

the CASTINE VISITOR

CASTINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Fall 2018

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Drawing Connections: Potatoes, War, and Misplaced Boots

By Hannah Kintzel, 2018 Summer Intern



Henry B. Butler (1832-1865)

Photo donated in honor of Wilbur D. Bullock,
a descendant of Henry and Mary Butler

For those of you whom I have not had the pleasure of meeting this summer, my name is Hannah Kintzel. I was the Castine Historical Society's graduate intern for the summer of 2018. During the academic year, I reside in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, which is about two hours outside of St. Louis. There I am working on my master's degree in Public History at Southeast Missouri State University.

As an aspiring public historian, I believe that historians must learn to effectively communicate the findings of the past through open dialogue with people and by connecting the past to contemporary society. Studying the past is vital to a person's relationship to society and, in turn, the society's relationship to the person. But not everyone immediately leaps off their seat in pure exuberance at the thought of discussing tales of times bygone. Because of this lack of enthusiasm, the historian strives to make people care about their past. By examining the past and sharing their passion, historians can help people see how the past does influence the world they live in today.

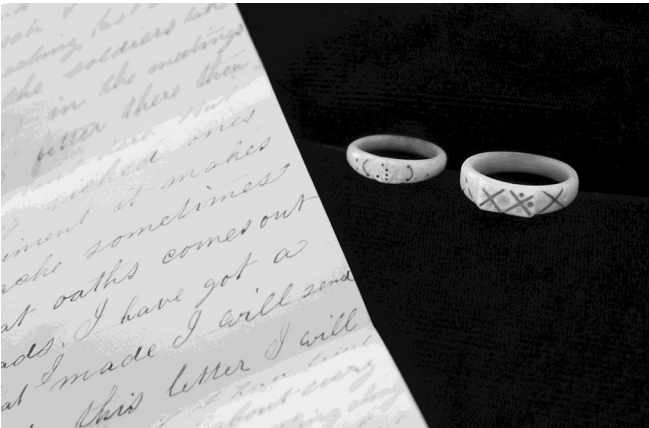
Take for example, the tale of Henry B. Butler, a Castine Union soldier, who died during the Civil War far from his home and loved ones. I initially learned of Henry Butler as part of my internship while processing a collection of letters donated to the Castine Historical Society. Henry wrote numerous letters to his wife, Mary, in Castine during his time as a Union soldier.

The more letters I read, the more I found myself fascinated with his life. At first, one might ponder the significance of Henry, a common soldier from Castine, in the larger scheme of things. So, why does his story matter?

(Continued on p. 2)

("Drawing Connections," continued from pg. 1)

Well, Henry was a person no different than you and me. Even though he lived during the 19th century, he also had passions, worries, hopes and dreams similar to yours and mine. Like us, Henry tried to make sense of the crazy world that he lived in. Like today, his world seemed to be falling apart as he watched the impact of a war-torn nation on people he knew.



Rings and letter donated in honor of Wilber D. Bullock, a descendant of Henry and Mary Butler

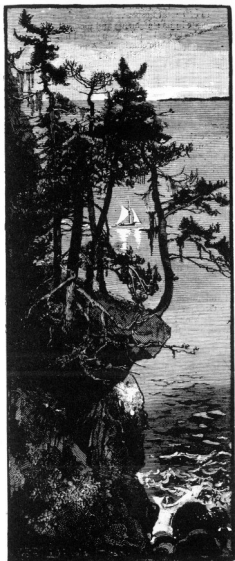
Times have not changed as society still feels the brutal impact of war on families, society, and the global community. To cope with his time in the war, Henry focused on one day at a time, writing to his wife, Mary, about his everyday life. For instance, we learn little things like that he was a big fan of potatoes. Henry also wrote about battles he witnessed, the divides within the military hierarchy (he knew the officers ate lavish foods in comparison to his own meager fare), acquaintances he ran into, and other everyday incidents.

Henry had to deal with how separation and distance affected his relationships with his family while his little darling son, Freddie, continued to grow up without his father. He was eager to learn about everyday life at home and the adventures of Freddie. Henry too grew frustrated when items seemed to get lost in the mail such as his brand-new boots.

By examining Henry B. Butler, people today can understand how problems people faced in the past relate to their own times today. People still have daily struggles such as dealing with long-distance relationships, losing packages in the mail, and witnessing the inequalities within society. People today also experience the same simple pleasures of life whether it is talking about a good meal or taking joy from parenthood. To help people today understand the significance of the past, historians must help them relate to people in the past. By studying history, people can begin to see how the past made today's society and how, on an innate level, everyone is connected by similar joys and struggles of life.

Hannah Kintzel

The CHS graduate intern for 2018, Hannah Kintzel, worked extensively on research and preparations for our 2019 seasonal exhibit *Risky Business: Squared Rigged Ships and Salted Fish*. To add to her knowledge of archival work, she inventoried the nineteenth century stereoview collection and processed the Butler civil war letters. Hannah found a special connection to the letters because several were written from Fredricksburg, Virginia, where her family lives.



Castine Historical Society

Mission

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.

2018 Exhibit Hours

June 11 - September 3

Monday - Saturday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Sunday: 1 - 4 p.m.

September 4 - October 8

Friday, Saturday & Monday

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Sunday: 1 - 4 p.m.

Grindle House Offices & Research Library

Staff work Monday - Friday,
year-round

Library open year-round by
appointment for researchers

Contact Information

13 & 17 School Street

PO Box 238

Castine, ME 04421

207-326-4118

info@castinehistoricalsociety.org

CastineHistoricalSociety.org

Executive Director's Letter

A View From the Common

Lisa Simpson Lutts

As I write this, our 2018 season is winding down and we are opened shortened hours. (See side bar). As a new staff member, it's been interesting to watch the comings and goings into the Abbott School.

I was surprised at the number of families coming in and as a result, we created a kids' scavenger hunt using the Bicentennial Quilt. The scavenger hunt has been a hit, and we will continue with it next year.

I've noticed that our Gift Shop – now one of the few places in town that sells Castine history books, postcards, and gifts – has done very well. Our new display at the Castine Visitor Center has motivated people to visit the Historical Society and to buy gifts.

Which brings me to attendance. Although we are not finished with the season, I'm happy to report that our attendance is up again this year! We've been working hard to get the word out. We've redesigned our brochure and paid a company to distribute our brochures to lodging properties and chambers of commerce from Camden to Ellsworth. We've also sent out press releases to media outlets, upped our posts on Facebook and sent out many e-blasts.

My final observation is that visitors are engaged, excited, and moved by this year's exhibit *Castine's Devoted Women: Social Change and Public Service*. Visitors seem surprised at the quality of our exhibit – both the research and the presentation. They all comment that while they love learning about the history, they are impressed that the exhibit brings the story of Molly and Polly up to the present. (I hope you read Hannah and Page's articles which delve into this.)

This year's exhibit looked at major social issues of interest to Molly and Polly and brought them to the present. Where are we today on issues like minimum wage, social security, women in political office to name a few topics? And we highlighted other contemporary women of Castine whose lives mirror those of Molly and Polly.

Thanks to the work of Paige and the exhibit volunteers, this year's exhibit resonates with our visitors by making the past relevant to today. Thanks to the groundbreaking work of women like Molly and Polly, today an unprecedented number of women are running for office, taking part in women's marches throughout the country, and most recently participating in the #MeToo movement. This exhibit focused on women who make a difference seems to have touched a nerve in our visitors and it is heartening to see them come away inspired and moved by the lives and legacy of Molly Dewson and Polly Porter and Castine's devoted women.

A Sad Passing

This June we were saddened to learn of the passing of the Castine Historical Society's Honorary Director, J. Alton (Al) Boyer. Al and his wife, Cynthia, have long supported the Historical Society through contributions and hands-on volunteering.

In his work life, Al was an accomplished lawyer and partner in a Washington D.C. firm where he specialized in maritime law until he retired in 1986. For 40 years he and his family dedicated themselves to spending summers in Castine and being active community members.



Al Boyer deep in conversation with Robert Rettig (L) and Doug Fitzsimmons (R)

Al served on the Historical Society's Board of Directors from 2001 to 2010, a period of major growth in the Historical Society when his intellect and passion for history guided and supported the Board. He remained active for the rest of his life, serving as an Honorary Director from 2011 on. He continued to help us in many ways whether by making sure the by-laws were accurate or by promoting scholarly historical research as a core function of the Historical Society. In addition, Al supported the annual graduate school summer internship program that is hugely valuable to both the Historical Society and the interns who seek experience before entering the museum field.



Hannah Kintzel's 2018 summer graduate internship was sponsored by Al and Cynthia Boyer.

Al Boyer lived a full life. The Board, members, staff, interns, and volunteers are grateful to have been part of that life. We will miss Al's sense of humor, his relentless intellectual curiosity, and his attention to detail. We already miss the time and interest he took with the curatorial graduate interns and the way he always taught us something new whenever we met.

The staff and volunteers of the Castine Historical Society continue to work year-round preparing for the 2019 season. If you are not a member already, becoming one is easy to do. Just fill out and send in the membership form in this newsletter, or join online at www.castinehistoricalsociety.org. We look forward to seeing you!

2018-2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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The Castine Historical Society gratefully acknowledges contributions received

In Memory of:
Roliston Woodbury
Al Boyer

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Elsie Freeman
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Miscellaneous Donations:
Moiria Bentzel
Betsy Foote & Howell Jackson
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Castine Golf Club for
Charlotte Legg
Roger Moss
Rodney Flora and Jill Schoof
Jack Macdonald
Lynne Dearborn

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

Blue Hill Historical Society
Cynthia Boyer
Leah Fitz-Gerald
Stephen Fitz-Gerald
Sarah F. Foote
Richard Hale
Albert Myers
The Pott Family
Gil Tenney
Peter Tenney

The Castine Historical Society actively collects photographs, papers, maps, memorabilia and artifacts to document life in Castine and the Bagaduce River area. If you want to donate something you think is worth preserving, please contact Curator Paige Lilly at:

(207) 326-4118 or curator@castinehistoricalsociety.org.

Either we will add your material to our collection or suggest a more appropriate institution for you to contact. Thank you!

Nautilus Island Fundraiser a Success



Left to right: Anne Fuentes, Janet Fisher,
Nancy Mundth, and Lisa Haugen

On a beautiful clear evening on July 31, over 100 guests joined the board and staff of the Castine Historical Society for a fundraising cocktail reception on Nautilus Island. Guests traveled across the bay in Maine Maritime Academy launches volunteered for the evening and were welcomed into the island's lovely boat house for cocktails.

Guests then took a leisurely stroll up the hill to the historic home magnificently renovated over 100 years ago by Dr. John Howard Wilson and his wife Georgia Wilson. The house became the home of their daughter, Ellenore Doudiet, until her passing in



Meredith Stuart Smith and
Stefanie Scheer Young

2004. Everyone sampled hors d'oeuvres catered by Markel's Bakehouse while enjoying the stunning poolside views over Penobscot Bay.

This year's fundraising reception celebrated our 2018 exhibit, *Castine's Devoted Women: Social Change and Public Service* which included Mrs. Doudiet. She was a younger contemporary in Polly and Molly's circle who made a significant impact on Castine through her devotion and leadership in expanding the Wilson Museum, which continues to thrive because of her efforts.

The Historical Society would like to thank Lisa Haugen, Event Chair, and the members of the Development Committee for helping organize the event. Much appreciation goes to those who supported the Historical Society by attending the event, and special thanks go to Jim and Stephanie Huger for opening their beautiful home and island to us for the evening.



Andrew and Fran Tschinkel



Board of Director Transitions

At the Castine Historical Society's Annual Meeting on August 22nd we said goodbye to three long-time board members who are rotating off the Board. They are Lynne Dearborn, Anne Fuentes, and Ruth Scheer. All three have made significant contributions to the Historical Society while on the Board.

Here are just a few of their contributions: Both Ruth and Lynne co-chaired the last three very successful House and Garden Tours and raised significant funds for the Historical Society. Over her 23 years on the Board, Ruth brought her organizational skills, determination and understanding of how to get things done to the Historical Society. She served on numerous committees, including Finance, Development, Nominating, Programs, Collections, and Governance. Recently, she chaired the search committee for the Historical Society's first Executive Director.

Lynne contributed her innate sense of design, quiet persuasion and sense of humor to all that she did during her 18 years on the Board. Lynne co-chaired successful Art Show and Sales. She also served on numerous committees during her tenure on the Board, including Programs, Collections, Exhibitions, Nominating, and Governance. Lynne also was on the Executive Director search committee and is a long-standing volunteer docent in the Abbott School exhibit gallery.

Anne, a retired private school history teacher and Alumni Director, brought her deep love and knowledge of history to the Board. In her 16 years on the Board, she chaired the Development Committee, served as Docent Coordinator, organized numerous opening receptions and annual meeting functions and volunteers as a docent in the Abbott School and walking tour guide.

While saying goodbye to these valuable Board members, we also want to welcome three new members to the Board of Directors. Alice Alston, Ellie Benjamin, and Jill Schoof have each joined the Board for a three-year term. We look forward to working with them in the coming years.

New Chapters for *The Castine Visitor*

With this issue of *The Castine Visitor* we announce the retirement of our long-time volunteer editor, Wendy Knickerbocker. Wendy has ably and skillfully shepherded the *Visitor* since becoming editor with the Fall 2013 edition. A published writer of historic non-fiction and a retired academic librarian, Wendy brought her talents to bear on shaping each issue, contributing many articles, and keeping us all on deadline. Many thanks for a job well done!

We are looking for a volunteer to take on the role of editor and work closely with the Historical Society staff to produce three issues of the *Visitor* per year. If you love Castine history and have a broad knowledge of American history and a sense of what would interest our members who read the *Visitor*, have proofreading skills, and a knowledge of grammar and spelling, we would love to hear from you. Email Executive Director, Lisa Lutts at director@castinehistoricalsociety.org or call her at 207-326-4118.



Wendy Knickerbocker

Curator's Corner

The Center of the Universe: History in Context

By Paige Lilly

For me, the context of place is a high priority. I've always wanted researchers seeking unique documents to have the opportunity to read them in the unique setting where they were created. Graduate students writing about the spirit drawings or agricultural practices of the United Society of Shakers in Maine should examine the documents while sitting in the community's library near the apple orchard at Sabbathday Lake, Maine. Researchers studying nineteenth century shipbuilding are better off catching a glimpse of the Kennebec River while reading the original manuscripts at the Maine Maritime Museum.



Castine Historical Society hosted a forum in August 2013 to air the 1613 settlement debate which had been intensifying in letters to the editor and at community events. J.R. Phillips, Consultant and former Maine State Museum executive director, served as the moderator for the event held in Emerson Hall.

original order and using standard accession numbers did not go over well. These diligent volunteers had already sorted everything according to date and/or intermingled material from different sources to group, for example, all the letters written by women or ship captains. At least two participants argued with me throughout the workshop. One attendee wrote me a sympathy note to console me after the experience.

In an ironic turn of events, I am now the curator of a town historical society. The transition from my archivist role in academic settings to my job as curator of Castine's Historical Society was challenging. I felt as if I had entered a different career even though the historic material was no different.

But both the academic and the historical society careers are the same. Only the emphasis is different. Local history is all about context--who's related to whom, where people came from and where they went next, what they did and what their children did, and how each person is connected to the wider world.

(Continued on p. 9)

Carol Kammen, in her *History News* column, "On Doing Local History," urges us to return manuscripts to their places of origin whenever possible, and I strongly agree. Likewise, reading the written history of nearby towns is essential--this reminder might help steer us away from seeing our own locale as the center of the universe!

In 1997, after working as an archivist in academic and museum settings for many years, I taught a workshop on archival practice at the annual meeting of Maine Archives and Museums. The participants were mostly historical society volunteers interested in learning better ways to organize and number their collections. My insistence on the importance of keeping papers together in their

Working with context is second nature to archivists. We tread slowly so the context and meaning of the provenance and "original" order have time to reveal themselves. We search for clues to background information allowing us to understand the function of these documents within the life of the person or institution that created them, and the wider environment within which these papers came to exist. What's here, what's missing, what does it all mean? Then we follow accepted best practices to arrange the files in boxes and write a multi-level description from a summary of the whole collection down to box and folder lists. The rest is left to the researchers.

Local historians and curators organize bits of information, artifacts and documents in the same way that academic archivists process collections. Preserving historic material--whether a single shoe or a box of letters--and establishing a system for knowing what we have are top priorities. Instead of a formal finding aid, we create history exhibits, pamphlets, programs, websites, and more. If we're careful in the process, we notice how the bits fit together and what's missing, allowing our visitors to understand that we are presenting what is known about the topic while leaving room to learn more. This approach promotes inquiry and exploration in the culture of the organization and the experience of the public.

In the Castine Historical Society's revised Penobscot Expedition exhibit, "Making Revolutionary History," we included this panel about how history is interpreted over time.

The word "history" refers to events in the past, but this does not mean history is static. To the contrary, history can change dramatically as fresh perspectives and new sources of information emerge, prompting additional inquiry and thought.

Context and multiple perspectives, rooted in evidence, are essential to the study of past events. Yet the existing evidence, limited to primary sources that have survived and been preserved, can be interpreted in many ways. Historians continue to study the sources and bring new critical thinking to bear, piecing together what frequently proves to be an evolving story.

In Castine we have had public and contentious disagreement about the date when the town was settled or established. Individuals with different points of view interpret the same sources differently. The argument sometimes appears to focus on proving that *this* place is the center of the universe. As an archivist and curator, I want people to dig deeper, to bring in more sources for context, and to consider that the question is open-ended and that conclusive answers might not exist. Read the histories of neighboring regions, exchange ideas with other historians, refrain from speculating about the bits we don't know, and leave room for later generations to discover more.

Doing local history is messier than working alone to process dozens of boxes of papers in a single collection. Yet I don't mind because here, with a view of the Castine common, people can study unique materials and make connections in the context of this unique place.

Note: The above is adapted from Paige Lilly's essay in *Zen and the Art of Local History*, published in 2014 by Rowman & Littlefield for the American Association for State and Local History. Paige wrote in response to an essay by Carol Kammen entitled "In Context."

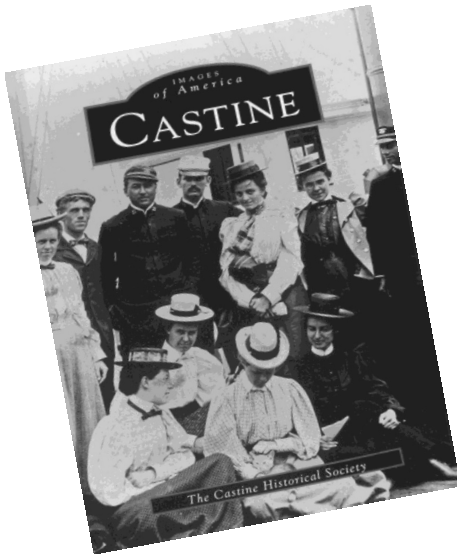
Buy Your Holiday Gifts at the Castine Historical Society

Even though the Castine Historical Society's exhibits close for the season in October, you can still purchase our merchandise. Whatever your needs -- a book, a Christmas ornament, or a stocking stuffer -- we have lots of fun options, including:

- Castine Historical Society mugs
- Castine Historical Society logo fleeces
- Christmas ornaments
- Books for adults and children

Of course, we still carry bags, cards, CDs, and a collection of Meri Meri items. You can purchase any of our items either in person by making an appointment, or by going to our online store at www.castinehistoricalsociety.org and selecting Gift Shop in the drop-down menu under Support. And don't forget that if you're a current member, you get a 10% discount!

If you are in town over the holidays, stop by our Pop-Up Holiday Shop hosted by our friends at Saltmeadow Properties at 7 Main Street in Castine. You can make purchases there during Saltmeadow open hours. We will announce more details about the Pop-Up Holiday Shop soon on our homepage, in our e-blasts, and on Facebook. Let us help you with gifts for your Castine-themed holiday!



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A Brick in Every Stocking!

This commemorative season give a brick to that someone special!

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. Buying a brick is the perfect gift for the holidays, a great way to support the Historical Society, and a lasting remembrance for future generations.

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

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Senator John McCain enjoys lunch with Ann Miller and Sally Foote at Castine Variety. Senator McCain was in town to give the commencement address at Maine Maritime Academy in April 2005 at the invitation of his Chief of Staff and Castine summer resident, Mark Salter.