Abstract for Maine Bicentennial Conference Panel #6:
Pine Tree Songscape: Historic Music of the Folk of Maine
Saturday, June 1, 2019, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm

Panel Members:
Laura Artesani (University of Maine)
Kristopher Paprocki (Pembroke, Charlotte and Perry Schools)
Stephen N. Sanfilippo (Maine Maritime Academy, ret.)
James Moreira (University of Maine at Machias), chair.

Three panelists will combine their musicianship and historical research to perform and present historic songs from Maine's past.

Laura Artesani will perform and provide information about two Maine folk songs. The first, titled The Loggers' Boast, is a well-known Maine lumberjack song. Included in John S. Springer's Forest Life and Forest Trees volume of 1851, it is described as "A specimen of log-swamp literature, composed by one of the loggers." The lyrics include the line, "On the banks of the Penobscot, where the rapid waters flow," indicating that this song was sung on our nearby Penobscot River. The song describes the hardships of logging during the frigid Maine winter, and the loggers' yearning to retire from this demanding profession, when they will spend their time "tilling the virgin soil" in the warm summer months. The second song is titled The Lewiston Factory Girl. It was written between 1830 and 1850, and describes a young girl's resolve to leave the regimented and monotonous life of a factory worker in Lewiston, Maine. The lyrics describe the indignities of being served bad food, enduring criticism of her work from the overseer, and the frustration of having her every move watched and questioned: "No more will I take my comb and go to the glass to comb my hair; no more the overseer will say, 'what are you doin' there?'". These two songs provide a glimpse into the life of Maine laborers during the mid-eighteenth century, not long after statehood occurred.

Stephen N. Sanfilippo's presentation will include the contextual setting, performance, and discussion of research about two historic ballads, each of which presents an important aspect of Maine's history. First, he will present "The Brave Town of Machias," composed in 1777, soon after a mid-August British naval attack. The ballad describes British naval movements in Machias Bay, local Patriots' preparation for defense, the British attack, the repulsion of the attack, and a strong statement in favor of the cause for "Liberty" in the American Revolution. This exceptional historic American ballad, published in Machias in an 1863 collection of historic documents and memorials, is subtitled: "being an account of the Success of Liberty against Tyranny at Machias, Maine, the thirteenth Day of August, 1777, as witnessed and composed by Mistress Betsey Scott," the daughter of Sylvanus Scott, whose buildings were burned by the British. It presents the articulate composition of a teenage woman who witnessed the event. The ballad account, celebrated each August in Machias, will be contrasted with the official British naval account, as presented by the invading force and forwarded to command in England by the North American admiralty at Halifax. The presentation of this ballad will include visuals of a map of the Machias area, Machias as it looked at the time of the incident, Burnham Tavern

(headquarters of the Machias "Sons of Liberty," and Fort O'Brien, Machiasport, which was attacked by the British.

Sanfillippo's second ballad is "The Cruise of the *Lapwing*," composed in 1870 by a hand in a Grand Manan banks schooner out of Jonesport, Maine. This song gives a detailed description of the work of men in the fishery, as well as their social and cultural life. Images will illustrate much that is in the ballad via historic photographs, fine art paintings, historic maps, and depictions of the banks schooners in harbor, under sail, and in storms. The presentation will also include an account of the long and extensive research that went into finding the ballad and its history, a story that stretches from Jonesport, to Scotland, to Connecticut, back to Jonesport, and again to Scotland.

In addition to performing and discussing the ballads, the panel will comment on how to go about researching historic songs that are hidden in local archives, the value of historic songs for teaching as well as their performance as public history, and considerations about historic songs as a rich means to understand Maine's past, generally, and the Maine statehood era and its commemoration, in particular.