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The Maine State Museum seeks to share what is meaningful about Maine and its place in the world, in order to inspire people to discover Maine's past, understand its present, and imagine its future. Visit www.mainestatemuseum.org.

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Recent Lunder Foundation Gift Ensures Completion of New Museum Education Center

Thanks to a major gift from The Lunder Foundation, the Maine State Museum will reopen in 2023 with a new facility for learning - a special place for families, students, and visitors to experience the thrill of museum discovery: the Lunder Education Center.

Regular readers of Broadside will know that for a number of years the museum's strategic and practical priority has been to develop a new education center, to offer the public modern techniques of museum engagement with Maine's cultural and environmental heritage. The museum has long had the largest on-site student audience of any Maine museum, some 15,000 student visitors a year, and has valued the sustained interest of so many home, private, and public schools. Some have returned year after year, from the farthest corners of the state, for learning offered by the museum's educators and exhibits.

Despite robust use by students and teachers, the museum never had a purpose-designed physical place to present programs to audiences at different age levels and seeking specific kinds of experiences. Access to technology has been only basic, not the world-encompassing and science-probing methods available today. In addition, the whole horizon of museum learning has changed, with more emphasis on personal histories, community connections, examinations of scientific evidence, ecological awareness. The museum planned a new education center to incorporate these essential aspects of teaching and understanding.

Recently the crowning and completing funding for this ambitious \$ 850,000 project was committed by The Lunder Foundation, and so the museum will be able to build the Lunder Education Center as a star attraction. *(continued on page 2)*



Museum chief educator Joanna Torow and exhibit designer Brewster Buttfield examine an osprey specimen planned for a large display in the Lunder Education Center that describes birds in flight.

New Database Brings Deep Dive into Collections

What exactly is in the Maine State Museum collection? Curators with decades of experience might know off the top of their heads, but new curators, and the public, rely on the information that staff members enter in a collections database.

In 2018, the Maine State Museum purchased a new collections database and transferred old database information into it. Although curatorial and collections staff began using the new system immediately, they were not able to tap its full capacity until large exhibition projects were completed in 2020.

To capitalize on the new database and enhance collections knowledge, museum curators began **Operation: Deep Dive, or the O:DD Project** (humor intentional) last August. *(continued on page 2)*



Museum conservator Teresa Myers photographs a dress hand-woven in 1975 by Phippsburg weaver Anda Bijhouwer. Along with many other museum collection pieces, this dress will be included in the upcoming online collections database. MSM 2018.1.41

Time to Ring Some Changes

That title, from a song by British folk-rock legend Richard Thompson (a personal favorite and frequent performer in Maine), could well describe the current condition of the Maine State Museum.

The museum has been closed to the public since June 2020 and may remain closed for another two years to allow major, state-required capital improvements to the Cultural Building in Augusta. But what seems quiet on the outside is a beehive masking furious work within.

Collections, curatorial, and exhibit staff are packing and moving hundreds of objects to protect them from anticipated construction and are pursuing intensive collections and cataloguing work to expand documentation and public online access. Education staff are developing online projects for students, teachers, and families, as well as virtual tours and interviews. These initiatives, plus the activities of the Friends of the Maine State Museum, are keeping the museum visible and available. Under awkward, sometimes trying circumstances, personnel are working at a level of intense activity, whether from home, from museum storage areas, or, while possible, in the Cultural Building.

Museum Education Center *(continued from page 1)*

The Museum Commission, staff, and Friends are also grateful to the many contributors, individuals and institutions, whose contributions have helped make this visionary effort a reality. These include the State of Maine, Avangrid Foundation, National Endowment for the Humanities, Kennebec Savings Bank, Elsie and William Viles Foundation, Bangor Savings Bank, Betterment Fund, G&E Roofing Fund, the Klingenstein family, Charles and Judith Micoleau, Diane S. Anderson Charitable Remainder Trust, Morton-Kelly Charitable Trust, and others. All have lent a hand to the museum's work of bringing its public educational work into a new era and with exciting, expanded possibilities. As the repairs to the Cultural Building progress, the museum will follow with the construction of the Lunder Education Center, a shining symbol of the museum's enduring commitment to educational programming, collections, and exhibitions for the people of Maine.

This strange transition period nevertheless contains rich prospects. With an enforced pause in some of our regular work, we can consider the museum's future. Dramatic changes are ahead.

The centerpiece of the building's entrance level will be the new Lunder Education Center, bringing an entirely new horizon of educational and interactive experiences to the Maine State Museum. Also, many exhibits now located on that floor are being reimagined. Some are slated to be removed during building repairs: not icons like the Lion locomotive, but most of the 35-year-old industrial and nature exhibits. These beloved displays, showing their age, also lack historical, ecological, cultural, personal and technological insights that now seem essential.

Elsewhere on the floor we plan captivating, up-to-date exhibits that will tell fresh stories about Maine and examine them in new ways. We will soon host community meetings to learn what Mainers might hope to encounter in these new exhibits, and how we can best present Maine's heritage. Please watch for these meetings. We have entered a complex, and in some ways a difficult time, but one full of promise and progress.

New Database *(continued from page 1)*

This is a collections research and assessment project with four goals: 1) **Intellectual Control**: Knowing what is in the collection, and documenting an object's history; 2) **Physical Control**: Knowing where objects are, and managing their conditions; 3) **Public Access**: Delivering portions of the collection through an online database; and 4) **Exhibition Development**: Identifying objects to include in exhibitions and educational programming.

Since the project's launch, new historical information has been added to the records of over 4,300 objects. The research includes information about the owners or users of an object, such as occupation, cultural and religious affiliations, family size, educational levels, and whether a family lived with servants or hired hands.

Once objects have been researched, their physical assessment follows, including photographs for an online database that the museum will launch in July 2021. The database will include hundreds of objects and greatly expand public access to the collection.

The **O:DD Project** is allowing museum staff to look at the collections in fresh new ways by revealing more about how objects moved through time and contributed to Mainers' lives.

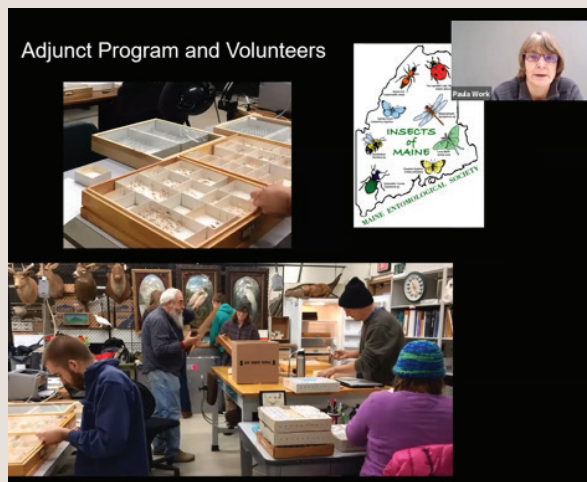
Friends Go Virtual for Annual Meeting

On Tuesday, January 26, 2021, the Friends of the Maine State Museum conducted its first virtual Annual Meeting. In addition to news and updates from the Friends, the program featured three brief presentations under the theme of “Getting Back to Nature.”

Dr. Paula T. Work, Curator of Life Sciences and Archaeology at the museum, spoke about research and collections activities within her department in recent months. Museum Director Bernard Fishman provided an early preview of a reimagined “Back to Nature” exhibition at the museum, and a status report on the museum facility and construction timetable.

Special guest Judy Camuso, the first female Commissioner for the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, discussed special projects and initiatives undertaken by the agency during the pandemic — notably ones that encourage Mainers to spend more time in nature.

Approximately 40 members and colleagues took part in the program, appreciating this opportunity to catch up, think about the great outdoors, and “take a breather.”



This slide from the presentation by Paula Work shows natural history collections volunteers at work prior to the pandemic.

New Members Advance Work of Museum Commission, Friends Board

Since the last issue of Broadside, five appointees have been added to the Maine State Museum Commission, and four new directors have been elected to the Board of the Friends of the Maine State Museum. Here we introduce and welcome them.

New to the Maine State Museum Commission

Richard Abramson (Portland), now an independent consultant, has been superintendent of schools for three different Maine school districts, an adjunct professor at the University of New England and University of Maine at Orono, and recipient of a Maine Distinguished Educator award. He holds an M.Ed. from University of Maine.

Andrea Constantine Hawkes (Portland), museum professional and historian, is the former director of the Rufus Porter Museum and of the Tate House Museum. She holds Ph.D. in history from the University of Maine.

Roger Pomerleau (Hallowell) has had a lifetime career in retail store ownership and wholesale distribution. He also brings energy to his volunteer efforts; he is former board member of Old Fort Western Museum and current Development Chair for Kennebec Historical Society.

Earl Smith (Belgrade Lakes), academic educator and administrator, is a retired Dean of Colby College and a prolific author. A Waterville native, he is also former chair of Waterville’s City Council and School Board.

Anne Witty (Georgetown), former chief curator of the Maine Maritime Museum, is currently Museum Registrar Assistant at Bowdoin College Museum of Art, as well as a guest curator and consulting scholar. She received an M.A. from the Winterthur program at the University of Delaware.

New to the Friends Board

Catherine Leonard (Brunswick), a former employee of the Social Security Administration, has served as trustee of the Pejepscot Historical Society and officer of the Pejepscot Genealogy Society. She chairs the committee for the historic Growstown School and is trustee of its cemetery committee.

Frank O’Hara (Hallowell) has worked as a planner and policy advisor at the local, regional and state levels. He has taught at the USM Muskie School of Public Policy, was special assistant to Gov. Brennan, and wrote for the *Maine Times*. His former consulting practice, Planning Decisions, was honored by the American Planning Association.

Jeremy Pare (Manchester) is a professor of Business, Law and Policy at Thomas College, teaching courses in business administration, political science, and sustainability. He has been a Manchester Selectman, board member for Bread of Life Ministries and the Children’s Center, and a Maranacook Community School Board member.

April Ylvisaker (Manchester) April is a Wealth Management Advisor and leads The Ylvisaker Group at Merrill Lynch. Committed to strengthening the greater Portland and Augusta area communities, April serves on numerous other nonprofit boards, including PROPEL, Veterans Count, and Portland Ovations.

Welcome to New Curator of Archives

Like most of the country, the Maine State Museum has experienced significant changes over the course of the past year. Among the most positive was the appointment in October of a new curator of archives, Zachariah Selley.

Zach joined the museum after seven years as associate head of collections and archives at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon, and with many years in public libraries prior to that. Here's a brief Q&A to introduce him.

Where did you grow up and what led you to archival work?

ZS: I'm originally from Salt Lake City, Utah, and I moved to the Pacific Northwest about 25 years ago. I started out working in photography – my own fine art work and photography for others. I enjoyed the printing and processing part of it, but as digital photography became more of the norm, my career shifted into print music publishing. I'd initially studied music history and philosophy. But libraries and archives always attracted me.

How did you train for that work?

ZS: Along the way, I acquired a Master's in Library and Information Science and, in parallel, an archives training certificate for specialized work with rare books and unique materials.

Tell us some highlights of your work while at Lewis and Clark.

ZS: Not surprisingly I got to immerse myself in the fascinating history of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. I was also able to work extensively with the archives of Oregon poet William Stafford (1914-1993) and to create a collection on Oregon Poetic Voices for the college and community.

What drew you across the country to Maine and this museum?

ZS: I've always loved New England. On vacations in the fall, I would often come east and make long leisurely drives through Maine and Vermont. When I came out for my first in-person interview last July, I was tremendously impressed, both by the scope and depth of the exhibitions I was able to view, and by the passion and professionalism of everyone on staff, especially while contending with the conditions brought on by the pandemic and subsequent building closure.

How do you view your new role?

ZS: My charge is to identify historically important material in the manuscript collections, and to grow them, to help fulfill the museum's mission. In other words: enriching and supporting research, exhibits, and education activities to showcase what is best, most important, and most distinctive about Maine.



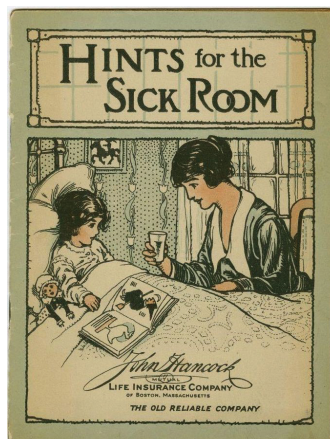
New curator of archives Zach Selley

Sharing the Local History of Pandemics

In 1833, a Maine man took it upon himself to stop a group of people crossing the border from cholera-ravaged Quebec. In 1842, the town of Orrington reimbursed citizens whose

contaminated sofas, shirts, towels, and quilts were burned to stop the spread of smallpox. In 1929, a group of children at a tuberculosis sanatorium in Hebron led their own Fourth of July parade, wearing masks under their goofy costumes.

As shown in these historical examples, the coronavirus pandemic is by no means the only disease to touch lives in Maine towns — or in communities across the globe. Clues about the impacts of disease are scattered across the



*Insurance booklet published during the influenza epidemic known as the "Spanish Flu," ca. 1919
MSM 2004.113.3*

historical record. They tell stories about how Mainers struggled, adapted, and survived.

Museum educators are working to lighten Maine teachers' load this year by giving them access to fascinating, timely stories related to smallpox, cholera, tuberculosis, influenza, and polio. Each pandemic carried its own risks and altered Maine life in unique ways. By looking at this historical material, students can find an entryway to process the historic moment they are living in today.

The recently released Pandemic Primary Source Sets allow students to explore original Maine documents, artifacts and images. The sets are available for free download on the museum website. Packets include teacher guides, digital images, contextual information, and suggested activities. The materials are adapted for 3rd-12th grade students in either virtual or in-person classrooms.

The sources are grouped around four key questions: 1) How do people carry on with life during a pandemic? 2) How do information and misinformation spread during a pandemic? 3) Is it right to control people's actions during a pandemic? 4) How do pandemics impact different people in different ways?

There are no easy answers to these questions. However, with the historical sources provided in these sets and students' lived experiences, there is rich material to connect the past to the present, prompting class discussion and reflection.

The Primary Source Sets were developed in collaboration with the Maine Department of Education, Maine Historical Society, Maine State Archives, Maine State Library, and Maine State Museum.

Museum Acquires Large and Rare Civil War Collection of Civil War Material

An outstanding group of artifacts and documents, preserved by their original owner, has brought new breadth to the museum's already outstanding holdings of Civil War material. Collected by Isaac Dyer, the new acquisition offers a glimpse of an officer's daily life in camp, away from the glory and horror of battle, and provides context for the experiences of Maine soldiers in their months or years away from home. It also hints at what life was like for civilians in the South during the war.



Isaac Dyer, ca. 1865
Courtesy Maine State Archives

Born in 1820, Dyer was a businessman in Skowhegan and served in the state militia. In 1861, he accepted an appointment as lieutenant colonel of the 15th Infantry Maine Volunteers. Less than a year later, he was promoted to full colonel and took command of the regiment. When the 15th Maine's assignment changed from Louisiana to Pensacola, Florida, Dyer succeeded Mainer Neal Dow as commander of the port. In 1865, Dyer was promoted to the temporary (brevet) rank of brigadier general.

After the war, Dyer returned home to Skowhegan. There, he stowed most of his war mementos in two trunks. In late 2020, those two trunks and their contents found a new home at the Maine State Museum.

The trunks' contents include personal artifacts such as swords, Dyer's pistol, souvenirs, writing kits, and a small silk banner with the number 15. Because of its rarity, museum curators have not yet determined how it was used.

A few of the items saved by Dyer speak to the effects of the Union Army's presence on civilians in the South. A "List of properties destroyed and damages on Mrs. L. LeBreton Deschappelle's [Louisiana] plantation" includes whole orchards of plum, pecan, and other trees—presumably cut for firewood—as well as livestock, construction materials, crops, and household goods. In all, the list documents \$23,155 in damages, roughly \$597,000 today.

The Isaac Dyer collection will be a rich resource for Civil War historians when, by year's end, its contents go on the museum's website.



Although simple in appearance, this small silk banner signifying the 15th Maine Regiment is one of the rarest pieces in the museum's recently acquired Isaac Dyer collection. The exact use of the banner is still under research by museum curators. MSM 2020.65.3

We're Very Grateful

Even with the changes brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, and by the subsequent closure of the Cultural Facility Building to the public, both the Maine State Museum and the Friends of the Maine State Museum have carried on, taking meticulous care of assets, creating new communications vehicles, initiating new online projects, and planning for an exciting future. These efforts and accomplishments would not have been possible without the continuing support of members, institutional funders, and other generous donors. The Friends of the Maine State Museum appreciates gifts and memberships at every level. Here we acknowledge gifts and membership dues of \$100 and above (other than capital gifts) made in calendar year 2020.

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Book available in Spring 2021!

Quilting has a rich history in Maine and America, and its popularity has surged in recent years as people return to traditional handcrafts.

Maine State Museum curator Laurie LaBar has written the most comprehensive book ever developed on the history of Maine quilts. She has brought new voices to Maine's past, coaxing interesting, eloquent stories from quilts and their makers.

