

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

**MYSTIC
SEAPORT
MUSEUM**





A MESSAGE FROM PETER ARMSTRONG | PRESIDENT

Please enjoy the 2020 Annual Report of the Mystic Seaport Museum. The year 2020 was like none we have experienced in our lifetimes. Where possible within the Report, we have tried to highlight the dramatic effect that COVID-19 has had on the Museum and our thoughts remain with our colleagues and friends who suffered its effects personally. As we emerge from the pandemic, I commend the Museum staff and Board of Trustees, under the able stewardship of retiring President Stephen C. White, for holding the Museum steady throughout this tumultuous year. From the day the Museum closed to the public, to the gradual reopening under skeletal staffing, the Museum has survived this crisis remarkably intact thanks to their astute guidance.

Taking on the mantle of leadership at this interesting time is, to say the least, both challenging and exciting. Although I have been here since December and am eager to make a difference, I recognize that now is not the time for great change, but the time to care for one another – our staff, volunteers, donors, community and our beloved Museum – as we recover from our losses and slowly return to a sense of normalcy. I envision a Mystic Seaport Museum poised to regain its momentum, welcome summer visitors, and adjust its operations to ensure future sustainability and relevance. It would be foolish to believe that we can return to the previous status quo. Instead, we can set a new course forward that will build on our rich history while developing a plan for future success that is inclusive, visitor-focused, and financially viable. With that in mind, I have initiated a central review of how the Museum impacts our audiences, tasking each department across the organization with examining how their work aligns with the Museum's central purpose in an effort to build efficiencies and streamline activities to more strategically align with that purpose.

The year 2021 holds promise for Mystic Seaport Museum. Restrictions are beginning to lift and, barring another surge, we will have a fully active campus this summer. The post-COVID world will be forever different, but I believe the lessons we have learned may benefit us all.

The dynamic line-up of exhibitions and programs in 2021, along with the TLC we have invested in the Museum during the colder months, will allow Mystic Seaport Museum to reimagine the potential of its collections and move from being a place of nostalgia and retrospection to a progressive arena where culture and science intersect with the sea. A living space for new audiences, the Museum will embrace its foremost commission as common ground, welcoming diverse voices and perspectives in dialogue and interchange around the fundamental questions and challenges of our American maritime experience.

I am excited by what the future holds and honored to be Mystic Seaport Museum's president.

Sincerely Yours,
Peter Armstrong

A MESSAGE FROM MICHAEL S. HUDNER | CHAIRMAN AND CEO

As I write to you, it has been more than a year since we had to close the Museum to the public, from March 13 to Memorial Day weekend. The shutdown happened two weeks after the end of the successful J.M.W. Turner exhibition, which received large crowds and widespread recognition from the likes of *The Wall Street Journal* and National Public Radio. The Museum team planted a flag on the summit of Mt. Turner and looked for more ranges to climb. Then, all was swept off the summit by the avalanche of COVID-19. President Steve White, who had just announced his intention to retire, rallied the troops and worked through the difficult process of reducing operations as part of the closure. The remaining staff was magnificent in taking on an enhanced workload. They developed strategies to offer a worthwhile experience despite greatly reduced levels of activity, and planned and implemented a phased re-opening. One of the highlights was the powerful attraction of a boat ride on the Mystic River. Visitors flocked to the Boathouse where eighteen different vessels were waiting to take people on the water! Let's see more of that.

It was a challenging year with no alternative but to face a workforce reduction commensurate with closure and the pandemic restrictions that allowed only a partial re-opening. The remaining core staff redoubled their efforts to assure that the families, couples, singles, and "pods" who did come had an interesting, enjoyable, and safe experience along the beautiful bank of the Mystic River. The long-planned exhibition schedule was inescapably disrupted in 2020 and beyond. Despite that, the Thompson Exhibition Building opened the exhibition *A Way with Wood*, celebrating maritime craft through live, interactive demonstrations of boat building and restoration. While attendance was off by 65%, our contributed revenue was solid thanks to the incredible generosity of our donors. The Annual Fund set a record, the Era of Exhibitions Campaign was successfully completed, and the *America and the Sea Award* Gala, though held virtually, was a great success. We are deeply grateful for your support.

The year began with Steve White announcing that, after eleven years at the helm, he wished to retire. The Board of Trustees held a special meeting to plan for the search processes and agreed to approach the effort with an openness to the changes that Steve's successor would bring. Sadly, we said goodbye to another remarkable leader this year. After 40 years, Susan Funk, Executive Vice President, announced her retirement last summer. Her extraordinary contributions shaped this institution and we are deeply grateful.



Carved wooden hippocampus (sea horse) currently on display in the *Figureheads & Shipcarvings* exhibit in the Wendell Gallery.

COVID-19 arrived in March, and proved to be the change agent of all time. The need to contend with the exigencies of operating – even existing – under COVID-19 conditions was quite a challenge operationally, organizationally, financially and, in a meaningful way, morally. Despite occasional angst, it has been a beautiful thing to see how much has been re-thought, re-imagined, and enhanced in terms of the visitor experience and the depth and quality of activities and exhibitions. All of us associated with the Museum can be proud of that connection. The passion of the entire Mystic Seaport Museum family for this place is one of the Museum's greatest assets and is palpable to all.

The Executive Search Committee gathered a strong pool of candidates and concluded in late November with the appointment of Peter Armstrong, who hit the ground running in mid-December. His arrival allowed Steve and Maggie White to enjoy a well-deserved uninterrupted Christmas, along with our profound thanks and appreciation for all the achievements of the past twelve years! Also in December, Christina Connett Brophy joined as SVP of Curatorial Affairs and Senior Director of Museum Galleries. Both Peter and Christina are seasoned museum professionals with substantial operating, marketing, and curatorial experience. Their impact is being felt as the Museum reimagines and optimizes its ways of connecting with visitors, creating a sense of place in their minds, generating reasons to visit and take in the natural beauty of this special environment along with the historic watercraft and intriguing exhibits and events. The highly dynamic process of connecting to a new and expanding public happens in part through digital and social media marketing, as well as visitor data analysis.

An exciting program of exhibitions and events rolls out starting this spring to include the continuation of the Henry Luce Foundation funded exhibitions, as well as a major Mellon Foundation funded initiative. In collaboration with Brown University and Williams College, the Museum will undertake two years of research into our collection followed by an exhibition in 2023.

All in all, 2020 was a year of great challenges that were met by remarkable and successful responses. The Mystic Seaport Museum family of stakeholders really rose to the occasion. As with the restoration of the *Charles W. Morgan* several years ago, we will honor the old while adding the new and hope to see you all as often as possible along the banks of the Mystic River this summer and beyond!

Heartfelt thanks for your continuing support,
Mike Hudner

2020: A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER



VOLUNTEERS

455 volunteers
14,943 volunteer hours in 2020

VISITORS AND MEMBERS

113,641 visitors through our gate in 2020

504,021 unique visitors to the website in 2020

16,165 new users on our stories blog which served as our Digital Museum

Delivered 42 non-Education Department virtual programs that reached more than 2,200 households

10,334 member households

EDUCATION

Educated more than 6,600 students with virtual programs

Developed 21 virtual field trips for students

Completed 10 weeks of healthy, safe, and fun summer camps – both land-based Summer Day Camps and our Community Sailing Summer Camp



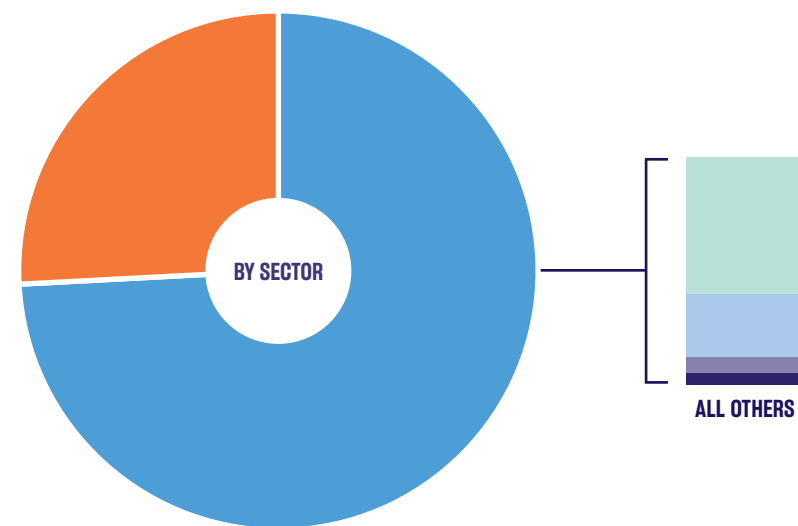
COLLECTIONS & RESEARCH

2020 was an extremely busy year for the Collections Department at Mystic Seaport Museum. In all, the Museum acquired more than 10,000 pieces, including paintings, trophies, postcards, photographs, papers, charts, ships plans and other items.

Among these acquisitions was an extraordinary collection of early 20th century ocean liner material numbering over 7,500 pieces that included:

- a painting of the *Titanic* survivors in lifeboats heading to the rescue ship *Carpathia* by influential American impressionist Colin Campbell Cooper,
- a letter written aboard the *Titanic* on *Titanic* letterhead on the day of her departure,
- objects belonging to the *Titanic*'s radioman and engineers, and
- a medal from "Unsinkable" Molly Brown given to the captain and crew of the *Carpathia* in appreciation for her rescue from the sinking ship.

COMPREHENSIVE FUNDRAISING (amounts in '000s)



CONTRIBUTED REVENUE BY SECTOR: \$7 MILLION

\$7 million represents Gifts, Grants, Bequests and Membership revenue raised in 2020 for purposes with restrictions and without restrictions.

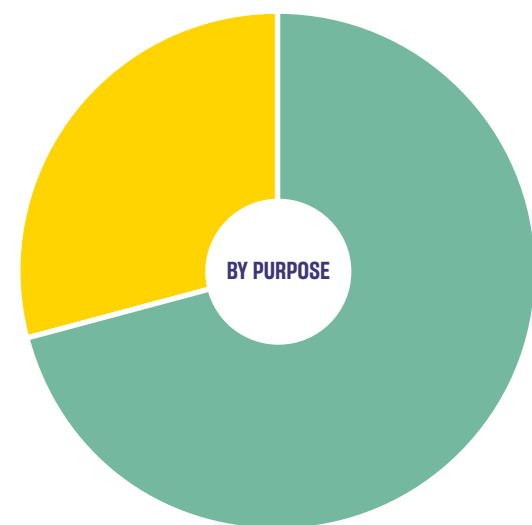
TRUSTEES	\$1,820	26%
ALL OTHERS	\$5,180	74%

ALL OTHERS BROKEN DOWN

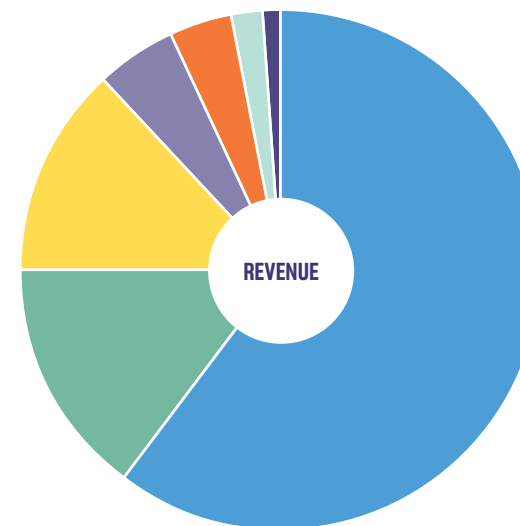
INDIVIDUALS	\$3,143	45%
FOUNDATIONS	\$1,435	21%
CORPORATIONS	\$333	5%
GOVERNMENT	\$269	4%

CONTRIBUTED REVENUE BY PURPOSE

WITHOUT RESTRICTIONS	\$4,944	71%
WITH RESTRICTIONS	\$2,056	29%



FINANCIALS FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2020 (amounts in '000s)



MUSEUM OPERATING REVENUE

GIFTS, GRANTS AND BEQUESTS	\$6,581
GATE ADMISSIONS	1,578
PROGRAM FEES	1,339
RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICE	534
MEMBERSHIP	407
MISCELLANEOUS	180
SALE OF PUBLISHED MATERIAL, VIDEO AND FILM	86
TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	<u>\$10,705</u>

MUSEUM OPERATING EXPENSES

GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE	\$4,123
WATERCRAFT	3,404
VISITOR EXPERIENCE	3,085
CURATORIAL, LIBRARY AND PUBLICATIONS	2,212
FUNDRAISING	1,524
EDUCATION	1,180
COMMUNICATIONS	603
MUSEUM STORES	380
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	<u>16,511</u>
OPERATING LOSS	<u>\$(5,806)</u>

INVESTMENT INCOME*

ENDOWMENT BALANCE AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2020

**Unrealized gains on investments were \$5.9 million*

JANUARY–FEBRUARY 2020

- Record crowds turn out for the *J.M.W. Turner: Watercolors from Tate* exhibit
- Turner exhibition closes on 2/23/20

MARCH

- COVID-19
- Museum closes temporarily to the public on 3/13/20
- Most staff begin to work from home
- MSM engages with audience via virtual content, added to the website

DURING CLOSURE

- All activity throughout the Museum is stopped or reduced
- Membership staff remain onsite, processing renewals, and communicating with Members
- Collections are maintained carefully through daily onsite inspections
- Staff are required to wear masks, social distance and adhere to capacity guidelines

APRIL

- Not knowing when things will return to “normal,” a major staff layoff takes effect
- All remaining staff take a significant salary reduction
- MSM brings the Museum and our collections to homes and offices via a “Digital Museum” with behind the scenes content, tutorials and lectures. Education, Membership and Advancement launched virtual events through Zoom and YouTube

MAY

- The Annual Members’ Meeting is held virtually for the first time ever
- Treworgy Planetarium 60th birthday celebration
- Reopening! Visitors are welcomed back, with free entry, to enjoy a safe experience limited to outdoor spaces (beginning 5/23/20 with free entry and shifting to reduced entry fees for the next 12 months)

JUNE

- Community sailing camps and summer day camps continue, adhering to strict COVID restrictions
- Visitors are offered free rentals of rowboats, sailboats and pedal boats, and tours aboard *Liberty*
- Dock visitors are welcomed back
- Exhibition installation in full swing

THE MUSEUM’S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

At Mystic Seaport Museum, 2020 began with people from all over the world lining up to see *J.M.W. Turner: Watercolors from Tate*. But just weeks after the exhibition ended, the Museum was forced to close to the public as Connecticut and the world faced the COVID-19 pandemic. Here at the Museum, our primary concerns were the health and safety of our staff and visitors, and the maintenance and preservation of our collections. Many of our events and programs had to be canceled or reimagined. Following are some of the Museum’s milestones and highlights from 2020.



Temporarily closing the Museum and postponing or canceling programs and events had a profound impact on the Museum’s finances, and your support in 2020 was never more important. Thank you so much for your generous support!

JULY

- Susan Funk, EVP and COO, retires after a 40+ year career with MSM
- A Way with Wood: Celebrating Craft* opens in the Collins Gallery
- The *Mayflower II* leaves the Museum for Plimoth Plantation
- Antique & Classic Boat Rendezvous
- Attracted more than 400 people to our Member Day on July 25 for a day of safe events

AUGUST

- Installation construction in progress for *Sailor Made: Folk Art of the Sea*
- Decision made to move the Gala to an online platform, enabling nearly 200 guests to attend the event virtually
- The tall ship *Kalmar Nyckel* arrived for hull maintenance in our preservation shipyard
- Antique Engine Show attracts 1,985 visitors

SEPTEMBER

- Sailor Made: Folk Art of the Sea* opens in the C.D. Mallory Building
- Member Appreciation Month
- 1,427 people attend the Antique Vehicle Show: By Land and By Sea

OCTOBER

- The America and the Sea Award Gala* honors Tom Whidden. Held virtually, the event successfully meets all goals
- 1,657 guests attend our Jack-o-Lantern Walk over four nights, delighting in 500 hand-carved pumpkins

NOVEMBER

- Peter Armstrong is appointed as MSM’s new President
- 975 visitors attend Viking Days
- A new figureheads exhibit – *Figureheads & Shipcarvings* – opens in the Wendell Gallery

DECEMBER

- Long-time President and CEO Steve White retires
- 3,262 visitors enjoy a reimagined and socially-distanced Lantern Light Village
- The annual Carol Sing is held in the Museum parking lot with guests singing in their cars
- Museum receives prestigious Mellon Foundation grant to undertake a three-year initiative to explore traditional narratives around the American maritime experience



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THE AMERICA AND THE SEA SOCIETY 2020 ANNUAL FUND

(Gifts received from January 1–December 31, 2020) Gifts at the America and the Sea Society level have a tremendous philanthropic impact on every program museum-wide. Support to this leadership giving society reflects deep commitment to the vitality of Mystic Seaport Museum and is an affirmation of our mission to preserve our maritime heritage for the benefit of future generations.

FLAGSHIP SOCIETY (Gifts of \$50,000 and up)

Jay S. and Jeanne Benet
Alexander and Amanda Bulazel
Grant and Peggy Cambridge
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Estate of J. Orin Edson
Michael T. and Joanne E. Masin
The Thompson Family Foundation
Kenneth and Dina Siegel
The family of Robert G. Stone, Jr.
Stanley T. and Nancy M. Wells

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**“It has been my pleasure
to support MSM...
for a half-century!”**



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(Gifts of \$500 to \$999)

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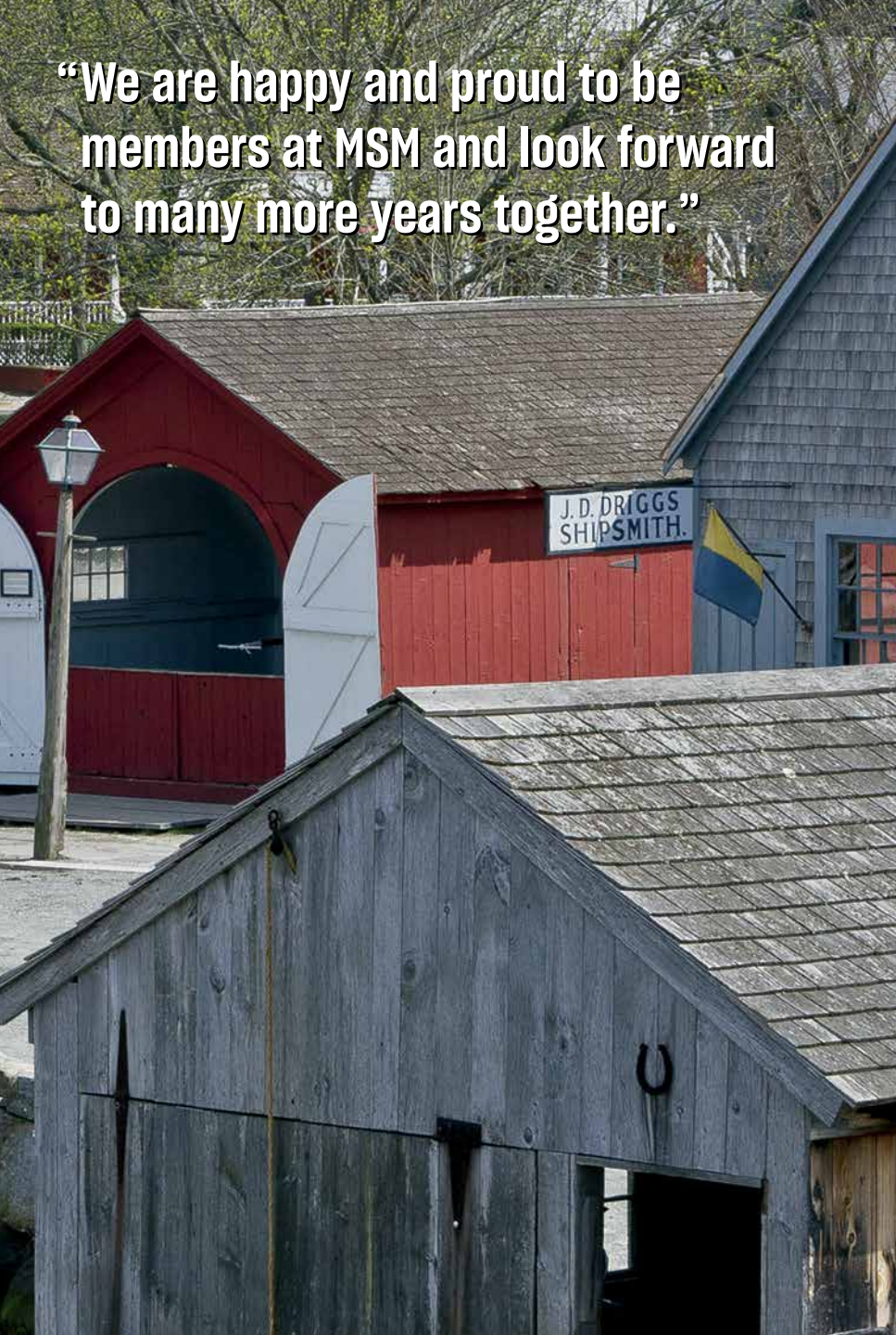
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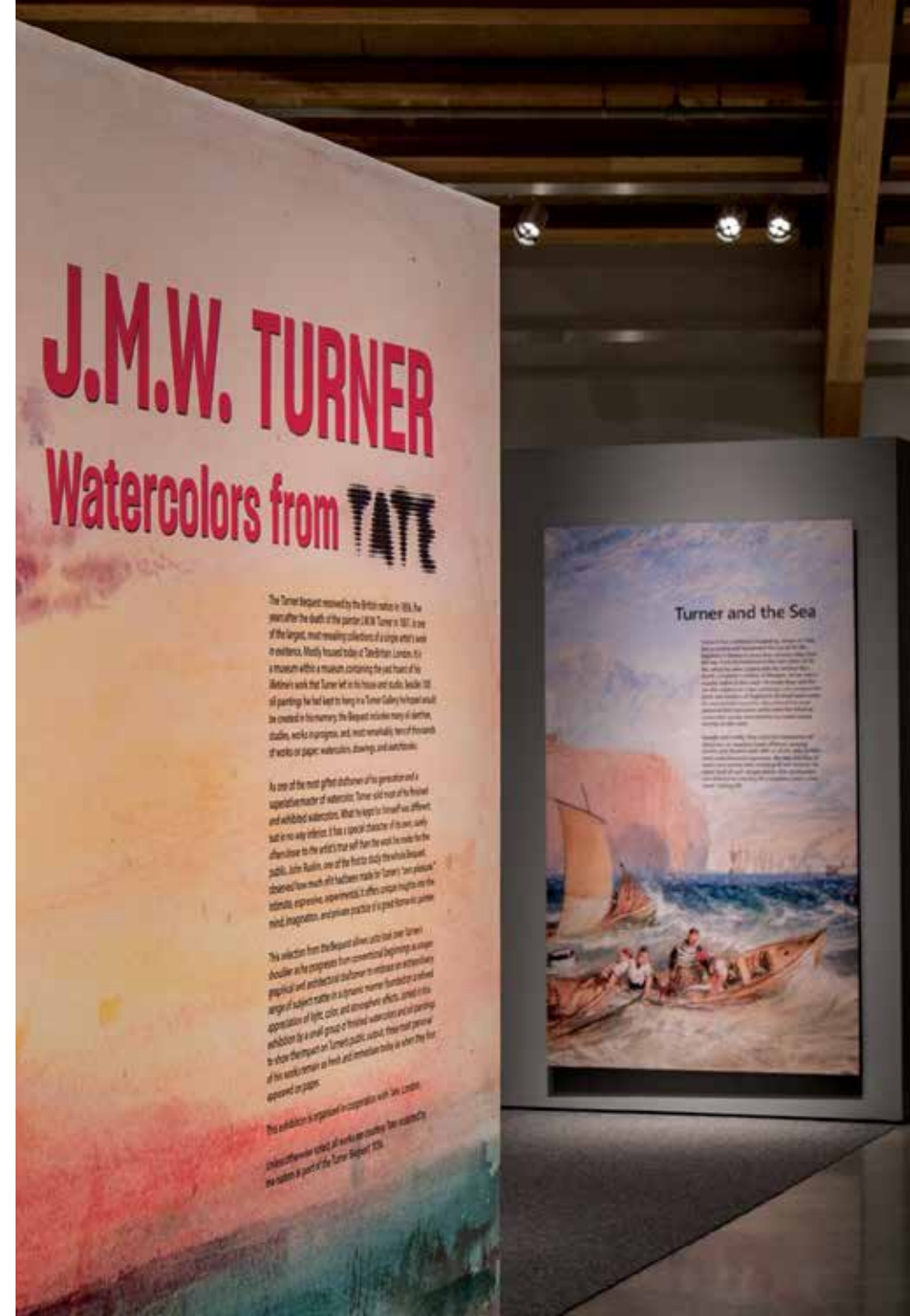
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The Era of Exhibitions reaffirms Mystic Seaport Museum’s identity as a vital cultural center, preserving our standing as the nation’s leading maritime museum while elevating our position among the finest museums in the Northeast. Below is a cumulative list of donors to the Era of Exhibitions campaign as of December 31, 2020.

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EXHIBITIONS

Closed *Turner* and opened **three** new exhibits in 2020:
A Way With Wood: Celebrating Craft,
Sailor Made: Folk Art of the Sea,
Figureheads & Shipcarvings



“For me to be recognized alongside other abundantly accomplished previous honorees, for doing what I most love, by the most prominent maritime museum in the United States, is a dream come true.”

– Thomas A. Whidden

THE AMERICA AND THE SEA AWARD GALA

Established in 2006, the *America and the Sea Award* Gala honors and celebrates those individuals or organizations who embrace the scholarship, exploration, adventure, aesthetics, competition, and freedom that the sea inspires.

Thomas A. Whidden was the 2020 *America and the Sea Award* recipient.

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Guests enjoy the Gala virtually from a private dock in Stonington Harbor.

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(Gifts received from January 1– December 31, 2020) There are a variety of ways to support Mystic Seaport Museum. The donors listed below have given generously in support of one of the many programs, collections, exhibits, events, or other activities that uphold Mystic Seaport Museum’s stature as the nation’s leading maritime museum. This list does not include the Annual Fund, the Era of Exhibitions Campaign, Endowment Funds or the *America and the Sea Award* Gala.

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(Gifts received from January 1– December 31, 2020) Endowment is the bedrock upon which Mystic Seaport Museum stands. Gifts to endowments help to build a strong foundation of annual support, ensuring the continued growth and future success of the Museum. These gifts help to inspire future generations by supporting experiential learning and passing on the gift of knowledge. A strong endowment enables us to carry out superlative stewardship of our peerless collections. In 2020, the donors listed below collectively contributed over \$275,000 to Mystic Seaport Museum endowment funds.

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“ Thank you for presenting us with such interesting programs during the pandemic. We have enjoyed them and certainly appreciate your efforts. While I still miss the interaction in person, this has provided a wonderful alternative.”



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“Mystic Seaport
Museum collects and
shares the history
of the oceans and
seas that surround
all of us politically,
economically and
environmentally.
Now and in the future
this exhaustive
collection will
help with our
responsibilities
and actions.”

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Mystic Seaport Museum has grown since 1929 from a small historical association on the banks of the Mystic River to become the preeminent American maritime museum of the 21st Century. The Museum's founders, Carl Cutler, Charles Stillman and Edward Bradley understood the fundamental significance of our country's maritime heritage when they founded this institution. It has been through the dedicated leadership, vision, commitment and generosity of our greatest donors that the Museum has continued to grow and evolve. The

Carl C. Cutler Society was created to recognize and celebrate those donors who have given over a million dollars in cumulative giving.

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“Although the experience was very different this year, our visits in 2020 were particularly special given the circumstances. We enjoyed many times on the water in the Beetles, the Whitehall and even the Paddle Boat as well.”



STILLMAN SOCIETY

In 1938, Mystic Seaport Museum (then the Marine Historical Association) received a generous bequest from the Estate of Charles K. Stillman, one of the Museum's three founders. As the first bequest to the Museum, this significant gesture helped establish an endowment for the Museum's programs and future operations. It also began what has become a tradition of planned giving at Mystic Seaport Museum. Since then, a great many individuals have made generous gifts to the Museum in their wills or estate plans. In order to recognize their generosity, Mystic Seaport Museum has established the Stillman Society, named in honor of the Museum's early benefactor.

Mystic Seaport Museum is pleased to recognize these special donors during their lifetimes, not only to acknowledge their generosity personally, but to celebrate the role the Stillman Society plays in the growth and development of the Museum. If you believe that you qualify for membership and would like to add your name to the list, please contact the Advancement Department at 860.572.5365 or advancement@mysticseaport.org.

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“The Seaport was wonderful in organizing a fun, socially-distanced event that provided our team members and their families a day of fresh air, connection, and Seaport fun!”



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◀ Sprucing up the campus for the summer

A small craft exhibit transforms the Peter Sanger Visitor Reception Center into an exhibition space ▶

A LOOK AHEAD



A Spectacle in Motion: The Grand Panorama of a Whaling Voyage 'Round the World opens Memorial Day weekend ▶

◀ Electric propulsion is being added to the Steamboat Sabino





**The Wooden Boat Show returns! ▶
August 20 -22**

***Sea as Muse* opens in September ▼**

**▲ Antique & Classic Boat Rendezvous
July 24**

**Museum establishes new curator for social maritime histories
supported by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**

***America and the Sea Award Gala* honors Terry Hutchinson**

A LOOK AHEAD



DURING OUR LIVES, THROUGH WORD AND DEED

WE LEAVE OUR IMPRINT ON THE INDIVIDUALS AND INSTITUTIONS ABOUT WHICH WE CARE DEEPLY

The legacy we bequeath conveys the story of our own lives and accomplishments just as the exhibits and programs at Mystic Seaport Museum convey to us stories of the accomplishments of our forebears.

Please consider including Mystic Seaport Museum in your long-term plans so that you may:

- Nurture and grow the financial sustainability of Mystic Seaport Museum to ensure future generations can develop an understanding of our past in order to be prepared for their future
- Enrich through your legacy the passion for knowledge of our history as a nation and a people
- Awaken a curiosity for discovery, exploration and experiential learning

To learn more about including Mystic Seaport Museum in your will or estate plan please call the Advancement office at 860.572.5365.

www.mysticseaport.org/support/legacy-giving



