

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Government Evaluation Act

Maine Historical Society
November 1, 1999

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I. Enabling Legislation

Private Acts of the State of Maine Passed By The Legislature At Its Session, January, 1822

CHAPTER CXVIII.

An Act to incorporate the Maine Historical Society.

SECT. 1. *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives, In Legislature assembled,* That William Allen, Albion K. Parris, Prentiss Mellen, William P. Preble, Ichabod Nichols, Edward Payson, Joshua Wingate, Jun. Stephen Longfellow, Jun. George Bradbury, Ashur Ware, Edward Russell, Benjamin Orr, Benjamin Hasey, William King, Daniel Rose, Benjamin Ames, Isaac Lincoln, Benjamin Vaughan, Nathan Weston, Jun. Danile Cony, Robert H. Gardiner, Sandford Kingsberry, Eliphalet Gillet, Thomas Bond, John Merrick, Peleg Sprague, Jems Parker, Ariel Mann, Ebenezer T. Warren, Benjamin Tappan, Reuel Williams, James Bridge, Hezekiah Packard, Samuel E. Smith, William Abbott, Leonard Jarvis, John Wilson, William D. Williamson, Jacob M'Gaw, David Sewall, John Holmes, Johnathan Cogswell, Josiah W. Seaver, William A. Hayes, Joseph Dane, Ether Shepley, Enoch Lincoln, Horatio G. Balch, and Judah Dana, with their fellows or associates and successors, be, and they hereby are made a body politic and corporate, by the name of the Maine Historical Society; and by that name may sue and be sued, plead and be impleaded, and may have a common seal which they may alter at pleasure; and may hold real estate to an amount not exceeding the yearly value of five thousand dollars, and personal estate to an amount not exceeding, at any one time, fifty thousand dollars; and may choose a President, Librarian, Treasurer, and such other officers as they may think proper; and may make and ordain by-laws for the government of said Society: *Provided;* the same are not repugnant to the Constitution and Laws of this State.

SECT. 2. *Be it further enacted,* That the annual meeting of said Society shall be held at Brunswick, on the Tuesday next preceding the annual commencement at Bowdoin College, for the choice of officers and the admission of fellows, and a general examination into the state of the funds and concerns of the Society.

SECT. 3. *Be it further enacted,* That it shall be the duty of said Society to collect and preserve, as far as the state of their funds will admit, whatever in their opinion may tend to explain and illustrate any department of civil, ecclesiastical and natural History, especially of this State, and of the United States: And the Legislature of this State shall ever have the right to examine into, and ascertain the condition of said Society, and to alter, limit, restrain, enlarge or repeal any of the powers conferred by this charter of incorporation.

SECT. 4 *Be it further enacted,* That Prentiss Mellen, Ichabod Nichols and Edward Payson, or any two of them, are authorized to call the first meeting of said society, for the purpose of organizing the same, to be held at such time and place, as they may designate, by publishing a notification of such intended meeting, two weeks successively in such of the public newspapers, printed in Portland and Hallowell, as they may think proper.

[This Act passed February 5, 1822]

II. Program

Incorporated by the State of Maine in 1822, the Maine Historical Society is a charitable, educational, non-profit corporation. It devotes its resources to the discovery, identification, collection, preservation and interpretation of materials that document the history of Maine and its people. Located in Portland since the late 19th Century, the Society is now housed in three buildings on Congress St., which together comprise the Center for Maine History. The Society's program is organized in four major service areas: Research Library, Museum, Education Outreach, and Publications. A fifth area, Internet Services, is under development.

RESEARCH LIBRARY SERVICES.

The Maine Historical Society's research library is the state's most comprehensive resource for the study and investigation of Maine history. Its collections include 125,000 books, 575 newspapers in series, 3,500 maps, 75,000 photographs, over 100,000 architectural drawings (the largest single collection in the state) and 2 million additional archival items spanning the 15th to 20th centuries. All aspects of Maine's social, economic, political, and cultural history are documented, and all corners of the state are represented. Of particular note are the personal papers of Maine's civic and business leaders, early proprietary and town records, shipping and maritime records, account books and business records, and genealogical research collections, cartographic and land surveys, engineering drawings, photographs, prints and broadsides. The Library is open six days per week and serves over 10,000 researchers from Maine and the U.S. (in person and by remote contact) annually.

MUSEUM SERVICES.

The Society's museum operation has three components.

1) A Permanent Heritage Site: The National Historic Landmark Wadsworth-Longfellow House, built by Revolutionary War hero Peleg Wadsworth in 1785-86. Eventually the childhood home of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, America's most famous 19th-century poet, the Wadsworth-Longfellow House is one of Maine's most important heritage attractions. Open 7 days a week from May to October, the House is visited each year by thousands of Maine school children and many thousands of adult visitors from Maine and around the world.

2) The Museum Collections: In addition to 1,000 artifacts original to the three generations who lived in the Wadsworth-Longfellow House from 1786 to 1901, the Museum collections also include over 10,000 additional artifacts and works of art documenting Maine's material culture from colonial to modern times: special concentrations include costume, militaria, decorative arts, political ephemera, and much more.

3) The Maine History Gallery: Begun in 1994, the Maine History Gallery is a venue that allows the Society to mount a series of changing high-quality interpretive exhibitions of interest to Maine people. Exhibitions include: *E Pluribus Unum: Maine and the Making of a Nation* (1999)—focused on the ideals that helped form our state and nation; *First Light: The Dawn of Photography in Maine* (1999)—a look at the first and rarest images of the state and its people; *Rum Riot and Reform: Maine and the History of*

American Drinking (1998)—explored Maine's important role in the temperance movement; *Spirits in the Wood: Two Hundred Years of Wabanaki Basketry, Carving, and Enterprise* (1998)—on the state's legacy of Native American handcrafts; and *The Way Life Should Be: Tourism, Romance and Reality in Early Modern Maine* (1997)—a look at Maine's changing social fabric in the period 1890-1930. The Maine History Gallery is open year-round.

Museum Visitation: The Maine Historical Society Museum (historic house and gallery) is visited by approximately 8,000 adults and 3,000 school children each year.

EDUCATION OUTREACH SERVICES

The Society's education department conducts numerous on-site programs and workshops for school children, teachers, and the adult public in connection with the Wadsworth-Longfellow House and all changing museum exhibitions. In addition, middle and high school use of the Research Library is promoted through specially designed classroom projects. The Society also goes beyond its geographic boundaries through a number of outreach activities. 1) Programs in the Schools: Society personnel bring specially designed literature and history presentations to Southern Maine classrooms; 2) Education Materials: primary document resource study kits on important themes in Maine history are assembled for use—and are currently adopted—by teachers throughout the state (e.g., *Maine People, American Identities*, helps students grasp the history of Maine's true demographic diversity); 3) Travelling Exhibitions: select exhibitions that have been mounted at the Maine History Gallery are sent to other venues in the state; e.g., *The Way Life Should Be* was seen in Bethel, Hinkley, Bangor and Presque Isle. Outreach services are currently reaching approximately 7,000 Mainers each year.

PUBLICATION SERVICES

Since its founding, The Maine Historical Society has been responsible for publishing the documents, essays and books that form the backbone of our understanding of Maine's past. Since 1969, in cooperation with the History Department of the University of Maine, Orono, the Society has published *Maine History*, the only state journal devoted to publishing new and ongoing scholarship about Maine's history, culture, and people. It has, in addition, published (or co-published) bibliographies (Civil War, Maine Indians), atlases, genealogical research guides, reprints of important Maine titles, and groundbreaking works such as *Maine in the Early Republic*, and *Revolution Down East*. With the advent of its museum exhibition program, the Society has also begun to publish and distribute a series of catalogs that are permanent additions to our knowledge of the state.

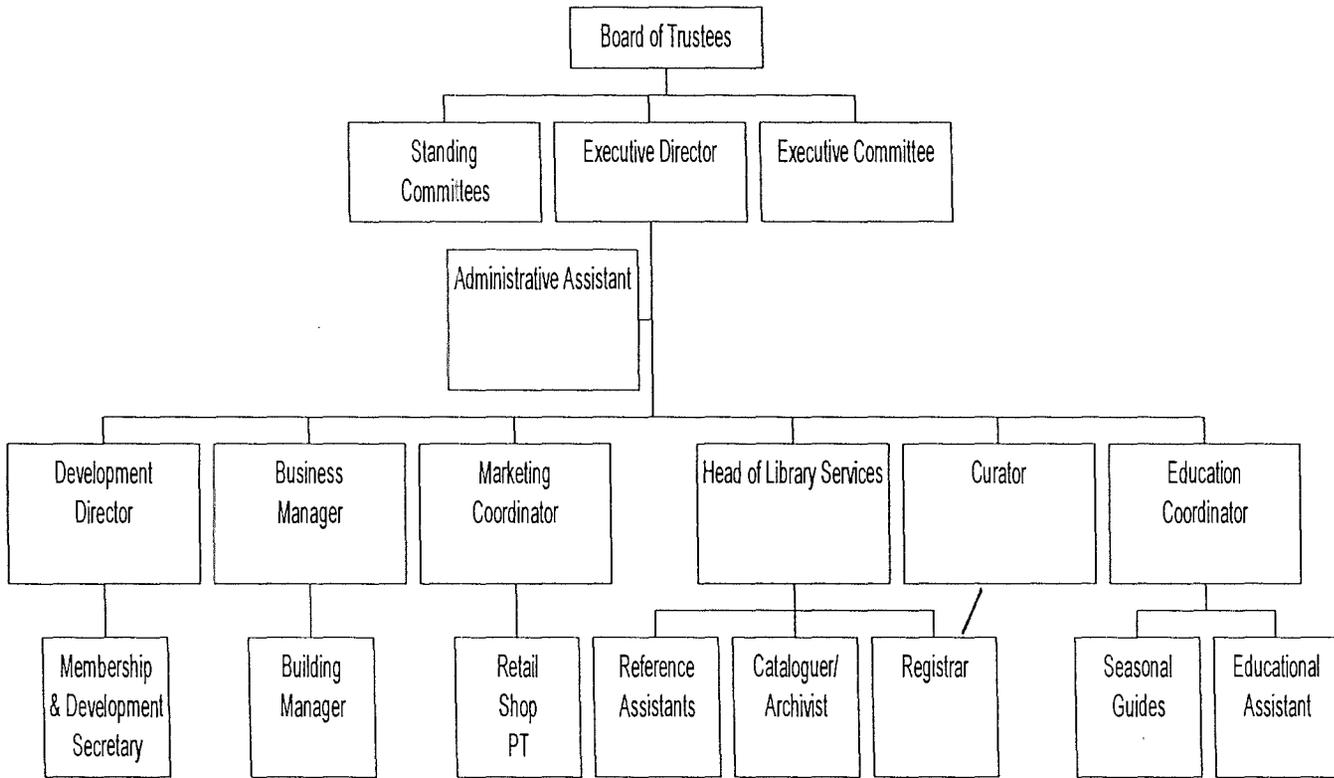
INTERNET SERVICES

Beginning in 1999, with the help of a special appropriation of the State Legislature made to the Society and six other state cultural agencies through the Maine Communities in the New Century Program, the Maine Historical Society has begun development of the Maine Memory Network. Undertaken in cooperation with the Maine State Archives and the Maine State Museum, the Maine Memory Network is a Web-based, virtual museum and educational resource that will serve community libraries, schools, museums, historical societies, and every Internet-ready home in Maine. It will make the primary

records of Maine history—images, interviews, maps, photographs, documents, and much more—available over the Internet. Modeled, in concept, on the American Memory site of the Library of Congress, the Network will provide links to digitized historical and cultural materials from every corner of the state. Once fully operational, the Memory Network project will assist communities and cultural organizations by helping to digitize significant collections, disseminating digital cataloging standards, and providing historical and educational frameworks. The Maine Memory Network will be an electronic reflection of everything Maine Historical Society has to offer. While we are projecting a modest increase in numbers served in the first year of operation, with continued support the Maine Memory Network has the potential to reach hundreds of thousands of Maine people in the years to come.

III. Organizational Structure

Maine Historical Society
Organizational Chart
Fiscal Year 1999 - 2000



IV. Compliance

The Maine Historical Society is aware of and compliant with, among others, the following acts, laws, and regulations.

1. The Maine Human Rights Act
2. The Maine Employment Security Law
3. The Maine Worker's Compensation Act
4. The Maine VDT Law
5. The Occupational Health and Safety Act
6. The Family Medical Leave Act
7. The Equal Opportunity Laws
8. The Americans with Disabilities Act: The Society has been making a concerted effort to make all its public spaces accessible to people with disabilities. In 1997, for instance, the research library was fitted with an ADA approved access ramp and bathroom.

MAINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Expenditures

Year	93	94	95	96	97	98	99 *	00 *	01 *
General Fund	24,761	24,761	24,761	24,761	24,761	24,761	24,761	134,761	134,761
MHS funded	<u>338,445</u>	<u>459,298</u>	<u>485,253</u>	<u>442,087</u>	<u>497,119</u>	<u>628,367</u>	<u>668,030</u>	<u>811,789</u>	<u>896,444</u>
Total	363,206	484,059	510,014	466,848	521,880	653,128	692,791	946,550	1,031,205
% of General Fund to Total	6.8%	5.1%	4.9%	5.3%	4.7%	3.8%	3.6%	14.2%	13.1%
Positions									
Full Time	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	10
Part Time	<u>10</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>
Total	17	15	17	17	17	17	19	21	21

* estimated

VI. Regulatory Agenda----Not Applicable

VII. Coordination With Other Agencies

The Maine Historical Society has always cooperated with other private and state agencies in the pursuit of its mission. Its publishing service, as noted earlier in Section II, page 3, is conducted, in part, with the University of Maine. By rule it also assists the Maine State Archives in chairing the Maine Historic Records Advisory Board, a statewide policy and grant-making body. In recent years, however, the degree of coordinated activity between the Society and the state's other cultural agencies has taken an extraordinary jump. This ranges from collaborating with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission on exhibitions, to engineering joint purchase and ownership agreements with the Maine State Museum, in order to prevent the loss (by out-of-state sale) of Maine's historical treasures.

The most important instance of inter-agency cooperation has been the New Century Community Program, a joint effort of Maine's seven state cultural agencies—Maine Arts Commission, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Maine State Library, Maine State Museum, Maine Historical Society, Maine State Archives, and Maine Humanities Council—under the auspices of the Maine Cultural Affairs Council and the Maine Community Cultural Alliance, a citizens advisory board. The purpose of the program is to help communities across the state preserve and revitalize their cultural heritage. It provides resources to save historic properties, artifacts, and documents; to expand educational opportunities; and to strengthen or rebuild community cultural institutions. Under this program, funded by the Legislature for FY99-00, the Society has undertaken the development of the Internet service described above, the Maine Memory Network. Coordination between this and all other programs of the New Century Community Program is provided through ongoing leadership and oversight of the Maine Cultural Affairs Council.

VIII. Constituencies

The programs of the Maine Historical Society serve a wide variety of constituents. The Society itself has 2,500 members throughout Maine and the United States. Annual on-site visitation is approximately 20,000; outreach activity touches another 7,000, and indirect exposure through publications and media reaches approximately 100,000 per year. Many constituent groups make up the people we serve. Here is a listing.

1. General Public (adults and families).
2. Family History Researchers (MHS is the center for genealogical research in the state)
3. K-12 Students (especially the fourth and eighth grades)
4. K-12 Teachers
5. Local and Special Interest Historians
6. Scholars, College and Graduate Students
7. Media Producers
8. Home Owners and Architects
9. Museum Professionals
10. Collectors
11. Lawyers

IX. Privatization

The Maine Historical Society is a private, non-profit corporation, which does essential work for the State of Maine. This private/government partnership has been in effect since the early 19th century, when the State Legislature made the first of a number of appropriations to help the Society establish itself and advance its programs. Though a small but regular state subsidy was established in the 1940s, the majority of Maine Historical Society support has always come from private sources.

In the last 20 years, in fact, private sources have accounted for an increasing share of the total MHS operating budget. This is accounted for by the fact that while the State subsidy has remained about the same, the Society's programs have grown tremendously, with an accompanying increase in costs. In 1979, for instance, state subsidy accounted for 24% of the MHS operating budget. In 1999 it accounted for 3.6%. This year, with the allocation of additional State funding, granted to MHS through the Maine Communities in the New Century Program, under Part II of the 99-01 State budget, the State's share of the total MHS operating budget rises to an average of about 13.5%. This is still only a modest fraction of the whole, and, we think, a bargain for the State. The long-standing relationship between Maine Historical Society and the State of Maine is an excellent example of the way private/government partnerships can work.

X. Emerging Issues

There are three emerging issues for the Maine Historical Society: 1) Developing the Maine Memory Network described in Section II, pages 3 and 4; 2) completing the preservation and restoration of the Wadsworth-Longfellow House, for which a capital campaign is about to be launched; 3) improving physical and intellectual access to the collections, including renovation of storage spaces and the conversion of a manual library catalog to a machine readable and web-available resource. A planning study is underway, as well as a new strategic ten year plan.