

WILSON MUSEUM BULLETIN

Spring 2015

Vol. 5, No. 11

Auto-Biography of Lemuel Norton



This version of the Castine Gazette was only printed for a year 1872/73. A newspaper of the same name was printed 1884/85. In the Museum's collection are several editions of the Castine Gazette along with the printing blocks (shown above) for the title.

In March the Wilson Museum held Open Research Sessions and talks at the Hutchins Education Center inviting genealogists and historical researchers to delve into some of the resources from the Museum's collections. Newspapers were the highlight of the first talk, given by Janet Roberts, coordinator of the Maine Newspaper Project. Microfilms of some of Castine's earliest newspapers were available to peruse while several actual copies were displayed. Inspired by the series, over a decade of *Ellsworth American* newspapers on microfilm were donated by owner and publisher Alan Baker, adding to others he had given in the past.

The following excerpts from a volume in the Museum's collection, written and published by Lemuel Norton in 1862, describe a bit of his early life and his work with the *Castine Journal and the Eastern Advertiser*. Following a series of adventures, Lemuel became a minister in his later years.

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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CHAPTER I

I was born in Edgarton[sic], Martha's Vineyard, Mass., June 2, 1785. My parents' names were Noah Norton and Jerusha Dunham. They were of English descent, though both were natives of the beautiful isle above named. My parents in 1786 moved from Massachusetts[sic] to what was then called the District of Maine. I was at that time the youngest of six children. My father being a house carpenter, found plenty of work in this then almost wilderness part of New England, and took the oversight in building more than fifty dwellings, taking them from the stump and seeing them finished. In this way he reared a family of seven sons and three daughters...

... The first event of my life that I can now call to mind, of any special interest, is that of hearing a sermon preached by the Rev. Daniel Merrill of Sedgwick, Orthodox, when I was about twelve years of age. This was in the town of Brooksville, then a district in Castine, county of Hancock. This discourse affected me exceedingly, young as I was – so much that as soon as I returned home I retired by myself and wept profusely; and although that sermon was preached sixty-three years ago, and is so far back in the dim distance, I can distinctly remember this day, June 12, 1862, with what awful solemnity he portrayed the miseries of the lost in hell.

This, however, soon wore off, and I became as mirthful as ever...

At the age of fourteen I was smart and healthy, and could do as much work as my next older brother, who was about three years the oldest. At this time my father sent me into the field with my scythe one morning to mow, and on coming out where I was at work, observed that what I had done was well done, only I had not done enough to make it profitable either to him or to myself, and in this I perfectly agreed with him; and what was a little singular, this was the first and the last time I ever attempted to mow a single clip till after I was twenty-four year of age. A few days after this little affair took place, an accident befell me which I now think changed the whole future course of my life.

While chopping wood at the door, I scored in a stick which required to be chopped off twice to fit it for the four-feet, fire-place in the kitchen (the stick or log being about ten inches through), and then stepped over it to stick my ace into one of the scores, I had made, in order the more readily to turn it over, and being a little careless of how I struck, I extended the axe so far as to hit the off corner of it against the farther part of the scarf, which caused the axe to glance off a little – just enough to light upon my foot nearest the log – and having put extra force to the axe in order to sink it deep into the log, that it might hold fast so that I could turn the log over by it, it made its terrible way through shoe and stocking, flesh and bone, directly down through the great toe joint of my left foot. It being very warm, the very last of June, and, withal, my blood much heated by chopping, flowed freely from the wound, and caused me to drop my axe and make for the house, as fast as possible, on entering which, my poor mother, seeing the blood flow so profusely, became alarmed and cried out: "Have you killed yourself?" I told her no, but that I had spoiled my foot, which indeed, to some extent, proved true. Had the axe gone clear through my foot, it would, no doubt, after proper

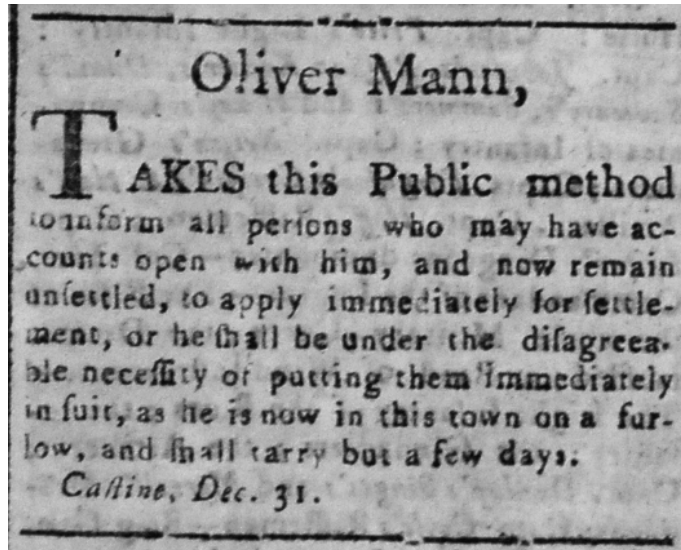
IN MEMORIAM

The Wilson Museum is saddened by the following recent deaths. These members will be greatly missed not only for their various contributions, but for the friendships cultivated over many years of close association.

Jack Castino
1917-2014

Joan "Penny" Steppacher
1926-2015

elapse of time, with good care, notwithstanding the extreme heat of the weather in July, have healed up sound. But not so...[i]n twenty days from the time I struck this almost fatal blow I was carried five miles to Dr. Mann's house, in Castine village, where I remained twenty days more under his hands, during all which time I had the best possible care



taken of me, not only by the doctor and his family, but by the young lady whose entire business it was to anticipate my wants, and to see that they were all supplied.

At the end of the twenty days at the doctor's, my wound being about healed and my health being otherwise pretty good, the doctor thought it would be safe for me to return home, though not exactly as I went, he having a desire to let the villagers see that he had made a cure of me, compelled me, or rather insisted on my walking with crutches to the boat at the end of Main street, in which I was received and returned joyfully to my father's house, where I was gladly received. ...[M]y limb gathered strength, so that notwithstanding I had lost the use of my great toe joint, it having become entirely stiff, I could walk several miles in a day.

About this time a newspaper had just been started in the village of Castine – the only village of any considerable importance east of Wiscasset, in the district of Maine. This paper was then called the

Castine Journal No. 3 of Vol. II

on all sides that I should be a printer. And accordingly in the Autumn of 1799 I went into the printing office and commenced typesetting. A little before this, some young gentlemen and ladies had called in to see this new establishment in their neighborhood, and how it was that newspapers are printed, and in their passing round among the cases of type, or in some of their movements, they managed to upset a case of type so that they were piled all up together topsy-turvy, making what printers denominate pi. It was my first work to set these on end, so that they could the more readily be distributed into their proper places in the case.

In a very few months I became quite a proficient in type-setting, which business I liked very much, because it learned me rapidly how to read and how to spell. And here let me just say, that printers are the best spellers of any class of people in the world, lawyers themselves not excepted.

Here I am now in my new relation, the youngest of two apprentices, the other, Ebenezer Whitney, being

Castine Gazette and Eastern Advertiser, David Jones Waters, Editor, and was at this time the only paper printed east of Wiscasset in Maine. In it was an advertisement for an apprentice, and I being about fourteen years of age, and in other respects answering the description given in the advertisement tolerably well, and the physician saying I could never walk over five miles in a day, it was agreed



Note that Lemuel calls the newspaper the Castine Gazette and Eastern Advertiser, but the editions in the Wilson Museum collections are entitled Castine Journal and Universal Advertiser in January of 1799 with David J. Waters as printer. By May it had become the Castine Journal and the Eastern Advertiser (Mr. Waters still the printer) and remained so until 1801. To the best of our knowledge, the Castine Gazette did not exist until 1872.

Castine Journal No. 3 of Vol. II

WINDOW ON THE WORLD

The Perkins House window at right is a window on the world – the world of Phebe and John Perkins, their family, life in Castine, and so much more. Fifty years ago, the Perkins House was in an abandoned and deteriorated condition. With expertise and care this building was brought from the brink of demolition to becoming a valuable teaching tool for the community and the many visitors from around the country and the world who tour each summer. The longevity of this historic house allows us to showcase different topics and time periods and is so important to our mission. Its preservation is critical.

With a life-span of 250 years and running, maintenance on the John Perkins House is an on-going activity. Some care, such as painting, is a continuous project with a side or more scheduled each year. And while painting can fend off larger problems for a fairly long period, eventually the

Condemned as a fire hazard, the John Perkins House was purchased in December of 1968 by the Castine Scientific Society (aka Wilson Museum). The building was carefully dismantled and reassembled on a new concrete foundation beside the Wilson Museum; and, in 1971, was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

ravages of time, weather and moisture produce issues that are more extensive and expensive than the Museum's annual maintenance budget can handle. Our windows are just such an example of growing concern. Weather off Castine Harbor is wearing away not only the exterior paint and window glazing, but the muntins themselves. Given that these window sashes were handcrafted by Hoyt Hutchins 45 years ago, our annual maintenance has preserved them remarkably well. Now, however, they are in need of major attention. Another area of concern is continued infiltration of ground moisture through the basement which tends to wick up through the walls causing high humidity conditions inside. Long-term humid conditions can be detrimental to furnishings and artifacts, but can be mitigated with your support.

This summer we will hold special fundraising events and use your membership renewals and donations to address these and other preservation concerns at the John Perkins House.



Join us on July 9 at 3 p.m. for a presentation and book signing by John Leeke of Historic HomeWorks in Portland, Maine. He will be talking about how to **Save Old Windows** and copies of his book *Save America's Windows* will be available for purchase. In a community filled with historic homes as Castine is, this should be of interest to many. Support, through donations and memberships, help us preserve and interpret the Perkins House and turn challenges such as deteriorating windows into learning experiences for the benefit of all.

Special Candlelight Dinner Invitation

You are cordially invited to a Colonial Candlelight Dinner for six on June 29 (5:30 p.m.) at the home of Phebe and John Perkins, hosted by the couple's daughter Polly. True to the era of the Perkins House, guests will dine by candle light enjoying Colonial punch and a hearth-cooked meal made with an enticing array of seasonally available ingredients.

This intimate dining experience is a special fundraising event and a rare opportunity to relax in the gentele atmosphere of a bygone era. Individual seating is by donation (\$100 per person minimum) and will benefit Perkins House preservation projects. Please make your reservation early as this is certain to be a popular evening. Should RSVPs exceed available seating, the hostess may open her dining room once again at a later date.



First Dibs: A Preservation Celebration July 20, 2015 (5:30 p.m.)

It's an auction, only better! Join us Monday, July 20 at 5:30 p.m. for a fun and exciting fundraising event. You can get "First Dibs" on a wide array of gifts, services, and prizes donated by generous businesses and individuals from our local area all in support of preservation projects at the John Perkins House.

Each guest's name will go "into the hat," and those drawn first will get to claim First Dibs on an item of their choice. There will be plenty of individual prizes, but some items, such as the two samples on the left, require more than one dib to acquire — that's part of the fun. Come as a team, or plan to find collaborators that evening to claim a group experience, a dinner party, or a shareable package.

No bidding wars to sit through, and with the opportunity to go it alone or team up to get something special with friends, no one will go home empty-handed! Donations will be listed on our web page.



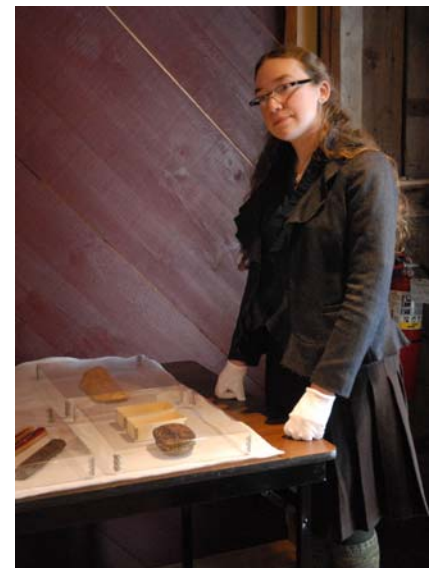
Four Dibs - One half day of beginner/novice woodturning lessons for a group of four students - date by arrangement.



Four Dibs – Sailing the Penobscot Bay on Temple's Turn with lunch for two couples – date by arrangement prior to Nov. 1, 2015.

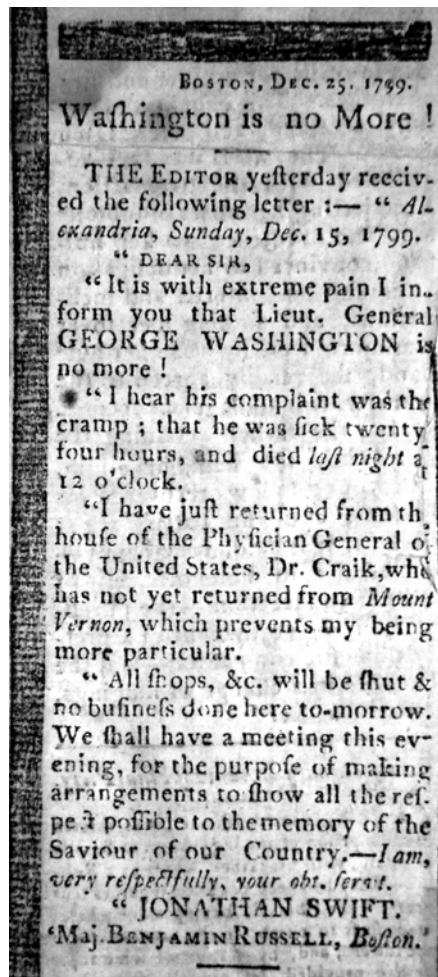
Abby Dunham Promoted to Collections Manager

The Wilson Museum's Executive Director, Patricia Hutchins, is pleased to announce the promotion of staff member Abby Dunham to Collections Manager. Abby, a Castine native who grew up loving to visit the Wilson Museum, has a B.A. in Anthropology from Dartmouth College. The Wilson Museum hired Abby in 2012, and she has worked for the Museum in several capacities since then. Abby has gradually devoted more of her time to caring for the Museum's collections, a focus that was made official with her promotion in January 2015. She is excited to work closely with the diverse collection, develop exhibits, encourage researcher access, and increase public knowledge about the Museum's holdings. The Museum's Collections Committee held a Celebratory Tea for Abby in February, where she shared some of her favorite little-seen artifacts from the collection.



about nineteen. And being the youngest, I had every week, on the day on which the paper was published, to take some seventy-five or a hundred under my arm and pass through every street, leaving a paper at every subscriber's door, or throwing it in at the door. Nothing worthy of note took place with us – everything moved on harmoniously until toward the last of December, when the sad tidings of the death of General George Washington came to our village. This seemed to made every one sad; the whole nation was clad in mourning; we all wore black crape on the right arm for thirty days, as expressive of our grief for the loss of the Father of our Country, who died December 14, 1799, aged sixty-seven years.

Being rather of an intellectual turn of mind, I enjoyed the business of printing very much, became strongly attached to the man with whom I lived, and should no doubt have continued with him, had it not been that I had an unconquerable desire to see more of the world than I possibly could while confined within the walls of a printing office.



Note the black borders on the papers edges, a sign of mourning.
Castine Journal No. 1 of Vol. II

Ships, brigs, and schooners, coming in from different parts of the world and anchoring in the harbor, within hailing distance of our office, from time to time, greatly attracted my attention, and their splendid appearance with the men and boys on the yards and at the mast-head, furling and sometimes loosening their sails, drew my affections quite away from all other pursuits, and I longed to be a sailor. My roving propensities overcame me, and I finally came to the conclusion that I would leave the indoor work of setting type, and go and see what was to be seen in other climes and in other kingdoms.

After settling up...I packed what little I had of clothing, together with a Bible and Watts's Hymns, and leaving my father's house, went on board the good schooner Polly, of Castine, belonging to Capt. Joseph Perkins of said place, where a berth had been provided for me to go as cook to the West Indies.



SOURCES:

Auto-Biography of Lemuel Norton, Portland: Printed by Brown Thurston. 1862. Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1861, by Lemuel Norton, In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the District of Maine.

Castine Journal and the Eastern Advertiser, No. 1 of Vol. II, [January 7, 1800] date illegible & No. 3 of Vol. II, January 21, 1800.

Castine Journal and Universal Advertiser, No. 4 of Vol. I, January 23, 1799.

Microfilm resources available for viewing by appointment:

Castine Journal, March 13, 1799 – Dec. 26, 1800 (not complete) from Maine Historical Society.

Castine Eagle, Nov. 14, 1809 – 1812 (not complete) from Maine Historical Society.

Castine Eagle, Nov. 6, 1810 – Dec. 14, 1811 (not complete) from Maine Historical Society.

Ellsworth American, January 1921 – December 1930, complete, 5 rolls.

Ellsworth American, January 2001 – December 2014, complete, 35 rolls.

New Education Team

Director Patricia Hutchins reports that, following the completion of the year-round Hutchins Education Center, a team of educators has been brought on board to collaborate on the development and implementation of exciting new educational programming.



Cameron Frothingham has taught a variety of subjects in Maine schools after moving here a decade ago. In addition, Cameron collaborated with two Wilson Museum Trustees on a boatbuilding program at the Adams School, in which students built a dory using only hand tools. Cameron is excited to join the Wilson Museum Education Team!

Deborah Kulisch has studied, lived, worked, and adventured across the U.S. and abroad. Deborah brings a wealth of hands-on experience in child development and education. She looks forward to sharing her passion for life-long learning with Museum visitors of all ages.



Jean Lamontanaro not only brings a background in art education to the Team, but, while a stay-at-home Mom, she moonlighted as a graphic designer. Jean is excited to marry these skills to develop and promote educational programming for the Wilson Museum.

Two Robin Bray Awards Presented

On March 24, Blue Hill Consolidated seventh grade students came to the Hutchins Education Center with teacher Kyle Snow to attend a reading of excerpts from the Wilson Museum's collection of Civil War letters and diaries. This program was arranged by Paula Dunfee and included information about camp life, soldier's clothing, and rations. The class will return in June to tour the Museum and give a presentation of their own Civil War research.



Kyle is one of the two area teachers to receive this year's Robin Bray Museum-Based Learning Award. The unit he produced in fulfillment of the Award is *The Blue Hill Peninsula in the Civil War*. The second recipient of this year's award is Shawn Kenniston of Bucksport Middle School who is producing a unit on Wabanaki culture and economics.

Applications for next year's Robin Bray Museum-Based Learning Award are due June 15, 2015. This Award is open to Blue Hill Consolidated School and Bucksport Middle School teachers. The recipient will create and teach a curriculum unit utilizing Wilson Museum resources. The Award will provide the teacher with a professional development stipend and access to Museum resources as well as a field trip to the Wilson Museum for his or her class. If you are a middle school teacher for Blue Hill or Bucksport, please feel free to contact the Wilson Museum for more information.

Majabigwaduce was the name of the area that now includes the towns of Brooksville, Castine and Penobscot. What name was it given when it was incorporated in 1787?

A. Brooksville B. Castine C. Penobscot D. Bagaduce

Do you know the answer to the question above? If you have children in grades 5 - 8 in the Brooksville, Castine or Penobscot schools, we bet they do!

Maja Trivia, the game of local history for the towns of Brooksville, Castine, and Penobscot is still going strong in its third year. Monthly practice rounds have been preparing 5th – 8th grade students in all three towns for the Semi-Finals and, ultimately, the Tournament of Champions.

Semi-Finals take place in each town and are sponsored by their respective historical societies.

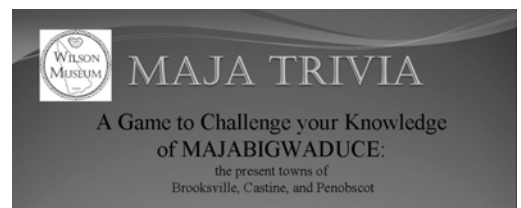
May 19 (12 - 2 p.m.) Penobscot Community School

May 20 (12 - 2 p.m.) Castine Historical Society's Mitchell Room

May 21 (9:30 - 11:30 a.m.) Brooksville Elementary School

Students advancing from each school then meet in the Tournament of Champions held at the Wilson Museum on June 9 (10:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.), with a picnic lunch provided to the students between rounds.

The public is invited to attend all tournament rounds. Come cheer on your hometown team!



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

WILSON MUSEUM

May 27-September 30
Weekdays 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Saturdays & Sundays 2-5 p.m.

JOHN PERKINS HOUSE

July and August.
Wednesdays and Sundays
Hour-long tours at 2, 3 & 4 p.m.

THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH & WOOD SHOP

July & August
Wednesdays & Sundays 2-5 p.m.

BAGADUCE ENGINE CO.

May 27-September 30
Same hours as Wilson Museum

2015 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(www.wilsonmuseum.org/calendar for complete listings)

JUNE

- 9** 10 – 1:30 Maja Trivia Tournament of Champions
19 5:30 p.m. Members Reception
23 2 p.m. *Barbour's Boatyard*, Henry Wiswell & Judith Frost Gillis

JULY

- 9** 3 p.m. *Saving Old Windows*, John Leeke
14 10-12:30 Workshop: *Cooking with Grace*, Grace Tarr
19 2 p.m. *Stories of Micmac Culture*, Simon Nevin
20 5:30 p.m. *First Dibs: A Preservation Celebration* fundraising event
22 2-5 p.m. Fireside Cooking
28 10-12:30 Workshop: *Cooking with Grace*, Grace Tarr
30 1-4:30 Workshop: *Basket Making*, Pamela Rackliffe Capurso
31 6 p.m. SISS Sculpture Dedication & Town Band Concert

AUGUST

- 4** 10-12:30 Workshop: *Cooking with Grace*, Grace Tarr
2 p.m. *Wabanaki History & Stories*, John Bear Mitchell
6 2-5 *Crafting with Quills & Birch Bark*, "Porcupine" Bishop
9 2 p.m. Wabanaki Drummers
11 1-4:30 Workshop: *Learn to Play Native American Flute*, White Owl Duo
13 2 p.m. *Penobscot Place Names*, James Francis
18 10-12:30 Workshop: *Cooking with Grace*, Grace Tarr
20 2 p.m. A program of history, stories & music, Allen Sockabasin & sons