

The Castine Visitor

Autumn 2022 • vol. 32 / no. 3

The Singular Life of Mary Tyler Jackson



by Georgia Williamina Zildjian

examining a life, it is perhaps unusual to begin with its end. Barring celebrities and well-known historical figures, the general public is not usually clued-in to the scope of an obscure figure's life, let alone the intimate details of their death. But much of what we can glean of Mary Jackson's life that could be called "intimate," – that which might provide us with an insight into her life, her heart, her character – those meager details are passed down to us through the double refraction of conjecture and memory. Mary ensured we would know her when in her final moments, she set her silver lantern¹ on the stair.

On the evening of May 6th in 1917, Mary walked through the spring-cool streets of Castine. Upon reaching her home, she spoke with her friend, Phebe, before heading to the kitchen to bake bread, an evening custom. Before taking her own rest, she lit her silver oil lantern and made sure to turn down the beds for each of the other inhabitants of the house, before ascending the second set of stairs that led to her room. Somewhere

The Whiting/Hatch family with Mary Jackson in front of their home on the Town Common, c. 1894. Front left to right: Frances Whitney Whiting, Harriet Hastings Hatch (Ames), Mary Kidder Whiting (Hatch), Mary T. Jackson; Back left to right: John Perkins Whiting, George Stanley Hatch, Phebe Whitney Whiting. Hatch family loan to Castine Historical Society.

between the completion of her long daily duty of service and the moment she would shut her door on the world, Mary lost her life. Somewhere between the realization of her own demise and unconsciousness, she set her oil lantern firmly on the ground, ensuring that her death would not be the cause of a house fire.

If one truly sees their life flash before their eyes in the last moments on this earth, what did Mary see? Though we have few hard facts about Mary herself, her life and circumstances were highly unusual. What she saw must have been extraordinary.

Mary Tyler Jackson (born c. 1850) entered the household of Frances and Samuel Whiting at about the age of 14.² Although Mary was the youngest of 9 siblings, by the time her father died in 1865, she was the only surviving member of her family.

2021-2022

Board, Staff, and Donations

Board of Directors:

Susie Hatch President

Howard Lowell Vice President

Lisa Haugen Secretary

John Mitchell *Treasurer*

Alice Alston
Richard M. Ames
Roberta Boczkiewicz
Mary Dearborn
Brittany Goetting
Kelly Gualtieri
Karen Lyons
Charlie Pearce
Marc Pelletier
Brooke Tenney

President Emeritus:

James M. Day

Honorary Directors:

David K. Adams Lynne Dearborn Sara F. Foote Jack Macdonald Marcia Mason Ann L. Miller John C. Parish, Jr. Robert B. Rettig Ruth Scheer

Staff:

Lisa Simpson Lutts Executive Director

Jules Thomson

Collections Manager

Mary Caron Durost Office Manager

New Members:

Bryan Carey
Jennifer and Greg DePardo
Brittany and Christopher Goetting
Libby and Chris Gros-Balthazard
Jacqueline and Christopher Hasty
Allen Kratz
Deborah Neve
Marguerite Rodgers
Ina Schonberg
John Sedgewick
Vanessa and Daniel Smith
Melanie and Andrew Twomey
Margaret Woolley

Miscellaneous Financial Donations:

Richard Ames Ruth Posey Boicourt Cynthia Boyer Elizabeth Macdonald Jean Di Sabatino and Louise Guigliano

Memorials/Honorariums:

Anonymous in memory of
Captain Guild of the *Victory Chimes*James and Leila Day in memory of Carol B. Allen
Alison Hale in honor of Lisa Haugen

In Kind Donations:

Janis Bobb Mary Dearborn Stefanie Scheer Young

Donations to the Permanent Collection:

The Adams School
Sabrina & Harold Babcock
Janis Bobb
Anne Wescott Dodd
Mary Caron Durost
Sara Foote
Paige Lilly
Courtney Maclachlan
Katherine McCoy
Todd Nelson
Doris Russell
Rem C. Westland
Charleen Wiseman

Abbott School Exhibits (17 School Street)

Closed for the 2022 season to reopen early June 2023.

Grindle House (13 School Street)

Staff work year-round Monday-Friday.

Researchers should contact
research@castinehistoricalsociety.org
to set up an appointment in advance.

Castine Uncovered Walking Tours

Finished for the 2022 season.

Virtual History Tour of Castine

To download the app or access the web version of the tour, visit castinehistoricalsociety.org.

Go to the "Visit" drop down button and click on Castine Virtual Tour.

Our Mission

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

Our 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.

The Castine Visitor is published three times a year by the Castine Historical Society as a benefit of membership.

Karen V. Lyons, Editor



by Lisa Simpson Lutts

excited to report on our 2022 season which is winding down to our closing day on Indigenous Peoples' Day. This was an exciting year for us because, after a two-year disruption, we went back to our normal hours in the Abbott School exhibition gallery. Exhibit attendance has been excellent. Many days we saw a record number of 75 visitors!

The exhibit, "Clark Fitz-Gerald: Castine's Sculptor-in-Residence," was a huge draw and received rave compliments from our guests. Because of visitors' interest in the exhibit, we decided to hold the exhibit over for a second year in 2023. However, we will refresh the exhibition with many new sculptures borrowed from individuals and museums in Maine. The new pieces will let our visitors continue to learn about Castine's noted artist who made an impact on the national and even international stage.

In this newsletter, you will read about our wildly successful Castine House & Garden Tour. We were heartened to see 1,000 people from all over Maine and beyond visiting and enjoying what Castine has to offer. What we found even more heartening was hearing warm praise from visitors about our beautiful and welcoming town, the magnificent homes and gardens, and how well the event was organized. We couldn't have achieved all this without the organizing committee, our close to 200 volunteers, the home and garden owners, and our generous event sponsors. It truly took a village to put on this massive event.

Funds raised from the House & Garden Tour will be used for future large-scale projects, which you will learn more about as we roll out our 2023-2025 Strategic Plan. The board and staff spent early 2022 working with Starboard Leadership Consulting in Bangor to create not only this new and exciting plan to guide our future but also our new mission and vision statements and values.

One area of our new Strategic Plan focuses on how we can best care for our vast permanent collection. In this issue you will read about an exciting development related to the collection. On our website you can now view our collection catalog of photographs, archives, and books, and over the next three years this online catalog will continue to expand. While it's fun to go through and look at these items, most importantly, this catalog will aid researchers and genealogists to see what is in our collection before making appointments for their research.

As we head into the end of 2022, I want to remind you that you will be receiving your Annual Appeal request letter in early November. We hope you will consider making an additional donation above your annual membership gift. The Annual Appeal helps us with day-to-day expenses that enable the Historical Society to run smoothly and offer top notch exhibitions and educational programming. Your gift supports everything from creating a history curriculum for the Adams School children to paying for the heating and cooling so our collection is cared for in a stable environment to hiring professional art movers to move the large Clark Fitz-Gerald sculptures safely. We can't thank you enough for considering this year-end gift and for all you did during the 2022 season to make it a success! Your visits to exhibits and programs, words of encouragement, volunteering, and financial support all make the Historical Society a vibrant educational institution that we can all be proud of.

Autumn 2022 3

continued from page 1

The Singular Life of Mary Tyler Jackson



Mary Jackson's silver oil lantern. Castine Historical Society Collection, donated by Elizabeth Macdonald and Richard Ames.

Mary's father, John J. Jackson lived his own remarkable life, one of hardship, adventure, and triumph. As the story memorialized in his obituary goes, Jackson was born in Africa, likely in the area of the Bight of Benin or the Gold Coast, sometime between 1777-1795 (records and accounts differ). As a boy, he was kidnapped into enslavement and transported to Brazil, most likely to work on a sugar plantation.

His account of his time on the slave ship, recorded in his obituary, is a rare glimpse into the harrowing conditions of the slave trade from a first-person perspective.³ Years later, John escaped the plantation and stowed away on a ship bound for New

York. From there, Jackson worked as a sailor for the East Coast shipping trade – a dangerous job for an African man, who could be captured into slavery in the South.⁴

There is no known record of how John made his way to Castine, although it could be due to Captain Leonard Jarvis Whiting, who employed John as a ships' cook.⁵ He met his wife, Catherine Boyce, in Castine. Catherine was an African American woman born in Maine, but little is known of her personal history. She and John married in 1833.

From a recently found quit claim deed in the CHS archives, we now know that Jackson was one of only 3 known African or African American property owners in Castine prior to the mid-20th century. On May 5th, 1856, Ebeneezer Richardson sold John Jackson a plot of land behind Dresser's Ropewalk.⁶

Even more remarkable than the fact that John, a free African man, owned property in Castine prior to the mid-20th century is the fact of whom he left it to. At his death in 1865, he bequeathed his property to his daughter, Mary Jackson.⁷ While Mary eventually sold the property for \$150,8 the triumphant fact remains that a free African American woman owned property in Castine from 1865-1877.9

We know for certain that Mary grew up with at least three of her siblings: Theresa, Julietta, and Frederick. Theresa and Julietta in particular would have been close companions, only 4 and 2 years older than Mary, respectively. From census records, we can gather that Mary's mother died sometime between the years of 1860-1865, prior to her husband's death that left Mary an orphan. As these sisters were recorded on the 1860 census, we know that Mary lost them, her mother, and her father all within a 5 year period, following quickly on the heels of her older brother Frederick's death in 1857.

In what must have been a time of intense grief and anxiety, Mary left the only home she ever knew – a free Black household – to cross the threshold of the wealthy, prominent, white Whiting family.

Although lore has framed this relationship as an "adoption," in an examination of Mary's life, we cannot take that narrative at face-value. Had the Whiting family not taken Mary into their household, she would have been a ward of the town, a precarious fate at best. And yet the offer of shelter was not one of complete charity, but a mutually beneficial arrangement – though the benefits were unevenly distributed at first.

In her memoir sketches, Mary Whiting Hatch writes of her mother, Frances Whitney Whiting's attitude to Mary's wardship: "[My father]... persuaded my mother to give her a home ... Mother has often told me it was difficult for her to take so young a girl and undertake her training as a servant, but she was well worth all the patience, for a more loyal and devoted person is not known."¹⁰

It is an understatement to observe that the difficulty would have been mutual. In the fog of grief and shock of displacement, Mary was expected to assist in the management of a household and the care of at least two small children (Mary Whiting [Hatch], age 4, and Henry Whiting, age 5). Moreover, despite the recollections of Mary Jackson as a member of the family, she still slept in servants' quarters, she still baked the family's bread, and on the night she died, she still turned town the family's beds before ascending to her own.



Mary Kidder Whiting's doll. We have consulted numerous doll experts. The best guess is that this rare doll dates to the mid-19th century, is not American, and appears to be a servant or enslaved African man. Castine Historical Society Collection, donated by Elizabeth Macdonald.

And there must have been small reminders of her "otherness" all around. For instance, what did Mary think of Henry Whiting's and Mary black doll? The doll is of mysterious origins but appears to be a servant or a slave. It's possible that he was acquired by the children's uncle, Henry Whitney Jr., on one of his voyages.11 What must she have thought as she tidied, picking this little man off the floor? Even

if we could time travel, it's likely that Mary wouldn't have told us. She was described as someone who was cheery and eager to please, a person with the presence of mind to secure a lantern in her last moments of life – not one to complain about inequity, or the pang of seeing someone who looked like her represented in shackles. And while we may never know what Mary thought

about this, the fact of the doll remains – a small but constant reminder in the Whiting house of the impassable gulf between the second and third floor bedrooms.

Yet, thanks to some members of the Whiting family, it seems that Mary's grief and hardships were not without solace. When she entered the Whiting home, Anna "Annie" Whiting, Frances' daughter and half-sister to Mary Whiting Hatch, was roughly the same age as she was. Castine school records confirm that African American children attended school with their white peers, and that attendance was mandatory. Thus, Mary and Frances likely attended school together, and seem to have formed a strong and lasting bond.¹²

On New Year's Day of 1891, Mary Jackson played a key role in the celebration of Mary Whiting's marriage to George Hatch: "[Mary Jackson] baked a sumptuous wedding cake, and relatives and friends happily joined hearts and hands." As the wedding was at the School Street home, and Mary is a part of the memory, we can safely assume that she attended the intimate ceremony. Days later, the newlyweds set out for Medford, Massachusetts, where George Hatch had inherited a large house. Mary Jackson traveled with them, stepping into the role of motherly mentor: "When your father and I came to the Medford house she came with us and helped me get things in order and a great help she was." 14

At her death in 1917, Mary was the last year-round citizen of color in Castine up through the mid-20th century, and had long been so. ¹⁵ She was likely friends with the servants who were swept in with the summer months, but, notably, her circle of friends was not limited to her own race. She is mentioned repeatedly in the social notices of the time:

1913: "Mrs. George Hatch [Mary Whiting Hatch] and Mary Jackson spent Monday in Bangor on business." ¹⁶

1916: "Mrs. Whiting [Phebe Whiting] and Mary Jackson who have been very ill with grip [influenza] during the past two weeks are glad to report as very much improved." ¹⁷

What is significant about these seemingly trivial social records is

the omission of Mary Jackson's race. The convention of the time was to distinguish Africans and African Americans by placing the word "colored" or "black" in parentheses after their names, but Mary Jackson evades this. Indeed, unless they were familiar with her, readers would assume that she was a woman of high social standing, equal to the Whiting/Hatch women.

When Frances Whiting died, she included Mary Jackson in her will, one of only six people she mentions by name. She bequeathed to Mary a sum equal to that bequeathed to her sister Phebe: \$500¹⁸ (worth over the buying power of \$16,000 today).

After Mary's death, she was buried in the Whiting family plot in the Castine Town Cemetery, the only one of her family who is buried in a known location. ¹⁹ The Whitings who survived her commissioned a white marble headstone for her, inscribed with the words: A faithful servant in the family of Samuel K. Whiting for more than 50 years. This November, the Castine community will have the opportunity to memorialize her legacy permanently: in her honor, Jackson Island will be an option on the ballot for the Negro Islands' renaming process.

Despite what we know of her extraordinary life, the facts seem to fall short of a worthy representation. In her upbringing, status, and relationships, Mary occupied a liminal space that defies the narrow labels available in her time period. She was neither servant nor family. Though never married, she helped to raise two children and manage a household. Though born a free woman, she never left the employ or house of the Whiting family until her death. Though marked out in society as "other" by her race, she was a valued member of this community, and her race was never mentioned in print – not even in her obituary – after she entered the Whiting household.

She had a fine character and one of the brightest and happiest dispositions, always having a smile and a cheery word for everyone. She was very thoughtful for others, always thinking in what way she could help and make someone happy.²⁰

Endnotes

- This remarkable object, engraved MTJ, Castine, was donated to CHS by Whiting descendants Richard M. Ames and Elizabeth Macdonald.
- Ames, Richard M. Risky Business: A Maine Village Goes Global. Custom Museum Publishing, 2019, (pg. 24). The Whitings resided at 21 School St. on the Town Common. Their home was built by the Whitney family in 1810.
- 3. Conrad, Robert. *Children of God's Fire*. The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1984.
- Ames, Richard M. Risky Business: A Maine Village Goes Global. Custom Museum Publishing, 2019, (pgs. 49-50). "Act for the Better Regulation and Government of Free Negroes and Persons of Color" (1822).
- Castine as She Remembered It. Memoir sketches of Mary Whiting Hatch with Francis "Frank" Hatch, (pg. 5), CHS collection.
- Ebenezer Richardson to John Jackson, May 3rd, 1856. CHS collection.

- Hancock County Maine Registry of Deeds, Mary Jackson to Joseph Surry (originally known as Giuseppe Sarvi), 1877.
- 8. A buying power of roughly \$3,892 today.
- D. Between the sale of her property and the death of Frances Whiting, Mary would go on to save another \$350. It seems that her savings were held by the Whitings in place of a bank. Therefore, when Frances died, Mary was the recipient of her own savings (\$500) and the money that Frances left her (\$500). This payout amounted to over \$16,000 in today's currency.
- Castine as She Remembered It. Memoir sketches of Mary Whiting Hatch with Francis "Frank" Hatch, (pg. 5). CHS collection.
- 11. In his introduction to *Castine as She Remembered It*, Francis "Frank" Hatch recalls tales of the exotic gifts that "Uncle Henry" brought back for his mother, including "a tamed marmoset." (pg. 3).
- 12. When Mary died, she left all her worldly property and money to Annie, suggesting that their friendship

- stood the test of time (50 years) and distance (Annie moved with her husband, Edward Cox Woodward, to Colorado after their marriage in 1885).
- Castine as She Remembered It. Memoir sketches of Mary Whiting Hatch with Francis "Frank" Hatch, (pg. 3). CHS collection.
- 4. Ibid.
- 15. Available Hancock County Maine census records, 1910-1950.
- 16. Bangor Daily News, Thursday, September 4th, 1913.
- 17. Ibid., Wednesday, January 16th, 1916.
- Copy of the Last Will and Testament of Frances A. Whiting, signed, sealed, and published 1893. CHS collection.
- 19. This may soon change. Records in the Wilson Museum Cemetery Survey suggest a potential burial site in the Castine Cemetery for John Jackson and at least four other Jackson family members.
- Mary Jackson's obituary, Bangor Daily News, Thursday, May 10th, 1917.

Autumn 2022 5

A Successful 2022 Castine House & Garden Tour

Ruth Scheer, Chair, Castine House & Garden Tour

Castine House & Garden Tour originally planned for 2020 was, after a necessary two-year COVID hiatus, held this July. The delays only strengthened the resolve of CHS and homeowners to ensure that Castine visitors would have a memorable experience. And that they did.

Roughly 1000 visitors came to town on July 22nd to join a few hundred others living in Castine for a day touring nine splendid classic homes and six gracious gardens, all within walking distance in the village. With that many people visiting and wanting to cut down on car traffic, many volunteers provided shuttle service throughout the day. This was a welcome addition not only to reduce traffic but because even though Mother Nature complied with sunny skies, she also brought warm temperatures, making a lift much appreciated by many.

The tour was organized by a team headed by myself, along with Lynne and Mary Dearborn, and a cadre of about 200 volunteers. Besides the shuttle drivers, volunteers and staff developed a publicity program, raised money from business sponsors and individuals, sold tickets, staffed the homes, ordered signs, organized a luncheon for 100 at the Castine Inn, commissioned tour-specific gift items for sale, hosted an afternoon tea, and cleaned up.

The hustle and bustle of the tour day spread throughout town with local merchants seeing increased traffic. Glowing comments about the content and organization of the tour were heard at every street corner, in the alleyways, and all the nooks and crannies of the village.

Homeowners were painstaking in their efforts to make sure their properties were in tip-top shape. This effort was highly worthwhile because the week of this year's tour turned out to be a peak time, especially for gardens. Shortly afterwards, the region suffered from a major drought.





In addition to ticket sales, a large number of individuals and businesses supported the event. On July 20, the Historical Society thanked these patrons and sponsors with an elegant, beautiful, and by anyone's measure, perfect dinner event in the garden of one of our residents. The weather behaved and there were nothing but compliments that evening and afterwards.

The proceeds for this important fundraiser were notable, tripling the results from the 2016 tour which in itself was a record for fundraising. With a stronger awareness of the importance of the mission and work of the Castine Historical Society, many from within and outside Castine also elected to become new members of the Historical Society. Some of the proceeds from the tour will support programs with the local school and other endeavors in town that relate to our mission.

It was very apparent that residents and visitors from as far away as California were ready to celebrate our town and celebrate they did with their enthusiasm and glowing accolades. If you came to the tour and have comments about your experience, we welcome them. This will help us as we plan for the next House & Garden Tour. Please share them with ruthscheer@aol.com or director@castinehistoricalsociety.org. And again, many thanks to all who made this year's event a resounding success for CHS and the town.







2022 House & Garden Supporters



Bangor Savings Bank Saltmeadow Properties

Media Sponsor

DownEast magazine/
Maine Homes magazine

In-Kind Graphic Design Work

Meri Meri

Major Corporate Sponsor

Eaton Peabody, Attorneys at Law

Lead Corporate Sponsors

Down East Landscape and Design Vance Gray Wealth Management

Corporate Sponsors

Cross Spruce Antiques
David Hatch Painting
E.L. Shea Builders & Engineers
Gary's Fuel
Merle B. Grindle Agency

Additional Corporate Sponsors

Cheryl Boulet CPA Elliott Architecture Furbush Roberts Printing HMV LLC Mainescape Garden Shop Seal Cove Boat Yard Wallace Interiors



Patrons

Anonymous (1) Carol Adams and Rick Armstrong Lela and David Agnew Susan Allen and Neil Middleton Laura and Richard Ames Carolyn and Morten Arntzen Gracen and Thomas Ashton Linda Austin and Jeb Hallett Jane Bagot Lynn and Jeb Baker Margaret and Peter Begley Ellie and Doug Benjamin Jill and James Bicks Hilary and Edmund Billings Julie Bohan and Dan Leader Cynthia Boyer Lynn and Ken Brown Emerson Bruns and Nic Quaife Marianne and Bill Buchanan Penny Carlhian and Marc Pelletier Elizabeth and John Casteen III Kristen Caverly and Robert Campbell Sandy Clark and Ned Odegaard Roxanne and Kevin Coady Michael Coughlin Claire and John Curtin Leila and James Day Iill leffries and lames Dearborn Lynne Dearborn Mary Dearborn Sandra and Will Dick Emily Eerdmans and Andrew McKeon Susan and Paul Farmer Sally and Todd Fonner Virginia Foote Monique and Eric Foster Mickey and Aaron Gast Linda Genereux and Timur Galen Carmen Gillett and Bill Belmont Felicity Gillette Deborah Gribbon and Winston Alt Barbara Grover Elizabeth and Whitney Hatch Susan and David Hatch Ceane Haughney and Bryan Corbett Kay and Rick Hightower Breeze and Skip Hobbs Mason and John Hoeller Marianne Lee and Wyllys Terry Sue and Jack Macdonald Flora and Bobby Marvin Dabney and Rick McKenzie Jane Mendelsohn and Nick Davis Diane and David Modesett

Nancy Mundth Sonja and Michael O'Donnell Liz and John Parish Peg and McKee Patterson Jean and Tom Pedersen Ellyn Plato and John Boyer Elizabeth and Darin Schanker Ruth and Ken Scheer Lindsay and Phil Scott Shannon and Vincent Signorello Margaret and Richard Taylor Brooke and Gil Tenney Ruth Anne and Bobby Vagt Betty and Mike Venson Elizabeth Wagner and Ross Zucker Susan Walter and Jim Hubbard Lynn Wessel Anne and Roger Whidden Gail Winkler and Roger Moss Stefanie Scheer Young and Andrew Young Patricia and John Zoller

Sponsors

Anonymous (2) Jane and Nat Ball Karen Bene Brenda Black Kathleen Bower Olivia and John Farr Judy and Doug Fitzsimmons Mary Hull and Sandy Frazier Wendy and Donn Fullenweider Courtney and Brad Hamlin Bente Hartmann Bambi Hatch Marina and George Hatch Charlie King Lisa and Jim Lawsing Charlotte Legg Jennifer and Gary Lieberman Maura and Bruce Lundie Marcia and Tom Mason Ashleigh and Bricken McKenzie Maggie and John Mitchell Kate and Jonathan Noel Judy and Kip Oberting Julia and Brooke Parish Marty and Don Tenney Serena and Fred Whitridge

Donors:

Lauren Brisky Emily and Richard Law Mary and Howard Lowell Ann Miller Helen Miller Peter Tenney



Dawn Mota and Shane Ward

Collections Corner

by Jules Thomson, Collections Manager

and summer of 2022 have been dynamic and successful at the Historical Society. I want to especially highlight two of our recent collections-related triumphs. These are, first, the launch of an online public catalog, and second, the processing of the Wheeler family papers by our 2022 summer intern.

In my last "Collections Corner" I wrote about the enormous effort that has gone into organizing and cataloging the Historical Society's collections over the past few decades, from the voluntary curatorship of Sally Foote through Paige Lilly's staff tenure. As a newcomer, I'm lucky that I arrived just in time to share this behind-the-scenes work with a broader audience, specifically by publishing the vast majority of our electronic catalog records online.

CHS recently upgraded our internal catalog from *PastPerfect* 5 to *PastPerfect Web Edition*, which among other things allowed us to easily integrate a "Public Access Module." This is the same platform that Penobscot Marine Museum, the Bangor Historical Society, the Abbe Museum, and the Maine Maritime Museum currently use to make their catalog records public.

The concept of "access" is one of the most sacrosanct pillars of the Library and Information Science world. In many ways, it is the fundamental reason for the Historical Society's existence as reflected in our mission statement. In the 21st century, providing online access is the obvious next step for an institution with internal electronic records. But while online catalogs may be *de rigeur* for well-resourced historical organizations, they are often



Wheeler family exhibit at Witherle Memorial Library

still out of the reach of many local Historical Societies because of financial and staffing constraints. So we are, as with so many things, very lucky here in Castine to have been able to share these with the town and region, and indeed with the whole world.

Fast on the heels of the public catalog launch came our summer internship program. Thanks to a generous recurring donation by Cynthia Boyer, the



Screenshot of the online collection catalog

Historical Society recruits and hosts a paid intern for two months each year. Projects differ annually, depending on the needs and interests of the intern. This year's candidate, Andrew Kendall, is a Museum Studies graduate student at the Cooperstown Program at SUNY Oneonta. He wanted to get more experience with archiving, which often intersects with museums but is not necessarily offered as a practical graduate course. To this end, we put him to work on a collection of Wheeler family papers donated to CHS in 2021. The collection is substantial (at least by our standards), with manuscript and typewritten records comprising three full document cartons. The project consisted of physically arranging and describing these multifaceted records so they will be of use to future researchers.

Along the way, we all learned a lot about the Wheeler family. An important presence in town, many of the Wheelers were historians and writers, and heavily involved in civic life. Some of you might be familiar with the seminal book on Castine's history: History of Castine, Penobscot and Brooksville, Maine: The Battle Line of Four Nations, written by family patriarch George Augustus Wheeler in 1875. Less well known is the fact that his daughter, Louise Wheeler Bartlett, wrote a substantial part of the republished 1923 edition, focusing on late 19th and 20th century town history. We still consult this volume regularly at the Historical Society because it contains so many local names and events.

Andrew also created an impressive exhibit on the Wheelers, hosted by the Witherle Memorial Library through the month of August. It featured three generations of writers and poets, beginning with George Augustus and continuing with his daughter Louise Wheeler Bartlett and granddaughter Elizabeth Louise Wheeler. All three were dynamic and talented individuals, and I am grateful to have learned more about them. One of my favorite things in the exhibit was a photograph of George Augustus Wheeler comically tipping his hat - a very humanizing portrait of our 19th-century town historian.

A Strategic Plan for 2023-2025

by Howard Lowell, Chair, Strategic Plan Committee

August the Historical Society Board of Directors and staff completed a six-months effort and approved a new Strategic Plan to guide the Historical Society through 2025. Strategic planning is a process used by organizations to identify mission, values, and goals, the strategies necessary for achieving those goals, and the internal performance management system to monitor and evaluate progress. Strategic planning also enables the Historical Society to manage competing priorities, as "good ideas" often outstrip available funds and staffing. In short, our Strategic Plan helps us "keep our eyes on the ball."

The new Plan promotes a new concise mission for the Castine Historical Society: We make Castine history accessible, relevant, and inspiring to all. It articulates our values: Provide Access, Embrace Diversity, and Demonstrate Quality. To meet our Mission, and apply our values, the Historical Society will take actions to address our three top priorities: expand access to collections, exhibits, and education; ensure a sustainable future; and increase awareness, collaboration, and engagement.

The process for reaching a final plan included a stakeholder survey, a Board retreat facilitated by Starboard Leadership Consulting of Bangor who were engaged in developing the Historical Society's current plan that ends in 2022, interviews with current and former Board members, conversations with staff, and a review of successes and unmet goals in our current plan.

Our Mission

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

Our 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.

During our information-gathering activities, and from suggestions from visitors to our exhibits, a recurring issue for the Board and staff to address in the new Plan is creating a permanent exhibit telling Castine's varied history. A significant investment of time during the 2023-2025 period will be to test the feasibility of meeting this voiced need. This could include creating exhibit space on the second floor in the Abbott School, with additional objectives of making the second floor of the Abbott School fully accessible.

CHS's new Vision Statement, which solidifies our role in the community, is to *cultivate curiosity about our past fostering a more inclusive, empathetic, and informed society.* Both inside and outside our walls, CHS will build relationships among individuals, organizations, and the community to enhance understanding of our collective experiences. It is a vision that looks to Castine's future, learning from Castine's past.



Autumn 2022

The Castine Historical Society Gift Shop -

The Perfect Solution for Your Holiday Gift Giving!

2022 season in the Historical Society's Gift Shop has been a resounding success! We received many compliments from visitors and members about our selection of gift items that are produced exclusively for us.

Perennial favorites are our Castine nautical chart items, which include trivets, key chains, cutting boards, coasters, decorative pillows, and very comfy throws. This year's most popular item is our etched CHS four flags logo stemless wine classes in two sizes, 15 and 21 ounces. They're perfect for your dinners and parties!

We always like to offer you new gift items for the holidays which you can see on our website and in November at our physical Pop-Up Holiday Shop at Compass Rose Books. We thank them for their generosity as we head into our fourth year of partnering with them.

Here are some of our new holiday offerings:

- Castine nautical chart Christmas stockings
- Castine Christmas sailboat ornaments
- Ship Castine tote bags
- Ship *Castine* playing cards
- Embroidered House & Garden Tour aprons
- Abbott School magnets, trivets, and Christmas ornaments

Purchasing items in our store or online helps support the work of the Castine Historical Society, which we greatly appreciate!

Check out and shop for merchandise by going to our website's homepage, www.castinehistoricalsociety.org, and clicking the upper right Shop button.

We can ship anywhere or you can arrange for local pickup. You can also order by phone by calling the office at 207-326-4118.

Don't forget that all current members get a 10% discount!

To receive your discount, type in MEMBER in the coupon box.



Castine nautical chart Christmas stockings

Embroidered House & Garden Tour apron



Abbott School Christmas ornament with keepsake gift box

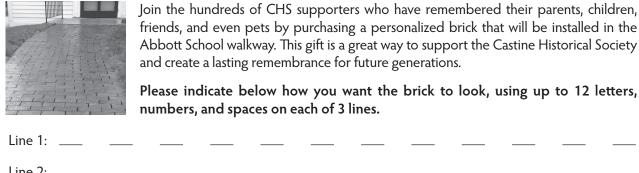




Castine Christmas sailboat ornaments

☐ New membership ☐	Renew my membership	☐ Gift membership
Name (as it should appear on the mailing list)		
Address		
City	State	Zip
Email (used only for special mailings)		
Membership Level:	☐ Family • \$50	☐ Contributing • \$100
Patron • \$250	☐ Benefactor • \$500	☐ Noah Brooks Society • \$1,000
OR join online at	for more information, pleas castinehistoricalsociety.org/ Society is a 501(c)(3) non-p	se call 207-326-4118 membership profit organization.

Buy an Abbott School Walkway Brick



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 castinehistorical society.org.

Autumn 2022 11



P.O. Box 238 • Castine, Maine 04421 Address Service Requested

Non Profit Org **US** Postage PAID Permit # 76 Bangor, ME





Most of you will have seen the marvelous Castine Community Bicentennial Quilt which hangs in the Abbott School and tells the story, pictorially, of the settlement and history of Castine. This photo to the left from 1995, generously donated by Charleen Wiseman (second from left), shows the quilters with their fabrics laid out in the appropriate quilt sections before sewing. From left to right the quilt committee is Sylvia Larson, Charleen Wiseman, Sylvia Muzula, Margaret Hodash, Caroline Livermore, and Lois Cyr.

CONTACT US:

(207) 326-4118 • info@castinehistoricalsociety.org

VISIT US:

13 & 17 School Street • Castine, Maine 04421

castinehistoricalsociety.org