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CENTENNIAL  
OF THE  
MAINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
1822-1922



# CENTENNIAL

OF THE

# MAINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

APRIL 11, 1922

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I. THE MAINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN BRUNSWICK,

BY PRESIDENT KENNETH C. M. SILLS,  
OF BOWDOIN COLLEGE.

II. THE MAINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY AT PORTLAND.

BY HON. AUGUSTUS F. MOULTON, OF  
PORTLAND.

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PORTLAND, 1922.

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## FOREWORD.

The organization of the Maine Historical Society in 1822 followed closely upon the separation of what was once the Province of Maine from what had long been known as the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In two carefully prepared papers a review of the first century of the Society's work is herewith presented. The meeting for this purpose was held at three o'clock in the afternoon of April 11, 1922, in the hall of the Library Building on what was once the Longfellow property in Portland. Although the weather was somewhat unfavorable, the audience was large, and both Dr. Sills and Mr. Moulton had deeply interested and most appreciative hearers. At the close of these literary services each speaker received a very hearty vote of thanks.

Following this vote, and recalling an allusion in Dr. Sills' paper to Hon. John A. Poor's address in 1859 on "English Colonization in America," the president of the society, Dr. Burrage, said that the more he became acquainted with Mr. Poor's work in connection with the Maine Historical Society the more he was impressed with the value of the services rendered by Mr. Poor. His range of vision naturally was limited. Very largely the sources of information as to the beginnings of our Maine history were not here then. Accordingly some of the conclusions in his historical papers would not now be accepted. But, more than

any of his associates, he seemed to be impressed with the value and therefore the importance of original sources in historical work. His papers in their footnotes show a firm grasp upon such sources as were within his reach. Also, too, Mr. Poor sought to interest the people of Maine in the history of their state. He was by far the most inspiring personality and indefatigable worker among his associates in the society. To him especially was due the great Pop-ham celebration at the mouth of the Kennebec, August 29, 1862, the first of our memorable field-days. While the society then had other members of great personal worth and large attainments, there was only one John A. Poor, and we do well to honor his memory.

Following these more formal proceedings, the members of the society and their guests assembled in the library below, where coffee and cakes were served, and where, among flowers and many interesting historical treasures, an opportunity was afforded for a social hour, with greetings and felicitations appropriate to the occasion.

The second centennial of the Maine Historical Society is far away. May it find its members in possession of its historic property and of historical treasures of much greater interest and value than are now in the society's care; also with larger opportunities for usefulness in their important work!







# THE MAINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN BRUNSWICK.

1822 --- 1880

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By KENNETH C. M. SILLS, LL. D.

In his famous preface, Livy, the Roman historian, tells us that in reading history everyone should consider these points: What life and manners were in ancient times; and through what men and by what means, both in peace and in war, empire was acquired and extended. He then goes on: "This it is which is particularly salutary and profitable in the study of history, that you behold instances of every variety of conduct displayed as on a conspicuous monument, that thence you may select for yourself and for your country that which you may imitate; thence note what is shameful in the undertaking and shameful in the result which you may avoid."

It is well to keep these precepts in mind as we survey, this afternoon, the origins of the Maine Historical Society and its progress until it forsook the quiet of the college of the pines for the din of the Forest City. We do not, to be sure, like the

Romans, trace our august beginnings to the activity of the gods or of Mars in particular; but the society did owe its origin to that greater culture and greater degree of leisure which marked the passing of a pioneer, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts District, into the urbane and beloved state of Maine. Indeed, before 1820 very few works, either historical or literary, had been published in our state with the exception of sermons and occasional addresses which had then a very great popularity. Among the more notable pamphlets or essays were some evidently of the propagandist type designed to promote immigration into the district. There were also a few volumes on Maine contributed to the Massachusetts Historical Collections. In 1795 appeared "The History of Maine," by General Sullivan, a valuable historical work. From 1790 to 1820 there were naturally many pamphlets published on the subject of separation, but the number of books written for purely literary or historical purposes can easily be counted on the fingers of one hand.

When Maine became a state, in 1820, her people very naturally desired, not only from local pride but also from other even more praiseworthy motives, to establish a reputation for interest in learning and culture. It is one of the excellent fruits of independence that a state wishing to stand by itself, as the name implies, is ambitious to encourage not only industry but literature and the arts, as a sign

that the people are able to look after their own higher interests. Consequently we find the first Legislature, which met here in the city of Portland in the month of May, 1820, giving grants to Bowdoin College and Waterville College, establishing the Medical School of Maine, and in general adopting what was for those days a liberal policy toward education. In 1821 the Maine Medical Society was incorporated.

On February 4, 1822, a bill to incorporate the Maine Historical Society was passed in the House of Representatives, and the following day was passed in the Senate and signed by the governor, Albion K. Parris. The act of incorporation contains the names of forty-nine corporate members, headed by William Allen, then president of Bowdoin College, and Albion K. Parris, governor of Maine. The list is a roster of names famous in the history of our state. You may find there a Mellen, a Preble, a Payson, a Wingate, a Longfellow, a King, a Lincoln, a Vaughan, a Weston, a Carey, a Robert Hallowell Gardiner, a Peleg Sprague, a Packard, an Abbott, a Williamson, a Sewall, a Shepley and a Dana. The list includes three who were, at one time or another, chief justices of our supreme court and several who became federal judges. Six of the incorporators later became presidents of this society: Albion K. Parris, William Allen, Ichabod Nichols, Stephen Longfellow, Prentiss Mellen and Robert

H. Gardiner. From 1822 to 1856, without a break, the destinies of the society were guided by those who were interested in, and indeed present at, its birth. The second section of the act of incorporation provided that the annual meeting of the society should be held at Bowdoin College on the Tuesday next preceding the annual commencement; but in 1828 this section was repealed, and the society was authorized to hold their annual meeting and other meetings at such times and places as it may think proper.

The first meeting of the society was held at Portland just one hundred years ago to-day, April 11, 1822. There were present Governor Parris, Chief Justice Mellen, Judge Preble, the Rev. Ichabod Nichols, the Rev. Edward Payson, Judge Ware, the Rev. J. Cogswell and Edward Russell. In the *Eastern Argus*, then a weekly newspaper, for April 16th of that year there is a brief account of this meeting. It was held in the Senate Chamber (in other accounts the Council Chamber) and the following officers were elected: President, Albion K. Parris, the governor of Maine; recording secretary, Benjamin Hadley; corresponding secretary, Edward Russell; treasurer, Prentiss Mellen; librarian, the Rev. Edward Payson.

At this meeting a committee was appointed to draw up by-laws to report at the annual meeting in Brunswick the next August, commencement then

being at that time of the year. The newspaper notice requests: "Gentlemen in possession of books, pamphlets and manuscripts [evidently ladies in those days were gallantly supposed not to be interested in erudition] who are disposed to place them in a situation to be useful to the future historian, are invited to send them to the librarian."

Yet august as the founding of the society was, with the governor its president and the chief justice its treasurer, in its early years it had the usual trials and struggles. Even less interest than is the case to-day was taken in historical studies. The society had to rely for its existence on annual assessments; it had no wealthy patrons and no funds for publications. Indeed, until 1831 the society seems to have had but a perfunctory existence. Yet we should not withhold credit from those who kept the society together and labored in its behalf. Governor Parris held the office of president but one year and was succeeded by President William Allen, of Bowdoin College, who presided from 1823 until 1828. President Allen was a good deal of a scholar and was particularly interested in philology and history. Graduating from Harvard College in the celebrated class of 1802, he was connected with that institution for some years, during which he published, in 1809, an "American Biographical and Historical Dictionary." The third edition of this encyclopedic work, printed in 1837, contained more than seven thou-

sand biographical notices—a monument to the president's industry, if not to his discretion.

The close connection between Bowdoin College and the Maine Historical Society is shown in the early officers. Professor Samuel P. Newman was corresponding secretary in 1828 and was succeeded in 1829 by Professor Parker Cleaveland, who held that office until 1858. John McKeen, who was an overseer of Bowdoin for many years, was treasurer of the Historical Society from 1836 to 1858. Parker Cleaveland was librarian from 1823 to 1829; the office was held also by Samuel P. Newman from 1829 to 1834; by Henry W. Longfellow in 1834; and by Alpheus S. Packard in 1835.

In the early period of its history the society also owed much to its third president, the Rev. Ichabod Nichols, 1828 to 1834, the very scholarly minister of the First Parish Church of Portland, said by William Willis to be "one of the best cultivated and universal scholars that Maine has cherished in her bosom." Small wonder is it, then, that the same historian informs us: "From excess of thought and the fulness of his mind his sermons often rose above the level of the common apprehension and often required close attention to follow the course of his reasoning and argument." But be it remembered those were days of the stalwart sermon tasters. Dr. Nichols was greatly interested in the Histori-



cal Society and presided with distinction at its meetings.

It was during Dr. Nichols' administration, in 1831, that the first volume of the Maine Historical Collections appeared. The book has a scholarly and philosophical preface from the classical pen of Judge Ware. "We are told," he writes, "that Americans love rather to tell of what they will do than of what they have done, and boast more of what their posterity will be than of what their ancestors have been"; and he goes on to analyze the reasons why historical research was never popular in a youthful nation. The main article in the volume is appropriately the "History of Portland from its First Settlement with Notices of the Neighboring Towns and of the Changes in Government in Maine," by William Willis. The volume also contains brief accounts of towns, particularly Limerick and Wells, some petitions of the inhabitants of Maine to Cromwell and Charles the Second, and the original letters of Benedict Arnold, written in 1775 while on his expedition through Maine, accompanied by an account of the expedition written by President Allen, of Bowdoin. The volume was thus a very valuable contribution, not only to local but to American history, and was well received.

The second volume of the Collections appeared in 1847; the third, in 1853; the fourth, in 1856; the fifth, in 1857; the sixth, in 1859; the Popham

Memorial Volume, in 1863; the seventh volume of the Collections, in 1876; and the eighth, in 1881. I give these volumes in chronological sequence to indicate the periods in which there seemed to be the most interest in publication, which was in the fifties; while, as we might expect, there was a decided falling off in the time of the Civil War and the years subsequent to it.

I confess that I have not read these volumes from cover to cover; but even a cursory survey of them shows how rich they are in historical material and how devoted to real scholarly research were some of our predecessors. In the Collections appear some of the addresses delivered from time to time by the president of the society. One by William Willis, given at Augusta, February 21, 1855, gives an interesting account of the origins and early history of the society, from which I have drawn much for this paper. The conclusion, in the somewhat stately style of the period, will bear quoting to-day: "Maine is moving forward with rapid strides to a distinguished station among the orbs of our political constellation. Her extent of territory, her rich soil, her long line of seacoast, her large and numerous rivers, intersecting her whole territory; her various valuable and permanent resources, and last and best, the indomitable energy, enterprise and ingenuity of her children—all give token of sure and steady progress to eminence and wealth—not

to the wealth, I trust, which leads to decay, else would I none of it. Let her be true to her high destiny; let her lay broadly and deeply the foundations of her empire, in general education and a faithful administration of civil functions, and a firm adherence, in all classes, to probity, temperance and good faith, and her prosperity will be as solid and enduring as it will be rapid and sure."

Another address of unusual interest, likewise from the pen of William Willis, was given at a meeting of the society in Augusta, March 5, 1857. This contained biographical notices of the six first presidents of the society: Governor Parris, 1822; President Allen, 1823-1828; the Rev. Ichabod Nichols, 1828-1834; Stephen Longfellow, the father of the poet, 1834; Chief Justice Prentiss Mellen, 1835-1840; and Robert Hallowell Gardiner, 1840-1856. These sketches abound in lively anecdote and skillful delineation of character and are in themselves no mean contribution to the history of our state, for after all it is men that make a commonwealth, and an account of these broad-minded and sturdy progenitors of this society has all the freshness that vivid personality ever brings forth.

In 1833 appeared the famous history of the state of Maine, from its first discovery to the separation in 1820, by William D. Williamson. He was an original member of the society and a most indefatigable historian. Undoubtedly his labors were in-

spired in no small degree by the earlier publications of the society; they, in turn, awakened an intense interest in local history. From 1833 to 1858 no less than fifteen valuable historical works were published, nearly all of them by members of the Historical Society. There was then far more interest in local history than there is to-day; indeed, it is a great pity that the local historian, the man who knows all about the traditions and events and progress of his home town, is in Maine almost as extinct as the dodo. Our society, in this its centennial year, could do no more worthy service than to help to revive interest in local history, and in particular the writing of the history of the last half century. To be sure, we have a valuable work in Dr. Louis Hatch's "History of Maine"; but nearly every one of our town histories needs a supplement or extension. And few seem to care that so much that has happened in Maine since 1850 has not been recorded and never will be unless more men like the early members of this society arise to tell of the past.

In 1849 the society received from the state the grant of half a township, which, sold for \$6,000, constituted a permanent fund, the income of which in those beneficent days was enough to bring out a volume of Proceedings and Collections from time to time. From 1856 to 1865 William Willis was the president of the society, and during his regime, as I have shown, there was a good deal of historical

productivity. In 1863, at the request of the society, the state appropriated \$400 to procure copies of documents in the British Museum relating to the early history of Maine.

In Volume VI of the Collections, published at Portland in 1859, there is an extended account of the proceedings of the society for that year. Perhaps a brief summary will convey something of the character of the meetings sixty years ago. The first meeting for the year 1859 was held at Augusta, January 19th. Several papers on historical themes were contributed by Joseph Williamson, Esq., of Belfast. In the afternoon, we read, a public meeting was held at the courthouse, at which a paper was read by Judge Pierce, of Gardiner, on the life of Major Archelaus Lewis, a Revolutionary hero. The president of the society, William Willis, produced some original letters of Lafayette, Talleyrand, Thomas Paine and other worthies, and then read some biographical sketches of deceased members. The Rev. Mr. Ballard, of Brunswick, read a valuable paper on the Abnaki Indians, and the Rev. Dr. Sheldon, of Bath, read an article on St. George's. In the evening President Woods, of Bowdoin, pronounced a eulogy on the late lamented Parker Cleaveland; the Rev. Mr. Ballard read another paper on the Abnaki Indians; the president of the society closed the meeting by reading a review of a volume published by the Hon. George Folsom, of

New York, on documents relating to Maine found in the English state offices. No wonder that the secretary recorded that the meeting was not only very interesting but protracted.

Nothing daunted, the society met again in Portland, June 29th. The president delivered eulogies on deceased members. The Rev. Mr. Ballard, of Brunswick, followed with an account of the history of the Episcopal Church in Maine; Mr. Robert Hallowell Gardiner read a paper on Benjamin Vaughan; the Rev. David Cushman, of Bath, again turned up to discuss the disputed locality of Captain George Waymouth's voyage; Mr. John L. Locke, of Camden, gave an account of General Waldo's proclamation in Germany; Professor Packard read an interesting letter from Albert Gallatin; the president read a paper on the conflicting claims of the French and English in Acadia; Professor Packard, with the assistance of John Marshall Brown, then an undergraduate in Bowdoin College, exhibited specimens and explained and read a paper by Professor Chadbourne about the celebrated deposit of oyster shells at Damariscotta. The Hon. Phineas Barnes presented a proposal for a union with the Portland Natural History Society, a proposition which led to an animated discussion. What a relief to read: "The afternoon meeting was adjourned to the evening, and a social levee of the members was held at the mansion of the president."

In the evening, John A. Poor, Esq., read a paper on "English Colonization in America," in which he claimed for Sir Ferdinando Gorges the honor of English colonization on this continent and disputed the claims of the Massachusetts historians in behalf of the Pilgrims and Puritans. Rufus K. Sewall, Esq., then read an interesting paper on the historical remains at Sheepscoot and Sagadahoc. The Rev. Mr. Ballard again spoke of the Abnaki Indians. We are not surprised to read in the official minutes: "The society adjourned late in the evening."

But 1859 is not finished. On August 4th the annual meeting was held at Brunswick. Of course the committee on the revision of by-laws reported, and naturally, after long discussion and amendments (*i. e., long* amendments), they were adopted. At eleven o'clock, the society proceeded to the church and listened to a profound and interesting discourse on the methods and laws of history from the Rev. Dr. Hedge, of Brookline, Mass. This learned production, we read, was a fitting and beautiful close of the annual transactions of the society, and we agree with the scribe that the space of the society was, in 1859, filled by deeds, not lingering years. In the sweet language of Ovid,

*"Actis aevum implet, non segnibus annis."*

There was surely nothing slow about that year.

It is perhaps no surprise to the modern reader to turn to the next volume, printed in 1876, and to read:



“The long interval since the last issue of our Collections has been occasioned by various circumstances.” The Civil War was undoubtedly one reason; the deaths of several who were vitally interested in the society left vacancies which the younger generation did not quickly fill. Nevertheless, during all these years from 1859 to 1876, besides the regular annual meetings each year save one, special meetings were held at Augusta, Bath and Portland. Furthermore, the society went afield and met from time to time at Damariscotta, Pemaquid, York and Monhegan. Ours is a virtuous society, but it has had its cakes and ale. During these years there is also some activity to record. In 1859 the office of vice-president was instituted, and Bishop Burgess elected, continuing therein until his death, in 1866. In 1867 the state contracted with the society for an annual volume in a series of volumes containing the earliest documents, charters and other state papers from the archives of foreign countries illustrating the history of Maine. Dr. Leonard Woods, who, in 1866, had resigned the presidency of Bowdoin College after a brilliant administration, was put in charge of the work in Europe, and engaged in historical researches until, in January, 1874, his fine library was destroyed by fire, where a large part of his books and papers perished. Happily the famous Hakluyt manuscript was elsewhere. The Collections published in 1859, 1876 and 1881 contain



many interesting eulogies. It is undoubtedly the fashion nowadays to minimize the importance of the eulogy, although the two biographical addresses lately given by the president of this society have been very well received. Biography is, after all, one of the most attractive of the handmaidens that attend history, and to-day, as with our grandfathers, "The proper study of mankind is man." Such eulogies as those by President Woods on Parker Cleaveland; by Charles Carroll Everett on President Woods; and by Robert Hallowell Gardiner on Benjamin Vaughan, are works of permanent worth, and in themselves justify all the literary activity of our society.

The other day I spent a few hours in going over the records of the Maine Historical Society from 1822 to 1880. It was not at all a wearisome task; for on nearly every page there appeared the name of someone celebrated in the annals of state or college. The annual meetings have been held for the most part in Brunswick. The first was on August 20, 1822, and who knows but that the last may be on June 20, 1922? Apparently there was no meeting in 1826; and there are no records of meetings from 1841 to 1846. From 1830 to 1836 the annual meetings were held in Portland. Sometimes we are discouraged at light attendance and slight interest. It is salutary to reflect that some years the society could not get enough members to meet at all, and

that in 1824 the society voted that the collection of the annual tax be suspended until further notice. In 1836 the secretary, the Rev. Asa Cummings, writes: "The hour of meeting having arrived the secretary stood alone and continued standing till he despaired of being met by any other member of the society, when he adjourned the meeting." The death of Chief Justice Prentiss Mellen was evidently a great blow to the society. He was president from 1834 until his death, December 31, 1840; no meeting was held until September 2, 1846, when Robert Hallowell Gardiner became president. He served until 1856; then came William Willis, 1856-1864; Edward E. Bourne, 1864-1873; and James W. Bradbury, 1874-1889.

One of the features of the society from 1855 to 1871 was a midwinter meeting, held annually with the exception of 1866, in Augusta in January or February. These meetings seem to have been well attended and certainly did much to popularize (if I may use that horrid word) the cause of the society throughout the state. In 1873 and 1874 such a meeting was held at Bath, and in 1877 there was an elegant field day at Wiscasset. In the period under review, 1822-1880, only nineteen meetings were held in Portland, while sixteen were convened in Augusta and fifty-three in Brunswick. That those were hardy days is shown by the hour of the annual meeting at the college town, 8.00 A. M.!

During the early years the collections of books, curiosities and objects of historical interest were necessarily small. But by 1847 it was necessary to provide suitable quarters, and a committee was appointed for that purpose. Early in the fifties the college assigned a room in back of the chapel for the use of the society. In 1860, we read that this room was fitted up with glass cases and that the books had been transferred thither from the college library. For some years these quarters seemed, if not commodious, at least adequate. But in 1876 Mr. John Marshall Brown, of Portland, offered a resolution to remove the collections to Portland. The motion had the usual fate of too eager reform and was laid on the table, expense being the chief objection raised. But the question would not down; and after four years of agitation a special meeting was held at Brunswick, November 23, 1880, to consider a very definite proposition to accept an offer from the city government of Portland to occupy a room in the City Building. There was an interesting debate. Some opposed removal to Portland on the ground that it would localize interest in the society; others argued that the incorporators, after deliberation, fixed on Brunswick, with its college, as the most suitable place for it; "as the literary gentlemen of the state were accustomed to repair thither at its annual commencement." The resolve to remove

carried by a vote of 16 yea and 9 nay; and the committee of removal consisted of Mr. James Phinney Baxter (who had, with our revered president, Dr. Burrage, become a member of the society in 1878), General John Marshall Brown and Mr. Lewis Pierce. With the appointment of that committee this paper properly ends.

I cannot, however, forbear taxing your patience for a brief space more to point out how many things of interest are revealed as one looks over the years from 1822 to 1880. An historical society is not in itself a very exciting body. But unquestionably ours has rendered some service to the state. The two things that have impressed me most in reviewing our history have been the quality of the men who have been connected with its destinies, and the real amount of good, sound, scholarly work produced by men who were not primarily scholars, but whose earlier training and devotion to truth gave them sound, scholarly instincts. It is true that we have not the leisure of our fathers and grandfathers. Life grows daily more complex. But we can at least envy them if we cannot emulate their excellent example. And as we review the struggles of those early years and the volumes produced under many difficulties it is not altogether reassuring to remember that we have published no volume of proceedings or of documentary collections since 1916.

There is excellent reading, even for the amateur, in many of those early books; let us hope that our generation may leave to posterity work as creditable.



# THE MAINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY AT PORTLAND.

BY HON. AUGUSTUS F. MOULTON.

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The Maine Historical Society, from the time of the granting of its charter in 1822, had close connection with Bowdoin College. Its official location and its collections and library were, during all of its earlier years, at Brunswick. The annual meetings of the society were almost an integral part of the college commencements. It does not appear that any effort was made to effect a change until after 1870. About that time it began to be suggested that connection so close with one college was likely to arouse jealousy upon the part of the other colleges in the state, whose co-operation was earnestly desired, and also that an association whose purposes were expressly applicable to the whole state ought to have an independent home of its own. Some of the most active of its members were residents of Portland and vicinity, and it was argued that a location in that city would be more convenient for the people of western Maine, and that even for the members living in the eastern part of the

state it would be almost, if not quite, as easy of access as the old meeting place at Brunswick.

The first record of a movement to bring about a change appears when, at the annual meeting held July 14, 1876, General John Marshall Brown, one of the most earnest and active of its members, presented a resolution having reference to the removal of the society from Brunswick to Portland. The proposal met with little favor, and the motion was laid on the table. The principal objection made was that, because of the society funds being very limited, the cost of removal to Portland and of obtaining and maintaining quarters in that place would be prohibitive. The work done by the society, notwithstanding its lack of means, as shown by its records and its publications, had been extraordinary in importance and shows the remarkable self-sacrificing efforts of its associates.

Some Portland members continued to display great interest in the matter. At the annual meeting of July 12, 1878, the membership was increased by the addition of prominent Portland men. A special meeting was called and held November 23, 1880, to consider the matter of removal, and a letter from Mayor William Senter was then presented, stating that he was authorized by the municipal officers of the city of Portland to offer, in behalf of the city, to the Historical Society, for their library, their collections and for their meetings, the free use



of the hall and anteroom in the city building lately vacated by the Portland Natural History Society. After a full discussion it was decided by a vote of sixteen in the affirmative and nine in the negative to make the change. It will be noted that this vote related only to the Historical Society in general terms, without reference to the holding of its annual meetings as specified in the charter. That was not necessary, since by amendment of the charter in 1828 the society was authorized to hold the annual and other meetings at such time and place as they might deem proper.

James P. Baxter was made chairman of a committee appointed to take charge of and supervise the business incidental to the change. The matter was attended to so promptly and efficiently that February 2, 1881, the rooms in the City Building were in order, and on that date a special meeting of the society was held in the new quarters. A lease of the premises was tendered and accepted, and a vote of thanks and recognition of the generosity of the city was passed. The removal of the tangible effects was made complete, and since that time Portland has been the general place of occupation and business for everything, except that the annual meetings have, for the most part, been held at Brunswick.

A public dinner was given at the Falmouth Hotel June 10, 1887, in honor of the eighty-fifth

birthday of Hon. James W. Bradbury, for a long time the efficient and devoted president of the society. On that occasion it was announced by Prof. Henry L. Chapman that Hon. James P. Baxter was about to make the city of Portland a gift of a public library building, and that the plans would provide very ample accommodations for the Maine Historical Society. At the annual meeting held June 21, 1887, it was voted that the society accept Mr. Baxter's gift of rooms in the library building with grateful thanks. The building was in due course completed, and on February 22, 1889, the first meeting, a special one largely attended, was held there in what is now the reference room of the library.

The society continued to occupy the conspicuous historical rooms in the public library building for three years. The municipal library and its patronage increased rapidly and the need of more space grew pressing. The city, in 1892, made a proposition to the society to exchange the possession of the historical rooms upon the first floor of the building for the larger hall and anteroom upon the second floor. The terms offered were attractive, and the society voted to accept the new quarters and surrender the old, in accordance with the proposition submitted. The removal was made under the supervision of Philip H. Brown, and for a considerable period this abiding place, named Baxter Hall,

with lecture room and library, was continued in occupation.

At a meeting held January 25, 1901, Lewis Pierce, Esq., was present and made announcement that Anne Longfellow Pierce, a sister of Longfellow the poet, was desirous to befriend the Historical Society by making a gift to it of the old Wadsworth-Longfellow homestead on Congress Street, to be owned and occupied after her decease as its regular and permanent establishment. The place offered was itself very valuable. The location was convenient and it was in every way desirable. The gift was accepted with much appreciation, and by deed of conveyance, dated April 27, 1895, Mrs. Pierce transferred the property in fee to the society, with the reservation that the donor should retain for herself the use and occupation of the homestead during her lifetime, and that it should thereafter be held and maintained for the use of the society and as a memorial building. Baxter Hall continued to be the headquarters of the association until after the decease of Mrs. Pierce, which occurred in 1901.

The Baxter deed of gift to the city as trustee contained the provision that the Historical Society should have the free use of the quarters furnished in the public library building so long as it should choose to occupy them, but if it should become possessed of and occupy other premises the society interest would thereby terminate and the entire

building revert to the city for library purposes. The change of location, therefore, and the acceptance of the very attractive proposition of Mrs. Pierce occasioned the complete sacrifice of the previous benefaction of Mr. Baxter and compelled the assumption of new and important responsibilities connected with the care and ownership of an independent situation of its own. For these reasons it is not surprising that the donation, while it was accepted with hearty appreciation, gave rise to misgivings upon the part of some as to the ability of the society to carry on successfully in its amplified field of endeavor.

The decision having been made and the time for action having arrived, the practical part of the business became a matter for serious consideration. The Anne Longfellow Pierce homestead and lot, so generously bestowed, consisted of land with frontage of  $66\frac{1}{2}$  feet on Congress Street and 255 feet in depth, containing 16,093 square feet. The assessed value of the property in 1901 was \$23,700.00, but its actual worth was considerably more. The Longfellow family restored the interior of the mansion at their own expense and under their own supervision, and furnished funds for renovation and repair of the exterior. The house has proved to be a veritable Mecca to those who love the memory of Longfellow and appreciate his writings. Thousands of people from all parts of the world have visited and enjoyed

the home of the poet's youth, with its quaint old-time furnishings and attractive associations.

The erection of the library building in which we have met to-day was no small undertaking. A large committee was appointed and subscription papers were circulated, both in this vicinity and abroad. The response was generous. Substantial contributions were made in Maine and from distant places. Ladies gave entertainments, enthusiasm of practical character was manifested, and the effort to raise funds met with large success.

The financial part of the undertaking having reached a point where it was deemed safe to proceed, the work itself was undertaken. Alexander W. Longfellow, a nephew of the poet, was selected as supervising architect, with Francis H. Fassett as assistant, and together they made the plans for the handsome building, so finely proportioned and specially adapted for the purposes of the society, as we now behold it. The structure is two stories in height, with commodious basement. The whole construction is of most approved fireproof quality, with bookcases of metal. There are three series of bookstacks, one rising above the other, and having capacity for holding 30,000 volumes. The large room on the first floor gives space for the display of articles of historic interest, as well as ample room and accommodations for visitors. Directly off the library room is a spacious and most secure vault for

holding objects of special value. The main hall and ante room on the second floor are conveniently adapted for general meetings.

The total cost of the building, as appears by the record, was \$38,201.18, this being exclusive of expenditures upon the mansion. Of this amount \$16,682.42 was raised by subscriptions, \$6,518.76 from income of the house and \$15,000.00 by a cash loan secured upon the premises, the larger part of which, it must be said with regret, still remains unpaid. The Wadsworth-Longfellow mansion itself, it will be noted, is not only of great antiquarian value, being the first house built wholly of brick in Portland, but has been from the first, and still is, a substantial source of revenue. With much of anxious effort the new fireproof library building was at length completed, the Longfellow residence renovated and restored without and within, and the library and other properties arranged in the new places. For this work special credit should be given to Fritz H. Jordan, Henry Deering and Rev. John Carroll Perkins. The labor of loyalty and love having been accomplished, the library and homestead were, on the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, February 27, 1907, formally dedicated, with appropriate ceremonies, as the permanent, commodious and attractive home of the Maine Historical Society.

The physical location consequent upon the re-

moval to Portland was a matter of great importance, but the real work, the work for which the society was organized, was of larger import and had not been neglected. Soon after the change of location, the membership, which had been limited to one hundred, was increased to two hundred, and this limitation was subsequently further increased to four hundred. Upon the decease of Hon. James W. Bradbury, James P. Baxter, June 25, 1889, became president and occupied that office continuously for twenty-two years, until his late and lamented decease.

The growth of the society Collections and publications since the time of the removal in 1880 has been creditable. At that time the publications consisted of eight printed volumes of Collections, meaning literary contributions and records, to which should be added the memorial volume of the Popham celebration of 1863, not included in its Collections. The society library, when transferred to Portland, contained by estimate 11,000 bound volumes and a very numerous assortment of pamphlets, documents and other accumulated historical data not in book form. It had also a large number of curios and relics. Since the removal, fourteen volumes of Collections have been printed. Besides these, the society has been sponsor for twenty-four volumes of Documentary History. The last named volumes consist of a compilation of royal charters and patents relating to Maine issued by the early



officials holding authority from king and council, French and English, together with parliamentary acts and other documents, comprising nearly all of the official papers relating to the early settlements and later colonial history of Maine. This invaluable collection was arranged under the immediate supervision of President Baxter and printed by the state. The present library of the society comprises 27,368 bound volumes and a very great accumulation of pamphlets and rare documents, of number estimated to be equal to the bound volumes. Besides these literary productions there are arranged and displayed in the library rooms an assortment of portraits, relics and articles of colonial and historical association not surpassed by those of any other similar organization.

The classification and numbering of the printed volumes of the society publications is somewhat confusing. The method adopted has been that of the Massachusetts society, by which books are numbered by series, each series comprising ten volumes. There are series of Collections and also series of Documentary History. Of the Collections there are ten of the first series, ten of the second series and two of the third series, twenty-two in all. The Documentary histories are numbered both by series and by consecutive numbers. These, for some reason unexplained, begin with series two and comprise, as has been said, twenty-four volumes. Some



of the Documentary volumes include copies of legal documents and historical papers as well. Besides these books there are printed pamphlets of the society containing full accounts of the exercises and papers relating to celebrations of particular events. It is difficult, therefore, to state the precise number of printed issues actually put out. Besides these there are manuscripts, some bound and some not in binding. The society has large collections of newspapers, such as fifty-seven volumes (1831 to 1859) of the *Portland Advertiser*, a complete set (1837 to 1901) of the *Portland Transcript*, and others, besides its great assortment of pamphlets, local histories and public and private records. The expense of printing the Documentary series has been, for the most part, contributed by the state, the editorial work being done under the supervision of the society.

Among the notable publications are the Trelawny papers (Vol. III of Documentary History), which contain the correspondence and business papers of Robert Trelawny, who had an early grant on the Spurwink River in Cape Elizabeth and Richmond Island and attempted to enforce also a claim to Machegonne, the peninsula on which Portland was founded by George Cleeve. These papers were obtained from England by John Wingate Thornton, and arranged and annotated partly by him and partly, after his decease, by Mr. Baxter. These

relate to the Trelawny occupation within the earlier concession of the Province of Lygonia, which province comprised most of western Maine, and was established a second time by the English parliamentary confiscation of the greater part of Sir Ferdinando Gorges' Palatinate, and came to an end with the restoration of the English king. The editorial notes and references are even more informing than the text.

In the Documentary History series are the Farnham Papers (second series, Vols. VII and VIII), being a collection of documents relating to the territorial history of Maine, a work of immense original research made by Mary Frances Farnham, of the Oregon Historical Society and the American Historical Society. This collection was presented by Miss Farnham and published by the society, aided by appropriation from the state. It includes practically all important public acts and documents relating to Maine from 1603 to 1871.

Two large volumes by Joseph Williamson, 1896, give a bibliography of Maine, the purpose of which is stated to be, "To give the full title of every book, pamphlet and reputable magazine article having reference to Maine and also all those of which the authors were resident within the state." These were printed under the auspices of the society. Mr. Williamson contributed also his extensive Scrap

Book, in which are rescued from oblivion many contributions to current periodicals.

Four manuscript volumes now in the library contain the York Court records, a transcript of an official copy made by the state and kept in the office of the secretary of state in Augusta. These are of more than local interest, for from the time when the province first came under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts until 1760, Yorkshire embraced the whole Province of Maine.

There are preserved in the vault the William Willis papers and manuscripts, being the assembled collections made by him during a long life devoted to extended research. Much of this material was used by Willis in his published works, and other parts of it will be of assistance to some future historian.

The Maine Wills, consisting of an exact copy of all wills appearing in the York Court records from the earliest in 1640, were compiled with particular exactness by William M. Sargent, Esq., under the auspices of the society, authorized and assisted financially under resolve of the state in 1887. These include all Maine wills from 1640 to 1760, four hundred and seventy-one in number.

The eighteen volumes of York Deeds consist of copies of deeds found in the records of York County from the earliest in 1640, when the government of the Province of Maine was organized under the

Gorges charter. The first was compiled by John T. Hull under the oversight of Hobart W. Richardson, the text being copied by William M. Sargent, Esq. This publication was made under resolve of the state in 1883, authorizing, with an appropriation, the superintendence of the work by the Maine Historical Society. The compilation of nearly all of the subsequent volumes, after the decease of Mr. Hull and Mr. Sargent, was done by Leonard B. Chapman. The introduction in the first volume, by Hobart W. Richardson, gives an account of the source of land titles in Maine with thoroughness and completeness that could hardly be surpassed and leaves little to be desired. This series ends with printed volume eighteen, published in 1910, and should be completed so as to bring the record to 1760, when the county of York was divided into the three counties, York, Cumberland and Lincoln.

The Barclay papers and the Ward Chipman papers, in manuscript, give particulars of the dispute over the northeastern boundary of Maine more fully than can be found elsewhere.

The extensive and valuable library of the Maine branch of the Loyal Legion of the United States has been presented and forms a valuable part of the library.

The society has also the Baxter Manuscripts, being a bound set of hand-written copies, English, French and American, obtained by Hon. James P.

Baxter. Nearly all of these have been put into printed form by the state and are included in the Documentary series referred to.

There is also a life of General Henry Dearborn by his son, Henry A. S. Dearborn, in seven volumes of manuscript. This work is not a biography alone, but comprises a wide historical range. It is interesting, both for its literary value and also for the rare and artistic character of the writing and illuminated pen work.

These references to unpublished compilations comprise a part only of the more important ones, taken to some extent at random. Many of the published accounts of anniversary celebrations and dedicatory exercises, which include the memorial volume of Henry W. Longfellow's seventy-fifth birthday (1882), the "Tercentenary of the Voyage of Martin Pring" (1903), the "Tercentenary of De Monts Settlement at St. Croix Island" (1904), the "Tercentenary of Weymouth's Landing" (1905), the "Tercentenary of the Beginning of the Popham Colony" (1907) and that of the dedication of the monument commemorating the Maine soldiers at Valley Forge (1907), are noteworthy and deserve extended notice. The Longfellow case, presented by Alexander W. Longfellow, and containing a classified and systematically arranged mass of literary material relating to aviation and naval history during the world war, forms, of itself, a remarkable

collection and should be examined rather than described.

Among the relics and exhibits found in the rooms of the library building the Fogg collection of autographs stands pre-eminent. This collection was made by Dr. John S. H. Fogg and bequeathed by him in his will to the society. Dr. Fogg was a graduate of Bowdoin College, class of 1846, and also of the Medical School. These comprise fifty-nine bound manuscript volumes and represent years of research and effort. Among the autographs are those of Ferdinand and Isabella, 1492; of Queen Elizabeth, 1591; of all the colonial governors, all the signers of the Declaration of Independence, of the presidents of the United States and of others, foreign and American, too numerous even for suggestion in brief reference. This collection was appraised by an expert, in the inventory of Dr. Fogg's estate, at the selling value of \$25,000, which appraisal was probably far below the actual value. It came into the possession of the society in 1907, and is one of the best, if not the very best, in the United States.

Other noted and invaluable relics which chiefly attract the attention of visitors are the strong box of Father Rale, taken at the capture of Norridgewock in 1724, and the bell of his chapel, which was later discovered in its hiding place near by. There may be seen also the baptismal font used by

Rev. Robert Jordan, the Episcopal clergyman very prominent at the time of the second settlement of Portland and before; the clock of Governor John Hancock, of Revolutionary fame; the General Henry Dearborn relics, and especially the bust of Henry W. Longfellow, which is a replica of that in Westminster Abbey and was presented to the society by the London executive committee of the English Longfellow Memorial fund. These remarkable curios and attractions cannot be enumerated at length and are worthy of extended examination.

The founders and supporters of the society prior to the removal to Portland receive appreciative notice in the address of President Sills. The worthy scholars and gentlemen who then composed the membership continued their activities afterward. It is an invidious and impossible task to attempt to enumerate or to make to any full extent special mention of all those who have contributed and still contribute to its welfare in the later days. It seems, however, appropriate to name a few of the prominent ones who have served in various ways, necessarily omitting mention of others quite as worthy.

Senator James Ware Bradbury was at all times a staunch and faithful supporter and advocate. He was a typical gentleman of the old courteous school. A graduate of Bowdoin in the famous class of 1825, having for classmates Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry W. Longfellow and John S. C. Abbot, and for fifty-



one year a member of the official boards of the college, serving also in the high position of United States Senator from Maine, he was both a zealous promoter of historical research and a whole-hearted worker in behalf of the society. From 1874 to 1890 he filled with distinguished ability the office of president. Although he did not favor the removal, his loyal and helpful assistance in all ways continued, and in his will he left to it a substantial token of remembrance.

Hon. James Phinney Baxter became president in 1889, as successor to Mr. Bradbury, and continued in the presidential office until the time of his decease, in 1921. Mr. Baxter was a gentleman of ability and dignified courtesy, and presided at its functions to general acceptance. Although a man of extensive business affairs, he devoted much time to historical research and historical writing. He was not only president of this society, but was likewise president of the New England Historic Genealogical Society from 1899, and was a member of other historical and literary associations. The public library building, in which our society had its home for some years, was a gift from Mr. Baxter to the city of Portland as trustee. In the field of historical investigation Mr. Baxter had few equals, and his editorial and original work appears in many of our society publications. His most prominent work, perhaps, "Ferdinando Gorges and His Province of



Maine," in three volumes, a production involving wide research in America and England, was published by the Prince Society, a distinguished private association in Boston. His "George Cleeve of Casco Bay," a book of equal merit, together with "The Voyage of Capt. Christopher Levett," annotated by him, appear among the publications of the Gorges Society, a private and select organization in Portland. He assembled at his own expense the papers referred to as the Baxter Manuscripts, which make nineteen of the twenty-four volumes of Documentary History of Maine, published by the state under the auspices of this society. Mr. Baxter's taste for history was his literary specialty. His own private historical library, lately disposed of by auction sale, was one of the finest aggregations in the whole country. Mr. Baxter's long occupation of the highest office in the society's gift, and his own accomplishments, long identified his name with that of the Maine Historical Society.

Rev. Henry Sweetser Burrage, D. D., a graduate of Brown University, and also state historian of Maine, is now the society president. He became vice-president in 1915, after the decease of Professor Henry L. Chapman and two years of incumbency by Professor George T. Files, and has long been one of the pillars of the organization and one of the chief contributors to its advancement. It is no disparagement to anyone to say that in exec-

utive matters he has long been the most efficient member. Notwithstanding the pressing requirements of professional and editorial life, and the constant performance of other literary work, he has found time to keep a steady oversight of the society's affairs. His papers, addresses and writings, as appears by the records, have been extraordinary in number and quality. His books as state historian, "Beginnings of Colonial Maine" and "The Northeastern Boundary Controversy," are works of fine character and interest, and of lasting value. Dr. Burrage unquestionably ranks with the very first of those who have established the reputation and high quality of this great public utility.

Rev. Henry O. Thayer, one of the earlier members, has done notable work. He has been the author of numerous papers and pamphlets showing patient investigation and singular accuracy. Among some of the more important are, "The Beginnings of Pemaquid," papers concerning various Kennebec localities, "Early Ministry on the Kennebec," "The Indian Administration of Justice," and especially his valuable volume entitled "The Sagadahoc Colony," published by the Gorges Society in 1892.

No man in the whole career of the society did for it more disinterested and efficient service than Fritz H. Jordan, for many years its treasurer and chief financial manager. He was a man of capacity, sound judgment and lofty ideals regarding public

matters. Freely, and without thought of compensation, except such as comes from the sense of duty well performed, he gave to the society's affairs just as careful attention as he applied to his own large business operations. His tastes were artistic and soundly practical. In the erection and equipment of the new library building, and in its after-development, he was principal adviser and overseer. Personally he was most attractive—a modest gentleman of the highest type and of character unexcelled. The society to-day is indebted to him almost for its existence. By his will he bequeathed to it the largest financial legacy that it has received, but his personality and inspiring example are his best memorial.

Hubbard W. Bryant was for a long time secretary of the society and an indefatigable helper. He was an official of the J. B. Brown Banking Company, and devoted a large part of his time outside of his business engagements to work in behalf of the society. Although his activities were not of a showy kind, they were unselfishly bestowed and were beneficial in many ways.

The Goolds, William Goold and Nathan Goold, were most valuable members. William Goold, the father, was an authority in historical matters, as is shown by his book, "Portland in the Past." Nathan Goold, the son, became secretary in 1914 as successor of Hubbard W. Bryant. He made his head-

quarters at the library and was author of many papers and pamphlets. He kept in touch with the needs of the library and of the mansion, and the oversight of the two occupied most of his time. Nathan Goold was a walking encyclopedia of information, and it is unfortunate that he did not commit more of his historical and genealogical knowledge to writing.

Among others, Henry Deering, a man of exquisite taste and constant interest; Charles E. Allen, a man familiar with the byways of antiquarian research; John Francis Sprague, historian and editor; Leonard B. Chapman, industrious and persistent; George C. Owen, compiler of a reference index that will perpetuate his name; Alexander W. Longfellow, architect of the library building and contributor of the Alexander W. Longfellow collections, are deserving of more particular mention than can be given in this brief sketch.

Although the accomplishments of the society in the last thirty-three years have been important, it has all the time been seriously hampered by financial limitations. Such invested funds as it has are for the most part made applicable by conditions imposed by the donors to certain special purposes. The demand for interest payments upon the unpaid portion of the funded debt has, of course, been imperative. It is pleasant to mention that the new treasurer, Walter G. Davis, has initiated a campaign

for contributions which bids fair to wipe out completely this long standing incubus of mortgage. The principal monetary gifts received have been those from the trustees of the Joseph Walker estate, the Thomas B. Reed monument committee, and the recent bequest from Fritz H. Jordan.

The dearth of working income has made necessary the omission for quite a long time of publications in its series of historical papers. The last volume of published collections is Volume II of Series III, put out in 1906. Meetings have been held and the reading of papers kept up, due very much to the persistent energy of Dr. Burrage. No period has produced papers of greater interest. Copies for publication have been regularly requested, and considerable matter of consequence is now on hand available for printing. Considerable also, it must be said with regret, has not been so left, because the authors were aware that such material could only be kept on the file for indefinite custody. There are few places where an endowment would be productive of more lasting good than here.

The society furnishes and keeps constantly open a free public library, which is consulted daily by students and interested parties from far and near. Besides its books upon historical topics, it has many useful reference works, and also a large and fine genealogical collection, giving the descent of many families. It has also a rare assortment of town and

local histories and scrap-book collections relating to current events, such as can be found nowhere else. Young people from the public schools, among others, make constant use of the library books and material. The Wadsworth-Longfellow mansion is more than self-sustaining, due very much to kindly volunteer assistance, and the surplus there obtained goes to help out the other slender income. Mention is particularly due to the efficient and courteous attendants, Miss Evelyn L. Gilmore and Miss Ethel T. Hall, who have the immediate and general charge of the properties. Their expert knowledge and valuable assistance are freely given, and are, in fact, indispensable, since the library has no available itemized list of its almost innumerable collections of books, documents and manuscripts, printed and unprinted, and its great assortment of articles kept for observations and instruction.

The record of the accomplishments of the Maine Historical Society from the foundation to the present time is impressive. It is, in principal perspective, a tale of individual initiative and loyal earnestness for public service. The work has been done with painfully stinted means, and perhaps, unfortunately, it has been wrought with such modesty and absence of ostentation that the general public have but little knowledge of the contents of its treasure house, or of the unrequited labors of those who have assembled here so much of the record of past human

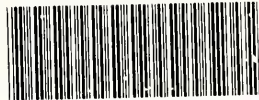
experience for its present helpful value and for its permanent use in illuminating the path of future progress.







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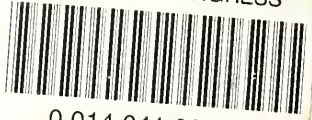


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