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# LCHA CHRONICLE

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Lincoln County Historical Association

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## President's letter

The LCHA has had a remarkable summer season. In addition to maintaining public hours for our three historic properties, we have welcomed many to our special events. We could not do any of this without a committed cadre of volunteers.

Some thanks are in order. Christine Hopf-Lovette convened a group of dedicated volunteers over several months to plan for the fourth annual Kermess . This important fundraiser included an auction skillfully performed by Kaja Veilleux of Thomaston Place Auction Galleries, wonderful food, and a breathtaking setting under the tent in front of the Court House.

Many thanks to Joe Zoellers and Chris Erickson for hosting the LCHA summer social at their home in Wiscasset on August 24. Good food and drink were enjoyed on their lovely grounds with a peaceful view of Wiscasset Harbor. We also thank Joe and Executive Director Kerry Cushing for the brilliantly produced Fall Fashion Show at Water's Edge in Edgecomb on October 5. Local merchants were featured, and LCHA friends walked the runway. Whether discussing the virtue of pockets, appreciating the elegance of several gowns, or viewing the practical offerings from Carhartt (Cah Haht in these parts) there was something for everyone. Faye Snyder curated displays at both events to remind us all of our core stewardship mission.

Thank you also to Ryan LaRoche for heading up LCHA's celebration of the Maine Bicentennial, beginning with a collaboration with Old Fort Western on six weekly programs about Maine's history at Wiscasset Middle High School. You'll see Ryan's scholarship in this newsletter and in the Lincoln County News. Stay tuned for word of future events in 2020.

Michael Chaney, President of the Board of Trustees

## LINCOLN COUNTY'S ROLE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR STATEHOOD

by Ryan La Rochelle

The movement to separate Maine from Massachusetts began in 1785 and the District of Maine held popular separation votes five times: 1792, 1797, 1807, and twice in 1816, before finally approving separation from Massachusetts in 1819. Significant opposition to separation existed along the coast, where the Federalist Party was dominant. In the state's interior, where the Republicans held more power, there tended to be stronger support for separation.

Lincoln County is a particularly exciting place to study the history of statehood, as the county played an interesting role in the debate over separation from Massachusetts. Several coastal towns opposed early separation efforts, as they benefitted from being linked with Massachusetts because of a 1789 coastal trade law. Under the 1789 law, trading vessels had to enter and clear customs in every state they passed between their port of departure and their final destination, except in states contiguous to the state where they were registered. Thus, vessels registered in the District of Maine were able to bypass customs in New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York, and of course Massachusetts, since these states all shared a border with Massachusetts. Coastal residents would thus lose a strategic advantage if they separated from the Bay State.

In the May 1816 separation election, Lincoln County was one of only two counties to oppose separation. Sparsely populated Washington County, which had only 670 legal voters compared to nearly 7,000 in Lincoln County, was the other. The staunchest opposition to

statehood in Lincoln County came from seacoast towns in the southern part of the county. The towns of Wiscasset, Alna (which was heavily reliant on coastal commerce at the time), Newcastle, Edgecomb, Boothbay, Georgetown, and Bristol voted nearly two to one against separation.

The September 1816 election followed a similar pattern. Historian Ronald Banks notes in Maine Becomes a State that anti-separation forces launched several opposition meetings throughout the summer, so the margin of victory for pro-separation voters was even slimmer. Lincoln County again voted against separation, this time joined by Washington, Hancock, and Penobscot Counties. But Lincoln County's opposition to separation stood out among the heavily populated counties in the district. Again, the towns of Wiscasset, Alna, Newcastle, Edgecomb, Boothbay, Georgetown, and Bristol voted overwhelmingly against statehood.

At the urging of William King, one of the separationist movement's leaders and Maine's first governor, the national legislature amended this coastal trade law in 1819, lumping the entire eastern seaboard into a single customs district. Much of coastal Maine's opposition to separation faded, and the inland frontier towns generally favored separation already, and so the path to statehood was eased.

Moses Carlton, Jr. of Wiscasset was one of the most vehement anti-separation voices during the 1816 debates. But after the passage of the 1819 coastal law, Carlton and fellow anti-separatist David Payson wrote in the Eastern Argus newspaper: "The Bill which has passed Congress, and which permits coasting vessels to proceed from Maine to Georgia without entering or clearing, does away with all the coasting objections...our objections therefore

to the separation cease.”

The vote to separate from Massachusetts passed overwhelmingly in 1819, including strong support from Lincoln County.

### **LCHA Bicentennial Committee News and Updates**

The LCHA/Old Fort Western Bicentennial Lecture Series has been informative and engaging. Dr. Arthur Spiess discussed Maine’s prehistory and analyzed the state’s interesting archaeological features. Orman Hines chronicled the history of Maine’s First Ship, the Virginia, and the Popham Colony. James Francis, Penobscot Nation’s Tribal Historian, described how place, geography, and culture inform Penobscot and Maine history. Dr. Emerson Baker discussed English settlement of Maine in the 17th century, and living historians Mike Dekker and Mark Rohman gave a perspective of the French and Indian Wars through the eyes of a soldier and a settler. In the final lecture, Ken Hamilton showed how the skill of French Acadien Naval Privateers in the King Williams War disrupted trade.

The LCHA Bicentennial Committee is running a monthly column on Lincoln County and bicentennial history in the *Lincoln County News*. Columns appear on the first Thursday of each month. The Bicentennial Committee will continue hosting county-wide planning meetings with historical organizations and other groups at the Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission office in Wiscasset. To stay informed of events and other bicentennial-related news, check out the website: [www.LincolnCounty2020.com](http://www.LincolnCounty2020.com). If you’d like to be involved, please contact Ryan LaRoche at [rlarochelle15@gmail.com](mailto:rlarochelle15@gmail.com) or give him a call at (413)464-3879

## COLLECTIONS

by Faye Snyder

The LCHA Collections Committee is pleased to announce the completion of the *Adopt a Sampler Project*. At the beginning of summer, the Collections Committee set a goal to complete the conservation and framing of the remaining two samplers belonging to the collection at Pownalborough Court House. All of the unframed samplers were on display at our Summer Membership Party at beautiful Riverlawn in Wiscasset. Through the generosity of our members and friends, we raised enough money to have all eight of our remaining samplers to be properly conserved.

The samplers are now in the hands of professional framers, Peter and Teresa Fogg. The LCHA sampler collection is a true treasure and a rare look into the lives of young school girls living in Maine in the early 1800’s. We thank everyone who recognized the importance of preserving these rare pieces of history. Your generous donations will enable the project to be completed in the spring of 2020 and the samplers will be displayed for all to enjoy.



Faye Snyder makes her very successful pitch for completion of the sampler project at the summer party.

## KERMESS 2019 — SWEET AND SULTRY

by Christine Hopf-Lovette

Sunday, July 21 was a sizzler, but guests at our annual Kermess gala were treated to gentle breezes from the Kennebec River. The dinner and auction, held on the grounds of the historic Pownalborough Court House in Dresden, once again raised over \$14,000 in profit.

Now in its fourth year, the Kermess (a Dutch word for an outdoor festival to raise funds for charitable purposes) includes an auction of cakes and an auction of experiences. As LCHA volunteers Linda Pope and Claudia Sortwell artfully showcased a dozen sumptuous cakes, expertly baked and generously donated by members of the LCHA community, Kaja Veilleux of Thomaston Place Auction Galleries used his skills and good humor to encourage some extraordinary bids, all for a good cause.



Claudia Sortwell offers Laura and Michael Chaney a close-up look at one of the auction cakes. Photo by Bob Bond.

Lucky bidders for the auction of experiences will now have the opportunity to enjoy vacation cottages, river trips, an overnight package in Portland, a spa day, a rafting trip, and more. When the auction was over, Ryan

LaRochelle, chair of LCHA's committee to plan events for the Maine State Bicentennial, gave a brief overview of some of the events that will take place and invited the guests to join his committee. Auctioneer Veilleux lost no time in encouraging the audience to pledge funds for this cause, and they obliged.

The theme for this year's Kermess was *Latin Rhythms*. Guests may have felt they had been transported to a steamy south of the border locale as they strolled the grounds to classical guitar music by Jeff Rojo and enjoyed a dinner of Spanish paella prepared by Red Plate Catering of Damariscotta.

LCHA is grateful to all the volunteers and to the individual and corporate members of the community for their enthusiastic participation in the 2019 Kermess. Primary sponsor of the event was Ames True Value Hardware & Supply in Wiscasset.

## WE DO LOVE A PARTY!

by Christine Hopf-Lovette

We couldn't let summer go by without taking advantage of the weather to hold one more outdoors event. On August 24, all members were invited to honor volunteers and enjoy each other's hors d'oeuvres at the home of Chris Erickson and Joe Zoellers.

Linda Wood from the Pownalborough Court House, Louise Miller from Chapman-Hall House, and Sally Gemmill from the Museum & Old Jail were presented with certificates of appreciation by president Michael Chaney.

The gathering provided the Collections Committee with an opportunity to achieve their goal of funding the conservation and framing of the last of the schoolgirl samplers in the LCHA collection.

## STEWARDSHIP REPORTS

### *Pownalborough Court House*

by Dave Probert

Trail usage has increased dramatically this past summer with 240 counted in July and 365 counted in August. Thanks to the Dresden Select Board for granting funds from the recreation account to purchase more pressure-treated material to build more bog walks on parts of our new Orange trail. Thanks to Ryan LaRochelle and Keith Wood, PCH Stewardship Committee and LCHA members, for helping in their construction.

We have cleared/cleaned the Jacob Bailey church lot on the Common Road as well as part of our new Orange trail. Many thanks to other Stewardship and LCHA members Judy and Paul Tunkle and to Wiscasset Middle High School's Kim Andersson for bringing some students to help with this job. Jacob Bailey has many ties to the Court House and Dresden, and we wanted to open this area for the public to see, enjoy, and feel the history of this area.

Kim has arranged for "follow-up" trips to Pownalborough Court House for tours and for help from more students.

We had many events this summer, including Memorial Day, Trek across Maine, and Summerfest. Thanks goes out to Robin Grant, from our Stewardship Committee, for helping with these events. Robin is taking on the role of event coordinator for the PCH Stewardship Committee, which will be solely responsible for organizing the Summerfest, an event that we are taking over from Dresden's recreation committee.

Admissions during July and August were down slightly from last year, including many days with

no visitors. The Stewardship Committee is considering being open fewer days per week during these two months. An idea that is in the development stage is to schedule tours, possibly through a company that offers bus tours of the region.

We closed for the season on October 13, but tours can be scheduled by appointment after that date. A special Halloween event is planned for October 19, 2019.

Check the Pownalborough Court House Museum on Facebook for up-to-date events and photos.



*Unique aerial view of the Pownalborough Court House from the side facing the Kennebec River*

### *Chapman-Hall House*

by Louise T. Miller

The summer went by all too fast and now with the fall weather setting in, the Stewardship Committee is preparing to close up the house. Yet, before that happens, we will be celebrating Pumpkifest with the Town of Damariscotta. The house will be open through Columbus Day weekend, our last day being the 14<sup>th</sup> of October.

Among the summer visitors this year was a lady from Germany who was fascinated with our samplers. She had learned about them through

the Costume Society of America. Twenty-seven members of the Society set-up “shop” at the Old Jail in May 2017 to examine and document textiles in the collections of all three of the LCHA sites (see the LCHA Chronicle, Spring 2017).

On September 20<sup>th</sup> six students from the Wiscasset Middle/High School joined committee members to help mark accession numbers on artifacts and photograph pieces in the house for documentation purposes. We were very pleased to be part of the school’s Community Service Day and look forward to partnering with them again. An important part of our work is to not only share the rich history of our historic site and region, but also to introduce students to the various areas of museum work. Perhaps we will spark a student’s career choice.



Children use a quilt design as a pattern for planting flowers. This project was sponsored by the Old Bristol Garden Club.

Keep up with the latest happenings at LCHA. Like us on Facebook. Type in Lincoln County Historical Association Maine.

## *Museum & Old Jail*

by Christine Hopf-Lovette

Sustained by a fresh pot of coffee and a tray of donuts, eight members of the stewardship committee spent a good part of a recent weekend morning on an end-of-season cleaning of the cells and the Jailer’s House. Everything is in order, but bats and birds continue to create unpleasant detritus. As the men in the group donned protective masks and prepared to remove several pigeon nests in the narrow windows of the cells on the second floor, they discovered gaps between the window frame and the granite blocks that have allowed bats to enter the building. They’ll fill the space with insulation foam, but that will not be the final solution to this problem!

Visitation for the season was about average. The numbers spike in years when we have a special tour. This was not one of those years. Records from the past show that there was a time when tour busses made the Jail a stop on their itinerary. The bus tours tapered off some 15 years ago. However, we have received an inquiry from a group of professional archaeologists who propose a tour for about 50 people in September 2020.

This year’s docents have given generously of their time to guide the visitors, who really enjoy the tours. We welcome additional volunteers to reduce the time commitment. We’re also looking into the possibility of hiring at least one tour guide. We need a guide and a greeter for each day that the site is open.

Upcoming projects for which we are applying for funding include rewiring the Jailer’s House, which would be followed by re-plastering and painting. In addition, the little gazebo covering the well in the center of the parking lot needs

re-shingling and painting.

Next year's Maine Bicentennial offers many opportunities for us to have fun as we involve the Lincoln County community in projects related to local history. One such project is a float that we plan to create for a state sponsored parade in Lewiston in May. We'll also show it off in the Wiscasset 4th of July parade. If you have experience building this kind of thing, please contact me at chopflovette@gmail.com. We already have the loan of a truck and flatbed trailer.

## EDUCATION REPORT

by Louise T. Miller, Education Director

Fall is a time for networking with teachers and reflecting on the summer activities. The August session of *Summer with the Past* day camp had the largest enrollment so far, with 10 children participating. August also saw the final days of the internship program. Katelyn Long, an incoming senior at Wiscasset Middle/High School worked with the Collections Committee, transcribed prisoner records, and assisted with the children's program.

At the end of August, Julia Einstein of Historic New England and I held a tea for Lincoln County teachers. The theme of our program was *Walking through Lincoln County - 1754 – 1918*. With the three LCHA historic sites and two belonging to Historic New England, there is a rich timeline of Lincoln County history. The attendees were intrigued by the idea that five historic sites can present a picture of the evolving history of the county and the way the people are affected by local conditions and national events.

With the beginning of the school year, teachers are requesting programs to enhance studies. We are planning a new interactive program for

all three of the LCHA sites. At least one should be ready for spring field trip season. Volunteers are still needed to work in this program. This is a great volunteer opportunity. One could hold court at the Court House, demonstrate spinning, or discuss parlor games. Or you could tell about cooking at a hearth, writing with a quill, or even sewing for prisoners at the County Jail. Please contact me by email at info@lincolncountyhistory.org if this volunteer opportunity intrigues you.

This year on Community Service Day, six students from the high school assisted with outdoor projects for the Pownalborough Court House and participated in cataloging activities at the Chapman-Hall House. We are very pleased to be partnering with the school at various levels.



Teachers enjoy tea served by Louise Miller at her presentation 'Walking through Lincoln County' - 1754 – 1918'

## STYLE AND FUN AT THE LCHA FASHION SHOW

by Terry Heller

The Midcoast has a fine history and tradition for style, but these days it's got a hot new showpiece. Kudos to co-chairs Joe Zoellers and Kerry Cushing, who pulled off another dilly of a Fall Fashion Show fundraiser for LCHA on Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, at Water's Edge in Edgecomb. The runway was elegantly intimate — models glided among the seated guests at

tables bedecked with amazing dahlias from Chris Erickson’s gardens, and pink satin gift pouches from Moulinette were tucked between wine glasses. Oo-la-la was everywhere.

Contributors to the event ranged the eastern seaboard, from Maine to New York to Boston to Miami, and guests were entertained with views of fashionable gowns from the 1820s to contemporary hand-dyed shawls that will wow well into the 2020s. Realtor Sherri Dunbar was stunning in a vintage full length white beaded gown from Finest Kind in Boothbay Harbor as granddaughter Natalie Dunbar stole a scene in her sweater dress and red velvet pants from Pitter Patter, also in Bath. Heads were turned, hearts were lost. More wine, please.

A crowd favorite on display was a formal gown from 200 years ago. Faye Snyder, chairman of the LCHA Collections Committee, curated several early 1800s fashions for the show which included a dazzling shell-pink silk ball gown—with high waist and slightly off the shoulder full gigot sleeves—that had belonged to Nancy Chase Smith of Sheepscott



Village. The story goes that Nancy wore the dress to the ball in 1820—possibly appearing in the fine hall on the second floor of the Washington Hotel in Wiscasset, the scene of many grand parties held in the early 1800s. But the real story was the Sunday morning incident, well after the ball was over, when a scandalized deacon barred Ms. Smith from entering the church! The reveal of her shoulders was a bit too much for the conservative congregation.

Twenty-two clothing shops from Boothbay to

Brunswick were paired with local community “stars” in an extraordinary variety of casual to formal wear that delighted both models and guests. As a finale, the room sparkled with laughter when two serious-looking interlopers, Ed Kavanagh of Wiscasset and Dave Probert of Dresden, showed up modeling survey team outfits and gear to shoot the grades at different angles across the room —another zinger ending to a Zoellers-inspired event.



Launched only last year, the LCHA fall fashion show is already a mid-coast couture tradition to look forward to for years to come. Income from the event, which is estimated at close to \$9,000 this year, provides a substantial boost to our bottom line. When we apply for grant funding, it is important to show that we are doing our part to sustain the organization.



*Amber Haywood and Ryan LaRochelle show off their garments to a table of guests at the Fall Fashion Show.*





Court House from the garden maintained by the Wiscasset Garden Club



Kermess tent during the auction



Above - Classical Guitarist Jeff Rojo entertains at Kermess



Right - Auctioneer Kaja Veilleux makes a sale



Linda and Tony Belmont

Below - (l to r) Sally Gemmill, Terri Wells, and Chris Hopf-Lovette model at the Fall Fashion Show



Thank you, Bob Bond, for helping us recall all the good times.



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*Eleanor Everson and Chuck Vaughan at the Court House*

**Don't be a stranger! Keep in touch with us:**

Web site - [lincolncountyhistory.org](http://lincolncountyhistory.org)  
FB - Lincoln County Historical Association Maine  
FB - Pownalborough Court House Museum  
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