

WILSON MUSEUM BULLETIN

Spring 2016

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A Mystery of the Bagaduce by Mary Dunbar Devereux



In 1915, the Lewiston Journal sponsored a contest for members of the Maine Federation of Women's Clubs. Member women were invited to submit an historical story with the winning stories serialized in the newspaper and prize money awarded to the author's club chapter. This resulted in so many wonderful stories that the Federation of Women's Clubs engaged the Lewiston Journal to publish the stories in book form. The book was entitled *Maine in History and Romance*. In 1916 a second volume was published, *The Trail of the Maine Pioneer*. Within this second book, Castine

was well represented with three of the thirteen stories penned by local authors: Louise Wheeler Bartlett, Mary Dunbar Devereux and Gertrude Lewis. In keeping with the Museum's summer mystery theme, we hope you enjoy this slightly condensed version of Mary Dunbar Devereux's "A Mystery of the Bagaduce."

Mary Dunbar Devereux, pictured above was born in 1871, the daughter of Bennett and Frances Leach Dunbar. She married Charles Warren Devereux and had a son, Richard. A member of the Castine Woman's Club, Mary was also a member of The Maine Writers Research Club and contributed to their two publications which were used as supplemental readers for Maine public schools. She also wrote "Castine's Brief History" for the program of the Castine State-Centenary Carnival of 1920.

MISSION

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

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UPON the hill just above the little settlement of Majabaguaduce, in the District of Maine, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, stood Master Pelatiah Beach, overlooking the town and the Bagaduce River whose mouth formed the harbor of that quaint old port — old over a century ago. ... Off to his left rose the walls of Fort George, on this last evening of November, 1783, yet occupied by the Redcoats who, four years previously, had defeated the Patriot army and fleet collected to oppose Gen. McLean's occupation.

The approach of an officer with three men did not at all disconcert Beach as the garrison had been friendly toward the inhabitants, excepting in a few instances, and from them, sturdy, plodding, but shrewd Pelatiah Beach had gotten no little revenue by the sale of produce. His servant had just discharged the last of many loads of provisions given in exchange for English coin. He responded in neighborly fashion to the greeting of the officer and, after some minutes of conversation concerning the prospect for to-morrow, the coming cold season, and the harbor and Bay of Penobscot so well known to him, Beach was turning to follow his ox team, when suddenly he felt the officer's hand laid in authority and command upon his arm —

"We are leaving for Halifax on the morrow, Master Beach, and have need of a pilot down your Bay of Penobscot," said the officer. "In the king's name follow me into the presence of our general!"

In vain Beach protested. Not even allowed to recall his man, now out of sight over the hill leading from the Peninsula of Pentagoet, or to communicate in any way with his family, he was hurried over to the barracks whence, at dawn, the British embarked in His Majesty's ships for Halifax, and not for more than two years was Pelatiah Beach seen again in his native District of Maine.

Meanwhile, his mother and young wife, with her little ones, were rudely startled from their busy life of quiet security, first, by the failure of the son and husband to return with the shadows of evening and by the servant's report that his master was last seen in converse with British officers. Later, their alarm and distress were increased by news from the port that watching townfolk had seen Pelatiah Beach marched under guard to the landing, at daybreak, and embarked upon H. M. Ship "Greyhound" with the last company of Redcoats.

Return to Your Seat

Enjoy lectures and programs in the Hutchins Education Center from the comfort of your "own" chair. For a donation of \$125 we will purchase a brass plate with your name or the name of a loved one engraved upon it. This will be attached to one of our new mission-style folding chairs. These are sturdy hardwood chairs with comfortable, padded seats, sure to last for years. Donations to the chair-naming fundraiser may be made on-line at www.wilsonmuseum.org/membership.html or by sending a check for \$125 per chair to Wilson Museum, P.O. Box 196, Castine, ME 04421. Please specify the name you would like engraved on the plate. You may also donate as a gift for someone else; in which case, please indicate if you would like "In memory of" for one who has passed away or "In honor of" for one still living. Take advantage of this limited chair-naming opportunity (the Education Center has a 50 chair capacity), then return to your seat again and again!



Was he to be punished, perhaps shot, for some fancied wrong? Was he a hostage, or held for ransom in spite of the recent treaty of peace? Or had he merely been taken as a pilot down the Bay on account of his well-known knowledge of its waters? In this last case he might be landed and return home within a few days, and for this his family hoped until, learning that the "Greyhound" had been grounded for some hours in the Reach below, but had later proceeded, the chance that he might be accused of wilfully endangering the fleet seemed to destroy their last hopes.

Days, weeks, months passed, and he returned not; neither was any word of his fate received, and friends and neighbors became convinced that Mistress Beach was a widow and her babes fatherless. But if they anticipated helpless need on the part of the family, they were happily disappointed. The young wife... proved herself a strong and brave woman in adversity.

She had been reared more softly and with more culture than her neighbors... at New Falmouth (Portland)... Mistress Mary — or "Polly" as the Marys of those days were usually called, having already learned from Mother Beach all the skill of the country housewife, now proved that she could direct the farm work as well. The preparation for the long, cold winter was completed, the stock housed, cellars and barns banked with fir boughs against mid-winter frosts; and when spring came at last tardily out of the South, the little heroine planned, directed and assisted in all the planting, cultivating and harvesting of her crops, not one of her neighbors having sleeker cattle or better produce for table or market than she.

Thus a year passed and another, and still no word of Master Pelataiah Beach! Yet another winter was passing from the Penobscot. Majabaguaduce was busy and stirring. Fishing had proved lucrative, and the lumbering pursuits offered in the region were drawing new settlers and calling home those who had fled during the British occupation. The renewal of land grants gave added impetus to immigration.

On a late March day of 1786, when spring promised in the warmth of the sun's rays and in the melting snows and bare brown hillsides and the faint breeze just rippled the waters and haltingly filled the sails of the ships in the harbor

of Majabaguaduce, a newly arrived trader dropped her anchor in front of the Town Landing at the foot of the main street. Presently a boat put out from the ship's side; the occupants landed, drew their boat upon the beach and walked up into the little settlement.

One man, taller and broader than any one of the others and the last to land, followed his companions briskly for a few rods, then paused to look about, to turn again to the harbor, to gaze off across the water toward the opposite shore, either as if recalling scenes once familiar or, it might be, fixing in mind a picture never beheld before. Meeting a group of citizens, talking animatedly of the recent expulsion of some who had been inimical to the Patriots' cause during the Revolution and of the new grants of land to incoming settlers, the newcomer again paused, then moved forward as if he would have passed the group in silence.

But Capt. Jeremiah Bardwell stepped forward with amazement and welcome in his bluff countenance.

"Why, Pel Beach! Are ye risen from the dead?" he shouted.

"As sure as I am Jeremiah Bardwell and these men, Dave Willson and Gabril Jahonnot, here is Pel Beach come back to life! Welcome home, old neighbor! — Won't this give Mistress Polly a start! And Bill Hutchins saying no longer ago than last Sabbath that a pity it was such a fine young woman had not yet taken a second husband to help her manage the farm and the children, with Pel dead and gone these two years and more! Welcome home!"

Handshakings followed, and Capt. Perkins with Mr. Aaron Banks also came forward to meet the long absent citizen. . . .

Capt. Bardwell took him hospitably into his company and presently led their steps from the town up over the hill whence, two years before, Pelataiah Beach had been taken by the British officer. At the cove back of the peninsula they embarked in the Captain's skiff and rowed stoutly up the river, Capt.

Jeremiah, whose home lay far up the Bagaduce, talking volubly of the changes in family or fortune in each homestead which they passed. He landed the traveler at "The Eddy" just below the famous Bagaduce Narrows, promising to call soon to see his old neighbor, and then rowed swiftly up stream with the current. . . .



Mounted photo of the Bagaduce River Narrows, Wilson Museum Collection, given by Telford Durham.

New Education Team Hired

Director Patty Hutchins is pleased to announce that a new team of educators, brought on board in January, has already made its mark with exciting new programs for children and adults. Several of their new offerings are illustrated in this spread.



Valerie Messana, coordinator for the team, was a librarian for 23 years and brings a wealth of experience working with children and adults. She is excited to use these skills for the benefit of the education program at the Wilson Museum. Valerie and her husband live in Brooklin.



Joanne Steenberg is a former teacher who is passionate about connecting with people to inspire and open their minds. She is enthused to share her awe of the Wilson Museum's collections with the educational community. Joanne, her husband and two children live in Penobscot.



Grace Tarr literally grew up teaching cooking at the John Perkins House. Since then, she has matured into an experienced historical interpreter proficient in both first-person and third-person presentations. Grace uses her youth and professionalism to inspire and engage the next generation of museum visitors. She lives in Brooklin with her parents and sisters.



Terrific Thursdays for Tots is a series of read-aloud stories and craft projects for preschoolers facilitated by Valerie and held at Wilson Museum's Hutchins Education Center from March through May.



HOME Convention took place in March and included a visit from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's wife Fanny (as portrayed by Grace) discussing her husband's poem "Paul Revere's Ride." The Museum also manned a booth with interactive and hands-on activities.



Young Docents is a six session program during May and June for young people age 12-18. Classes include meeting with Wilson Museum staff, touring behind the scenes, and collaborating with other students to refine

research and public speaking skills. The Young Docents program will culminate with presentations at the Wilson Museum's annual Members Reception in June.



Boy Scout troops #41 and #648 spent a Saturday in April learning about Castine and Wabanaki history. They enjoyed squash donuts at the John Perkins House, viewed Wabanaki artifacts at the Wilson Museum and tried carving a spirit club of their own. They also visited the Castine Historical Society and learned about marine vessel technology and science at MMA.

April Fools Coffee House was a delightful evening, organized by Joanne, with tasty goodies, Bucklyn Coffee and great music!



Two local bands: Pleasant Street, comprised of four MMA students, and The Leftovers, a group of six from East Blue Hill, played to an enthusiastic full house!



Educators' Reception was held on March 8 to provide teachers and other educators in the area with a glimpse of what the Museum can offer them and their students. Teachers from six local schools came together to enjoy delicious hors d'oeuvres, a tour of the campus, and a chance to network and share ideas. Some comments from attendees: "Thanks so much -- you have stimulated my imagination!" "Thanks for reaching out and for the great food!"



Cooking Classes for Kids was a series co-sponsored by Castine Arts Association & Wilson Museum. Ten students participated in this hands-on course with instructors Harry & Berna Kaiserian, Grace Tarr, Kelly Sawyer, Nancy Watson, and Rick Messana. Topics covered included Asian Fusion, Appetizers, Phun Pholding Phyllo, Italian, Desserts, and culminated in a formal dinner cooked for themselves and their guests.



More Upcoming Events

The Education Team has lined up a summer full of unique programming including old-time furniture making, a living history encampment, sock puppets with Frogtown Mountain Puppeteers, a kaleidoscope workshop, even a raw foods "cooking" class. Learn more about these programs and keep up with new ones as they are booked on our website at www.wilsonmuseum.org/calendar.html.

The man passed on, by the low farmhouses of several old neighbors, pausing at each to look, to murmur a word or two under his breath as if conning an oft-repeated lesson, and so on to the homestead of the Beaches. Again he paused ere he walked up the path from the high-road and, as he reached his own door, it opened to allow the passage of the same serving man who had accompanied Master Beach on that momentous trip to the port, two years before. The fellow stared a moment at the strange figure, peered doubtfully again, then, dropping the milking pails which he held in either hand, he turned back shouting, "The Lord be praised, Pel Beach has come home!"

The ruddy glow from the fire of logs on the hearth within shone upon Pelatiah Beach, standing upon his own threshold, and lit up the scene within — the children in a curious and interested group, Mother Beach in her wide arm-chair, her whitened hair smooth over the wrinkled brow, her hands now raised in amazed welcome of the long lost son, — and Mistress Polly, as if stunned with the suddenness of the shock, as if petrified by the apparition of the husband so long mourned and in whose loss she had steadily refused quite to believe. She stood white-faced, wide-eyed, with her beautiful dark hair framing that center of life in the fire-lighted room for a full minute, and then sank unconscious upon the hearth-rug.

Joy and anxiety were mingled in the hours, days and weeks following, when the wife tossed in delirium and neighbors and family vied with each other in efforts to restore her and to coax back the dauntless spirit whom all loved so well. Through all these weeks, at first timidly and remorsefully, had

Pelatiah Beach added his services in caring for the stricken woman, gradually assuming the direction of all the affairs dropped from those capable little hands... But youth and strength conquered, and when spring was giving place to summer, Mistress Polly at last stood again in her doorway, looking out upon the dear home scene and the river, always her chiefest delight. . . .

"I shall build a new house by yonder orchard, more fitting than this for you, dear wife," said Beach. "For weeks I have been planning it. It shall face the river and the highway like this, but higher upon the hillside, and it shall be the best in the region. There we shall remove and set up all your household treasures and many more, and the children shall be as proud of their home as of their beautiful mother. All the roots and shrubs of your garden shall be transplanted by the new house and, please God, we shall live there long together." *-to be continued in the next Bulletin-*

The Trail of the Maine Pioneer. Members of the Maine Federation of Women's Clubs. Lewiston, Maine: Lewiston Journal Company, 1916.

[*Editor's Note: While David Willson and Aaron Banks were both prominent early settlers, there is no one listed as Pelatiah Beach or Jeremiah Bardwell in the town and census records around the time of this story. In the book's Foreword Professor Nathaniel Stephenson was quoted in an address before the American Historical Society, 1916: "The one thing needful in history teaching, the thing so often missed, but without which there is not result worth while, is imagination." Were Beach and Bardwell figments of Mary Dunbar Devereux's imagination? Here begins our mystery – to be continued – and solved in the next edition of The Bulletin.*]




Mystery Exhibits throughout the Summer

This will be a summer of intrigue as we follow mystery after mystery at the Wilson Museum.

June will showcase some mysterious people with Castine connections. Come in and see if you can identify them all.

Starting in July we will add mysteries of the what, when and where variety. Variety is the operative word here. Time and distance can make even the most mundane thing into an enigma. We hope to make you think and maybe even inspire you to delve just a little further into some of our wonderful mysteries.



Collections Conversations

Abby Dunham, Collections Manager

Mysteries beg to be solved. People who research mysteries find that museums can be very helpful since it is their “business” to safeguard and preserve artifacts and archives full of documents and books for current research as well as for the benefit of future researchers. The Wilson Museum can assist both professional and amateur researchers in a wide variety of topics such as genealogy, history, prehistory, and more. Be aware that a single museum or collection may not hold all of the answers to a mystery, rather a visit may instead uncover clues that will lead in the direction of the final solution.

Here are a few guidelines to help glean the most from a research mission to a museum:



1. Contact the museum ahead of time to make an appointment and confirm that: the museum will be open when you intend to be there; the museum holds the resources you need; and staff will be available to help prepare and retrieve materials.

Making an appointment is not just a courtesy, but often the only way of ensuring that your visit will be successful.

2. Be as specific as possible in a request to view material. The role of museum staff is to connect the researcher with appropriate materials for your investigation. Requests that are too broad make it difficult or impossible for museum staff to identify the most useful resources to make available.
3. Bring pencil and paper to take notes; pens should never be used around museum collections. Many museums allow computer use, but not every museum does or access to outlets may be limited.
4. Request permission, costs, and protocol for copying or photographing museum materials. If allowed, staff may provide such services or instruct researchers in proper methods to ensure the continued safety of the materials.
5. Inform the museum when research may result in publication. Museum staff can then aid with appropriate procedures and credits. It is the responsibility of the researcher to secure copyright permissions. Researchers often send copies of a resultant publication to the museum whose collection was used; some museums require this as a stipulation in using their collections.

Museums may have other requirements on access and use, all intended to safeguard the collection.

Some recent research that has gone on at the Wilson Museum includes: church records of births and marriages, historic weather observations, 20th century views of Castine from the water, information on Fitz Henry Lane, letters from a French archaeologist, and many genealogy requests.

What mysteries would you like to research?

Collecting Castine Fundraising Event

Mark your calendar to attend *Collecting Castine*, a special, one-night exhibit and sale of Castine fine art on Monday, August 8, from 5 – 7 p.m. held at the Hutchins Education Center. This is a fundraising event with a twist. By making a reservation with a donation of \$125 per person, attendees will enjoy delicious hors d’oeuvres with cocktails, view an outstanding exhibit of original artwork created by living artists either from Castine or with a long association to Castine, have the opportunity to purchase an original piece of art, and (here’s the twist) cast a vote for a work of art to be added to the Wilson Museum’s collection. Based upon the vote, the Wilson Museum will purchase, from a portion of the ticket sales, one piece from the night’s exhibit for its collection. Following the selection process all other artwork will be available for purchase by attendees with proceeds from the commissions and donations used to grow and maintain the Wilson Museum’s collection and the event.

This year the *Collecting Castine* event is dedicated to the memory of artist Barbara Mallonee (1926-2015). Barbara’s first trip to Castine was in 1962 with three small children and a fourth on the way. She returned frequently throughout the rest of her life to visit friends and paint her beloved Castine. Not only was she an incredibly talented artist, she was a close friend and member of the Wilson Museum. Barbara found many creative ways to share her work and support organizations she cared about. She would be pleased to have her name associated with a creative fundraiser such as *Collecting Castine*.



Collecting Castine is great way to support both the vibrant arts community of Castine and the Wilson Museum. Reservations to this event may be made from the Museum’s website www.wilsonmuseum.org/calendar_details.html or by sending a check to Wilson Museum, P.O. Box 196, Castine, ME 04421.

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

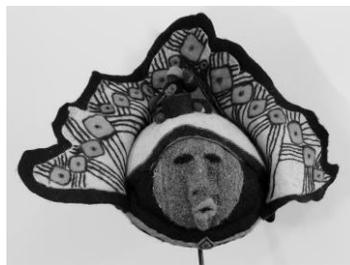
July & August
Wednesdays & Sundays
Hour-long tours at 2, 3 & 4 p.m.

**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



Special June Exhibit
Masks: A Personal Mythology

What is more mysterious than a mask? Beyond the mystery of who is behind the mask is the mystery of its creation.

Fiber sculptor Susan Barrett Merrill believes that from the faces she weaves a character emerges which connects the weaver to the cycles of life and the greater Self, thus, uniting personal and cosmological mythologies. Her work will be exhibited during the month of June in the Wilson Museum's main hall. Each mask was woven with wool from sheep who live on an island off Addison, fifty miles as the crow flies from Castine.

Susan Barrett Merrill is an artist, educator, life coach and author of the book of *Zati: The Art of Weaving a Life*.