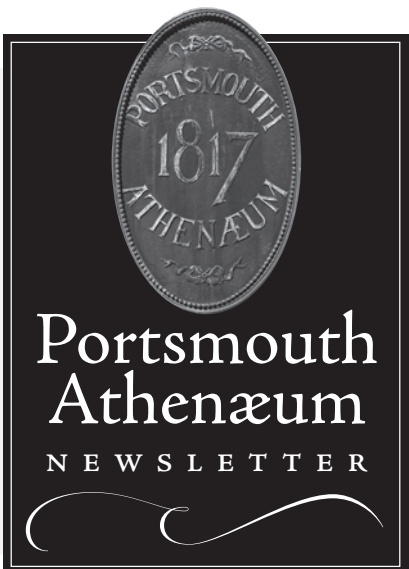


Summer 2020

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

THE PORTSMOUTH ATHENÆUM
9 MARKET SQUARE
P.O. BOX 848
PORTSMOUTH, N.H. 03802
603.431.2538
www.portsmouthathenæum.org



C O N T E N T S

Follow us on Social Media	2
Hitting the Beach/The Wentworths	3
Arcana: Special Collections	4
Staying in Touch, <i>continued</i>	5
Intern Marcus Wile	6
Meet our New Members	7
Update on School Records Project	7
Offer for Bibliophiles	8

WELCOME BACK TO THE ATHENÆUM

TOM HARDIMAN

In June, the Athenæum began a limited reopening for members of the building and book circulation.

The Reading Room is available regular hours.

The Research Library will be closed between 1:00 and 5:00 p.m. to allow staff time to process returned books, put out new books, and answer research requests.

Athenæum members open hours for the stacks and the Research Library are:

Proprietors – 6:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

Subscribers – 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Please wear a face mask. Disposable masks are available if you need one.

Please observe polite social distance of at least 6 feet from anyone not of your household.

Please wash your hands or use the hand sanitizer provided in the Reading Room if you touch any common surfaces.

If you have experienced fever, coughing, or other symptoms of COVID-19 or have been in the presence of someone who has, please stay home. We can make arrangements for local book delivery and pick-up.

We will allow members to reserve books by email or telephone and have a book cart in the Reading Room for reserved books. You can make a reservation by emailing us at info@portsmouthathenæum.org.

You will be contacted as soon as the book is ready. Returned books will go into a series of bins that will be rotated regularly so that the books can be isolated for up to 72 hours before being handled by staff and returned to circulation.

The Shaw Research Library and Randall Exhibit Gallery will be available by appointment only. Appointment hours will be Tuesday through Saturday between 1 and 4. You can make a reservation by emailing info@portsmouthathenæum.org or calling 431-2538 during reservation hours.

The Athenæum is open to the public by appointment; currently all public programs have been cancelled.

Staying in Touch while Distancing

DON MARGESON

During the coronavirus pandemic, staff-posted communications in the weekly "Latest News from the Athenæum" bulletins have kept us in touch with a place that many of us think of as a second home.

Several of these communications address the bibliophiles among us. Research Librarian Carolyn Marvin posted a sympathetic review of



Archivist Susan Kindstedt's daughter, Amy, sewed masks for the Athenæum staff out of a fabric printed with shelves of books.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Follow Us on Social Media

*Athenaeum Photographic Collections Manager James Smith
posted this on the Athenaeum's Facebook page on Monday, July 13.*



Stereocard is from the Dolph Naval photograph collection, P0004_179.

Portsmouth Athenaeum Newsletter is published three times yearly. Deadlines for articles are March 1, June 15 and October 1.

Contributions and queries may be directed to Publications Committee Chair/Editor Sherry Wood at sixswords@aol.com.

EDITOR:
Sherry Wood

DESIGNER:
Susan Kress Hamilton

CONTRIBUTORS:
Tom Hardiman, Dick Adams,
Peggy Hodges, Don Margeson,
Sandra Rux, James Smith,
Susan Kindstedt

Mansard Monday takes us to the corner of State and Water (now Marcy) streets along the Portsmouth waterfront, adjacent to Prescott Park.

This c. 1875 stereocard by the Davis Brothers captures a view of buildings that are no longer standing. At the time, butcher William O. Horn (c.1836-1906) ran his provisions store in the large mansard building, known as the Franklin House and owned by brew magnate and politician Frank Jones; however, around the turn of the last century, the building was better known as the Gloucester House, a house of ill repute.

Mary F. (Amazeen) Baker (1859-1930) ran her brothel at the Gloucester House from about 1897 until 1912. This area around Water Street was known as Portsmouth's red light district, and the neighborhood was a boat ride across the Piscataqua from the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. Businesses lined the street catering to sailors, filled with brothels, saloons and pool halls. And

Madam Baker, with diamonds in her teeth, was considered the most famous madam of them all.

And while she ran the brothel, Mary's husband, Allen, is said to have operated a legitimate ice cream parlor in the front.

In 1903, with business booming, Madam Baker bought the Gloucester from the estate of Frank Jones. In 1911, however, police raided several "disorderly houses" including the Bakers, and by 1912, the infamous red light district was no longer. In 1936, six years after Mary's death, the Gloucester went up for auction. The building was bought to tear down during the Prescott sisters' eradication of "seedy buildings" and the beautification of the waterfront. By 1939, the Capt. Thomas Shaw house was moved down Marcy to the site, and when you walk by the expansive side yard for the Shaw house, that is where the Gloucester House once stood.

EXHIBITS: STILL TIME TO HIT THE BEACH; THE WENTWORTHS coming in 2021

SANDRA RUX

“Hampton Beach: Summer of 1983” by Peter Randall continues in the Randall Gallery.

Proprietors, Subscribers and Friends can call the Athenaeum for an appointment. If you have not yet seen it, I encourage a visit—see a time of carefree summer at the beach. It will remain until at least early November.

Work continues to get the “Wentworth Takeover: How One Family Dominated New Hampshire from 1730-1775” ready for next year. Tentatively this will open in February 2021.

While the exhibition is focused on Lt. Gov. John Wentworth, his children and some of his grandchildren, I would like to relate a family tragedy that certainly affected John’s life. His father, Samuel Wentworth, was the first of the family to live in Portsmouth. You may remember him from the “By the Bottle or the Barrel” beer exhibit last year as he was the first in New Hampshire granted a brewing license.



Artist Joseph Blackburn painted this posthumous portrait of Lt. Gov. John Wentworth (1671-1730). It appears in *The Wentworth Genealogy*.



This image depicts the Sign of the Dolphin, Samuel Wentworth’s tavern in New Castle, circa 1671.

In 1690 a smallpox outbreak occurred in Boston. The disease spread to the fleet commanded by Sir William Phipps as he was setting out to attempt to conquer Quebec (an abject failure) and from survivors of the expedition spread over New England.

First in the Wentworth family to contract smallpox was Samuel’s 22-year-old son Daniel. He died in January 1690/91. Next to die was Hannah, 24-year-old wife of Samuel Jr., who perished in February.

Finally, Samuel himself contracted the disease. He made his will, stating that he was suffering from smallpox. Samuel died on March 25, 1691, in his 50th year of life.

It is not known if other family members had smallpox and survived. John, who was 19 at the time, became the leader of the family in Portsmouth, as his older brother Samuel moved to Boston after the deaths of his wife and father.

Arcana DICK ADAMS

Special Collections

Although I have been an Athenaeum Proprietor for over 30 years, I recently realized that I had very little knowledge of our Special Collections: what constitutes that arm of our holdings, what is in it, and how such material can be accessed. What follows is a brief summary of what I have learned through discussions with Keeper Tom Hardiman and his extraordinarily well-informed staff.

Tom defines "Special Collections" as being all non-circulating library materials: manuscripts, rare books, and reference materials. Included under that rubric are 100 large manuscript collections, 1,500 small collections, and 28,000 photographs. Among the large collections are documents associated with such Portsmouth luminaries as John Langdon, William Whipple, and the Ladd and Wendell families.

The Athenaeum also serves as a depository for collections relating to many of the town's churches, historic houses, and the Isles of Shoals.

To get a sense of what a large manuscript collection looks like, with the able assistance of Research Librarian Carolyn Marvin, I spent several hours poring through the Athenaeum's extensive holdings associated with a former Athenaeum Proprietor and distinguished jurist, Arthur D. Hill (1869-1947).

These documents provide intimate insights into the life of a Boston Brahmin whose rich life experiences included service in France during World War I with the army's Judge Advocate General's Department; advisor to Theodore Roosevelt during his unsuccessful 1912 quest for another term as president; law professor at Harvard Law School; District

Attorney for Suffolk County; and lead attorney for Sacco and Vanzetti during their failed 1927 attempt to get the Massachusetts Supreme Court to overturn the guilty verdict rendered by a lower court.

The voluminous Hill manuscript collection includes dozens of letters pertinent to his manifold activities over a long career, as well as typewritten copies of speeches he gave. Of particular interest are the dozens—if not hundreds—of letters he wrote to his mother over the span of 35 years, letters which yield a most humanizing understanding of Arthur Hill.

While Hill's primary residence was in the Beacon Hill district of Boston, he had a long connection with the local area, spending summer months at "The Barns," a rambling 18th-century farmhouse off Wentworth Road in Rye, on Sagamore Creek.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Boston lawyer Arthur D. Hill, shown in this circa-1930 image from the Hill Family photograph collection, was the lead attorney for Italian immigrant anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti in their failed 1927 attempt to overturn their guilty verdict on murder charges. They were executed in August 1927.
Courtesy of Portsmouth Athenaeum



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Staying in Touch....

Elizabeth Strout's recently released sequel revisiting the not-always-sympathetic protagonist of her 2008 novel *Olive Kitteridge*.

Librarian Robin Silva, working from home on an update of the Athenaeum's library catalog, discovered that in 1905, a book subtitled as a "romance of the Ku Klux Klan" was found on the premises of the Athenaeum and added to its collection. It was de-accessioned a few months later.

Another post included a link to an essay by Sherry Wood, editor of this newsletter and Night Editor at the *NH Union Leader*, for a series "What I Miss" in the pandemic era. As well as family and friends, Sherry finds that she misses libraries. Since age 6, she says, libraries have been a source of solace, strength and comfort. And in the Athenaeum's particular "smell of leather . . . , parchment, beeswax [and] mold" she has detected "the perfume of human wisdom."

On the lighter side, Proprietor Nancy Hammond shared a meme showing shelves of actually published books whose titles, read left to right and imaginatively punctuated, spell out a concise fable from the pandemic life, ending with "Don't Go Out."

Other items from "Latest News" deal with historical subjects. One of these items carried a link to Archivist Susan Kindstedt's social media post on the Seacoast volunteers who made masks and other gear to protect people during the 1918-19 Spanish flu pandemic. The item noted that today, Susan's

daughter Amy (14) carries on with this, making and donating about 200 masks locally, including some for the Athenaeum staff printed with shelves of books.

Photographic Collections Manager James Smith, who does the Athenaeum's weekly e-blasts, wrote a brief history of the Portsmouth Bath House on what is now Hanover Street. This "body invigorator" enterprise kept the town's citizens—in gender-separated facilities—clean for a half-century starting in 1804.

Susan Kindstedt mined the recently donated logbooks of Portsmouth sea captain Nathan Parker Simes to give us his account of his capture at sea off Nova Scotia. On Oct. 3, 1862, Capt. Simes' Emily Farnum was taken by the Confederate States Steamer *Alabama* under the formidable Capt. Raphael Semmes. Semmes' prior success at capturing Union ships with their cargo and sailors proved the salvation of Capt. Simes and his crew, in an epic real-life ironic twist.



Archivist Susan Kindstedt's daughter, Amy, sewed about 200 masks for distribution locally.

"Latest News" has even covered Athenaeum operations, providing a link to Research Librarian Katy Sternberger's article "Research by the Numbers" in the May/June issue of the professional journal *Archival Outlook*. The article discusses the usefulness to research organizations of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



Athenaeum Photographic Collections Manager James Smith shared on social media a brief history of the Portsmouth Bath House, which was on Hanover Street.

SPRING TERM HUMANITIES INTERN MARCUS WILE

TOM HARDIMAN



Athenaeum spring intern Marcus Wile

In December, Great Bay Community College announced it would be offering undergraduate internships in the Humanities for the January to May term.

The Athenaeum was fortunate to get Marcus Wile, an English major at Great Bay to take an internship with the Athenaeum. Marcus

spent eight hours per week for the full term working in our offsite storage facility in North Hampton.

He took the hundreds, if not thousands, of bound historical newspapers that were transferred in a jumble to the offsite storage and organized them by title and date and created a master inventory. In all he sorted and inventoried 29 different titles, covering more than a century-and-a-half of local news.

Thanks to him, we now have an accurate listing of which newspapers we have, and for which years, and exactly where to find them. We have already had two requests for news items and the inventory worked perfectly.

Many thanks to Marcus and well wishes for a bright future!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4
Arcana: Special Collections....

An example of a small holding in the Athenaeum's collection is a letter recently gifted by Proprietor Hollis Broderick. Dated 1862, it is a two-page letter from an Epping man named George Carleton to his wife. In Portsmouth with the army, Carleton found Portsmouth to be a den of iniquity, quite different from his rural Epping. Here is an excerpt from the letter:

"Portsmouth is the hardest place that ever I got into, when I awake nights I cannot get asleep again till I give the place a cursing. [T]here are two prominent institutions here as I have been informed...that is, there is said to be over three hundred and sixty places where licour [sic] is sold in this place this is one of the institutions, the other is the thirty houses of ill fame, with there [sic] five hundred female occupants, any place where authorities permits these evils to exist I think ought to be damned most sincerely..."

Direct access to manuscript materials in Special Collections is limited to staff only, but by selecting "Manuscripts" from the Athenaeum home page and then selecting "Alphabetical List of Finding Aids," interested Proprietors and researchers can identify items of interest that a staff member can readily retrieve.

Should the process of navigating the Athenaeum's resources online prove too daunting, help from a knowledgeable staff member is only a phone call away.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5
Staying in Touch....

statistics on the informational and other assistance requests they receive and explains how she developed for the Athenaeum a system for the orderly compilation of data on such requests.

Noting our common hope for the early return of music, lectures and conversation to the Athenaeum, Keeper Tom Hardiman urged in

yet another "Latest News" item that deferring these things for now better ensures a future in which we can all be there when it is once more safe to enjoy them together.

We are very fortunate that even as the pandemic wars go on, Athenaeum staff has been so diligent and generous in providing regular bulletins from (our other) home.

MEET OUR NEW MEMBERS

PEGGY HODGES

It is my great pleasure, as Secretary of the Athenaeum Board of Directors, to welcome our 2020 class of new members to date.

Athenaeum Proprietors, Subscribers and Friends consistently represent active community members who share a love of history, and who bring interesting backgrounds and valuable life experiences to the organization. We are pleased and honored to recognize these new colleagues:

PROPRIETORS: Susan Kindstedt, Joe Porter, Samuel Winebaum.

SUBSCRIBERS: Jean Kane, Brian Lemay, John Tabor, E. "Bill" Truslow

FRIENDS: Richard Antal, Jeffrey Myers, Christina Rodgers, Henry Roenke, Hazel Standeven, David Weber.

Congratulations to all on becoming members of the Portsmouth Athenaeum! I look forward to personally welcoming each of you to our unique and historic institution.



UPDATE ON THE SCHOOL RECORDS PROJECT

SUSAN KINDSTEDT

Although the project was put on hold during the Athenaeum's initial shutdown because of COVID 19, the Athenaeum is excited to once again be moving forward a collaborative effort with the Portsmouth Public Library and the New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS) to digitize and index historic Portsmouth School Records.

The 122 volumes of records date from 1846-1935 and contain valuable genealogical and historical information about the history of education in Portsmouth.

Earlier in the year, volunteers and staff from the Athenaeum and the

Portsmouth Public Library worked to rehouse the records in acid-free folders and storage boxes. The archival supplies were made possible thanks to a generous grant from the Rosamond Thaxter Foundation.

The first section of records has been scanned by NEHGS and are now ready to be indexed.

Although an in-person informational session for volunteers had to be canceled, the staff of NEHGS has done a fantastic job getting volunteers up to speed with the indexing process remotely. The final product of the project will be scanned and indexed records available online at NEHGS's website,

www.AmericanAncestors.org with a copy of the scanned images also residing at the Athenaeum.

There is now a growing team of local volunteers working to index the digitized records, all from the comfort and safety of their own homes. Anyone interested in joining the virtual effort is encouraged to contact Portsmouth Athenaeum Archivist Susan Kindstedt at skindstedt@portsmouthathenaeum.org. Susan will put you in touch with the indexing coordinator at NEHGS.

Thank you to all who have already volunteered!



THE PORTSMOUTH ATHENÆUM
9 MARKET SQUARE
P.O. BOX 848
PORTSMOUTH, N.H. 03802
Return service requested

Non-profit Organization
US Postage Paid
Permit No. 51
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Officers & Directors

PRESIDENT: Bradley Lown
VICE-PRESIDENT: Sally Gayer
TREASURER: Jeffrey Keefe
SECRETARY: Margaret Hodges
PAST PRESIDENT: Stephen H. Roberts
David A. Borden
Edward Caylor
Lynne Crocker
Janet Dinan
Ellen Fineberg
Sally Gayer
Mark McNabb
Peter Peirce Rice
Sandra Rux
Peter Tarlton

Staff

KEEPER: Tom Hardiman
LIBRARIAN: Robin Silva
ARCHIVIST: Susan Kindstedt
OFFICE MANAGER: Stephanie Hobbs Tabit
PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTIONS MANAGER: James Smith
RESEARCH LIBRARIANS: Carolyn Marvin, Katy Sternberger



A GENEROUS OFFER FOR BIBLIOPHILES

At the Athenaeum's 201st Annual Meeting, Dr. Philip Carling of Biblioboxes.com gave a presentation offering to do custom book preservation work to benefit our Library Fund. Biblioboxes is a custom antiquarian book and paper preservation service dedicated to the mission of stabilizing and helping save a full range of fragile paper materials. Services range from repair and stabilization interventions to the production of custom-made wrapped enclosures from Bristol board and clamshell as well as lidded boxes.

Any work for Athenaeum members will be priced as on the website and all proceeds, above costs, will be donated to the Athenaeum Library Fund. Repair and restoration work for members will be based on a fixed quote provided prior to the work and the proceeds after costs will also be donated to the Library Fund. To order a box or custom enclosure for your personal treasure, email Info@biblioboxes.com

SAVE THE DATE! September 8, 2020

Flatbread Pizza Bake Benefit

138 Congress St, Portsmouth

For each pizza sold between 5 and 9 p.m., a portion of the proceeds will support purchasing archival supplies for the Douglas Armsden photograph collection and other projects in the Athenaeum archives.