LCHA CHRONICLE

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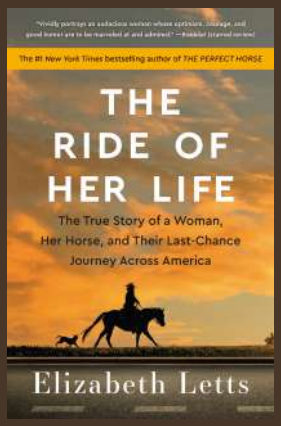


President's Letter

Spring is always a very busy time here at LCHA. Our steadfast stewardship committees have been cleaning and training docents prior to opening on June 4. The Board of Trustees gathered for a retreat led by Chris Hall of Bristol to discuss our goals and priorities. It was a rejuvenating morning, and we are excited about LCHA's future.

We have several high-quality programs this summer. The Pownalborough Court House hosted its annual Memorial Day observance, placing bouquets on the graves of nine veterans from the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and the Civil War. Our summer exhibit, *Women Writers of Lincoln County*, launches at the Museum & Old Jail. And we'll offer free tours for Lincoln County residents on Opening Day.

Education Director Louise Miller is hard at work on our *Summer With the Past* programs at the Chapman-Hall House and the Old Jail. Children will be introduced to each site's unique history and enjoy a variety of projects and games popular in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Our annual membership drive is now underway with an exciting new incentive. Members who join or renew at the $100 level will receive reciprocal member benefits at more than 1,000 art museums and galleries, historical museums, botanical gardens, children's museums, and zoos through the North American Reciprocal Museum Association.

As a historical non-profit, we do have several critical maintenance issues to address at our sites, particularly the Court House and the Old Jail. As you join or renew your membership, please consider an additional donation to support our efforts. We appreciate your generosity and support.

Ryan LaRochelle, President LCHA Board of Trustees

River Stories

by Scot McFarlane

All three of LCHA's properties overlook rivers: the Pownalborough Court House on the Kennebec, the Old Jail on the Sheepscot, and the Chapman-Hall House on the Damariscotta. These rivers not only offered opportunities for trade, travel, and sustenance from fishing, but they also shaped the history of each site. The rivers represent a history that goes beyond one location.

Central to Maine's river history is the story of Maine's indigenous people, the Wabanaki. As they navigated and portaged between Maine's rivers in their lightweight birchbark canoes, the Wabanaki could cover long distances quickly and quietly. The development of a string of forts along the Kennebec such as Fort Shirley at Pownalborough were an embodiment of colonists' fear that the Wabanaki would attack from the river. Ultimately, the forts led to increased settlement in the Kennebec Valley.

After this period of colonial conflict, Wabanaki remained in Maine, including along the Kennebec, and today they represent some of the most important voices advocating to restore the river and its fish runs. By focusing on the river, we can tell a story of belonging that extends before and after a single moment in time.

Just as the upkeep of our old buildings allows us to preserve history, we can also preserve history by protecting rivers. A few miles up the Sheepscot River from the Old Jail, a dam that had once once powered the mills that played a key role in Alna's development in the 18th and 19th centuries remained in place to block passage for migrating alewives.

Alna residents wanted to rehabilitate the historic fish run but they also wanted to memorialize the role the dam had played in funneling the river's power into their community. In 2019 Alna and its partners managed to restore the river by removing enough of the dam to allow fish passage while leaving a large portion of the dam in the river as a monument to its period of industry. If you visit the Head Tide Dam today you can see many moments in time, including the millenia-old alewife migration, the mill-era dam, and the present, always changing river.

Preservationists in Alna restored the fish passage, but retained part of the dam as a monument to its mill-era past.

LCHA's Kermess has a new name:

Preservation Party

We have chosen a name that more closely expresses the purpose of this annual celebration at Pownalborough Court House.

Save the Date!

Sunday, September 18

Education Report

by Louise Miller

Spring is fleeting, bringing us to the first edge of summer. *Be There – Stepping into History*, the new resource mentioned in the January report, was introduced to schools this past March. This resource introduces students to a collection of 38 women, men and events, many based in Maine, that became part of the fabric of American society. Each entry, coupled with a picture, engages the student with questions to be explored, bringing attention to numerous facts dating from the 17th century to the 1960s. Be There – Stepping into History, is available on the LCHA website, accessed by a password. The password is available upon request; this resource was offered to schools and individuals without charge.

After two years of not being able to offer *17th Century Lincoln County*, our partnership program with Colonial Pemaquid Historic Site is back on the calendar. Schools are as happy as we are. Five days of presentations have been booked for May, with one school booking for September – and the first one for 2023. Over 300 students will learn about life in a 17th C. midcoast Maine fishing village both from a 17th C. and 21st C. view. The program includes three costumed history presenters showing the 17th C. part, complemented by archaeology findings shared by park ranger and archaeologist Neill De Paoli.

The *Summer with the Past – Discovering 18th and 19th Century Art, Crafts, & History* children's programs have also found their way back into the schedule after two years of vacation. The June and August dates are filling up. Open to children 7 to 11, we will be welcoming some alumni as well as many new faces. If you are interested in registering a child, please see the LCHA website for more information and registration forms.

Between May 20th and June 14th the Education Dept. staff will be working with a small homeschool group The students and their parents will tour the Chapman-Hall House, participate in the FARMS cooking program focused on Native American foodways, and on June 14th hold a trial at the Pownalborough Court House as part of the Education Department's program *Before the Judges.* At the FARMS program Louise Miller, Education Director, will provide historical background. The *Before the Judges* program will also include a tour of the Court House and the 1811 Old Jail.

By August, we will be preparing for another school year. Please feel free to contact us through the LCHA website/e-mail (lchamaine1954@gmail.com) with any questions you may have on our outreach programs.

Stewardship Reports

Pownalborough Court House

by Dave Probert

The Pownalborough Court House is open from Memorial Day through Indigenous Peoples' Day for tours by trained docents. A Memorial Day Service is held at the original cemetery each year. Hours of operations are Saturday, Sunday, and Monday 10am to 4pm. Scheduled tours for groups or family can be arranged. In all seasons, many hikers come to enjoy some of the loveliest trails in the area, while others enjoy the grounds and river views. Talks and nature walks are often held on weekend afternoons in July, August and September. Re-enactors regularly set up encampments on the

grounds. And certainly important for Dresden residents, the Court House is the regular site for Dresden Summerfest, held each year in mid July. Court House tours are free for Dresden residents and LCHA members alike, during open hours and use of the grounds at anytime.

The Court House Stewardship Committee works hard to preserve this remarkable building and always welcomes volunteers to work on the grounds, in the building and at our many events. For more on the Court House, the trails, and scheduled activities, go to: http:// http://www.lincolncountyhistory.org and select the Pownalborough Court House section.

Museum and Old Jail

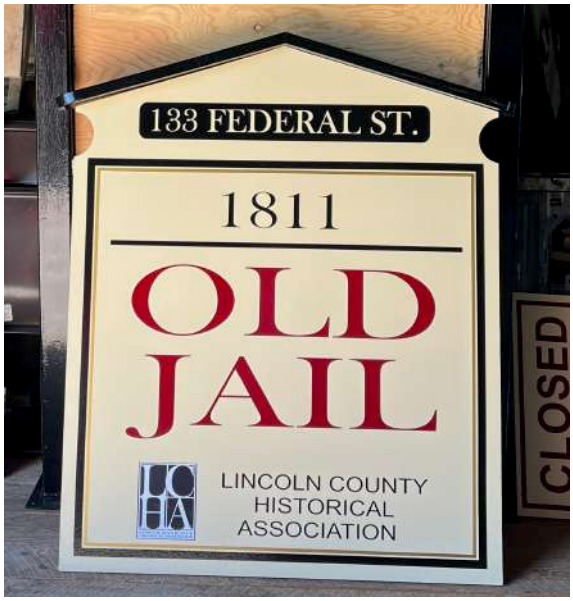
by Ed Kavanagh

The Old Jail is up and running. It seems great to have a "semblance of normalcy" back at our treasured site. We opened for the season on Sat., June 4th, which is Community Day at the Museums with free entry for Lincoln County residents.

Several of the committee members have been busy painting walls and trim in the Jailer's House. David Pope purchased and installed a period-appropriate light for the front door, and he continues in his quiet way to fix what needs fixing. Bill Sutter also drew on his expertise to install two new steel posts in the basement to replace defective rusty posts. Multiple cracks in the granite slabs on the second floor ceiling have been noticed. We have engaged a structural engineer to evaluate the situation and create a plan of action. It is indeed becoming more difficult to keep the "old girl" upright.

We are fortunate indeed to have Alice Smith Duncan in charge of our summer display, *Women Writers of Lincoln County.* With the help of our indefatigable director, Shannon Gilmore, Alice has made this presentation possible and they have already received accolades and notoriety from many groups for their work on this.

A new street sign is soon to be installed.The Jail committee applauds Chris Hopf-Lovette for her work with designer Ed Staples, who is creating the sign. We also owe much gratitude to committee member Bill Sutter. Bill has worked tirelessly to prepare for the proper installation. It is a big job and the sign will hang safely and properly thanks to his efforts.



A new street sign waits for installation prior to opening day.

Our season started in May with a tour group from the Early American Industries Association.

Other upcoming events include:

- June 10 - Wiscasset Area Chamber of Commerce reception - 4-6PM
- Plein air paintings created on the Old Jail property during "Paint Wiscasset" will be displayed throughout the summer and be available for purchase. A portion of the

proceeds will support LCHA

Summer promises to be busy for the Museum and Old Jail, and we are most grateful to our bevy of docents who will welcome and educate many visitors.

Here's hoping for a successful healthy summer for us all at our three sites.

Chapman-Hall House

by Louise Miller

With Spring of 2022 in hand, the Chapman-Hall House Stewardship Committee is well into its calendar of events. By the time you read this, *Dressing for Tea with Mrs. Chapman,* will have taken place, as will *Herb Gardening in Small Spaces* with Marie Erskine, and our annual Shredding on Site fundraiser.

Soon on the calendar will be our Yard Sale, June 25th – please check the LCHA website and local newspapers for times and location.

Dressing for Tea with Mrs. Chapman was attended by 33 people, some from as far away as Iowa and Florida. Two years ago, few of us had ever heard of Zoom, now it is an established way to share special events. Many thanks to Marie Erskine for sharing her expertise during the Herb Gardening program. And thank you to all those who attended this first outdoor event focused on the little herb garden at Chapman-Hall. Many thanks, too, to Betsy Evans and Master Gardener Program volunteer Lucian Laurie, Jr. for their work this spring on the herb garden and for their intention to care for it in the future.

Sharing the unique history of Chapman-Hall, of course, goes beyond special events. On May 20th two tours were conducted for members of the Early American Industries Association attending their Annual Meeting, this year held in Freeport, Maine. A homeschool has scheduled a field trip to our historic site. Still on the schedule, weather and Covid permitting, is an archaeology dig to be undertaken on the grounds most likely in September.

We offer an ongoing invitation to interested individuals to become docents at Chapman-Hall. Four hours a month of volunteer service offers an opportunity to learn about the site and local history, and share one's enthusiasm with those who visit. If you or someone you know would like more information, please get in touch! You can connect with us through the LCHA e-mail (lchamaine1954@gmail.com).

In the next Chronicle look for an update on new insights concerning the Chapmans and Halls that we are discovering through our on-going research.

Mischa Miller invites you to visit Chapman-Hall House.

Executive Director Report

by Shannon Gilmore

This time of year marks the reopening of our three museums to the public and we can't wait to share them with you! Our dedicated volunteer force has been taking excellent care of them in the off-season and our docents are preparing to welcome you. We hope you'll take time to stop by all three museums.

In addition to tours of the historic buildings, our *Women Writers of Lincoln County* exhibition will offer an opportunity to learn more about our local literary heritage. The main exhibition will be at the Museum & Old Jail, but you'll also discover smaller displays at each of our other two museum properties. I'm pleased to announce that this exhibition and associated programming for adults and children is supported by a grant from the Maine Community Foundation along with contributions from local business sponsors including Sherri Dunbar, Blue Heron Writing & Editing, Bmalori Creative, Spark Cycling, Willow Rose Flower Shoppe, and Patricia Pendergast Fine Art. Keep an eye out for special *Women Writers of Lincoln County* programs throughout the summer!

UPCOMING EVENTS We have already wrapped up some successful events this season, including a well-attended Zoom talk with mystery writer Kate Flora, who shared insights on the Maine crime writing scene and her friend Lea Wait, the Annual Memorial Day Observance at the Court House, and an exhibit preview for LCHA members.

6/4 **Community Day at the Museums!** All three museums will be open to Lincoln County residents free of charge and offering special features to guests that day. CHH visitors will receive a forged nail, MOJ visitors will have a chance to try some gingerbread, and PCH visitors will be entered into a drawing for locally made gift items. Please come! Please bring your friends! Please take pictures!

6/16 **Elizabeth Letts via zoom**. Ms. Letts is a NYT #1 bestselling author who will share stories of Annie Wilkins, about whom she wrote, **The Ride of Her Life** – please pick up the book between now and then and join us for the zoom with Ms. Letts! 6PM

7/6 **Alice Smith Duncan Talk at MOJ.** Curator and independent researcher Alice Smith Duncan will tell us about Madam Sally Wood, whose portrait hangs in the MOJ and who was America's first gothic novelist. 6pm

7/10 **Walking Tour of Madame Wood's Wiscasset.** Tour Wiscasset with Alice Smith Duncan and picture this town as through the eyes of Madame Sally Wood, who lived here from 1804 - 1812.

8/10 **"Elizabeth Coatsworth at Chimney Farm"**with Gary Lawless

Poet, publisher, and bookstore owner Gary Lawless will talk about Elizabeth Coatsworth and her former farm where he lives today. Please visit our website and navigate to Events to sign up and receive the Zoom link.

THE RIDE OF HER LIFE

The True Story of a Woman, Her Horse, and Their Last-Chance Journey Across America

"This **engaging folk-hero biography**, which follows Wilkins throughout her grand adventure, also touches on the cultural history of mid-twentieth-century America. As Letts delves into the postwar prosperity that transformed the U.S. into a land of cars and endless highways, she celebrates the dying tradition of the 'American tramp or hobo' that Wilkins, the self-christened 'last of the saddle tramps,' represented.
—Kirkus Reviews

It was 1954, and 63-year-old Maine farmer Annie Wilkins's odds were looking bleak. She had no money, no family, and had just lost her farm. When it seemed like things couldn't get much worse, they did—according to her doctor, she had only two years left to live.

For most, this would've marked the beginning of the end. But most weren't Annie Wilkins.
From #1 *New York Times* bestselling author Elizabeth Letts comes the remarkable true story of a woman, her horse, and their last-chance journey across America called **THE RIDE OF HER LIFE (On sale 6/7; Ballantine Trade Paperback)**, now available in paperback!

Determined to see the Pacific Ocean before she died, Annie ignored her doctor's advice to "take it easy," choosing instead to purchase a cast-off horse named Tarzan, dress in men's dungarees, and with her faithful mutt, Depeche Toi (French for "hurry up") in tow, head south in mid-November, hoping to beat the snow.
Personifying the very best of the American spirit—determination, grit, bravery, adventure, good humor—Annie and her four-legged companions captured the hearts (and media attention!) of people everywhere. In a decade when car ownership nearly tripled, television's influence was quickly expanding, rotary phones became widely embraced by the masses, and when homeowners began locking their doors, this motley crew of lovable misfits inspired an outpouring of kindness and hospitality in a rapidly changing world.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Elizabeth Letts is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Eighty-Dollar Champion* and *The Perfect Horse,* which won the 2017 PEN Center USA Literary Award for research nonfiction, as well as the novel Finding Dorothy. A lifelong horsewoman, she lives in Wyoming.

Don't miss it!

Elizabeth Letts will give a talk as part of our *Women Writers of Lincoln County* summer series.

Please visit our website, lincolncountyhistory.org and navigate to Events to sign up for this talk and receive the Zoom link

Date: June 16, 6 PM

Lincoln County Historical Association

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Renew Your Membership Today

Help LCHA continue the work of collecting, preserving, and promoting the history of Lincoln County with your membership renewal and perhaps an additional donation.

Your donations will directly impact the organization by helping to cover operating costs, including:

- Care of our very special three National Register of Historic Places listed properties
- Care of our collection of historically significant objects relating to Lincoln County history
- Educational outreach to students county-wide
- Special exhibits and programs
- The development of innovative and new ways of engaging with the community

Please return the enclosed remittance envelope with your membership renewal or visit our website to donate online: https://www.lincolncountyhistory.org/get-involved/donate