

Letter from MHS Director



We are excited to share this issue of *Maine History* with you as we begin the journal's redesign. This volume is a first step in that process—it features a larger trim size, expanded content, and color. We will continue to transform the journal over the next several volumes.

This is an important moment to invest in *Maine History* and what it represents. Maine's Bicentennial in 2020 (and Maine Historical Society's own Bicentennial in 2022) provides a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to demonstrate how profoundly history shapes Maine and its special sense of place today. History is also an invaluable resource as we plan for Maine's future, providing context, perspective, and countless examples of what it takes to create and sustain strong Maine communities.

In recent years, MHS has developed and tested innovative approaches that create much broader participation in history and that have helped us imagine a rich, expanded role for history in Maine. At the same time, MHS's core work remains supporting rigorous scholarship-based on research, use of collections and primary resources, collaboration, and dialog. That is the foundation for everything else we do. Nothing represents that commitment more than this journal.

Our vision is to transform the journal into a publication that is accessible, entertaining, and inspiring to diverse audiences, and one that deepens readers knowledge about and sense of connection to Maine. The cornerstone of the journal will remain peer-reviewed articles on any topic that informs our understanding of Maine history. We seek to promote relevant scholarship by making our collections and those of partners across the state accessible; by convening

researchers, scholars, and local historians for annual Historian's Forums; through collaboration with partners like the University of Maine and Maine Memory Network's 270+ contributing partners; and by creating platforms and opportunities for historians to share their work. Through our partnership with the University of Maine's History Department and other institutions of higher learning, we particularly want to nurture the next generation of Maine historians.

We are excited to launch this new face of the journal with the cover before you which features Mary Mitchell Selmore (Passamaquoddy), 1901, from the exhibition currently on display at MHS, *Holding up the Sky*. *Holding up the Sky* is the kick-off and foundation for MHS's Bicentennial activities. At MHS, we see the Bicentennial as an opportunity to not simply consider 200 years of statehood, but to consider how thousands of years of history shapes Maine today. The exhibit explores 13,000 years of Wabanaki presence, leadership, and stewardship in Maine. It is designed to provide critical context for statehood, which will be explored in a second major exhibition at MHS next year. The feature on items from the exhibit in this issue is an example of the kind of expanded content that will be included in the journal going forward.

Like *Holding up the Sky*, MHS hopes Maine History will help change the way contemporary people understand and appreciate Maine, and prepare them to approach the Bicentennial in richer, more complex ways.

Thanks to all of you who support the practice of history in Maine!

Steve Bromage