

Executive Director
Castine Historical Society
Castine, Maine



We make Castine history accessible, relevant, and inspiring to all.

The Castine Historical Society (CHS), on the scenic Maine coast, invites talented, enthusiastic museum professionals with a passion for local history to apply for the position of Executive Director. The ideal candidate will also have strong exhibit, communication, organizational, and fundraising skills, the desire to serve as the public face of an organization, and the ability to lead CHS as it expands and rebrands for the future.

CHS was incorporated in 1966 and owns two buildings, the Abbott School, built in 1859 as the town's high school, and the adjacent Samuel P. Grindle House, built c. 1850. The Abbott School serves as exhibit and program space, and the Grindle House contains offices, a researcher's reading room, a small exhibit space, and a state-of-the-art collections storage facility. A planned renovation of the Abbott School will make it ADA compliant and provide space for a permanent exhibit on the history of Castine to accompany changing exhibits.

CHS's dedicated and talented staff includes a full-time Executive Director, an additional full-time position, and two part-time staff members, plus an active group of about 70 volunteers. The annual operating budget is approximately \$400,000. Thanks to a healthy, well-managed endowment, CHS is open to visitors seasonally free of charge, and most operating expenses are covered.

The Opportunity

- Lead an organization that is financially stable, has a plan for the future, is poised for growth, and is eager to spread its wings and fly.
 - CHS is a gem among local history museums and historical societies. It consistently punches above its weight and definitely is not your grandmother's historical society.
 - Work with an engaged and talented board to lead a capital campaign to renovate the Abbott School and create a dynamic and expansive new permanent exhibit on Castine's 400-year history.
 - Lead the rebranding of CHS to better reflect all the town's history and engage all the people living in the community.
- Lead and inspire a dedicated and talented group of staff (f.t. Collections Manager, p.t. Office Manager and a fully funded vacant p.t. position) and volunteers.
- Partner with an engaged and hardworking Board.
- Care for, expand, and be inspired by CHS's collections, housed in a state-of-the-art storage facility and featured in CHS's changing exhibit program.
- Lead an institution that is committed to diversity, values everyone's story, and uses Castine's history to explore social justice issues.

- Partner with other cultural organizations in Castine and the region to create programs and events for a variety of audiences.
- Enjoy living and working in a beautiful coastal community where other people go for vacation. Castine is busy with vacationers and seasonal residents in spring, summer and fall, and quieter in winter.
 - Be part of a welcoming community where the spirit of cooperation is alive and well.
 - Enjoy life in one of the top dozen best U.S. states to live in.

Key Responsibilities

Vision and Leadership

Provide visionary leadership and strong administrative oversight for all aspects of CHS's operations.

- Set the strategic direction for CHS's mission, vision, and values in collaboration with the Board, staff, and community stakeholders.
- With Board and community stakeholders, develop a new name and brand for CHS.
- With the Board, develop, implement, and monitor the Strategic Plan. Develop annual staff work plan that aligns with and meets the plan's yearly goals.
- Collaborate with the Board to achieve good governance. Work with them to grow and diversify the Board through recruitment and onboarding of new members and professional development opportunities for Board members.
- Ensure full and transparent communication with the Board. Attend all Board and committee meetings and maintain a strong working relationship with the Board and its committees.

Development and Financial Management

In partnership with the board and appropriate committees, ensure that CHS is in a financially stable position.

- Plan and lead a comprehensive fundraising strategy that includes annual and long-term goals to expand fundraising and earned revenue that will support existing and new programs, general operations, and long-term financial goals.
- With the Board Chair and Treasurer, develop the annual operating budget. Administer the budget, monitor income and expenses, assure that input from staff and committee chairs is integrated into budgetary assumptions, and support long-range budget planning and analysis. Provide the Board with regular financial reports.
- With the Board and volunteers, plan and implement an annual fundraiser.
- Write and administer grants.
- With the Board and appropriate consultants, plan and implement a capital campaign for renovations of the Abbott School and creation of a new permanent exhibit.

Buildings and Grounds

Ensure that the building exterior and interior and the collections are well cared for and maintained.

- Develop familiarity with CHS's buildings and collections and their preservation and conservation needs.
- With the chair of the Buildings and Grounds Committee, oversee the maintenance and preservation of CHS's two historic buildings.

Human Resources

Oversee a small and talented staff and an engaged group of volunteers.

- Implement best human resources practices, including onboarding, policies, benefits administration, professional development, and performance management.
- Lead, inspire, and support the staff of museum professionals so they have the skills and expertise to oversee programs with a high degree of creativity, professionalism, and sustainability.
- Guide and support Board and committee members and other volunteers in their work.

Exhibits and Programs

Lead the Exhibits and Education committees to create compelling, culturally relevant, and innovative exhibitions and programs that share the diverse history of Castine with a variety of audiences.

- In consultation with the Exhibits Committee, guest curators, and appropriate community partners, develop and install a program of changing exhibits.
- In consultation with the Education Committee, plan, implement, and evaluate dynamic public history programs for diverse adult, family, and youth audiences.
- Lead a team of committee members, appropriate consultants, and community partners to develop a new permanent exhibit on the diverse history of Castine for the Abbott School.
- Lead the Education Committee and volunteer Docent Coordinator to oversee an active volunteer docent program for the exhibition gallery, including recruitment, training, and volunteer management.
- Assure that the collections are properly cared for and explore opportunities for expanding the collection to better tell the varied stories of Castine and its people.

Community Engagement, Public Relations, and Marketing

Provide a high degree of visibility and serve as the representative of CHS in the community. Communicate its mission and programs to diverse constituents.

- Build new and strengthen existing community partnerships to engage individuals and organizations from diverse backgrounds.
- Work with community partners to introduce new audiences to CHS.
- Coordinate all public relations, marketing, and communications projects, including the content and design of newsletters, website, social media accounts, advertisements, and other print and online materials.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- Bachelor's degree in history, art history, museum studies/management, non-profit management or equivalent required. Master's degree preferred.
- Minimum of 3 - 5 years of successful leadership of a historical society, historic house or site, museum, or similar leadership experience.
- Experience as a Director of a similar organization, or a second-in-command or department head at a larger institution.
- Enthusiasm for local history. Eager to learn and understand Castine's role in the local, regional, state, and national experience.
- Experience running a similar organization in a way that shows confidence and inspires others to follow.
- Demonstrated leadership and visioning skills
 - Experience casting a vision and cultivating buy-in.
 - Track record of developing and implementing strategic plans.
 - Experience in rebranding and reimagining an institution.
- Sound management skills
 - Successful track record of leading and inspiring staff and volunteers and working with a Board.
 - History of sound financial management of a nonprofit organization.
 - A strong work ethic with a high degree of energy.
 - Strong organizational skills; the ability to balance several priorities simultaneously.
 - Knowledge of best practices and trends in the museum field.
- Strong fundraising skills
 - Ability to plan and lead a comprehensive organizational fundraising strategy.
 - Skilled at grant writing and donor cultivation; possessing that unique ability to solicit donations with ease.
 - Experience with and/or management of a capital campaign.

- Outstanding communication and relationship building skills.
 - Demonstrated ability, desire, and commitment to engage and partner with people and organizations from a culturally diverse landscape.
 - Strong social skills. Enjoys being out in the community, fostering goodwill and community spirit.
 - Skilled at written and verbal communication. Able to share CHS's vision with a variety of constituents.
 - Willingness to understand and embrace technology to leverage publicity for CHS.
- Experience in the development, implementation, and evaluation of exhibits and educational programs.
 - Experience in overseeing the collaborative development and installation of major exhibits.
 - Ability to lead a team to plan, implement, and evaluate dynamic public history programs for adults and youth.
 - Experience with project management and construction.

More about the Castine Historical Society

CHS was incorporated in 1966, but previous incarnations of the organization date to 1865. CHS owns two buildings on the Town Common. The **Abbott School** was built in the Italianate style by the Castine School District in 1859 as the town's high school. The building served multiple purposes over the years, and in 1994 CHS embarked on a three-year campaign to purchase and renovate the school as the new home of the Society. CHS celebrated the grand opening in July 1996. The Abbott School serves as exhibit



Abbott School students, 1927. (CHS Collection)

and program space. A planned renovation will make the building ADA compliant and provide space for a permanent exhibit on the history of Castine.



In 2008 CHS purchased the adjacent Greek Revival style home built by ship carpenter Samuel P. Grindle c. 1850. CHS restored the house for use as offices, a researcher's reading room, a small exhibit space, and a state-of-the-art collections storage facility. In November 2017, the **Grindle House** received the prestigious *Maine Preservation Honor Award*.

Grindle House raised up awaiting the move to its new foundation, 2013

CHS's **collections** document the town's diverse history from its earliest days to the present. The highlight is the **archival collection**, which includes photographs, letters and diaries, maps, town records, books, school records, newspapers, postcards, and genealogical materials. Highlights of the archival collection include the papers of Castine sculptor Clark Fitz-Gerald, who created public and private sculpture commissions in the US and England, including many in Maine.



The archival collections are housed in a state-of-the-art storage facility.

The **object collection** includes military materials, works of art, furniture, ceramics, textiles, and other materials. Castine's Bicentennial Quilt, designed and constructed by sixty members of the Castine community in 1996 to celebrate the town's 200th anniversary is a favorite. Recent collecting efforts include [Oral Histories](#) and the [Castine Covid-19 Collection](#). To learn more about all of the collections, visit CHS's [Online Catalog](#).



Castine's Bicentennial Quilt on exhibit



A major reason that residents and visitors alike seek out CHS is its program of **changing exhibits**, often created by a talented guest curator. 2024's special exhibit, *A History of Castine in 40 Objects*, showcases unexpected and compelling artifacts that weave together almost 400 years of Castine history. Exhibits are open seasonally, from early June through Indigenous Peoples Day in October. Visitors may make appointments to do research in the archives all year long, and the office is open year round.

2022-23's exhibit, *Clark Fitz-Gerald: Castine's Celebrated Sculptor-in-Residence*, (left) provided a fresh new look at the artist's amazing career.

A varied schedule of **programs and events** takes place each season. They include walking tours, guided exhibit tours, and lectures. **Lectures** often relate to the year's special exhibition, and the annual Deborah Pulliam Memorial Lecture brings in guest speakers to address topics of local, national, or international interest. **CHS partners with the Adams School**—the town's pre-K – 8 public school—to create programs that meet the teacher's needs and the State of Maine's Educational Standards. A program for 3rd and 4th grades covers historic occupations, using real life men and women who lived and worked in Castine as examples. CHS is currently working with the 7/8th grade teacher on a Castine African American history curriculum that will debut in the fall.

CHS **fundraisers** take advantage of the busy season and include a summer garden party or house and garden tour. Ongoing fundraising efforts include the *Business Partner Program*, which gives local businesses a way to support CHS, and *The Brick Project*, giving donors the opportunity to inscribe a brick on the Abbott School pathway.

Students from Adams School visit CHS



Garden Party Fundraiser



About Castine and the Blue Hill Peninsula

The town of Castine, perched on the Blue Hill Peninsula where the Penobscot and Bagaduce rivers meet to form Penobscot Bay, is one of the prettiest and most welcoming coastal towns you'll come across. Beautiful 18th- and 19th-century houses line tree-shaded streets. CHS's buildings are on the town common, along with the library, school, private homes, and churches. Historic brick business blocks cluster near the waterfront, and you catch a whiff of salt air as you near the harbor.



Downtown Castine, early 20th century (CHS Collection) and today

The community is busy with visitors in the summer and tranquil in the offseason. The year-round population of approximately 1,000 includes families who have lived and worked in the community for generations, retirees who enjoy its beauty and sense of community, students and faculty at Maine Maritime Academy, and new families who discovered the joys of small-town life during the pandemic. Summer brings seasonal residents and visitors from across the country. [Adams School](#) provides an outstanding education to students from pre-K – 8th grade. High schoolers can attend Bucksport High or [George Stevens Academy](#) in Blue Hill, which serves students in the region and is also a private academy educating students from across the country and world.

Castine has a vibrant cultural scene thanks to a diverse group of organizations. In addition to CHS, the town boasts [the Wilson Museum](#), with its eclectic collections and buildings and a living history program; the [Witherle Memorial Library](#), still housed in its 1913 building (with a modern addition), and [Maine Maritime Academy](#), a four-year college that trains a student body of about 950 in the maritime professions. These and other organizations comprise Castine History Partners, an informal group that works to share the history of the community. They created a [virtual tour of Castine](#) and just received a grant to interpret the Native American history of Castine.



Castine waterfront and the Wilson Museum

If you enjoy music and the visual and performing arts, [Castine Arts Association](#) offers courses and events for people of all ages. If you are a budding artist, you can take a course in anything from printmaking to woodworking to ceramics to blacksmithing at [Haystack Mountain School of Crafts](#) and other galleries and studios in the area. There are opportunities to enjoy live music too. The [Blue Hill Concert Association](#) and [Kneisel Hall Chamber Music Festival and School](#) offer concerts nearby, and the [Bangor Symphony](#) is only an hour away. Other museums in the region include [Woodlawn](#) in nearby Ellsworth and the [Penobscot Marine Museum](#) in Searsport.

If you want to explore the great outdoors, [Blue Hill Heritage Trust](#) and [Maine Coast Heritage Trust](#) manage a combined 180,000+ acres of conservation land with over 100 miles of hiking trails and other outdoor offerings. Castine and just about every other nearby town has a harbor or boat launch if you choose to venture out on the water with a kayak, sailboat, or motorboat. If you'd like to travel farther afield, visit [Acadia National Park and Bar Harbor](#), only an hour away.

If a bigger city calls you, [Bangor](#), with its international airport, is less than an hour's drive away, and Maine's capital, [Augusta](#), is less than two hours away. The [University of Maine at Orono](#), with its Collins Center for the Arts and Division 1 sports teams, offers educational, cultural, and entertainment opportunities only an hour away. [Portland](#), the state's hub for art, culture, and food, is an easy weekend getaway.



For a small town, Castine has an outsized history. The area was originally home to the indigenous Tarratine people, and from the early 17th century, when the French first visited, to the American War for Independence, the area was occupied, colonized, settled, or raided by the French, English, and Dutch. Finally, it became part of the British Empire in 1715. The earliest permanent English-speaking settlement in the area dates to the 1760s, when Scots-Irish settlers from Britain and English settlers from Massachusetts arrived. Castine itself was chartered in 1796, named after French nobleman Baron Jean-Vincent d'Abbadie de Saint-Castin, who was part of the military contingent that evicted the Dutch in the 1670s.

Castine's years of greatest prosperity were from the early 1800s through the outbreak of the Civil War. Its wealth came mostly from fish, the salt to preserve them, and the ships that caught them. Every spring nearly five hundred fishermen loaded up with salt to take to the fishing grounds. Over one hundred commercial sailing ships were built in the town's shipyards. Rope walks, sail lofts, and ship chandleries, along with many skilled craftsmen, supplied the maritime industry. By the end of the Civil War, Castine's days as a commercial and fishing center ended as railroads and steamboats became America's preferred mode of transportation. Steamboats brought tourists and summer residents to the area, and by the late 1800s Castine had become a summer destination.

Today's visitors to Castine can still catch glimpses of the town's 400-year history. Tarratine and Madockawando streets honor the original inhabitants and their 17th-century chief. The cross marking the arrival of the French in the 1600s still stands, and the town celebrates Bastille Day as well as American Independence Day each July. The remnants of Britain's Fort George still stand guard at the top of Main Street. The 500-foot MMA training ship *State of Maine* looks out over the harbor when it is not at sea, and as always, the sea calls.



Castine Harbor and the *State of Maine*



***Ruins of Fort George* (Billy Hathorne Photo)**

To learn more about Castine and its neighboring communities, visit the [Town of Castine](#), or the [Blue Hill Peninsula Chamber of Commerce](#). You can also watch [Maine Life TV's episode on Castine](#).

Compensation

The salary for the position is \$75,000 - \$90,000, commensurate with experience, plus benefits, including 100% paid for ACA compliant health insurance.

To apply for the position

- **Apply via email** with cover letter, résumé, and names and contact information for three professional references to Executive Search Consultant Gail Nessell Colglazier at gncolglazier@gmail.com. References will not be contacted without prior permission of the applicant, and all applications are confidential.
- **Inquires and nominations are welcome.** Please send questions or names of potential candidates to gncolglazier@gmail.com.
- **CHS is an Equal Opportunity Employer** and does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, religious affiliation, marital status, national origin, or sexual orientation/identity.
- **Application deadline:** July 1, 2024.
- Research shows that women and people from underrepresented groups often apply for jobs only if they meet 100% of the qualifications. CHS understands that it is unlikely that someone will meet all the requirements, so if you can check off most of the boxes, we welcome your application.

CHS Vision

The Castine Historical Society cultivates curiosity about our past to foster a more inclusive, empathetic, and informed society. Inside and outside our walls, we build relationships among individuals, organizations, and the community to enhance understanding of our collective experiences.

CHS Values

- Provide Access
 - We are a community gathering space, resource, and catalyst for civic engagement that is rooted in the understanding of Castine's history and its impact on our lives today.
 - Through our collections, exhibitions, and programs, we work to ensure all people can experience the power of history.
- Embrace Diversity
 - We strive to embrace diversity in all aspects of our institutional culture and programming.
 - We seek to promote an inclusive and broadminded understanding of Castine's history that accounts for multiple points of view.
 - We value questions, new ideas, and unexpected connections and discoveries that arise through inquiry. We welcome challenging conversations and the opportunity to learn from our mistakes. We recognize that willingness to change our minds is crucial to understanding history and applying it to the present.
- Demonstrate Quality
 - We responsibly care for the historic and financial resources that have been entrusted to us, today and for future generations.
 - We communicate with honesty, openness, and transparency.
 - We promote the highest standard of excellence in everything we do.