

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



PORTSMOUTH
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CONTENTS

In Memoriam

The Portsmouth Historical Society mourns the passing of Sue Thoresen in 2024. A dedicated supporter of our mission, Sue and her husband, Bob, championed our programming and exhibitions for many years. In addition to her contributions to the Society, Sue was a prolific author and passionate activist, advocating for women’s rights and supporting numerous local nonprofit organizations.

Sue’s legacy endures through her family, her writings, and the countless lives she touched. Her final book, *Choose Joy*, a heartfelt collection of family stories, vignettes, and reflections on life, was published just before her passing.

Her wisdom, generosity, and unwavering spirit will be greatly missed, but her impact will continue to inspire for generations to come.



Sue Thoresen at center

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A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Emma Stratton, Executive Director

Last year was unlike any other—full of construction, change, and growth! If you visited us last year, you may have noticed some challenges along the way. Our small but vital parking lot was closed for much of the year as the City installed a new accessible ramp on our building, and ongoing construction on Islington Street made reaching us an adventure at times. While these disruptions impacted our foot traffic—especially during the peak summer months—we’re thrilled to see critical infrastructure improvements taking shape, including beautiful new sidewalks that will enhance access for years to come.

Despite the excitement (and obstacles) outside our doors, the Portsmouth Historical Society was buzzing with activity inside. We hosted countless public programs, took over the Portsmouth Plaque Program, and launched engaging new exhibitions. From “The Matter of Memory” to collaborations with the NH Art Association, Pastel Society of NH, and NH Furniture Masters, and of course, the beloved Gingerbread exhibition, 2024 was a year of creativity and community connection. We also expanded our accessibility efforts, piloting ASL-supported walking tours—an initiative we’re excited to continue in 2025.

You, our community, embraced meaningful moments, from collections highlights on social media to our Indigenous Culture Family Day, where 55 individuals joined together to build a wigwam on the lawn of the John Paul Jones House. These immersive experiences highlight the power of history to bring people together, and we look forward to offering even more in the coming year.

Looking ahead, we are eager to share “Cabot Lyford: Winds of Change,” our major exhibition for 2025, and continue our work of preserving and sharing Portsmouth’s history. As economic uncertainty and shifting nonprofit funding landscapes present new challenges, we are more grateful than ever for you—our members, supporters, and community. Your belief in our mission keeps Portsmouth’s history alive, and we thank you for being part of this journey.

Here’s to another year of learning, connection, and growth!



Emma Stratton, Executive Director of the Portsmouth Historical Society

Emma

STRATEGIC PLAN

Our Mission: The Portsmouth Historical Society’s museums and programs connect the community to our past, present and future through collections, interpretation, education and preservation.

Our Vision: Cultivate and enrich a greater understanding of Portsmouth histories

- Priority 1 Diverse Stories**
 - Collection Understanding and Curation
 - Exhibitions and Programs
 - Digital Archiving
- Priority 2 Community Engagement**
 - Partnership
 - Interactive Events
 - Volunteer and Membership Programs
- Priority 3 Inclusivity**
 - Accessibility
 - Representation in Leadership
- Priority 4 Sustainability**
 - Environmental Sustainability
 - Building Sustainability
 - Financial Sustainability
 - Operational Sustainability
- Priority 5 Advocacy**
 - Policy Advocacy
 - Public Awareness Campaigns
 - Education

By focusing on these five priorities, the Portsmouth Historical Society aims to create a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable organization that actively contributes to the preservation and celebration of Portsmouth’s diverse history.



FINANCIALS

Balance Sheet January - December 2024

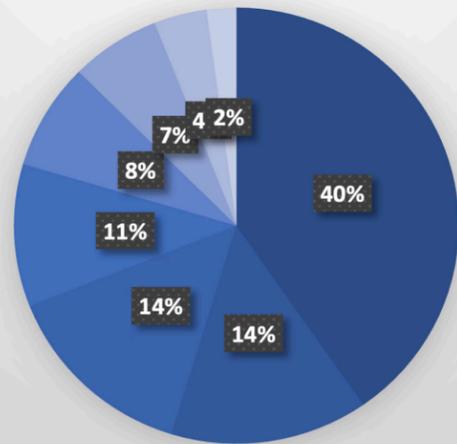
	Total
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
Restricted	595,498.43
Unrestricted	105,987.95
Total for Bank Accounts	\$701,486.38
Total for Accounts Receivable	\$7,317.84
Total for Other Current Assets	\$2,731.85
Total for Current Assets	\$711,536.07
Total for Fixed Assets	\$2,773,757.34
Total for Assets	\$3,485,293.41
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Total for Accounts Payable	\$20,419.58
Total for Credit Cards	\$1,017.74
Total for Other Current Liabilities	\$36,306.44
Total for Current Liabilities	\$57,743.76
Total for Long-term Liabilities	\$1,225.00
Total for Liabilities	\$58,968.76
Equity	
3900 Retained Earnings	\$3,610,963.10
Net Income	-\$184,638.45
Total for Equity	\$3,426,324.65
Total for Liabilities and Equity	\$3,485,293.41

Profit and Loss January - December 2024

	Total
Income	
Contributions and Grants	\$342,493.14
Program-related admissions & fees	\$95,513.93
Revenue from dues	\$43,812.55
Revenue from investments	\$96,525.41
Museum Shop Income	\$70,956.30
Fundraising Events	\$25,764.50
Total for Income	\$675,065.83
Gross Profit	\$675,130.63
Expenses	
Museum Shop Expense	\$28,593.84
Salaries & related expenses	\$564,486.87
Contract service expenses	\$36,235.50
Non-personnel expenses	\$18,841.81
Utilities	\$52,285.01
Facility & equipment expenses	\$121,017.90
Travel & meeting expenses	\$2,852.23
Program Expenses	\$31,089.47
Other expenses	\$56,639.50
Total for Expenses	\$859,769.08
Net Operating Income	-\$184,638.45
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	\$153,577.00
Net Income	-\$31,061.45

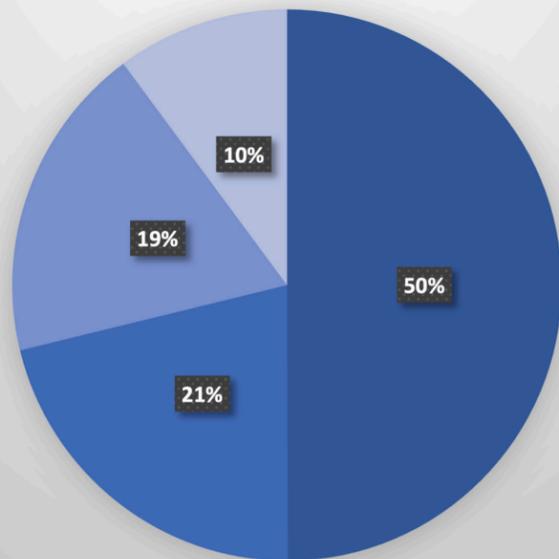
A full copy of our financial records and 990 are available upon request.

2024 Income



- Individual Contributions (40%)
- Other Income (14%)
- Programs & Admission (14%)
- Gift Shop (11%)
- Grants (8%)
- Membership (7%)
- Fundraising Events (4%)
- Corporate Sponsors (2%)

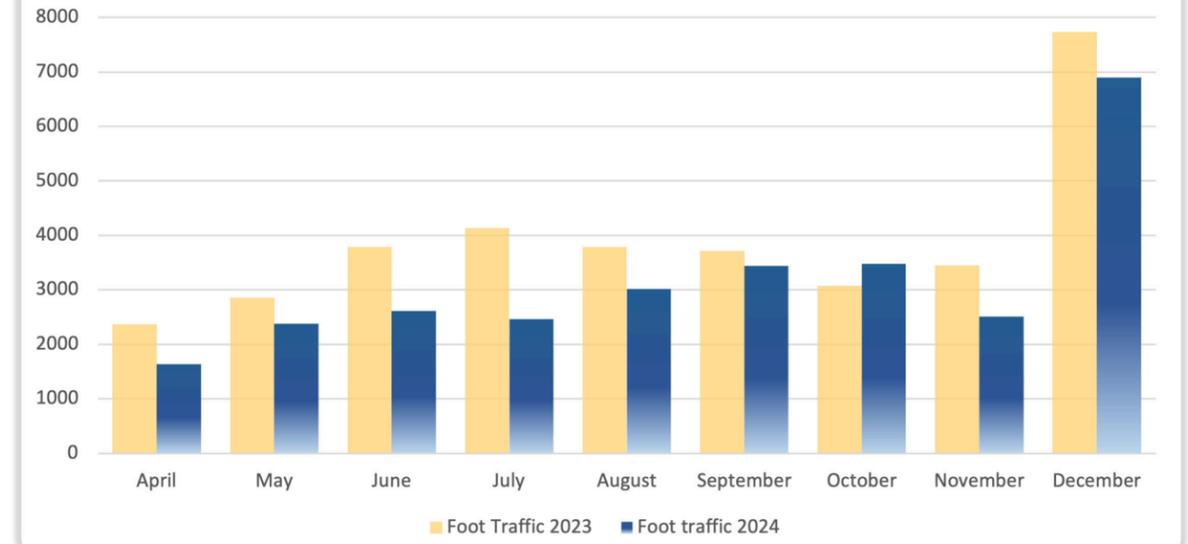
2024 Expenses



- Programs (50%)
- Management & General (21%)
- Building Maintenance (19%)
- Fundraising (10%)

VISITATION

Museum Traffic by Month 2024 vs. 2023



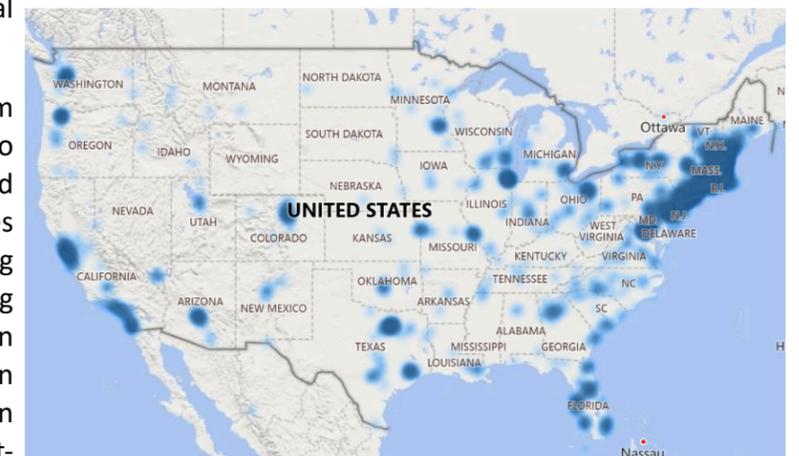
Total museum visitation numbers include visitors to all of our exhibitions, the John Paul Jones House, and the Seacoast African American Cultural Center, as well as those who attend our programs (such as lectures, book signings, workshops, and more) and visitors during our many events and rentals.

28,434
total foot traffic in 2024

In 2024, the Portsmouth Historical Society experienced a shift in visitor numbers following the excitement and heightened local engagement of Portsmouth's 400th anniversary in 2023. While local visitation naturally leveled off, we remained a valued destination for visitors and continued to play a meaningful role in the city's cultural landscape.

Despite these temporary obstacles, our exhibitions, programs, and events continued to resonate deeply with visitors. We received enthusiastic feedback throughout the year and successfully expanded our reach through new offerings.

Portsmouth as a whole saw a dip in tourism this year. Citywide efforts were launched to reinvigorate visitation, and we participated in several key conversations and initiatives aimed at strengthening tourism. Ongoing infrastructure improvements—including major construction along primary downtown routes, continued work on the Islington Street corridor, and extensive renovations in our own parking area—also presented short-term access challenges.



Heat map showing visitation from the United States.

FACILITIES

JAN HVAC motor replacements	FEB Permit of Assembly completed with the Fire Department	MAR Spring carpet and window cleaning	APR Annual sprinkler and alarm inspection
MAY Window leaks repaired	JUNE Tree trimming and masonry work on our entrance	JULY Portsmouth Painting Co completes Morton-Benedict exterior	AUG City begins ramp replacement project
SEP Construction work causes leak in fire suppression system	OCT John Paul Jones House ceilings refinished and painted	NOV Fire suppression system leak successfully fixed	DEC New access ramp completed



Thanks to the City of Portsmouth, our new ramp improves accessibility for all visitors.

BECK HOUSE



The Beck House, located at 43 Austin Street, in autumn.
Photo © Kenneth R. Goldman

The former Beck family home at 43 Austin Street remains under the stewardship of the Portsmouth Historical Society. We continue to provide preventative maintenance including groundskeeping, furnace inspection, gutter cleaning, and more. In addition, we held conversations with many different community partners about a potential adaptive reuse of the Beck House. We look forward to sharing more information with you soon.

MARKETING & OUTREACH

This year, Portsmouth Historical Society made significant progress in digital marketing, most notably through the successful implementation and optimization of the Google Ads Grant for nonprofits. By leveraging this resource, we were able to run targeted advertising campaigns that generated \$4,350 in free ad value, resulting in over 10,300 impressions and 838 clicks to our website. These efforts directly contributed to a 25% increase in overall site traffic. Throughout the year, we experimented

to continually improve ad performance, ensuring that our online presence reached broader and more diverse audiences.

Alongside advertising efforts, substantial work was done to improve our website and including more aspects of our operations on the website. We began the process of a large-scale update with the “About” section. Pages for Portsmouth Advocates and Marine Society Press were updated to reflect new publications and preservation projects. One standout success was the revitalization of the Portsmouth Plaque Program, now housed under the Portsmouth Advocates. Through a mix of social media storytelling, community research sessions, and monthly features highlighting new recipients, the program generated significant buzz—one post alone reached nearly 10,000 people—and helped foster deeper connections with our local audience.

To support year-round visibility and reinforce our visual identity, we introduced evergreen banners designed for use during our off-season. These banners are a physical extension of our broader branding work, which this year included standardizing fonts, colors, and messaging across promotional materials. This emphasis on continuity has helped unify the look and feel of our exhibitions, events, and programs—both online and in person—strengthening public recognition and reinforcing the Society’s presence in the community.



Reusable off-seasons banners highlight key components of our museum offerings that are available each year, creating an environmentally friendly way to affirm our branding when no exhibitions are on display.

The Portsmouth Historical Society is committed to lowering the barriers to museum admission through participation in:



EXHIBITIONS

The Matter of Memory

Our main exhibition, “The Matter of Memory,” explored how museum collections connect us to the past and shape how we remember history. Through carefully curated objects, the exhibition highlighted the ways objects serve as icons of continuity between generations, as emblems of family, and as funereal memorials while also asking whose stories are represented and whose are missing.

In addition to pieces from our own collection, generous loans from the North Church, the Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire, Strawberry Banke, and private collectors enriched the show. Together, these objects underscored the vital role museums play in combating disinformation and in representing diverse histories, including Native American, African American, LGBTQ+, and women’s stories.

On our second floor, contemporary works by New England artists in a juried companion show, presented in partnership with the New Hampshire Art Association, offered modern reflections on memory. This first collaboration was a resounding success, strengthening community connections and adding fresh perspectives to our historical narratives. We look forward to building on this partnership in 2025.



Exhibition preparation included moving a collection of Badger family portraits from the John Paul Jones House to our museum gallery.



A snapshot of shoes and stockings, 18th–19th century. On display in “Finishing Touches.”

Finishing Touches

For the 2024 season, the temporary gallery at the John Paul Jones House featured “Finishing Touches,” an exhibition highlighting accessories from our permanent collection. These often-overlooked pieces have been a part of fashion since the beginning of civilization. In this display, there is a head-to-toe look at the added touches to the wearer’s ensemble, as well as some myths, sensationalized headlines, and local stories. Some notable pieces in the show are a pair of sun goggles from circa 1920s, silk fans from the mid 19th century, and a pair of wedding shoes from 1857. “Finishing Touches” will be on view again for the 2025 season.

34th Annual Gingerbread House Contest

This year’s 34th Annual Gingerbread House Contest delighted visitors of all ages. With the theme “Holiday Memories,” over eighty entirely edible creations brought personal traditions to life—everything from classic holiday movie scenes to family feasts and even a Santa-alien encounter!

120 holiday cards for local assisted living residents, delivered alongside baked goods by the Alliance.

We wrapped things up with our 2nd Annual Gingerbread Smash fundraiser—because while gingerbread doesn’t last forever, smashing it sure is fun and cathartic after the holidays.

We look forward to more sugar and spice next year!

We also partnered with the Alliance for Greater Good to offer a card-making station. Visitors created



“Light the Lamp, Not the Rat!” from Muppet Christmas Carol, by Zak Terry.



“Greenhouse at Snug Harbor Farm, Kennebunkport, ME” by Alex Lewis, Ali White & Doreen Lewis.

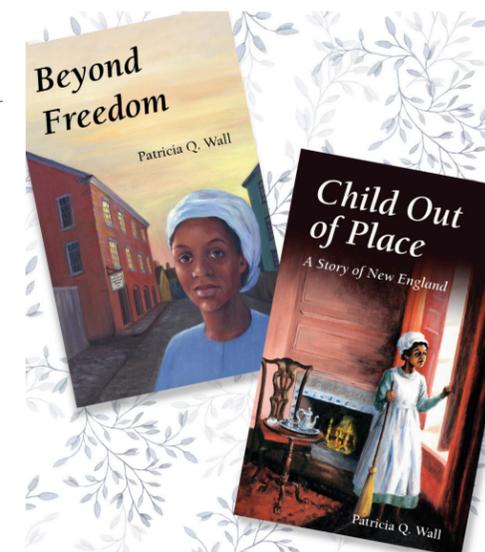


“Whaleback Lighthouse” by Hunter, Jason, and Susan Kindstedt.

PORTSMOUTH MARINE SOCIETY PRESS

Thanks to Patricia Q. Wall, who generously made the rights available to the Society, we were able to produce new editions of her two historical novels for young adults, *Beyond Freedom* and *Child Out of Place: A Story for New England* (Publications 43 and 44). Both of these books are now available on-demand through Amazon. Her *Lives of Consequence: Blacks in Early Kittery & Berwick in the Massachusetts Province of Maine*, published by the Press in 2017, remains perhaps our best-selling book.

Preliminary work also began on *Reinventing Portsmouth* (Publication 46). This multi-author book, prepared under the direction of Robert Thoresen, is an outgrowth of the exhibition of the same name held at the Historical Society in 2023. It is expected to be in print by the fall of 2025.



Cover art, by Debby Ronnquist, for Pat Wall’s two historical juvenile fiction novels.

EDUCATION AND PROGRAMS

Education

Our third-grade history program continued its partnership with the Portsmouth school district in 2024. Our year-long program consists of eight classroom lessons paired with hands-on artifact investigation and a capstone walking tour, which included the John Paul Jones House, African Burying Ground, Moffatt-Ladd House, and Portsmouth Athenaeum.

This year, we also piloted and launched educational programming aimed specifically at homeschoolers. We started with single-day workshops, then site-specific tours, and have now combined those ideas into a set of eight lessons with artifact exploration, hands-on activities, and local field trips.



A third-grade class from New Franklin Elementary School visited the John Paul Jones House in May to cap off our year-long outreach to local public schools.

2024 Program Highlights



Artist Workshops

In 2024, we hosted several workshops led by local artists that allowed our visitors to try their hand at artforms like cyanotypes and pastels.



Homeschool Days

Homeschool programs included one-day artifact investigation workshops, walking tours, and the beginning of a set of eight lessons on Portsmouth history.



Read it and Eat!

A potluck series that very literally brings people to the table (in our galleries!) to build community around family recipes.

Programs

In 2024, we continued to grow our Family Day, Read It and Eat, and Knit Happens programs, and also added (and revived!) new programs.

First, we restarted what used to be our Young Writers Contest and updated it to include both writing and visual arts, renaming it the Young Artists Contest. Children ages seven to eighteen choose a piece from our exhibitions that inspires them and then create a work of art based on that piece. We had a wonderful group of submissions this year that included short stories, poems, essays, paintings, collages, drawings, and more!

We also started giving cemetery tours for the first time this year. Portsmouth is lucky to have five historic cemeteries within the city, and we started

our tour program with North Cemetery. Our cemetery tour focused, not just on who is buried in the cemetery, but on the history of New England cemeteries, our changing relationship with death, and major events in our city's history like disease outbreaks that influenced funeral practices. These tours sold out, and we can't wait to add more next year!

Taking advantage of our city's love of Halloween, we held our first Halloween party and fundraiser in 2024. Our "Matter of Memory" exhibition featured many artifacts from the Victorian era, so we used that as our party theme, complete with masquerade mask making, pumpkin painting, tarot reading, and more. This is another program we look forward to continuing in our next season.

Family Days

Held monthly on Saturdays, our Family Days this year featured activities based on themes of indigenous history, shipbuilding, ocean conservation, and more!



Halloween Party

Taking inspiration from our "The Matter of Memory," exhibition, our Victorian Halloween party featured tarot card readings, crafts, and spooky fun!



Cemetery Tours

We took visitors on tours of North Cemetery, and they learned, not just about the famous and less-famous individuals buried there, but also about Puritan New England's changing relationship with death.



2024 BY THE NUMBERS



34 plaques delivered



3 new board members



82 Gingerbreads smashed



3 staff field trips to other museums



53 contemporary artworks
41 artists exhibited



117 visitors on our
Curator Tours



2072 visitors to the
John Paul Jones House



21 dishes served at
Read It and Eat!



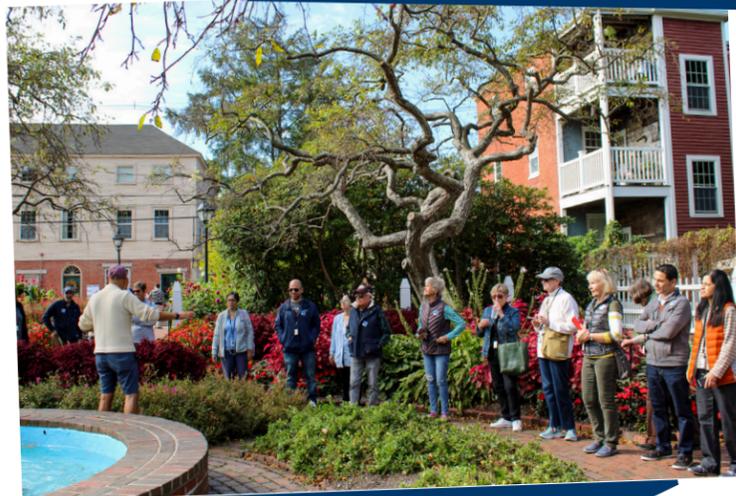
369 items sold in our DOT sale



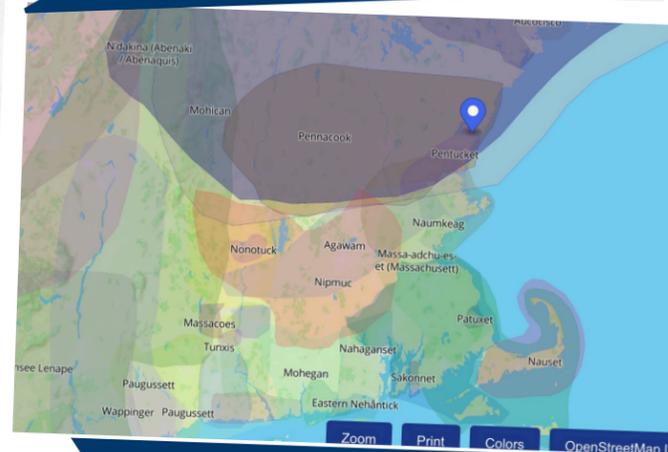
18 rental events



408 members



2703 walking tour guests



Most viewed post of 2024:
Native Land Map resource share
40,036 views,
211 likes, 17 comments



8 dresses stored away



150 third-graders
reached



PRESERVATION ADVOCACY

In the summer of 2024, we welcomed Verity Boyer, our first team member with a background in historic preservation. Verity has since revitalized our preservation advocacy efforts, including reactivating the Portsmouth Advocates committee. She now oversees the Portsmouth Plaque Program and is expanding our preservation initiatives. We're excited to offer these additional opportunities to explore and share Portsmouth's rich history with you.

In 2024, Portsmouth Advocates continued to champion the city's architectural and cultural heritage through advocacy, education, and community engagement. Our Portsmouth Plaque Program remained a highlight, helping homeowners celebrate and share the rich histories of their properties. We expanded our advocacy efforts, providing guidance on preservation best practices and voicing support for policies that protect Portsmouth's historic character.

In 2024, we advocated for the preservation of the Daily Times Building, lending our voice to the effort to prevent its demolition, and supported the thoughtful redevelopment and adaptive reuse of the Sherburne School. We also advocated for the Historic District Commission's (HDC) ability to oversee solar installations, ensuring that sustainable energy solutions are in harmony with Portsmouth's historic character. Additionally, we strengthened partnerships with local organizations and preservation professionals, ensuring that historic preservation remains at the forefront of community discussions.

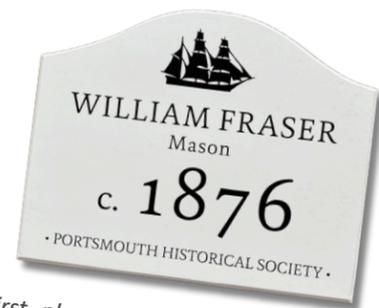


Verity Boyer joined the staff in the summer of 2024 and is now spearheading our preservation and advocacy efforts.



The Polanski's took part in our plaque program and chose to honor the first residents of their 1917 property.

As we look ahead, Portsmouth Advocates remains committed to safeguarding the city's past while inspiring future generations to appreciate and preserve its legacy.



The first plaque made after the Portsmouth Historical Society took ownership of the Plaque Program from Portsmouth NH 400.

ADOPT AN ARTIFACT

Launched in 2023 to highlight the critical preservation work required to care for our historic collection, this program continued to thrive in 2024. Portsmouth Historical Society stewards approximately 3,000 objects, each requiring specialized attention to ensure long-term stability.

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, we've been able to purchase archival-quality boxes for artifacts that lacked proper housing or whose containers had deteriorated. We also acquired pest traps designed to protect natural materials from damage.

Several major preservation projects are ongoing. Restoration work on a historic worktable, made possible in 2023 through the support of Sharon Churchill, is nearing completion. Additionally, the Frank Jones poster, supported by Ellen Fineberg, is currently undergoing evaluation by professional conservators. The length of these projects reflects the patience, skill, and precision required to preserve these irreplaceable pieces for future generations.

In 2024, our donors helped preserve 17 artifacts, up from 10 artifacts in 2023. We are excited to bring this program back each summer to provide a behind-the-scenes look at what it takes to care for these delicate objects.

Artifacts Supported in 2024

- Archival shoe boxes** supported by Kimberly Alexander & Dane Morrison
- Baseball** supported by Theresa & James Terry, and Martha Shanley
- Football Photograph** supported by Pat Remick
- Funeral Gloves** supported by Karen Battles & James Shanley, and Clare Purcell
- Ivory Cane** supported by Carol Seely
- Ostrich Cape** supported by Diane Fagan Affleck
- Ostrich Fan** supported in honor of Molly Liolios
- Pease Diorama** supported by Pat Remick
- Portrait of Joseph Haven** supported by Richard Candee
- Portrait of Sarah H. March** supported by Colleen Bean & Ceal Anderson Richard Candee, and Nancy Hammond
- Ribbon Banner** supported by Colleen Bean & Ceal Anderson, and Diane Fagan Affleck
- Ruth Blay Quilt** supported by Colleen Bean & Ceal Anderson, Margaret Clarke, Diane Fagan Affleck, and Julia Phelps
- Silhouette of William A. Vaughn** supported by Jason Moody
- Silk Fan** supported by Mary Ellen & Walter Hoerman
- Slippers** supported by Jane & Fred Reynolds, and Martha Shanley
- Surveyor's Compass** supported by Stephen Buczko, and George Dumas
- Toy Cradle** supported by Ken Goldman & Barbara Sadick



Collections Manager, Molly Liolios, Conservator & Collections Committee Member, Michaela Neiro, and Curator, Gerry Ward highlighted several of the object most in need of preservation funding during the annual showcase.



Silk fan America or Europe, mid 19th century Dyed abalone shell, silk, metal sequins Gift of Annie Appleton Ferree.

COLLECTIONS

We added more than thirty objects to the collection in 2024, nearly all by gift. These include a marvelous group of family materials from Wendy Blood of Portsmouth, including several twentieth-century women's hats worn by Pearl Downs Tucker (1900–1972) of Portsmouth, her grandmother, and given in her memory. Mrs. Blood also gave a magnificent marble-top center table made in the 1850s and signed by Edmund Brown & Co. of Portsmouth in honor of her mother, Barbara Craven Widen, a life-long resident of Portsmouth. Finally, the Bloods also gave an ice-cream parlor table and chairs of ca. 1900–1920 used in the Lobster Pound and Ice-Cream Parlor, a family business once located at 475 Marcy Street.

Other important additions to the furniture collection include a commode chair of the 1840s signed by J.C. Colcord, a Portsmouth cabinetmaker, the gift of Cleon Graham (who rescued it from the Kittery town dump!). Robert St. Cyr gave our first example of seating furniture attributed to Samuel Dockum, a stylish rococo revival side chair with a history in the Dockum family.

Tom Kaufhold added to his gifts over the years of Portsmouth souvenir ware and other items of popular culture, including this year an enormous Paul Jones Whiskey advertising bottle. Jake Elwell gave five Portsmouth-related items, including our first baseball glove, this one with a history at the Navy Yard. Although the collection includes many examples of women's clothing, we have relatively few pieces associated with men. Thus we were

delighted to receive a man's naval cloak of ca. 1916, a family piece given by John Rice.

Thanks to the bequest of Merrilee Possner, we were also able to purchase at auction two Portsmouth samplers of the early 1820s, one by Sally Whidden and the other by Comfort Whidden, to add to the Historical Society's outstanding collection of school-girl art from the early nineteenth century.

The Collections team continued to update our records on CatalogIt, adding pictures taken by Ralph Morang and Sabina Ion, as well as adding new research to various object files. With these updates, we are one step closer to having our collections available through an online hub. We also continued to clean the third floor at the John Paul Jones House, disposing of old exhibit furniture and panels in order to reorganize our permanent collection and better utilize the storage on the third floor. With the help of volunteers Lynne Costa and Ellen Fineberg, an inventory of the first room was completed.



Sampler by Sarah N. "Sally" Whidden (1810 ca. 1844) Portsmouth, 1822. Silk on linen. 11 1/2 in. x 21 in. (including frame). Museum purchase with funds provided by Merrilee Possner.

It is with much appreciation that we thank the following individuals for their donations

Donors to the Collection

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Wendy Blood | Portsmouth 400 |
| Hollis Brodrick | Walter Powell |
| John Elwell | John Rice |
| Cleon Graham | Robert St. Cyr |
| Tom Kaufhold | |

Donors to the Library and Archives

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Ellen Fineberg and Vince Lombardi | Barbara McLean Ward and Gerald W.R. Ward |
|-----------------------------------|--|

DEVELOPMENT

Our greatest fundraising success in 2024 wasn't measured by dollars alone — it was measured by the sense of community it created. For the first time since the pandemic, we brought back our silent auction and combined it with our exhibition opening to host a lively and exciting Preview Party & Silent Auction. Artists, donors, members, and our local community all came together to make the night a success. We are deeply grateful to everyone who participated and helped us raise more than \$10,000 in support of our 3rd-grade history program. This beloved program allows us to continue teaching social studies to Portsmouth students at no cost to schools or families.

In grant funding, we made important progress on preservation efforts, including continued work on the facade of the Morton-Benedict House, with fresh paint and repairs to the front entry and windows.

At the John Paul Jones House, peeling paint was addressed, and several rooms received a renewed appearance, helping us welcome visitors with pride. This year, we also introduced an exclusive member newsletter, keeping our supporters informed about exhibitions, programs, and behind-the-scenes highlights.

Thanks to you — our generous donors and champions — we raised over \$40,000 through our Annual Appeal, ensuring that we can continue sharing Portsmouth's rich history with the community and beyond.

We look forward to another exciting year in this vibrant seaside city we're proud to call home. History is our passion, and it's an honor to share that passion with everyone who walks through our doors. Thank you for standing with us and helping us tell Portsmouth's stories.

CORPORATE SPONSORS

- \$5,000
Newburyport Bank
- \$2,500
Kennebunk Savings Bank
- \$1,000 to \$2,499
Avery Insurance
The Chamber Collective of Greater Portsmouth
Devine Millimet
EnviroVantage
Fine Foods
Piscataqua Savings Bank
Red Post Realty
Seacoast Lately
- Up to \$999
Bangor Savings Bank
Partners Bank
St. Mary's Bank



Emma Stratton, Sarah Robbitts-Terry, Kim Simmons, and Jo Ann Klatskin (Newburyport Bank) celebrate the continued sponsorship of Portsmouth Historical Society's Family Day program.

FOUNDATION SUPPORTERS, LIBRARY MEMBERS, IN-KIND SUPPORTERS

In-Kind Sponsors

Canterbury Shaker Village
 Castle in the Clouds
 Flatbread Company
 The Dinnerhorn
 Joanne Foster
 Jameson & Priscilla French
 Ken Goldman
 Don Gorvett
 Sabina Ion
 Jardiniere Flowers
 JSN Associates, LLC
 Liar's Bench Beer Company
 Loaded Question Brewery
 Lucky's Barber Shop & Shave Parlor
 Robin Lurie-Meyerkopf
 Matt Gunn Design
 Jay McSharry
 Moffatt-Ladd House & Garden
 Mike Neilio
 The Music Hall
 New Hampshire Art Association
 New Hampshire Boat Museum
 New Hampshire Theatre Project
 New Hampshire Historical Society
 Laura Pope
 The Palace Theater
 Portsmouth Harbor Cruises
 Prescott Park Arts Festival
 Port City Bike Tours, LLC
 Peter Randall
 Seacoast Repertory Theatre
 The Shanty
 South Street & Vine
 Megan Stelzer
 Sunshine Sweets, LLC dba Kilwins
 Donna Theodossiou
 Treehouse Toys, Ltd.
 Mark Troy
 Tina Williams

Foundation Supporters

\$20,000+
 New Hampshire State Council on the Arts

\$15,000-\$20,000
 The Fabulous Find
 New Hampshire Charitable Foundation

\$5,000- \$10,000
 Americana Corner (Preserving America Grant Program)
 New Hampshire Preservation Alliance (1772 Foundation)
 Samuel P. Hunt Foundation

Up to \$5,000
 Land and Community Heritage Investment Program
 New Hampshire Humanities Council
 Rosamond Thaxter Foundation

Library Members

Lee Public Library
 Madbury Public Library
 Newmarket Public Library
 North Hampton Public Library
 Portsmouth Public Library
 Wiggin Memorial Library



Funds from the Americana Corner Preserving America Grant helped to repair age and water damage in several rooms of the John Paul Jones House.

2024 MEMBERS AND DONORS

We are extremely grateful for the continued support of our members and donors, who make our important work possible. Currents members are noted with an asterik (*).

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Members enjoyed discounts to museum events, like our Victorian Halloween Party. We loved seeing people go all out in spooky costume!



Items from "The Matter of Memory" exhibition, from top to bottom: Thomas Pickering Drown, ca. 1805 (202). Mourning brooch, ca. 1835 (485). Gold mourning ring for Gregory Purcell, 1776 (2015.004). Damascus tile, ca. 1300–1600 (1497). Beaded bag (877).

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 Robert and Marilyn Zimman



Participating artists, their friends and family, and our broader museum community celebrated the start of a multi-year partnership with New Hampshire Art Association.

PLANNED GIVING

In 2024, we introduced our Planned Giving program, ensuring the legacy of Portsmouth's history for generations to come. The following individuals have generously included the Portsmouth Historical Society in their estate plans:

Ceal Anderson & Colleen Bean

If you have named the Historical Society in your will and do not see your name listed, please contact us at development@portsmouthhistory.org so we can acknowledge your support.

VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers are at the heart of everything we do, and in 2024, their dedication and enthusiasm continued to strengthen our programs and community outreach. This year, we welcomed several new volunteers who joined our efforts to share and preserve Portsmouth's history. Their support has been invaluable in leading walking tours, assisting with exhibits, and helping at special events, ensuring that our programming remains engaging and accessible to the public.

To foster a sense of connection and appreciation, we introduced monthly volunteer coffees, providing

a space for volunteers to come together, share experiences, and stay informed about upcoming initiatives. These gatherings have strengthened our volunteer community and reinforced the vital role each person plays in our mission.

We are deeply appreciative of the time and effort our volunteers contribute. Their enthusiasm makes our programs stronger and more welcoming, helping us connect with more people in meaningful ways. As we look ahead, we're excited to build on this momentum and continue growing our volunteer community.

Thank you to our amazing volunteers this year:

Michael Anderson
 Denise Ankarberg
 Elaine Apatang
 Caroline Bain
 Louisa Bain
 Karen Battles
 Louise Cameron
 Ellen Cohen
 Lynne Costa
 Suzanne Danforth
 Beverly Donahue

Devaja Dutta
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 Gordon Stone
 Sandra Stowe
 Terri Terry
 Mary Thomas
 Carolyn Trosky-Absher
 Austin Vancelette
 Lucinda Wigodo

With thanks to our walking tour guides:

Randy Absher
 Karen Bailey
 Alan Cohen
 Tom Kaufold
 Fred Lewis
 Knut Roalsvig
 Elizabeth Sanborn
 Ron Sher
 Jeff Thomson

With additional thanks to our volunteer guest curator:

Rachel Walls, "Cabot Lyford: Winds of Change," 2025



Thank you to all the volunteers who help with our events, at the John Paul Jones House, during the Gingerbread season, and more. We couldn't do what we do without you!



COMMITTEES

In 2024 we saw the reformation of our Buildings & Grounds Committee as well as our Development Committee. We are grateful to the individuals who contribute to our important work.

In addition to our staff members, our current committees are:

Buildings & Grounds Peter Michaud*, Kerry Vautrot, Reagan Ruedig

Collections Nancy Pearson*, Laura Calhoun, Linda Ceruzzi, Peter Michaud, Diane Fagan Affleck, Tom Kaufhold, Michaela Neiro, Carolyn Roy, Barbara Ward

Development Julia Phelps*, Nancy Pearson, Elissa Von Letkemann, Pam Yonkin, Judi Currie, Dawn Przychodzien

Exhibitions Laura Calhoun*, Chuck Doleac

Finance Pam Yonkin*, Ken Goldman, Ann Hartman

Governance Nancy Pearson*, Chuck Doleac

Portsmouth Advocates Kerry Vautrot*, Chuck Doleac, Peter Michaud, Richard Candee, Barbara Ward

Programs & Education Linda Ceruzzi*, Ellen Fineberg, Julia Phelps, Amy Steinberg

*denotes Committee chair

We want you! We are always looking for individuals to serve on our committees, which meet, on average, once a month. If you are interested in learning more about our committees, email director@portsmouthhistory.org.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

We welcomed three outstanding new Board members: Ann Hartman, bringing expertise in finance and management; Elissa Von Letkemann, with a background in graphic design and branding; and Julia Phelps, with experience in fundraising and community engagement. Their energy and expertise will help guide the Society's future.

We also thank Michaela Neiro for her dedicated Board service. Though her term concluded in 2024, we're grateful she continues to lend her conservation expertise through the Collections Committee.

Nancy Pearson, *President*

Peter Michaud, *Vice President*

Ken Goldman, *Secretary*

Pamela Yonkin, *Treasurer*

Laura Calhoun

Linda Ceruzzi

Charles Doleac

Ellen Fineberg

Ann Hartman

Julia Phelps

Kerry Vautrot

Elissa Von Letkemann

Martha Fuller Clark, *Trustee Emeritus*

STAFF As of 12/31/2024

Emma Stratton, *Executive Director*

Meredith Affleck, *Exhibitions Manager*

Verity Boyer, *Program & Volunteer Engagement Coordinator*

Beth Gross-Santos, *Welcome Center & Gift Shop Manager*

Sabina Ion, *Marketing Manager*

Jessica Kliskey, *John Paul Jones Site Manager*

Molly Liolios, *Collections Manager & Registrar*

Robin Lurie-Meyerkopf, *Facilities & Walking Tour Manager*

Kim Simmons, *Development Manager*

Sarah Robbitts-Terry, *Director of Community Engagement*

Gerald W.R. Ward, *Curator & Editor*

With sincere thanks to our seasonal front desk staff:

Brenda Brewster

Jay Daphnis

Roberta Lew

Donna Theodossiou



OVERVIEW OF THE 2025 CALENDAR

Exhibitions

“Cabot Lyford: Winds of Change” <i>at 10 Middle Street</i>	April 1 – November 3
“Contemporary Currents” with New Hampshire Art Association <i>at 10 Middle Street</i>	April 4 – October 13
John Paul Jones House Open to the Public	May 23 – October 31
“Finishing Touches” <i>at the John Paul Jones House</i>	May 23 – October 31
Open Door Arts <i>at 10 Middle Street</i>	October 26 – December 30
35th Annual Gingerbread House Contest and Exhibition	November 28 – December 30

Programs

Historic Portsmouth Walking Tours	Daily, May 1 – October 31
Art in Bloom	June 12 –16
Preservation Month <i>Sustainability Panel, Architectural Walking Tour, Window Workshop & more</i>	Throughout May
Twilight Tour <i>with the Portsmouth Historic Sites Associates</i>	August 9
Curator Tours <i>free First Friday admission all day long</i>	First Fridays at 12:00 and 5:30 pm
Family Days <i>free drop-in activities and scheduled workshops for visitors of all ages</i>	Saturdays April –December
Cemetery Tours	Saturdays in October
Halloween Party	October 25



Front cover: Families building an eastern conical wigwam at our September Family Day.