

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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MEMBERS OF THE 102ND MAINE LEGISLATURE  
JOINT INTERIM MUSEUM STUDY COMMITTEE

REPORT

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AUGUSTA, MAINE

January 21, 1966

To: MEMBERS OF THE 102ND MAINE LEGISLATURE

From: JOINT INTERIM MUSEUM STUDY COMMITTEE

This Committee recommends authorization of a state-wide referendum vote on a bond issue to fund location, design and construction of a Maine State Cultural Center adjacent to the Capitol building in Augusta. This Center should include:

1. A new and expanded State Museum
2. A new and larger State Library
3. A structure for storage, display and study of Maine's priceless archival material

The three above facilities are needed now and by combining them into one structure important savings can be made in construction and operating costs. Joint use of shipping and receiving rooms, maximum security vaults, rest rooms, reading rooms, lounges, microfilming and binding rooms, etc., will save taxpayers' dollars. Similar savings will be possible through joint use of certain personnel.

It is well known that many departments of state government need additional space at the present time. Removal of the library and museum from the Capitol will free space in this area, and also in the Vickery-Hill Building.

1. MUSEUM

A new and expanded State Museum will capture for all - citizens, tourists, adults, children and scholars - the scope of Maine's rich historical heritage, its natural wonders, its economic breadth. The present museum in the Capitol, although outstanding, does not fill the need to preserve this heritage for present and future generations.

We must recognize the importance of interpreting and bringing to life that heritage in attractive and practical programs for Maine people. The need to provide information, services and facilities to all the people of Maine should be recognized, including professionals and amateurs who are studying Maine's heritage and interpreting it to the people of Maine and to the world at large.

Our country is in the midst of a cultural explosion. To illustrate, in Colorado the State's several museums get more visitors than its more widely advertised ski resorts and parks. Additionally, museums are a focal point for educational programs of state-wide value. Our Maine Capitol, despite limited museum displays, attracts increasing thousands of your people and tourists. Those who wish to have further documentation of this need are referred to the report prepared for this Committee by Michael Spock, Director of the Children's Museum in Boston, and by William E. Marshall, Executive Director of the State Historical Society of Colorado. Copies are available from members of this Committee and from the Legislative Finance Office.

## 2. LIBRARY

Demands placed upon the State Library have come close to tripling in the past fourteen years. In common with all types of libraries, it has been experiencing an unprecedented growth in demand for books and services. The State Library serves not only the Capitol area, but also the entire State with loans, bookmobile service and consulting services to every library in every Maine county. To illustrate, the library lent 36,759 books in the 1951-52 fiscal year. In the 1964-65 fiscal year, it lent 86,409 books. Only one of the past fourteen years has not shown a gain.

Direct services to other areas of the State and assistance helping to develop local library services have expanded and result in a staff of fifty-five today, compared to thirty-four in 1955. The report of the State Librarian, Miss Ruth Hazelton, and Harland A. Carpenter, Ogunquit, Consultant, provides full information and is available through members of this Committee or from Miss Hazelton.

### 3. ARCHIVES

Maine is one of very few states without a program for preservation, display and use of its archival records. In other words, a sound program of record management. Development of such a program, in conjunction, of course, with housing for it, cannot be postponed. The need to preserve our vital records for the benefit of all of us is now generally accepted.

This Committee is satisfied that the recommendations of the Archives Advisory Board, documented by a study by Dr. James B. Rhoads, Assistant Archivist for Civil Archives, Washington, D.C., are sound and will provide minimum practical facilities. Copies of his report are available through members of this Committee or through Samuel Silsby, Jr., secretary to the Archives Advisory Board, in the Legislative Research Office.

This report is brief by legislative standards, but available documentation is voluminous. Study on these matters has been thorough. The Museum Study Committee has consulted with experts in the field in Maine and outside the State. It has met twice a month or more since January, 1965. Other affected groups have also made intensive studies.

Support of these findings has been offered by groups representing thousands of citizens, including ordinary citizens and experts in art, in history, in the museum field, the archival field and in related areas.

Maine men and women are concerned with the thought that the cultivation of the beauty, the history and the learning of the State of Maine is a challenging objective and a necessary development of our priceless heritage.

Respectfully submitted,  
LEGISLATIVE MUSEUM STUDY COMMITTEE

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