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Maine Historical Society

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MAINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume 12, Number three

Winter, 1973

Published quarterly at 485 Congress Street
Portland, Maine 04111

NEWS OF THE SOCIETY

Nominating Committee: The Committee to nominate candidates for vacancies on the Standing Committee occurring in June, 1973, has been appointed by President Ray. Committee members are : Mrs. William J. Murphy, Joel W. Eastman, John W. Hakola, Wendell P. Sargent, and Roger. C. Taylor.

The Committee will nominate seven candidates to serve on the Standing Committee for three year terms. Members of the Society are invited to communicate their suggestions for candidates to the Nominating Committee at this time. Nominations may also be achieved by a petition of twenty or more members. In order to be placed on the official ballot, petitions must be submitted to the Secretary of the Society no later than May 26, 1973.

Members now serving on the Standing Committee whose terms are due to expire in June, 1973 are: Robert G. Albion, John W. Hakola, Donald L. Philbrick, Roger B. Ray, Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., Herbert T. Silsby, II, and Samuel S. Silsby, Jr. All are eligible for reelection since none have served three consecutive terms, the maximum allowed under the 1969 Bylaws.

Annual Meeting: The 151st Annual Meeting of the Society will be held on the campus of the University of Maine at Orono on Saturday, June sixteenth. The Society will be guest of the Bangor Historical Society and the University of Maine at Orono. Please mark your calendar with a bold red circle. Full particulars for the day will appear in the next issue of the *Newsletter*.

Publications: In January of this year, the New

Hampshire Publishing Company became exclusive distributor for all publications of the Maine Historical Society. This far-reaching agreement, authorized by the Standing Committee last November, will allow the Society's publications to reach a much wider audience than has been achieved up to this time.

In addition, the New Hampshire Publishing Company and the Society have agreed to undertake a program of cooperative publication which will include new titles as well as reprints of worthwhile books on Maine history and genealogy. The facsimile edition of Willis' *History of Portland* published under a dual imprint last November, was the first instance of this new venture.

Scheduled for publication within the next two years are: *The Letters of Thomas Gorges*, edited by Robert E. Moody (see *Newsletter*, Vol. 12, No. 1b) and a fresh, in-depth study of the *Kennebeck Purchase Company* by Gordon E. Kershaw. Scheduled for reprint are George Folsom's classic *History of Saco and Biddeford* with a new introduction by Robert E. Moody, and a new paperback edition of Ronald F. Banks' *Maine Becomes a State*. (The hardbound edition published by the Society with Wesleyan University Press for the State Sesquicentennial is exhausted). Many other titles are under consideration, and the Society's director and the Publications Committee welcome suggestions for reprints from the membership at any time.

The New Hampshire Publishing Company and the Maine Historical Society are both vitally interested in fostering worthwhile regional books of high quality. Herein lies our hope for a long and valuable association.

Christmas at the House: At the invitation of Greater Portland Landmarks, the Wadsworth-Longfellow House Committee opened the House for one week just prior to Christmas; the first time this has been done in its long history. It was a heartening experiment in cooperation and encouraged the House Committee to make it an annual event.

Under the supervision of Registrar/Curator Hannah Adams, the entire first floor was decorated in the late nineteenth-century manner. Members of the Longfellow Garden Club and the House Committee spent long hours getting everything just right, and even donated or loaned some of their own treasured possessions to properly set the scene. The charming, hand-crafted doll house and furniture, object of many admiring comments, was later given to the Society as a Christmas present by Mrs. Robert G. Albion.

Ladies from Portland Landmarks and the House Committee volunteered as Hostesses throughout the week, and choirs from several schools and churches sang in the courtyard each day.

We salute the "Spirit of Christmas Past" which can engender such pleasant cooperation, and hope that many of you will be able to join us next season.

Arts & Humanities Grant: In November, the Maine Historical Society received a matching grant of \$1000 from the *Maine State Commission on the Arts and the Humanities* for the purpose of preserving the Library's large scrapbook collection from total destruction by making xerox copy. The \$2000 generated will allow us to at least make a start on this \$7000 project. Over many years, a card index has been maintained making the scrapbook collection one of the most prominent research tools in the Library, and one we simply cannot afford to lose. Many scrapbooks were assembled by some of Maine's most prominent citizens and scholars and contain unique materials. Due to the self-destructing chemicals used in pulp-paper manufacture, it has become the Library's number one priority preservation project. The preservation grants offered by the *Maine State Commission on the Arts and the Humanities* have been an immense help to this Society. In 1970-71 a grant was obtained for preserving Maine books, and in 1971-72 for the restoration of three historic Maine paintings.

Franco-American genealogical materials: We would like to call attention to the fact that the Society Library has been acquiring great quantities of Canadian



genealogical material, particularly from Quebec Province. These materials include marriage records, reprints of notary records, etc. Mr. Reginald L. Olivier of Sanford, Maine, has kindly given us guidance in selecting from the mass of publications available in Canada. One of the most useful books in this area was published by Mr. Olivier late last year entitled, *Your Ancient Canadian Family Ties*, Everton Publishers, Logan, Utah. This remarkable work contains 3,775 short biographies of the earliest pioneers in Canada.

In addition, the Library has purchased materials associated with Franco-American history in the State of Maine, including twenty microfilm rolls of the newspaper *La Justice de Biddeford*, 1896-1950, recently filmed at the University of Maine at Orono; Maurice Violette's *French Canadians in Augusta*; Allen's *Migration Fields of French Canadian Immigrants in New England* (microfilm); Heinz Kloss' *Les Droits Linguistiques des Franco-Américains aux Etats-Unis*; and many other titles. Our motivation has not been to "jump on the band wagon" rather, it has been an effort to correct a grave deficiency in the Library's outstanding genealogical and historical collections.

NEW MEMBERS

FROM MAINE *Augusta*: Arthur C. Ray *Bath*: Michael A. McMillen *Bar Mills*: Clifton F. Giles, Jr. *Belfast*: Mrs. Albert L. Crawford *Biddeford*: Mrs. Gertrude B. Weir *Cape Elizabeth*: John R. Connell, Mrs. V. Stroud Pyle, Mrs. Charles S. Vogler *Cumberland Center*: Mrs. Edwin G. Leighton *Denmark*: Sylvia MacDonald, Malcolm MacDonald *Falmouth*: Margaret Gauthier *Falmouth Fore-side*: Mrs. Paul Jones, Jr. *Freeport*: Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Samuel B. Griffith II *Gorham*: James D. Graffam, George L. Watson *Lee*: Gerald A. Burleigh *Manchester*: Kenneth Haskell *North Bridgton*: Mrs. Victoria A. Webster *Portland*: Lyman F. Brewer, Terry K. Dallaire, Mrs. Ralph Egers, Jr., Mrs. Clifton M. Hamm, Mr. & Mrs. E. Frederick Low, Jacqueline O. Lunt, Thomas A. Martelle Preston Murphy, Mrs. Emma W. Scribner, Mrs. Ralph A.

Smith, Samuel S. Stoddard *Rockport*: Mrs. P. S. Gates,
Jr. *Sanford*: Reginald L. Olivier *South Freeport*:
Mary-Eliza Wengren *South Harpswell*: H. Franklin
Williams *South Portland*: Frank W. Babbidge, Philip H.
Carey, Michael J. Conroy, Roxie H. Insel *Westbrook*:
Priscilla D. Waters *Yarmouth*: Mr. & Mrs. Albert A.
Loder, Jr., H. M. Sterling.

Other States CALIFORNIA *St. Helena*: Lewis P.
Mansfield CONNECTICUT *Greenwich*: Shaw Mudge DELAWARE
Wilmington: Edward S. Jordan MASSACHUSETTS *Danvers*:
Kenneth L. Cobb *Oakham*: Charles S. Thurlow *South-*
bridge: Arthur J. Kavanagh NEW HAMPSHIRE *Portsmouth*:
Richard J. Hutchins *Salem*: Donald L. Banks PENNSYLVANIA
Philadelphia: Richard P. Horwitz.

LIFE MEMBERS

Mr. Bruce W. Hazelton
Cumberland Center, Maine

Mr. Joseph S. Jones
South Portland, Maine

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY FUND

Mr. Arthur H. Benoit, *Falmouth*
Mr. William J. Dow, *South Portland*
Mrs. Jesse A. Drew, *West Falmouth, Massachusetts*
Mrs. Josiah H. Drummond, *Portland*
Mr. Harland Eastman, *APO New York*
Mr. Beniah C. Harding, *Thomaston*
Mr. Alan H. Hawkins, *South Portland*
Mr. Herbert S. Hodsdon, *Standish*
Mr. Lewis P. Mansfield, *St. Helena, California*
Mrs. Eric C. Patch, *Quincy, Massachusetts*
Miss Margaret Payson, *Portland*
Mrs. M. S. Peabody, *Falmouth*
Mrs. Mildred W. Pennell, *Portland*
Mr. Donald L. Philbrick, *Portland*
Mr. John B. Robinson, *Oxford*

Dr. Harry W. Rowe, Lewiston
Mr. Richard A. Savage, East Brookfield, Massachusetts
Mr. Herbert T. Silsby, II, Ellsworth
Miss Elizabeth A. Taylor, East Vassalboro
Mr. Irving L. Vaughan, Gorham
Mr. James B. Vickery, III, Brewer
Dr. Roland G. Ware, Jr., Portland
Mr. Philip R. Webb, Portland
Mr. John W. White, Auburn

The 150th Anniversary Fund Committee has been extremely gratified with the response from the membership. By mid-February, 445 members had contributed \$15,976.92, nearly half of the amount needed to enable the Society to double its capacity for housing manuscripts. Plans are progressing well with the architect, and it now looks as if it will be possible to gain 2,034 linear feet of stack shelving which will accommodate approximately 4,746 standard documents cases.

NEWS OF OTHER SOCIETIES
AND INSTITUTIONS

The Maine State American Revolution Bicentennial Commission was formally established in February of last year when Governor Kenneth M. Curtis signed the enabling legislation. The first meeting of the nineteen member Commission was held on August, 1972.

Naturally, the Commission has been very much involved with long-range, procedural planning. However, two concrete programs have been announced about which members of the Maine Historical Society will want to know.

Maine Bicentennial Manuscript Competition: At its meeting in January the Commission approved what its Chairman, Dr. Ronald F. Banks, described as a "landmark agreement" with the New York publishing firm of W. W. Norton and Company.

The agreement provides for the W. W. Norton Company and the Maine Bicentennial Commission to jointly sponsor a manuscript competition. Three categories of manuscripts have been established, corresponding to the three themes of the national Bicentennial: *Heritage '76* manuscripts, focusing on an aspect of Maine's history; *Festival '76*, focusing on contemporary Maine life; and *Horizons '76*, manuscripts dealing with Maine's future. Manuscripts may be fiction or non-fiction and include edited as well as narrative manuscripts.

The prize winning manuscript in each of the three categories, as determined by a panel of judges selected by W. W. Norton, will receive cash awards of \$5,000 each. The best manuscript of the three prize winners will be designated Grand Prize winning entry and will receive an additional \$2,500. Thus, the Grand Prize for the competition will be \$7,500. Prizes will be granted as advances against publication royalties. It is expected that a May, 1975, deadline will be set for entries. Dr. Banks explained that the competition was similar to other national competitions such as the National Book Award, where prizes are awarded only if

the quality of manuscripts justify such recognition. Dr. Banks feels that the amount of prize money is sufficient to attract fine talent in each of the three categories so that awards will be possible.

This is not only a splendid opportunity for writers, but it is one which could result in works of great significance to Maine. By focusing on the present and future as well as the past, opportunity has been provided for works which deal seriously with contemporary problem areas as well as works suggesting the direction in which Maine should move in the future. Hopefully, these possibilities will produce efforts of quality that may prove to be classics because of their impact on public policy.

Bicentennial Planning Grants: In July, 1972, a Federal Grant of \$45,000 was awarded to each of the fifty States in order to help get plans for a 1976 Bicentennial observance underway. In Maine, a portion of this money was set aside for *Bicentennial Planning Grants* to be made available to non-profit applicants representing educational or civic organizations. Applications for these grants may be submitted at any time.

For complete Guidelines for either the *Manuscript Competition* or the *Planning Grants* a request for information should be addressed to: Executive Secretary, Maine State Bicentennial Commission, State House, Augusta, Maine 04330. The Commission will be publishing a *Newsletter* in the very near future, and one should write to the same address in order to be included on their mailing list.

The American Indian Historical Society with headquarters in San Francisco has begun publication of a monthly newspaper called *Wassaja: A National Newspaper of Indian America*. The first issue (January, 1973) gives promise that it will be truly national in scope, rather than concentrating solely on western Indian affairs.

*The Maine Historical Society
takes pleasure in announcing
its Fourth Annual Prize Essay
Contest in Maine History:*

PURPOSE To encourage the study of Maine History and to promote the publication of serious research efforts in the field.

CRITERIA Originality, accuracy, and scholarship which shows an obvious use of source materials.

ELIGIBILITY Open to members or non-members of the Society. Amateurs having a strong interest in Maine history as well as professional historians and students in higher education are invited to enter. Ineligible are members of the Staff and Standing Committee of the Society.

MANUSCRIPTS No more than 5000 words in length, typewritten, double-spaced. Please submit manuscripts to: Director, Maine Historical Society, 485 Congress Street, Portland, Maine 04111.

Deadline: May 1, 1973

AWARDS Announcement of the awards will be made at the Annual Meeting of the Society in June, 1973. *First Prize:* \$100 and publication in the Newsletter. *Two Honorable Mention Awards* will consist of one year's complimentary membership in the Society.