

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Government Evaluation Act

**Maine Historical Society
November 1, 2007**

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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. Daniel 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 Description

Founded in 1822, the Maine Historical Society is a charitable, educational, non-profit corporation and the third oldest state historical society in the United States. Located on a one-acre campus in downtown Portland, the Maine Historical Society reaches and serves the entire state through educational programs; exhibits; research services; support, training, and resources provided to local historical organizations, museums, libraries, and schools; publications; and a dynamic and far-reaching Internet program. Our mission is as follows:

The Maine Historical Society preserves the heritage and history of Maine: the stories of Maine people, the traditions of Maine communities, and the record of Maine's place in a changing world. Because an understanding of history is vital to a healthy and progressive society, we collect, care for, and exhibit historical treasures; facilitate research into family, local, state, and national history; provide education programs that make history meaningful, accessible, and enjoyable; and empower others to help preserve and interpret the history of our state.

Today, MHS is organized into the following major program areas:

(1) MHS Research Library. The MHS Library is widely recognized as the most comprehensive resource for the study of Maine and New England History in the state. The library collection documents all aspects of Maine's past including the state's social, economic, political, and cultural history. It contains unrivaled book, map, newspaper, print, and photographic collections; deep archival manuscript holdings from the 16th to the 21st centuries; and rare and important documents, including a Dunlap broadside of the Declaration of Independence, one of 25 known copies printed on July 4, 1776; the manuscript records of the Northeast Boundary Commission which determined the border between Maine and Canada from the mid 18th to the mid 19th centuries; and much more. A retrospective conversion project has recently been completed that converted the Library's paper-based card catalog into digital form and made those records accessible via the Internet and MINERVA, the state's shared online library index. The Library is open five days per week and serves over 16,000 researchers each year on-site and through online, phone, and mail research requests. The 1907 Research Library building, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, is currently undergoing a major centennial renovation and will re-open in early 2009. Full library access and services are being maintained throughout the renovation at a temporary facility that has been established at 510 Congress Street.

(2) MHS Museum. Open year-round, the Maine Historical Society Museum features two to three changing exhibitions per year that explore more than five centuries of Maine life. Our exhibitions illuminate diverse aspects of Maine's past and present, and highlight documents, artifacts, images, and art drawn from MHS's extraordinary collections. The permanent museum collections include more than 15,000 artifacts that document every aspect of Maine history, from prehistoric native material, to industrial and domestic appliances, textiles, costume, furniture, paintings, and the decorative arts. Recent exhibitions include:

- *A Riot of Words: Broad­sides and Ballads, Posters and Proclamations* (2006). This unique exhibit was comprised of nearly 150 posters and broadsides drawn from the

Maine Historical Society's collections. Dating from circa 1700 to the 1940s, this exhibit illustrated the way Maine people used this ephemeral media to communicate news, political views, commercial opportunities, and moral values.

- *Umbazooksus and Beyond: The Maine Woods Remembered* (2005). Drawing from the library collection of Maine Historical Society, this exhibit chronicled the experiences and memories of a number of Maine woods visitors in the early decades of the twentieth century. Using photographs, journals, and other writings the exhibit interpreted a period of transition when the Maine woods became a destination for more and more people seeking to nature in the face of urban and industrial developments.
- *A City Awakes: The Arts and Artists of Early 19th Century Portland* (2005). This exhibit featured over eighty paintings, prints, drawings and examples of decorative arts made in Portland during a period when the city flourished as a major commercial center.
- *Amazing! Maine Stories* (2004). This exhibit presented the history of eighteen individuals who in their own unique way shaped the history of Maine, from settlement through the twentieth century. Organized chronologically and presented in a newspaper or tabloid style with bold declarative headlines, the exhibit is to explore the way historical stories and objects are woven together to create a sense of place, and in this case, an understanding of Maine history.
- *The Shape of Maine: Drawing Boundaries, Mapping History* (2003). *The Shape of Maine* explored the development of Maine's boundaries, how those boundaries reflected the nature of the State's political structure, and the many struggles over the location of Maine's border.

The museum also offers a robust public program series that features lectures, workshops, training, and trips that explore a wide variety of topics in Maine and U.S. history. Our museum store is vibrant retail destination on Congress Street and provides books and other resources related to Maine history to educators, tourists, and the general public. In 2006, more than 15,000 visitors including nearly 3,500 school children visited the House, MHS Museum or attended lectures or other educational programs. Another 1,000 teachers and students participated in outreach programs throughout the state.

(3) Wadsworth-Longfellow House. The Wadsworth-Longfellow House, childhood home of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, was given to the Maine Historical Society in 1901 and has been open as a museum ever since. Guided tours of the House, a National Historic Landmark, are offered from May through October. A meticulous restoration of the House was completed in 2003. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was a commanding presence in the cultural life of nineteenth century America; his Portland roots and close ongoing connections to Maine provide key opportunities for MHS to offer public, school, and scholarly programs that explore important topics in American history, literature, and culture.

(4) The Maine Memory Network (www.mainememory.net). Launched in 2001, the Maine Memory Network is a statewide digital museum that provides unprecedented online access to a

constantly-growing collection of more than 13,000 historical items—photographs, letters, journals, diaries, records, maps, and objects— contributed by 180 historical societies, museums, and libraries from every corner of Maine. It also includes nearly 100 online exhibits that explore a diverse range of themes and topics in Maine history; lesson plans; a gallery of student history projects; online tools that let site visitors to create and share their own exhibits; and much more. Maine Memory serves as a statewide finding aid and point of access for resources related to Maine history for people in local Maine communities, across the state, and throughout the world. Through a robust outreach program designed to support Maine Memory that has been made possible through a series of key federal grants, MHS also provides extensive training and support to local historical societies and schools. Maine Memory has enabled dozens of small, rural organizations to establish a Web presence and share their collections. The site regularly receives over 20,000 unique visitors per month, and is bookmarked on every middle school laptop distributed through the Maine Learning Technology Initiative. Maine Memory has become a valuable resource for educators and students, and has come to be recognized as a critical piece of the state’s cultural, educational, and information infrastructure. Maine Memory has been recognized nationally by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and others for its innovative approach to engaging and representing local communities in the telling of Maine history.

(5) Education Programs. The Maine Historical Society offers programs, resources, and support to teachers and students at our campus in Portland, in classrooms around the state, and online. Our education programs, all of which are tied to Maine Learning Results, use Maine history to enhance teaching and learning in the social studies, language arts, and other curriculum areas.

- ***Longfellow House Tours.*** Students explore the connections between Longfellow’s childhood, family life in the mid–nineteenth century and the poetry he created. Almost every object in the house is original to the family and documented, giving students a rare, authentic window into 19th century life in Portland.
- ***Museum programs.*** Each Museum exhibition is accompanied by a substantial interactive gallery program. Each program is designed to meet Maine Learning Results and includes pre-and post-visit lesson plans. Among many other activities, in recent programs students have: operated an antique printing press while learning about communication in nineteenth century Maine; traded stories of the historic Maine Woods while sitting around a recreated campsite; and learned how Maine’s early borders were established by using reproduction surveyor’s chains to measure and claim a piece of MHS property.
- ***Online Resources.*** The Maine Historical Society offers many online resources designed to bring the collections and expertise of Maine’s historical societies, museums, and libraries directly into classrooms across the state. MHS also provides Maine educators with extensive training and support in their use. Maine Memory offers amazing opportunities for students to develop a variety of key skills, and to engage and help preserve and share the history of their communities. In addition to other resources available on Maine Memory, MHS offers educators:

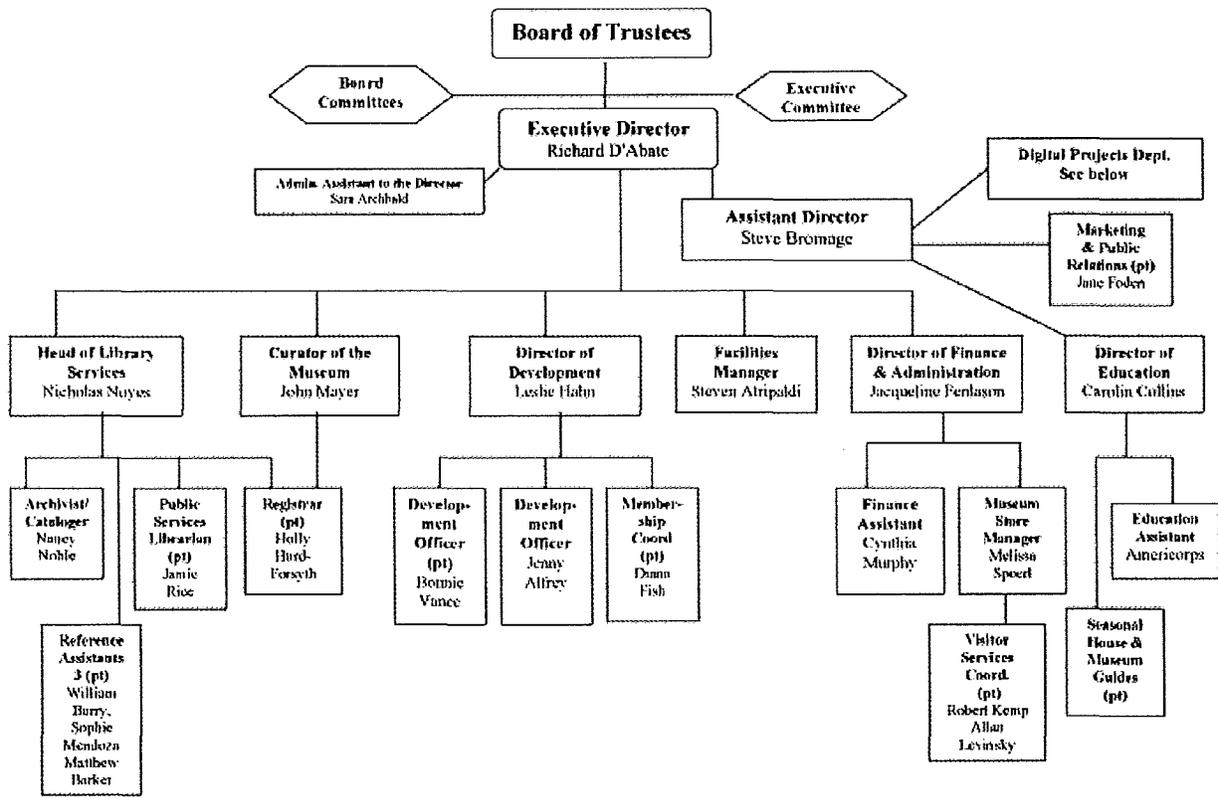
- *Finding Katahdin Online* (www.mainememory.net/findingkatahdin), a comprehensive resource for teaching Maine Studies. Created to complement and support the new Maine Studies text book, *Finding Katahdin: An Exploration of Maine's Past* (UMaine Press, 2001), this site features approximately 60 lesson plans and hundreds of primary sources that explore themes and topics in Maine life from prehistory to the present.
- ***Special Programs and Partnerships.*** In addition to our regularly scheduled programs, the Maine Historical Society partners with schools around the state to develop special programs tailored to current initiatives and the needs and interests of individual teachers. Examples include:
 - *Local History/Local Schools*, a museum-school partnership program offered twice a year to third grade classes in Portland.
 - a library research project undertaken by 8th grade students from South Portland that explored the history of Malaga Island.
 - an intensive three-month study of Portland's working waterfront undertaken by a group of At-Risk students from Lyman Moore Middle School.
 - Local history projects in numerous communities in which students learn to do research, help digitize collections, and create online exhibits for Maine Memory.

(6) Publications. MHS also serves the public through publications. Most prominently, MHS works very closely with the University of Maine through its History Department to publish *Maine History*, the journal of state history. *Maine History* is the primary scholarly forum for new research, interpretation, and discussion of topics in the state's history.

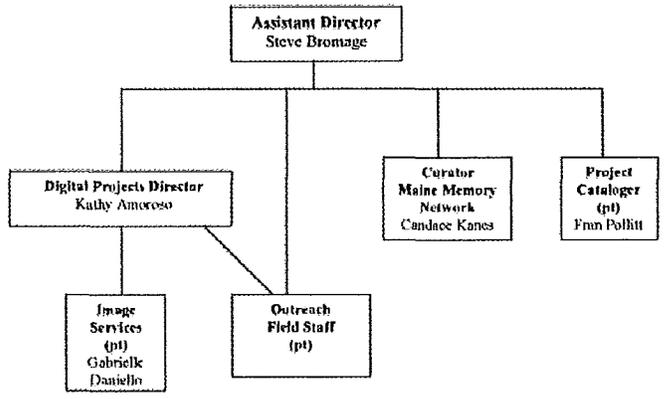
III. Organizational Structure

A 34 member Board of Trustees, thirteen standing committees and eleven subcommittees advise and support the society staff of fifteen full-time and twenty part-time in its work. In 2000, MHS began a rigorous self study and strategic planning process designed to clarify the problems, aspirations, and priorities of the organization. This work laid the foundation for our current Strategic Plan which starts with a broad and ambitious vision for the future supported by a number of interrelated strategic goals designed to achieve it. It charts continued improvement, outreach, and accomplishment in every department of the organization.

Maine Historical Society Organizational Chart 2007



DIGITAL PROJECTS DEPARTMENT



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

V. Financial Summary

MAINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Expenditures

Year	FY 97/98	FY 98/99	FY 99/00	FY 00/01	FY 01/02	FY 02/03	FY 03/04	FY 04/05	FY 05/06	FY 06/07*
State General Fund	24,761	244,761	24,761	59,136	61,201	61,201	57,529	57,529	54,653	54,653
MHS Funded (Unrestricted)	<u>567,675</u>	<u>395,396</u>	<u>692,800</u>	<u>782,938</u>	<u>876,860</u>	<u>940,215</u>	<u>946,622</u>	<u>922,500</u>	<u>980,760</u>	<u>1,049,781</u>
	592,436	640,157	717,561	842,074	938,061	1,001,416	1,004,151	980,029	1,035,413	1,104,434
% of General Fund to Total	4.18%	38.23%	3.45%	7.02%	6.52%	6.11%	5.73%	5.87%	5.28%	4.95%
Unrestricted Postions										
Full time	8	8	10	11	10	9	10	10	12	11
Part Time	<u>9</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>
Total	17	20	21	22	22	26	26	26	27	27

* Estimated as of 11/14/07

VI. Regulatory Agenda

Not applicable.

VII. Coordination with Other Agencies

The Maine Historical Society works closely with cultural, educational, and civic organizations at the local, state, and national level. At the state level, MHS collaborates closely with the six other statewide cultural agencies through the **Maine Cultural Affairs Council**. The Council, which has been recognized nationally by the Pew Charitable Trust and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government for its innovative, collaborative, efficient, and highly cost-effective model of supporting local museums, libraries, arts agencies, and other cultural organizations, provides a key network of support, expertise, and contacts. MHS also works closely with the **Maine Department of Education**—through the **Maine Learning Technology Initiative** and many other programs—and contributes a great deal of time and expertise to a variety of Department initiatives, particularly related to social studies and technology. The Department plays an important role in helping Maine teachers learn about and use MHS programs and resources.

Also in the educational realm, MHS works closely with the **University of Maine**. We jointly publish the journal *Maine History*, described above, and collaborate on special projects such as *Finding Katahdin Online*, also described above. We will be collaborating with the **Hudson Museum** at the University this Spring to mount a major exhibit, *Gifts from Gluskabe: Maine Indian Art Forms from the Hudson Museum* that explores Native American history in Maine and that will help teachers meet the requirements of LD 291. We work with the **University of Southern Maine**, too, on projects ranging from exhibits, to public programs, to collecting issues, to internships.

MHS frequently partners with the **Maine State Museum** on special projects. In particular, our institutions have jointly purchased important documents and objects related to Maine history that were at imminent risk of being sold to private collectors and taken out of state. In these cases, neither institution had the resources to purchase the objects on their own so instead entered a partnership in which the items are shared between institutions. Notable examples include the John Martin journals, a richly illustrated primary source that is a fundamental document related to Bangor history in the 19th century, and a 19th century painting of the original statehouse in Portland. We have also just entered a partnership with the **Maine State Library** on a major new initiative called the Maine Community Heritage Project (described below.)

MHS works closely with and provides key leadership to historical societies, museums, libraries, and schools in every part of Maine. Every one of the **Maine Memory Network's 180 contributing partners**—a number that grows regularly—has received extensive training, resources, and support from MHS staff. The process of training organizations to participate in Maine Memory has revealed a broad range of institutional needs and issues that organizations face related to their overall organizational capacity. In response, MHS staff have begun to provide training in the digitization of collections; guidance in collections management; consultation on equipment purchases; fundraising assistance; and help developing school/community partnerships. These efforts have demonstrated to us that outreach is a distinct and vital part of Maine Memory, that it is essential to MHS's mission, and that this program needs to be continued, refined, expanded, and supported. Thus far, with support from several important federal grants, we have been able to provide these services without charge. This is a key dynamic: most local historical organizations have extremely limited resources and lack the

funding and staff resources to address basic collections activities on their own. This system has created numerous economies of scale, and proven to be an extremely effective and cost-efficient way for the state to benefit from the expertise and resources that MHS has developed.

MHS also collaborates on an ongoing basis with cultural organizations throughout the state on individual programs and special initiatives (e.g. the **Maine Print Project**). These partnerships expand the audience for our own programs and those of other institutions, and help ensure that Maine has a vibrant, inclusive, and far-reaching cultural community.

VIII. Constituencies

The program of the Maine Historical Society serves a wide variety of constituents. MHS has 2,500 members throughout Maine and the United States and we reach and serve thousands of others. Many constituent groups make up the audience we serve, including:

1. General public (adults and families)
2. Family history researchers (MHS is the leading institution for genealogical research in the state)
3. K-12 students
4. K-12 teachers
5. Local, national, and special interest historians
6. Scholars, college and graduate students
7. Media producers
8. Homeowners, architects, and others doing architectural research
9. Museum professionals
10. Collectors
11. Lawyers
12. Staff and membership of Maine-based local historical societies, libraries, and museums

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 thirty 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 grown only incrementally, MHS 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 2006 it accounted for 4.95%. This is a modest fraction of the whole, and, we think, an incredible bargain for the State. We will, in fact, need additional support from the state to maintain and expand the level of service we provide people, organizations, and communities throughout 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

The Maine Historical Society is looking forward to a number of exciting opportunities and challenges in the coming years. The re-opening of our renovated library building in 2009 will be an important milestone in our institution. It will represent significant growth in our capacity as an organization, ensure that our library collections are cared for and stored properly, and provide researchers, students, and others throughout Maine and beyond with a first-class, modern research facility. That facility will, in fact, serve as a foundation for all that we do.

There are two important initiatives underway related to the Maine Memory Network. With major funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, we are currently developing a comprehensive online history of the state called **Maine History Online**. This will be a major new section and resource within Maine Memory that provides the general public and students with a broad introduction to key topics, themes, and events in Maine history, and encourage them to think critically about history in general. That history will be told in large part through the stories and collections of individual Maine communities with their active participation. We have recently completed a series of twelve regional planning meetings that were held around the state for the project that drew tremendous interest and support.

With major funding from the Institute of Museum & Library Services and in partnership with the Maine State Library, we are about to launch the **Maine Community Heritage Project**. This statewide initiative is designed to foster partnership between local schools, historical societies, and libraries through the exploration, celebration, and sharing of local history. Over three years, local teams from sixteen Maine communities—one from each county in the state—will work closely with Maine Historical Society and Maine State Library staff to create content-rich websites within the Maine Memory Network dedicated to the history and culture of their communities. The MCHP will create a partnership model, resources, and a technological infrastructure that will enable other communities to share their history online; foster intergenerational collaboration between historical societies, museums, libraries, and schools; and engage young people as key participants in their community. This project builds on extensive field work we have done in communities around Maine and a successful pilot project that tested the model in Skowhegan, New Sweden, and Mt. Desert Island.

MHS has made tremendous progress in recent years in its ability to reach and serve the people of Maine but we still face significant issues: we have outgrown our collections storage, processing, exhibition, education, and public program spaces. Our current museum facility—which was not originally a museum—is not environmentally controlled, nor is it adequate for many basic museum functions (e.g. movement of and access to collections). Maintaining the Maine Memory Network's infrastructure and outreach program, and ensuring that its resources and opportunities reach and benefit every local school, historical society, library, and community in the state, will require new sources of funding and a commitment from the state and others who recognize its ability to empower, enrich, and support people and organizations throughout Maine. We see numerous opportunities to expand programs, extend partnerships, acquire collections, and reach out and better serve the state, but we have limited staff and resources to pursue those opportunities. There is substantial interest within MHS in developing a core exhibit, creating additional gallery space, and, potentially, replacing our current museum building. With a strong

Strategic Plan in place, we are beginning a vigorous planning process to address those issues. We recognize that continued growth needs to be carefully planned, sustainable, and grounded in our core mission and strengths.

The most important and ambitious undertaking will be the replacement of our museum building at 489 Congress Street which has major structural issues that significantly impact how we operate and our ability to accommodate and serve as many people as we believe that we can. The new museum building, which is in the earliest of planning phases, will be a major cultural destination for the state and anchor the Monument Square area of Congress Street. A new museum building would include expanded gallery space in which we would develop a permanent exhibit dedicated to Maine history that would serve a broad public and as a foundation for a variety of school programs; galleries dedicated to sharing the history of Maine communities through the collections of local historical societies; and gallery space to showcase and provide access to more of our own museum collections.