible without you!

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To pay by credit card, or for more information, please call CHS at 207-326-4118

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