

# WILSON MUSEUM BULLETIN

Autumn 2013

Vol. 5, No. 8

## STORYTELLING, Another One, Please !



Self-portrait courtesy of Jude Lamb.

*STORYTELLING BY THE SEA* was a great success! This was a huge effort by many dedicated individuals and organizations. We look forward to bringing the Festival to life again next year and have already begun plans. If you have comments, suggestions or would like to participate, please be in touch with Patty Hutchins or Darren French at the Museum or Anne Romans at Witherle Memorial Library.

As the year winds down, we would like to offer one more story. Here is a seasonally appropriate story about Lem, a fictionalized version of author Noah Brooks and his childhood in Castine, Maine.

*Lem: A New England Village Boy* is available at the Wilson Museum and on-line at [http://www.wilsonmuseum.org/books\\_prints.html#LEMAnchor](http://www.wilsonmuseum.org/books_prints.html#LEMAnchor).

### **Ghosts, Bougars, and Such** by Noah Brooks

On their way home from Perkin's Back, the boys came across one of their favorite haunts, known as Aaron Banks's cellar. On the edge of the wood was a deep hole in the grassy sward, in the bottom of which could be seen a few rocks that had once formed a part of a cellar wall. Near this was another smaller hole, only three or four feet deep. Both places were green with the turf of years, and a stranger would never suppose that these were the site of a home. But it was a well-known tradition that Aaron Banks and his family had once lived where nothing but a hole in the ground marked the place of his cellar, and another hole showed where his well had been. Stones had been used to fill up the well, and where the cellar had been was a cuplike dent for the boys to play in and hide from their fellows.

**MISSION**  
*Building on the legacy of its founding family, the Wilson Museum uses its diverse collections and learning experiences to stimulate exploration of the natural history and cultures of the Penobscot Bay region and the world.*

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“Polly Webber has told me all about the witch that sunk the floor of Aaron Banks’s house,” cried Lem, eagerly, as the boys halted to slide down the slippery grass into the ancient cellar.

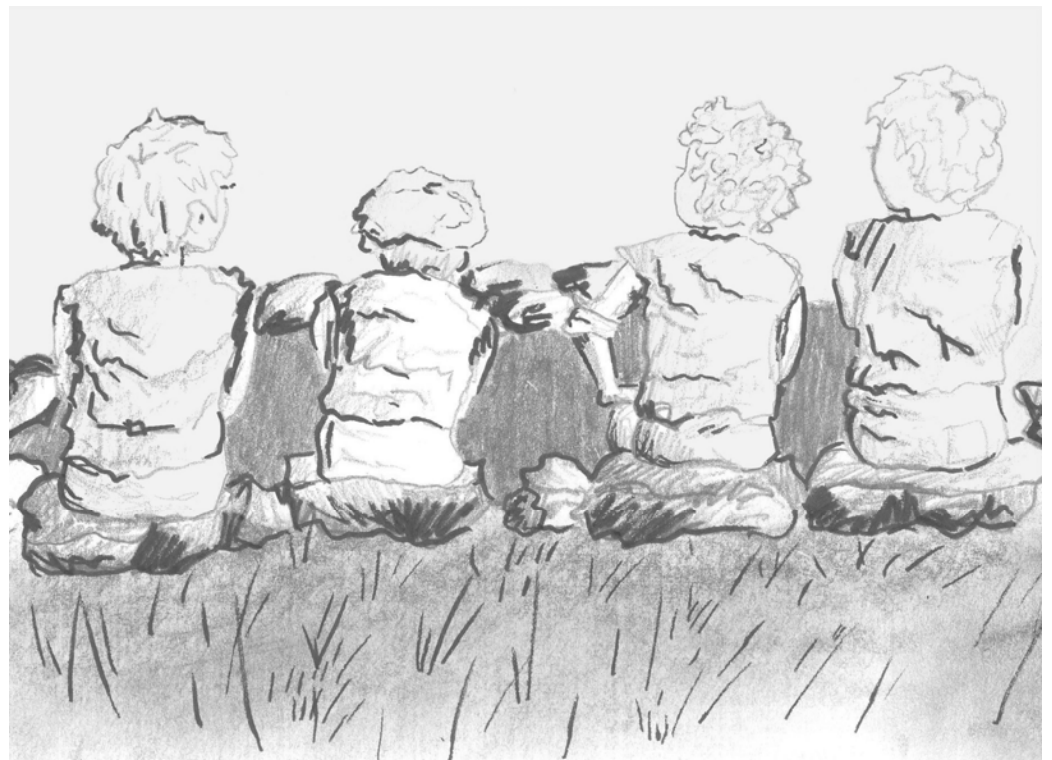
Polly Webber was a village oracle. She went from house to house, making and mending boys’ clothes, making wedding-cake, and nursing the sick. Whatever she said was accepted as gospel truth by all the youngsters, no matter whether their parents approved or not. She was full of stories, delightful stories of the past, when she was a young woman and when “the pesky boys” were not even thought of. Polly did not approve of boys, although she had been often called in when some of these unruly creatures first came into the world.

“Tell us about the witch!” cried Otis, eagerly, and all the other boys joined in with glee. The boys of Lem’s day were always delighted to hear about witches, ghosts, and bougars. These last were a sort of hobgoblin not described in any of the books, so far as I know. The only creature at all like a bougar was one in a story-book belonging to George Howe, where it was described as a wicked and malevolent creature named Rumpelstiltskin. But there were many bougars around Fairport, and when Lem was a very small boy, there was one cupboard in the house, under the back stairs, very dark and very deep, which was believed to be crowded full of bougars of the worst kind. At least, that is the tale that the hired girls told Lem, and he believed it; he rather liked to believe stories of that sort. And now, as the boys sat down on the smooth edge of Aaron Banks’s cellar, and entreated him to tell them the tale of the witch, he smacked his lips and began.

“Once upon a time there was an old woman that lived down to the lighthouse; and she was witch –”

“What is a witch, anyhow?” demanded Jo Murch, with an air of one who is ready to disbelieve anything.

“Oh, hush up, and let’s hear the story!” said Otis, impatiently. “The fellow that don’t know what a witch is has no business with us. We all know what a witch is. Ma’am Heath is a witch. Go on, Lem.”



*Sketch by Grace Tarr*



And Lem took up the thread of his story again, “She lived down to the lighthouse, and her name – well, her name – well, I don’t exactly remember her name. It had a Mac to it, I’m sure.”

“Oh never mind her name. Go on with your story,” cried several boys at once.

“Well, everybody knew she was a witch,” continued Lem; “and they shunned her whenever they had a chance. But some folks were afraid of her, and once when Aaron Banks’s family gave a party, she was a neighbor, and they invited her. I guess they wished they hadn’t, for some of the girls and fellows made fun of her, and that made her mad. They were dancing right here where this very house was, over this very cellar.” And here some of the boys looked fearfully around on the grassy banks of the ancient cellar. “Right here in this very house,” continued Lem. “By and by, while the dancing was going on, and everybody was feeling gay, the floor of the room began to sink, sink, sink, right in the middle!”

“Did it kill the folks that were on the floor?” cried George Perkins, very much excited by this strange tale.

“You shut up!” said Jo Murch, his eyes growing bigger every moment. “Why can’t you let Lem tell his story?”

“As I was saying, the floor began to sink right in the middle where the dancing was going on, and those that were near the middle of the floor kept a-sliding down until almost everybody was in the cellar in a heap. There was a girl that sat near the witch, and she was scared, I tell you, to see all the folks sliding down into the place where the floor had gone into the cellar. But the witch turned to her and said, ‘Don’t you get skeered, my dear; you haven’t been sarcy to me, and you shan’t be hurt.’”

“I bet I know that girl’s name,” shouted Otis. “It was Polly Webber!”

“Shucks!” replied Lem, with much scorn. “All this happened years and years ago, before ever Polly Webber was born. Her grandmother told her the story, and her grandmother was there and saw and heard it all.”

“You mean that her grandmother was *here* and heard and saw it all,” said George Howe, with a scared look around the deserted cellar. The day was now far spent, and twilight shadows were beginning to fall. Some of the boys shivered, but they all entreated Lem to go on.

“That’s about all there was to the story,” said he. “But the funny part of it was that after they had tumbled down into the cellar they scrambled out of the cellar doorway and came and looked into the room; and, lo and behold! there was the floor right back where it fell from, just as if nothing had happened!”

“Oh, what a yarn!” cried one of the bigger boys.

“I don’t care,” retorted Lem. “That’s the story that Polly Webber told me. And she said that Aaron Banks’s folks quit living in this house after that, and that’s the reason why this cellar is here. And she said that once when Old Dyce lived down here on the Head, a big black cat kept stealing his chickens and carrying ‘em off to her hole. So one night, he laid for that cat with his shot-gun, and hit her right on her hind leg. She crawled away, and he lost her. Next day, somebody told him that Mrs. Mac (I have forgotten the rest of her name) was lame and sick. Old Dyce was a clever old fellow, and he went to see what was the matter with her. She was laid up in bed with a lame leg!”

“Well, what of that?” said Otis Stevens. “What has that got to do with Dyce’s shooting a black cat?”

Lem looked at Otis as if he pitied him, and then said: “Why, don’t you know that witches can change themselves into almost any shape they like? This witch had taken the shape of a black cat, and had been stealing old Dyce’s chickens. See?”



“I have heard of a witch that changed herself into a toad once, and she was found in a baby’s cradle.” This was Jo Murch’s addition to the tale. “The mother of the baby was real scared, but she grabbed the toad by the hind leg and threw it into the fire. The toad swelled up and bust with an awful noise, and went up chimney. Next day that witch was laid up in bed with burns all over her legs. How did they get there, those burns?”

Nobody answered; and the boys sat silent for a time. The sun was low in the west; the crickets began to clink in the dry grass, and a night-hawk swooped, rustling her wings, over the lonely cellar.

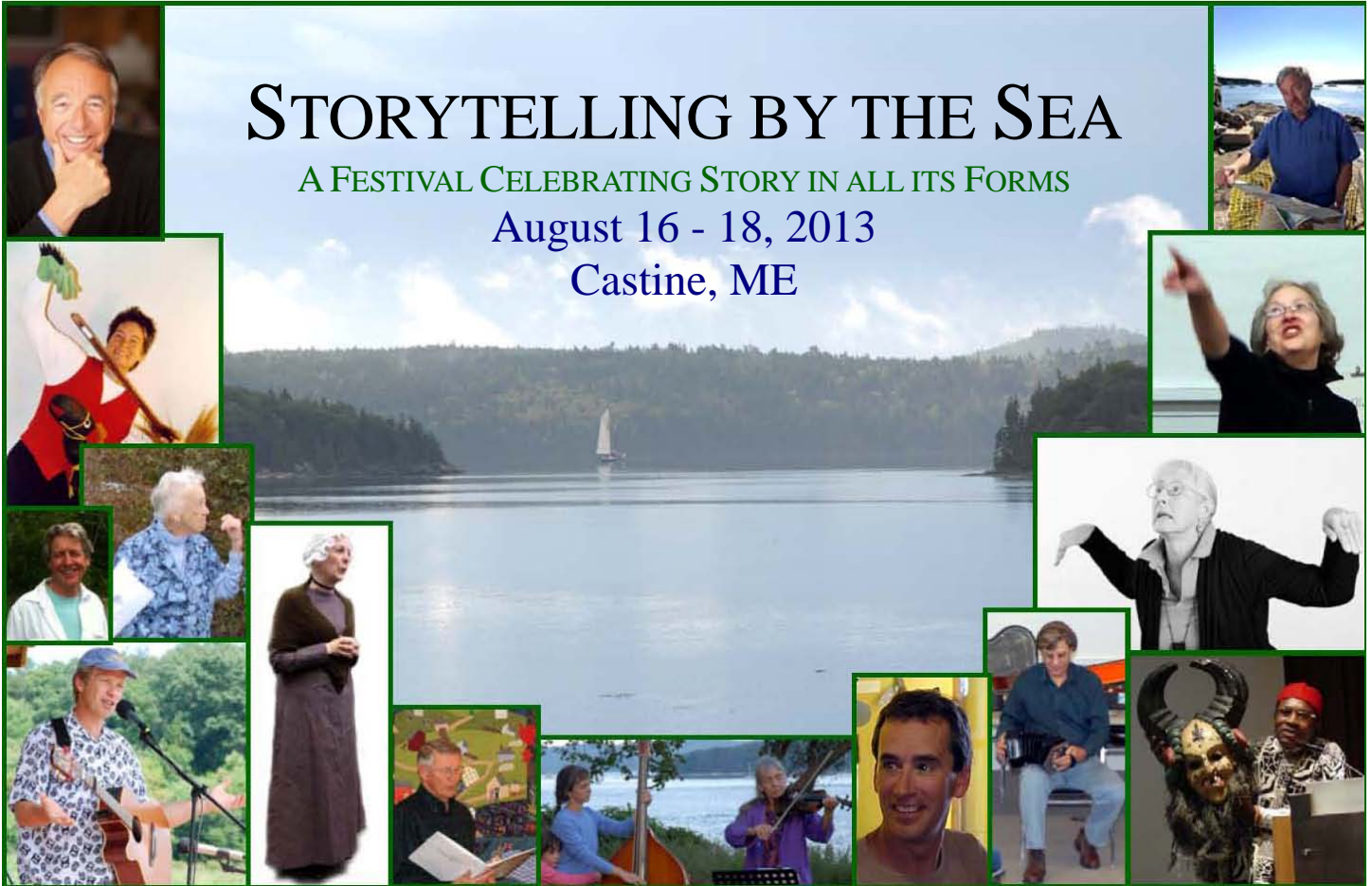
“Come, fellows, let’s get home,” said Lem; and the little company, looking curiously around them, climbed out of the deserted cellar.

# STORYTELLING BY THE SEA

A FESTIVAL CELEBRATING STORY IN ALL ITS FORMS

August 16 - 18, 2013

Castine, ME





## Robin Bray Museum-Based Learning Award

The Wilson Museum is proud to work with Museum Trustee, Barbara Jackson, and her husband Bill on a museum-based learning award to enhance Middle School curriculum and to develop a lifelong positive connection between the Museum and Bucksport, Orland, Prospect and Verona Island youth.

In creating this award, Bill and Barbara Jackson wish to honor the memory of their beloved friend and neighbor Robin Bray. "We could think of no better way to do this than by supporting area teachers to utilize local field trips to enliven student learning. Robin consistently broadened her students' horizons by connecting the classroom curriculum with the broader world."



**Robin Cassandra Bray  
1955-2013**

Born the fourth of five children to Anita and Richard Bray of Orland, Robin grew up in a family who encouraged curiosity and learning. At the University of Maine, Robin earned her teaching credentials and later her MS in special education.

Before joining the teaching staff at Orland Consolidated School, Robin taught home economics and many other subjects to teen parents. After a two-year leave of absence as a Maine distinguished educator, she returned to Orland School until cancer forced her to retire in 2010.

Robin's special area of expertise was working with students whom others considered to be difficult, ranging from the intellectually gifted to those with other learning differences. Her students excelled in science and social studies by being involved in extensive outdoor experiences and community activities. She was among the first teachers to implement the Maine requirement to include Wabanaki studies in the curriculum, bringing tribal educators into her classroom.

Teaching and participating in the wider community, Robin was involved with organizations including Orland Historical Society, Bucksport Bay Healthy Communities Coalition, Beth C. Wright Cancer Center, and other support for people living with cancer. She learned to dance and shared her passion through performance as well as guiding young dancers.

Robin's courage and brilliance continue to inspire former students, colleagues, family and a worldwide network of friends.



### Board Members Elected at 2013 Annual Meeting

On October 15, 2013, the Board of Trustees met for its Annual Meeting and election of officers and Board members (see side bar on page 2 for complete list). All officers were re-elected for another term:

President Harry Kaiserian  
Vice President Temple Blackwood  
Treasurer Joceline Boucher  
Secretary Janice Zenter.

Two Trustees, Harry Kaiserian and Janice Zenter, were re-elected for their third three-year term. Three new Trustees were appointed to fill one two-year term and two three-year terms. We are pleased to introduce our newly-elected Board members:



**Richard "Rick" Armstrong** is the first permanent Executive Director of the Tidal Energy Demonstration and Evaluation Center at the Maine Maritime Academy and is an Adjunct Professor of Business Logistics at the Academy. Rick and his wife, Carol, reside in Castine.



**Elizabeth "Libby" Rosemeier**, currently Dean of Students at George Stevens Academy, has served on the Boards of Blue Hill Public Library, Penobscot Historical Society and Nichols Day Camp. Libby and her husband, Scott, reside in Blue Hill.



**David Wyman** designs and surveys boats from his home office in Castine. He is active in the Down East Traditional Small Craft Association and is Vice President of the National Council of the Traditional Small Craft Association. David and his wife, Rosemary, reside in Castine.

schoodic  
**SCULPTURE**

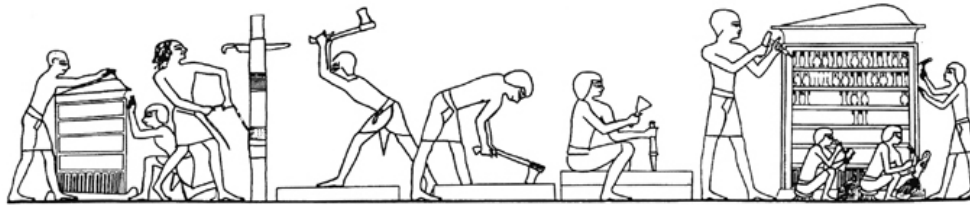
 international  
**SYMPOSIUM**

Castine will be the recipient of a large granite sculpture, created during the summer of 2014 at the Schoodic Education Research Center in Acadia National Park. And, the site chosen on the campus of the Wilson Museum will make it accessible to the public and visible from both land and sea.

Started eight years ago by Jesse Salisbury, a sculptor from Steuben, the idea was to create a biennial cultural event, bringing together artists from all over the world to create sculpture from the local granite quarries, and to give each piece to a town in Hancock and Washington counties. The mission of Schoodic International Sculpture Symposium (SISS) has been to engage individuals and communities in public art, to allow visitors and students to come and watch the process free of charge, and to create a large public art collection in Downeast Maine. There are

now twenty-seven of these sculptures in towns stretching from Deer Isle to Eastport. To enjoy them, SISS has created the Sculpture Tour Map, which people from all over follow, as on an artistic pilgrimage.

The Wilson Museum is honored to be chosen as the sculpture's site. The Museum's Education Coordinator will be working with the SISS educational team and local teachers to create programming for the upcoming year that will tie the sculpture to the geology, mining, art and history of the area. We will keep you updated.



### STEM

In a rapidly changing world, science and technology are shaping the lives of people and the world around them. Over the summer, representatives of three Castine organizations: Maine Maritime Academy, Wilson Museum and Witherle Memorial Library met to discuss ways in which they can develop interest and understanding in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). The collaboration began when Witherle Library Director Anne Romans reached out to Cornerstones of Science, an organization based in Brunswick, Maine, which helps libraries expand their scientific offerings. In June, Cynthia Randall of Cornerstones of Science organized the initial meeting of the group with the purpose of helping the Library utilize the town's extensive scientific resources. In the months since, the group has met twice more and is beginning to plant the seeds of what is sure to become a worthwhile partnership.

The first sprout of this collaboration has already born fruit. On September 10<sup>th</sup> the Library hosted a

lecture on edible seaweed with Dr. Jessica Muhlin of Maine Maritime Academy. The Library also created a "Fab-Lab Maker Space" in their Children's Room, giving kids the opportunity to design their own projects using scientific terms, call group meetings for brainstorming support, and make formal presentations when they feel a project is complete.

The Wilson Museum is excited to be part of this initiative! In 2014, we will set our sights on combining STEM-related programming with the educational component of the SISS Sculpture that will be being placed on the Museum's property (see previous article). The Museum will focus on sculpture-related subjects such as geology, mining, tools from around the world and throughout time, and the science of simple machines. By referencing the past and basic scientific concepts, the Museum will strive to be a valuable part of a project that will help shape future scientific learning for children in our local area.

WILSON MUSEUM  
P.O. Box 196  
Castine, ME 04421



WILSON MUSEUM  
May 27-September 30  
Weekdays 10 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Sat. & Sun. 2-5 p.m.

JOHN PERKINS HOUSE  
BLACKSMITH SHOP & BARN  
July & August  
Wednesdays & Sundays  
2-5 p.m.

Help us grow our membership!  
Thanks to all of you who responded to our spring membership renewal letter. If you haven't yet renewed your membership, feel free to use this coupon to do so. Or, pass it along to a friend.  
Every member counts.

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

STUDENT \$ 15.00       FAMILY \$ 40.00  
 INDIVIDUAL \$ 25.00       LIFE (INDIVIDUAL) \$ 500.00  
(Memberships are renewed annually - except for Life members)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

WINTER ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ SUMMER ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to volunteer - please contact me.