

# Art & Artifact Self-Guided Tour



**PORTSMOUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY**

175 Parrott Avenue • Portsmouth, NH 03801 • 603-427-1540



**The Portsmouth Public Library** houses over 200 art and artifact objects that feature Portsmouth or were created or owned by local residents. Included in the collection are oil and watercolor paintings, sculptures, lithographs, and ceramics, among others. Many of these works are on display throughout the library.

We invite you to take the following tour of items currently on display. If you have questions about the items on view, please ask the Special Collection or Reference librarians.

This tour will take you throughout the building and directs you to use the main staircase. A wheelchair and walker are kept in the lobby and are available for use in the building. Our elevator is located next to the Circulation Desk on the first floor.

Requests for reproduction should be directed to the Special Collections librarian.



*The tour begins in the lobby where you will see our wall display cases that house objects given to the City by its residents. The cases were made possible by a generous gift from Merrilee J. Possner (1943-2007), Portsmouth resident and American folk-art expert. Temporary exhibits often feature items from our Special Collections. The following items are on permanent display:*

- Earthenware pot, Native American, possibly Catawba
- Clay figure from Japan
- Ceramic dishes, Chinese and Japanese origin dating from the Ch'ing Dynasty through the 19<sup>th</sup> c.
- Sake and water bottles, Chinese and Japanese
- Pair of cloisonné vases, China, Ch'ing Dynasty, Ch'ien-lung period, 1450-1456
- Powder jar and lid containing powder and puff

Many of these items were bequeathed to the Library by Portsmouth resident Theodora Lyman (1852-1942) in 1919.

*Proudly displayed in the middle of the cases is:*

**CELIA THAXTER** 19<sup>th</sup> century  
Attributed to Emil Otto Grundman (1844-1890)  
Oil on canvas  
[PPL-AA: 1989.46]

This 19<sup>th</sup> century portrait of the famous Celia Loughton Thaxter (1835-1894) was donated to the library in 1896 by her son Karl. Born in Portsmouth, Celia moved with her family to White Island, part of the Isles of Shoals, in 1839. She married Levi Thaxter in 1851 and together they moved to Massachusetts where she began her writing career and her family, giving birth to three sons. Celia returned to the Isles upon the death of her father in 1866 and she remained there, at least part of each year, for the rest of her life. This portrait was conserved in 2006 thanks to a generous grant

from the Rosamond Thaxter Foundation. (See separate informational bookmark for more details.)

*Make your way to the grand “Staircase to Enlightenment.” Hanging in the center of the rotunda is the Liberty Pole eagle sculpture suspended on a wrought iron hook:*

**EAGLE** ca.1824

Attributed to Laban Beecher (1805-1876)

Wood

[PPL-AA: 1993.6]

This historic eagle stood atop the town’s 110-foot Liberty Pole for nearly 150 years. The wooden eagle was moved to the Library in July of 1977. It sits on a suspended iron hanger crafted by Peter Happny, a local blacksmith. The eagle was conserved in 1978 and again in 2019 thanks to a grant from the Rosamond Thaxter Foundation.

The Liberty Pole was first erected in January 1766 to celebrate protest of the Stamp Act. Today, the pole can be found on Marcy Street near Prescott Park with a replica eagle atop. (See separate informational bookmark located by the portrait of Celia Thaxter for more details.)

*Climb the staircase to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and head to the right. On the wall just past the display case, you will see:*

**HOWARD JOHNSON’S RESTAURANT** 1947

Photograph

[PPL-AA: 2023.1]

Howard Johnson’s Restaurant was located at the intersection of Routes 1 and 16. It was originally built in 1940 where the NH Liquor & Wine Outlet is today. When the traffic circle was constructed, Howard Johnson’s moved across the street to where the Roundabout Diner now sits.

This framed photograph was gifted to Richard Hatch, a manager at Howard Johnson’s, by employees of the restaurant in 1976. Richard’s brother, Rodney, and his wife,

Mary, donated the photograph to the library in 2023.

*Walk along the wall and around the corner by the non-fiction section. On the walls between the windows overlooking the courtyard you first see a series of three prints by Stow Wengenroth. From right to left:*

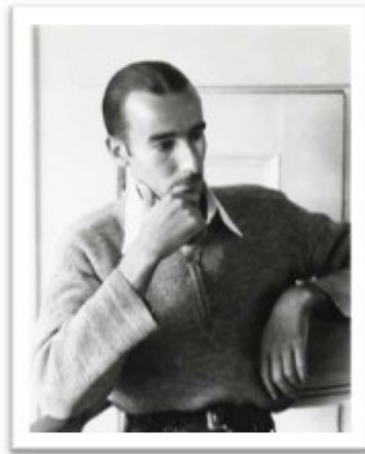
### **STOW WENGENROTH PRINTS**

Stow Wengenroth (1906-1978)

Lithographs

Stow Wengenroth was born in 1906 in New York City. He was drawn to New England where he mastered lithography using the natural landscape, harbors, and buildings as his subjects. He died in Gloucester in 1978.

These prints were a gift to the library from William G. Wendell, the great grandson of noted Portsmouth merchant, Jacob Wendell.



*Stow Wengenroth*  
1936, Peter A. Juley & Son Collection,  
Smithsonian American Art Museum  
Photograph courtesy of the Smithsonian  
American Art Museum

### **Fort Point Light, Newcastle** 20<sup>th</sup> century

[PPL-AA: 1993.11]

First built in 1771, this lighthouse is more commonly known as the Portsmouth Harbor Lighthouse. It was originally a hexagonal, wooden lighthouse erected on Fort Point, a mile from the mouth of the Piscataqua River. Sturdier



replacements were built in 1804 and again in 1878, though the location moved about 100 yards to the east, onto a rock close to the water's edge. The lighthouse has remained on that rock since and continues to operate as part of the Fort Constitution Historic Site.

### **Warner House 1962**

[PPL-AA: 1993.9]

View from Daniel Street. The Warner House was built in 1716 by Captain Archibald Macpheadris. Today it is the oldest brick house in Portsmouth. The house is named for Jonathan Warner, a wealthy merchant, a member of the King's Council, and the son-in-law of Capt. Macpheadris. The Warner House Association commissioned this lithograph.

### **Wendell House 1959**

[PPL-AA: 1993.10]

Located at the corner of Pleasant and Edward Streets. The house was built in 1789 by Jeremiah Hill and named after Jacob Wendell who purchased the home in 1816. This lithograph was printed in January, 1959 after being commissioned by William G. Wendell.

*The next piece you will see along the wall is one you can interact with!*

### **BORDERLANDS 2004**

Poet: Lesley Gaudreau

Eco-Artist: Tim Gaudreau

Poetry Wheel: wood, painting, poetry

[PPL-AA: 2004.1]

This collaborative, interactive work of art was part of "Voice and Vision," a project of the Portsmouth Poet Laureate Program, established in 1997. Chosen Poet Laureates spearhead projects that encourage a love of poetry in the community. "Voice and Vision" was one such project created by John Perrault, Poet Laureate from 2003–2005. He paired poets with artists to create works of art that are now on

display throughout the town. Borderlands was gifted to the library by the artists.

*On the wall at the end of this wing, just past the **tall non-fiction section**, is a carving believed to provide serenity:*

### **KYLIN WOOD CARVING**

Artist unknown  
Wood, lacquer, brass  
[PPL-AA: 1989.12]

The Kylin, or Qilin, or Kirin (Japanese and Korean) is a mythical, hooped, Chinese chimerical creature known throughout various East Asian cultures. It is said to appear in conjunction with the arrival of a sage. It is a good omen that brings *rui* (roughly translated as "serenity" or "prosperity") and is often depicted with what looks like fire all over its body.

Bequeathed to the Library in 1919 by Theodora Lyman.

*Walk back to the **Information Desk** in the Reference area and turn to the right. On the shelf above the travel guides, you will be greeted by:*

### **BRONZE INCENSE BURNER** ca. 19<sup>th</sup> century

Likely Chinese  
Bronze  
[PPL-AA: 1989.19a-c]

Fo Dogs take their name from the Chinese term for Buddhism, *fojiao*, but are also known as 'Fu Lions,' a homonym based on the Chinese word 'Fu' meaning luck or prosperity.

This was a 1919 bequest to the Library by Theodora Lyman.



*Turn to your left and look above the computers to see (right to left):*

### **PORTRAIT OF JAMES T. FIELDS** 1849

George D'Almaine (1807-1892)

Pastel on paper

[PPL-AA: 1989.30]

James T. Fields (1817-1881) was a Portsmouth native who served for nine years as the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*. Fields married twice: first, in 1850, to Eliza Willard who died soon after, and secondly, in 1854, to Annie Adams, Eliza's cousin. His death notice, appearing in the *Portsmouth Herald*, reports that Fields took tea with Celia Thaxter shortly before he died on a Sunday in April, 1881. This portrait, a pastel, was presented to the library by the Mercantile Library Association.

### **ASSEMBLAGE OF JAMES T. FIELDS DOCUMENTS**

[PPL-AA: 1994.1]

Two letters, Harvard diploma, photograph.

### **PORTRAIT OF JOHN CONLON** 1896

Ulysses D. Tenney (1826-1904)

Oil on canvas

[PPL-AA: 1989.29]

John Conlon (1834-1894) moved to Portsmouth from Albany, N.Y. to accept a position at the Frank Jones Brewery. Nine years later he opened a grocery store on Penhallow Street which he ran for 26 years. He was a member of the County Committee and served as Alderman, Assessor of Taxes, and Representative to the State Legislature. His portrait was painted by Portsmouth artist, Ulysses D. Tenney, who had a studio on Court Street in the late 1880s. Tenney is noted for the portraits he painted of New Hampshire governors.

*Walk around the Information Desk and into the Printing/Copying/Study Room. The room to the left is **Study Room 1**. (This room is often booked for use by local groups or individuals. Please do not enter if the room is in use.) Enter or peek in and you will find:*



## **AERIAL VIEW OF PORTSMOUTH AND KITTERY 1986**

Photograph from slide

[PPL-AA: 2019.1]

This large image shows the Piscataqua River as it divides Maine from New Hampshire. Piscataqua comes from the Abenaki words for “branch” and “river with a strong current.” Originating at the junction of the Salmon Falls and Cocheco Rivers, the Piscataqua flows eastward where it divides Portsmouth from Kittery before emptying into the Gulf of Maine.

*Exit the printing area and turn to the right. Just above the computers, you'll see a row of bright paintings. From right to left:*

## **NORTH END OF PORTSMOUTH 1972**

David T. Atwater (b. 1901)

Acrylic on canvas

[PPL-AA: 1989.22]

This colorful painting was completed from the steps of the old library on Islington Street. The artist, Reverend David T. Atwater, depicts North End houses as they are moved across town. Atwater studied at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington before becoming rector at Grace Church in Brooklyn. He gifted this piece to the library.



## **STRAWBERRY BANKE 1940**

Roy Greenaway (1891-1972)

Oil on canvas

[PPL-AA: 1989.40]

Roy Greenaway was a reporter for the Toronto Star, a member of the Ontario Society of Artists and the Canadian Royal Academy of art, and a frequent summer visitor to Portsmouth and the library. As reported in the Portsmouth Herald June 19, 1958, this painting was done from the Isles



of Shoals Wharf in 1940 and given to the library by the artist in May 1958.

This painting was conserved in 2010 thanks to a grant from the Rosamond Thaxter Foundation.

### **ST. JOHN'S CHURCH 1961**

R. King

Oil on canvas

[PPL-AA: 1993.17]

St. John's Episcopal Church as it is known today was built in 1807 and designed by architect Alexander Parris. It stands at the top of Bow Street and overlooks the Piscataqua River. In 1871, the church began renting out its basement to a local brewery who stored their beer a story below the country's oldest working pipe organ. The churchyard was purposefully elevated to allow entrance to the tombs from street level.



Enter the **Special Collections Room**. To your right, above the podium with the sign-in book:

### **TIDE AND TIME CLOCK 2007**

Chelsea Clock

Bronze

[PPL-AA: 2007.1]



This bronze clock was gifted to the Library by Pamela Keene and family, in memory of her niece, Katie Mills, and in honor of her mother, Janice Flahive Mills.

The clock was made by Chelsea Clock, clockmakers in Chelsea, MA since 1897. The inscription at the top of the clock is an excerpt from the poem "Sea Fever" by English Poet Laureate John Masefield:



---

"I must go down to the seas again,  
for the call of the running tide  
is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied" ...

John Masefield

---



*Just above the old card catalog, you will find this portrait:*

**MARY YEATON** ca. 1805

Artist thought to be George Dame

Oil on canvas

[PPL-AA: 1989.43]

Mary Yeaton (1772-1852) was the only daughter of Captain Hopley Yeaton and Comfort Marshall Yeaton. Her father was the first captain of the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service, known today as the U.S. Coast Guard. Hopley Yeaton is often referred to as the "father" of the U.S. Coast Guard. Ms. Yeaton married William Sawyer of Wakefield, N.H. in 1804. This portrait was bequeathed by Mrs. Thurlow Gordon Sr., granddaughter of Mary Yeaton.

*Outside of the Special Collections vault door:*

**BUST OF NAPOLEON**

Marble

[PPL-AA: 1989.49]

The marble bust of Napoleon rests on a marble pedestal with a swivel platform. It is likely a replica of a piece by Antonio Canova (1757-1822). According to a report by Dorothy Vaughan, it is believed this bust came from the Borghese Palace in Rome, or, more likely, was created in the likeness of a sculpture from the palace.

A plaque on the pedestal reads, "The Gift of Thomas P. Salter." Salter was a successful businessman from Portsmouth who spent most of his life in New York City, but returned to his hometown a decade before his death in 1907.

*To the right of the windows:*

### **JEREMIAH MASON**

Artist unknown  
Plaster  
[PPL-AA: 1989.51]

A plaster bust of Jeremiah Mason (1768–1848), the son of Revolutionary Col. Jeremiah Mason. The younger Mason earned a law degree from Yale College before moving to Portsmouth to practice law in 1797. He served as Attorney General of New Hampshire until 1805, was elected to the U.S. Senate by the Federalist Party, and was also a member of the New Hampshire House of Representatives. In 1832 he returned to Boston where he spent the remainder of his life.



*Exit Special Collections by the magazine/newspaper racks. Follow the hall to the end, take a left, then a right. You will see the **MacLeod Board Room**. In this room you will find the following (please ask a librarian to view these works up close as this room is kept locked unless a meeting is underway):*

### **PORTRAIT OF ADMIRAL DAVID G. FARRAGUT**

Ulysses Dow Tenney (1826-1908)  
Oil on canvas  
[PPL-AA: 2022.3]

Admiral David G. Farragut (1801-1870) was at one time the highest ranking official in the US Navy and the first Hispanic 4-star admiral. He was stationed at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard when he died in 1870. The portrait was done by Ulysses D. Tenney, a noted Portsmouth portrait



painter. The local Storer Post of the Grand Army of the Republic gifted this to the Portsmouth Schools in 1891.

### **MERCHANT SHIP “FRANK JONES”**

William P. Stubbs (1842-1909)

Oil on canvas

[PPL-AA: 1989.21]

This painting of the Frank Jones was done by Boston maritime painter, W.P. Stubbs, and the original ship was built by Daniel Marcy in 1874. It is considered the last of the large merchant vessels

built in Portsmouth.

On its maiden journey from San Francisco Bay to Manila, the Frank Jones shipwrecked close to the Golden Gate Bridge. It was sold at auction the very next day for \$4,750.



Frederick Melcher donated this piece to the library in 1950 in memory of Daniel Melcher (1799-1874). Frederick was the editor of *Publisher's Weekly* and a descendent of John Melcher, publisher of the *New Hampshire Gazette* in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

*Walk straight out the door, heading towards the stairs, and stop to notice the two busts and a portrait along the windowsill to your right. Closest to the MacLeod Boardroom, you'll see:*

### **BUST OF ICHABOD GOODWIN 1860**

Attributed to Henry Dexter (1806-1876)

Marble

[PPL-AA: 1989.50]

This is a marble bust by Henry Dexter of New York who sculpted a series of busts of US governors in the late 1850s. Ichabod Goodwin (1794-1882) served as the governor of



New Hampshire from 1859-1861. The Goodwin Family donated this bust to the library in the early 1900s.

*On the wall above the table you'll see:*

### **LOTTE JACOBI**

James D. Lincoln (1933-2022)

Photograph

[PPL-AA: 1993.18]

Johanna Alexandra (Lotte) Jacobi (1896–1990) was a German photographer who immigrated to the United States to escape Nazi Germany. Born in Thorn, Prussia (now Poland), she spent parts of her life in Berlin, New York City, and New Hampshire. She photographed such people as Albert Einstein, Marc Chagall, Eleanor Roosevelt, Alfred Stieglitz, and J.D. Salinger. Jacobi continued to photograph through the early 1980s. She died in her home in Deering in 1990. Her papers are housed at the University of New Hampshire.

J.D. Lincoln was a photographer and the author of *People of Portsmouth and Some Who Came to Town* (1982). He was born in Massachusetts, but settled in the Portsmouth area. Lincoln worked for the *Boston Globe* and taught children's photography classes at the Prescott Park Arts Festival. He donated the photograph of Lotte Jacobi to the library around 1974.

*Closer to the stairs is:*

### **BUST OF GEORGE WASHINGTON**

Marble

[PPL-AA: 1989.45]

This is a 19th century marble sculpture by an unknown artist. While it is possible that this sculpture is made of Carrera marble and is from the San Georgio Gallery in the Borghese Palace in Rome, it is more likely a reproduction. It was bequeathed to the library in 1899 according to an article in the *Portsmouth Herald*. A report from Dorothy Vaughn, former Head Librarian, states the bust was presented by George F. Towle, a captain of the 4th New

Hampshire Volunteers.

*Follow the stairs back down. Head towards the Circulation Desk and walk just past it to the wall between the elevator and the desk. There you will see a framed photograph of our own Library building:*

**PORTSMOUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY 2016**

Thomas L. Lavoie (b. 1951)

Photograph

[PPL-AA: 2017.2]

This photograph was created as part of an exhibition entitled, "Views of PPL," for the library's 10th Building Anniversary in the fall of 2016. It was gifted to the library by Jodi Frechette.



Thomas L. Lavoie has been a photographer on the Seacoast since the early 2000s. He first began experimenting with cameras while traveling across Europe as a professional trumpet player. Since then, he has shot weddings and ads as well as portraits and fine art. Lavoie teaches photography at Granite State College and is a member of The NH Art Association and the photography advisory board for R.W. Creteau Regional Technology Center in Rochester, NH.

*Turn around and walk into the café area. The courtyard is currently closed, but through the window you can see the following piece:*

**BUST OF DAVID F. MAHONEY 2007**

Richard Creighton (b. mid-1950s)

Bronze

[PPL-AA: 2007.3]

David F. Mahoney (1925-2001) was the president of Granite State Minerals of Portsmouth, a local company which he founded in the 1950s. He was interested in many local organizations such as the Boy Scouts of America, Portsmouth's V.F.W. Post 168, and the Propeller Club. The bust is placed in the library's courtyard which was funded by a donation from Granite State Minerals.

The artist, Richard J. Creighton, is a Professor Emeritus of Art and Design at UMass. His experience is in metal fabrication and other sculpture mediums. His works have been exhibited in numerous shows both locally and nationally. Gift of the Mahoney family in memory of David F. Mahoney.

*Exit the café and head to the right, into the Youth Department. Walk past the Youth desk and see on the wall above the audio CDs:*

### **ILLUSTRATIONS FROM OCEAN-BORN MARY**

Lois Lenski (1893-1974)

Pen and ink

[PPL-AA: 1989.55-58]

These four pieces are original illustrations from *Ocean-Born Mary*, written and illustrated by Lois Lenski. Lenski gifted these pieces to the library out of gratitude to Dorothy Vaughan who assisted with research for the book. One of the pieces notes that the donation was during "Book Week" in 1944.



Lois Lenski was a prolific children's book author and illustrator, having over 98 works published. Her book *Strawberry Girl* was awarded the Newbery Medal in 1945. *Ocean-Born Mary* was published in 1939 and is based on a New England folktale that tells the story of a Scottish immigrant named Mary Wilson Wallace.

*Walk back into the lobby and exit through the main doors. Turn to your right. In the landscaping bed:*

### **WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL 2004**

Syphers Monument Co.

Granite and bronze

[PPL-AA: 2006.1]

**"REMEMBERING THOSE WHO MADE THE SUPREME SACRIFICE"**

This memorial was a gift to the City of Portsmouth from the Portsmouth High School Class of 1940. Funds for the memorial were raised in 2001 through a production of the play, "With Love."

The first five names on the bronze plaque are the five men from the 1940 graduating class who lost their lives during World War II. The 68 other names are men from Portsmouth who also died during the war. The fallen were honored at the memorial's dedication in Goodwin Park in June, 2004. The monument was moved to the new Library upon the building's completion in 2006.



Donated on behalf of the Portsmouth High School Class of 1940 by Elaine Hussey.

*Follow the walkway a few feet towards the road and you'll see our next two pieces on the lawn in front of the building:*

## TERI WEIDNER DAHLEN MEMORIAL 2020

Thomas Berger  
Granite  
[PPL-AA: 2020.2]

This bunny carved from white granite was erected in 2020 in memory of local children's author and illustrator Teri Weidner Dahlen (1963-2019). The bunny design is based on one of Teri's illustrations as bunnies were known to be her favorite thing to draw.

German-born sculptor Thomas Berger is known for his representation of the natural world in his works.



Given in memory of Teri Weidner Dahlen by her friends and family and in particular Tess Feltes, Lin Albertson Thorpe, and Chris Dahlen.

## BENCH 2010

Seacoast Memorials  
Granite  
[PPL-AA: 2010.1]

This bench is inscribed, "In Loving Memory of Cyrus and Edna Wardwell." The Wardwells were a Portsmouth couple who were married for 78 years. They began their married life in 1931 in West Paris, Maine. After living in several places, they returned to the area and settled in Portsmouth when Cyrus was 87 years old. His daughter is quoted to say, "When they lived in Portsmouth, Dad came to the library every week and got books for them to read."

Given in memory of Cyrus and Edna Wardwell by their daughter, Carolyn Dow.

*Continue to follow the walkway around the building. In the back of the library, you will find our **garden**. Behind the raised beds,*



*you will see one final piece:*

### **SUN WHEEL SCULPTURE 2007**

Don Drumm

Metal

[PPL-AA: 2007.2]

This free-standing, flat cutout of a gleeful sun is made of oxidized metal. It was a gift of Worldly Goods (closed in 2013), in conjunction with a donation to name a study room in the memory of John and Doris Holden. Given by their sons David M., William S., and Peter B. Holden.



This concludes the Portsmouth Public Library Art & Artifacts Tour. Thank you for taking the tour and enjoying all of the wonderful art the library has to offer!

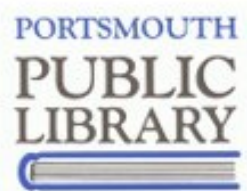
If you have any questions regarding anything that you have viewed, please do not hesitate to ask the Special Collections or Reference Librarians.

If you have any information about the history or provenance of any of these items, we ask that you share it with a library staff member! Thank you!

Join us for a  
**BEHIND-THE-SCENES ART TOUR**

Catch a glimpse of the library's hidden artwork as we tour staff spaces throughout the building. Check our calendar for the next tour date. Meet in the lobby by Celia Thaxter's painting.

Contact Katie Czajkowski at 766-1723 or [fczajkowski@cityofportsmouth.com](mailto:fczajkowski@cityofportsmouth.com) for more info!



**Portsmouth Public Library**

175 Parrott Avenue

Portsmouth, NH 03801

(603) 427-1540

[www.cityofportsmouth.com/library](http://www.cityofportsmouth.com/library)