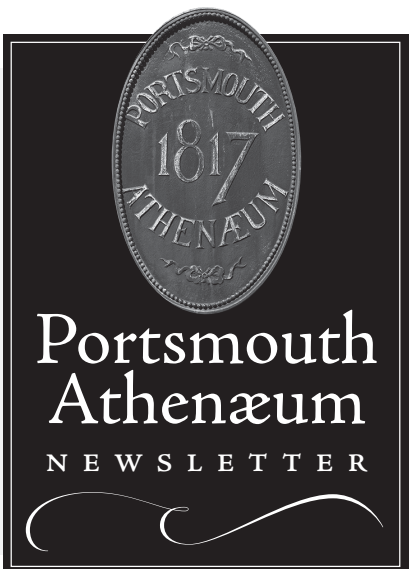


Spring 2017

News and events for  
Proprietors, Subscribers & Friends  
of the Portsmouth Athenæum

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## The Portsmouth Athenæum: 1840-1899, High Hopes and Ambitious Plans

SANDRA RUX  
Exhibits Committee Chair

200 Years of Treasures at the Portsmouth Athenæum, our bicentennial exhibit series, continues with "High Hopes and Ambitious Plans—1840-1899 which opened on April 21.

The period began auspiciously, with keeping the ranks of Proprietors filled, an ever-growing library and additional subscribers for the Reading Room. An article in the *Portsmouth Journal* in 1862 called it a "gradual upward progress" resulting in a library of over 10,000 volumes, and a well-used Reading Room.

A furnace was added in the 1850s and lighting changed with new technologies (see *Athenæum Arcana*, Page 3). In 1855, the Reading Room was redecorated in a popular Victorian style with frescoes. Another major redecoration

## A Bicentennial Gift

The Portsmouth Athenæum Publications Committee is pleased to announce that Proprietors and Subscribers can pick up their complimentary copy of the book entitled *Portsmouth Athenæum: The Story of a Collection Through the Eyes of Its Proprietors, 1817-2017* after the Toast to the Bicentennial on Wednesday, June 21.

This lavishly illustrated, hardbound book explores the Athenæum's building, furnishings and objects and the role of Proprietors past and present in acquiring and preserving them. The 22 essays were written by Proprietors and the Athenæum staff.

Following are some of the variety of essays you will find: Pat Breslin examines the half-hull models adorning the walls; Ursula Wright introduces the first female subscriber; Richard Adams offers insights on the cannons that greet us at the door; Keeper Tom Hardiman reveals the secrets of the Athenæum's book-cases and Douglas Aykroyd tells the story of a renaissance man and Athenæum Proprietor, Col. Henry B. Margeson.

The gift of the book is made possible in part by the Donald H. Margeson



Fund, created in 1994 and established to cover the costs of a history of the Athenæum. Anyone wishing to maintain the fund for future publications (our 250th, for example!) is welcome to make a donation.

Your copy of the book will be available after the June 21 toast in the Reading Room, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., as well as at the Athenæum throughout our bicentennial year.

Above: We have chosen "Athena of the Parthenon" as our symbol for the Bicentennial Year of the Portsmouth Athenæum. On Athena's hand is Nike, goddess of strength, victory and speed. Image from De Quincy, M., *Quatremère Monuments et Ouvrages D'Art Antiques Restitués* (Paris: Jules Renouard, 1829), 2 vol. [acc#21072-3 Woodbury 8]. Logo by Susan Kress Hamilton.

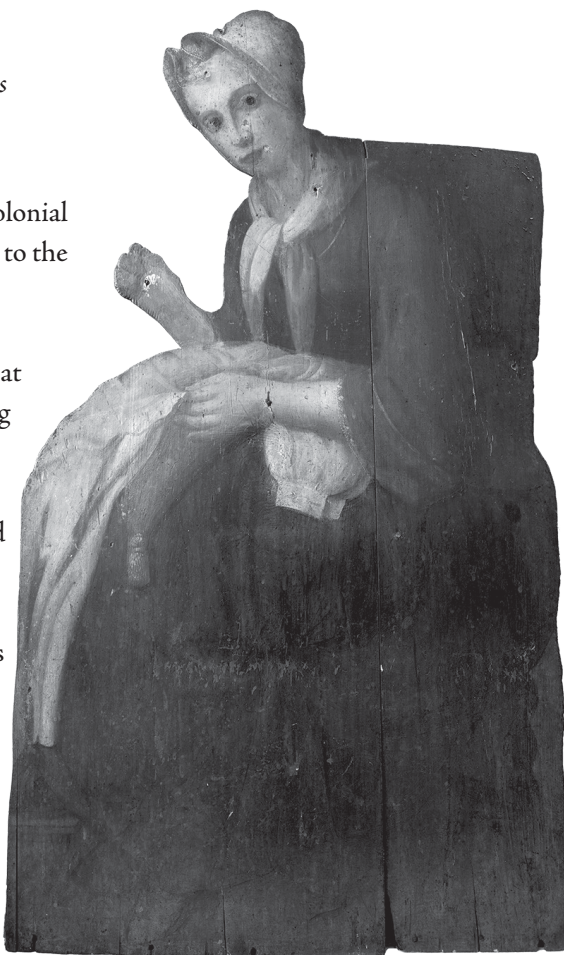
in 1893-1895—this one in the colonial revival style—added the fireplace to the original Reading Room finish.

By 1861, the library was bulging at the seams. Opening up the ceiling to the top-floor museum (then relegated to the Mezzanine) allowed new book shelves around the perimeter. New alcoves were later added for the libraries of Benjamin T. Tredick and Charles Levi Woodbury. The suitability of women as librarians was discussed, and a card catalog system was adopted in 1899.

Leadership generally devolved to the ministers in town—the Rev. Charles Burroughs until his death in 1867 and later to the Rev. Alfred Gooding (1856-1934) of the South Church. While "the Athenaeum Boys" continued to congregate in the remodeled reading room, by century's end the Athenaeum seldom attracted newcomers.

Curator Sandra Rux will present a gallery talk on Saturday, May 6, at 11 a.m., "High Hopes and Ambitious Plans."

The Discover Portsmouth Center has offered an excellent opportunity to showcase both the history and the current cultural role played by the Portsmouth Athenaeum. Richard Candee and Bob Chase, assisted by Athenaeum staff Carolyn Marvin and James Smith, will curate an exhibit in the program room on the second



*Tradition has identified the woman sewing as Mrs. Elizabeth Knight Janvrin Adams (1687-1757), the wife of Rev. Joseph Adams of Newington. The dummy board is painted in oil on Scots pine (probably English), circa 1730-1750.*

Photo: David J. Murray, ClearEyePhoto.com.

floor of the Discover Portsmouth Center.

"200 Years of Treasures of the Portsmouth Athenaeum" will formally open on Friday, May 5, for Art Around Town, and will run until the beginning of September. Discover Portsmouth is open from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. every day. The exhibition will feature some of the curiosities from the Athenaeum's early museum, books, ephemera and manuscripts.

## A Bicentennial Cap

The Bicentennial of the Athenaeum is upon us.

The Publications Committee decided to up the game a bit, so for this year only, there will be a second cap for sale. The committee requested a golden-colored cap with a green insignia to honor the 200th. Be the first on your block to sport this fashion-forward chapeau.

With this new color, two-cap families finally can live peacefully, with no more arguing over the green caps. The new cap is in production and should be available for purchase this spring.

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*Portsmouth Athenaeum Newsletter* is published three times yearly. Deadlines for articles are March 1, July 1 and October 1.

Contributions and queries may be directed to Publications Committee Chair/Editor Sherry Wood at [sixswords@aol.com](mailto:sixswords@aol.com).

EDITOR:

Sherry Wood

DESIGNER:

Susan Kress Hamilton

CONTRIBUTORS:

Dick Adams, Douglas Aykroyd, Ann Beattie, Tom Hardiman, Peggy Hodges, Don Margeson, Sandra Rux, Sherry Wood

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# Arcana DICK ADAMS

## Hardy Proprietors

In these troubled times it may be tempting to look upon earlier periods in the Athenaeum's history — say, the 1830s — as being simpler and generally more pleasant than the present.

While they may have been in some respects, in terms of creature comforts life was incomparably less agreeable than what we take for granted today. Consider the matter of staying warm: until 1861, when the first hot-air furnace was installed, the 1805 building relied on three fireplaces on the first and third floors (and possibly more on the fourth floor until it was opened up in 1861).

A stove — presumably a Franklin — was added on the first floor in 1810 and again in 1817, well before the Athenaeum acquired the building in 1823. Fireplaces being notoriously inefficient means of providing interior heat, the stoves may have been of some help.

In 1816, almost 15 cords of wood were consumed in an effort to heat just the first floor of the building. To envision that much wood, picture a stack 4 feet deep, 4 feet high, and 120 feet in length. The firewood was stored in a dual-purpose shed that covered most of today's back parking lot. Its second function was to serve as an outhouse, there being no plumbing in the building until 1890.

The memoir of William H.Y. Hackett speaks of "the reading room

on the ground-floor present[ing] of a winter afternoon or evening the picture of comfort, in the woodfire that blaze[s] upon the hearth...", but it's probable that most of us, if transported in time to that era, would not have found the room especially warm nor the prospect of a trip to the privy particularly inviting in the dead of winter.

An indication of the hardiness (and probably the frugality) of those early Proprietors is reflected in a poll the board issued in 1861 to gauge interest in installing a coal furnace. Of 59 Proprietors participating, 32 wanted a furnace. Seventeen did not and 10 were indifferent.

Until 1851 the rooms were illuminated by kerosene lamps, hardly an incentive to read far into the night. In that year gas fixtures were installed in the first floor (the Reading Room) and staircase, but for reasons unknown the gas lighting was unpopular; in 1863 the Proprietors voted unanimously to revert to kerosene. Electric lighting did not appear until the early 1900s.

Hot summer days could not have been pleasant in the Athenaeum, as no means existed to provide cooling (the 1805 Building was not fitted with air conditioning until 2004).

Early photographs often show the building with its large windows facing Congress Street open, but given the Victorian custom of men to wear vests and jackets throughout the year, we must assume that they tolerated heat discomfort far better than we do today.

*Congratulations to the following Proprietors celebrating their long association with the Portsmouth Athenaeum (compiled by Douglas Aykroyd):*

### 55-YEAR PROPRIETORS

Howard T. Oedel, Life Share #5

### 50-YEAR PROPRIETORS

Dana Walker Mayo, Share 32

### 35-YEAR PROPRIETORS

Peter E. Randall, Share 3

Peter Weeks, Share 69

### 30-YEAR PROPRIETORS

Lynne Crocker, Share 43

Cdr. Stanley O. Davis, Share 76

Armistead Dennett, Share 168

J. Michael Hughes, Share 203

Richard E. Winslow, Share 80

### 25-YEAR PROPRIETORS

Robert Rhett Austell, Share 296

Susan Sweetser Bank, share 297

Patricia Griffin Barbour, Share 295

Nancy Reynolds Beck, Share 294

John Holt, Brewster, Share 53

Thomas George Coleman, Share 285

Louisa Gillespie, Share 300

Neil A. Graves, Share 281

Col. Lionel Ingram, Share 4

Gerald J. Kelly, Share 253

A.T. Michael MacDonald, Share 152

Elizabeth H. Muzzey, Share 272

Samuel Seabury Reid, Share 49

Joseph Anthony Ritzo, Share 278

Rodney D. Rowland, Share 292

Thomas F. Smith, Share 86

Clinton Hoxsie Springer, Share 293

Jeffrey A. Wood, Share 234

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



# IMPORTANT NEW SPECIAL COLLECTIONS ACQUISITION: The Israel Kimball Papers

DON MARGESON, *Publications Committee*



*Israel Kimball (1812-1890) is shown with his family at his home at 848 Islington St. in Portsmouth.*

In 2016 the Portsmouth Athenaeum made a major acquisition for its Special Collections holdings: a large body of the papers of Israel Kimball (1812-1890).

The Athenaeum already owned some of Kimball's pocket diaries and other papers from the 1850s. The new acquisition greatly expands this collection to add over 600 letters; material from the family of Kimball's wife, notably a ship's log kept by her brother; numerous family photographs; and ephemera such as broadsides, handbills, play programs, and calling and business cards.

Special Collections Committee Chairman Richard Candee calls the Kimball collection the Athenaeum's

most important "birth-to-death" collection for any Portsmouth family after the Wendell Family collection. The new materials were obtained from a dealer in Manchester as part of a larger collection that he had acquired from Kimball descendants in Pittsburgh.

Israel Kimball was born in Wells, Maine, to a family of performing singers. He attended Bowdoin College, where he joined a literary society and wrote on cultural subjects; he may have signaled his later political views by participating in a meeting called to express sympathy with a black student at the University of Vermont.

He graduated in 1839 and in the following year married Clara Parsons

Bragdon, also of Wells; the couple eventually had four daughters and two sons.

After briefly managing singing schools in Great Falls (Somersworth) and Dover, he moved his family to a home on South Street in Portsmouth. The Kimballs joined the North Church, and Israel became a member of the church choir under the direction of local musician and poet Thomas P. Moses.

Kimball and Moses were both men of strongly held opinions, and evidently these did not always coincide. Perhaps the intensity of the friction that rose between them was exacerbated by the difference in their

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

# Events at the Portsmouth Athenæum APRIL – SEPTEMBER 2017

Unless otherwise noted, all events are free and open to the public. Reservations are requested since space is limited. Please call 603-431-2538x2 at least 48 hours in advance. For more current listings, check [www.portsmouthathenaeum.org](http://www.portsmouthathenaeum.org).

APRIL 19, WEDNESDAY: The Secrets & Treasures lecture series continues with Dick Adams speaking on "Tales from the Portsmouth Athenæum," 7 p.m. in the Research Library. Free to Athenæum members; \$10 general admission. The "Secrets & Treasures: 200 Years at the Portsmouth Athenæum" lecture series is sponsored by UBS Financial Services of Portsmouth.

APRIL 21, FRIDAY: The exhibit "Treasures of the Athenæum Part II, High Hopes and Ambitious Plans 1840-1899," opens, 5-7 p.m.

APRIL 27, THURSDAY: Gala Athenæum Bicentennial Dinner at the Wentworth by the Sea.

MAY 5, FRIDAY: The Randall Gallery will be open for Art Around Town, 5-8 p.m.

MAY 5: Athenæum bicentennial highlights, "200 Years of Treasures of the Portsmouth Athenæum," opens in the program room on the 2nd floor of the Discover Portsmouth Center.

MAY 6, SATURDAY: Gallery talk by Sandra Rux for "High Hopes and Ambitious Plans," 11 a.m.

MAY 15, MONDAY: Athenæum Concert in the Reading Room with a string ensemble of Juilliard students.

MAY 17, WEDNESDAY: The Secrets & Treasures lecture series continues with Ed Caylor on "The Rescue of Alpha Foxtrot 586," 7 p.m. in the Research Library. Free to Athenæum members; \$10 general admission. The lecture series is sponsored by UBS Financial Services of Portsmouth.

MAY 25, THURSDAY: Tea and open house for new members, 4:30 p.m. in the Reading Room.

JUNE 2, FRIDAY: The Randall Gallery will be open for Art Around Town, 5-8 p.m.

JUNE 11, SUNDAY: Historic Portsmouth Chamber Music Series presents The Neave Trio, New Castle Congregational Church. 3 p.m., \$20 suggested donation; \$75 series subscription; series Patron seating \$250 per person/\$500 per couple.

JUNE 14, WEDNESDAY: Proprietor Jonathan Hodgdon will give a presentation about his work, "A Visual Journey through 30 Years of Global Disaster Response," 7 p.m. in the Research Library.

JUNE 21, WEDNESDAY: A toast to celebrate the Bicentennial of the Athenæum, 5:30-6:30 p.m. Afterward, Proprietors can pick up their gift of

the Bicentennial book *Portsmouth Athenæum: The Story of a Collection Through the Eyes of Its Proprietors* (see article on page 1).

JUNE 24, SATURDAY: The exhibit, "Treasures of the Athenæum Part II, High Hopes and Ambitious Plans 1840-1899," closes.

JULY 7, FRIDAY: The exhibit, "Treasures of the Athenæum Part III: The Somnolent Years 1900-1980," opens. The Randall Gallery will be open for Art Around Town, 5-8 p.m.

JULY 9, SUNDAY: Historic Portsmouth Chamber Music Series presents Central4, St. John's Church, Portsmouth, 3 p.m.; \$20 suggested donation; \$75 series subscription; series Patron seating \$250 per person/\$500 per couple.

AUG. 4, FRIDAY: The Randall Gallery will be open for Art Around Town, 5-8 p.m.

AUG. 8, TUESDAY: The Annual Athenæum picnic.

SEPT. 1, FRIDAY: The Randall Gallery will be open for Art Around Town, 5-8 p.m.



# Secrets & Treasures:

2017 Program Series celebrates the 200th anniversary of this unique, historic library

ANN BEATTIE, Program Committee Chair

The Portsmouth Athenaeum celebrates its 200th anniversary with its 2017 Program Series, "Secrets and Treasures." Come hear amazing stories about the men and women of Portsmouth, many of whom are the Proprietors that keep this unique, venerable library and repository of artifacts available to history buffs and other researchers. Each program begins at 7 p.m. in the Research Library at 9 Market Square. Call (603) 431-2538, Ext. 2, for reservations; space is limited. Attendance is free for Athenaeum Proprietors, Subscribers and Friends. Guests and members of the public are welcome to attend the entire series by becoming a Friend of the Athenaeum for as little as \$25 per year, payable via mail or at the door. Admission to an individual program is \$10. Please visit [portsmouthathenaeum.org](http://portsmouthathenaeum.org) for more information.

In March, Athenaeum Keeper Tom Hardiman regaled attendees with "America's Membership Library Movement 1731-2016," in which he investigated the history of membership libraries from the establishment of the Library Company of Philadelphia by Benjamin Franklin in 1731 to the founding of Folio, the Seattle Athenaeum in 2016. He spoke of the 16 membership libraries remaining in America and how they differ from one another. In addition to being Keeper, Hardiman is acting historian for the Membership Libraries Group. A former curator at the Saco Museum, he is a repository of historical knowledge. His wide-ranging historical research and publications have greatly enriched our understanding of the past.

**APRIL 19– "Tales from the Portsmouth Athenaeum:"** Dick Adams explores the peaks and valleys in the Athenaeum's fortunes over the last 200 years, and tells of Proprietors and others who have played both positive and negative roles in creating change. Along with major events that have shaped the institution, hear little-known stories, such as the scandalous defacement of Proprietor Levi Woodbury's bust. *Dick Adams, a Portsmouth native, was a frequent visitor to the Athenaeum at an early age, accompanying his Proprietor grandfather. A Harvard graduate, he served as a Marine Corps pilot in Vietnam and was a pilot and manager with Eastern Air Lines. Along with Proprietors Richard Candee and Susan Hamilton, he created the historic markers that can now be seen throughout Portsmouth.*

**MAY 17– "The Rescue of Alpha Foxtrot 586:"** Ed Caylor retells a remarkable story. During the Carter-Brezhnev era, a U.S. Navy reconnaissance aircraft developed engine trouble within sight of Soviet Kamchatka, forcing the crew to ditch their aircraft in an Arctic gale-force storm. After 12 hours in the cold waters and high seas of the North Pacific, they were rescued by Soviet fishermen, aided by the Navy, Coast Guard, Air Force and Army. *Ed Caylor was the senior survivor. He graduated from the Naval Academy in 1974 and was a Naval aviator for the next six years, leaving the Navy in 1980 to pursue a career as an airline pilot. An Athenaeum Proprietor, Ed retired from flying in 2010 and has lived in the New Hampshire seacoast area for the last 36 years.*

**OCT. 18– Pontine Theatre presents "Pretty Halcyon Days: On the Beach with Ogden Nash:"** The Portsmouth Athenaeum Proprietor spent his summers on Little Boar's Head in North Hampton. Pontine Theatre's Co-Artistic Directors, Marguerite Mathews and Greg Gathers, explore the ways in which Nash's life on the New Hampshire seashore influenced his poems, giving insight into the man, his character and his ideas about family, society and nature. *Greg Gathers holds a BFA from the Cleveland Institute of Art. He has been designing and constructing Pontine's sets, costumes and props since 1982. Marguerite Mathews, founder of Pontine Theatre, earned a theater degree in communications from Michigan State University. She studied with Etienne Decroux at L'Ecole du Mime Corporel in Paris, France, and with Thomas Leabhart at the University of Arkansas and Valley Studio.*

**NOV. 15– "Crowdsourced Treasures: Selections from the Athenaeum's Collections:"** Peggy Hodges describes how the Athenaeum's collections are largely the creation of its Proprietors and other civic-minded locals, who for 200 years have donated books, papers, art and artifacts they deemed of cultural, scientific and historical importance. Through stories of the history, ownership and gifting of selected Athenaeum treasures, this talk will show how this unique collection reflects the shifting intellectual interests of Portsmouth residents over two centuries. *Proprietor Peggy Hodges is an independent historian and writer, with a background in anthropology and museum education. She has published a novel, short stories and historical articles, and is co-author, with Derin Bray, of "Bucket Town: Wooden Wares and Wooden Toys of Hingham, MA, 1635-1965" (2014). She is currently collaborating with Bray on a history of tattooing in Boston.*



# Current Research Project at the Athenaeum: White Family Genealogy Revision

DON MARGESON, *Publications Committee*

Some 30 years ago, Charles A. “Chuck” Petlick began compiling a genealogy of the White family of New Castle. His interest in this project was partly personal: through his late mother Marion, he is a member of the family’s 10th generation since its arrival in the Piscataqua area dating back at least to 1667. His interest was also grounded in his long residence in New Castle, his home for most of his life and a town he served in a wide range of municipal offices between 1975 and 2009.

He completed and published a first edition of the genealogy in 2013. It was over 240 pages long; the index contained entries for more than 1,800 individuals.

Perhaps more than other varieties of historical writing, a genealogy can be a perpetual work-in-progress. There are of course frequent opportunities for supplementation — and sometimes the need for correction — as new information emerges from old attics. Moreover, a genealogy by its nature calls for expansion as new generations come along.

So it’s not surprising that Chuck Petlick is back at the Athenaeum, working on an update of his original document.

That document centers on the line of Nathan White (1640s-1698) and his wife Salome Jackson Wyatt White (1650s-1730). (Salome’s brother Richard Jackson built the Jackson House in Portsmouth, the oldest surviving wood-frame home in New Hampshire.) Five collateral White families are also included.



*Arnold B. and Louise Jordan White, ca. 1940.*

The narrative for each family is set out in a fairly conventional format. Separate sections cover the known individuals of each generation; for patriarch Nathan’s line, 11 generations are covered, right down to the present day. To each individual, a unique number is assigned to allow unambiguous cross-reference to that person elsewhere in the text. Children are enumerated by name in the section on their parents’ generation, then given fuller coverage in the following section covering their own generation.

The extent of information varies widely, but generally focuses on residence, occupation, and ownership of land and commercial property. A rich offering of photographs shows people and buildings referred to in the text.

The records that Petlick found most helpful in compiling the White

genealogy include such familiar sources as county registers of deeds and probate and family diaries and Bibles. Because several generations of Whites were mariners, he consulted customs records and ship captains’ logs extensively.

The account books of local retailers and other tradesmen provided information about the nature, timing and cost of family members’ purchases. As the document took shape, Chuck found that his genealogy had become something of a local economic history as well, tracing the succession of lead occupations in New Castle as fishing gave way to farming, and farming to employment in area shoe factories.

In 2015, Chuck’s experience with the Athenaeum’s research resources moved him to join our institution as a Proprietor.

Those interested in attempting the challenge of compiling a genealogy will find guidance on genealogical research — particularly in New England — and an abundance of pertinent data at the Athenaeum; consult Research Librarian Carolyn Marvin in the Copley Research Library for direction to these materials.

The Portsmouth Public Library conducts genealogy workshops, generally on the third Sunday of each month, and its Special Collections Department holds manuals for formatting genealogies. Contact Special Collections Librarian Nicole Cloutier, (603) 766-1725 or [nlcloutier@cityofportsmouth.com](mailto:nlcloutier@cityofportsmouth.com).

## FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK

Douglas Aykroyd  
oakscouter@comcast.net

### Farewell to an Athenaeum Friend

Over the past few months we have lost a number of longtime Proprietors. I would like to take note of one in particular, Sam Jarvis. For me, he was representative of the best the Athenaeum has to offer, a person who really loved the institution and all of its members.

I first got to know Sam as a member of the Board of Directors. He was quiet but demonstrated a keen sense of humor. He was not flashy, but his ideas attracted attention because of the common sense and practicality that formed their foundation. He could identify ways of doing things better, and he was more than willing to help. We needed to get glasses washed after a holiday gala, and Sam arranged for Rudi's Restaurant to pick them up, clean them, and bring them back.

He helped come up with the idea for our wine stewards. I really enjoyed our meetings at the Athenaeum as we discussed and formalized the concept. He was always comfortable to be around and you always looked forward to seeing him.

But now that Sam is gone, who will fill his shoes?

I do not know the answer today, but I am confident that there is someone who will step up and make equal contributions to the Athenaeum, someone who will see that it is not

difficult to make a big difference, someone who will get satisfaction from serving others.

The Athenaeum is a library with a collection. The buildings and the objects they house are but a gathering point for the most important part of the Athenaeum — the Proprietors, Subscribers, Friends, Staff and families who give it a reason for being. For those of us who live close to Portsmouth, our ability to associate with other like-minded members of the Athenaeum family is our greatest membership benefit.

### A Bicentennial Toast

Wednesday, June 21, will be the 200th birthday of the Portsmouth Athenaeum.

According to our Keeper, it was on that day in 1817 that the New Hampshire Legislature approved our application to incorporate.

To honor this significant event, the Program Committee and the Social Committee are organizing a Toast to the Bicentennial in the Reading Room. The Publications Committee will be distributing the Athenaeum's bicentennial book. (*See related story on page 1*) The event is planned for 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., with the toast to be given shortly after 5:30 p.m.

It is the plan to use Champagne (French, of course) for the toast, but we will need some donations of funds or French Champagne to make this plan a reality. I should note that we have already received a donation of \$50 from a Friend, while a Proprietor has

offered to purchase 200 champagne flutes (French, of course) for the toast. So mark the date on your calendar and see if you can help out. Do not be concerned if you do not like Champagne; other beverages will be available.

### Thanks to our volunteers

At our annual meeting in January, we took time to recognize some of our volunteers.

As has been our long-standing tradition, we recognized three years of dedicated service rendered by our outgoing directors: Richard Candee, Mark Connolly and Peggy Hodges.

Then we broke new ground by recognizing other volunteers. President Karen Bouffard thanked Cindy Knapp for her leadership of the Social Committee and Ann Beattie for the great job she has done as chair of the Program Committee.

The Art and Artifacts Committee recognized Pat Breslin for seven years of service as a weekly volunteer. Emma Nelson was thanked for her five years. Longtime committee members Louise Dennett, Deborah Child, Hilda Versluys and Barbara Hill were presented certificates for outstanding contributions made to the Athenaeum. Finally, certificates recognizing five years of service as wine stewards were presented to Karen Bouffard, Frank Breslin, Wendy Lull, Steve Roberts and Clint Springer.

Thanks to all our volunteers who help to make the Portsmouth Athenaeum the very special place it continues to be.



*Israel Kimball Papers*

credentials in musical matters — long experience (Moses) vs. training and formal study at an elite university (Kimball).

In any case, Moses' heated derogation of Kimball and Kimball's partisans in an "autobiography" published in 1850 led to Moses' discharge as North Church's organist and choir-master. That Kimball himself may have had a difficult personality during this period is suggested by the fact that, having been appointed in 1850 as principal teacher at the Boys' High School on State Street, he was fired from that post by the School Board in 1853.

Kimball next opened a private school at the Temple, a Baptist meeting house located at the site of the present-day Music Hall. He then took over management of the Portsmouth Academy, which occupied the building at the head of Islington

Street that now houses Discover Portsmouth.

In 1862 Kimball's life took a remarkable turn. Perhaps in recognition of his engagement in the reform and abolitionist movements, President Lincoln appointed him to head a division in the federal Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), predecessor of the Internal Revenue Service.

Kimball moved with his family to Washington, but — never knowing how long his patronage appointment would last — kept his home in Portsmouth. He is credited with, though was never compensated for, the invention of a "device for cancelling revenue stamps that was used by the federal government for many years."

Israel Kimball died at 78 on Dec. 10, 1890. A meeting of BIR officers

and clerks held three days later adopted a resolution noting that Kimball's "hearty geniality and unflinching warmth and kindness manifested in his daily intercourse with his associates. . .together with his paternal and venerable aspect, obtained for him the title of 'Father Kimball.'" He is buried in Portsmouth's Harmony Grove Cemetery.

Once cataloged and available for research purposes, the Kimball papers are expected to be a most valuable resource for anyone investigating the history, in Portsmouth and environs, of public education (especially musical education), public musical performances, reform movements of the 1850s, and maritime and shipbuilding matters.

*This article draws heavily on biographical information generously provided by Dr. Richard M. Candee.*

*Congratulations*

20-YEAR PROPRIETORS

Roland P. Emerton, Share 7  
Elizabeth B. Larsen, Share 46  
Barbara Millar, Share 62  
Carol S. Cole, Share 71  
Karen S. Pierce, Share 124  
Peter Davis Bergh, Share 228  
15-Year Proprietors  
Elizabeth H. Field, Share 283

10-YEAR PROPRIETORS

Ann E. Beattie, Share 314  
Karen L. Bouffard, Share 30  
Kerry E. Cronin, Share 27  
Carol A. Lincoln, Share 59  
Constance V. Seery, Share 226  
Tobey Stowe, Share 82  
Townsend H. Dunn, Share 136  
Margaret Guy, Share 229



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## HELP US CONSERVE AN ATHENAEUM TREASURE

PEGGY HODGES

The Library and Special Collections committees have identified a singularly important candidate for this year's Adopt-A-Book Conservation Campaign — a complete volume of Portsmouth's Bills of Mortality, 1801-1835, in desperate need of conservation care. The Bills are a remarkable record of Portsmouth's public health in the first decades of the 19th century and an invaluable resource for researchers studying early epidemiology and demographics.

Dr. Lyman Spaulding, cofounder of Dartmouth Medical School, began compiling mortality data for Portsmouth in 1800 — a full decade before Boston. Concerned by an increase in deaths from tuberculosis, and wishing to collect actuarial data for life insurance

and annuities, Dr. Spaulding recorded Portsmouth's total number of inhabitants and deaths, and the age, sex and cause of death for each. Portsmouth's Bills of Mortality were printed as broadsides annually, with some gaps, between 1801 and 1835.

Dr. John Thurston, a later compiler of Portsmouth's mortality data, presented a complete set of the Bills, bound in marbled paper boards, to the Athenaeum in 1826. Subsequent Bills were later added to the book. This is the only known complete set of these documents in existence. Unfortunately, the book was "liberated" from the Athenaeum collections, and spent several decades in a leaky garage prior to its recent discovery and return. As a result, the 30 Bills and the book containing them

have been badly damaged by water, dirt, mold and mildew. Conservator Nina Rayer has estimated the cost to treat Portsmouth's Bills of Mortality at \$4,200 to \$4,500.

It's essential to the Athenaeum's mission that we preserve this unique Portsmouth record for future generations. Help us fulfill our duty as stewards of Portsmouth history. Checks payable to the Portsmouth Athenaeum can be sent to the attention of Robin Silva, Librarian, at 9 Market Square, Portsmouth, NH 03801. Indicate that your gift is to support conservation of the Portsmouth Bills of Mortality. For more information, call Robin at (603) 431-2538 or email [info@portsmouthathenaeum.org](mailto:info@portsmouthathenaeum.org). And thank you!