LCHA CHRONICLE

Lincoln County Historical Association

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LCHA volunteers enjoy a cruise on the Kennebec.

President's Letter

While the autumnal air and the changing of the leaves indicate the annual closing of our historic sites, it does not mean that our organization isn't staying busy. The end of summer and the beginning of fall are in fact incredibly busy times at LCHA.

We recently held our *Preservation Party*, which would not exist without the steadfast efforts of the planning committee, headed by Christine Hopf-Lovette and Ann Light. This year's event was a tremendous success, and the generosity of our donors and members will help us repair and paint the historic Pownalborough Court House, which is in dire need of a facelift.

Preservation Party 2022 was a huge success, achieving two goals in one.

The Board of Trustees thanked some of our most engaged volunteers with a cruise on recent fall morning along the Damariscotta River. We also had some exciting events, including the annual cider pressing and "Judgement Day" at the Court House on Halloween. All the while, our Stewardship Committees are hard at work putting our historic sites to bed for the winter; the Collections Committee continues to archive and catalog our vast material collections; and the Education Program's work continues throughout the school year. We're also

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President's Letter, cont.

preparing for our Annual Meeting on November 4th at the Maine Tasting Center.

In the pages that follow, you'll read more about these and other developments, including a fascinating piece by trustee Jamey Tanzer on a mysterious eighteenth-century sighting at the Pownalborough Court House.

The fall also brings our annual appeal, so keep an eye on your mailboxes! LCHA would not exist without the dedication and generous contributions of our members, donors, and volunteers. This is not a cliché; it is the absolute truth. You are the foundation of our organization, and we hope that you will be able to contribute as generously as you can during this year's appeal. Your contributions help ensure that our historic properties remain in good condition so that we can share each site's important story with Lincoln County residents and visitors. They also support our education programs, lectures, and events, which highlight the important role that Lincoln County has played in our state's history.

On behalf of the entire Board of Trustees and LCHA's staff members, I want to say that we are so appreciative of your generosity and support. LCHA would not be the organization it is without your help.

Ryan La Rochelle, President of the Board

Executive Director Report

by Shannon Gilmore

One summer highlight for me was a visit from descendants of John and Rosilla Dow, the jailer and cook at the Old Jail in Wiscasset in the early 1900s. Their great-great and great-great-great grand-children's visit revealed to me that the Jailer's house was truly a home, which surprised me and challenged my previous assumption that it must have been a bleak and unpleasant place to raise a family. The Dows passed down warm memories of their time in residence at the building, with John and Rosilla and their ten children all remembered as kind, good people who valued family and education.

It was a real treat to discover that our work preserving the Old Jail and Jailer's House is valued not only for its importance in the history of our criminal justice system, but also for its preservation of a family legacy. As we continue to learn about its previous inhabitants, I know we will discover that this building has many more stories to tell. I'm so excited to continue investigating, learning, and sharing our local history along with our wonderful volunteers, members, and friends.

Descendants of John and Rosilla Dow received a special tour of their predecessors' home from docent Ed Kavanagh this summer.

The *Preservation Party* Committee planned an incredible event that helped us raise vital funds to support our work! Thanks from all of us at LCHA.

Merry Fossel, Chris Hopf-Lovette, Linda Pope, Ann Light, Tina Guy, Shannon Gilmore, Sally Gemmill, Robin Grant. Absent: Carol Watts

Stewardship Reports

Museum & Old Jail

by Christine Hopf-Lovette

LCHA's mission is to collect, preserve and *interpret* the history of Lincoln County, and our volunteer docents are essential to the third element of the mission. They tell the stories that make the factual data meaningful to visitors to our historic sites. You don't need to be steeped in the history of Lincoln County to be a docent; each site has a manual of facts and unconfirmed tales to guide the narrative. Often, a new docent will start as a greeter and shadow a more experienced guide on tours.

Alice Smith Duncan described her feelings about being docent volunteer at the Old Jail: "A favorite aspect of being a docent is the chance during "down time" to learn more about the other docents! This summer, it was a delight to learn about Greg Shaw's career as a pilot, Ann Light's far-flung life experiences, Rachel Henson's family history in Wiscasset, and Judith Sutter's treasured robe of many colors, an astonishing "friendship" crazy-quilt-style appliqué lounge coat made for her aunt in the 1940s.

"And almost every group of visitors has at least one particular interest drawing them to MOJ -- a couple who run alternative schools for boys; a woman who was startled and delighted to recognize a 1950s photo of herself in a book in the exhibition; a young medical student arriving alone because he knew his great-great aunt had been an LCHA founder (whom I'd known as a child)."

Chapman-Hall House

by Louise T. Miller

In the last Chronicle I noted that we are gaining new insights about the history of the Chapman-Hall House and the families that lived there. However, the "new insights" have only led to more questions! Those questions promise a winter of research, or as some would say, "chasing leads …." We did learn that Augustus Hall, son of Tilden and Elizabeth Hall died of disease at Baton Rouge, not during the Civil War battle in that city.

Questions ahead relate to the archaeological dig undertaken at the house in September. Archaeologist Tim Dinsmore of Midcoast Archaeology conducted the dig with assistance from an enthusiastic group of volunteers and staff. Work was done in front of the house, on the side facing Bath Savings, and in the herb garden. The stewardship committee appreciates all the LCHA members and friends who contributed funds to made the archaeology project a reality.

As the dig progressed, Tim became curious as to why more artifacts were not being found. The answer may have come from a committee member who recently learned that in 1967 a lovely garden had been installed on the north side of the house by the Old Bristol Garden Club, exactly where two of the dig pits were located. The same disturbance is suspected in the area of the present herb garden. Despite this, many shards of 18th and 19th century items were found. Tim will evaluate the pieces and present a report of his findings. Many thanks to Lucian Laurie, Jr. and Betsy Evans for their work removing and caring for the plants until they could be replanted and prepared for winter.

Miriam Chapman *asks whether Tim Dinsmore has found the spoon she tossed out the window in 1767 in an attempt to hit a pesky raccoon in her garden (Nathaniel looks on).*

Pownalborough Court House

by Dave Probert

This was a very successful season for tours and events at the Court House. Our latest event, a cider pressing was held on a beautiful fall day. Between volunteers and some younger folks, we pressed about 30 gallons. On October 28th and 29th, we'll present our annual Halloween event with tours of a 'haunted' court house and cemetery.

We are pleased that LCHA has raised the funds to paint the exterior of both the Court House and the Ell. Some minor repairs will be made this fall in preparation for the painting in 2023.

An interesting challenge for docents is to to find out what special interests visitors might have, and how much time they would like to spend on the tour — which can be adapted to suit their needs. We like to have two docents on duty not only to share the job, but to learn from each other. And because the building is so large it is good to have a greeter while a guide is leading a tour.

We will be closing up the court house for the winter after our Halloween event and will look forward to our Memorial Day event 2023.

Collections

by Faye Snyder

Who are the LCHA volunteers that serve on the Collections Committee? In this issue of the Chronicle I would like to introduce you to George Keyes and Perry Palmer. In a future issue I'll tell you about Jeff Miller, Marie Reinhardt, and myself.

George Keyes held the positions of both of Chief Curator at the Detroit Museum of Art and the head of the Department of European Art. His expertise in the field of fine art, period furniture and accessories has been invaluable in identifying such objects in the LCHA collection. He brings extensive knowledge of the behind the scene workings of a large museum. George keeps our mission in mind when it comes to the process of accessioning and deaccession objects. He tirelessly reviewed and organized past inventory records kept by earlier collection committees going back to 1955. George's experience and vision were the driving forces behind the introduction of *Catalogit*, a powerful inventory management tool specifically designed for museums. Over the course of several years he has personally entered hundreds of objects into the database and provided training to other members.

Perry Palmer retired from her position as a senior VP in the banking business and moved to rural upstate New York. She became a founding trustee of the Thomas Cole House Museum at Cedar Grove in Catskill, NY. Living in an 18th century farmhouse, Perry became interested in antiques and was an antique dealer for over 20 yrs. She is also a member of a re-enactment group and portrays an 18th c. cook. Her expertise in early kitchen cookware, domestic objects and American primitives has helped us identify and understand the use of the many objects in our three museum kitchens and everyday objects throughout the museums. Perry was also chair of "Keeping Warm in 18th C. Maine" a symposium based on her expertise in early textiles.

A Pownalborough Ghost Story

by Jamey Tanzer

Locations seem to accumulate ghost stories as they age. We expect this. The area around the Pownalborough Court House in particular has been a spooky spot for a very, very long time, and we have a fantastic ghost story from 1786 to prove it. What makes this ghost story remarkable is that it involves one of its first inhabitants, Elizabeth Goodwin, wife of Major Samuel Goodwin, and that the tale comes to us from Major Goodwin himself, in his own words.

In February 1787, Elizabeth Goodwin passed away

at the Pownalborough Court House after a struggle with a debilitating illness described as "nerve palsy." She was 72. Major Goodwin, having lost his life's companion, was devastated. He wrote to his friend and one-time pastor, the Reverend Jacob Bailey, to tell him the sad news. "I am very dul and melancholy," Major Goodwin confessed to Reverend Bailey, "I miss her more and more every day. [...] I am now left alone."

But that wasn't all that was playing on Major Goodwin's mind. "Sir–I cant omit one affair," Major Goodwin added hastily after signing his name, beginning a lengthy postscript to his letter that likely sent shivers up Reverend Bailey's spine.

In his letter, Major Goodwin proceeded to describe the singular events related to him by his wife sometime in the year before she was struck down with her last illness. Mrs. Goodwin had gone on foot one day from their home at the Pownalborough Court House to visit their married daughter, Mercy Bodfish. Returning home on the "fine clear afternoon," Mrs. Goodwin carefully noted that she crossed the causeway "agoing from Jonathan Bowman's Esq. house." This ancient causeway is still a feature on Dresden's Cedar Grove Road (route 128) today, where the road dips down close to the Kennebec River, north of Bowman Lane.

As Mrs. Goodwin climbed the rise at the north end of the causeway, she had a clear view of the court house, for the old road followed a more westerly path than Cedar Grove Road does today, and the land around it had been cleared of trees. From this vantage point, Mrs. Goodwin saw a strange and wonderful sight, "a woman cloathed in white, looking most beautiful, a riding in the road towards her from the hill next the court house." Today, this hill is marked by a small cemetery, with the remnants of the old road still running alongside.

Mrs. Goodwin and the woman in white continued to approach each other on the road. When the woman and her horse "came alonge near to her," Mrs. Goodwin "turned out of the troden path to give way for her," and ascended the side of a nearby grassy slope. As the two passed by each other "within ten or fifteen feet," Mrs. Goodwin tried to get a good look at the mysterious woman. But her effort was in vain. Mrs Goodwin "saw the side of her face but no more, [and] could not find out who shee was."

Then, at that very moment, Mrs. Goodwin's feet tangled in her dress, and she "trod on her apron." She quickly "cast her eyes [down] to take up her apron," and when she returned her gaze to the road, she couldn't believe what she saw. She was completely alone. With growing apprehension, Mrs. Goodwin "looked for the woman and horse but they was gone, which put her into a tremour."

Clearly aware of how fanciful his wife's tale might seem, Major Goodwin heartily defended her credibility to Reverend Bailey. "It was daylight and clear as could be, so my wife said shee could not be mistook." … "[Mrs. Goodwin] kept her eyes on [the woman] when first discovered till shee cast her eyes to take up her apron. It was about 80 rods [a quarter of a mile]." We can almost hear Major Goodwin shake his head in amazement as he concludes, "the woman and horse went rite by her."

What are we to make of this mysterious woman in white? In British folklore, tales of a spectral "White Lady" abound. She is sometimes portrayed as the ghost of a scorned woman, sometimes as a keening harbinger of death. And sometimes, like the White Rider of Corfe, in Dorset, she is a silent rider on a silent horse, disappearing quickly into thin air–much like Mrs. Goodwin's woman in white.

Which returns us to the question: what exactly did Mrs. Goodwin see that bright, clear afternoon on the old river road? Was the woman in white a vision brought on by Mrs. Goodwin's silent illness, or something else altogether, something beyond explanation? I walked down one of the remaining portions of the old river road recently, past the cemetery on the hill, retracing the path of the woman in white. The sun was shining through the leaves high above me, and there was the slightest hint of autumn in the September air. The road felt ancient, and though no one was with me, strangely, I did not feel alone.

Education Report

by Louise Miller

The LCHA Summer Programs for children rebounded well after a two-year Coronavirus break. Three one-week sessions were offered, and 25 children participated. This year we offered a third week, geared to 12 to 14 year-olds. About half of this group were alumni of the program who had aged out of the program and still wanted to attend.

Children said they signed up because the program appealed to their curiosity about history and crafts, and for some it was highly recommended by friends. And what did they like best? – the activities. Making things and games came out on top, and the historical background added to their understanding of the projects. Activities at the Chapman-Hall House revolved around 18th century skills and home life such as making hand puppets; those at the Old Jail highlighted the 19th century such as designing and coloring a piece of plate glass and framing it with crushed tinfoil to imitate 19th century tinsel art.

Children display Brigantines they painted and assembled during Summer with the Past program at Chapman-Hall House.

Our partnership program at Colonial Pemaquid State Historic Site concluded the year a with a visit from some 300 Southport Central School students on a unique field trip designed to introduce the study of 17th century Lincoln County.

Preservation Party meets two goals

by Christine Hopf-Lovette

While rain poured down in other parts of Lincoln County, the grounds of the Pownalborough Court House remained dry for our annual fundraiser on September 18th. But there was more good news for co-chairs Christine Hopf-Lovette and Ann Light. While lively bidding during the after-dinner auction had already ensured that we would meet our goal for the event, one of our guests made a surprise announcement that changed the course of the evening.

At the completion of his very successful auction of cakes and experiential items, auctioneer Kaja Veilleux of Thomaston Place Auction Galleries began a pledge round to kick off LCHA's fundraising campaign to paint the exterior of the Pownalborough Court House. At that moment, one of the guests, Paul Schack-now, announced a matching challenge. He said that he and his wife Sharma would donate $5,000 toward the campaign if the rest of the guests would match it right there and then.

"It was an incredible surprise when Paul stood up and announced his matching challenge," said executive director Shannon Gilmore. "It energized the crowd to immediately get behind a crucial project that will ensure the proper care of our irreplaceable treasure, the Pownalborough Court House."

With pledges of an additional $5,250 from the guests, gross revenue from the event reached just under $30,000. Expenses total about $7,000. The party planners achieved their goal, and the campaign to raise funds to paint the court house was completed in one fell swoop.

Having fun as we fulfill our mission….

Christine Hopf-Lovette outlined the evening's program at Preservation Party.

Linda Pope displays a fabulous cake to John Upton in the auction of desserts.

State Historian Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr. delighted guests with reminiscences of the early

Paul and Sharma Schacknow challenged the guests to match their donation to fund the Court House painting project.

Youthful helpers make cider at the Pownalborough Court House.

(above) Darryn Petersen, Ed Kavanagh, and Perry Palmer promote LCHA at Pumpkinfest.

(left) Perry and George examine an item for inclusion in the Catalogit database.

Lincoln County Historical Association

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Let's keep in touch!

Visit our website: **www.lincolncountyhistory.org**

Email us: **lchamaine1954@gmail.com**

Phone: **207-882-6817**

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Zoom discussion group: *Sparks from our Stories*

11/1, 11/15, 12/6

register at: lakeichline@gmail.com

Annual Meeting

Maine Tasting Center

November 4th at 5:30 PM