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Friends of the Maine State Museum

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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 mainestatemuseum.org.

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Broadside

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Gone But Not Forgotten: Maine State Museum Leads New Research on the Extinct Sea Mink



Plate XVII from Charles T. Jackson's 1837 *Atlas of Plates Illustrating the Geology of the State of Maine*, shows a sea mink (bottom left and inset) on the rocky coast. MSM 2017.8.1.

In April, Maine State Museum curator of natural science Paula Work and former Maine State Museum staff members Bruce Bourque and Robert Lewis published a groundbreaking study in the *Journal of Quaternary Research* that illuminates some mysteries of the now-extinct sea mink.

Although some scientists still doubt whether the sea mink was a species distinct from the modern land mink, the team's findings support the idea that it was. But their discoveries didn't stop there.

To better understand the sea mink when it inhabited Maine's rocky coastline, the team compared the museum's sizable collection of identified prehistoric mink bone specimens with those of today's

(continued on page 2)

Save the Date! October 24, 2026



The Friends of the Maine State Museum gather at the 2025 Annual Meeting, held at the museum on October 16.

◀ **Save the Date!** The countdown is on—the Maine State Museum will officially open to the public for the first phase of its Grand Reopening on October 24, 2026.

Want the inside scoop? Become a **Friends of the Maine State Museum** member to enjoy exclusive reopening updates plus special invitations to members-only preview events and programs.

The Countdown Begins

The Maine State Museum had a particularly important staff meeting not long ago. Our old exhibits had been closed for five years for the renovation of the Cultural Building in Augusta, but in July this year we moved back into the not-quite-finished structure, and we were now ready to decide how long it would take to build the new 13,000 sq. ft. of exhibits we've designed, and how long it would be before we could open to the public once more.

We discussed the many aspects of this process, such as construction schedules, materials, staff tasks, installation, etc., and then came up against the hard point: when? When could we re-open? Well, here it is: **October 24th, 2026**. Feeling considerable nervous excitement, nevertheless we are confident we'll be able to welcome you on that date to see the reborn Maine State Museum.

As I write this, we still have to enter the building through the loading dock because ongoing construction blocks the main entrance. We still have only limited wi-fi in the building, and the conservation lab is not quite ready for prime time. But work on constructing the exhibits is forging ahead, led by staff exhibit designer Brewster Buttfield, exhibit preparator Ryan Walker, and exhibit project manager and deputy director Sheila McDonald.

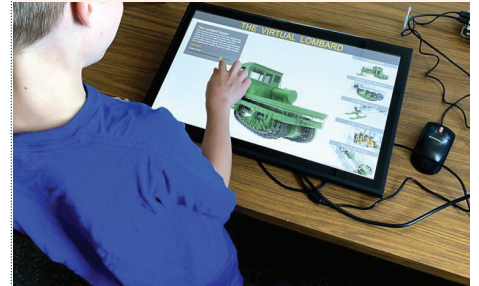
“...we are confident we'll be able to welcome you on October 24th, 2026 to see the reborn Maine State Museum.”

The structural framework of the *Maine Quilts* exhibit is already finished.

In October, attendees at the national American Quilt Study Group conference in Portland made a special visit to the museum to see a preliminary presentation of that exhibit. The giant Pine Tree, an educational feature for younger visitors to the Lunder Education Center, is complete, and the bird displays that will be part of the natural science exhibits there have just arrived on site.

Whale whisperer Dan Danto and his crew of installers will be coming in mid-November to finish the installations of the whale skeletons in the *Vector: A Whale's Life in the Gulf of Maine* exhibit. The final revisions of the labels and panels for the *Beyond the Postcard* core history exhibit are ongoing, as are the crowning touches of the new interpretive exhibit on the museum's Lombard Log Hauler. The place is a hive of activity, as we get ready for the Big Day.

Lombard Log Hauler Interactives: From Concept to Reality



A young volunteer tests one of two educational interactives that museum staff and consultants are perfecting for the upcoming display of a Lombard Log Hauler in the new exhibition, *Beyond the Postcard: Stories of the Maine Experience*. The interactive shown here invites an engaging look at the mechanics of the log hauler. The second interactive, “Be the Inventor,” explores the challenges faced by Alvin O. Lombard in his invention of the log hauler, which was manufactured in Waterville, Maine from 1903 – 1934.

Laser Ablation and the St. Mary's 'Re-berth'

Museum conservator Teresa Murphy is using laser ablation technology to treat the museum's twenty-ton, forty-foot starboard section of the Downeaster merchant ship *St. Mary*, in preparation

for its new life as part of the *Beyond the Postcard* exhibit. She is carefully identifying and removing restoration materials applied in the late 1970s and early 1980s on one end of the ship, revealing the original wood

beneath for visitors to see.

Built and launched in Phippsburg, Maine in 1890, the *St. Mary* was one of the last full-rigged wooden ships constructed in the United States. Tragically, she shipwrecked off the coast of the Falkland Islands on her maiden voyage later that same year. Her remains stayed on the beach for 88 years until nautical archaeologists salvaged the starboard section and transported it to Augusta, Maine, where it was permanently installed in the Maine State Museum in 1978.



Gone But Not Forgotten

(continued from page 1)

American land minks. They also consulted contemporary accounts from fur trappers in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Sea minks were considerably larger in size and had darker fur than land minks. They were also prized for their larger, coarser pelts, which very likely led to their extinction at the hands of fur trappers between 1860 and 1920.

The team concluded that the sea mink was likely an emerging marine fissiped—a land-dwelling carnivore evolving toward a more aquatic lifestyle, much like today's polar bears and sea otters, with webbed feet adapting to both land and sea.

While some questions remain, this research brings scientists closer to understanding the elusive sea mink and its place in Maine's natural past.



New Acquisition: Maine State Museum Preserves a Rare 18th-Century Powder Horn

The museum recently acquired a rare powder horn that was used and inscribed by Thomas Simons, a soldier who served at Fort Pownall in Stockton Springs, Maine. Private Simons was assigned to the garrison periodically from 1765 to 1770.

A powder horn is fabricated from the hollowed-out horn of a bull. In the days prior to self-contained paper or brass cartridges, these horns were used by each shooter to transport their personal ration of gunpowder. Soldiers often etched their names, designs, and images into the cortex of powder horns in a way similar to that of

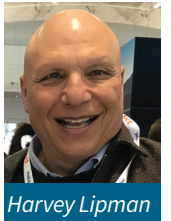
sailors creating scrimshaw on whale bones and teeth.

This powder horn was brought to the attention of the Maine State Museum archaeology department by a local colleague who had used the detailed map found in the intricate carvings to locate archaeological features such as the redoubt that protected the southwestern flank of Fort Pownall.

The Simons powder horn has truly been a clue to the past that will find a safe home in the collections of the Maine State Museum so that it may be studied by researchers for generations to come.

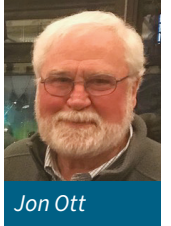
Welcome Aboard to Three New Board Members!

Harvey Lipman grew up in Augusta and has a background in the fresh fish industry and international project management. He is a Maine regimental historian, researcher, writer, and editor.



Harvey Lipman

Jon Ott has served as executive director of museums and historical societies in Massachusetts, Georgia, and Maryland. He is a U.S. Army veteran and a published author.



Jon Ott

Kay Rand hails from Ashland, Maine and operates her own consulting company. She previously managed Angus King's successful campaign for the U.S. Senate and served as his chief of staff in Washington, DC.



Kay Rand

Now More Than Ever: Your Support Matters to the Maine State Museum

At this critical time for the museum, with a Grand Reopening date set and staff working diligently to meet deadlines, your support of the **annual appeal** is even more vital. Visit **MaineStateMuseum.org/Support** or give the Friends of the Maine State Museum a call at 207-287-2304 to find out how you can best support the museum now and in the future.

► **Members and donors** to the annual appeal will also receive behind-the-scenes reopening updates and exclusive invitations to stay informed and help us build excitement for our doors to reopen!



Scan the code above to make a secure donation now!

Calling All Potential Friends Volunteers!

Want to help the Friends of the Maine State Museum spread the word about the museum's Grand Reopening?

Connect with Communications & Engagement Coordinator Torie Levesque at Victoria.Levesque@maine.gov or 207-287-2304 to learn how you can play a part in ushering in this exciting new era for the museum.

FRIENDS OF THE
**MAINE STATE
MUSEUM**
MEET MAINE HERE

Grand Reopening!
October 24, 2026

Meet Maine Here—Virtually!

September saw a major accomplishment in a collaborative effort by the Friends and museum staff—the rollout of a fresh new website.

The updated, now mobile-friendly site enhances the user experience by allowing visitors quick access to important information via streamlined navigation. It also adheres to accessibility guidelines, ensuring the site is usable for all individuals.

A new Events and Exhibits page offers an at-a-glance look at what's happening at the museum, and a new Classroom Resources page allows educators easy access to lesson plans and primary sources. Signing up for virtual presentations and workshops has never been easier, and a new video library includes years of educational and behind-the-scenes videos on exhibits, programs, and more.

Visit the new site to see for yourself
at **MaineStateMuseum.org**

*We are grateful to the Maine Office of Tourism and our
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**MAINE STATE
MUSEUM**
MEET MAINE HERE

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Exhibits and Events

The Maine State Museum shows the best of Maine – all under one roof.

CURRENT



EXHIBIT
Maine Labor Mural
Currently online; Reopening in 2026
Maine State Museum

UPCOMING



EXHIBIT
**Beyond the Postcard: Stories of the
Maine Experience**
Opening in 2026
Maine State Museum

UPCOMING

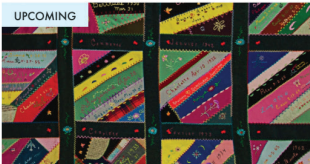


EXHIBIT
**Maine Quilts: 250 Years of Comfort and
Community**
Opening in 2026
Maine State Museum

UPCOMING



EXHIBIT
**Vector: A Whale's Life in the Gulf of
Maine**
Opening in 2026
Maine State Museum