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## The Society

Maine Historical Society

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## THE SOCIETY

*THE MAINE HERITAGE FUND*, the spearhead of the Maine Historical Society's renovation and restoration efforts, is now underway. The summer of 1979 will be a crucial time for the Society. By the end of the season, we expect to have raised several hundred thousand dollars necessary for major restoration work on the Wadsworth-Longfellow House and the renovation of the Library which houses our priceless collections of Maine imprints, manuscripts, mechanical and architectural drawings, and museum objects.

Mr. Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., president of the Society, notes, "This is the first time in our 157 year history that we have undertaken a fund raising campaign of this magnitude. The Standing Committee, however, feels that it is absolutely necessary if the Society is to continue to serve the historic and cultural needs of the people and to grow."

The Wadsworth-Longfellow House, the permanent home of the Society since its bequeathal to us in 1901 by Anne Longfellow Pierce, the sister of poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, is in dire need of repair. Over the years, this landmark has fallen victim to the elements and spiraling maintenance costs. The brick facade of the structure must be restored, and a new roof and electrical wiring are sorely needed. Thanks to grants from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission and the Community Development Program of the City of Portland some of this work is now underway. It is hoped that the

inconvenience caused to the more than eight thousand tourists who annually visit the House will be minimal. The Library is in even more serious condition. The exterior of the structure is deteriorating, and the roof, cornicing, window sashes, and brickwork all require immediate attention.

Also of concern is the seriously deteriorating condition of the Society's invaluable collection of early Maine paintings, many of which were done by the state's most famous artists. In the past, responsible museums throughout Maine have been permitted to draw upon this collection when mounting Maine-oriented exhibitions. Unless timely attention is paid to the conservation needs of these important works, however, the canvasses will continue to deteriorate, and, in time, many will be lost to future generations. This would, indeed, be a calamity of truly tragic proportions.

In assessing our overall needs, consideration must also be given to the Society's extensive collection of more than 60,000 printed works and its unique manuscript collection of more than 1.7 million documentary items covering every phase of state, local, and family history. These collections, long recognized as valuable resources for scholars and genealogists, are supplemented by other important holdings such as the original drawings of the Portland Company, one of the nation's earliest manufacturers of locomotives, the architectural drawings of John Calvin Stevens, a nationally recognized Portland architect, Indian artifacts, glassware, pewter, and other antiques and memorabilia. Since much of this material has never been properly cataloged and arranged, these aspects of the Society's holdings, the single most important resource available to the students and scholars of Maine, remain relatively inaccessible.

The success of *THE MAINE HERITAGE FUND* campaign will give us the means to address these serious problems. The money will put us in a position to forge ahead with the renovation of the Wadsworth-Longfellow House and the Maine Historical Society Library. It will allow us to proceed with the restoration of our art and artifact collections, and to build upon the strengths of all our collections by making appropriate acquisitions. Finally, we will also be in a position to supplement our undermanned staff with the professional librarians and curators necessary to maintain and properly display these priceless relics of the past.

The stakes are high. Certainly, while the Maine Historical Society has always remained faithful to its rich historic and cultural tradition, it has always had to work within rigid financial constraints. Now we must move forward. No institution can long survive on reputation alone. Institutions, like people, either continue to grow or they wither and die. Thus, we need all the help we can get, especially the time and financial support of our members.

## NEW MEMBERS

*FROM MAINE* *Auburn*: Mr. John B. Annett *Bangor*: Mr. William R. Baron *Brunswick*: McTeague, Higbee & Tierney *Cape Elizabeth*: Mrs. Deborah H. Conley, Mr. Donald H. Maguire, Mrs. Lawrence F. Merrill, Dr. & Mrs. Bruce D. Nelson, Mrs. Charles Vogler *Cape Porpoise*: Mr. Thomas Bradbury *East Baldwin*: Mr. Theodore P. Decker *Falmouth*: Mr. James P. Goduti, Ms. Ruth L. Walls *Gorham*: Mr. Harold F. Bent *Harrison*: Mrs. Miriam S. Monroe *Islesboro*: Mr. Joseph T. Cabaniss *Jefferson*: Mr. Stephen A. Allen *Lewiston*: Mrs. Ruth L. O'Halloran *Lisbon Falls*: Mr. John L. Stevens *Monmouth*: Ms. Bonita L. Bulmer *North Castine*: Mr. Gardiner E. Gregory *North Yarmouth*: Mrs. Dura S. Bradford *Orono*: Miss Judi LaBeau *Peaks Island*: Mr. Donald Foster *Portland*: Mr. Kenneth Skillin Daicy, Jr., Mrs. Phyllis M. Drinkwater, Mrs. Kathleen Fecteau, Mr. Steven E. Jackson, Mrs. Marion P. Johnson, Ms. Mary E. Kimball, Mrs. Mary S. LeBaron, Mrs. Charlotte H. Marsden, Mr. Walter L. Royall, Mr. LaForest S. Saulsbury, Miss Jodi-Ann Wallace *Raymond*: Mrs. Phyllis Hetzler *Saco*: Mr. Bruce Tucker *Sanford*: Ms. Marian MacDonald *Scarborough*: Mr. Joseph B. Nappi *Sebago Lake*: Mrs. Daisy J. Thomas *South Portland*: Mr. Walter W. Fillebrown, Jr., Mr. David T. Flanagan, Mrs. Judith H. Kelley *Steep Falls*: Mrs. Cheryl L. Norris *Wiscasset*: Mrs. Linwood A. Bailey, Jr. *Yarmouth*: Miss Ellen Berry, Mr. Alan S. Graffam, Mrs. Linda R. Haggett, Mr. Stephen J. Helphand.

*Other States* *CALIFORNIA* *Burbank*: Mrs. Miriam D. Cobb *Healdsburg*: Mrs. Dorothy L. Miller *FLORIDA* *Maitland*: Mrs. Patricia Leydon *INDIANA* *Indianapolis*: Mr. E. D. Wilhite *MASSACHUSETTS* *Amherst*: Ms. Sarah B. Blair *Arlington*: Mr. Duane E. Crabtree *Lynn*: Mrs. Sandra N. Frost *Melrose*: Mrs. Marynoyes K. Holden *Westwood*: Mr. Richard A. Blake, Jr. *MICHIGAN* *Ann Arbor*: Mrs. Mary H. Parsons *NEW HAMPSHIRE* *North Conway*: Mr. Richard G. Smith *Portsmouth*: Mrs. Nancy L. Dodge *NEW YORK* *Pelham*: Ms. Joyce P. Davis *OHIO* *Mentor*: Mrs. Phyllis S. Williams *WASHINGTON* *Seattle*: Mrs. Doris K. Carnahan.

*CANADA Dorval: Mr. Raymond Gomm GREAT BRITAIN  
Bristol: Mr. Terence Bryant.*

*LIFE MEMBERS*

Miss Margaret Payson  
*Falmouth Foreside, Maine*

Mr. Josiah Pierce  
*East Providence, Rhode Island*