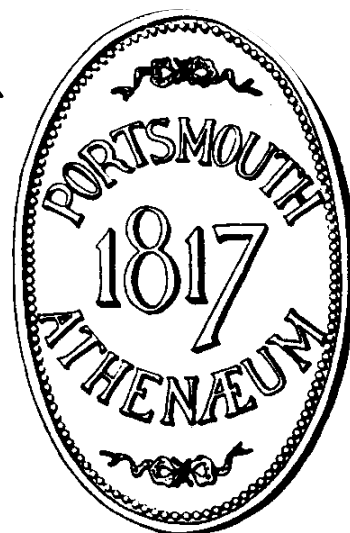


# The Portsmouth Athenæum Newsletter

Fall, 2011



## Welcome Home George and Clementina

On September 7th, the Athenæum unveiled its recently acquired portraits of George Jaffrey IV and his wife, Clementina Matilda. George was one of the Athenæum's founders, serving on the board of Directors from 1818 to 1850, spending many of those years as either Librarian or Commissioner of the Library. He was a prolific contributor of books and artifacts for the museum.



**George Jaffrey IV**

The portraits came up for auction in 2008 at which time the Athenæum made an unsuccessful bid to purchase them. Earlier this year the winning bidder—Newport, Rhode Island art dealer William Vareika—kindly offered them to us at his cost. Nearly 50 Proprietors and Friends have made generous contributions to help fund this important acquisition. The portraits are hung in the

*cont. on page 5*

## Inside:

### ***The Great Nitrate Film Project***

### ***From the Secretary's Desk***

### ***Upcoming Events***

***October —December, 2011***

### **2011 Proprietors Art Show**

The 16th Annual Proprietors Art Show, a real highlight of our yearly events calendar, opens this season on December 9th. Entries are limited to two original works by proprietors and their spouses or domestic partners and may be in virtually any medium including painting, sculpture, photography, woodwork, needlework, ceramics, metalwork, prints, multi-media or audio.

Please see the entry form on the back cover. Drop off is to the Randall Gallery on Friday, December 2 and Saturday, December 3. Any work to be hung should be framed and ready for hanging. If submitting a 3-D piece, please supply a pedestal if at all possible. Work is exhibited at the artist's own risk. Prices will not be listed with the titles; any inquiries about their purchase will be directed to the artist.

This year's show will be open Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. until February 4, 2012.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER, 2011 — DECEMBER, 2011  
FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

- OCT. 7 Opening Reception for the exhibition “Money, Revolution, & Books: The Athenæum’s Library of John Fisher of London.” 5:00 p.m. - 8:00p.m., Randall Gallery
- OCT. 12 Digging up the Past: Dr. Gregory McMahon lectures on “The Hittites and Their World: The Archaeology of Hattuša and Late Bronze Anatolia.” 7:00 p.m., Research Library (see article below). Free for Proprietors, Subscribers & Friends of the Athenæum, all others \$10. Becoming a Friend costs as little as \$25; visit the Membership page of our web site for more information.
- OCT. 18 In a meeting of the Piscataqua Decorative Arts Society, Athenæum Proprietor Deborah M. Child gives a talk on “The Case of the Missing Heirloom: A Copley Pastel of a Boston Bride.” 5:30 p.m., Stoodley's Tavern at Strawberry Banke. \$10 for non-PDAS members.
- OCT. 29 Tour of the Mark Wentworth Home, once the residence of John and Anna Fisher, who leased it to Anna’s brother, Governor John Wentworth. 10:00 a.m.
- NOV. 9 Digging up the Past: Dr. Robert Goodby, associate professor of anthropology at Franklin Pierce University, delves into the historical lives of the Abenaki in New Hampshire. 7:00 p.m., Research Library (see article below). Free for Proprietors, Subscribers & Friends of the Athenæum; all others \$10.
- DEC. 2 “Art ‘Round Town” showcases the Athenæum Reading Room. 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
- DEC. 9 Festive Holiday Gala; invitations forthcoming.
- DEC. 17 “A Yuletide Celebration” featuring Great Bay Sailor with Jim Prendergast. 7:00 p.m., Reading Room (see article on page 5).
- JAN, 2012 193rd Annual Meeting of the Proprietors of the Portsmouth Athenæum. Details to come.

**Space for Many Events is Limited; Please Call 431-2538, ext. 2, for Reservations**

## Digging Up the Past: From the Hittites to the Abenaki

**Dr. Gregory McMahon’s October 12th lecture** on the ancient Hittites—creators and rulers of the first Anatolian empire in the Late Bronze Age—focuses on that fascinating culture and history through a discussion of some of the key historical records and images both of their spectacular capital city, Hattuša, and the lecturer’s own excavation site of Çadýr Höyük, a provincial city of the Hittite empire. Powerful allies of 18th Dynasty Egypt and contemporaries and rivals of the Mycenaean Greeks who fought the Trojan War, the texts of their extensive royal archives—the oldest records in an Indo-European language—were almost lost to history when their empire was catastrophically destroyed around 1200 B.C.E.

Dr. McMahon received his Ph.D. in Hittite philology from the University of Chicago, and has been on the faculty of the Department of History at UNH since the

fall of that year. He is currently co-editing the Oxford Handbook of Ancient Anatolia for Oxford University Press.

**The historical lives of the Abenaki are the subject of the November 9th lecture by Dr. Robert Goodby**, associate professor of anthropology at Franklin Pierce University. Digging in the shadow of Mount Monadnock, he has unearthed an 18th century Abenaki fort and, at the Tenant Swamp Site in Keene, evidence of Native American households from the end of the ice age, some 12,000 years ago.

Robert Goodby attained his Ph.D. from Brown University in 1994. He directs the Monadnock Archaeological Project, is an executive board member of the Monadnock Institute of Nature, Place and Culture and is past president of the New Hampshire Archeological Society.

# GENEROSITY

## Welcome to the following new Proprietors...

...**Faith Miller** (daughter of Elizabeth Critchley, share 98), a retired textbook editor whose family ancestors (Wentworth, Sise, Parker, Jewett) have been involved with the Athenæum since its founding. Her mother, a long-time resident of York Harbor, was an Athenæum Proprietor for fifty years. Faith lives in North Yarmouth, Maine with her husband, Walter.

...**Daniel Hoefle** (son of Harold Hoefle, share 20), a partner in the law firm of Hoefle, Phoenix, Gromley & Roberts, who is closely involved with numerous community organizations. He lives in Rye, where he has been Town Moderator for 10 years.

...**Alan Sanderson**, a self-employed contractor who lives in Portsmouth with his wife Joyce. He takes over share 92, formerly belonging to his mother, Frances.

...**Christine Quinn-Thibodeau**, who is retired from teaching at Berwick Academy and lives in York with her husband, Robert. She will take over share 332, formerly belonging to her father, Dr. Thomas Quinn.

...**Sarah (Tinker) Newick**, a USDA Agricultural Enumerator and Wetlands Consultant in York. She is a direct descendant of John Mason, the original patentee of New Hampshire and is involved in many local historical organizations.

...**Sandra Rux**, Curator of the Portsmouth Historical Society and a frequent lecturer on local history. She lives in Kittery Point with her husband, Alan Haesche.

## Thanks to The Following New and Renewed Friends of the Athenæum:

*Pat & Frank Breslin*

*Tyson Dines III*

*Philip Kendrick*

*Pamela Robinson*

*Jack & Dianne Chambers*

*Meganne Fabrega*

*Charles & Ellen Kirkpatrick*

*Elisabeth Garrett Widmer*

*Lois & Horace DesRochers*

*Joan Jones*

*David Narlee*

*Diane Woods*

**MANY THANKS** to **Wendy Lull** and the **Seacoast Science Center** for hosting our annual picnic. Special thanks to **Cindy & Jeff Knapp** for their hard work in organizing the event. Thanks to all those who helped out: **Douglas & Elizabeth Aykroyd, Kitty Clark, Bud & Lois DesRochers, Sam Jarvis, and Carvel Tefft.** Thanks to **John Rice and the Overtones** for the entertainment, to **BSA Troop 107** for loaning the tables, and to **Douglas Aykroyd** for making certificates to honor those Proprietors who've been with us more than 10 years.

### ADOPT-A-BOOK:

*Cynthia Knapp*

*Charles Warner Wendell*

*Robert S. Chase*

*Linda Cheatham*

*Katherine S. Clark*

*Kenneth H. Cohen*

*Anita Gauthier*

*Woody Goss*

*Barbara & John Gregg*

*Ruth L. Griffin*

*Susan Kress Hamilton*

*Tom Hardiman*

*Nathan Hazen*

*William Hazen*

*Barbara Hill*

*Shirley L. Hodgdon*

*Margaret Hodges*

*John Hopkins*

*Anne S. Howells*

*Charitable Trust*

*Dan & Carol Hughes*

*J. Michael Hughes*

*Raymond Jarvis*

*Marcia Jebb*

*Paul Peter Jessep*

*Philip Kendrick*

*Michael Kenslea*

*Herbert Kingsbury*

*Cynthia Knapp*

*Elaine S. Krasker*

*Jim & Ellen Labrie*

*James Ladd*

*John C. Lamson*

*Liz Lamson*

*Carol Zall Lincoln*

*Peter Loughlin*

*Jennifer Lemire*

*Susan Lohse*

*Frances Lord*

*Bruce MacIntyre*

*Fran Mallon*

*Donald S. Margeson*

### ANNUAL APPEAL:

*Robert Allister*

*Alan P. Amman*

*R. Rhett Austell*

*Douglas & Elizabeth  
Aykroyd*

*Nancy Beck*

*Molly & Jeff Bolster*

*Maryellen Burke*

*Richard M. Candee*

*Juliana C. Cardone*

*Dr. Robert Chaikin*

*Laurie Chandler*

*Mark Connolly*

*Gloria Costello*

*Stanley Owen Davis*

*Stephen Decatur*

*Charles DeGrandpre*

*Patricia DeGrandpre*

*Sara Delano*

*Charles Doleac*

*Gail Drobnik*

*David & Marion Ellis*

*Barbara Engelbach*

*David & Elria Ewing*

*Lois Fonda*

*Sarah P. Ford*

*cont. on page 7*

## Certificates of Tenure

It was noted at a recent Board of Director's Meeting that we recognize most Proprietors when they receive their shares and when they pass away. It seemed like a natural thing to recognize them as they reach certain milestones in the length of their proprietorships. You may remember that we produced a list at the Annual Meeting with the names of those who had celebrated at least 10 years as a Proprietor in 2011. To further the recognition, a Certificate of Tenure was produced for each member of this group to be passed out at the Summer Picnic. Twenty-six of these were presented that day, which means that just over 200 were not passed out. In preparing these certificates, I discovered how stable our membership is with one proprietor (James Shanley) at 50 years, eight others over 40 years, another 35 with 30 years, 25 over the quarter century mark, 45 over 20 years, and an amazing 116 with 10 or more years. That makes 230 proprietors of our authorized 390, or 59%, that have been such for 10 years or more. The remaining certificates will be available for pick-up in the Athenæum Reference Library during normal working hours.

## Athenæum Wine Stewards and Other Volunteers

With conviviality an important component of the Athenæum's mission, it seems important that the service of wine and beverages at our functions be well planned and smoothly executed. In the past we have had some glitches which have caused the Keeper to leave functions to buy wine. We're looking for a few volunteers who would like to act as Wine Stewards at upcoming social events, especially the December holiday reception and the summer picnic. The Wine Stewards will help party planners select appropriate wines and soft drinks for each event, then work together in short shifts during the event to open bottles, clear empties, and refresh supplies as needed. Our thanks go to Sam Jarvis and Carvel Tefft for their help at this year's summer picnic. This is a great way to meet people, make new friends, and contribute to the conviviality that makes our Athenæum such a vibrant organization.

We continually need help with the job of organizing volunteers and coordinating the efforts of our many committees. The individual committees also do their own marketing for their programs and we could use someone to help coordinate the publicity to avoid conflicts. Along the same lines, Darcy Scott kindly volunteers to edit and format the newsletter, but we could help with gathering and soliciting material for the bulletin. If you would like to be a part of this group, please contact Tom Hardiman.

## Young People's Corner

There is a book case on the mezzanine containing books for young people. This was established by the Library Committee in hopes that Proprietors will introduce younger members of their family to the Athenæum. If, for instance, you have visiting grandchildren, they are welcome to come and select books to check out which may be of greater interest to them than *Brewster's Rambles*. Books available include *Celia's Lighthouse*, by Ann Molloy; *The Story of John Paul Jones*, by Iris Vinton; and *Taking Liberty: the Story of Oney Judge, George Washington's Runaway Slave*, by Ann Rinaldi.

Start them young and who knows, they may become the Proprietors of the future!



Mrs. Roland Thaxter with her four children, Eliot at right.

# Welcome Home George and Clementina

(cont. from page one)

Reading Room along with fellow Athenæum founders Nathaniel Adams and Nathaniel A. Haven, Jr. It is not too late to contribute to this significant piece of our library's story. All contributors will get a copy of Elizabeth Aykroyd's monograph "The Last Jaffrey's," outlining the colorful history of the Jaffrey family and the significance of these portraits to our collection.

The unveiling party was made possible by countless volunteer hours put in by **Elizabeth & Douglas Aykroyd**, assisted by **Pat Breslin**, who made the veils. **Emma Nelson** designed the exhibit on the Jaffreys in the Reading Room display case. **Deb Richard** outdid herself with the food and she donated wine glasses, as did **Douglas Aykroyd** and **Joyce Volk**. Thanks most of all to the generous contributors who have raised one third of the cost of the portraits:



**Cementina Jaffery**

## **FOUNDERS CIRCLE:**

Hollis Brodrick

## **JAFFERY CIRCLE:**

Barbara Sweet

## **READERS CIRCLE:**

R.J. Allister

Rhett Austell

Elizabeth & Douglas  
Aykroyd

Larry Benedict

Karen Bouffard

Lorn Buxton

Elizabeth Cavanagh

Lois & Bud DesRochers

John Evans

Jameson French

Gary Ghigliotti

Sarah Hamill

Tom Hardiman

Cathy Hodson

Simeon P. Jarvis

Mike Kenslea

Sandra Rux

James Shanley

Vivian Treat

Tom Watson

Sumner Winebaum

## **FRIENDS CIRCLE:**

Kimberly Alexander

Jan Bamberger

Maryellen Burke

Stephen Decatur

Armistead Dennett

Ronan Donohoe

Tibbie Field

Sarah Ford

Barbara Hill

Marcia Jebb

Phil Kendrick

Cynthia Knapp

Frederick Lewis

Wendy Lull

Michael McAndrew

Peter Randall

Susan Reynolds

Ned Robinson

Nancy Starks-Cheney

M. Elaine Tefft

Hilda Versluys

Joyce Volk

Tara Vose

Pat Wall

Gerry Ward

Mac Willoughby

# A Christmas Yuletide Celebration

Performed by Great Bay Sailor with Jim Prendergast

Join us Saturday, December 17th at 7:00 p.m., when we welcome Great Bay Sailor for an eclectic musical celebration of the Holiday season that includes a bit of history about both ancient and modern songs and tunes of the season.

Great Bay Sailor's broad-ranging repertoire encompasses the diverse traditions that have come to be included in our modern day celebration of the Christmas/Yuletide Season. They perform songs of Brittany; carols of the British Restoration (mid 17th century); ancient pagan ceremonial dances; "pub carols" from the countryside near Sheffield, England; Irish songs of the season hitherto heard only in the tiny village of Kilmore, County Wexford; music hall ditties; broadsides; familiar settings from the Anglican Ceremony of Carols; music that tells the Christmas story with an Appalachian accent; and lovely, seldom played, seasonal compositions for guitar, whistle, mandolin, Irish drum and accordion.

This is not your usual Holiday fare. Bring a friend and toast the season in friendship and song! Space is very limited so please call 431-2538, ext.2 by December 1st for reservations.

## RECENT ACQUISITIONS: Gifts of Books, Jan. – Oct., 2011

- Adams, Richard:** *The Portable Faulkner*, by William Faulkner
- Alanson, Sturgis:** *Here's How We'll Do It: An Informal History of the Construction of the Shoals Marine Laboratory*, by John Merriam Kingsbury
- Arrington, Ruth:** *The Book of Gardens and Gardening*, by Reginald T. Townsend
- Aykroyd, Elizabeth:** *The American Heritage Cookbook and Illustrated History of American Eating & Drinking; The Fishermen's Memorial and Record Book, ...containing a list of vessels and their crews, lost from the Port of Gloucester from the year 1830 to October 1, 1873...*, by George H. Procter; *The Making of a World Power: War and the Military Revolution in Seventeenth-century England*, by James Scott Wheeler; *The Story of John Paul Jones*, by Iris Vinton; *Winslow Homer: an American Vision*, by Randall C. Griffin
- Braker, Dorothy:** *A History of English Furniture*, by Percy Macquoid; *Furniture in England from 1660 to 1760*, by Francis Lenygon; *Children of the Great Country Houses*, by Adeline Hartcup; *Instruction Pour les Jardins Fruitiers et Potagers, Avec un Traite des Orangers, Suivy de Quelques Reflexions sur l'Agriculture*, by Jean de La Quintinie; *The Life of Benvenuto Cellini*, by Benvenuto Cellini
- Candee, Richard:** *Maritime Portsmouth: The Sawtelle Collection*, by Richard Candee
- Clark, Tom:** *Drop-Frame: A Documentary of Life in New Hampshire's Lakes Region, Presented in Time-lapse*, by Tom Clark
- Cunningham, Valerie:** *The Cox Families of Holderness: with Partial Genealogies of the Cox, Randall, Nutter, and Pickering Families*, by Louis Sherburne Cox
- Currier Museum of Art:** *Jon Brooks: A Collaboration with Nature*
- Dater, Michael:** *The Black History of the White House*, by Clarence Lusane
- Field, Elizabeth "Tibby":** *The Washingtons of Sulgrave Manor: Immigrants to the New World* [videorecording], by Ken Winber
- Ford, Sally:** *Bungee Down Under*, by Sally Ford (multiple copies)
- Grossman, Nancy:** *The Placenames of Portsmouth: Being an Anecdotal Stroll Through the Centuries and Neighborhoods of Portsmouth, New Hampshire* (2nd ed.), by Nancy Grossman
- Hardiman, Thomas:** *A Palladian Villa in Bristol: Clifton Hill House and the People Who Lived There*, by Annie Burnside; *The Royal Commission on the Losses and Services of American Loyalists, 1783-1785 Portland*, by Greater Portland Landmarks, Inc.; *Architectural Treasures of Early America* (10 Vol. Set); *Eastport and Passamaquoddy: a Collection of Historical and Biographical Sketches*, by William Henry Kilby.
- Hubbard, Jonathan V.:** *Historical New Hampshire*, June, 1945
- Kingsbury, Herb:** *Cleopatra: A Life*, by Stacy Schiff
- Lyons, Shirley:** *Over the Hill Hikers: and How They Grew...and Grew...and Grew*, by Shirley Elder Lyons.
- Maclachlan, Courtney:** *Autobiography of Mark Twain*, by Mark Twain
- Moses, Mark D:** *How to Build a Model Yacht*, by Herbert Fisher; and a scrapbook focused on Stephen Decatur's Annapolis Dismissal & Healthful Exercises and Diet
- Mulqueen, Nancy:** *The True History of Tea*, by Victor H. Mair
- Porter, Jane Molloy:** 20 books for the children's shelf written by her mother Anne Molloy Howells
- Robinson, J. Dennis:** *Frank Jones Brewery Song*, by P. Ryan
- Shaines, Robert:** *Command Influence: A Story of Korea and the Politics of Injustice*, by Robert A. Shaines.

cont. on page 7

**RECENT ACQUISITIONS, cont.**

**Silva, Robin:** *The Letterbook of Eliza Lucas Pinckney*; *Taking Liberty: The Story of Oney Judge, George Washington's Runaway Slave*, by Ann Rinaldi; *The Bear Who Missed the Boat*, by Portia Williams Weiskel; *Everybody's Revolution: A New Look at the People Who Won America's Freedom*, by Thomas J. Fleming; *Encyclopedia of World History: From the Stone Age to the 21st Century*; *Flushed: How the Plumber Saved Civilization*, by W. Hodding Carter; *Ocean-Born Mary: The Truth Behind a New Hampshire Legend*, by Jeremy D'Entremont; *Scorch City*, by Toby Ball; *Endgame: Bobby Fischer's Remarkable Rise and Fall from America's Brightest Prodigy to the Edge of Madness*, by Frank Brady; *The Red Badge of Courage*, by Stephen Crane; *The Wind in the Willows*, by Kenneth Grahame; *Anne of Green Gables*, by L. M. Montgomery; *Kidnapped*, by Robert Louis Stevenson; *The Ideals Guide to Presidential Homes and Libraries*, by Peggy Schaefer

**Smith, Max:** *Forgotten Voices of the Blitz and the Battle for Britain*, by Joshua Levine

**Smyser, Sally:** *The Royal Standard English Dictionary*, by William Perry

**University Press of New England:** *The Lighthouse Santa*, by Sara Hoagland Hunter; *The Wildlife of New England: A Viewer's Guide*, by John S. Burk

**Volk, Joyce:** *Washington Rules: America's Path to Permanent War*, by Andrew J. Bacevich; *Maine Moderns: Art in Seguinland, 1900-1940*, by Libby Bischof

**Ward, Gerald and Barbara:** *The American Enlightenment Treasures from the Stanford University Libraries*; *The Right Attitude to Rain*, by Alexander McCall Smith; *Tea Time for the Traditionally Built*, by Alexander McCall Smith; *The Unbearable Lightness of Scones*, by Alexander McCall Smith; *The Double Comfort Safari Club*, by Alexander McCall Smith; *The Charming Quirks of Others*, by Alexander McCall Smith; *The Saturday Big Tent Wedding Party*, by Alexander McCall Smith; *Jewelry by Artists: In the Studio, 1940-2000*, by Kelly H. L'Ecuyer; *A New World Imagined: Art of the Americas*, by Elliot Davis; *Witches, Rakes, and Rogues : True Stories of Scam, Scandal, Murder, and Mayhem in Boston, 1630-1775*, by D. Brenton Simons; *Chihuly, Through the Looking Glass*, by Gerry Ward; *American Furniture 2010*

**Watterson, Rodney:** *32 in '44: Building the Portsmouth Submarine Fleet in World War II*, by Rodney K. Watterson

**GENEROSITY, cont.**

Allen McGee  
John Miller  
D. Bruce Montgomery  
James Munton  
Stephen Munton  
Kathleen & David Murray  
Barbara Newall  
John Payzant  
Karen Pierce  
Elsbeth W. Pope  
Peter Randall  
Barbara Renner  
Anne Reynolds  
Susan Reynolds  
W. Roderick Richards  
Jessica C. Ritzo  
Stephen Hall Roberts  
Edward O. Robinson

J. Dennis Robinson  
Sheelagh Ryan  
Joan Sanborn  
Shirley R. Sanders  
Eléonore P. Sanderson  
Gayle Sawtelle  
Stella Scamman  
Ira Schwartz  
Anne L. Seekins  
John Shaw  
William Seaward  
Max Smith  
Stacy Smith  
Sally Horner Smyser  
Nancy Starks-Cheney  
Sally Strazdins  
Sally Sulloway  
Peter Tarlton

Heather Thomsen  
Joyce Volk  
Barbara & Gerald W. R. Ward  
David Watters  
Marcy Lyn Weeks  
Nancy Wetzel  
David Willcox  
Sumner Winebaum  
Roger Wood  
Diane E. Woods  
Ursula & Phil Wright  
Susan L. Zuckert

**FUND FOR CONSERVATION OF MECHANIC FIRE SOCIETY CHEST:**

Mark R. Henschke  
James Labrie  
Morton Schmidt  
Edward R. Tate

**SPECIAL COLLECTIONS:**

*Isles of Shoals Association, in support of the Rutledge Collection*

**UNRESTRICTED:**

*Elizabeth P. Hobbs in honor of Louise Tallman's 90th birthday!*

# The Great Nitrate Film Project

A while back, Keeper Tom Hardiman purchased a set of about 750 pictures of the Charles Gerrish family and the Kittery Point area. Dating from about 1915 to the 1940s, they covered the Kittery Tri-Centennial and various camp pictures. Most importantly, they documented the interior of the Gerrish House as it was in 1934, the year Caroline Lewis Gerrish died. She was the aunt of Charles Gerrish and the last of the family to live in the family homestead. After her death, the furniture and contents were disbursed to institutions like Historic New England, Strawberry Banke Museum, and Kittery Historical Society. These are the last images of the Gerrish house as it was when the family owned it.

Unfortunately, these pictures were on nitrate film, a very volatile substance that can easily self-combust if it is left in an airtight container. Even if stored loosely, the film sticks together, often deteriorates around the edges, emits an obnoxious smell and irritates the skin. The way to handle nitrate film is to scan the images and then safely discard the film itself.

Luckily for us, Steve Hemeon, who is both a photographer and Athenæum volunteer, generously agreed to scan the Gerrish Family Nitrate Film Collection. Due to the nature and condition of the film, Steve had to treat the whole project very differently from the way one would treat a normal scanning project. To separate the many images that were stuck together, he pried them apart slowly with a credit card or similar

plastic card. To scan the ones that were almost transparent, he used a sheet of red-colored mylar as a background to bring up the image. He then worked to sharpen and highlight the images as much as possible. He worked with gloves throughout the project.

Steve has been working on this for about two years now, and has gained quite a bit of expertise. It's because of his persistence and exacting work standards that the Gerrish pictures are all safely and beautifully scanned. They contain a wealth of information and we owe Steve an enormous debt of gratitude.



**Dorothy Lamour at the Rockingham, 1940s  
Charles Gerrish, photographer.**

Nitrate film was used in the making of early movies, and much of it was also used for home photography. Many of our Athenæum members with old family pictures may have nitrate film in their homes without even being aware of it. According to Steve, this is not safe to keep. To identify nitrate film, check

for the following three things: it has notched edges; it is exactly 35 millimeters wide, and it was manufactured before 1951. Often the chemicals in the film have become blurred and sticky. On the other hand, if you find the word "safety" printed on the margin of the film, you can be sure that it is not nitrate.

Steve says he would be happy to talk to anyone who believes they may have nitrate film and are wondering how to deal with it. He can be reached at [shemeon@netscape.net](mailto:shemeon@netscape.net).

# “Money, Revolution and Books”: an Exhibit of Political Intrigue

The story of how a London squire's library ended up in Portsmouth, inspired by the 2010 recataloging of a book collection originally donated to the Athenæum in 1829, is the basis of our current exhibit on display through November 26: "Money, Revolution and Books: the Athenæum's Library of John Fisher of London."

Fisher's valuable library was material testament to his family's amazing tale of intercontinental avarice, political subterfuge, harrowing delivery from imminent danger and a remarkable series of legal triumphs which make them arguably the only victors of both sides of the the American Revolution.

John Fisher of London was born in Portsmouth on May 4, 1764, the eldest of 15 children. His parents, John Sr. and Anna Wentworth Fisher were well-connected. Anna's uncle, Benning Wentworth, was province governor, and John Fisher Sr. came from an educated, wealthy family in Bristol, England. He came to America in 1762 after obtaining a mid-level position in the colonial customs system—a job that entailed recording every ship entering or leaving a port.

By 1765, Fisher had secured a position as Collector of Customs in Salem, Mass—a time of increasing political volatility. The Stamp Act, imposed that year by Parliament, inflamed the colonies who declared it taxation without representation. Though repealed, the political climate became increasingly unstable and by 1768, Fisher had been removed from office by Salem 's board of customs commissioners. He immediately went to London to plead his case and was restored to his position. This strategy of lobbying on both sides of the Atlantic would become a pattern as the family's fortunes were caught between duty to the crown and rising revolutionary sentiment. As the American colonies rose to throw off the yolk of George III and British rule, John Fisher Sr. would use every bit of the knowledge and influence he gained from his post to make the most of his family's fortunes.

Because of his chameleon nature, even his contemporaries and close friends never knew which

side he was on. This secretive strategy helped him get through the chaos of the Revolution in good standing with all parties, but it has also been the primary reason he has been ignored by history.

The Boston Tea Party in 1773 led to the Boston Port Act. General Thomas Gage, commander of all the British forces in North America, was transferred to Boston, effectively imposing martial law. With the danger increasing in Massachusetts, Fisher moved his family from Salem to Portsmouth, but even there trouble was brewing.

On Dec. 13, 1774, Paul Revere rode to Portsmouth to warn the Committee of Correspondence that troops from Boston were on their way to secure the gunpowder at Fort William & Mary in New Castle. The next day, several hundred local citizens, led by

John Langdon, overwhelmed the garrison and took about 100 barrels of powder, thereby sealing the fate of all the officers of the king in New England, including Fisher. And yet again he returned to England seeking restitution, leaving his family in Portsmouth . They would not join him until 1778. Two daughters, 3-year-old Frances and 4-year-old Sarah, remained in Portsmouth in the care of their grandparents.

Years later, Sarah would marry wealthy merchant James Sheafe and become a significant benefactor to the Athenæum, donating a number of family portraits as well as convincing her brother, the younger John Fisher, to donate 234 volumes "of very valuable works in various branches of science and general literature," the Athenæum's Board of Directors noted in their 1829 annual report.

For 180 years, the books were disbursed into the general catalog—each banished to their individual subjects until the 2010 recataloging. About 30 of these books will be on display for the exhibit, including Erasmus Darwin's *Zoonomia, or the Laws of Organic Life* (1796), Mungo Murray's *A Treatise on Ship-Building and Navigation* (1754), and Charles Stedman's *The History of the Origin, Progress and Termination of the American War* (1794).

*“Because of his  
chameleon nature, even his  
contemporaries and close  
friends never knew which  
side he was on...”*

The Portsmouth Athenæum  
9 Market Square  
Portsmouth, NH 03801

*Return Service Requested*

**OFFICERS & DIRECTORS**

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VICE-PRESIDENT: *THOMAS WATSON*  
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RESEARCH ASSISTANTS: *JAMES SMITH*  
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**THE 16TH ANNUAL PROPRIETORS ART SHOW**  
**2011 Entry Form**

Entries are limited to two original works by proprietors and their spouses or domestic partners, and may be in virtually any medium including painting, sculpture, photography, woodwork, needlework, ceramics, metalwork, prints, multi-media or audio.

**Yes, I want to show off my creative side!**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Work/Medium #1 \_\_\_\_\_

Work/Medium #2 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Drop Off: Friday, December 2nd and Saturday, December 3rd at the Randall Gallery**  
**Pick Up: Anytime after "Art Around Town," February 3, 2012**

Fill out and mail to Kitty Clark, 69 Peninsula Drive, Stratham, NH 03885  
or email [kclark47@comcast.net](mailto:kclark47@comcast.net).

Questions? Please call Kitty at 603-778-9599