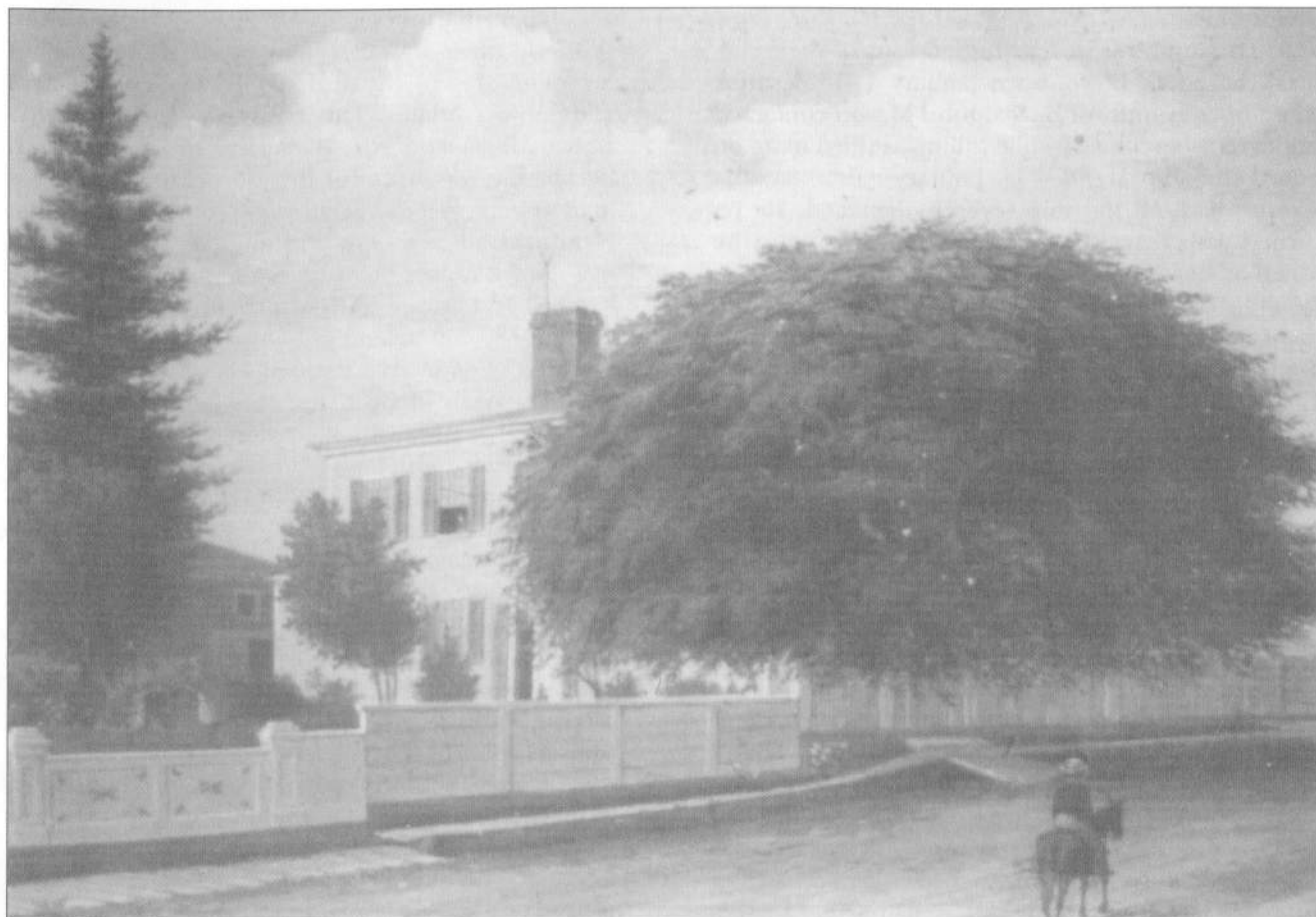


WILSON MUSEUM BULLETIN

Fall 1997

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A photograph, given in 1971 by Sally Stevens Ayers, of Fitz Hugh Lane's painting of "the old Stevens House on the corner of Main St. & Stevens Lane . . ." It stands today with a Mansard roof, added to accommodate boarders from the Eastern State Normal School.

THE STEVENS CHILDREN

Dr. Joseph Stevens and his wife, Dorothy, raised their nine children in Castine during a time when it was a considerably wealthy seaport - a port of entry serving the neighboring towns of Penobscot and Brooksville as well as the islands within ten or fifteen miles. The bay was filled with vessels of all manner. There were those laden for the south with barrels of fish - herring, shad, mackerel and cod; kegs of porgy oil; potatoes; lumber, staves, shooks; bricks and rope. Returning ships brought their catch from the Grand Banks or the Bay of Chaleur; rum

and molasses from the West Indies; salt from Liverpool and Cadiz; and goods from many foreign ports - household furnishings, tools, textiles, clothing, spices, fresh fruits and the like. The shore was lined with wharves for the exchange and with ships being built or repaired. In addition to this, the Stevens family experienced Castine in its glory as shire town for Hancock County. Though the seat was moved to Ellsworth in 1838 and the flow of people decreased, steamers continued bringing family, friends and business men to the busy seacoast

village. Such activity provided opportunities for a diverse citizenry: carpenters, smiths, riggers, teachers, lawyers, judges, storekeepers, innkeepers, coopers, farmers, seamen, etc. Surely, all were crucial to the town's prosperity. It is equally certain that this diverse people and the activity about town had an impact on the doctor's children. But, however strong the bonds were to their native town, none were to make Castine their home.

Dr. and Mrs. Stevens buried four of their children. Elizabeth Lowe, born January 1, 1835, died, when not yet four, of burns. John Mason contacted phthisis (tuberculosis) while sailing as third mate on board the ship *Wellfleet*. A January gale, near the Azores, had left the ship severely damaged. He returned with it to Boston in July and in August he sailed on her as second mate. He wrote: *Arrived in St. John [N.B.] Wednesday m. August 20, 1856. Left on account of sickness September 4, 1856 ... home Sept. 6th.* He died at his parents' home at the age of twenty-one. Charles Little, born March 10, 1829, sought a career in the mercantile business, first in his uncle's store in Gloucester and later removed to Boston. In 1861 he joined the Gloucester Company of the Eighth Regiment. He wrote his parents: *I have only time to write a word before starting for the seat of war. . . This step I have not taken hastily. When the military were ordered out, I made up my mind to go if necessary. . . . If 'twas any foolish war of aggression, I would not go, but this is a just and holy cause and 'tis the duty of every man to go who can. . . . Perhaps I may never come back - if so, I trust my life or death will be of service to my country in this her peril. I have only one hour to get ready in and I don't know where we are to go. Don't worry about me - I am healthy, and with God's help will do my duty. I sacredly promise so to conduct myself that you need never blush for me. . . .* On June 28, 1863, at the siege of Port Hudson, Lieutenant Stevens, then in Company A 14th Regiment Maine Infantry, was mortally wounded. Six years later they lost Samuel Bradford to yellow fever while he was on board the ship *Charles Davenport*. On April 12, 1869, Dr. Stevens records: *Mon 12 !! This day the melancholy news received in a letter from W^m C. Vose, Callao of the death of our dear Son Samuel - the[y] made the passage from Rio to Callao in the very short passage of 41 days - mentioned as such in the prints - died on March 15 of yellow fever - taken sick on Saturday - died on Monday theres three grown sons we have lost. . . . I calculated on his living here - the rest all gone from home -*

Joseph Jr., the eldest, born in 1822, moved to Gloucester where he helped in the family business. Here, he became good friends with marine artist Fitz Hugh Lane who often accompanied Joseph when he visited his parents. Lane's first visit was probably in 1848. Many of Lane's coastal paintings were made during these trips to Castine. The well known litho-

graph of *Castine from Hospital Island* was a result of Joseph Jr.'s proposal, in 1855, that a lithograph print of Castine be *struck off similar to the sketch lately made by Mr. Lane to be executed in the best style in Boston in plain dark & white* - The required 100 subscribers, paying two dollars per copy, were mostly residents. Reproductions of this print were made in 1977 and are available in the Wilson Museum. The museum also has a diary kept, in 1852, by William Howe Witherle which tells of a short cruise with several of his friends; Joseph Jr., Fitz Hugh Lane, George Tilden and Samuel Adams. This cruise was printed in the *Wilson Museum Bulletin, Winter 1975-76, Vol. 2. No. 2.* Permission was given for the journal to be included in *Paintings by Fitz Hugh Lane*, John Wilmerding, National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1988.

Mary Lowe, born in 1824, married Leverett Kimball and moved to Bradford, MA. Edward Otis, born in 1827, married Elizabeth Lowe and moved to Boston. William Avery, born 1832, married Mary Whitney Wells of Brooklin, ME, and moved to Illinois. George Beckwith, their youngest, born in 1845, made a brief attempt in the mercantile business, then chose to follow his father's profession. Dr. Stevens wrote - Friday, December 1, 1865: *George commenced study of Medicine with me today . . .* By 1869 his son assumed duties as "Senior Surgeon intern" in *City Hospital [Boston] - may Heaven preserve him and carry him successfully through his great responsibilities.* He married, in 1880, Mary Hills. It is through Dr. George Beckwith Stevens and his family that the society received the Stevens collection.

Joseph and Dorothy's family, though drawn away from Castine in their adult life, were attentive to their parents' needs and visited their home frequently. One of the last passages in the doctor's diaries was in August 1874: *Sat 15. My birthday - age 84 - tolerable health - visits from children - viz Leverett & Mary & Wallace - Lina - Nellie - & Grace - enjoying their company very much. they dont fail by tokens of remembrance to congratulate their grandfather - It has been a year of a good deal of suffering from sickness with me professional business about done - have occasionally been to Brooksville &c -*

Noah Brooks, in his book *Lem, A New England Village Boy*, skillfully reveals the heart of a young boy growing up in Castine during the era of the Stevens family. So, too, does sixteen year-old John Mason Stevens, when next we meet.

End Note

The Stevens family was honored on May 15, 1881, when Captain Edward F. Davies and other Civil War veterans formed a local Post of the GAR and gave it the name - The Charles L. Stevens Post, 76, Grand Army of the Republic. A year later the town named the street above the family homestead Stevens Street.

Clara C. Wiswall (1900-1997)

Clara Wiswall joined the Museum Council in 1967 and soon became involved in the society's movement to preserve the decaying John Perkins House. Mrs. Wiswall is appreciated for her work to this end; her name joins others on a plaque in the Perkins House for giving generously to this restoration. A candle stand, which she gave in 1974, stands in the parlor. She served for over twenty-three years as trustee and for nine years as secretary.

Russell B. Harriman (1902-1997)

Serving as a Council Member for several years, Russell Harriman gave much time and energy to the establishment of the Blacksmith Shop in the early 1970s. He gave many choice tools to the smithy as well as items for the John Perkins House and Wilson Museum. His handsome copperware was shown with other work by area artist during the summer of 1991 and, until the last two years, he frequented the museum complex each season

CURATOR'S REPORT

September 1996 - 1997

Over this past year the society's small staff has been busy. Much time was given to publishing *Ann Eliza Birkbeck Wilson, Letters of Friends and Relatives* in celebration of the society's seventy-fifth anniversary. The material was edited by Ellenore W. Doudiet, daughter of the society's founder, Dr. J. Howard Wilson. The Stevens collection of diaries, journals and letters has been worked on this past year and will continue as time allows. Letters inquiring into genealogy or local history are answered as quickly as possible and involve many hours each week. The society continues to loan school study boxes for periods of two to four weeks; delivery and pick-up are provided by the staff and volunteers. Home schoolers are also being served and we would appreciate knowing of families in the area that might be interested.

The summer was very pleasant. Hoyt T. Hutchins returned to the smithy after recuperating from a quadruple by-pass in May 1996. Also returning was Pauline Hutchins for her twenty-second year at the front desk and Brian Adams in his second year as my summer assistant. The number of visitors this season holds steady with an average of 3300/year over the past ten years. Group visits were arranged from late May through September. Advance notice is encouraged for these visits to insure that we have ample assistance. A summer exhibit entitled *Birchbark, Baskets and Beadwork* drew the attention of many visitors. Gretchen Faulkner from the Hudson Museum, photographed the beadwork for research she is involved with on Eastern Woodland culture. As usual, special activities were scheduled for Saturday afternoons during July and August. The staff provided demonstrations in caning, rush work and spinning. From Castine we are grateful to Anne Keith for sharing

her skills in rug hooking; Alice Kimball for her work in stained glass; and Deborah Pulliam for spinning wool for the Old Town Science Group. We were also pleased to have Rev. William Hart speak on his experiences with the Navajos and to have Ashley Webster and his grandson David Lobley reminisce on life in and around Morse's Cove. Maine Indian basket-makers demonstrated their work; from the Penobscot Nation were Caron and Lawrence Shay, a father and daughter team, and, representing the Micmacs, were Donald and Mary Sanipass and their grandson Max. Their son David spent the afternoon telling stories using flutes he fashions from various wood. The John Perkins House held two fireside cooking demonstrations and Joseph Meltrader of Brooksville was a guest smith in the Blacksmith Shop.

There was little repair on the complex this year; copper gutters on the water side were installed and electrical fixtures were replaced in the Museum and Blacksmith Shop. Roof shingles on the south side of the Smithy are soon to be replaced and upon the arrival of spring the John Perkins House and Hears House will be painted. The windows in the museum will eventually need to be replaced. The society will look for sources where these can be purchased.

Though the museum is closed for the season, winter work continues in the office to make plans for the new season and to work on the archival material and artifacts that make this museum so unique and valuable to this area. Suggestions for exhibits, activities and research are always welcomed and we encourage you to contact the museum with new ideas and a helping hand.

Patricia L. Hutchins, curator

TREASURER'S REPORT

June 1, 1996- May 31, 1997

RECEIPTS

Gifts, membership, contribution	\$ 4,800.08
Memorials	325.19
John Perkins Admission	800.00
Net Sales	1,501.43
Interest	732.93
Dividends	48,253.42
From Endowment Fund	<u>21,841.16</u>
	\$78,254.21

EXPENSES

Net Salaries/wages	\$32,399.19
Payroll Taxes	11,912.40
Worker's Comp. & insur.	4,476.30
Supplies & Maintenance	5,073.23
Office and printing	2,079.82
Printing <i>Ann Eliza Birkbeck Wilson</i>	18,062.00
Utilities	3,691.54
Miscellaneous	<u>559.73</u>
	\$78,254.21

Hoyt T. Hutchins, treasurer

TRUSTEES

Jane Surran Pyne, Esq., *president*
Anne Keith, *vice-president*
Ellenore W. Doudiet, *secretary*
Hoyt T. Hutchins, *treasurer*
Donald Crist, MD
Anne Farnham
Pauline A. Hutchins
Camillo F. Petri
Lucy Jane Webster

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ronald Austin
Sandra Dinsmore
Hildegard B. Perkins
Charlotte Sholod
Shelley McVicker, Esq.

Books and Prints Available Through the Museum

Majabigwaduce - Castine, Penobscot & Brooksville, Ellenore W. Doudiet. 1973.
Lem, A New England Village Boy, Noah Brooks. 1903. Reprinted in 1988 with Foreword.
Juliet Bowes Corbett, Letters of Friends and Relatives, edited by Ellenore W. Doudiet. 1995.
Ann Eliza Birkbeck Wilson, Letters of Friends and Relatives, edited by Ellenore W. Doudiet. 1996.
Castine From Hospital Island. 1855. Fitz Hugh Lane. (21" x 31") print, reproduced 1977.
1889 CASTINE, Maine. (23" x 35") print, reproduced 1977.



Castine, Maine 04421