



2023 Spring – Fall Lecture Series

“The Best Ever!” Parades in New England 1788-1940

April 18

Jane C. Nylander, *President Emerita of Historic New England*



Jane Nylander last spoke about this topic to PDAS in March 2009, shortly after beginning the research that led to her latest book. In her presentation, she will share some of the results of what became a vastly entertaining retirement project centered on extensive research in the collections of historical societies and museums throughout the region. Having shifted the topic to focus on the creativity and narrative qualities of parade floats rather than the hierarchy and power of long lines of marching white men, she will illustrate the rich diversity and some unique features of New England parade traditions ranging from the Ratification of the Constitution to the eve of World War I. Persistent themes of liberty, education, and history are illustrated with allegory or tableau. Whether constructed to honor individuals, advocate reform, support political candidacy, celebrate victory, criticize incumbents, or advertise products, parade floats show how

ideas have been shaped over time and changed by circumstance, even as ideas about significance and perceptions of the past are still evolving and are questioned in the present.

Jane C. Nylander is President Emerita of Historic New England and formerly Director of Strawberry Banke Museum, Curator of Textiles and Ceramics at Old Sturbridge Village, and Director of the New Hampshire Historical Society. She has lectured extensively on New England social history and domestic interiors, textiles, clothing, and antiquarianism in the U.S. and abroad. Widely published in periodicals including *Antiques*, *Antiques and Fine Arts*, *Early American Life*, and *Historic New England*, her books include *Our Own Snug Fireside: Images of the New England Home, 1760-1860* (Knopf 1992); *Windows on the Past: Four Centuries of New England Homes* (Historic New England, 2009); and “*The Best Ever!*” *Parades in New England, 1788-1940* (Bauhan Publishing, 2021).

Mid-Century Modest:

May 16

The Architecture of Piscataqua in the Mid-20th Century

Peter Michaud, *Cultural Resource Manager*



Architectural historian Peter Michaud examines the architecture of the post-war Piscataqua region looking at several major buildings but concentrating on the more modest work done by the community of architects that developed in the decades following World War II. The lecture will provide a general overview of mid-Century architecture as represented in the region.

Peter Michaud, a native of New Hampshire, grew up in Rollinsford and is a graduate of the University of New Hampshire in Durham. He began his career as the Portsmouth & Exeter Site Manager for Historic New England, working out of Portsmouth’s Governor John Langdon House. He later served as the National Register, Preservation Tax Incentives, and Easements Coordinator at the NH Division of Historical Resources. He now works as a cultural resource manager for the federal government. He is a founding board member of the Piscataqua Decorative Arts Society, is on the National Council of Strawberry Banke Museum, and is the secretary of the Portsmouth Historical Society.

Elizabeth Farish, Curator, Strawberry Banke Museum

Gerald W.R. Ward, Consulting Curator, Portsmouth Historical Society



Two exhibitions have been designed to celebrate Portsmouth's 400th anniversary. Strawberry Banke Museum will present an exhibition featuring objects with local provenance, some of which appear in the book, *A History of Portsmouth NH in 101 Objects*. illustrate how the city developed over time. From a busy colonial seaport that fostered worldwide trade, to the industrialized production of the Nineteenth Century, and finally to the evolving industry of the post-World War, ***Portsmouth Possessions: Objects that Shaped the City*** seeks to share the history of our changing city through the objects made and used here. Join curator Elizabeth Farish and tour the special exhibition in the historic houses of Strawberry Banke.

A Sense of Place will be presented by the Portsmouth Historical Society. This companion exhibition to the publication, *A History of Portsmouth NH in 101 Objects*, encourages visitors to explore our shared past. The exhibition includes dozens of objects featured in the book, as well as providing its own episodic glimpse into the shadows of our past. From maps to landscape paintings, commemorative items and objects of daily life, the exhibition demonstrates Portsmouth's history in expressive ways that expand on the typical historical narrative. Curator Gerry Ward will start the evening by sharing what visitors to his exhibit can expect.

Elizabeth Farish has extensive knowledge of Portsmouth history, the collections of its National Historic Landmark houses, and Historic New England's properties, where she was Regional Site Mgr. for NH and Maine. Elizabeth holds a graduate degree in Historic Preservation from Savannah College of Art and Design.

Tour of the Frost House and Garrisons, Eliot, Maine

September 12

John Schnitzler, Master Carpenter



The complex of eighteenth-century buildings on Garrison Drive sitting atop Frost's Hill include a circa 1778 house and two other structures. The two garrisons, the oldest dating to 1735, were constructed to provide security in Colonial Maine. The smaller, and likely older garrison is the only known surviving structure thought to be built for the defense of a single family. The main house has been newly rehabilitated and will be offered as a rental by owner Stephen Foster. The complex, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1971, and the work being completed on it will be the subject of John Schnitzler's tour. Directions to Frost

Farm will be sent out closer to the date.

John Schnitzler, the longtime restoration carpenter at Strawberry Banke Museum, has worked on dozens of privately owned historic buildings. Most recently he completed a restoration of the Tobias Lear House, for which he was honored by the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance.

The Importance of Staying Within the Lines: The Paint-by-Numbers Craze

October 17

Gerald W.R. Ward, Consulting Curator, The Portsmouth Historical Society



In the early 1950s, the Paint-by-Numbers phenomenon swept the country. One firm alone, Palmer Paint, manufactured some 18 million kits in just 1953. Although the craze eased by 1956, the popularity of Paint-By-Numbers continued into the 1970s and beyond. In this talk, Gerry Ward will help place this decorative pastime in a historical and cultural context, examining it as an important skirmish in the ongoing battle between "highbrow" art and "lowbrow" popular culture. He will also look at its relationship to other forms of amateur and professional art, including some contemporary revivals and adaptations, and discuss several locally owned examples.

Gerry Ward is the Senior Curator of American Decorative Arts and Sculpture Emeritus at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, which he joined in 1992. Previously, he served as the Assistant Curator for the Garvan Collection at the Yale University Art Gallery, an editor at Winterthur Museum and a Curator at Strawberry Banke Museum. His many publications include *The Cabinetmaker and the Carver: Boston Furniture from Private Collections* (2013), *Chibuly: Through the Looking Glass* (2010), and *New England Silver and Silversmithing: 1620-1815* (Co-Editor, 2008).