

COMMUNITIES



By MARC FERRIS

HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON

IT is hard to miss the 34 eye-high signs that have popped up all over town; watching passers-by stop in their tracks to inspect them makes that clear.

Each is emblazoned with historical photos and two paragraphs of text, one in English, the other in Spanish. They are part of a program called *Museum in the Streets*, which the Hastings Historical Society says it is using to try to stimulate interest in the village's past.

"We see this as a gift to the community," said Barbara Thompson, the society's president. "We also hope that it brings people in to do further research. We get lonely in here sometimes."

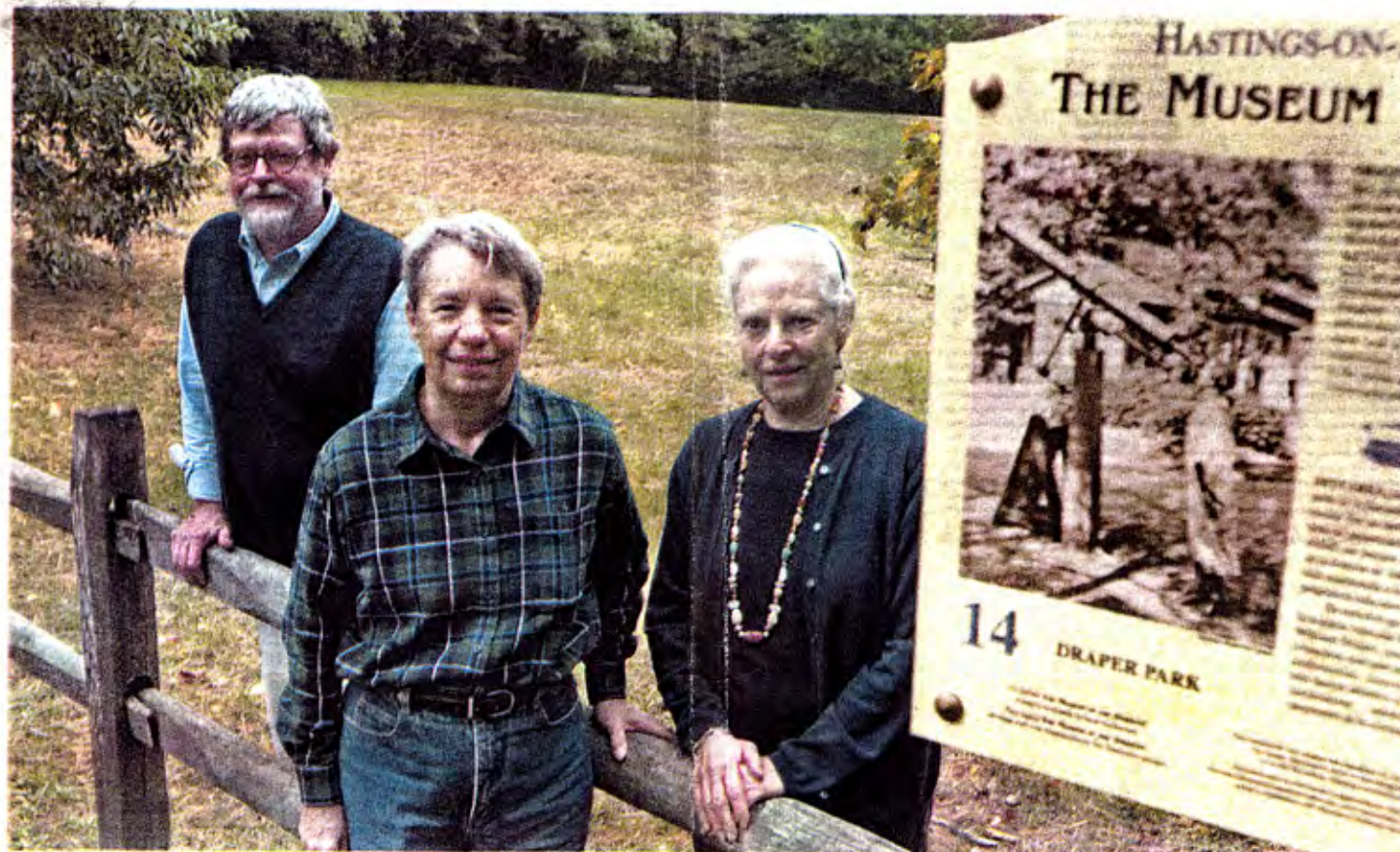
The signs are also intended to foster a modest form of heritage tourism — which local merchants are doing their bit to encourage: Store patrons can pick up a brochure with a brief history of the village and a map for a walking tour that loops around the downtown area. "It's designed to be a win-win-win situation," said Patrick Cardon, the museum consultant who came up with the *Museum in the Streets* idea. "It's good politically, educationally and commercially. We hope people will linger, look around and visit local businesses, so it's not just the historical society or the tourism office getting involved, it's the pizza parlor and the video store, too."

Mr. Cardon, who lives in Cushing, Me., made the local connection through his wife, Carol, a trustee of the Andrus on Hudson senior center and a descendant of the Andrus family. She suggested the program to the historical society and Mr. Cardon came down to pitch the idea.

Several communities in Maine have installed the signs, beginning with Thomaston, in 2002. Hastings is the first municipality in New York State to embrace the project. Mr. Cardon says he is speaking with other towns in states from South Carolina to Texas.

Most of Hastings's signs are on village land. The Board of Trustees approved the plan with little debate and directed the Department of Public Works to install the signs free of charge, said Sue Smith, a historical society trustee. The total cost,

The Village That Became Its Very Own Museum



around \$22,000, is being covered by grants and private donations raised by the historical society.

Though the venture is not intended to make a profit, Mr. Cardon sells the rust-proof, bulletproof and graffiti-resistant signs, which carry a 10-year warranty. His goal, he said, is quality control.

"I'm trying to create a museum-quality experience, where visitors are supposed to

focus on the picture, not whether the label is crooked," he said. "I don't want anyone to notice a chipped sign or a rust spot."

He also insists that the signs be bilingual. The second language on the signs in Maine is French, because of the large numbers of visitors from Quebec. Hastings adopted Spanish, to reflect the growth in the Hispanic population and to complement the new emphasis on Spanish in local schools, Ms.

Smith said.

Some signs convey little-known historical facts. From the one near Hastings's modest municipal building, for instance, the reader learns that it was designed by Shreve & Lamb, the architectural firm behind the Empire State Building. A sign on Washington Avenue explains that in 1912, guards at a copper wire factory on the Hudson shore in the village shot into a crowd of strikers, kill-



Photographs by Alan Zale for The New York Times

Historical markers have popped up all over Hastings, thanks to the efforts of, from left, David McCullough, Sue Smith and Barbara Thompson, among others.

ing one. Still other signs depict the grand mansions that predated today's houses and apartment buildings.

The endeavor took a year and a half, most of it spent deciding on the signs' content and their placement, Ms. Smith said. Volunteers selected the photographs from the society's unusually rich collection. Almost half the signs bear the work of Arthur Langmuir, who toted his camera around town in the 1920's and 1930's and documented village life in an effort to expose poor conditions.

The text was written by David W. McCullough, a historical society trustee who is a professional writer (and is often confused with the David McCullough who wrote best-selling works like "1776").

There are also signs highlighting the fact that Hastings has been home to a number of famous figures. Among them are the nation's first naval admiral, David Farragut; the theater impresario Florenz Ziegfeld; the birth control advocate Margaret Sanger; the photographer Lewis Hine; the painter Jasper Cropsey; and the sculptor Jacques Lipchitz. The Italian patriot Giuseppe Garibaldi also spent time here.

One of Mr. Cardon's goals, he says, is to connect the localities that adopt his program with broader currents of history. Another is to puncture the stereotype of the sterile suburb.

"Even though this is a small village," Mr. McCullough said, "if you scratch the surface a little bit, you find out there's lots of layers of history here."

Forgotten Westchester

A New Museum, Open 365 Days a Year, Rain or Shine

—Mark Frankel

Old times might be gone, but they won't be forgotten by residents of Hastings-on-Hudson, thanks to an innovative local history program known as the Museum in the Streets. Formally unveiled around the village last month by the Hastings Historical Society, 34 placards measuring 20-inches square depict vintage photographs of long-gone local landmarks and daily village life. They are culled from the society's collection of more than 10,000 historical photographs of the village; a brochure available at local stores guides viewers through two walking tours of what is intended to be a permanent exhibit.

In the works for 18 months, Hastings is only the second village in the U.S. to fashion a Museum in the Streets, the brainchild of Maine resident and museum consultant Patrick Cardon, who pioneered the concept with installations in 15 French towns and in Thomaston, ME.

"We have so many wonderful photographs"—three are shown here—"it took us a long time to choose which ones to feature," says society member Sue Smith, who oversaw the project. "It makes sense to use the richness we have and share it with the community. People will be surprised to discover things about Hastings they did not know."

For info, call (914) 478-2249.



1 A 1905 portrait of the well-dressed crowd passing time outside at G.H. Wagner's combination newsstand and bicycle-automotive repair shop on Warburton Avenue (notice that bikes are given top billing, being much more prevalent back then).

2 A 1932 view of an already antiquated horse cart stopping to water the horse on Broadway (the now-empty horse trough can still be found on the east side of Broadway, across from the Food Emporium).

3 A 1918 photograph of students celebrating the Nov. 11 Armistice that ended World War I outside Farragut School, then the village's only school building.

Have a historic local photo you'd like to share? Email mfrankel@westchestermagazine.com

'Museum' adds dimension to area streets

By Judith Doolin Spikes

To the initiated, the landscape, thoroughfares, and buildings of Hastings tell the centuries-old story of the village, from Indian hunting ground through colonial manor to local hub of commerce and industry and so on up to its present-day incarnation as a commuter suburb. Now, thanks to the Hastings Historical Society and village government, that story unfolds in the form of 34 strategically placed outdoor markers combining photos and text to add time — the fourth dimension — to each scene.

Hastings' "Museum in the Streets" — a trademarked concept created and owned by Patrick Cardon — is the first in the United States outside of Maine. A ceremony this Sunday, Oct. 2, at 2 p.m., in Fulton Park (next to the Hastings Public Library) will mark its formal opening.

The plaques, with text in English and Spanish, may be enjoyed individually, but are arranged to facilitate a walking tour. Members of the Historical Society will lead short, sample tours after the opening ceremony. A bus tour will be available for those who prefer to ride. Refreshments will be served at Historical Society headquarters — the Observatory Cottage in Draper Park.

Boulanger Plaza, whose marker features Grace Episcopal Church as it was being moved from that site to its present location farther up Main Street, is a likely point of departure for a self-guided tour of the "museum." The tour would continue to Olinda, Draper Park, and down Washington Avenue, with markers along the way describing the Revolutionary-era Peter Post Tavern, the former Chrystie Estate, the Old Croton Aqueduct, and other sites, until reaching the municipal building. It would then proceed up Maple Avenue to Riverview Place, and down Broadway to Warburton Avenue and Spring Street, with stops at the Katterhorn houses, Tower Ridge clock tower, the former Zinsser Estate property, and the Protection Engine Co., ending at the site of Dock Street, which once spanned the train tracks.

Four sites lie farther afield: MacEachron Park and Kinnally Cove on the riverfront; the Burke Estate; the former industrial site in the present-day commuter parking lot, and the Longue Vue restaurant site, now home to the Andrus-on-Hudson senior residence.



MIKE DISCULLO/RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE

DPW employee Billy Osborn, who installed the plaques, with Sue Smith, who coordinated the project.

"By the time you've finished the tour," says Sue Smith, a trustee of the Historical Society who coordinated the project, "you'll know about the people who lived in the big houses and the people who worked on the waterfront and how they were tied together."

Cardon's company, based in Cushing, Maine, manufactured the signs, providing the design and Spanish translations of the text. Historical Society volunteers chose the sites, contributed the photos, researched and wrote the text, secured permission to mount the signs from private and public property holders, and committed a

minimum of \$20,000 to the project. The Hastings Village Board approved the Society's proposal, and signs were erected this month by the village's Department of Public Works.

"The community — both those who live here and those who have moved away — is so supportive of the Society, with money, with family photos," Smith says. As a result, the Society has such a large and splendid collection of photos that "it was agony to choose among them," she adds. "Cardon would have preferred one big photo on each sign, but we insisted on one big

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

American Legion

Flea Market

(Many Vendors!!!)

Dobbs Ferry Waterfront
 Sunday, September 18
 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Rain Date: September 25
 For more information, call 693-1964



50% OFF

Museum

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

establish a fundraising campaign.

After the meeting, Cardon, 57, returned to his home in Cushing, Maine, where he lives with his wife, Carol, and manages the various Museum in the Streets projects currently in development. In a phone interview last week, he explained the origins of his company and how he came to Hastings.

Cardon said Museum in the Streets concept dates back to the early 1990's, when he was director of the Paris-based International Council of Museums, a group of museum professionals and organizations that "protects and promotes the museum profession," he said.

During that period, Cardon, who speaks French, said he was asked to join the board of directors of a French historical society, and at one of its meetings was asked how the society could go about drawing bigger crowds to its museums.

Cardon said he replied — off the cuff — that, "if we can't get people into the museums, we have to take the museums to the people." To his surprise, the society's board responded with enthusiasm and asked him to develop a plan using the village of Pontlevoy as a demonstration project, funded by the society.

Although Cardon said it took two

years to get what became the model for his "streets" concept off the ground, when completed it was "an immediate success. So there I thought I was being a smart aleck, with an idea that wasn't going anywhere, and today I've got a tiger by the tail."

Cardon began "Museum in the Streets" as a limited liability corporation (LLC) in 1995, taking that business form because he says it allows him to operate it like a nonprofit corporation without the layers of bureaucracy an actual nonprofit would require.

"I try to keep my expenses as low as possible, to make this accessible to as many towns as possible," he said. "It's more important to get the history out there, into the streets, than to make a profit."

After completing installations for 15 municipalities in France, Cardon brought his company to the U.S. in 1999 and set up the street museum in Thomaston. The museum in Hastings, which will be the first of its kind in the U.S. outside of Maine, came about because his wife, who is an art historian, is also a board member of the Andrus Foundation here, requiring periodic trips on her part to the village. Impressed by the amount of local history she saw on her visits, she urged him to contact the Hastings Historical Society. He did, and was asked to make a presentation, which was received enthusiastically by

I try to keep my expenses as low as possible, to make this accessible to as many towns as possible

Patrick Cardon

the society's board members.

"This would not happen without local historical societies," Cardon emphasized. "They do the work, the research, because it has to be historically accurate. They dig up the stories, and it becomes a community effort; it's a binding element bringing together disparate groups."

Cardon said that his museums fill a void that occurs when the stories of small communities are overlooked in the history taught in schools, which focuses on the famous people and important events of entire nations.

"We shouldn't forget these little towns, because small communities, no matter where they are, have a lot of history," Cardon said. "For instance, how did Hastings contribute to New York State or national history, or what major battle or important invention that we just don't know about happened there?"

David McCullough, a Hasting Histor-

ical Society trustee who has been involved with the project since its inception, said last week that the society was intrigued with the street museum as "a more direct way" of communicating the village's story.

"It's a new way of bringing history to life," he said, "not only to visitors, but our main intent was, this is actually a good way of letting people who live here know more about the story of their town."

McCullough said the historical society had tentatively identified 30 sites for the walking tour, with Boulanger Plaza and the Hastings train station as logical spots to locate the two larger map panels. He said society members are now pouring through their vast photo archive to decide which pictures to use for the tour's signage, which, he added, is designed to "blend into the landscape."

In addition to providing the photos, McCullough said the society will also write all the text for the signs, while Cardon will design the layout, translate the text into Spanish, and have the signs manufactured by a subcontractor.

The historical society will meet again in early June to decide on a schedule for the project, he said, and it hopes to have it completed within a year.

Because the signs involved with the museum will not be of a commercial nature, the project does not require further approvals from village review boards.

In village, all signs pointing to history

'Museum in Streets' guided walking tour to open in Hastings

Rebecca Baker Erwin
The Journal News

HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON — Iris Farber of Yonkers paused last week to read the new sign on the wall leading up to the Hastings Library and Municipal Building.

The sign told her that Village Hall was designed by Shreve and Lamb, the same architects who created the Empire State Building. Next to that was a picture of the old house that used to be on the Maple Avenue site.

For a self-described history buff like Farber, it was magic.

"I love it," the 71-year-old said, beaming a wide smile. "What a great idea. I think it's absolutely wonderful."

The historic marker is among 34 signs in Hastings that have created a "Museum in the Streets," the first of its kind in New York state.

The Hastings Historical Society will sponsor a guided walking tour of the sites today, starting with a 2 p.m. kickoff ceremony at Fulton Park next to the library.

The walking tour will include



Mark Vergari/The Journal News
Historic signs with vintage photos have been placed throughout Hastings-on-Hudson. This one shows Boulanger Plaza.

29 stops downtown, where 20-by-20-inch signs give a brief history of the site next to a photograph of what it looked like decades ago. The Hastings bus will be available for riding tours.

Five additional places are a little farther off and are not part of today's tour.

Sue Smith, a trustee of the Hastings Historical Society and its past president, said choosing the sites proved to be a challenge.

"We had so many wonderful photographs," she said. "It was really hard to contain ourselves."

Museum in the Streets was a concept created by Patrick Car-

Please see HISTORY, 2B



Photos by Mark Vergari/The Journal News

Sue Smith, right, a trustee with the Hastings-on-Hudson Historical Society, shows one of the historical markers to resident Georgia Honovich last week. The village is holding a walking tour today.

In Hastings-on-Hudson, new signs point to history

HISTORY, from 1B

don of Maine, who launched similar walking tours in his home state and in parts of France.

Smith said Cardon had been to Hastings when visiting his wife's family in Yonkers and approached the Historical Society with the idea.

"We liked the idea of being the first on the block to do it," she said.

All of the information on the signs are in English and Spanish, which Smith said stays true to Cardon's bilingual vision.

"The idea is to make it more easily understood," she said. "They're teaching Spanish in kindergarten now. It's the second-most common language in Hastings."

The historical society and private donors are splitting the \$22,000 manufacturing cost of the

If you go

What: Hastings-on-Hudson "Museum in the Streets" ceremony and guided tour.

When: 2 to 4 p.m. today, rain or shine.

Where: Fulton Park, next to public library on Maple Avenue. Refreshments will be served at the Observatory Cottage in Draper Park from 2:30 to 4 p.m.

signs. Volunteers spent the past two weeks putting up the signs.

The signs will be there for at least 10 years.

Folding maps of the tour sites are available for free at downtown businesses for people to take a self-guided tour.

Hastings resident Barbara My-

ers, 62, welcomed the historic signs downtown.

"It would be interesting to see what it was like years ago," she said.

If the historic walking tours are a hit, Smith said she would like historical societies in the river villages to launch their own tours and create a tourist attraction for the region.

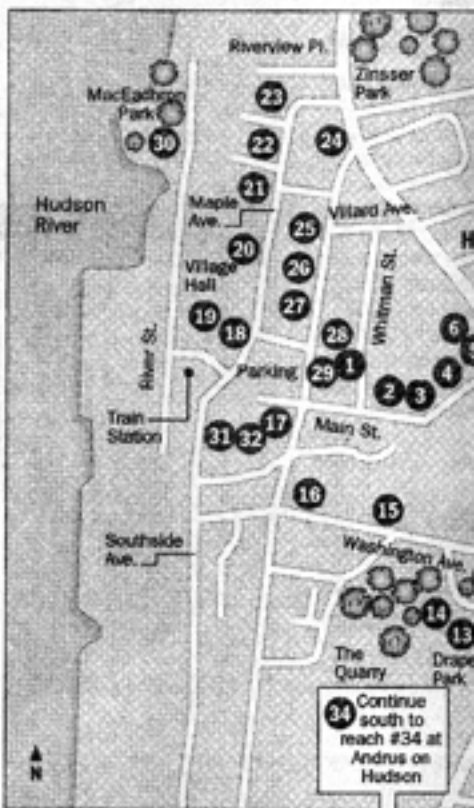
So would Farber, who said she would like to see bus tours of the river villages for senior citizens and physically challenged residents.

"People are always telling us about the grand, exotic places they're off to," she said. "They don't realize the great places that are close to home."

Reach Rebecca Baker Erwin at rerwin@thejournalnews.com or 914-694-5064.



One of the historic signs shows the Protection E and is placed on the wall of the firehouse on W



John Cornell/The Journal News

Museum in the Streets, Hastings-on-Hudson

1. Boulanger Plaza
2. Former school, blacksmith's shop, and firehouse
3. Church
4. Former private garden
5. Old Broadway
6. Horse watering trough
7. Oldest church
8. School days
9. Olinda Avenue neighborhood
10. First high rise
11. Draper Terrace
12. Forge cottage
13. Henry Draper and his observatories
14. Draper Park
15. Old Croton aqueduct
16. Former Washington Avenue footbridge
17. Former soda fountain

18. Municipal building
19. Former school
20. Former school
21. Katter's
22. Tower
23. Squint
24. Comm
25. St. M
26. Forme
27. Protec
28. Forme
29. Forme
30. Ships
31. The n
32. The n
33. Bille
34. Forme

Plaques of history to decorate Yonkers

Business group calls for public to submit photos for project

Ernie Garcia
The Journal News

YONKERS — A plan to put history-themed plaques around downtown has the effort's organizers appealing to the public for vintage photographs.

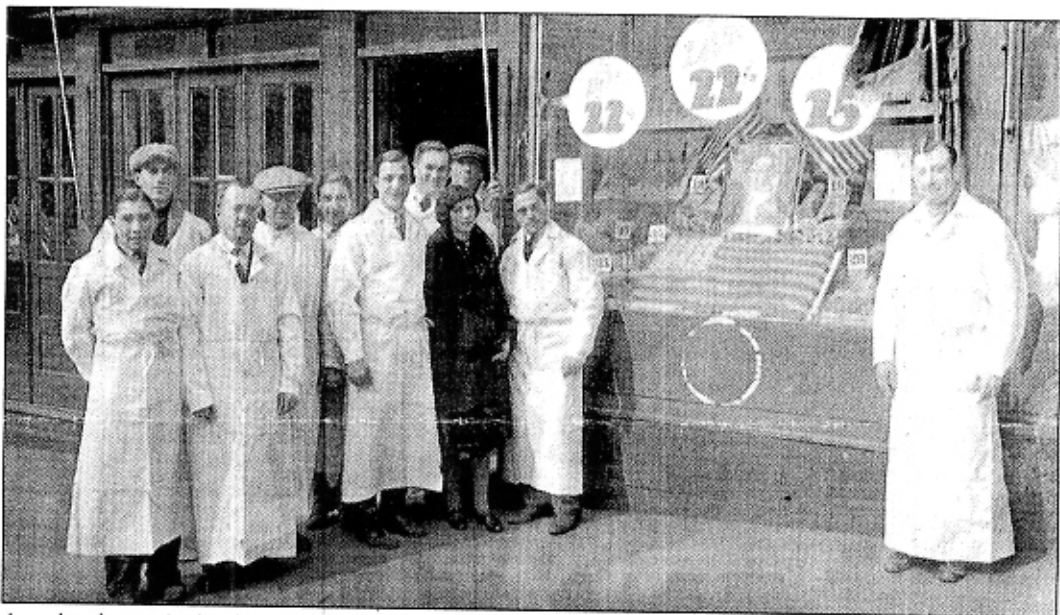
The Yonkers Downtown-Waterfront Business Improvement District wants to build 30 phenolic resin plaques embedded with digitally scanned antique images of downtown life. The problem is that most of the city's and the Yonkers Historical Society's vintage downtown shots have been overused in previous promotions.

"We really want to make it as lively and entertaining as possible," said Joan Jennings, the district's assistant director. "That's why we really need to get more personal snapshots."

The \$30,000 project, funded by grants, consists of three 47-by-64-inch walking-tour maps posted around downtown, and the 20-by-20-inch plaques. The ash-colored plaques will be mounted on poles, with some affixed to buildings.

A committee selected the spots where the plaques will be installed, including the Herald Statesman building in Larkin Plaza, Teutonia Hall on Buena Vista Avenue and the Young Women's Christian Association building on South Broadway.

The plaques will have text and a montage of photographs resistant



Joan Jennings submitted a photograph of her father, Frank Poroski, second from right in back row, with his co-workers at a New Main Street butcher shop in the 1920s, in the hope it will be incorporated into a plaque.

Be a part of history

People with vintage family photographs of historical interest are sought for a history-themed plaque project in downtown Yonkers. E-mail high-resolution images with captions to Joan

to vandalism.

Jennings does not want people to donate photographs, but simply to bring them to the district's office at 4 Hudson St. so she can make computer scans of them.

Jennings already made her own submission to the project, a photograph of her father, Frank Poroski, standing with a group of

Jennings at joanjenn@gmail.com or have a photograph scanned at the Yonkers Downtown-Waterfront Business Improvement District's office at 4 Hudson St. For more information, call 914-969-6660.

his co-workers outside their employer's butcher shop at 129 New Main St. in the 1920s. Poroski and others in the photograph proudly stand in front of a George Washington window display featuring a U.S. flag made with ground beef and sausage.

Similar plaques are posted in neighboring Hastings-on-Hudson.

The markers there are in English and Spanish.

Jennings said Yonkers' polyglot population prompted the business improvement district to use English in the plaques, with explanatory brochures in about 10 languages that would be available at Philipse Manor Hall.

Jennings said the best images for inclusion in the project would be family photos that also illustrate the city's history, such as images of people at public events, work or in other social situations that could be considered historic.

Reach Ernie Garcia
at elgarcia@lohud.com
or 914-696-8290.

LOCAL & STATE

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Monday, November 13, 2006

Portland Press Herald/ Coast Edition

SECTION B

Cardon

WALK DOWN MEMORY LANE

Museum in the Streets celebrates city history

Biddeford prepares to launch a walking tour with plaques to commemorate 30 historic sites.

By KEVIN WACK
Staff Writer

BIDDEFORD — From the right vantage point, one can picture centuries of commerce and change in this historic riverfront city.

On an unseasonably warm morning last week, the flags in downtown Biddeford's Mechanics Park were flapping in the autumn breeze. To the right was Water Street, once home to several shipyards that built massive schooners. To the left stood the city's vast complex of 19th-century textile mills. Straight ahead was the churning Saco River, which falls 47 feet in Biddeford, and which gave the city's founders a

CEREMONY ON SATURDAY

BIDDEFORD'S Museum in the Streets will be inaugurated Saturday at 11 a.m. in Mechanics Park. Francis Gauthier, the French consul general in Boston, is expected to attend. Walking tours of the city's historic sites will be available after the ceremony.



FOR A PHOTO slide show of Biddeford's Museum in the Streets walking tour, go to MaineToday.com.

reason to settle here.

In this park on Saturday, the Biddeford Historical Society plans to inaugurate its Museum in the Streets, a walking tour with plaques in both English and French commemorating 30 of the city's historic sites. The 11 a.m. ceremony will be followed by guided walking tours of downtown sites.

The 2-year-old project, which cost

about \$20,000, is being funded entirely with private money. The goal is to bring the city's past closer to its present.

"It's meant to educate our own citizens," said Norman Beaupre, the historical society's president, "but also for all the tourists who will be visiting here."

The buildings to be commemorated range from houses of worship to ca-

thedrals of commerce. They were built between the late 1600s and the early 1900s. Each one has a compelling story to tell.

Just across a busy intersection from Mechanics Park is the one-time home of Revolutionary War-era lawyer James Sullivan, who was a friend of John Adams. He also set the boundary between Maine and New Brunswick and wrote the first history of the state. The site of his house at the corner of Hill and Main streets is now a small urban park.

To the west, at 129 Main St., the building once known as Marble Hall is one of several architectural gems that are awaiting a downtown renaissance. The three-story building still has its signature tall windows and marble facade, which date back to 1877. But it recently



Staff photo by Doug Jones

The clock towers of Pepperell Mills and Biddeford City Hall rise above the cityscape.

Please see **BIDDEFORD**, Page B3

BIDDEFORD

Continued from Page B1

lost its ground-floor tenant, the Reny's department store chain, whose departure left the building without a major store for the first time in 50 years.

Around the corner on Alfred Street, it's difficult to determine exactly where Biddeford's first French-language newspaper, *La Justice*, was housed. The most likely candidate appears to be a vacant storefront sandwiched between a print shop and a dance studio. The weekly newspaper, published from 1893 to 1950, served a large community of French Canadians who had come to this mill city for work.

Farther west on Main Street sits the red-brick Lincoln Mill, where textiles were produced beginning in 1853. This 260,000-square-foot mill is one of the buildings that have found ways to adapt to Biddeford's changing economy.

Today, the Lincoln Mill is home to an eclectic mix of tenants, from furniture makers to a wood turner to a business that restores vintage electrical equipment. But city officials have bigger dreams for the mill. They'd like to convert it into the state's first pharmacy school.

Just across Main Street is the Thacher Hotel, which dates to 1847 and has been doing business under the same name for more than 100 years. This is where World War I Gen. John J. Pershing ate breakfast during a 1920 tour through Maine. Today, the hotel still rents rooms, but some of its first-floor storefronts are vacant, a reminder that downtown Biddeford has struggled economically since many of the nearby mills closed and more residents began shopping at suburban strip malls.

Further to the south, at the corner of Adams and Jefferson streets, sits McArthur Hall, a



Staff photo by Doug Jones

St. Joseph's spire is visible past the brick facade of St. Jean-Baptiste de Bienfaisance on Elm Street in Biddeford.

mansion built in 1847 to house the men who oversaw the Pepperell Manufacturing Co.'s mill.

The mansion was later used as a boarding house and a social club, and it lost some of its architectural grandeur before Doug Sanford, who owns several local properties, bought and restored it.

"It was a pretty ugly building at the time," Sanford recalled. "We kind of brought it back."

Biddeford is the fourth Maine community to develop a Museum in the Streets. Patrick Cardon, who lives in the Maine

town of Cushing, came up with the model in 1995, and it's since been adopted in Belfast, Thomaston and Waterville, as well as several towns in Europe. The idea is to connect members of a community with human stories from their collective past.

"This is about our predecessors, our ancestors," Cardon said. "Because nothing we do now lives outside a context."

Staff Writer Kevin Wack can be contacted at 791-6364 or at:

kwack@pressherald.com

Journal Tribune



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Recalling Biddeford's history

Museum in the Streets could generate local pride, Beupre says

By **BEATRICE MAROVICH**

Staff Writer

BIDDFORD — The signs that you'll begin seeing — posted near the Saco River, on Alfred Road, up and down Main Street — are a tribute to city pride, says local historian Norman Beupre.

"I think that everything begins with pride," he says. "Pride in oneself, pride in the municipality."

This, he adds, is an important time for city residents to keep this in mind.

"If you're depressed about yourself, and the state of the city, and there's no enthusiasm for the city,

it's going to fall apart," he says.

The Museum in the Streets is the Biddeford Historical Society's \$20,000 contribution to the revitalization of the municipality.

A series of 30 weather-resistant plaques, embedded with old photographs, and printed with bilingual text (French and English), are being placed strategically throughout the downtown so that visitors and residents can take a walking tour of the city to learn about its roots.

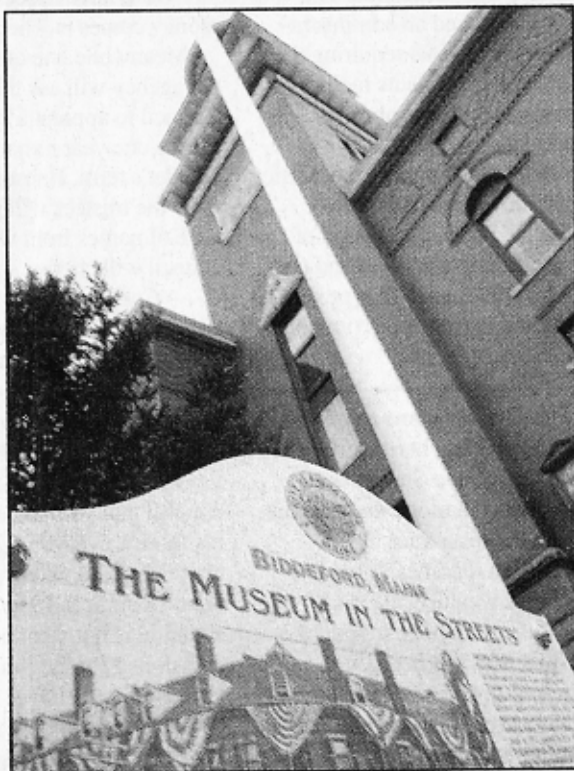
Beupre sees eye-to-eye with a small culture of investors, business owners, and volunteers who believe that something good is

happening downtown.

"I think a lot of people have given up on Biddeford," he acknowledges. But, he says, "Except for going to graduate school, I've lived here all of my life."

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A marker as part of Biddeford Historical Society's Museum in the Streets project, a walking tour of the city's landmarks, sits outside City Hall on Tuesday.



History

From Page A1

I see, somehow, that right now Biddeford is on the cultural move.”

While there are some who don't think much about the history or culture of the city, and focus mainly on economic development issues, he believes that a solid grounding in culture will hasten economic development in its own way.

“Biddeford is more than the Crossing,” he says, referring to the large shopping complex that's opening along the interstate. “It's not that I'm against that. But a city can be lifeless if you lose the history and culture that lives inside it.”

A strong culture makes for a more distinct municipality, which is more attractive to potential residents and business owners.

Patrick Cardon, a Maine resident who developed the trademarked program that's being implemented in towns across Maine, New York, and France, might agree.

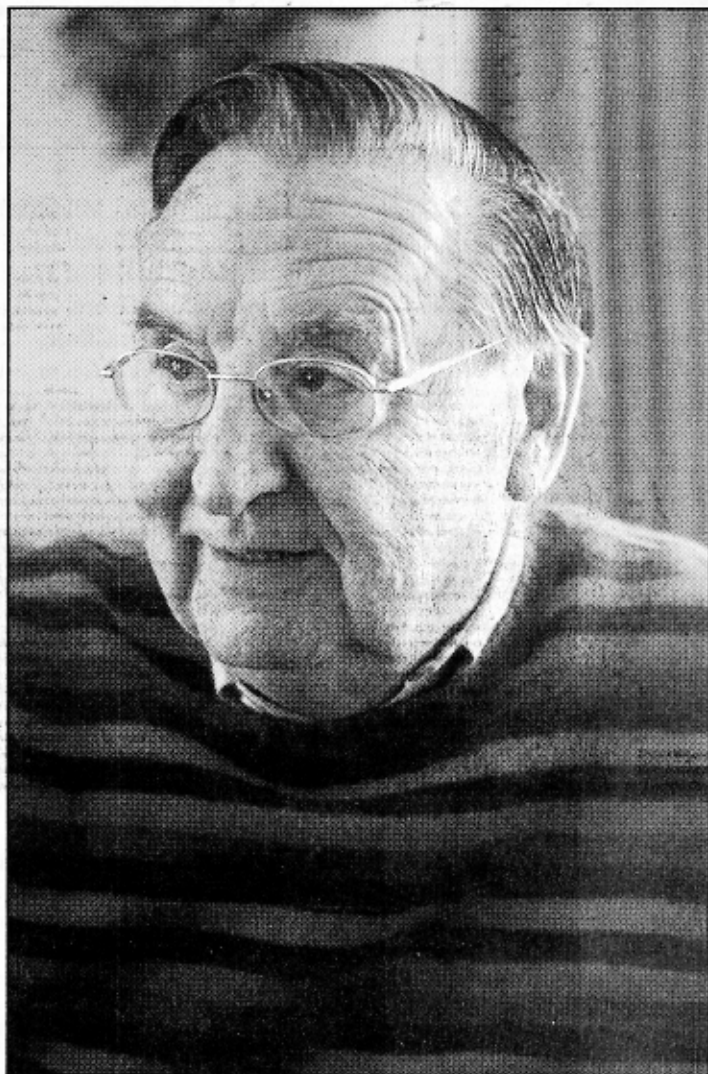
“I do believe that development is stronger if it happens in a cultural context,” he says. “It's a way of tipping our hats to the ancestors, who brought us to the current point.”

As museum culture across the world changes, bringing people more in touch with real, tangible, living elements of history (rather than simply hiding it behind glass) he jumped on the trend.

Although traditional museums are an excellent way to house valuable pieces, such as artwork, many things don't belong there. There are photographs – for example – that should be out on the street, to serve as a tribute to the structures that have risen and fallen in their place.

His custom-made plaques are each printed with a digital image of aging local portraits and snapshots, from ships built along the coast, to an afternoon in the textile mills.

“It's not right to shut these things up, and put officials in charge of them. This stuff really belongs to the patrimony of human beings,” he says. “Returning it to the streets is one way of saying: This is the way things were before you were here. You realize that the streets were dirt, at one time,



JOHN SWINNECK/Journal Tribune

Biddeford Historical Society President Norman Beaupre at his Biddeford home Tuesday. The society has begun the Museum in the Streets project, marking landmarks of historical significance.

KICKOFF CELEBRATION

□ The inauguration of Biddeford's Museum in the Streets will be held Saturday, Nov. 18, rain or shine. The first walking tour will be preceded by a dedication, and will set out from Mechanic's Park at 11 a.m.

that people walked around in clogs. We're much more respectful of our ancestors, and more aware of how to move into the future.”

For his part, Beaupre is grateful for the comprehensive program that Cardon has organized. It's professional, and helps community members organize every step of the way— from the initial collection of historical data and images, to the final printing.

Because of this, it's moved much more quickly than other

initiatives (such as placing one plaque per year on buildings in the downtown) could have. But it wouldn't have been possible without a lot of inspired community support.

The project has eaten up hundreds of volunteer hours donated by Beaupre and other Historical Society members such as Ray Gaudette, Charles Butler, and Denis Lettelier. They've spent the last two years doing research and leg-work.

“I don't deliver a finished product, I deliver an idea,” says Cardon.

Signs are going up across the downtown region all week. Residents will have the opportunity to see this idea put into action for the first time this weekend, during a Saturday afternoon walking tour.

— Contact Beatrice Marovich by calling 282-1535, Ext. 324, or e-mail bmarovich@gwi.net.



LIZ GOTTHELF/Journal Tribune

Norman Beaupre, president of the Biddeford Historical Society, introduces the new Museum on the Streets at a dedication at Memorial Park on Saturday. Below, Rachael Weyand, executive director of the Heart of Biddeford, leads a group on the self-guided historical walking tour.

Want to learn about Biddeford's history?

Take a walk

By **LIZ GOTTHELF**
Staff Writer

BIDDEFORD — When was the first allopathic hospital built in Biddeford, and where was it located? The answer to this can be found by taking a walk.

The new Museum in the Streets in Biddeford is a historical

walk that highlights 30 different places of historical significance with placards detailing the history in both English and French and providing a photo of the site.

The "museum" was honored at a dedication ceremony in front of a map of the walk on Saturday at Memorial Park, along the banks of the Saco River where French Explorer Samuel de Champlain sailed more than 400 years ago.

U.S. Rep. Tom Allen (D- Maine) congratulated the Biddeford Historical Society and praised them for the walk.

"This kind of identification of historic points of interest in the city really gives a sense of where Biddeford came from, and therefore what it is today," he said.

Mayor Wallace Nutting made reference to the nearby mills, which were made entirely by human and animal power, and which he said people liken to the pyramids; and the many lives spent to make manufactured goods that went all over the world.

"We have to be proud of our heritage, and this is a wonderful way to recognize it," said Nutting.

The idea for The Museum in the Streets sprang up about two years ago, when historical society President Dr. Norman Beaupre was giving a book reading in Waterville and saw the history walk that Patrick Cardon had designed. Cardon made a presentation to



See Museum
Page A3



KRISTEN MUSZYNSKI/Journal Tribune

A Museum in the Streets sign, pictured Friday, stands on the lawn of City Hall, in front of the Thacher Hotel. The sign gives a brief history of the hotel, in both French and English, and includes a photograph of the building in its heyday, decorated with patriotic banners during a visit from a politician.

Museum From Page A1

the historical board and it embraced the idea.

"I'm just the concept person, they did all the work," said Cardon.

Members of the historical society got busy going through photos and postcards, doing research, digitizing photos, writing text and translating. Member Edouard Maxson was instrumental in getting permission from landowners to post the signs, while Ray Gaudette and historical society secretary Charles Butler compiled and translated the text for the markers.

Beaupre said they decided to put the text in both English and French to honor the Franco-American community in Biddeford and to make the tour accessible to French speaking tourists.

Gaudette said he was excited

to see all the hours of work the group had put in cumulate into a successful project.

"It's really come together," he said.

Gaudette, who has lived in Biddeford his whole life, talked about the changes in Biddeford, such as when Whites Wharf Street, next to where Memorial Park is now, was lined with houses.

Funds for the project were raised by the Historical Society with the help of private sponsorship.

"There were no state or municipal funds involved," said Beaupre.

Cardon said the whole purpose of the project is to give people access to history, and not keep it locked up in books and museums. This sort of "in your face" approach to history will make people more aware of their heritage, he said. Cardon believes that once people know their history, they can make

more effective decisions about the town they live in.

"How can you vote whether or not to tear down the mills if you don't know their history?" he said.

Cardon has designed memory walks in Maine and New York as well as in France. He would like to see a memory walk in all the coastal towns of Maine. As a person traveled down the coast, they could connect the towns as well as get an idea of what makes every place unique.

"Every story is different. In the end you would get a complete view of what happened in Maine," he said.

Beaupre said that the project fulfills the mission of the historical society, and he is hoping that people will learn a lot as they walk the tour.

"I know I learned an awful lot from this," he said.

—Contact Liz Gottself by calling 282-1535, Ext. 329, or e-mail egottself@gwi.net.

Biddeford unveils 'Museum in the Streets'

By Stephanie Grinnell
Staff Writer

If you have done any walking around the city of Biddeford lately, you may have noticed numbered plaques with photographs appearing in multiple downtown locations. The plaques are the result of a collaboration of the city and the Historical Society to bring the Museum in the Streets to Biddeford. They mark historical sites around the city and give information about the sites in English and French.

There is a master plaque located in Mechanics Park and another at Biddeford City Square to give an overview of the self guided walking tour. Pamphlets are available at local businesses that contain the map and information about the history of Biddeford and the Museum in the Streets. There are just three other Museums in the Streets in the entire state of Maine located in Thomaston, Belfast and Waterville.

Fundraising for the concept began about two years ago. Patrick Cardon, the Founder of Museum in The Streets, and Norman Beaupre, President of the Biddeford Historical Society, were the original supporters of the project.

About 45 people attended the inauguration of the Museum in the Streets on Saturday November 18, including Representative Tom Allen, Mayor Wallace Nutting and French Consul Francois Gauthier.

According to Charles Butler of the Biddeford Historical Society, the locations and pictures represented on the plaques were chosen by the historical society. Butler said some of the pictures were originally postcards and architect's drawings. He said that local people translated the English to French on the plaques then Beaupre edited them for clarity and accuracy.

"It's been a dream for a long time," Butler said of the project.

He spoke of the meaning the historical plaques will have for the city of Biddeford.

"Biddeford is on the cultural move," he said, adding that the historical society had started marking historical sites with the bell in Biddeford Pool and Champlain's landing site along the Saco River. He also thanked the many contributors to the project.

Nutting referred to the diverse history of Biddeford.

"This is a great day in Biddeford,

Maine. It is an exciting day to have the Museum in the Streets to be brought here and further recognize the potential we have and continue to develop," he said.

Nutting acknowledged the "magnificent accomplishments" made by the historical society in bringing this project to Biddeford. He also said that the mills in Biddeford and Saco have been compared to the pyramids because they were built only with human and animal labor.

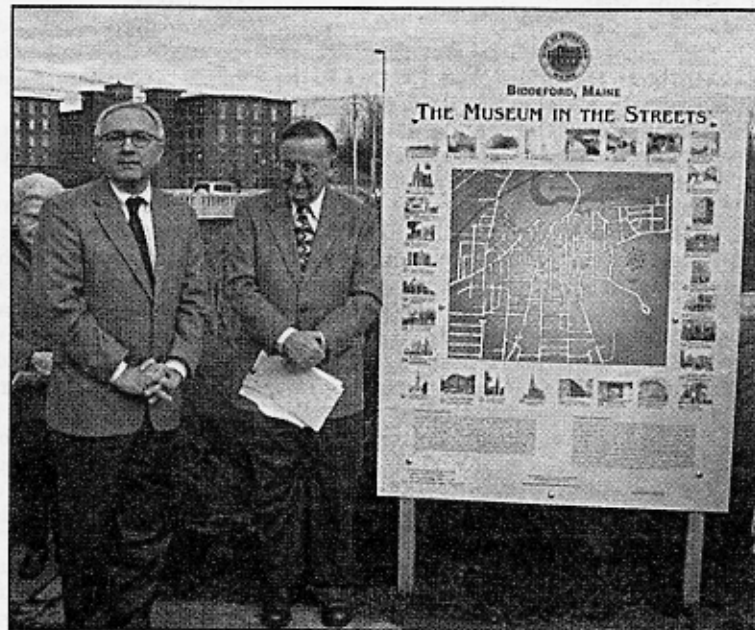
"We have to be proud of our heritage," he concluded.

Allen noted that having the Museum in the Streets sets Biddeford apart from other cities in Maine.

"This is a very exciting project. Biddeford isn't Anytown, USA. It is very important to understand our roots and this is a great way to do that. This kind of walking tour, this kind of identification of historic points in the city gives people a sense of where we came from," he said.

Gauthier spoke emotionally.

"It is very moving to be in the town of Biddeford, it has kept it's culture and it's people," he said, "I look forward to visiting this beautiful place and taking



HISTORY AND HERITAGE — French Consul Francois Gauthier (left) and Historical Society President Norman Beaupre proudly present the Museum in the Streets master plaque located in Mechanics Park. The master plaque shows all of the pictures and titles of the historical sites included on the walking tour. (Stephanie Grinnell photo)

the walking tour. I hope it draws many tourists, including French tourists. I feel like at home and I feel like family."

Sen Olympina Snowe was unable to attend the event, but her representative, Cindy Oldfield, read a prepared statement.

"Please accept my heartfelt

congratulations and very best wishes as you inaugurate "Museum in the Streets", which will showcase the diverse and rich history of Biddeford though a walking tour of 30 historic sites and the plaques that accompany them," she continued, "and I am all the more honored to join with Congressman Tom Allen and French Consul General Francois

Museum

(Continued from page 4)

Gauthier in congratulating Norman Beaupre, the Biddeford Historical Society, the Heart of Biddeford, and all of their partners for their steadfast vision, tireless commitment, and dedication to heritage."

Beaupre explained that some of the plaques were not yet in place because they had not been able to get permission from the current landowners.

"We did not want to intrude, so we asked permission to place our signs," he said. The plaques are 99 percent in place according to Beaupre.

Some people decided to take the tour themselves without a guide and left in small groups immediately after the speeches ended. The last group to leave on the tour included Nutting, Beaupre and Gauthier along with a group of historical society members, two University of Maine professors and was led by Rachael Weyand of the Heart of Biddeford.

Most of the history tour can be easily walked. The tour zigzags across Main Street and includes only a few locations that are removed from the Main Street area.

The sites marked by plaques that are most distant are the Webber Hospital on Pool Street, the Saint Joseph's School and Biddeford High School off Alfred Street, and the Saint Mary's Church on St. Mary's Street.

Local

Friday, March 7, 2003

Museum in the Streets

Franco-American group leads effort in Waterville

By AMY CALDER
Staff Writer

WATERVILLE — Patrick Cardon believes that when you take a work of art out of its environment, you lose an important part of its essence.

"A painting or sculpture has a life and spirit and soul," he said. "You remove it and put it in a museum or on the auction block and it just doesn't have the same feel about it."

That is the idea behind an effort to bring art to the people of Waterville — an effort being launched with help from Cardon, an art historian and museum administrator from Cushing.

MUSEUM

- **What:** Museum in the Streets planning session
- **When:** 10:30 a.m. Saturday
- **Where:** The Forum at The Center, downtown Waterville

The "Museum in the Streets" would consist of informational plaques placed around the city at places of interest, including historic sites — old homes for

instance. The plaques, erected on wood posts, would bear old photographs of the location, as well as information about it, written in both French and English.

The Franco-American Heritage Society of Kennebec Valley is launching the effort with help from Cardon, who started the Museum in the Streets in 1995 in Pontlevoy, France, and then brought it to the United States.

The first town to develop the project here with Cardon's help was Thomaston, where 26 such plaques lead residents and tourists on a walking tour of the town that delves into its history and ties it in with other

events throughout Maine and beyond.

"You take art and history and return it to its environment — with the Museum in the Streets — and you return information to the place where it came from," Cardon said. "All of a sudden, it's in a context that makes sense."

The Franco-American Heritage group in Waterville, led by its president, Lisa Marrache, is working with Cardon to develop the Museum in the Streets.

They invite area residents to join them for discussion and planning at 10:30 a.m. Saturday

Please see MUSEUM, B3



Contributed photo

A sign in Thomaston points out highlights of that town's "Museum in the Streets."

• Museum

Continued from B1

in The Forum at the Center downtown. People are urged to bring old photographs of buildings or other sites of interest.

"We want to make people start digging in their attics and basements, or wherever they keep their pictures," Marrache said.

The Museum in the Streets, after all, is a community project, driven by what the people want to see as museum sites, Cardon said. Once the plaques are erected, brochures containing maps of the museum tour will be placed in area shops, where people may pick them up.

Marrache, a doctor and state representative from Waterville, said the Franco-American, Jewish and Lebanese communities as well as the Waterville Historical Society are involved in the effort. Possible sites for plaques include Front Street, the boyhood home of former U.S. Sen. George J. Mitchell, and areas in the South End, according to Marrache.

"We're hoping we'll be the first city to do this along the Kennebec-Chaudiere Heritage Corridor," she said.

The group plans to raise funds for the project. Cardon raised the money for Thomaston's Museum in the Streets, garnering half the needed funds from MBNA

The "Museum in the Streets" would consist of informational plaques placed around the city at places of interest, including historic sites — old homes for instance. The plaques, erected on wood posts, would bear old photographs of the location, as well as information about it, written in both French and English.

and the other half, from a Cushing resident who enthusiastically supported the initiative, he said.

Marrache's nonprofit group formed two years ago. Its mission was to open a museum dedicated to Franco-American heritage to stimulate and promote the resur-

gence of the Franco-American culture along the Kennebec-Chaudiere (a river in Quebec) corridor, and to promote the French language.

Other Franco-American-related events planned include a performance by the Prince Edward Island band, Barachois, at 2 p.m. March 16 at the Opera House with a reception to follow in the dance studio at The Center (tickets may be purchased by calling the Opera House); and Franco-American Day to be held March 19 in the Hall of Flags at the State House in Augusta.

Other efforts: Les Bavards, a group led by Waterville resident Sylvanne Pontin, meets regularly, promotes conversational French and invites speakers; an exchange program is being planned by Roger Hallee of Waterville, for people in this area and residents of France; and work on a downtown cultural center. Julia Schulz of the Penobscot School of Language and Culture and Maine filmmaker Ben Levine present the annual Franco-American Film Festival at Railroad Square Cinema, and Schulz holds classes to help people revive their French speaking skills. Also, Artie Greenspan is planning a course at Colby College on oral histories of Waterville Franco-Americans, according to Marrache.

NAL

Belfast opens 'Museum in the Streets'

BY TOM GROENING
OF THE NEWS STAFF

BELFAST — More than a few chests swelled with pride Thursday afternoon as the Belfast Historical Society opened its "Museum in the Streets," highlighting the city's rich history in 30 panels around the downtown.

The panels, made from a specially coated plastic composite to resist damage from vandalism, feature old photographs and text describing the significance of the nearby buildings, or what was once there.

Midcoast

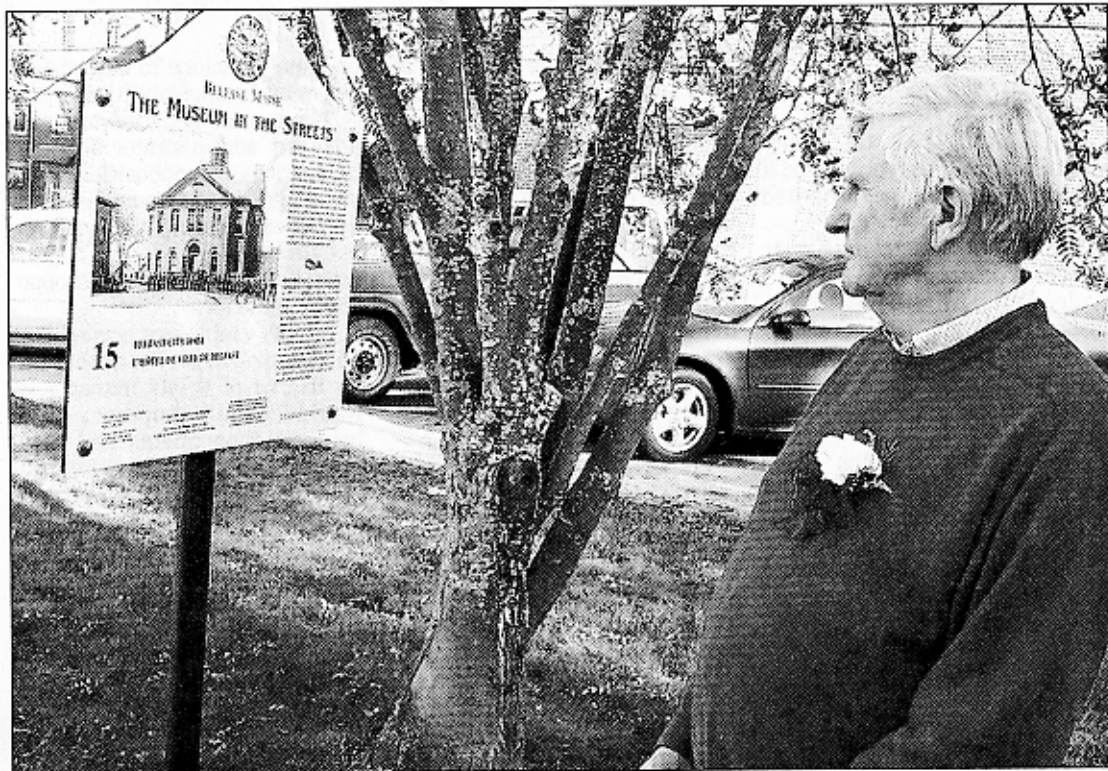
One of the panels marks the site of the launch of a five-masted schooner at what is now a park, but most allow pedestrians to see what a building looked like 100 years ago, then gaze up at the building as it is today and learn about its place in the city's past.

The "Museum in the Streets," a concept trademarked by Cushing resident Patrick Cardon, was introduced in Maine in Thomaston two years ago. A second version opened earlier this month in Waterville. Cardon, who championed the development of the idea in some 40 towns in France, envisions a "heritage trail" throughout Maine.

On Thursday, Cardon said he is pitching the museum concept to city officials in Bath, and he expects to speak with officials in Bangor in coming days.

"Each town has its own flavor," he said, making each one a different version of the same idea.

Residents and visitors have stopped to examine and read the



BANGOR DAILY NEWS PHOTO BY TOM GROENING
Fred Roebke reads the text on a panel that is part of Belfast's "Museum in the Streets" shortly after it was unveiled in front of City Hall on Thursday.

panels around town this week, but Thursday marked the official opening of the permanent exhibit.

In front of City Hall, with about 60 people watching, Megan Pinette, president of the Belfast Historical Society, thanked the businesses that sponsored the panels to help offset the \$30,000 budget.

In a touching moment, Pinette unveiled the panel in front of City Hall — the building known as Memorial Hall when Civil War veterans built it in the

late 19th century — with former Mayor Page Worth. Worth's daughter Peg, a local real estate agent, sponsored the panel in honor of her mother, who served as mayor from 1984 to 2000.

In addition to the 30 panels are two large introductory maps showing the layout of the walking tour that is the museum. Brochures with maps for the self-guided tours are available at the Belfast Museum, Chamber of Commerce information center and at businesses sporting the decal of a ship launching.

"It's a wonderful program," Pinette said. "It gets people out, getting exercise and learning about history." The museum also can be a draw for tourism, she said.

"It's history 24 hours a day on the streets of Belfast," Pinette said.

Mayor Mike Hurley forecast the museum would add flavor to the city's culture. "You're going to see people standing here reading these things," he said.

Text on the panels is in English and French.

A walk back in time

'Museum in the Streets' opening soon

BY DAVE PISZCZ

BELFAST — Visitors to the city will soon be able to stroll into the past, using their own two feet as time machines. The Belfast Historical Society plans to unveil its "Museum in the Streets" project on Sept. 30. The self-guided walking tour of the city's rich history will consist of some 30 panels located from City Park to the East Side, containing photos and information on buildings, boats, balloonists, bridges and broiler queens, just to name a few. Some of the panels will feature images of long-vanished buildings, while others will show historic views of existing structures.

"We're expecting a UPS shipment any time now," said Historical Society director Megan Pinette. Once delivered, the plaques must be mounted in steel frames set on posts, and those posts planted at the designated locations by the city Public Works Department.

"Everybody's so laid back about this — everybody but me, that is," Pinette, experiencing a case of pre-opening jitters, said. The project has been funded through a combination of grants and contributions from local



Megan Pinette of the Belfast Historical Society displays a sample plaque for the "Museum in the Streets," slated to open Sept. 30. DAVE PISZCZ

businesses and individuals, Pinette said. The concept of a museum without walls is based on a project in Thomaston originated by Dr. Patrick Cardon of Cushing. The concept was brought to Belfast through the efforts of a committee consisting of Pinette, Nina Young, George Squibb, Nathan Goldberg, David Crabiell and Liz Townsend.

Two master maps will be posted at the Opera House and the Chamber of Commerce building, Pinette said. Downtown businesses

will carry handbills with a portable version of the Museum in the Streets layout, so visitors can find their way to the sites of interest.

The street museum is scheduled for a grand opening on Thursday, Sept. 30, at 3 p.m. at City Hall. A reception at the Belfast Museum and a guided tour of the Museum in the Streets is also on tap. For more information, call 338-9229.

Dave Piszcz can be contacted by e-mail: dpiszcz@courierpub.com, or by telephone: 338-3333. ■

Maine walks bring more than a bit of exercise

Some great views, some art and history are easily accessible when you stretch your legs.

By MARY RUOFF

Walking is great exercise, but when we're on vacation or out for a day trip we want more. We want to be captivated – by majestic views, gorgeous scenery and natural wonders, by historic sites and buildings, by architectural beauties set like gems on the landscape. We want it all – often in an hour or less.

But trips centered around museums, antiquing or a leisurely drive may not leave time for a lengthy hike requiring extra gear. Perhaps you've got young kids or elderly parents in tow or have health limitations yourself. Maybe you just want to keep things more relaxed for all or part of a trip.

Whatever your reasons for wanting to take a scenic walk, Maine – world-famous for its diverse natural beauty and its rural landscape dotted with historic villages and towns – has plenty to choose from. Check with local chambers of commerce and, in smaller locales, town offices for suggestions. Bed and breakfast owners are an invaluable resource and often

direct guests to lesser-known paths treasured and trod by locals.

To get you started, perhaps on a series of journeys, here's a sampling of well-marked scenic and historic walking routes. Scattered around the state, the walks showcase a mix of mountains, seaside and villages, all with inspiring sights along the way, or, in one case, at the summit.

MUSEUMS IN THE STREETS

With the launching last fall of The Museum in the Streets, Belfast is following in the footsteps of Thomaston, another midcoast community with stately, well-preserved architecture that testifies to its prosperous heyday as a ship building center.

Cushing resident Patrick Cardon teamed with local historic societies in Belfast and Thomaston to develop these permanent walking tours and is working to establish more around the state. In both places, large placards mark historic sites and buildings downtown, on the waterfront, and along nearby residential streets. Text in English and French is accompanied by photos of the same spots decades or centuries ago.

In Thomaston, all the pictures are from the same photographic collection, shot in the 1870s.

FOR MORE

BELFAST AREA Chamber of Commerce, 338-5900, www.belfastmaine.org; Belfast Historical Society and Museum, 338-9229

ROCKLAND-THOMASTON Area Chamber of Commerce, www.therealmaine.com, 596-0376 or 800-562-2529. Thomaston Historical Society, www.thomastonhistoricalsociety.com

KENNEBUNK/KENNEBUNKPORT Chamber of Commerce, 967-0857, www.kennebunkkennebunkportchamber.com

Many on the Belfast tour are from the 1800s, though the photo at panel No. 28, "Broiler Capital of the World," shows a "state-of-the-art" poultry processing plant built in 1956 on what's now a waterfront common. After all, the city's factory era is also part of its past.

If you can, pick up a Museum in the Streets pamphlet at local businesses or municipal or chamber offices. Not that you have to – these "museums" are open 24-7. Each town has two large, well-placed signs with a

WALKS

Continued from Page V8

tour map and town history, the same information you'll find in the pamphlets.

Walk to a couple of "exhibits" if that's all time allows or spend an hour or two on a route of your choosing - the signs aren't in any particular order. In both Belfast and Thomaston, you could easily spend an afternoon doing the entire tour by foot, since a few sites are on the outskirts of town.

Placards mark historic homes as well as churches, banks, storefronts and public buildings. Many structures don't look that different than they did in the 1800s, though the waterfronts have changed dramatically, as pictures of tall sailing ships, passenger steamers and wharves attest.

One of my favorite stops on the Belfast tour is No. 18, "Stylish Lodging." This large dwelling - deep and wide, with columns gracing the small Greek Revival porch - still has the big side yard and picket fence shown in the picture, though look closely and you'll see that one chimney has lost its arch.

But stories, not photos, make these streets come to life. Built by Thomas Whittier in 1803 as a home and tavern, nothing about this grand home's appearance suggests it was ever a commercial establishment, much less a favorite "drinking, dancing and dining" spot. "Famous for the

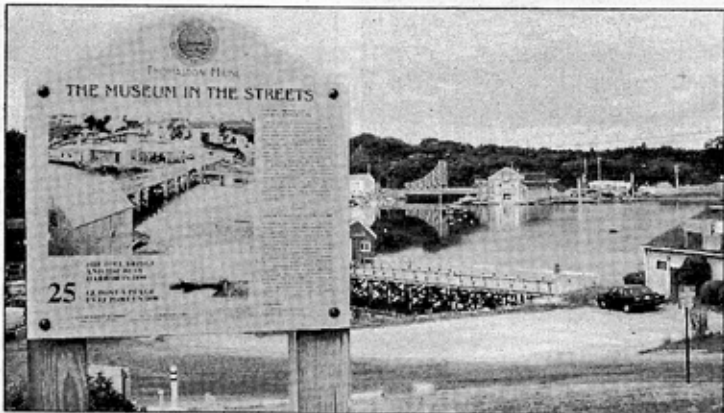


Photo courtesy of the Rockland/Thomaston Chamber of Commerce

Plaques like this are the keys to the Museum in the Streets programs in Belfast and Thomaston.

abundant produce from her gardens, Whittier's wife was known as 'Lady Bountiful.' The text also includes tidbits about the young millionaire who built the "villa style" home next door, shown in a smaller inset photo.

History picks up the pace

Walk along, see the sights, catch the scent of history

BY NANCY GRIFFIN
Times Record Contributor

THOMASTON

The Mid-coast town of Thomaston, former home of the Maine State Prison, will invite the public to stroll through its rich history when it unveils an illustrated walking tour, the state's first "Museum in the Streets," Thursday, starting at 2:45 p.m.

The trail through "The Town That Went to Sea," once Maine's most prosperous community, consists of 25 signs, illustrated by historic photos and posted so the current scene depicted on the panels is visible from the same vantage point.

Pictures on the tour highlight many of the town's gracious homes, primarily Federalist, and built mainly for the sailing captains and boat-builders who made the town prosperous, including the former home of Jonathan Cilley, the last man in the United States to die in a duel, and his neighbor and employer, John Ruggles, the "Father of the U.S. Patent Office." Other panels show the launch of one of the hundreds of schooners built along the harbor on the St. George River in the heyday of sail, lime kilns, sail lofts and Main Street, before pavement.

The town will launch the

museum with the first walk along the trail for the public at 2:45 p.m., departing from the town office. Renny Stackpole of Thomaston, historian and recently retired director of the Searsport Marine Museum, will lead the tour.

Following the walk, the Camden National Bank will host a reception from 4 to 7 p.m.

The concept of the "Museum in the Streets," on average a 45-minute walk through town and time, was developed by Patrick Cardon of Cushing while working as a museum consultant in France. As he is American, Cardon said he insisted the French panels include an English translation. The Thomaston panels will continue the tradition with a French translation.

"When the library decided to raise funds for the museum, we also decided we wanted to use the French translation to honor Maine's strong Franco-American heritage," said Luthera Dawson, author of "Saltwater Farm" and board member of the Thomaston Public Library and the Thomaston Historical Society, two of the groups that sponsored the museum along with the town. "We also have a lot of French-Canadian visitors during the summer. We thought they would appreciate it," Dawson said.

Cardon, who began his career as an Egyptologist and art historian, moved into museum management while in France, and after six years at the International Council of Museums became an inde-



THIS IS a photograph of one of the many ships built in Thomaston during its shipbuilding heyday. The photo is featured on a "Museum in the Streets" panel recently installed in the town. Tours start Thursday.

pendent consultant. He developed "Museum in the Streets" for a small French museum whose directors told him that no matter how hard they tried, they could not entice more people to visit their collection. He told them to bring the museum into the streets

for the people.

Now more than 15 French towns host "L'histoire au fil des rues," as the "Museum in the Streets" is known in France. Most resemble the Thomaston installation, said Cardon, featuring historic homes and industries that no

longer exist.

"The 'Museum in the Streets' is an excellent way of assuring that a town's unique history is preserved for future generations to study," said Eve Anderson, head of the Thomaston Historical Society, and author of "A Breach of Privilege: Cilley Family Letters, 1820-1867" (Seven Coin Press, Rockland). A picture of Cilley's former home is on the tour.

"It has the potential of being an excellent teaching tool for children because the tour offers not only a chance to view their town in the 19th century but also instructs them on the importance of learning a second language," Anderson said.

When Cardon returned to live in the U.S., he sought out Thomaston first as a potential museum site.

"Thomaston was known as the town with the state prison. It seems there was some shame attached to that, and little was known about why Thomaston was chosen as a prison site, and very little known about the rest of the town, its history, its buildings, its trades," said Cardon. "One forgot about the 'Town that Went to Sea.' One just drove through. It seemed a shame. I thought the town was perfect for a 'Museum in the Streets.'"

Traveling throughout Europe for his work, Cardon said he saw many kinds of museums besides art, including those devoted to maritime history, toys, fans, industry and science.

IF YOU GO

Visitors wishing to take the walking tour may go to one of several Main Street businesses, such as Camden National Bank or the Thomaston Cafe, for a brochure. The brochure mirrors the introductory panel and contains thumbnail representations of the photographs on each numbered sign and a brief explanation of the Museum in the Streets concept.

Thomaston is located on Route 1, approximately 40 miles from Bath and 50 miles from Brunswick.

"They all have the same concerns," he said. "Historical societies and libraries fall in the same category. They are usually collecting centers with very little public visiting because they lack means, but they are very rich in collections about our own immediate history, the development of our towns, the trades once practiced and the famous people. It is all down to earth, close to home."

Funding for the "Museum in the Streets" was provided by the MBNA Foundation, Frederick Moon and the Camden National Bank.

NANCY GRIFFIN is the president of the board of trustees of Thomaston Public Library.



BANGOR DAILY NEWS PHOTO BY TOM GROENING

A couple take time to study one of the 25 new panels that make up Thomaston's Museum in the Streets. The museum was officially opened Thursday afternoon with a tour led by local historian Renny Stackpole.

Open-air museum freshens Thomaston streets

BY TOM GROENING
OF THE NEWS STAFF

THOMASTON — No one could accuse this museum of being stuffy.

With early fall weather cooperating, the town's Museum in the Streets was opened in grand style Thursday afternoon, as about 60 people gathered for a guided tour along Knox Street, just one of the streets where 25 panels are installed to compose the museum.

The idea for the museum came from resident Patrick Cardon, who worked in France to create more than a dozen such museums. The town's Board of Selectmen got on board, as did the library and historical society and a core group of volun-

ed it, funding was possible. After MBNA committed to offer a matching grant, organizers were prepared to raise the local match, a dollar at a time, if necessary.

As local historian and writer Luthera Dawson said Thursday, museum boosters began calculating how many bean suppers it would take to match the \$10,000 grant.

But within three days, Frederick Moon of nearby Cushing stepped forward to provide the matching money.

Speaking to the group that gathered near Watts Hall for the ribbon cutting, Cardon said Thomaston would change in the eyes of Mainers from the home of the state prison — which is now gone — to the home of the

land and Belfast on hand to see the museum, Cardon's dream seems likely to come true.

Renny Stackpole, former director of the Penobscot Marine Museum in Searsport and a Thomaston resident, led the group down Knox Street, relating the history of some of the old homes and the men who built them.

Knox Street is "one of the great maritime streets in America," Stackpole said, which spawned "a moment of brilliance in Maine's maritime experience."

After the War of 1812, the men who had grown up on their family's boats — smaller vessels that traveled the Eastern Seaboard — began building larger and larger vessels to keep

building sheds. The ships grew to weigh 1,000 tons and more, he said.

"Once they were launched, they never came back to Thomaston," as they were used on the heavy trade routes between New York and Boston and other large cities.

Thomaston shipbuilders wisely did not seek financing for their vessels from New York and Boston banks, Stackpole said, and instead bankrolled the ships themselves, giving the captain and crew shares in the enterprise.

When the ships returned to port, he said, the phrase, "Their ship had come in," had literal meaning — profit.

As he guided the group down the street, Stackpole stopped at

And so it went, as the tour continued. While Stackpole won't be guiding people through the streets on a regular basis, the panels provide an interesting mix of factual and anecdotal information about the town's residents and their homes.

One panel, titled "The Wealthiest Man in Town," related the story of Capt. Samuel Watts. According to the panel, Watts "was not only the wealthiest man in town, [but] according to the United States Census report in 1840, he was also the wealthiest man in the United States."

Three of seven millionaires in the country lived in Thomaston; they were all shipbuilders."

Signs of The Times

Thomaston has taken it upon itself to reinvent the walking tour — and other towns are taking notice. By Joshua F. Moore.

Next to or across from twenty-five of the most interesting properties around town are plaques that not only explain the background of the particular site but also show what it looked like a century ago.

THOMASTON has an identity crisis. All that remains of its signature landmark, the Maine State Penitentiary, is a grassy field. Its Main Street boasts one of Maine's most remarkable collections of nineteenth-century architecture, yet its eastern skyline is still dominated by a big, ugly cement factory. The broad, tree-lined streets here are



some of the most pleasant in New England, but few motorists leave the gridlock of Route 1 to explore them.

Coming to grips with this complex community has never been easy for either locals or visitors. But thanks to a Cushing museum expert and his pale yellow plaques, Thomaston has come to life in a whole new way for anyone willing to spend a few minutes strolling the sidewalks here.

The signs, twenty-five in all, comprise Thomaston's "Museum in the Streets," an entertaining, bilingual, self-guided tour that leads walkers along Main and Knox Streets, two roads listed on the National Historic Register. The details they contain offer glimpses into the parlors and bedrooms that people have called home for the better part of two centuries. The first such walking tour in the nation, the stories and vintage photos on these plaques go beyond explaining the town's architectural styles and pull back the curtains to expose the everyday lives of the shipbuilders, bankers, sailors, and quarry workers who built this community into what was once one of America's most significant maritime ports.

ONE sign located at the public landing bears a laminated image of the full-rigged ship *Samuel Watts*, taken in 1870, as she pulled away from the other wooden sailing ships being built on the Thomaston waterfront. Anyone glancing at it is immediately struck by what has changed here. But look closer and you'll see that the same stone navigational marker still stands in the St. George River, and boatsheds still line the shore. You notice how little has changed here in 200 years — and how much.

The Museum in the Streets focuses on a loose collection of properties hand-picked by the Thomaston Historical Society for their historical and architectural significance, as well as for the stories behind them. The rich details within these narratives are often as interesting as the houses themselves. Instead of just describing the history of the toll bridge over the St. George River, for example, the plaque there explains, "Some say that north of the bridge the first Indian trading post was established by the Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony in 1623." At Captain David Jenks' former Main Street residence, built in 1795 and originally used as a tavern, walkers are

While people taking the self-guided walking tour can start at any of the sites on it, a map of the itinerary is on the side of the Thomaston Café in the center of town, and folding maps are available in most local shops.

In addition to attracting visitors, the privately funded signs have proven popular with local residents and children, bringing Thomaston history to life for everyone who lives there.



told that despite being one of the oldest structures in town, its history is a bit hazy. "Depending on which history you read, the story changes," it says, disclosing that this walking tour takes on no scholarly airs. But a description of the 160 wood-fired limekilns that dotted the St. George riverfront in 1828 instantly sends your senses back 175 years, stating simply, "Imagine the smoke."

Thomaston's two-mile walking tour takes most amblers an hour or two and can be begun anywhere in town. A map is available in local shops and is also posted on the side of the Thomaston Café downtown. The plaques add a breezy introduction to the architecture of the homes that have been attracting savvy homebuyers to the town in recent years. Main Street's Ranlett-Gould House, for example, with its classic Greek Revival lines and ionic columns dating from 1849, stands as an anachronism to the modern SUVs and tractor-trailers that rumble past it on Route 1. Just steps away, tall maple trees on broad, sleepy Knox Street help shade former millionaire shipbuilder Samuel Watts' house, the largest in town, according to the plaque, and boasting a thirty-by-forty-foot front room large enough to swallow many modern homes (Watts built a home to "reflect his standing in the world," the sign says). Most of the ultraviolet-resistant plastic laminate plaques, which have a ten-year warranty and are mounted between two six-foot-tall posts, are positioned on the same side of the street and not directly in front of the house they're describing, but on town property beside the sidewalk across the road. They were deliberately placed both to protect homeowners' privacy and, in many cases, to allow walkers to stand precisely where the photographer stood when he captured the vintage photographs that adorn each sign.

The plaques themselves, though, are only part of the Museum in the Streets experience. Step back from the one marking the Ranlett-Gould House and you'll practically stumble into the front yard of a fine, and unmarked, 1840 example of the Federal style. Around the corner from a Knox Street plaque explaining the elaborate Italianate style of an 1854 home constructed by local builder James Overlock, with its sheltered side entrance and overly large porch brackets, sits a Queen Anne Victorian, its wrap-around deck and peaked rooflines pre-

(Continued on page 99)

THOMASTON, MAINE
THE MUSEUM IN THE STREETS

FROM TEACHING TO SHIP BUILDING

Robert Watts arrived in Thomaston from Ireland where he had been a teacher. After several years he changed his occupation to ship building, a much more lucrative profession. He had the Ranlett-Gould house built for his family in 1849. The first floor of the house is a wood-carved masterpiece. The large parlor on a prominent corner.

The white house originally had the same French wallpaper as the Ranlett-Gould house. Six years after they were purchased and professionally restored. The furniture from the living room and the wallpaper were added to the collection of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. The paper is a beautiful creation complete with designs of Greek, Roman, Egyptian and other motifs. The colors are vibrant and capture the essence of the high style of the Victorian era.

UN PROFESSEUR DEVENU ARMATEUR

Un jour, Robert Watts arriva à Thomaston après d'être professeur à l'école. Après plusieurs années, il changea d'occupation pour se consacrer à la construction navale, une profession beaucoup plus lucrative. La construction de sa maison fut destinée à sa famille. Construite en 1849, la façade est remarquablement soignée, elle est le produit d'un véritable art de la construction.

L'habitation a été restaurée et le papier peint original est en vente au Musée de l'Architecture de l'Université de Washington, D.C. Le papier est une belle création complète avec des motifs grecs, romains, égyptiens et autres. Les couleurs sont vives et captent l'essence de l'élégance de la haute mode victorienne.

**20 FROM TEACHING TO SHIP BUILDING
 UN PROFESSEUR DEVENU ARMATEUR**

Bienvenue à Thomaston

The Museum in the Streets is bilingual, curiously.

PERHAPS the most unusual aspect of Thomaston's walking tour is the complete French translation that accompanies the description on each plaque. When Patrick Cardon brought his concept of the Museum in the Streets to Thomaston's board of selectmen, he insisted the town adopt this bilingual style, a trademark of his European tours.

"Bilingualism is not an issue of language, it's an issue of tourism," Cardon explains, adding that the tours can also be used in foreign language classes. He insists on this bilingual component as a way to unite the plaques in all his tours. "It all has a similarity of image, regardless of where it's located," Cardon says. "In France, people relate to this as a product. Here, I want it to be a Maine product."

Although not everyone in town was enchanted with the notion of bilingual signage, Thomaston Town Manager Valmore Blastow, Jr., says the town ultimately chose French as a second language because of the

state's longtime relationship with French-Canadians.

For Luther Dawson, a longtime Thomaston resident and member of the town's historical society and library who helped dig up the information for the plaques, the bilingual component was a stretch. "I wasn't all that excited about the French at first, but I went along with it," Dawson says. "If we were up around Lewiston, I think we'd get more French-speaking people, but we don't get that many around here. But since the plaques were made in France and Patrick speaks French, it was almost a natural, and I'm not sure we could've gotten out of it."

Cardon says several of the Maine town managers he's consulted with about potential tours in their communities have expressed some concern with the tour's bilingual component, but he remains steadfast in his desire to have a second language represented, whether it's French or some other. "It raises an awareness that we're not all the same," he maintains.

Signs of the Times

(Continued from page 75)

sented an equally interesting, and yet unexplained, structure. It is as if the sites on the tour are not so much destinations, but rather waypoints to pique everyone's curiosity about all the people who built and lived in this lovely old shipbuilding town.

FOSTERING the community's own sense of pride in its heritage has been the driving force behind the Museum in the Streets program, according to Patrick Cardon, a resident of nearby Cushing who developed the concept. A former museum administrator, Cardon has established five similar walking tours in France and owns the trademark to the Museum in the Streets concept. "We started with a fairly glib statement: 'If people won't come to the museum, let's take the museum to the people,'" Cardon says. "The idea is to take the museum out of the museum, out of a building, and make people aware that where they live is a museum of its own."

As Cardon sees it, his Museum in the Streets helps bring Thomaston to life in ways that other tours cannot. "If you can find a guidebook, it's just a mute representation — it won't tell you what happened behind the doors and windows," he says. "This is not anonymous, it's about people: their lives, their part in history."

It is also the juxtaposition of old and new that brings Thomaston to life. Just a few steps from a plaque describing the congenial history of the side-by-side Baptist and Episcopal churches on Main Street, for example, a plastic lettered sign at the Masonic Temple advertises an upcoming five-dollar public supper (fish chowder). Even the impressive Ranlett-Gould House sports a satellite dish tucked away behind its porch, a modern amenity missing from the vintage photograph of Captain Ranlett's home. And you'll be hard-pressed to find any vinyl siding in Thomaston, but the town's true character is revealed as much in its imperfections as its renovations; the paint on many homes is peeling, and many have the trademark barn slowly seceding from the main house. These homes are and have always been lived in, and these flaws are simply wrinkles on their otherwise impressive facades, and they all contribute to the town's character.

Valmore Blastow, Jr., Thomaston's

town manager, says the tour helps both locals and tourists discover the town's rich history. "Thomaston is a historical community, so this kind of plays right into the make-up of the town," Blastow explains. "It's one of the few communities that have kept so many colonial structures intact along the Route 1 corridor, without them becoming commercialized."

"The tour gives you an instant peek into the community without doing a lot of research," he says. "You can just be passing through the town and take the tour and go away potentially knowing more about the town than someone who's lived here his whole life."

But it was a relatively new resident, the Algerian-born, Egypt-raised, and

Cardon says he has pitched his concept to other town managers around the state, hoping to set up two Museum in the Streets "trails" in Maine.

New York-educated Patrick Cardon who has brought Thomaston's sense of history to life. Born to a family of Suez Canal workers, Cardon, 55, immigrated to the U.S. when he was seventeen, eventually earning a doctorate in Egyptology from New York University and later serving as a museum administrator and independent museum consultant in France. Cardon fell in love with Maine after a landfall in Camden during the 1970s. He humbly admits he speaks "a fair number" of languages and still spends several months of the year at his home in the Loire Valley, but says the Cushing farm he purchased in 2000 is the spot he and his wife now call home.

After settling in Cushing, Cardon didn't waste much time in approaching Thomaston's selectmen, who enthusiastically approved his project, provided that funds for it could be raised privately. The Thomaston Historical Society and Thomaston Public Library agreed to help research and write the legends for the plaques. Cardon says gathering the \$21,000 needed to manufacture the series of plaques took only a few days, thanks to Fred Moon,

Cardon's brother-in-law and a fellow Cushing resident, and a generous gift from the midcoast's own credit-card giant and benefactor MBNA.

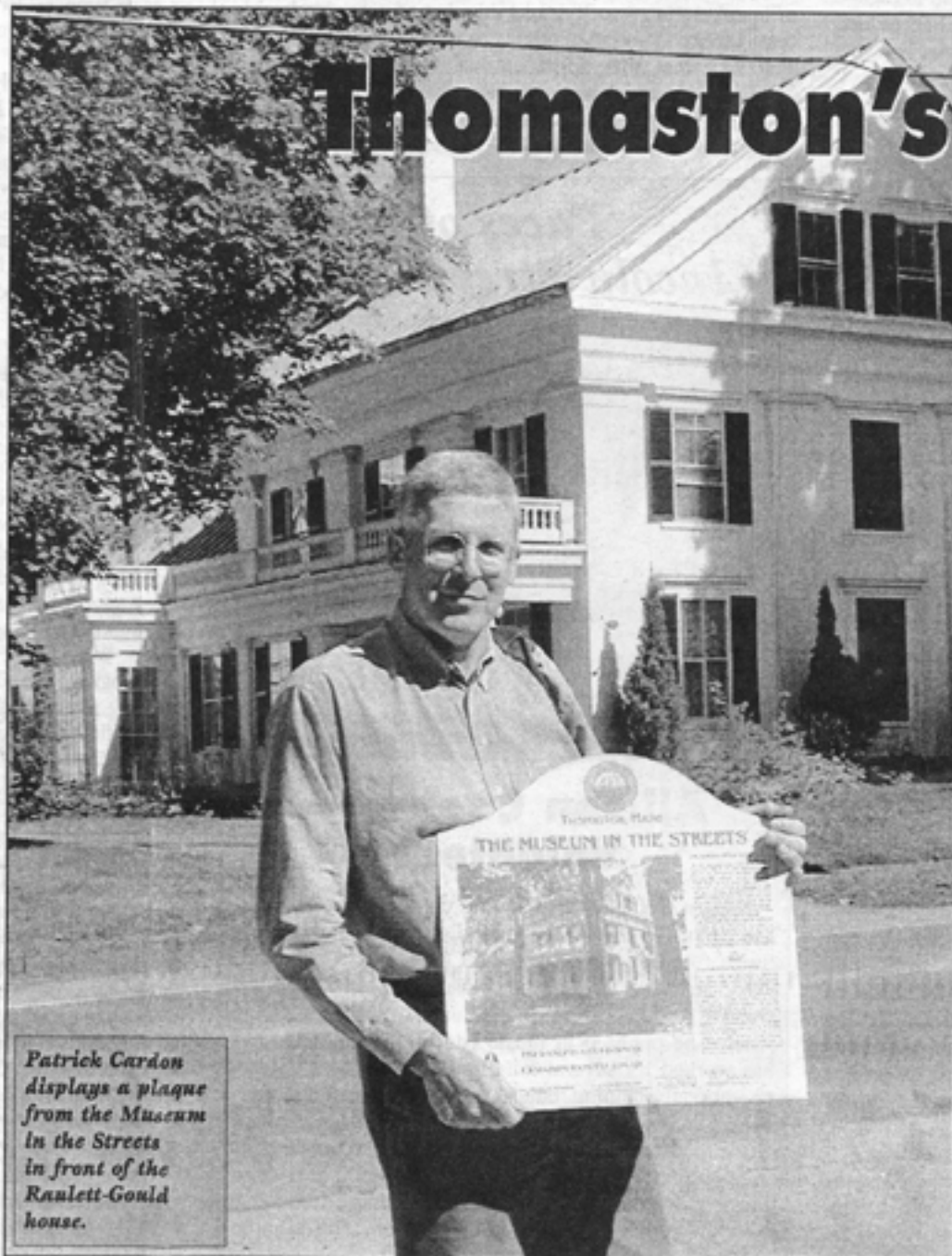
LUTHERA Dawson, who at ninety-two admits she was recommended to help with the history tour because "I'm so darned old I've lived through a lot of it," says the project's success has exceeded her expectations. More often than she anticipated, she reports, she is noticing groups of people huddled around the plaques. "Some people have seen the place and thought they'd come here someday," she says, "and now they're finally making it."

Cardon says he has pitched his concept to other town managers around the state, hoping to set up two Museum in the Streets "trails" in Maine: one going up the Kennebec River Valley through Augusta, Waterville, and Skowhegan, and the other along the coast, through Thomaston, Rockland, and Belfast. Most are excited about his idea, which would cost each town about \$10,000 to implement. An avid history buff ("In the absence of history, you end up living in the day-to-day," he says) who is completely smitten with Maine, Cardon shrugs off any suggestion he promotes the Museum in the Streets for profit. "I make some money, but I don't make a lot," he says. "If I wanted to make a lot of money it'd be franchised, and I don't want to do that because there's a quality that I really want to keep track of."

The real reward, Cardon says, is meeting local treasures like Lutheria Dawson. As enthusiastic as he is about developing these self-guided tours, the community involvement is key, and if one is cool to his idea (Camden's Planning Board rejected his proposal this spring, unable to squeeze the plaques within the town's rigid sign ordinance), he will not push the issue.

On the corner of Main and Robinson Streets, a plaque describing Captain Edward Robinson's home mentions that the side street was named to honor his widow, Penelope Fales Robinson. It's a detail made all the more interesting by also noting that for years locals insisted on calling it Penelope Lane, to emphasize that it honored a great woman, and not her husband.

With the Museum in the Streets, Thomaston honors both of them, plus so much more in this remarkable community. □



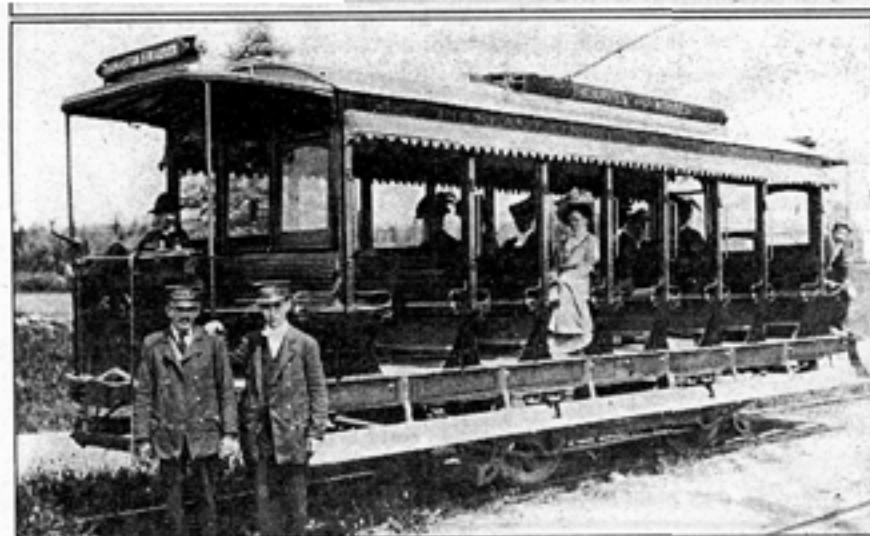
Patrick Cardon displays a plaque from the Museum in the Streets in front of the Raulett-Gould house.

Thomaston's Museum in the Streets

"If people won't come to the museum, let's take it to the people."

This statement by Patrick Cardon describes his unique approach to creating public interest in what museums and historical societies have to offer within their walls. Maine's first Museum in the Streets will open in Thomaston on Thursday, September 26, with a walk of the historic trail that features the town's history in pictures, starting at the Town Office on Knox Street at 2:45 p.m. A reception, hosted by Camden National Bank, will follow from 4 to 7 p.m.

The story behind The Museum in the Streets began in France, where Cardon lived in the Loire Valley for the past 10 years while working for the International Council of Museums, an advocacy and support group whose seat is at UNESCO. Cardon, who was born in France, lived in Egypt, and speaks Arabic, French and English, moved



Top: Early forms of transportation appear on Museum plaques, such as this Thomaston trolley.

Right: A brochure, available in Thomaston shops, shows a map of plaque locations.



to the United States at age 17 and, after undergraduate studies at College of Wooster and McGill University, received his doctorate in art history from New York University, with a specialty in Egyptology. For his degree he had to study ancient Egyptian. "Languages and history have always been my thing," says Cardon. Prior to his move to France, he worked at the Brooklyn Museum for 18 years, and his wife was employed by the Metropolitan Museum. All of Cardon's four daughters seem to be following in their parents' footsteps by studying art or art history, and one will be a new staff member at the Guggenheim Museum in Venice this fall, after spending the summer working at the Thomaston Café. The family recently relocated to Cushing and Cardon has found that his innovative approach to museum public relations translates very well to his new home.



In France, the first Museum in the Streets was started in the town of Pont Levoy, where the local historical society had a collection of old glass negatives but few people stopped in to see them. This, says Cardon, is a common problem: museums collect and store materials, but in general very few people go to museums and, once having been, rarely go back. So museums, in order to compete with films and television and get people in the doors, must change exhibits and advertise. But how do you get people interested in what museums are about?

Cardon reasoned that if museums started showing in the streets it would whet people's appetites and they would want to see more. Even if his idea didn't go well, he thought, it would have at least used the collection to teach people. But the idea worked. Shortly after the first Museum in the Streets opened in Pont Levoy, five other towns in the area wanted one. Cardon has since registered and protected his idea and, with Thomaston, has begun to acquaint Mainers with his concept.

In Thomaston, the Museum in the Streets consists of a series of 25 historic photographs featuring houses, trades, scenes of ship building, the early wooden buildings of the Maine State Prison, the old Knox Mansion. These photographs, taken from the historical society's archives, have been mounted on weatherproof resin plaques along with some history of the various sites and anecdotal materials. Two larger panels — one mounted near the Thomaston Café and the other located on the waterfront — give an overview of all the plaque locations. The information on the plaques is given in English and French, and Cardon feels the bilingual concept is important. His first signs, in Port Levoy, were also in English and French, so that Japanese tourists could read them, and it was decided that French was a good choice for a second language on the Thomaston plaques, as many French-Canadian tourists travel through this area.

Many people in a town must be involved before Cardon's projects get under way. Merchants are involved because the brochures showing the entire historical trail are only available in local shops. In Thomaston, Cardon first

went to the town office with his proposal and was sent to the library, schools and historical society, whose cooperation would also be needed. Cardon's feeling on these projects is, "I won't do it if the community doesn't want it." Eve and Olaf Andersen of the Thomaston Historical Society at first questioned Cardon's credentials; they were convinced of his *bona fides* only after he had talked with them extensively about the mummy collection in the Brooklyn Museum. Won over, they then came on board for the project.

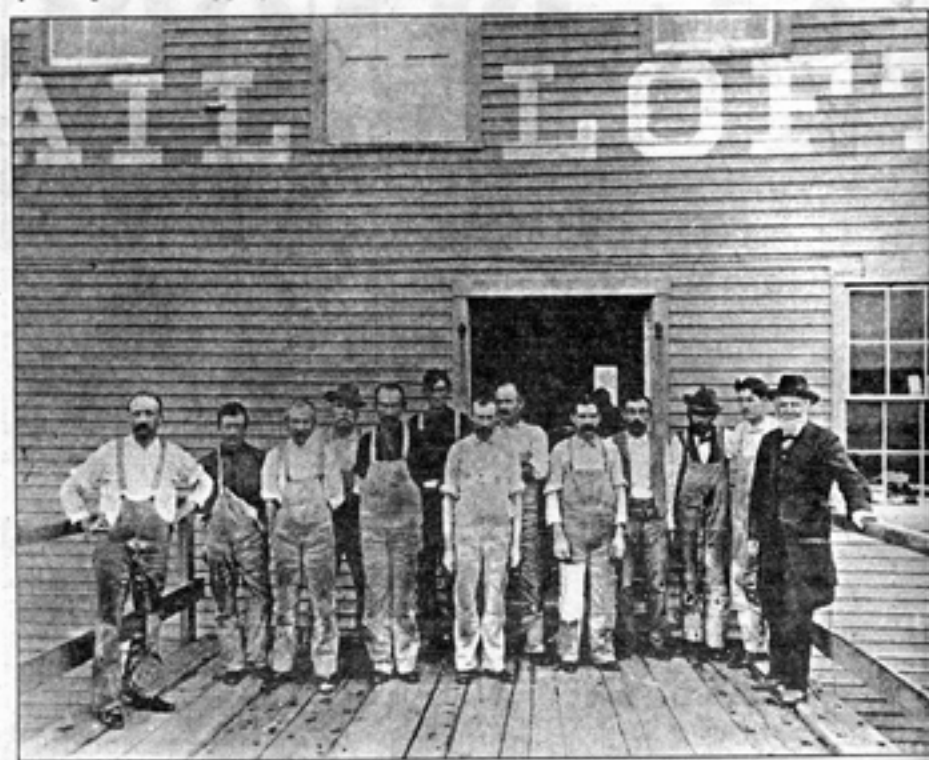
But even after Cardon presented his proposal to Thomaston selectmen at a town meeting and all approved, there was still fundraising to be done. Cardon helped the town by applying for a matching funds grant from MBNA. Four days later, he had the matching funds from Fred Moon, a private benefactor from Cushing. The Town of Thomaston pitched in by doing all the digging and hanging needed to install the plaques.

The plaques themselves are of museum quality and are guaranteed by their French manufacturer for six years. Cardon says he has been unable to find any manufacturer in the U.S. that would guarantee their work for more than two years. This has come as a surprise to Cardon, who, after living abroad for all these years, is used to the craftsmanship and quality of European manufacturers. He's also found that big manufacturers who are used to assembly-line work don't want to take on this type of small

job, so for now his French manufacturer is the only source for the plaques.

After Thomaston, Cardon plans to take the Museum in the Streets concept to other towns and cities in Maine, many of which are as rich in history as Thomaston. He's encouraged by the reception he had in Thomaston, although he wasn't always certain of his success. When he first outlined his proposal to Luthera Dawson, who is, at 93 years old, one of Thomaston's liveliest historians, she sat and looked at him for what seemed like a very long time, Cardon recalled, and he began to feel apprehensive. Finally, Dawson told him that in all the years she'd been around it was the best project she'd ever heard of. Cardon was so gratified by her approval that he remembers thinking, "Even if it doesn't fly, I'll still be flying."

— Georgette Davis



Employees of a former sail loft.

Thomaston takes to the streets

by Daniel Dunkle

THOMASTON — More than 50 people attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony Thursday for the new Museum in the Streets project, and the group could be seen walking down Knox Street, stopping to look at the houses of ship builders and captains.

"I encourage you to walk the streets of Thomaston today and see the town it was yesterday," said Luthera Dawson of Thomaston.

The Museum in the Streets, first proposed by Patrick Cardon of Cushing, is a series of signs providing historical information about the street or a particular house. The signs also provide photos of nearby buildings taken in the 1800s or early 1900s, allowing viewers to see what has changed over the years and what has stayed the same.

Cardon, originally from France, said he has posted these signs in several towns there. He said he plans to bring Museum in the Street signs to other communities including Rockland, Camden, Belfast, and possibly Portland.

The first official tour of the Museum in the Streets started with a few speeches in front of the town office at the corner of Knox and Main streets. Cardon told the spectators that he loves the history of Maine and that it is his dream to have these signs posted in Maine.

Following the speeches, Selectmen's Chairman Walter Breen cut the ribbon across Knox Street with help from Cardon, Town Manager Valmore Blastow, Montpelier — the General Henry Knox Museum trustee Renny Stackpole, and Eve Anderson of the Thomaston Historical Society. Then the tour of the signs along Knox Street began. The hour-long tour did not include all of the 25 signs



Leslie Ballin of Thomaston reads one of the new Museum in the Street signs on Knox Street in Thomaston Thursday. DANIEL DUNKLE

that stretch along Main Street, Knox Street, and parts of Water and High streets.

Most of the history on the tour is focused on the old houses of Thomaston, their owners, builders and architecture. Stackpole stopped in front of several houses and talked about their history, and about Thomaston's tradition in ship building.

The group stopped in front of the Davis Funeral Home that was once owned by Capt. Samuel Watts. Stackpole said Watts, who first went to sea at the age of 11, was one of the town's great rags to riches stories. The sign for the home says that Watts was not only the wealthiest man in the town, but the richest man in the country in 1840, citing a U.S. Census report. Three of the country's seven millionaires lived in Thomaston at the time, according to the sign, and all

three were ship builders.

People looked at houses built by James Overlock, who was a popular builder from 1840 to 1855.

A collective groan was heard when Thomaston tree warden Peter Lammert told the group that Dutch elm disease wiped out 447 trees in 1974, many of the which had been planted in 1876. He said only four survived, explaining that the disease is transmitted by a beetle that flies 700 feet and then gets tired. He said the few trees that survived were more than 700 feet away from the other elms.

Stackpole also pointed out the original location of Montpelier, Major-General Henry Knox's home in Thomaston, now the location of Lyman-Morse Boat Building Co. Stackpole pointed out that Thomaston is still known for its maritime trades, including yacht building. Knox

was George Washington's head of artillery during the American Revolution and Washington's first Secretary of War. The original Montpelier was torn down to make room for the railroad, Stackpole said.

Following the tour, residents attended a reception at Camden National Bank on Main Street that included refreshments.

The Museum in the Streets signs include information in both English and French.

The Museum in the Streets project was funded in part by a grant from MBNA and by Frederick Moon. Camden National Bank provided additional support for the printing of brochures, which are available at some Main Street businesses. The installation of the signs was organized by the Thomaston Public Library, the Thomaston Historical Society and the Thomaston town office.