The ASH

The Newsletter of Freeport Historical Society Keeping the Past Present Since 1969

Strouts Point: An Active Waterfront for More Than Two Centuries

By Holly Hurd

Strouts Point has been "socalled" (as noted in deeds) since at least the year 1800. In fact, the point of land at the terminus of Main Street in South Freeport has been "Strouts Point" for so long that histories and records going back to the turn of the 19th century do not describe the name's origin. Presumably it acknowledges a pre-1800 owner. Deeds show that Strouts Point was owned by Benjamin Parker Jr. in 1800, who sold it to Micah, and later Joseph, Stockbridge. In 1802, the Stockbridges sold their land to a mariner from Portland,

Alexander Motley, who was the first apparent developer of Strouts Point as an active trade site. Motley built a wharf and store there, shares were sold to others, and Union Wharf was established as a prolific site of commercial activity, focused on the fishing and coastal shipping industries. In 1829-30, Motley and others sold their land and wharf shares to Freeport mariner Joshua Waite who held on to it for only a year—in 1831 he sold to the newly-formed Strouts Point Wharf Company (SPWC). Freeport village trader and merchant Samuel Holbrook and South Freeport resident Jacob Lincoln were the directors of the SPWC. These owners immediately constructed a wharf building that remained on the waterfront for 177 years. It was used in different capacities over time, including serving as the Casco Yacht Club in the early 1900s, until it was dismantled and moved to the property of Jack Pierce in 2008.



Figure 10

(building on the right, Fig 1.) The SPWC rented their land and wharf to fishermen, and later to entrepreneurs who began to develop the shipbuilding industry as the fisheries declined.

Shipbuilding in Freeport came as naturally as the resources available—abundant lumber and points of land grazing channels of the Harraseeket River. In the 18th century, settlers built small fishing and trading vessels near Mast Landing and Mitchell's (later Porter's) Landing, and even near inland farmsteads, dragging the finished schooners by oxen to

the waterways. However, these early sea-going vessels represented only a small fraction of what was to come. Shipbuilding would expand and become a leading industry of Freeport in the middle decades of the 19th century, jumpstarted by the construction of the famous privateer The Dash for the war of 1812 in the Porter yard. The Porters built vessels for several decades until Rufus Soule began renting their yard in the early 1830s. There he and his son Rufus C. Soule built at least 100 vessels over a period of about 30 years, while shipyards at Cushing-Briggs, at the Talbot and Bliss yards in South Freeport, and at Mast Landing kept workers busy during the heyday of wooden shipbuilding--- from the 1830s until about 1880. During this period, as many as 40% of the men in Freeport either followed the sea or worked in the shipvards.

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The Dash

The Dash is published four times annually by Freeport Historical Society for its members.

Freeport Historical Society Harrington House 45 Main Street Freeport, ME 04032 (207) 865-3170 www.HistorcFreeport.org

Office Hours May to Oct. 12, Mon to Fri 9-5 Oct 13 to May, Tues to Fri, 10-4

Appointments may also be made for a weekend visit.

We encourage a phone call prior to any visit, to verify that the office is open.

Research and visits involving the collections require an appointment in advance. Call 207-865-3170 to speak with Holly Hurd or email library@freeporthistoricalsociety.org

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A Sense of Place

Dear Friends,

Our Sixth Annual **Harborside Gala** is coming up quickly on **Saturday June 24**th.

The committee organizing the event is working hard and doing a great job to make sure that this is a Very Fun Party!

Not only will this be a great launch to the summer season it will be a chance to socialize with friends and enjoy terrific food and music.

Please see the enclosed flyer for the most up to date listing of our generous sponsors but you need to be assured that the menu includes lobster rolls, fresh oysters, chowder, grilled chicken, plenty of delicious vegetarian options and lots of local beer and a specialty drink concoction created just for you!

Music is once again provided by talented local musicians of The Ethos Band. Perrin Davidson, Isabellla Pignatello, Tucker & Sam Pierce.

This fundraiser is **Very Important to our operating budget** and is what allows us to provide you with many educational programs and to maintain our collections, Harrington House and the Pettengill Farm. Please come to enjoy the event and participate in the live and silent auctions of some very high value items provided by local individuals and vendors. Items vary from custom woodworking, to a southern condominium, to a new paddleboard ensemble.

Please come Support your Historical Society in this very fun way!

The event starts at 6:00 PM at Strouts Point Wharf Co. in South Freeport. Parking will be across the town pier at Brewers Marine.

Our Working Waterfront is the theme for the event and you will see and learn how the waterfront has transitioned from a quiet agricultural area to a bustling shipbuilding center, into decline and how it is now enjoying a resurgence of waterfront businesses that employ over sixty people year round and close to 100 in the summer.

We look forward to seeing you there!

The GALA Committee 2017

Jay Flower, Chairman: Nina Weyl, Ben Hamilton, Christine Sullivan, Guy Blanchard, Meghan Palmer, Eric Smith & McKay Bigger.

Jim Cram, Executive Director

WRITING CONTEST: THE ART IN ARTIFACTS

BY HOLLY HURD

On Sunday, April 23, the Freeport Historical Society and about 60 community members celebrated the culmination of its first ever writing contest--*The Art in Artifacts*--with a banquet and reading. Participation was fantastic—we received submissions from 71 adults and students from four different local schools. To encourage student entries, Holly Hurd did presentations about the contest that featured objects from our exhibit at Mast Landing and Freeport Middle Schools. Students from the Maine Coast Waldorf School, Coastal Studies for Girls, and Pine

Adult Winners

Tree Academy visited the historical society to view the exhibit and learn about the contest.

The idea for a writing contest originated as a program to engage the community with the objects in our current exhibit, which focuses on historical artifacts with intriguing and thought-provoking stories. One such object is a wooden barrel that held flammable lard from a 19th century store that burned down in 1894 taking the Congregational Church at the site of LL Bean's main retail store with it. The exhibit includes nails from a ship built at Porter's Landing in 1869 that were retrieved from an Antarctic whaling station at South Georgia, and an Inuit paddle brought back by MacMillan's engineer from an Arctic exploration. These

objects and 150 others in the exhibit served as a source of creative inspiration for school-age and adult writers all over town. In the big picture, viewing and thinking about our historic objects helps community members care about them and thereby participate in their preservation.

With so many entries, our judges—writer Sam Smith, Freeport High School English teacher John Stivers, and Collections Manager Holly Hurd-- had trouble choosing winners, so we decided to add honorable mentions in each of the categories. Award winners were: YOUTH (grades 3-6), 1st Prize Isla Wilson, 2nd Prize Taylor Kaplan, 3rd Prize Lyman Ordway, Honorable Mentions Kessa Benner and Paige Tyson; YOUNG ADULT (grades 7-12), 1st Prize Nickolas Eastman, 2nd Prize Renee Pickard, 3rd Prize Raizel McNally, Honorable Mentions Clare Rigney and Charlie Van Wiest; ADULT 1st Prize David Sloan, 2nd Prize Ann Coltman, 3rd Prize Brendan Tierney, Honorable



Young Adult Winners

Mentions Jerry Tims, Sam Hunneman, and Maryellen Carew. The winning entries can be read on our website.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Lara Bailey Martha Kenney & James Bannar McKay Biggar Guy Blanchard Edward Bonney Richard Bowen Sue & Perry Bradley Polly Brann Lynne Brown Meg Brown Payson Kevin Byram Linda Bail & George Casey Tammy Champagne David & Connie Coffin Susan & Malcolm Collins Joan & George Connick Anne & James Cram Robert Criswell Renee LeMieux & Dan Crowley Beverly & Mark Curry Jane Danielson Anne Marie & Richard Davee Eleanor & John Davis Lucille Dennison Charles & Yvonne Devine Jeanne Douglas Deb & Roy Driver Elizabeth & Rod Duckworth Marilyn & Atwood Dunham Walt Dunlap Thelma Dunning Lois Randall & Capt. Steven Edwards, USN, Ret. Judith Elfring Marge & John Eller David Emery Harold Estabrook Elizabeth & Lawrence Estey Chrstine & Bob Farrell Julie & Jay Flower Caroline Foust-Wright

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WRITING CONTEST: THE ART IN ARTIFACTS... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Many participants thought the contest and event were wonderful. Here are some of their comments:

I've long known that Freeport was a highly creative town, but until I got involved with this project I was unaware of how true this was of its students as well as of their parents and other adults. The hardest thing about this was trying to pick between so many excellent assays. A sign, incidentally, not only of some fine writers but some fine teachers as well. - Sam Smith, Contest Judge

Thank you so much for providing our students with this opportunity! I'm

Lyman Ordway reading her story impressed with how many people submitted work. Our students really enjoyed when you came to MLS to share the artifacts - interesting Freeport history lesson for us all! - Gayle Wolotsky, 4th grade teacher Mast Landing

A sincere thank you for organizing the wonderful writing contest this spring and for hosting such a lovely event last night. It is a wonderful way to engage people in the town (and especially kids) in some of the town's remarkable history, and some of the wonderful items in the FHS collection. We are so grateful that Isla has these sorts of opportunities to enrich and extend her classroom learning, to engage with her community, and where she has a little more freedom to write something following her own passions and interests. Thanks again for doing this contest and for helping inspire and engage our town's young people! - Fiona Wilson, parent of participant

It was quite an amazing turnout, great participation, and wonderful food too. This was a wonderful way to engage the community, to involve youth, and to make connections with the schools. Great work! - Kathy Smith

What a wonderful way to connect the community with Freeport Historical Society! - Janel Tyson, teacher Pine Tree Academy

Youth Winners

If your intent was to gain publicity for the Historical Society and get the public more involved, it was <u>very</u> successful. What I liked most was the involvement on the part of the youth/young adults. I was so impressed with their creative talents and public recognition at that age is what is needed to launch a lifetime devotion to creative writing. - Jerry Tims

Congratulations for pulling off a nice event that got a lot of kids writing. - Brendan Tierney

Using the exhibit as a springboard for writing was such a great idea, and such fun for me ... how nice to allow my heart to triumph over my head again. - Maryellen Carew

I think the contest is a wonderful idea for so many reasons - connecting people to the local history, encouraging creativity,

and it clearly appealed to a multigenerational group. Thank you all so much! - Ann Coltman, teacher Maine Coast Waldorf School



- continued from front page

Perhaps it was the example of their first cousin Rufus Soule that inspired brothers Enos, Henchman, and



Figure 2

Soule Clement their establish own shipbuilding enterprise at Strouts Point in South Freeport in the late 1830s. At first, they leased the yard from the SPWC. but success at their

enterprise enabled the brothers to purchase the wharf, store, and shipyard in 1846. While their specific roles changed over the years, for the most part Enos ran the yard from



Figure 1:

South Freeport while Clement captained some of their vessels and Henchman oversaw the business from New Haven, Connecticut. Henchman and

Enos sold their share of the waterfront

property to Clement in 1851, who expanded the family holdings over the next decade.

From 1839 until 1879, the Soule brothers built 29 vessels—the first was the bark *Ella* and the last the ship *Paraminta*.



Figure 7

Like the brigantine Dash, several of the Soule-built vessels have remained in the hearts and minds of the people of Freeport because of the adventures they encountered after leaving Freeport. Two

ships experienced mutiny--the bark *Glen* and the ship *Haidee*, the *Tam O'Shanter*, a fast clipper ship that won a photo-finish race around Cape Horn by only 2 hours, also notoriously hid the captain's dead wife in brine for months, the *San Joaquin* survived a run-in with a nine mile-long iceberg, and the *Lafayette* was burned at sea during the Civil War causing the Soules to name their next carrier the *Southerner*.

Beginning in the 1860s, the Soule brothers shared Strouts Point with **Bliss** brothers Charles and Gershom, who developed their own yards east of the main wharf. However, it was the Soules who became, and have



Figure 5

remained, the family most associated with shipbuilding at Strouts Point, primarily because they maintained the business through successive generations. Although shipbuilding at Strouts Point came later than it did to other areas of Freeport, the Soule family's multi-generational involvement in the industry caused it to grow into one of the biggest yards in Maine, and to last longer than it did in

other areas of town.

For example, when patriarch Enos Soule died in 1869, the business was taken over by his son Enos C. Soule who had already been running the yard for



Figure 6

nearly a decade. Enos C. Soule captained a number of Soule ships, and continued to build vessels at the yard for

another decade. During the period between construction of the last "Soule Brothers" vessel in the yard in 1879 and WWI, the wharf and landing continued to be used by the fisheries, and also served as a stop for the many steamboats that brought summer visitors to Casco Castle and transported vacationers to the islands. (Fig 2.) Strouts Point remained in the hands descendants during this period of relative inactivity, but Enos C. Soule's son Julian, also a sea captain, along with five of Enos C.



Figure 11

that occurred with the advent of World War I in the early slid down the shipways. After these last large barges were 20th century. The Soule-founded Freeport Shipbuilding completed, Strouts Point became a peaceful dock Company was commissioned to build several wooden surrounded with sailing vessels and water-loving became a whirlwind of activity with hundreds of workers with shipbuilding activity. (Fig. 12, aerial view of Strouts tending vessels on the stocks and lining up for a Point ca. 1955) Last year, Ted Wengren, a descendant of page 1 & 4 panorama above). The *Nemassa* was the first been in the family for 170 years. ship completed (Fig. 5), but it in sank in Baltimore Harbor on its maiden voyage to Italy. The Harraseeket was launched in 1919, but construction of the final vessel was halted with only a finished hull when the war ended. (Fig. 6) It was later finished to be a 5-masted schooner, named the Sintram.

Just after the war, the era of Prohibition again brought shipbuilding work to South Freeport. Several "rum chasers" (also known as "fast lobster boats") were built in the Soule yard in the early 1920s. (Fig. 8) These Coast Guard-manned vessels were used to chase down smugglers attempting to run illegal alcohol to ports along the coast of

Maine. During this time some fishing boats and yachts were also built in the Soule yard until it closed in the mid 1920s.

Still, even this closing was not the end of major shipbuilding at Strouts Point. The second World War opened vet another era of wooden shipbuilding with a government contract to build five Red Oak barges for carrying supplies during the war effort. The Casco Shipbuilding Company employed many men and completed building four barges. (Figs 10 & 11) Launchings were well-attended

Soule's grandsons, oversaw a major revival of shipbuilding public events with cheers of excitement as the new vessels Ferris-Type steamers for the war effort, and the yard again enthusiasts, then, as now, standing on a site once brimming photograph on November 13, 1918 (see Fig 3, panorama Enos Soule, sold Strouts Point Wharf Company, after it had



Figure 12

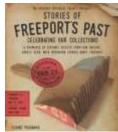
Freeport's Working Waterfront Today

By Christine Farrell and Jim Cram

Today, Freeporters continue to sail the coast of Maine and often to other ports around the world. But, the old shipyards have been replaced by two very modern and active boatyards which service hundreds of boats each year.

Brewers Marine and Strouts Point Wharf Company (recently acquired by Brewers) employ a total of over 50 workers year-round and many more in the bustling summer months. Between them they have over 200 boat slips and many moorings which are rented to local and visiting yachtsmen. Strouts Point has a faithful following of wooden boat owners who come back year after year for the caring service and craftsmanship they have come to rely on since Ted Wengren founded the modern yard in 1984 on the same land his ancestors built the larger ships. His managers Cym and Charlie share his pride of quality service and are proud to be carrying on as a semi-autonomous branch of the Brewer organization. Across the Town Dock, Brewers Marine is a larger operation and has a greater focus on fiberglass

HISTORICAL SOCIETY EVENTS



STORIES OF FREEPORT'S PAST: CELEBRATING OUR COLLECTION

Tuesday through Friday 10:00 am-5:00 pm: Extended through Fall 2017 Suggested Donation: \$5 general, \$3 members and children 12-17 (under 12 free) A showcase of rarely seen objects from our collections archive. These objects "tell" an interesting story of Freeport's history: for example the top hat of Freeport entrepreneur E.B. Mallet who developed Freeport Village in the late 19th century by building a shoe factory, and opening a granite quarry, sawmill, and brickyard to encourage industrial production.

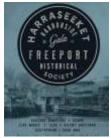
Concert in the Courtyard: Featuring The Coastal Winds

Sunday, June 18th, 2pm, at FHS 45 Main Street

Bring a blanket and lunch and have yourself a picnic in the Historical Society courtyard while listening to the sounds of the Freeport's own *Coastal Winds*. An afternoon that is sure to be a delight!



The Coastal Winds, the Freeport area's community band, comprises over 35 dedicated and talented woodwind, brass, and percussion instrumentalists. Membership is on a volunteer basis and includes professional musicians, business people, and retirees from the Mid Coast area, as well as a few high school students.



Harraseeket Harborside Gala

Saturday, June 24th 6pm at Strouts Point Wharf Co., 5 Wharf Rd, South Freeport
Join us for our 6th annual Harraseeket Heritage Gala to benefit the Freeport Historical Society's
mission of educating preserving and collecting Freeport's history. This spirited celebration of
Freeport's Working Waterfront History will include live music, live and silent auctions, the now
famous "wheel of chance" great food, live entertainment and more!

Pettengill Farm Tours

Thurs June 29 at 10 am, Wed July 19 at 6 pm, Tues Aug 22 at 5 pm, Fri Sept 15 at 11 am \$10 FHS Members, \$12, General Public

The Freeport Historical Society will offer guided tours of the historic Pettengill Farmhouse and grounds as a way for the public to learn more about this remarkable homestead. These tours offer a rare opportunity to view and learn about the house, which is generally open only once a year, on Pettengill Farm Day.





Historic Freeport Village Walking Tours Dates starting in July (TBD)

FMI: www.freeporthsitoricalsociety.org or info@freeporthistoricalsociety.org, \$10 per person Tickets will be sold at the Historical Society on the day of the tour.

Take a 45 minute guided walking tour of Historic Freeport Village. Tours will begin at the Historical Society, 45 Main Street, and stroll around the village to many of Freeport's special architectural treasures.

Pettengill Farm Day

Sunday, October 1, Pettengill Farm, 31 Pettengill Road, Freeport

This year's Pettengill Farm day will feature an old time Baseball Game with Maine's own team Dirigo vs. a team to be announced. There will also be Kids activities, Cider Pressing, Tours of the Farmhouse and more! Watch our website for more announcements.





Ghosts of Freeport's Past October 26 - 29, 2017

For more information: www.freeporthistoricalsociety.org

ANCESTORS IN THE ATTIC

By Holly Hurd



Trustees David Coffin and Jane Grant and Volunteer Bob Fusselman enjoying a good story

On March 18, twenty community members met at the Freeport Historical Society for *Ancestors in the Attic*. This program was designed to encourage community members to bring historic artifacts they own to FHS, and share their stories with others—one of two programs related to our current exhibit--



A Pencil Sharpener

Stories of Freeport's Past: Celebrating Our Collections.

Although the objects cared for by FHS are extensive, many historical artifacts--- photographs, paintings and diaries--- are cared for by community members, especially those with deep roots in town. Our goal is to connect these "keepers of history" with the Historical Society so that historical artifacts in private hands may eventually find a home at FHS or be passed along to family members who value and cherish their importance in understanding the

town's history. This effort is directly in line with our mission to preserve and interpret, as well as to educate the public about the history of Freeport.



A cardboard bank

We enjoyed a lunch together and then participants took turns describing their objects. We saw an interesting range of items and heard some wonderful stories about old photographs, a clock, a pencil sharpener, match books, an old bottle, a Porter's Landing school desk, an old lantern, a cardboard bank, Native American horse beadwork, a gold pin, a 19th century carving tool, a sign board advertising clambakes, Mrs. E.B. Mallet's dress, and a chair made by a shipbuilder. The latter three items, as well as a number of photographs, were

received as donations to the Historical Society!



A advertising match books

THE HARRINGTON HOUSE GARDENS

The gardens at Harrington House got a good cleaning out on April 13th with the help of 5 students and 2 adults from Mast Landing School during their first ever Community Day. This was the perfect boost for our dedicated Garden Volunteers led to get ready for our annual plant sale on May 20th. The plant sale committee, made up of *Becky Hotelling, Brad Snow, Polly Brann, Jane Alden, Jane Danielson, Nancy Salmon and Betty Furtney,* were a great team! This year FHS was join by the Freeport Women's club who held their annual Bake Sale at FHS during the plant sale. The weather was perfect and the day a success for all. Thank you to our plant sale sponsors; *Estabrooks, Shady Glen Nurseries, Steve Brann Building, Hughes Inc. Arbor*



and Land Management and Casco Bay Cutlery. Thank you to the many people who dug and potted their own perennials for donation to our sale, with your donations the plant sale would not be as successful as it is. The Proceeds of the plant sale will help fund the gardens at Harrington House.

Freeport's Working Waterfront Today - continued from page 7

and composite boats. The yard likes to give great service to all boaters. As yacht broker Will Thomas likes to say, "we see boats valued from \$1.5 thousand to \$1.5 million on a regular basis". Local owner John Brewer comes from a family who owned multiple boatyards along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. He was in his 20's and having a ball racing high speed, high tech, Maxi Boats when he got the opportunity to run this yard in Freeport. He never looked back. The company has continuously invested in improvements to the yard, docks and buildings. John loves all aspects of the operation, the people, the boats and his crew. Some of whom have been there for decades.

The Town Dock itself is a testimony to local cooperation. There is activity year-round which of course accelerates in the summer. Lobstermen and clammers, the Bustin's Island ferry, yachtsmen, kayakers, the Harbor Master, visitors all have learned to share the available dockage and allow public access to Casco Bay.

There is more activity across the docks at Harraseeket Lunch and Lobster with the multiple lobstermen they service. Over at the Yacht Club there are nearly another hundred boats, more boaters and a very active youth sailing program. All of this activity means the Harraseeket is once again full of boats, people and the hum of seaborne activity.



BOY SCOUTS VISIT FREEPORT AND EARN A MERIT BADGE

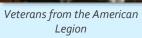
Scouts learn about the National Register

On Saturday, May 13, 2017 more than 3,000 Boy Scouts arrived in Freeport for their annual Scout-o-Rama. The Freeport Historical Society became part of Scout-o-Rama this year offering the scouts an opportunity to achieve the requirements for their American Heritage merit badge.

The American Heritage merit badge is one of the scouts' more difficult merit badges to achieve, requiring the scout to interview veterans, read the declaration of independence, learn about the National Register of Historic Places, tour or visit a Historic Site or District, learn about careers in American heritage, and learn about two political or historical figures in US history, along with more requirements. Jim Cram, Executive Director and Jennifer

Pollick, Programs and Admin. Manager for FHS teamed together to build an afternoon for the scouts to finish many of these requirements.

Thanks to the help of great volunteers we were able to complete interviews with three veterans from the Freeport chapter of the American Legion. With the help of Bob Cecil a volunteer at the Pejepscot Historical Society the scouts learned about General Joshua Chamberlain. It was a lot for the boys to take in, but they did a great job. We were thrilled to meet the getting ready to tour the National Veterans from the American scouts from Freeport, Cape Elizabeth, Mexico and Hollis, Maine.





Lillian Haversat and scouts Register District of Historic Freeport Village

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Harrington House 45 Main Street Freeport, ME 04032

info@freeporthistoricalsociety.org www.HistoricFreeport.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Annual Gala June 24th Tickets Available online or at FHS

Are you a history lover? Perhaps a long time resident of Freeport? Want to meet new people from town? Maybe you're just looking for something to do for a few hours each month?

The Freeport Historical Society is seeking volunteers to begin training in the following areas, If you are interested please contact Jennifer Pollick at info@freeporthistoricalsociety.org or call 207-865-3170.

Walking tour docent: Walking tour docents will lead one hour tours of the Historic Freeport Village. Tours take place during the week and possibly Saturdays. Training will be provided.

Non-Profit Organization U.S. Postage PAID Permit #47

Freeport, Maine

Office Admin/Meeter-Greeter Volunteer: This volunteer will meet and greet visitors to the Historical Society, work with Programs and Admin Manager to do light filing, answer phones, etc. Training will be provided.

JOIN or RENEW your MEMBERSHIP!

Membership has its benefits: A copy of the book *Tides of Change: A Guide to the Harraseeket Historic District*, a trail map of Pettengill Farm, and our quarterly newsletter, *The Dash*, are included. Members also receive one hour of research time in our archives and invitations to all Society events and exhibits at free or reduced rates.

of research time in our archives and invitations to all Society events and exhibits at free or reduced rates.					
Name_					
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	☐ \$20 Senior/Student ☐ \$40 Seniror Family	□ \$35 Individual □ \$50 Family	☐ \$100 Contributi ☐ \$250 Supporting	0	☐ \$500 Sustaining ☐ \$1000 Leadership

Please make checks payable to Freeport Historical Society and mail to 45 Main Street, Freeport, ME 04032, or join us online at www.freeporthistoricalsociety.org