



Don't miss our new website

Museum L-A's online presence expanded this fall with the introduction of a new website at www.museumla.org. Features include expanded content and photos with pages on current and past exhibits, descriptions of educational programs and a section for educators and lots more. Web visitors are invited to share their stories through an online form. We will be adding more photos and content – so keep checking back.

The site will be further enhanced soon with the ability to purchase items from the Museum Store online as well as make monetary donations to the Museum via the Support pages. The site was designed by Encompass Marketing of Auburn and developed and hosted by T.H. Creations of Lewiston.

We're on Facebook, too. Become a "Fan" today!



The Story of Work and Community
in Lewiston-Auburn

(207) 333-3881

35 Canal Street, Box A7
Lewiston, ME 04240
www.museumla.org

Be Significant!

Museum L-A actively challenges visitors and supporters to engage in the stories it tells and the history it richly preserves. With your help and support, Museum L-A will continue to play an important part in the current economic and cultural revival of Lewiston-Auburn.



Rural Business Enterprise Grant received from USDA-Rural Development.

Fun with the MUDMOBILE



Children and adults, parents and grandparents had great fun with clay as they made their own piece of art on Saturday, August 22 as the Mudmobile visited Museum L-A.

Instructors and supplies from the Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts in Newcastle were on hand for the entire day as groups gathered at tables outside the Museum to design a tile of their own. The tiles were then brought back to Watershed where they were fired. Finished designs were then



picked up a few weeks later at the Museum.

The Mudmobile's visit coincided with the Great Falls Balloon Festival and was a program affiliated with the exhibit, *Portraits & Voices: Brickyard Roads*. Funding was made possible through a grant from the Maine Arts Commission.



VOICES



FALL 2009

Historic mill to become our new home!

The historic former Camden Yarns Mill land and building on the Androscoggin River is now in the hands of Museum L-A. Plans are under way for it to become a vital part of the riverfront development – both within and beyond its walls.



Transfer of ownership from the Miller Family to the Museum took place on June 30. The mill has been in the Miller family since the early 1930's. "Acquiring this historic mill building represents a big step toward making our dream a reality," said Elliott Epstein, president of the Board of Directors.



David Robinson, representing the Miller family, presents the keys to the building to Board President Elliott Epstein and Executive Director Rachel Desgrosseilliers.

"A long search was done for the right site as we went through a lengthy planning process with lots of community input," notes Executive Director Rachel Desgrosseilliers. "We wanted to stay downtown, be in a mill, and become part of the revitalization of the Lewiston-Auburn riverfront. This site is perfect for us.

"This places us in one of Lewiston's first cotton mills with a long history of textiles and recycling," Desgrosseilliers continued. "We can look toward Main Street and tell the story of water power, the Great Falls, the canal system, rail



Above: Board member Kevin Callahan of Callahan Art Preparatory Services and Executive Director Rachel Desgrosseilliers (on ladders) erect a sign on the newly-purchased property that will become the Museum's new home. Gathered around are members of the Museum's staff (from left) Jennifer Dube-Works, Susan Beane, Annette Vance Dorey, and Karla Leandri Rider. Not pictured: Gail Baillargeon. Above, Left: The former Camden Yarns Mill building #2 as it stands now.

transportation and the Androscoggin River. We turn toward the Bernard Lown Peace Bridge and we see "Little Canada," the "Irish Patch" and New Auburn to tell the story of immigration. As we face Lincoln Street we can tell the story of the mills with their textile heritage. We look across the river and see Auburn with its history of shoemaking. Surrounding us are buildings made from the brickyards of Lewiston and Auburn."

If someone was moving into the mill as a manufacturing facility, they could move in right away. However, since the Museum will be bringing in the general public, a little more environmental work must be completed - such as removing lead paint and old electrical fixtures. An EPA targeted brownfields grant of \$200,000 has been received with the help of Sen. Olympia Snowe and work has begun to complete the small amount of cleanup remaining to



Map of site location.

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For More Information log on to: www.museumla.org or call 207-333-3881

FROM THE DIRECTOR

A dynamic year, 2009 showed us that building a solid foundation can make a difference between being good and being great. It takes a team to **make creating a “new Museum” a reality.** We have that team – our Board of Directors, our staff, our volunteers, our donors and our community. You will see the results of their efforts throughout our newsletter.



Our Board of Directors is a guiding force and inspiration in letting us think outside the box. They are leaders who believe that even the impossible is possible. Allowing a purchase option for the land and building for our new Museum with a one-dollar bill was a leap of faith. They accepted the challenges ahead when we closed on the historic Camden Yarns Mill property on June 30. The huge undertaking in *Echoes in Time*, which brought the community together to dance the night away, was another challenge. Our Board believed in letting us go for it and helped make it happen. To our leaders, I say Thank You for your fortitude and commitment.

Our professional and passionate staff members are dynamos in making things happen. Being such a small staff, each doing the work of two people, they take care of collections and establish archives, develop award-winning exhibits and quality programs for all ages, engage in partnerships, attract new friends and funds, and make sure what we do has impact on our community. To them and to our spirited volunteers who back them up, I say Thank You for being such a dedicated

and effective group making the seemingly impossible happen.

To our many donors, who are our lifeblood - we Thank You sincerely. Every dollar counts for us, as it does for you, and we promise to make sure that each dollar is spent in the most effective way. One of our top priorities is sustainability - we plan on being here for many generations to come. It is encouraging and heartwarming to see the many \$5, \$10, \$25 and larger donations arrive. Many of you say you wish you could do more. We understand, and we want you to know that your participation in giving is more important than the dollar amount of your gift. To you we say, Thank You, Thank You and Thank you again!

As Director of your Museum, I promise that we will keep exploring the past to keep discovering our community. We now have recorded and preserved more than 275 oral histories. I always knew that we were an **amazing community, but... in listening to all the life stories we are recording, it is clear that we are not just amazing – we are Amazing Fantastic! The “CAN DO” spirit that has given us our roots will only make us even more fantastic in the future.**

Ray Geiger, a man who truly believed in his community and a mentor of mine, used to tell me: **“Rachel, if you believe, you CAN DO IT! No matter what anyone thinks or says.” His spirit continues to urge us on. I invite everyone to join us in this spirit. Why? Because our community deserves its own Museum that tells its magnificent stories and inspires a Future Imagined in Continued Greatness!**

Rachel Desgrosseilliers,
Executive Director

Museum L-A Board of Directors

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and Visitor Services

DEVELOPMENT NOTES

Fall is the busiest time of year for most Development Offices and Museum L-A is no different in this! First, we celebrate.

November fifth marks the first annual donor and volunteer thank you event at Museum L-A, *Many Thanks. Many Milestones.* We look forward to an evening of honoring and thanking our friends. With their help and support, we have accomplished beautiful community outcomes.

Many thanks again to all those who contributed to the first museum exhibit fund to help create the making of *Portraits & Voices: Brickyard Roads*. The gala opening was a huge success and the positive comments and experiences shared from this exhibit have exceeded all expectations. Thank you for joining our FRIENDS WALL in the Gallery of Museum L-A. Look forward in 2010 to the third in the series, the story of our Shoeworkers.

The funding you generously give is invested to provide significant community impact. Over the past year, support has made it possible for:

- 3951 people from our community, 31 states and six countries visited this year and

experienced our rich sense of place and industrial legacy in Lewiston and Auburn. In 2010, we expect to greet 6,500 people.

- More than 250 children participated in workshops. Children explored our history

museum L-A ANNUAL FUND

As we approach 2010, we invite you to consider a gift of support to Museum L-A's ANNUAL APPEAL. Please help keep the community momentum going.

and our industrious people through hands-on engaging and lively guided activities at either no cost or minimal cost. This coming year, we plan to more than double that participation.

- More than 455 students in the school system in grade 3 participated in guided educational visits at Museum L-A in a collaborative effort that, among other things, will work to impact Maine's learning results and encourage greater interaction with community and history in hands-on ways. This year, we have scheduled an additional 800 students in grades 3, 8 and

in high school to continue to explore community and U.S. History at no cost to the students or schools through private, corporate and grant funding.

- 1,500 people reunited and danced at the first Museum L-A Event, *Echoes in Time*, held May 30, 2009 to celebrate our community history in music from the '40s-'70s.
- Two major exhibits were opened that richly shares our stories of brick making and immigration: *Portraits and Voices: Brickyard Roads* and *Rivers of Immigration: Peoples of the Androscoggin*, which richly share our sense of industry, art, and who we are as a people. In 2010, we launch the third of our *Portraits and Voices* exhibits **with the story of the Twin Cities' legacy in shoemaking.**
- Multiple Standing-Room-Only community programs were presented, with engaging lecture series, talks, lunch and learns and thought-provoking films.

We hope for a record-breaking Annual Appeal this year and THANK YOU for making it happen!

-Jennifer Dube-Works

FROM THE ARCHIVES



Lithuanians all over America celebrated when Lithuania finally gained its independence in 1918 from the Russian Empire. Pictured above, is a section of a grand panoramic photograph of local supporters taken in front of the Lewiston City Building. Museum L-A has two copies of this photograph in the Archives – one donated by Roger and Pauline LeHouillier and the other by Dawn Proctor. The full panoramic photograph may be viewed at Museum L-A as part of the new exhibit *Rivers of Immigration: Peoples of the Androscoggin*. We'd like to hear from you if you recognize someone in the photo or would like to share what you know about it. Please contact Susan Beane, Museum L-A's archivist at (207) 333-3881 or sbeane@museumla.org.

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make the site a totally clean site.

Architectural museum planners for pre-design work of a phasing project and overall conceptual design have started working to make sure that the Museum becomes part of the downtown, incorporates the river and more importantly, the community.

“Throughout the pre-design work, the Museum will be looking for lots of input from the community,” says Desgrosseilliers. “We want to make sure this is a museum that will save the legacy of our rich history as a community, especially what gives us our ‘sense of place’ and defines who we are.”

The original building was constructed in 1864 as **one of Lewiston's earliest cotton mills. It was the second of two mill buildings known as The Lewiston Mills.** In December 1945 a spectacular fire that burned for four days destroyed the top two floors. Plans are for the third floor to be reinstated in the future.

Programs and exhibits will continue to take place at Museum L-A's present location in the Bates Mill Complex .

VOLUNTEERS & COLLECTIONS



Volunteer Kirsten Larsson-Turley introduces a Red Hats group to the Museum's exhibit on the history of brickmaking in Lewiston-Auburn.



Volunteers Jill Snyder Wallace (left) and Kendra Biddle measure one of the many Bates bedspreads in the museum's collection. Their work is part of the museum's Textile Preservation Project funded by a \$3,000 grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Sciences. The project entails accessioning and cataloging over 300 textiles and providing special housing for 100 priority bedspreads.

- Karla Leandri Rider



ARCHIVES - Volunteers Norm Berube, far left, and Roger Nadeau, right, helped Collections Coordinator Karla Leandri Rider (pictured) and Archivist Susan Beane with a special project to inventory and box up records stored in a vault on the lower level of Bates Mill #5. These records are part of a vast collection of paper materials left behind when Bates ceased operations. They tell the story of the day-to-day operations of the company as well as the millworkers themselves. Once they are organized and preserved, they will prove an invaluable resource for our community. We'll be reviving some of the history that has been literally locked away in a vault!

-Susan Beane



Members of the Auburn-Lewiston Rotary Breakfast Club and Lewiston-Auburn Rotary Club, above, volunteered their time on a Saturday morning to assist in organizing and sorting through the museum's collection currently stored in Bates Mill #5. Volunteers got down and dirty moving heavy machinery, boxes, and other large objects that are important in telling the story of industry in Lewiston-Auburn. The work was done in preparation for the projected tearing down of Mill #5. Pictured, from left, are: Art Chamberlain, Dennis Barriault, Ed Cormier, Doug Boyd, Norm Lamie, and Bill Hunter.

The involvement of our community is crucial in maintaining the museum's mission. Volunteer opportunities invite people of all ages to join us in continuing to develop and grow a museum for the people of Lewiston-Auburn.

Volunteers keep Museum L-A going, and their effect is felt through all aspects of our operations, exhibits, and programming. From helping with fund-raising mailings, to working with collections, to guiding visitors and school groups, we rely on our volunteers to help us move ahead and accomplish so much.

Stories of work, immigration shared at Humanities Council History Camp

Museum L-A hosted and participated in the Summer History Camp for high school students held at Museum L-A the last week of July. The camp was sponsored by the Maine Humanities Council. Students from all regions learned the stories of immigration to Maine. They explored assimilation issues, cultural preservation, and jobs that attracted new workers.

Besides tours around the mill district, students gathered around a panel of elders who worked in our local textile, shoe and brick industries as they shared details about their jobs, the working conditions, the pay, as well as stories about family life "in the good old days."

- Annette Vance Dorey



History Camp participants listen to mill elders at Museum L-A.

After-School Program kicks off with bricks

Students examined the new *Portraits & Voices: Brickyard Roads* exhibit on Sept. 15th as part of the first after-school program of the school year. Each student chose a portrait of a former brickyard worker and read from their oral history, then shared with the group what they learned.

Students discovered what the job of making bricks the old-fashioned way involved and saw a video of the modern mechanized process that utilizes robotics. Then students handled the bricks. They predicted how many six-pound bricks they could move by hand, by using a container, and by using a cart.

Their hands-on experiences revealed that moving bricks by hand was very difficult, and that wheels on a cart allowed them to easily move more bricks. They left with an appreciation of our local brick-making history as well practical applications of math and physics.

- Annette Vance Dorey



Cowan Mill Bricks to become part of new Museum L-A

Bricks from the outer walls of the ruins of the Cowan Mill were delivered to the former Camden Yarns site - home of the future Museum L-A. The bricks will be incorporated in some way that will allow the story of the Cowan Mill to remain alive.



Design Contest for ALL AGES!

If you admire the famous Bates bedspread designs, you may want to



enter the Bedspread Design Contest at Museum L-A. Official entry forms and Contest Rules are available upstairs in the Design Dept. at the Museum.

The contest has two age divisions: Junior, for anyone age 12 and younger. The Teens and Adult division is for individuals age 13 and beyond. They involve two distinct formats. Junior designs will be rather free form, inspired by classic silk screen designs. Older contestants will use special point paper, similar to that used for the intricate matelassé designs that were woven on Jacquard looms to create the Bates heirloom bedspreads.

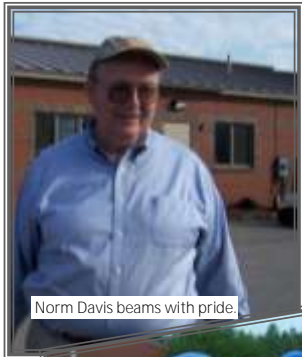
Entries must be returned to Museum L-A by May 1, 2010. Judges will choose several winning designs, which will be reproduced as postcards. They will be available for purchase in the Museum Shop. Complimentary sets will be given to the winners. The contest is open to all—even former mill workers!

- Annette Vance Dorey

BRICKWORKERS REUNION

July 31, 2009

Museum L-A reunites 126 at Morin Brick for a made-to-order breakfast and plant tour.



Norm Davis beams with pride.



"Red" and John Morin look at vintage photos.



Plant tour included viewing types of bricks now made.



Earl Goding, who worked over a half-century at Morin Brick, shares memories with co-worker Walter Goulding.



Harvey Desgrosselliers, a brickworker at age 16, has a laugh with Willie Baker's sons - Billy, Roger, and Mike.

New exhibit explores history of immigration in Twin Cities

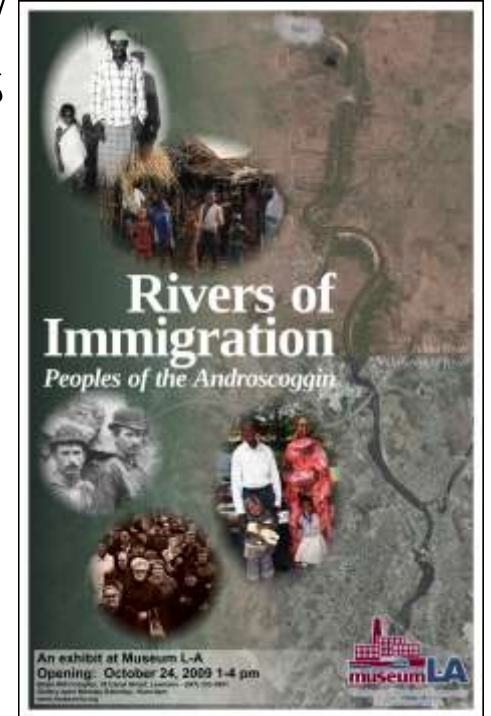
Guests were treated to the sounds and tastes of Franco-American, Irish, Somali and other cultures as *Rivers of Immigration: Peoples of the Androscoggin* opened on Saturday, October 24 in the Museum's new special exhibits gallery on the first floor. Collaborating with the Museum for this exhibit are Anne Kemper, Counselor/Coordinator of the Lewiston Adult Education Center and Catherine Besteman, Professor of Anthropology at Colby College as well as members and leaders of the local Somali Bantu community.

This exhibit not only showcases the cultural diversity of the Twin Cities, but also reminds us that

history repeats itself in the immigrant experience.

Immigrants from Somalia, China, Peru and other lands share their journeys from their home lands to L-A through personal stories and photographs. An illustrated Timeline traces the arrival of some of the immigrant groups to L-A since the mid-1800s.

An interactive Writing Wall invites visitors to contribute their thoughts and stories of immigration to the area. Community members are encouraged to bring in photographs of their ancestors who came to Lewiston-Auburn.



An exhibit at Museum L-A
Opening: October 24, 2009 1-4 pm

Portraits & Voices: Brickyard Roads EXHIBIT OPENING - Aug. 1, 2009



Exhibit Opening becomes Dennis Family Reunion!

Photo by Russ Dillingham / Sun Journal



Ralph Metayer signs an exhibit poster.



Congressman Mike Michaud and volunteer/brickworker Norm Berube unveil commissioned painting by Ray A. Michaud titled "Laying Brick in the Yard."



Artist Christina Bechstein explains her brick carpet



Lachance brothers reminisce with Earl Goding



Generations of family gathered to honor brickworker Roger Bertrand.



Dennis Turcotte and family flew in from California for the opening. Dennis donated his printing services for the title wall and exhibit art.



Henri "Lefty" Gilbert, who was a Marine and brickworker, receives flag flown over U.S. Capitol in honor of Lewiston-Auburn brickworkers. Flag arrangements were made by Sen. Olympia Snowe's office.