

# LCHA CHRONICLE

Lincoln County Historical Association

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## President's letter

In mid-March our world in Midcoast Maine changed dramatically with the health restrictions imposed to keep us safe from COVID-19. Since that time, our way of life has been altered in ways we could not have imagined. Social distancing, wearing face masks, being careful where you go, the elimination of dining out, and, most troubling, not being able to see family have become the norm.

The Lincoln County Historical Association, like virtually every other cultural institution here in Maine, has closed its doors to the public. Our board of trustees and volunteer committees have had to adapt to a new reality where we hold meeting by conference call and Zoom. But the new restrictions have not prevented LCHA's dedicated volunteers from continuing to care for our three historic sites and to think of creative ways to keep our mission alive. We are making an update to our collections management software that will allow more volunteers to input collections data, and new educational activities are now available on our website for use by teachers and parents.

We were fortunate to receive an SBA Payroll Protection Program loan to keep our part-time staff on the payroll for a limited period of time, but a major summer fundraiser, Kermess at Pownalborough Court House had to be canceled. A similar fate is likely for the fall Fashion Show, making it more important than ever for our donors and members to continue their support of this valuable resource for the preservation of Lincoln County history.

I am happy to report that the newly expanded trail system at the Pownalborough Court House is being well utilized by the general public. It is gratifying to be able to offer that outdoor experience in a safe way. On the other hand, some interesting initiatives may be postponed until next year, including LCHA's role in some of the state bicentennial celebrations and an archaeological dig at Chapman Hall House. We look forward to a time when we can once again gather together at each of our historic sites. Stay safe.

Michael Chaney, President of the Board of Trustees

## Bicentennial News

By Ryan La Rochelle

On March 15, Maine celebrated its 200<sup>th</sup> birthday, albeit more quietly than originally anticipated. The state's celebratory events in Augusta were postponed as a result of the novel coronavirus outbreak. Since then, we've all been hunkered down in our homes, connecting via Zoom, and writing letters to one another to stay in touch. Not exactly how we hoped to be commemorating our state's bicentennial.

Unfortunately, the global pandemic has also led LCHA and the Lincoln County Commissioner's Office to postpone our Bicentennial "Lincoln County Pilgrimage," which was originally scheduled for mid-August. We had been working on this initiative for nearly a year, and had more than ten organizations and nearly twenty sites throughout the county ready to organize and host open houses of historical sites; special tours of historic buildings and landmarks; reenactments of historical events; special displays, speakers; a guided driving tour; and an open archaeological dig. We received a \$4,500 grant from the Maine Bicentennial Commission to support the pilgrimage, and the Commission has stated that we will be able to use the funds next year. Given the level of coordination, planning, and collaboration necessary to pull this off, we are currently planning to postpone until summer 2021. While we're disappointed that we'll have to postpone, the participating organizations were all in agreement, and we're hopeful that we can recreate, and perhaps even expand, the pilgrimage in what will be Maine's 201<sup>st</sup> year of statehood. We'll ask everyone to bring a plus-one to Maine's Bicentennial Plus-One!

Not all is lost, however. The "Commemorating Statehood" column is still running roughly every month in the *Lincoln County News*. LCHA's own Louise Miller wrote a terrific piece on celebratory fashion for the March column; for the April/May column, David Andrews of South Bristol Historical Society penned a fascinating article about how

Maine almost ended up a Canadian province; and Jean Lawrence of Waldoboro Historical Society has submitted an article about Waldoboro in 1820 for the June column. Of course, if you have an idea for a column, please be in touch.

As of now, Maine's Bicentennial Parade, which was originally scheduled for May, has been postponed until August. Several LCHA volunteers have been hard at work on a unique float for the occasion that highlights unique aspects of each of our three historic properties.

Maine's 200<sup>th</sup> year has certainly been interesting thus far. I don't think we'll ever forget (much as we might like to) what we were doing during Maine's bicentennial year.

## Chapman-Hall House Museum Archeology Project

By Bruce Campbell and Tim Dinsmore



A former archaeological dig at an 18th-century house in Lincoln County directed by Tim Dinsmore of Midcoast Archaeology. A similar dig proposed for the Chapman-Hall House in Damariscotta is planned for August 2020.

To commemorate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Maine statehood, the Lincoln County Historical Association is planning to sponsor an archaeological dig at the Chapman-Hall House museum in Damariscotta. The dig will be conducted by historical archaeologist Timothy

Dinsmore, who heads up Midcoast Archaeology in Walpole. The dig is planned for August of 2020, but this may change due to the current health concerns.

The Chapman-Hall house was built by Nathaniel Chapman in 1754 and is a rare example of a timber-framed cape house. It was home for the Chapman family and later the Tilden Hall family until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The house serves as an historic-house museum and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1970. The house is open weekends seasonally to the public and to school groups, and features special exhibits.

The aim of the archaeological survey is to locate artifacts and features representative of the lives of the occupants. The artifacts retrieved will better determine objects to display in the house to accurately depict the lives of the Chapmans and the Halls, will provide material for display of actual items used at the site, and will educate the public about the important role archaeology plays in the interpretation of historic sites.

The archeological survey, which will be open to the public to view, will consist of up to six one-meter-square excavation units with a depth of about half a meter. Each unit will be carefully excavated with hand trowels, and the soil screened in the search for artifacts. It is likely that ceramic, metal and glass objects indicative of the occupancy of the house will be discovered. Selected objects will later be displayed in the house.

The survey will be sponsored by generous donors who are stepping forward to fund the project, to whom we at LCHA are grateful and without whom the project would not be possible. The exact dates of the dig will be announced in the Lincoln County News and in the LCHA website. We hope that LCHA members as well as the general public will stop by to see archaeology in progress.

**Have you renewed your LCHA membership?  
If not, please use the envelope provided in  
this newsletter.**

## Education Outreach

By Louise Miller

During the winter months we actively provided in-school presentations and historical-themed cooking classes in partnership with Focus on Agriculture in rural Maine Schools (FARMS). But in mid-March, the field of work for educators shifted drastically under the “safe at home” requirements mandated by the governor as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.

Canceling activities began to take on a domino effect. For example, my plans for an April children’s arts program at Skidompha Library was put on indefinite hold the same week that field trips and school presentations were being canceled. As schools closed I found myself exploring the world of schooling via Zoom, a process that is new to both students and teachers.

This provided a good opportunity to remind teachers in public and private schools as well as homeschool parents that our Lesson Resources are free and readily available. The lessons are ready to go. A master copy for teachers, plus student worksheets and text with historical background can be found on the LCHA website. Just click on LEARN then YOUTH PROGRAMS and then EDUCATION OUTREACH PROGRAMS.

Currently our programs with educators and our partnerships with FARMS and Colonial Pemaquid State Historic Site are on hold. It’s likely that the summer programs for children cannot happen. Therefore, I am turning my attention to the LCH website as a medium for sharing Lincoln County history. New presentations will support creativity along with historical insights in a manner that ensures the integrity of the information.

While I cannot be with the children in school and the students cannot come to our historic sites at this time, we can connect through technology and also through the old fashioned system of the US mail.

## 2020 Membership Campaign

By Kerry Cushing

As we prepare as best we can for an uncertain season ahead, I would like to thank you for your continued loyal support. While some of our events have been canceled and some are being rescheduled in the hope we can hold them in the fall, we are working on ways to keep members engaged. Your support helps to fund operating and project goals that are vital to the fulfillment of our mission.

Goals this year include:

- Replace the electrical system at the jailor's house at the Old Jail and repair and replace plaster in the ceilings and walls
- Replace the Carriage House roof at the Court House Preserve, manage, and catalogue the collections
- Provide resources to supplement the curricula in our local schools

Your hours of volunteer time, donations of goods and services, work on committees and events, and your generous financial support have made a huge difference to what we have accomplished.

In these challenging times, preservation of past values becomes even more important. Thank you for helping LCHA preserve the history of Lincoln County for future generations

## Remembering John Reinhardt

John Allen Reinhardt, 80, former president of the Board of Trustees of LCHA, died Wednesday, April 22, 2020 at Hawthorne House in Freeport, Maine. Born in Evanston, Illinois, John graduated from the University of Illinois and earned a master's degree in voice from Catholic University in Washington, D.C. He subsequently served 23 years in the U.S. Navy.

Music, flying, history, and antiques were important to John. He taught music at Lincoln Academy and served as a cantor for St. Patrick's Catholic Church

in Newcastle. He also sang professionally in Europe and the United States. As the leader of the 6th Fleet Singers in Italy, he directed concerts in Europe, North Africa and Asia. After retirement he formed his own opera company, The Pocket Opera Players, and presented operas in English for school children.

An energetic participant in LCHA, John was a member of the stewardship committee for the Old Jail and served as president of the Board of Trustees from 2009-2012. He was a founding member and chair of Wiscasset's Historic Preservation Committee and served as a president of Stewards of the Sheepscot.

John is survived by his wife Marie, a daughter, Laura Reinhardt Steele and her husband Walter of Brentwood, California; a son, Jonathon and his partner Clint McCall of Tucson, Arizona; a sister, Arden Thompson and her husband Dan of South Bristol, Maine; two grandchildren, Benjamin and Julia Steele; and many nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will be held at St. Patrick's Church at a later date.



*John loved to act. He was happy to spend a few hours in a cell at the Old Jail playing the part of a drunken pirate for special tours.*

**The following article reprinted with permission from the Bangor Daily News, provides us with a reminder that we have beaten pandemics in the past and we will get through our current crisis.**



## The other pandemics that have hit Maine over the centuries

Bangor Daily News. April 1, 2020



U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command | AP In this Oct. 19, 1918, photo provide by the U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command a sign is posted at the Naval Aircraft Factory in Philadelphia that indicates, the Spanish Influenza was then extremely active.

The coronavirus pandemic has upended the world for just about everybody. And yet, throughout history, infectious disease outbreaks were much more common than they are today, especially in the United States. It's only been within the past 50 years that deadly outbreaks in the U.S. of diseases such as influenza, polio and cholera stopped occurring with any regularity, thanks to the development of vaccines and other medical and scientific advancements.

Some of the worst epidemics and pandemics to hit Maine over the centuries had devastating effects on a number of vulnerable populations in the state — from indigenous people to immigrants to children. Here's a roundup of some of the other disease outbreaks Maine has been through.

### Colonial-era epidemics

One of the ways viruses begin to lose their impact is the fact that the human body tends to develop immunities to them once a person has had a virus once. If a person has never been exposed to a particular virus — and most humans have not been to today's coronavirus — that virus' effects are often much more deadly.

Such was the case in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, when smallpox devastated indigenous people across the Americas, none of whom had ever been exposed to the virus. Smallpox killed millions upon millions of people after Europeans landed on American shores, nearly wiping out entire tribes. It's estimated there were 15,000-20,000 Wabanaki people living in what is now Maine before Europeans arrived in the mid-16th century. Within 100 years, nearly 80 percent of them had died from smallpox, as well as from typhus and flu.

While indigenous people were disproportionately affected, colonists were also affected by those diseases. Smallpox, influenza and measles outbreaks were a regular part of life in the 18th century. A particularly bad outbreak of smallpox occurred between 1775 and 1782 during the Revolutionary War, affecting all 13 colonies, spreading as far away as what is today California, and killing tens of thousands of people. George Washington became a leading proponent of the then-new practice of inoculating his soldiers with smallpox, thus giving them immunity. A proper smallpox vaccine was not developed until 1798, by British scientist Edward Jenner.

### Cholera pandemics

Throughout the 19th century, a series of fast-moving, deadly cholera pandemics swept the globe, killing millions. The bacterial disease, spread mostly by water and food contaminated by human feces, has been stopped in most parts of the world by access to clean water. As late as the 1920s, however, it was a real threat, even after a cholera vaccine was developed in the 1890s. Cholera outbreaks are ongoing in both Haiti and Yemen.

Cholera outbreaks happened in Maine on several occasions between the 1830s and 1850s. One account of an outbreak in Bangor comes from 1832, when a chest of clothing belonging to a sailor who died from cholera in Europe was shipped home to Bangor. The contents of the chest were distributed to family and friends, and all contracted the disease. Another cholera outbreak in Bangor in 1849 killed many members of Bangor's Irish immigrant

community, and a cholera outbreak in Lewiston in 1854 killed 200 people.

### The 1918 influenza pandemic



*Library of Congress | AP In this November 1918 photo made available by the Library of Congress, a nurse takes the pulse of a patient in the influenza ward of the Walter Reed hospital in Washington.*

The “Spanish flu,” as the 1918 outbreak was dubbed, was the worst pandemic in terms of loss of human life in modern history. An estimated 50 million people died worldwide, and in Maine, more than 5,000 people succumbed to the flu between September 1918 and May 1919, with around 47,000 total cases.

The first reported death in Maine was on Sept. 23, 1918, when a 36-year-old Augusta man died. Within a month, there were tens of thousands of cases statewide and more than 2,000 deaths. Though larger cities including Portland and Lewiston were more heavily affected, the flu made its way rapidly to all corners of the state — Bar Harbor was overrun with cases by Oct. 4, and Caribou and Madawaska counted multiple cases and a few deaths by November.

While orders for the closing of schools, churches and public gathering places did happen, they did not happen uniformly, with Portland ordering closures Sept. 28 — five days after the first death, and likely weeks after the disease first came to Maine. By Oct. 1, Bangor, Lewiston, Waterville and Augusta had all followed suit.

By the end of 1918, around 3,800 Mainers had died, with 2,500 of those deaths occurring in October 1918 alone. Though cases began to slow in 1919, another 1,200 Mainers died between January and May of that year. By contrast, 1,026 Mainers died during World War I — and half of those war dead actually died from influenza, not from combat.

### Polio in the United States



*File | BDN An iron lung from the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis arrived Sept. 17, 1952, at Eastern Maine General Hospital for stand-by purposes in the event of polio cases.*

Though the poliomyelitis virus has affected humans for centuries, for millennia its effects were less destructive, due to the fact that people were constantly exposed to it, and thus developed immunity. With great advancements in public health and sanitation in the 19th century, however, polio came back with a vengeance, due to reduced immunity.

In the first half of the 20th century, more than 15,000 Americans — two-thirds of them under the age of 15 — died from polio, and tens of thousands more were left permanently disabled. In Maine, a polio epidemic that started in New York City in 1916 reached the state on Aug. 7, with multiple cases throughout Maine and four reported deaths. Still others — many in the baby boom generation — were affected by nearly back-to-back outbreaks in the 1940s and 1950s.

Jonas Salk's polio vaccine, introduced in 1955, was considered one of the great accomplishments of the 20th century, and 65 years later, the disease is eradicated in all but three countries: Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nigeria. Polio survivors in Maine were among those to publicly come out against a 2020 referendum to repeal the state's elimination of the religious and philosophical vaccine exemptions to school and hospital vaccination requirements.

### Other influenza and coronavirus epidemics

Since the 1918 pandemic, the world has been hit by other influenza and respiratory epidemics — none as bad as the Spanish flu or the present-day coronavirus pandemic. Two influenza epidemics in 1957-58 and in 1968 both came out of Hong Kong and Singapore, and both killed around 1 million people worldwide and about 100,000 in the United States. The 1968 "Hong Kong flu," as it was dubbed, made it to all 50 states, including Maine.

More recently, the 2002-04 sudden acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak did make it to the U.S., though it caused no deaths and did not make it to Maine. The 2009 "swine flu" epidemic did cause deaths — 3,433 in total in the U.S. The first case in Maine was confirmed on April 29, 2009, and that day, Gov. John Baldacci declared a civil state of emergency, with several schools and day cares in York County closing for a week. In total, there were 2,232 cases confirmed in Maine and 21 deaths, according to the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

### Keep in touch with us. We like to hear from you.

Phone - (207) 882-6817

Website - [www.lincolncountyhistory.org](http://www.lincolncountyhistory.org)

FB - Lincoln County Historical Association  
Maine

FB - Pownalborough Court House Museum

## Some precautions have not changed in 100 years

### 1918 Public Health Notice

#### Rules to Avoid Respiratory Diseases

(By the Surgeon General of the U. S. Army)

1. Avoid needless crowding – influenza is a crowd disease.
2. Smother your cough and sneezes – others do not want the germs which you would throw away.
3. Your nose, not your mouth, was made to breathe through – get the habit.
4. Remember the three C's – a clean mouth, clean skin, and clean clothes.
5. Try to keep cool when you walk and warm when you ride and sleep.
6. Open the windows – always at home at night, at the office when practicable.
7. Food will win the war if you give it a chance – help by choosing and chewing your food well.
8. Your fate may be in your own hands – wash your hands before eating.
9. Don't let the waste products of digestion accumulate – drink a glass or two of water on getting up.
10. Don't use a napkin, towel, spoon, fork, glass, or cup which has been used by another person and not washed.
11. Avoid tight clothes, tight shoes, tight gloves – seek to make nature your ally not your prisoner.
12. When the air is pure breathe all of it you can – breathe deeply.

(Originally published in the Boston Broadside)

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